

Beginnings of Japanese Pastel Drawings: featuring TAKEUCHI Tsurunosuke & YAZAKI Chiyoji as forerunners

Welcome to the Exhibition “Beginning of Pastel Drawings – featuring TAKEUCHI Tsurunosuke & YAZAKI Chiyoji, as the forerunners.” This Exhibition commemorates the 30th anniversary of the opening of Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo (MMAT).

In the history of western art in Japanese modern times, the Pastel medium for the artists was not as popular or as well known to the public as oil painting or watercolors. Many times, it was seen as supplementary, similar to esquisse, and sometimes it was and still is confused with other media. In spite of its weakness in the finished work due to its property extremely similar to pigment itself, Pastels do have distinctive features; the clear vivid colors that can be applied directly, the swift application to capture the moments that dries fast as it does not require oil or water when used, and its convenience in handling.

In this Exhibition, MMAT features the two “pastel painters”; Takeuchi Tsurunosuke and Yazaki Chiyoji, who worked mainly with this medium, with extensive knowledge of what it can do. Takeuchi discovered Pastels while studying in Paris, and explored every possibility of Pastels to draw landscapes, while Yazaki fully utilized its swift application to snapshot the landscapes and the lives of people around the world. They had very little in common in their backgrounds and in their style. However they were both drawn to the charms of Pastels, created their own style through research and experiments, and furthermore they contributed much to the dissemination of Pastels.

What is also important in this Exhibition is that we shed light on the domestic production of Pastels from the latter half of Taisho Era through the early Showa Era, and Yazaki played important role for it. We will see the process of research on imported materials, and learn how the decision of colors were made. We will also see experimental products, that finally led to the domestic production of Pastels.

30 years since its opening, MMAT has been collecting art works mainly of Japanese artists studying abroad as the central focus of the museum, and has been holding various exhibitions. We also continue to shed light on the media for artists such as paint and others that support artists to create their works. Featuring the works of two artists, who encountered Pastels abroad, as well as the Pastel medium they worked with, this Exhibition is indeed most suited to commemorate the 30th anniversary of MMAT. Along with the works of these artists and their efforts for the domestic pastel production, we exhibit works by Dugas, Rudon and other pastel artists familiar to the Japanese fans. Through these exhibitions, we would like visitors to re-discover the charms of pastel drawings.