

Made in Japan: Kakiemon and 400 years of porcelain

23 June – 21 August 2016
Room 3, Free

Supported by the Asahi Shimbun

This Asahi Shimbun Display *Made in Japan: Kakiemon and 400 years of porcelain* celebrates fifteen generations of porcelain production in Arita by showcasing work by one of the most famous potting dynasties. This year is the 400th anniversary of the birth of porcelain in the town of Arita in Saga Prefecture and the show will feature, among other examples, a new work decorated with acorn branches by Sakaida Kakiemon XV (b.1968) representing his coming of age as an artist that he created specifically for the British Museum. Featured in the display is an original film made by the British Museum at the Kakiemon kiln, which allows viewers to see and feel through the actions of the potters how Kakiemon porcelain is actually created.

The Kakiemon (pronounced 'ka-ki-e-mon') kiln is still modeled on the traditional Japanese early modern workshop system. Succession is based on the principle of *iemoto* or 'head of the household', the oldest son inheriting and sustaining the brand and workshop. The current head of the kiln is Kakiemon XV. He recently received the title following the death of his greatly admired father Kakiemon XIV in 2013.

Historically, the Kakiemon workshop produced some of the most exquisite porcelain for export to Europe and the Middle East, notably in the later 1600s. In 1647 Sakaida Kizaemon was credited with introducing the overglaze enameling technique to the Arita porcelain kilns, making advanced porcelain production possible and starting the potting dynasty. He was thought to have learnt the secrets to overglaze enameling on

porcelain from a Chinese specialist in adjacent Nagasaki. This success earned him the name Sakaida Kakiemon I - which derived from *kaki* or persimmon after the orangey-red colour of the most important overglaze enamel. Japan was a late starter to porcelain production compared to China and Korea, but it quickly made up for lost time. Japan benefitted from domestic turbulence in China and was able to start exporting to Europe and elsewhere through the Dutch East India Company.

The classic Kakiemon style, lasting from 1670 to 1700, is defined by its refined yet sparse decoration executed with bright overglaze enamels in a palette of orange-red, green, blue and yellow. Some of the most exquisite porcelain is on view in this display such as *Boy on a Go Board*, dating c.1670-80. This figurine was specifically created with a distinctive creamy-white porcelain body called *nigoshide*, the formula for which was developed by the Kakiemon kiln. The contrast in colours and tones emphasises the brightly coloured enamels. A 3D model of this figurine can be viewed at [online](#).

Kakiemon grew in international popularity in the late 17th century, and became particularly valued in England during the reign of Queen Mary II (1686-1694) who was passionate about the Kakiemon style. Classic Kakiemon style in Japan ceased production in the 18th century, but its popularity continued and the style was reproduced in China and in Europe, examples of which can be seen in this display. There was a revival in the mid-20th century of traditional Kakiemon style due to the ingenuity of Kakiemon XII and Kakiemon

XIII. They rediscovered the forgotten techniques and created a renaissance for the *nigoshide* creamy white porcelain used earlier with *Boy sitting on go board*. Kakiemon XIII was awarded the high honour from the Japanese government as a 'Living National Treasure' for his revitalisation of classic Kakiemon style. His son, Kakiemon XIV continued the legacy of his father while also developing the Kakiemon brand through inspired naturalistic designs. Kakiemon XV is now poised to take the revitalised Kakiemon legacy forward.

Notes to Editors:

The Asahi Shimbun Display *Made in Japan: Kakiemon and 400 years of porcelain*

23 June – 21 August 2016

Room 3

British Museum

Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

Opening hours 10.00–17.30 Saturday to Thursday and 10.00–20.30 Fridays.

The Asahi Shimbun Displays are a series of regularly changing displays which look at objects in new or different ways. Sometimes the display highlights a well-known item, sometimes it surprises the audience with extraordinary items from times and cultures that may not be very familiar. This is also an opportunity for the Museum to learn how it can improve its larger exhibitions and permanent gallery displays. These displays have been made possible by the generous sponsorship of The Asahi Shimbun Company, who are long-standing supporters of the British Museum. With a circulation of about 7 million for the morning edition alone, *The Asahi Shimbun* is the most prestigious newspaper in Japan. The company also publishes magazines and books, and provides a substantial information service on the Internet. The Asahi Shimbun Company has a century long tradition of staging exhibitions in Japan of art, culture and history from around the world.

Free related gallery

Japan

Mitsubishi Corporation Japanese Galleries

Rooms 92–94

These galleries present the long history of Japan from prehistory to the present. Until 10 October, the Museum will celebrate 400 years of porcelain making in Arita with a special display. Historical Nabeshima wares will be shown alongside their contemporary counterparts made by the Imaizumi Imaemon family, and other works made in Arita. You can also see a major work by Hitomi Hosono in The Mitsubishi Corporation Japanese Galleries

Public programme: lectures and events

Lights, camera, Kakiemon: filming the making of Japanese porcelain

Tue 5 Jul, 13.15, Room 3

A gallery talk by Nick Harris and Gabriel Sainhas, British Museum on filming in the Kakiemon kiln and Arita. Free, just drop in

Augustus Wollaston Franks' adventures in porcelain

Tue 12 Jul, 13.15, Room 3

A gallery talk by Nicole Rousmaniere, British Museum. Free, just drop in

Nabeshima to Imaizumi Imaemon XIV: 400 years of Japanese porcelain

Wed 20 Jul, 13.15, Room 93, Mitsubishi Corporation Japanese Galleries

A gallery talk by Nicole Rousmaniere, British Museum. Free, just drop in

Japanese porcelain: Kate Malone and Hitomi Hosono in conversation

Sat 6 Aug, 13.30, BP Lecture Theatre

Ceramic artists Kate Malone (judge on BBC2's *The Great British Pottery Throw Down*) and Hitomi Hosono join Exhibition Curator Nicole Rousmaniere to discuss Japanese porcelain.

Free, booking essential

Live Japanese porcelain demonstration with Hitomi Hosono and Kate Malone

Sat 6 Aug, 15.00–16.30, Studio

Watch a live demonstration of the materials, tools and techniques used in Japanese porcelain making.

Ceramic artists Kate Malone, (judge on BBC2's *The Great British Pottery Throw Down*) and Hitomi Hosono take inspiration from the porcelain in the display, and curator Nicole Rousmaniere will give a tour of the show. £5, Members/concessions £3

Kakiemon then and now

Wed 17 Aug, 13.15, Room 3

A gallery talk by Ai Fukunaga, British Museum.

Free, just drop in

Join in online

Share your thoughts using #Kakiemon

Visit britishmuseum.org/kakiemon to:

- explore a 3D scan of a Kakiemon porcelain, Boy on a go board
- view a gallery of the production process in the Kakiemon kiln
- view the porcelain potting town of Arita through the British Museum's film team's eyes and ears
- discover Arita porcelain through the shared story of Nabeshima, Imaemon and Kakiemon porcelain

Related book

A new catalogue of Japanese porcelain will be published in 2017.

Next in Room 3

The next Asahi Shimbun Display in Room 3 will feature rock art from southern Africa (15 September – 20 November 2016).

For further information

please contact the Press Office

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For high resolution images: <http://tinyurl.com/h6xbbyl>

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