

May 17, 2022
Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation

Two Journeys: Aoki Shigeru and Sakamoto Hanjiro Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of Their Births

July 30 [Sat.] - October 16 [Sun.], 2022



Left : AOKI Shigeru, *Paradise under the Sea*, 1907, Oil on canvas, Important Cultural Property

Right : SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Three Grazing Horses*, 1932, Oil on canvas

The Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation (Director: Ishibashi Hiroshi), presents *Two Journeys: Aoki Shigeru and Sakamoto Hanjiro Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of Their Births*.

Aoki Shigeru (1882-1911) and Sakamoto Hanjiro (1882-1969) were both born in what is now Kurume, Fukuoka prefecture. They studied at the same elementary school, enrolled at the same private Western-style art school, and both aimed to become painters. In a period when Western-style painting was approaching maturity in Japan, each pursued his own individual style. Aoki made his debut in the world of painting while studying at the Tokyo Fine Arts School (now Tokyo University of the Arts). His *A Gift of the Sea* attracted attention amidst the rise of the trend towards Meiji Romanticism, winning him acclaim while still quite young. Despite his career's brilliant start, he spent the last years of his life traveling aimlessly around Kyushu. His dream of returning to the heart of the art world unrealized, he died quite young.

Sakamoto, stimulated by Aoki, also moved to Tokyo, where he made his debut several years after Aoki's. After studying abroad in Paris, he returned to his hometown, where he steadily created work on a variety of themes, including horses, still lifes, and the moon, until his death at 87. Over those years, he developed a tranquil world view.

These two artists were utterly different in personality and style, but Aoki and Sakamoto were aware of each other and also, it is clear, competed with and encouraged each other.

This exhibition commemorates the 140th anniversary of these two artists' birth with about 250 of their works on display. The focus is on works that express their individual characteristics and their relationship with each other as we explore these two artists' journeys during their occasionally intersecting lives.

Exhibition Highlights

1 . 66 Years Since Their Last Joint Exhibition

There have been multiple, but separate, retrospective exhibitions for both Aoki Shigeru and Sakamoto Hanjiro on significant anniversaries. The last time their works were shown together, however, was in 1956 at the *Works by Aoki Shigeru and Sakamoto Hanjiro* exhibition at the former Ishibashi Museum of Art. This exhibition is the first opportunity since then to see a competitive presentation of the works of these Kurume natives.

2 . Rare and Fabled Works From Their Youth

In recent years we have added twenty-five of Aoki's sketches of *Gigaku* (masked dance) and *Bugaku* (court dance and music) masks to our collection. It has been nearly forty years since these "mask sketches" were displayed as a group. It has also been forty years since the last public showing of Sakamoto's *Girl Sleeping*, a work produced while the artist was in Europe.



Left: AOKI Shigeru, *Sketches of Gyodo Masks*, c.1900-1903, Pencil and watercolor on paper

Right: SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Girl Sleeping*, 1923, Oil on canvas, Private Collection

3 . Masterworks Side by Side

After Aoki's death, fearing that his works would be scattered and lost, Sakamoto appealed to Ishibashi Shojiro, out of friendship, to collect Aoki's works and build a museum for them. Because of this connection, what is now the Ishibashi Foundation Collection includes about sixty works each by Aoki and Sakamoto. This exhibition of nearly 250 works, which also includes works on loan, brings their signature works together for the first time. While we organized retrospectives for Aoki in 2011 and Sakamoto in 2006, this exhibition is a rare opportunity to see their works—from the early to the final works of their careers—side by side.



Aoki Shigeru

Born in Kurume, Fukuoka prefecture, in 1882. In 1903, while studying at the Tokyo Fine Arts School (now Tokyo University of the Arts), he made his debut on the art scene with a group of works on mythological themes. The following summer, he stayed with his friends Sakamoto Hanjiro and Morita Tsunetomo and his lover Fukuda Tane in a fishing village on the Boso Peninsula (now Tateyama, Chiba prefecture). There his friend's description of the landing of a huge catch stirred Aoki's imagination, and he created *A Gift of the Sea*. He returned to Kurume in 1907 and then roamed aimlessly all over Kyushu. He had planned his return to the art world, but died, that dream unrealized, of tuberculosis in 1911, at the age of twenty-eight.



Sakamoto Hanjiro

Born in Kurume, Fukuoka prefecture, in 1882. In 1902, at Aoki's invitation, he moved to Tokyo and studied at Fudosha, a private art school, and the Taiheiyo Art Research Institute. After Aoki's death, he worked to honor him, organizing exhibitions of his work and editing a collection of his paintings. In 1912, his *Usurebi* (*Dim Sun*, private collection), which he showed in the Bunten (Ministry of Education Exhibition), was highly praised by the novelist and art critic Natsume Soseki. In 1914, he took part in organizing the Nika Association, a society of progressive Western-style artists, and its Nika Exhibition. In 1924, after three years of study in Paris, he returned to his hometown, Kurume. In 1931, he moved to nearby Yame. He continued painting cows, horses, Noh masks, the moon, and other subjects, in his tranquil style, throughout his long life, which ended in 1969 at the age of 87.

