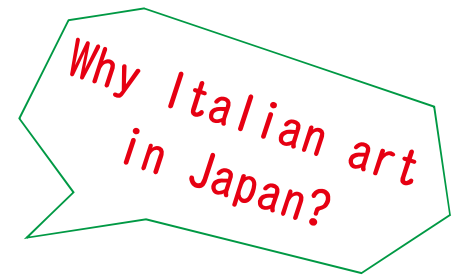


Avant-garde in Japan and Italy: Intercultural Dialogue of Artists in the 20th Century

Press Release



How has Italian art from the 20th century been collected in Japan? How was the collection received in Japan then? While asking these questions in the context of the 21st century, we try to bring to light the relationship between Italy and Japan at that time.

This exhibition sheds light on the 20th century, when the relationship between Italian and Japanese artists began to change; the Japanese artists, who used to study with Western artists, started their dialogues with Italian artists on an equal basis. We attempt to trace the roots of Italian art works that have been collected in Japan to this day.

The exhibition begins with the dialogue between the Italian Futurists, Togo Seiji and Kambara Tai, followed by the friendship between Lucio Fontana and Takiguchi Shuzo, a representative poet and art critic in postwar Japan. Subsequently, we focus on their friendship which was expanded to the further personal relationships, including Bruno Munari, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, and the like. Through more than 100 artworks and documents, we aim to review the story of Italian art collection in Japan.

Featured Artists

Italy: Giacomo Balla, Remo Bianco, Umberto Boccioni, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Enrico Castellani, Lucio Fontana, Gruppo T, Enzo Mari, Marino Marini, Bruno Munari, and others

Japan: Abe Nobuya, Azuma Kenjiro, Kambara Tai, Miyawaki Aiko, Takahashi Shu, Takiguchi Shuzo, Togo Seiji, Toyofuku Tomonori, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, and others

General Information

Exhibition Title: Special Exhibition: *Italian and Japanese Avant-garde: Japan-Italy Exchange in the 20th Century*

Venue: Fukuyama Museum of Art Exhibition Period: April 6 - June 2, 2024 Hours: 9:30-17:00

Admission: 1,500 yen (1,200 yen) *Price in parentheses is for advance tickets or paid groups of 20 or more.
*Free for high school students and younger

Organizers: Fukuyama Museum of Art, Fukuyama City, Chugoku Shimbun Bingo Headquarters

Supporters: Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassy of Italy in Japan, Italian Cultural Institute - Osaka, Japan-Italy Association, Hiroshima Japan-Italy Association

Contact: Fukuyama Museum of Art, Curatorial Division, Koike Kumiko (Public relations), Tsutsui Aya (Curator of this exhibition)

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Highlights

1. Looking Back on Japan-Italy Exchanges Through the “20th Century Italian Art Collection,” the Highlight of the Fukuyama Museum of Art

Fukuyama Museum of Art currently has a collection of more than 100 Italian art works, including those brought to Japan in the 1950s and 1960s. Mainly focusing on these artworks, this exhibition examines how the Japanese people then received the 20th-century Italian art.

2. The 20th-Century Italian Art Collections in Japan Gathers in Fukuyama!

Italian art collection shown here come from all over Japan, including not only art museums but also local companies in Niigata. Interestingly, Italian art works were collected in Niigata due to the common motivations shared by artists, galleries, and collectors in the 1960s. They aimed to introduce international art movements like Italian art to Niigata, in order to culturally contribute to their native town. Even from today's perspective, it seems clear that such an attitude shows a strong will to disseminate their attempt from the region to the whole of Japan and ultimately to the world.

3. Tracing Postwar Japanese Art From the Perspective of Italy

After the war, the door to overseas reopened in Japan. Individual artists began to interact with each other internationally. Takiguchi Shuzo, followed by other young Japanese artists, traveled to Italy. Their footsteps allow us to trace how these Japanese evaluated contemporary Italian art and reconsidered their own “Japanese” identity.

