

Press release of 9 January 2015

## **Ai Akino: «Glimpses of my garden»**

**Tea blossoms, sacred bamboo or snow-covered pine branches: Japanese artist Ai Akino sees these and many other subjects when she looks into her garden in Kyoto. She paints in the classic Japanese *Nihonga* style using precious pigments, inks and gold leaf. With her opulent colour palette the artist captures the beauty of Japan's plant world and its seasonal changes and creates paintings full of life and depth. Akino's first exhibition outside Japan offers a rare opportunity to experience the work of an extraordinary *Nihonga* artist in Switzerland.**

Classical Japanese flower themes are central to the works of Ai Akino (\*1971). Her detailed paintings display nature's diversity and quiet inner life and, at the same time, hint at the extensive world outside the frame. The artist achieves this effect by selecting small details, cropping subjects and finely rendering the effects of light using the rich repertoire of traditional Japanese painting materials. Akino uses ground semi-precious stones, crushed seashells and pearls, powdered minerals, as well as ink and gold leaf, for her fresh and animated paintings. Sometimes she goes beyond traditional *Nihonga* subjects, painting leafy tropical forest canopies or exotic lilies. Whatever the subject, the viewer is moved by the artist's intimate observation of nature and her use of warm, expressive and shimmering colours.

Akino's paintings are completed by her simple but equally noble framing. The artist uses high quality red paper to line the edges of the wooden boards upon which her paintings are mounted. Associated with various Japanese festivities, vermilion gives the diverse paintings a celebratory and uniform appearance.

Ai Akino has exhibited regularly in Japan for over 20 years and has won many prizes. In 2004 the artist was particularly honoured to be appointed by the city of Kyoto to paint the new votive plaque for the central prayer room of the important Kiyomizu temple; this plaque is replaced only once a century. The Galerie Claudia Geiser is pleased to present the first exhibition of Ai Akino outside Japan.

**You and your friends are warmly invited to the exhibition preview on Thursday 22 January 2015, from 17.00 to 20.00.** At 18.00 there will be an introduction by Japanese art experts Tomoe Steineck and Dr. Charly Iten.

The exhibition runs from 23 January to 14 March 2015.

At 18.30 on Wednesday 25 February 2015 Dr. Charly Iten will give a brief introduction to Japanese painting and lead a tour of the exhibition.

Opening hours: Wednesday to Friday 12.30 to 18.00, Saturday 11.00 to 14.00, or by appointment.

**Further information available from:**

Claudia Geiser  
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## Ai Akino

### Education

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

### Solo exhibitions

- 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

- 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, *Tea blossom*, 2014, Japanese pigments and gold leaf on paper, 31.5 x 41 cm.
2. Ai Akino, *Nandina*, 2014, Japanese pigments on paper, 40.9 x 31.8 cm.
3. Ai Akino, *Snowy Pine*, 2014, Japanese pigments and gold leaf on paper, 60.6 x 72.2 cm (detail).
4. Ai Akino, *Procession*, 2014, Japanese pigments on paper, 40.9 x 27.3 cm.