

Serizawa Keisuke – the 120th anniversary of his birth

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THE JAPAN FOLK CRAFTS MUSEUM

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※ The title of the exhibition is presented family name first while others are reversed as usual.

This exhibition celebrates the 120th anniversary of a dyer Keisuke Serizawa and introduces his creative world through his works.

Serizawa (1895-1984) was born in a draper family in Shizuoka city, Shizuoka prefecture. After he graduated from the Design Department of Tokyo Higher Industrial School (later Tokyo Institute of Technology), he taught at Shizuoka Prefectural Industrial Research Institute. At the same time, he began to feel that he would like to find out himself not in just a design or pattern but in a concrete 'object'.

For Serizawa who sought his way as a dyeing artist, the encounter with Soetsu Yanagi (1889-1961), founder of the museum, was a great turning point. In spring, 1927 Serizawa was on a ship to Korea. There he read the book '*Kogei no Michi* (The Way of the Crafts)' and got impressed deeply. Serizawa expressed, 'The book opened my eyes and the true way of crafts was spread out in front of my eyes for the first time'. In the following year, he saw an Okinawan *bingata* textile in the pavilion 'Mingeikan' which was submitted by Yanagi to the Industrial Exposition in Ueno and got moved strongly by its colors and design. This led Serizawa to be a stencil dyer as his career.

Serizawa, at request of Yanagi, worked with 12 cover designs of *Kogei* magazines from the first issue published in 1931. He applied stencil-dyeing more than five hundred volumes per issue. At that time he had just began to work with stencil dyeing and this experience led to his later works of as many as five hundred book designs.

Serizawa traveled Okinawa with Yanagi and his company of the Japan Folk Craft Association in April, 1939. There he learned traditional techniques of Okinawan *bingata* from two craftspeople, Yoshimochi Senaha and Sekishu Chinen. They stayed in Okinawa for fifty-nine days. These days became his original landscape in Okinawa. He later recollected that Okinawa was as it were his hometown for his work and that it would be perfectly his palace. This experience was a foundation of Serizawa's works who had been longing for *bingata* works.

After the war, textiles were not easily available and Serizawa used Japanese *washi* paper instead. Thanks to this new attempt, Serizawa works had been widely spread to the public. He got a studio in Kamata and kept producing many works steadily including kimono with design of Okinawan hats and fans, which belongs to the Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum. His works which shined on the world were highly admired both in and out of Japan and he was designated as the holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property in the field of *katazome* stencil dyeing in April, 1956.

In this exhibition, Serizawa's sketches and his collection which belongs to Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum are also on display. They would definitely develop your understandings toward Serizawa works.

Serizawa always sketched everything around him like plants, landscapes and his collection. They were fundamental power when he produced works. The works without patterns including sketches, design for works, drawings, ceramics with paintings, glass paintings and so on represent Serizawa's plain artistic quality.

In addition to these works, his collection which Serizawa called 'another creation' by himself expands to as many as six thousand pieces only after the war; from small votive pictures to dyed and woven materials, ceramics and so on from various countries. Serizawa's collection by his genuine eyes was highly appreciated by Yanagi and potter Hamada and many of them were donated to our museum.

As explained above, Serizawa's works were produced from his excellent ability of expression and his keen eyes to grasp the beauty accurately. They capture hearts of viewers freely. Serizawa would be a rare artist who could practiced the theory of mingei by Yanagi, which aimed to make the beauty spread in the daily life by crafts.

Thematic Exhibition

The Mingei Movement and the Company

'To propose the standard of the beauty' and 'Preparation for future creation' are tasks of Mingeikan. Not only Keisuke Serizawa, but Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai, Shiko Munakata and other artists also improved themselves here in Mingeikan. They cultivated their way of creation inspired by the beauty of mingei.

Thematic Exhibition

Various Crafts of Joseon Dynasty

During Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) in the Korean Peninsula, the original culture of the people had prospered. In this room, ceramics, wood works, metal works, stone works and folk paintings mainly produced from 18th to 19th century are exhibited. Please feel their generous and vivid features.

Thematic Exhibition

Okinawan Bingata

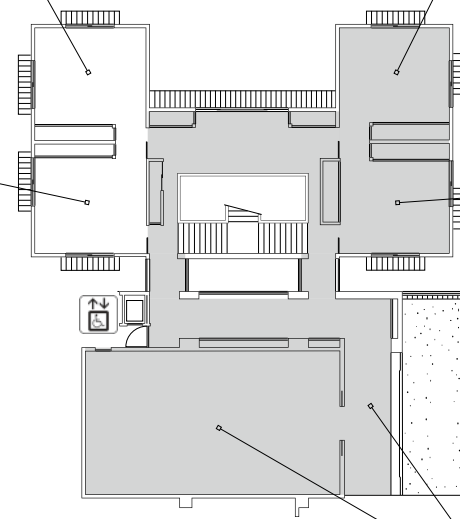
Okinawan bingata are the origin of Serizawa's dyeing works. Various patterns are used in making bigata works from large design to small one and they are dyed colorfully with pigments or dyes. Various motifs are also used; plants like pine trees, bamboos, ume blossoms and cherry blossoms, birds like cranes and wild geese, and landscapes.

Thematic Exhibition

Japanese Folk Kilns

About 50 pieces of excellent works of folk kilns from the collection of Mingeikan are on display. Folk kilns are kilns where daily wares for the people have been produced. On display are ceramics of Kyushu, Tohoku, Tsuboya, Seto Tamba, and so on. Most of them were made in and after Edo period.

SECOND FLOOR



Serizawa Keisuke and Japanese Handiworks

Works of Serizawa include various motifs of crafts and landscapes which Serizawa encountered through the Mingei Movement. Here, Serizawa's works used in the book 'Teshigoto no Nihon (Handicrafts of Japan)' written by Yanagi in 1948 and craft works for the motifs of the book as well as works with design of places of production or craftspeople are exhibited.

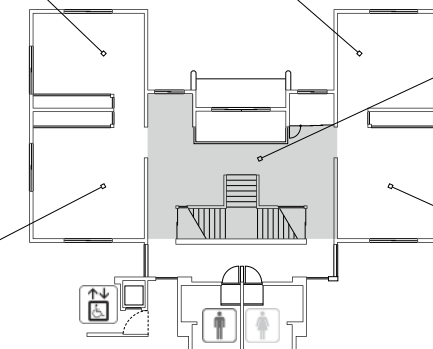
Serizawa Keisuke and Yanagi Soetsu

Serizawa and Yanagi, founder of Mingeikan. Yanagi was the only person Serizawa respected as his master. Works of Serizawa for Yanagi's books and Yanagi's writings on Serizawa are on display. Through these works, the relationship between Serizawa and Yanagi could be seen.

Serizawa Keisuke – the 120th anniversary of his birth

[His Works]

Museum Shop



Serizawa Keisuke – the 120th anniversary of his birth

[His Collection]

Dyeing Artists in the Mingei Movement

Works of various dyeing and weaving artisan are exhibited who got influenced by Soetsu Yanagi or Keisuke Serizawa from the collection of Mingeikan. On display are stencil dyeing works of Kichimon Okamura, Tokujiro Kojima, Samiro Yunoki, Nagako Tachibana and Machiko Furusawa, tie-dyed works of Motohiko Katano, *kasuri* works of Yoshitaka Yanagi and Yoshihiro Yanagi, *banakura-ori* of Hatsuko Miyahira. Please enjoy the wide variety of materials, colors and designs.

FIRST FLOOR

Special Exhibition

Special Exhibition

Thematic Exhibition