4. Valuable Items on Display for the First Time!

In Italy, it was a custom for artists to give each other their own works as gifts. Due to this, those works by Japanese artists have remained in the hands of Italian artists, and vice versa. Along with these works, handwritten letters that convey the latest news from each writer are displayed in this exhibition. Some of them are displayed for the first time in public exhibitions. Mainly focusing on the documents previously owned by Takiguchi Shuzo, the personalities of each artist will emerge more clearly.

Structure of the Exhibition

Chapter 1: The First Step — Futurism in Italy and Japan

Contemporary exchanges between Japan and Italy became realized when traveling abroad from Japan came to be possible in the 20th century. As the first example, this chapter focuses on the art movement “Futurism” that arose in Italy in the 1920s. Japanese artist Togo Seiji went to Italy and participated in the Italian Futurist exhibition, and Kambara Tai, who exchanged letters and documents with Filippo T. Marinetti.

Works to be exhibited

- Giacomo Balla, *Girl with a Wheel*, Fukuyama Museum of Art
- Umberto Boccioni, *Study of a Man at the Cafe*, 1914, Fukuyama Museum of Art
- Togo Seiji, *Man with a Hat (Walking Woman)*, 1922, Nagoya City Art Museum
- Kambara Tai, “*Woman and Cat*” of *Verlaine*, 1923, Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki



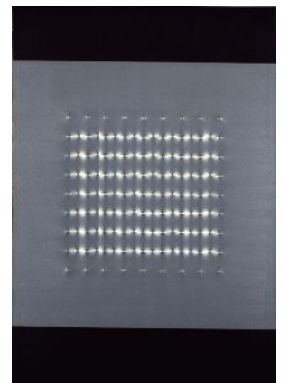
Giacomo Balla, *Girl with a Wheel*, 1915, Fukuyama Museum of Art

Chapter 2: Fontana and Takiguchi Shuzo

After the World War II, more Japanese than ever visited Italy for various reasons, such as travel and study. Among them is Takiguchi Shuzo, a representative poet and art critic in postwar Japan. In 1958, he traveled throughout Europe, and established personal relationships with contemporary Italian artists, including Lucio Fontana and Bruno Munari. Some other Japanese artists, either traveling or living in Italy, visited the studios of Italian artists as well. In some cases, they gave their artworks each other as a souvenir of such exchanges.

Works to be exhibited

- Lucio Fontana, *Spatial Concept: Venice in Silver*, 1961, Fukuyama Museum of Art
- Giuseppe Capogrossi, *Surface 170*, 1955, Fukuyama Museum of Art
- Enrico Castellani, *Untitled*, 1964, Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art / The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum
- Marino Marini, *Idea for a Rider*, 1955, Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art / The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum
- Miyawaki Aiko, *Work*, 1960-61, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
- Azuma Kenjiro, *MU-766*, 1976, Private Collection
(deposited at Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art / The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum)



Enrico Castellani, *Untitled*, 1964,
Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art /
The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum

Chapter 3: Spatialism Remains in Niigata

Currently, there is a large collection from 20th century Italian art in Niigata Prefecture. This is due to the efforts of Niigata-born individuals in the art world—Abe Nobuya, an artist who lived in Italy for more than a decade, Yamamoto Takashi, then the owner of Tokyo Gallery, and local companies like BSN Niigata Broadcasting and Daiko Bank. They attempted to introduce international art movement to Japan. This chapter reconsiders the Japanese-Italian exchange from a slightly different perspective than artists' dialogue.

Works to be exhibited

- Lucio Fontana, *Concept*, 1962, BSN Niigata Broadcasting (deposited at Niigata City Museum of Art)
- Mario Schifano, *2-2B*, 1960, BSN Niigata Broadcasting (deposited at Niigata City Museum of Art)
- Piero Dorazio, *Consciousness*, 1960, BSN Niigata Broadcasting (deposited at Niigata City Museum of Art)
- Remo Bianco, *3D—The Power of the Repetition*, 1963, BSN Niigata Broadcasting (deposited at Niigata City Museum of Art)
- Abe Nobuya, *Work (GREEN ECHO)*, 1964, BSN Niigata Broadcasting (deposited at Niigata City Museum of Art)



