

# Large Print Labels

## **Flora and Fauna in Japanese Art**

October 5, 2018—March 24, 2019

Gallery 225, Main Building

日本・大正時代・芦雁図屏風(六曲一双)  
今尾景年筆

Imao Keinen, Japanese, 1845–1924

**River Reeds and Geese, 1916**

Taishō period, 1912–1926

pair of six-panel folding screens;  
ink, color, and gold wash on silk

William K. Bixby Trust for Asian Art and funds given by donors to  
the 1997 Art Enrichment Fund, Museum Shop Fund, The Century  
Club, and Mr. and Mrs. John Peters MacCarthy 20:1998.1, .2

These screens depict a flock of eight wild geese resting on a sandy bank and gliding over marsh reeds in full bloom. In Japan, the annual visitation of geese from Siberia is an ancient literary theme, symbolic of autumn, and this seasonal aspect is evident as the reeds transition from their peak at right to wilting at left. The passage of time is emphasized by the birds shown in three stages: preparing to land, preening on the bank, and relaxing among the water reeds.

When Imao Keinen finished this work in 1916, he had been a well-known teacher for nearly 50 years and a member of the Imperial Household Artists. His prominence began when he established his own studio in Kyoto in 1868. Twelve years later, he was among the first government appointees to the newly formed Kyoto Prefecture Painting School; he was instrumental in the promotion of Japanese-style painting.

日本・明治時代・菊花双鶏図・野口幽谷筆

Noguchi Yūkoku, Japanese, 1827–1898

**Chickens and Chrysanthemums, 1892**

Meiji period, 1868–1912

hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

This large painting depicts a pair of chickens surrounded by blossoming chrysanthemums. The artist Noguchi Yūkoku was a fifth-generation painter of the literati class, whose members were intellectuals and drew inspiration from traditional Chinese literary and visual culture. Yūkoku's career coincided with Japan's newly emerging international presence, and although his practice drew from traditional styles and subjects, late 19th-century influences derived from the West do appear in his work. These are especially evident in the sketchy treatment of the rooster's feathers.

Yūkoku, a native of Edo (later Tokyo), trained with the literati painter Tsubaki Chinzan (1801–1854). From Chinzan he learned how to define birds and flowers with a faint background wash and how to depict the chrysanthemums realistically with meticulous brushwork. Yūkoku was an active participant in early modern artists' organizations as well as an influential teacher.

日本・明治時代・夏景の芙蓉芦竹に孤鴨図  
小室翠雲筆

Komuro Suiun, Japanese, 1874–1945

**Summer Scene with Solitary Duck amidst  
Rose Mallow and River Reeds, 1903 or 1904**  
Meiji period, 1868–1912  
hanging scroll; ink, color, and oyster-shell-white  
pigment (*gofun*) on silk

The Langenberg Endowment Fund 101:2017

This painting depicts a female mallard (*magamo*; *Anas platyrhynchos*) perched at water's edge beside blossoming rose mallow (*fuyō*; *Hibiscus mutabilis*) and lush river reeds (*yoshitake*; *Arundo donax*). The bird and plants are realistically portrayed, and the artist used oyster-shell-white pigment (*gofun*) to render the white stigma pads of the blossoms. An early work by the artist, this is a fine example of Japanese bird-and-flower painting (*kachō-ga*).

The painting was exhibited at the World's Fair in St. Louis, although its Japanese and English titles have been revised since that time. The original title mentions spring scenery, which is at odds with the rose mallow and river reeds that flourish during July and August in the summer. After more than a century, it has returned to join the permanent collection of Japanese art at the Saint Louis Art Museum.

日本・大正時代・稲子図  
渡辺省亭筆

Watanabe Seitei,  
Japanese, 1851–1918

**Rice and Grasshopper**, c.1915  
Taishō period, 1912–1926  
hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Friends Fund 92:1986

Nodding heavily in the field, ripening stalks of Japanese rice (*Oryza sativa subsp. japonica*) represent the autumn harvest season. In Japanese culture, rice is reaped around the middle of the eighth lunar month, roughly September. New grain was dedicated to the deity Inari with festivals and Shintō rituals that continued well into the ninth lunar month, roughly October.

A feather suspended from a hemp cord alludes to the ancient belief that agriculture in Japan began when a bird dropped a rice seed from its mouth. In the left corner, the green bamboo rod and white paper strips suggest a temporary shrine. Perched on another hemp cord is a rice grasshopper (*Oxya yezoensis*), which is a pest farmers strive to keep away. The artist cleverly made a visual pun, because in Japanese, an ear or head of rice is called *inaho*, which sounds like *inago* (“child of rice”), the rice grasshopper.

