

Léonard Foujita's Works on Books

April 14 (Sat) – June 10 (Sun)

Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo



Tsuguharu Foujita / circa 1928 photo: Andre Kertesz
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GREETING

2018 marks the 50th year since the death of Tsuguharu Foujita (Léonard Foujita). This Exhibition is organized to commemorate the year, introducing the works of Foujita, centered around his illustrated books.

Foujita was born in 1886 in Tokyo as the second son of the army surgeon. After finishing the course of Western Painting of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (presently Tokyo University of Arts), he went over to France in 1913. In 1919, all six of his works were accepted for the Salon D'automne Exhibition, and all his works exhibited there later achieved popularity, which established his status in the artistic circles of Paris. He played an active part as a leading painter of the Ecole de Paris. In particular, the nude women with milky-white skin he painted in the early 1920's were recognized as Foujita's unique expression style, and achieved high praise in Europe at the time. Foujita, having established himself as a popular painter in Paris, worked not only on paintings but also on illustrated books. Illustrated books by artists (Livre d'artiste) have a long history in Europe, and their artistic value was recognized. Especially from the late 19th century through the 20th, rare illustrated books were in high demand for the bibliophile collections. Foujita was in Europe, when the illustrated books were booming, with illustrated books by Chagall and Picasso being published. Foujita published his first illustrated book "Pieces of Poetry (Quelques poèmes)" in 1919. Through his life, he contributed his illustrations to more than 50 illustrated books in France, more than 30 of which were published in 1920's. It reflects the popularity he had in France of the time, and tells us that he himself was attracted to the works on illustrated books. This Exhibition focuses on his "works on books" by displaying his illustrated books published in France before the WWII, the book-related works he did during the 1930-1940 period in Japan, and the illustration works on big gorgeous books he did after he immigrated to France in 1950, as well as his "paintings and prints." At the same time, the Exhibition shows the wide range of his creative activity, displaying his picture cards and letters he sent to his friends, handmade toys, and ceramic artworks.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the collectors of the exhibits and to those who helped us for this Exhibition.

The Organizer