Remo Bianco, *3D—The Power of the Repetition*, 1963,
BSN Niigata Broadcasting
(deposited at Niigata City Museum of Art)
courtesy of Fondazione Remo Bianco

Chapter 4: “Moving Art” in Japan

The focus of this chapter is Italian artists who have shown their works in Japan. In particular, it features Bruno Munari and Gruppo T, both of whom participated in the avant-garde movement “Arte Programmata.” Aiming for “programmed art,” they produced works that could actually move or be operated. Electricity and motors were also of their interests. With Takiguchi Shuzo’s support, they organized exhibitions in Japan. It was when only a few Italian artists did so. Comparing the Italian and Japanese interests in movement, space, and light, we will see different attitudes toward them.

Works to be exhibited

- Bruno Munari, *Direct Projection*, 1959/1973, NPO CCAA
- Bruno Munari, *Concave-convex*, 1985, NPO CCAA
- Grazia Varisco, *Magnetic Table*, 1961, Tama Art University Art Archives Center
- Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, *Relation of C*, 1965, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
- Mario Merz, *Acceleration+Dream+Illusion*, 1972/1998, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo



Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, *Relation of C*, 1965, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Exhibition Catalogue

Avant-grade in Japan and Italy: Intercultural Dialogue of Artists In the 20th Century

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Published by : rose des vents -- suiseisha

Price : 3,300 yen (tax included)

ISBN 978-4-8010-0806-9

Purchase here <http://www.city.fukuyama.hiroshima.jp/site/fukuyama-museum/2861.html>

About the Museum

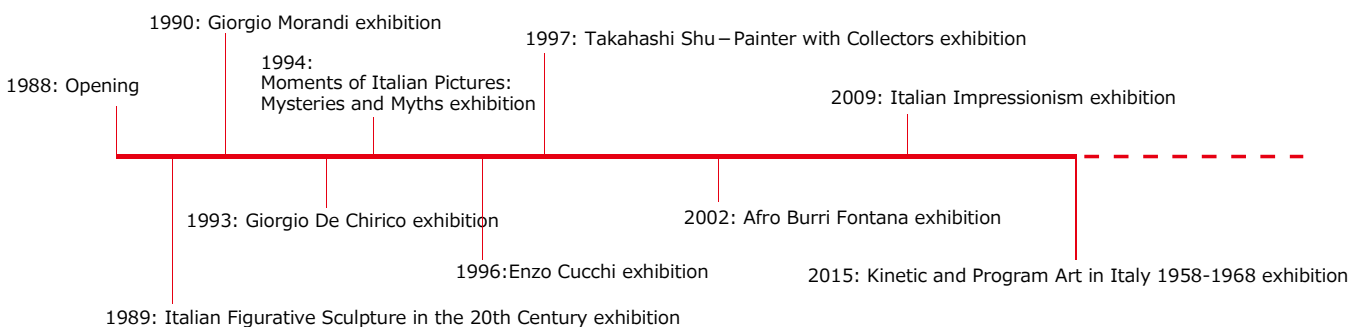
The Fukuyama Museum of Art is opened on November 3, 1988 in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture. The museum's collection includes a wide variety of works, from modern and contemporary art to tea utensils and swords, with a total of about 3,300 pieces.

The collection policy is based on four component, and the museum's collection includes works by local artists from Fukuyama City, Fuchu City, and Jinsekikogen Town, works by artists related to the Seto Inland Sea region, modern and contemporary Japanese art, and modern and contemporary European art, mainly from Italy.

There are very few art museums in Japan that feature Italian art, but our museum has placed Italy at the core of its collection because artists with ties to Fukuyama, such as Takahashi Shu and Ketani Itto, had been based in Italy.

The museum was built on the western moat of Fukuyama Castle (the remains of the moat) which was recently renovated, and you can view the castle from the second floor of the museum. It is conveniently located just a five-minute walk from the station.

Past Italian Art Exhibitions Held at Fukuyama Museum of Art



*Past exhibition catalogs can be purchased here.

Purchase here <http://www.city.fukuyama.hiroshima.jp/site/fukuyama-museum/2861.html>