

# Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum  
Busch-Reisinger Museum  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

## Press Release

### Harvard Art Museums Announce New Tours of *Painting Edo* Exhibition on Google Arts & Culture



Sakai Hōitsu, Detail of fifth month: Hollyhocks, hydrangeas, and dragonfly, from *Birds and Flowers of the Twelve Months*, Japanese, Edo period, c. 1820–28. Set of 12 hanging scrolls; ink, color, and gold on silk. Harvard Art Museums, Promised gift of Robert S. and Betsy G. Feinberg, [TL42096.14](#). Image: John Tsantes and Neil Greentree; © Robert Feinberg.

Cambridge, MA  
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The Harvard Art Museums today launched a collection of online tours of the special exhibition *Painting Edo: Japanese Art from the Feinberg Collection*; the series is made possible through the museums' partnership with the Google Cultural Institute and is available on the [Google Arts & Culture](#) platform. The four short, immersive tours showcase stunning examples of hanging scrolls, folding screens, sliding doors, fan paintings, and woodblock-printed books in the exhibition, all of which have been generously promised to the museums by Robert S. and Betsy G. Feinberg.

The tours are organized into four sections:

- [Part One](#) provides an overview of the exhibition, including an introductory video with co-curator Rachel Saunders;
- [Part Two](#) visits the “Floating World” of Edo’s licensed pleasure quarters and explores the graphically rich paintings of the School of Kōrin;
- [Part Three](#) invites readers to travel through the evocative ink landscapes of Japan’s “scholar-painters” and to experience the supreme strangeness of Edo’s so-called eccentrics; and
- [Part Four](#) traces the expansion of pictorial culture to new markets, takes a close look at the intricacy of folding fan paintings, and steps into the 20th century with compelling works that continue to inform contemporary images and understandings of “Japan.”

*Painting Edo* offers a window onto the supremely rich visual culture of Japan’s early modern era and explores how the Edo period (1615–1868), and the city of Edo (present-day Tokyo), expressed itself during a time of artistic efflorescence. A striking array of paintings in all the major formats is on display—hanging scrolls, folding screens, sliding doors, fan paintings, and woodblock-printed books, among others—from virtually every stylistic lineage of the era, telling a comprehensive story of Edo painting on its own terms.

Other new online content related to the *Painting Edo* exhibition includes two **Art Talks**: a [general tour](#) of the galleries narrated by exhibition co-curator Rachel Saunders, the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Curator of Asian Art; and a [second tour](#) focused on a unique set of Zen paintings in the show, led by Leah Justin-Jinich, Ph.D. candidate in Harvard’s Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and a graduate intern in the museums’ Division of Asian and Mediterranean Art. The full range of videos related to the exhibition is available on [Vimeo](#).

Visit [harvardartmuseums.org/paintingedo](http://harvardartmuseums.org/paintingedo) to learn more about the exhibition.

The Harvard Art Museums are working closely with officials at the university to monitor the COVID-19 crisis and to estimate a safe opening date when possible. For now, the museums remain closed, and all public programs have been canceled through September 7. Museum staff are currently evaluating next steps and possible scenarios.

The museums joined the Google Cultural Institute in 2015 and have thus far contributed more than 1,100 high-resolution images of works of art to the initiative. This contribution allows users to explore examples of paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, photographs, coins, decorative arts, and other objects in the museums’ collections, including works spanning the 2nd millennium BCE to the 20th century, from the Americas, Europe, North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Asia. While the museums have made their collections available for about 15 years on their [own website](#), including images and in-depth information about objects, the contribution to Google’s platform allows interlinking with other institutions’ collections, enabling greater global access and discovery. In addition, Google’s custom-built smooth-zoom viewer supports higher-resolution images that can be seen in great detail, making the tool a powerful means of close looking similar to what is encouraged by the museums’ own online collections database.

## Credits

*Painting Edo: Japanese Art from the Feinberg Collection*, organized by the Harvard Art Museums, is co-curated by [Rachel Saunders](#), the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Curator of Asian Art at the Harvard Art Museums, and [Yukio Lippit](#), the Jeffrey T. Chambers and Andrea Okamura Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. The exhibition will be on view exclusively at the Harvard Art Museums; an [illustrated publication](#) by Saunders and Lippit accompanies the show.

The exhibition was made possible by the Robert H. Ellsworth Bequest to the Harvard Art Museums, the Melvin R. Seiden and Janine Luke Fund for Publications and Exhibitions, the Catalogues and Exhibitions Fund for Pre-Twentieth-Century Art of the Fogg Museum, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, the Thierry Porté Director's Discretionary Fund for Japanese Art, and the Japan Foundation. The accompanying print catalogues were supported by the Harvard Art Museums Mellon Publication Funds, including the Henry P. McIlhenny Fund. Related programming is supported by the M. Victor Leventritt Lecture Series Endowment Fund, Harvard University's Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, and the Department of History of Art and Architecture Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund for Art and Architecture.

The Google Arts and Culture tours were created with the assistance of Elie Glyn, Assistant Director for Exhibitions; Matthew Rogan, Curatorial Assistant for Special Exhibitions and Publications, Division of Asian and Mediterranean Art; Rachel Saunders, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Curator of Asian Art; Jeff Steward, Director of Digital Infrastructure and Emerging Technology; and Benjamin Villa, temporary student worker in Collections Management. Photography provided by Katya Kallsen, Natalja Kent, and Mary Kocol, as well as Neil Greentree and John Tsantes, of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

### **About the Harvard Art Museums**

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, and are comprised of three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on Asian art, Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern art, and Islamic and later Indian art. Together, the collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States. The Harvard Art Museums have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies.

[harvardartmuseums.org](http://harvardartmuseums.org)

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