

Press release of 4 November 2016

Ai Akino: «White flowers, too...»

Using pigments, inks and gold leaf, Japanese artist Ai Akino creates paintings that celebrate the diversity of nature through the changing seasons. The detailed and colourful works depict mostly traditional Japanese plant motifs in the classical Japanese *Nihonga* style. The effects of light on leaves, flowers or butterfly wings are carefully and vividly expressed with materials such as ground semi-precious stones or crushed seashells and pearls. The mindfulness of the artist is also reflected in an appreciation of the white flowers that occasionally bloom amongst the colourfully flowering plants of Kyoto gardens. They set brilliant accents amidst an abundance of colour.

Ai Akino (*1971) utilises the whole range of the *Nihonga* repertoire for her flower and plant motifs: Ground or crushed seashells, pearls, semi-precious stones and minerals are applied in numerous layers and often combined with gold leaf. They lend the paintings a warm, soft shimmer and vibrant depth. The artist expresses not only the most diverse colours, forms, textures and light effects. She also conveys the character of the plants, as experienced while sketching directly from nature. In so doing, she adds a contemporary element to *Nihonga* painting, that often uses stylised templates.

The exhibition title alludes to the single white flowers that occasionally bloom on plants that ordinarily flower colourfully. These are highly prized in Kamigamo, the artist's home and one of the oldest districts of Kyoto, with its traditional houses and spacious gardens. Interest in such rare varieties is also an example of the love of detail that characterises the work of the artist and everyday life in her neighbourhood.

Ai Akino never depicts plants in their entirety, but rather only small, but precisely observed sections of them, as if seen through a narrow window or gate. She thereby induces a sense of the extensive world beyond the painting. All paintings are framed by high-quality vermillion paper. This lines the edges of the wooden frames that Akino mounts her paintings on. The exquisite colour not only gives the paintings a simple and elegant finish. It also allows the diverse motifs in the exhibition to become elements of a coherent universe that this extraordinary artist shares with us.

You and your friends are warmly invited to the exhibition preview on Thursday 17 November 2016, from 17.00 to 20.00. At 18.00 there will be an English language introduction via Skype by Dr. Gert van Tonder, the artist's husband.

Exhibition tour: Friday 25 November 2016 at 18.30. Short introduction to the portrayal of nature in Japanese painting by Dr. Charly Iten, art historian and Japanologist.

Closing event: Saturday 17 December 2016, from 12.00 to 15.00.

The exhibition runs from 18 November to 17 December 2016. New opening hours from November: Thursday and Friday 13.00–18.00, Saturday 11.00–14.00 or by appointment.

Further information available from:

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Ai Akino

Education

1990–1994 BA in Fine Arts, at Kyoto University of Art and Design, Kyoto (JP)

Solo exhibitions

- 2015 Galerie Claudia Geiser, Zurich (CH)
- 2014 *Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Takashimaya Department Store, Yokohama & Nagoya (JP)
- 2013 *Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Takashimaya Department Store, Kyoto & Osaka (JP)
- 2007 *Nihonga Debut*, Fine Art Gallery of the Daimaru Department Store, Kyoto (JP)

Group exhibitions

- 2016 *Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Osaka and Tokyo (JP)
- 2014 *Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Osaka and Tokyo (JP)
- 2013 *Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Osaka and Tokyo (JP)
- 2012 *Three Rising Painters*, Porta Fine Art Gallery Hana, Kyoto (JP)
- Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Osaka and Tokyo (JP)
- 2011 *Stationed*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, in collaboration with the Fine Art Gallery of the Isetan Department Store, Kyoto (JP)
- Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Osaka and Tokyo (JP)
- 2010 *Stationed*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, in collaboration with the Fine Art Gallery of the Isetan Department Store, Kyoto (JP)
- Nihonga*, Fine Art Gallery of the Mitsukoshi Department Store, Tokyo (JP)
- 2009 *DO-DA: Four Man Show*, Kyoto Prefectural Centre for Art and Culture, Kyoto (JP)
- 2008 *The Cicadas Gather III*, Hanaoka Fine Art Gallery, Kobe (JP)
- 2007 *The Cicadas Gather II*, Hanaoka Fine Art Gallery, Kobe (JP)
- 2006 *The Cicadas Gather I*, Hanaoka Fine Art Gallery, Kobe (JP)
- 2005 *31st Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 2004 *Duo Exhibit*, Fine Art Gallery of the Takashimaya Department Store, Kyoto (JP)
- 30th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 2003 *29th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 2002 *28th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- Suga Tatehiko Grand Prix Exhibition of Japanese Art*, Kurayoshi City Museum, Tottori (JP)
- 2001 *27th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- Kyoto Prefectural Showcase of Young Artists*, The Museum of Kyoto, Kyoto (JP)
- 2000 *26th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 1999 *25th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 1998 *24th Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 1997 *23rd Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 1996 *22nd Sogaten*, Autumn & Spring Exhibitions, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 1995 *21st Sogaten*, Spring Exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 1994 *20th Sogaten*, Autumn Exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)

Awards

- 2010 *Silver Prize for Outstanding Young Nihonga Artists*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (JP)
- 2004 *30th Sogaten Spring Exhibition First Prize*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art (JP)
- 2002 *Suga Tatehiko Grand Prix Exhibition of Japanese Art Silver Prize*, Kurayoshi City Museum (JP)

Collections

Permanent collection of the Shizuoka Prefectural Akino Fuku Art Museum, Shizuoka (JP); Junsei Collection of Fine Art, Nanzen Temple, Kyoto (JP).

Selected works

1. Ai Akino, *Red Camellias at the end of Spring I*, 2016, Japanese pigments, ink and gold leaf on hemp paper, 15.8 x 22.7 cm.
2. Ai Akino, *Powder Blue*, 2016, Japanese pigments on hemp paper, 36.3 x 25.7 cm.
3. Ai Akino, *Mountain Sprite*, 2016, Japanese pigments on gold leaf and hemp paper, 15.8 x 22.7 cm.
4. Ai Akino, *Enoki*, 2010, Japanese pigments on mulberry paper, 16 x 45.4 cm.