

**Nihon bijutsukan = The art museum of Japan.**

**日本美術館 = The art museum of Japan.**

Tōkyō: Shōgakkan, 1997. 東京 : 小学館, 1997. ISBN: 4096997013 ¥15,000

Location: Lilly Reference and EA Reference: 709.52 N691, 1997

As the title suggests, the book intends to be a museum of Japanese art, rather than providing information on Japanese art museums. It includes roughly 3000 works of art from prehistoric times to the present. Organized chronologically, each chapter is divided into six-eleven themes, each of which is further divided into two-page sections written by an expert in the field (total of 528 two-page entries). Equal weight is given to modern Japanese art history; in fact, about 325 pages (28%) are devoted to Meiji and later. The author signs the section; the chapters have an editor-in-chief.

The book's purpose is not just to narrate the orthodox chronology of Japanese art but also to think of it from many different aspects; to do that it uses close ups of different works, discusses the principles of art and their function, provides a social history (social background, the groups of artists, value of art), discusses the latest perspectives on Japanese art, introduces corresponding works of art from the rest of the world, and hopes to be useful as a handbook of basic knowledge on Japanese art.

The table of contents not only details the themes but also includes a brief chronology of important events in the social/political world and art history at the bottom of the page.

Furigana is extensively provided for names, titles of art works, and unfamiliar terms. Romanized versions/western equivalents of western terms and names are unfortunately not included. (For instance, the section on Meiji which provides background, discusses the French artist Georges Ferdinand Bigot 1860 - 1927 who went to Japan in 1882 and recorded aspects of daily life in Meiji Japan; I needed to search the internet to figure out the caption). The reader must refer to the appendix to find the size and the owner of the various works of art; fortunately the appendix is in page number order.

Appendix includes:

- A brief dictionary of important terms in Japanese art in gojuon order, from the sixth century to the present. Also includes western terms important to understanding Japanese art. Among modern terms, includes Mavo, Mizue, Realism.
- A brief biographical dictionary of Japanese artists in gojuon order with dates, furigana for names, birthplace, degree, significant accomplishments (covers artists from the sixth century through 1960s; also includes men of culture [bunkajin], politicians, art historians who are important to the understanding of Japanese art history).

Note: when the reading of the name is not clear, they follow the usual reading for the last name; the personal name and the artist's name are given in the on-yomi.

The brackets around the name distinguish men from women.

- A list of photographers,

- An list of the images included in the book (with date, size and source) in plate number order,
- An index in gojuon order, p1216-1247.

Chapters: Time period: editor-in-chief for section

- Prehistoric Time - From the stone age to the tomb period (Kofun); the beginnings of Japanese art: Aoyagi Masanori. pp 35-100
- Asuka-Nara; art born from the fusion of old and new: Tōno Haruyuki. pp.101-202
- Heian; the realization of classical culture: Sano Midori pp.203-312
- Kamakura; assertion of individuality and realism: Gomi Fumihiko pp.313-438
- Muromachi; Japanese and Chinese aspects: Shimao Arata pp. 439-560
- Momoyama; the unifiers and art: Okudaira Shunroku pp.561-688
- Edo; the scattering of many flowers: Kōno Motoaki pp. 689-834
- Kindai/Meiji; the age of exhibitions: Kinoshita Naoyuki pp. 835-986
  - Covers the founding of the modern state in the Meiji period; themes include the opening of Japan, introduction of photography, “Civilization and Enlightenment,” development of art education, western painting, Nihonga, handicrafts and sculpture (including industrial design), the State and art, folk (minshū) and art, the growth of the art marketplace
- Gendai/Modern Age; the beginnings of modern art and current trends: Omuka Toshiharu pp.987-1156
  - Begins with Taishō; themes include: Modernism, machine art and the city, Nihonga and modernism, gurafizumu and the masses, the maturing of Western style painting and its diversification; war and art; growth from reconstruction; art in the information age