日本・江戸時代・有田焼  
古伊万里様式染付蓮池鷺文大皿

Japanese

**Dish with Design of Herons  
in a Lotus Pond,**

mid-to late 17th century

Edo period, 1615–1868

Arita ware, Ko-Imari type; porcelain  
with underglaze cobalt blue decoration

William K. Bixby Trust for Asian Art 342:1962

This large dish portrays two herons in a pond with lotus and reeds. The single lotus pod suggests the season is mid-summer when the blossoms have fallen. The peaceful scene is contained within double circles while the surrounding border is broad, carrying its own landscape theme of water, rocks, banana, and butterfly. The design is freely and rapidly drawn in fairly rich blue. Washes in lighter and darker gray-blue are layered over solid areas.

The striking design is derived from Chinese prototypes. Bananas are often seen on Chinese blue-and-white porcelain of the early 17th century during the late Ming dynasty, while butterflies frequently adorn Kangxi period (1662–1722) porcelains of the Qing dynasty. However, the overall composition is very much in the Japanese manner.

日本・江戸時代

有田焼伊万里様式染付雲割桜に  
雉四方襷文様七宝花菱文様皿

Japanese

**Dish with Design of Pheasant  
and Flowering Cherry in a  
Landscape**, mid-17th century  
Edo period, 1615–1868

Arita ware, Imari type; porcelain with  
underglaze cobalt blue decoration

Friends Fund 243:1972

This shallow round dish is decorated with a green pheasant (*kiji*; *Phasianus versicolor*) and flowering cherry (*sakura*; *Prunus serrulata*) in a landscape. The clouds above are patterned with dots arranged within a grid (*yomodasuki-monyō*) while the rim is painted with “flowery-diamond linked-jewels” (*shippō-hanabishi-monyō*).

In Japanese art, green pheasants, which are generally solitary birds except during the mating season, and flowering cherries are often depicted together as a springtime bird-and-flower pairing. The imagery is decorative rather than representational, for no one could take seriously the patterned clouds, the gigantic flower, or the wonderfully bizarre pheasant.

日本・江戸時代

有田焼伊万里様式染付牡丹鳥文大皿

Japanese

**Dish with Design of Birds and Peony,**  
second half of the 17th century  
Edo period, 1615–1868

Arita ware, Imari type; porcelain with  
underglaze cobalt blue decoration

Gift of Henry B. Pflager and Katherine King Pflager  
103:1976

This large dish features a simple, quiet design of resting birds and a spray of peony framed within double circular lines. The asymmetry of the central composition is a typical feature of Japanese visual art. The flower suggests a springtime theme, which coincides with the mating season of most birds. The flattened interior side, broad rim, and use of geometric and floral patterning on the rim are reminiscent of earlier 17th-century Arita wares, as seen nearby on the *Dish with Design of Pheasant and Flowering Cherry in a Landscape* (243:1972). However, the character of the glaze and body of this dish indicates a date of manufacture after 1650.

日本・江戸時代

有田焼柿右衛門様式染付沢瀉に  
鷺文輪花皿

Japanese

**Eight-Lobed Dish with Design  
of Heron, Rock, and Three-Leaf  
Arrowhead**, early 18th century  
Edo period, 1615–1868

Arita ware, Kakiemon type; porcelain  
with underglaze cobalt blue decoration

William K. Bixby Trust for Asian Art 32:1969

The center of this dish features a heron standing against a rock and three-leaf arrowhead (*omodaka*; *Sagittaria trifolia*). The eight-lobed rim is decorated with maple leaves floating on water, a popular design known as the “Tatsuta River pattern” (*Tatsutagawa-mon*). The Tatsuta River, near the ancient Japanese capital of Nara, is famous for this annual maple leaf autumnal spectacle.

Dishes such as this one were often produced in sets of 5, 10, or 20, making the superior quality of the images even more remarkable. The decorators of these wares must have been master craftsmen of the highest order to have painted such a quantity of porcelain that is equally filled with vigor, sensitivity, and consistency.

日本・江戸時代

京焼(永楽焼)色絵交趾写螭竜瑞雲四季花鳥文  
高台鉢・永楽保全作

Eiraku Hozen, Japanese, 1795–1854

**High-Footed Dish with Foliated Rim and Design  
of Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons in the  
“Kōchi” Style, c.1827–1854**

Edo period, 1615–1868

Kyōto ware (Eiraku ware); stoneware with overglaze  
polychrome enamel decoration

Gift of Paul Moss 185:1993

This vessel is decorated with overglaze enamels of yellow, blue, black, green, and aubergine (dark purple). The interior has a central roundel with two young hornless dragons amidst multi-colored, auspicious clouds. The roundel is surrounded by four decorative panels, each containing assorted birds, insects, plants, and flowers of the four seasons. The underside of the dish is embellished with floral scrolls and insects. The exterior of the tall cylindrical foot is also divided into four decorative panels, each featuring seasonal flora and fauna.

Colors and floral motifs on this vessel are surrounded by fine raised lines which enclose the enamel pigment. This distinctive style of decoration is known in Japan as the “Kōchi” style. The term is derived from the Chinese word *Jiaozhi*, used to describe the far southern regions of ancient China. By the 19th century, this style of ceramics had been transmitted to Taiwan as well as Japan.