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【広報用図版】



- 1 AOKI Shigeru, *Self-Portrait*, 1903, Oil on canvas
- 2 AOKI Shigeru, *Yomotsuhirasaka, Escape from the Land of the Dead*, 1903, Colored pencil, pastel and watercolor on paper, Tokyo University of the Arts *On display in the second half of the exhibition period.
- 3 AOKI Shigeru, *Portrait of Sakamoto Hanjiro* 1903, Pencil and watercolor on paper, Private Collection *On display in the first half of the exhibition period.
- 4 AOKI Shigeru, *Hot Spring*, 1910, Oil on canvas, Private Collection
- 5 AOKI Shigeru, *A Gift of the Sea*, 1904, Oil on canvas, Important Cultural Property
- 6 AOKI Shigeru, *Seascape*, 1904, Oil on canvas

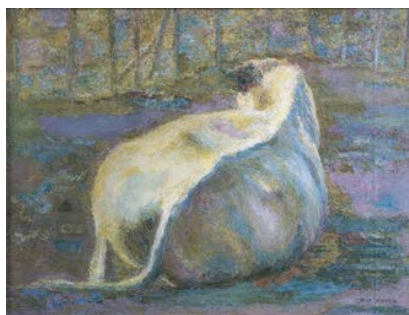
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7 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Self-Portrait*, 1929, Oil on paper

8 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Woman with a Hat*, 1932, Oil on canvas

9 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Cow*, 1919-65, Oil on canvas, Private Collection

10 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Noh Mask and Hand Drum Body*, 1962, Oil on canvas

11 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *Flowerpots*, 1962, Oil on canvas, Kurume City Art Museum

12 SAKAMOTO Hanjiro, *The Moon*, 1966, Oil on canvas, Muryojuin-Temple, on loan to Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art

Exhibition Overview

Exhibition title:	Two Journeys: Aoki Shigeru and Sakamoto Hanjiro Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of Their Births
Organized by	Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation
Venue:	Artizon Museum, 6,5F Galleries
Exhibition period:	July 30 [Sat.] - October 16 [Sun.], 2022
Opening hours:	10:00 – 18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays except September 23) *Last entry 30 minutes before closing.
Closed:	Mondays (except September 19, October 10), September 20, October 11
Admission (incl.tax):	Timed entry system (Online booking starts from May 31, 2022) Online ticket: 1,600 yen Same day ticket (on sale at museum): 1,800 yen Students: Free entry (Advance online booking required.) *This admission fee gives the visitor access to the concurrent exhibitions. *Same day tickets on sale at the museum are available only for time slots that have not reached full capacity. *Advance booking is not required for children up to junior high school age.

*Works on display will be changed during the exhibition period.

First half: July 30 [Sat.] - September 11 [Sun.] Second half: September 13 [Tue.] - October 16 [Sun.]

*The exhibition details are subject to change without notice.

Curators: ITO Eriko, HARA Sayuri

Traveling to: Kurume City Art Museum, Main Building, 2F
(Exhibition period: October 29 [Sat.], 2022 - January 22 [Sun.], 2023)

Concurrent Exhibition

Selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection Special Section

Country, City, Family

The 4F Gallery introduces selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection, plus a special section with a carefully chosen group of cityscape paintings, a genre that flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially in Italy. With portraits also included, this section focuses on family relationships in the country and the city, unraveling the history of their transformations.



Giovanni Battista PIRANESI, *The Piazza del Quirinale, with the Statues of the Horse-Tamers seen from the Back (from Views of Rome)*



Charles MÉRYON, *Petit Pont*, 1852 and later, Etching and engraving

Organized by Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation

Venue: Artizon Museum, 4F Gallery

Curators: HARA Sayuri

Exhibition period: July 20 [Sat.] - October 16 [Sun.], 2022

Opening hours: 10:00 – 18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays except September 23)

*Last entry 30 minutes before closing.

Closed: Mondays (except September 19, October 10), July 29, September 20, October 11

*Special notice for July 20 [Wed.] to July 28 [Thu.]

Only the 4F Gallery will be open; the 5F and 6F Galleries will be closed.

Admission (incl.tax): Timed entry system

(Online booking starts from May 20, 2022)

Online ticket: 500 yen

Same day ticket (on sale at museum): 500 yen

Students: Free entry (Advance online booking required.)

*Same day tickets on sale at the museum are available only for time slots that have not reached full capacity.

*Advance booking is not required for children up to junior high school age.

*This admission fee gives the visitor access to *Selections from the Ishibashi Foundation Collection* (4F Gallery).

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<https://www.artizon.museum/en/>

Directions: 5 minutes on foot from JR Tokyo Station (Yaesu Central Exit); Tokyo Metro Ginza Line Kyobashi Station (No.6, 7 Exit); Tokyo Metro Ginza Line, Tozai Line, Toei Asakusa Line Nihombashi Station (B1 Exit)

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* Sakamoto Hanjiro's works are still protected by copyright, but permission has been received to use these images to publicize this exhibition.

* All works are in the collection of the Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation, unless otherwise noted.

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