

For Immediate Release

Ippodo Gallery New York



人 (hito) Human
H15 3/4 W34 2/4 in I H40 W87 cm

An Exhibition of Calligraphy by Suikei Saito
Art of Lines - “Human, and We Live”

September 12 - October 3, 2015

NEW YORK, NY, August 4, 2015 - Ippodo Gallery New York is delighted to announce that it will be holding the first exhibition outside Japan of work by calligrapher Suikei Saito, from September 12 to October 3, 2015. For the opening of this exhibition, Saito will perform the calligraphy demonstration “Praying for Peace” at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York on Friday, September 11 from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. Reception for the artist will also take place during the demonstration.

“My struggle started when I became fascinated and astonished by the world of calligraphy, which is the ‘art of lines,’ and its depth, and when I made up my mind to master it.” – Suikei Saito



Suikei Saito first held a writing brush when she was twelve. After marrying and raising a family, Saito began searching for something to enrich her life. As fate would have it, she once again encountered calligraphy. With a renewed commitment to calligraphy she accepted the challenge of a journey without end. Her glyphs, created by a woman who has lived as a wife and a mother, are full of vitality, an enveloping warmth, an innocent boldness, a subtle humility, and, above all, a sense of elegance.

Saito has adopted the theme “Human, and We Live,” for her first solo exhibition in the human melting pot of New York. In preparation, she has set to work exhaustively on the character 人, *hito*, human, writing it again and again. It is a strange character that looks almost like two people are holding out their hands to support each other. She also wrote the characters for the full range of human emotions. Having explored the meaning and history of each character, her thoughts on paper are expressed in a state of no mind. Her calligraphy is an act of meditation, a spiritual dance. Each character is scattered one by one like sparks resembling elements in an abstract painting.

Calligraphy is an art woven of lines and the meanings of the characters. These Chinese characters originated in the Shang dynasty between 1700 and 1046 B.C.. While each letter in the alphabet indicates one sound, each Chinese character has one meaning, and there are well over 100,000 of these ideograms. Chinese characters began reaching Japan in the first century B.C. and have been used for two millennia to write Japanese. In Japan, they are known as *kanji*, “Chinese characters.” The art of calligraphy arrived later, with the transmission of Buddhism to Japan, and developed swiftly. Copying classic texts by the ancients or highly talented calligraphers became, for example, part of Zen training. By the late ninth century, in the Heian period, *hiragana*, a phonetic script unique to Japan was created to simplify writing Japanese. Calligraphy became regarded as one of Japan’s traditional arts, along with the tea ceremony, flower arranging, and the incense ceremony. There are now about seven or eight million practitioners of calligraphy in Japan. The writing implements used in calligraphy are distinctive. The brushes are made of animal hair (from sheep, *tanuki* raccoon dogs, and other sources). *Sumi*, ink, begins by mixing soot generated by burning either wood or oil (sesame, rapeseed, or soybean oil) with glue to form an ink stick. Some ink sticks are four hundred years old. Rubbing the ink stick on an inkstone or *suzuri*, which has a small pool of water at one end creates the smooth glossy liquid ink used in calligraphy. The process of taking time to rub the ink stick and make one’s own ink could be said to be a ritual in itself.

Today in our digital world, glyphs of all sorts are mass produced by machine. The glyphs that human beings write are, however, never the same. No two are ever alike. They are thus a tool of communication that captures the vigor, the energy, and even the heart and soul of the individual. Through the swing and graze of Saito’s brush and in the distinctive marks that result, the subtleties of the heart are expressed. This work goes beyond writing to become a form of painting.

By offering a demonstration of calligraphy in New York on September 11, Saito wishes to communicate the splendor of uniting without conflict. We, Ippodo Gallery believe that her calligraphy transcends language to speak to us, to show us a path by which people can unite.

Calligraphy Demonstration by Suikei Saito & Reception :

September 11 (Friday) 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Demonstration 1) 3:30~ 2) 4:30~ 3) 5:30~

Museum of Arts and Design (7th floor)
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1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. 祈 (inori) Prayer
H22 3/4 W12 2/4 in
H57.3 W31.5 cm

2. 情 (nasake) Sympathy
H15 W15 2/4 in
H37.5 W38.8 cm

3. 回 (kai) Cycle
H29 3/4 W36 2/4 in
H75.5 W92.5 cm

4. 人 (hito) Human
H15 W34 2/4 in
H38 W87 cm

5. 人 (hito) Human
H15 3/4 W35 2/4 in
H39.5 W90 cm

For more information and images, please contact Shoko Aono : + 1 212. 967. 4899 mail@ippodogallery.com

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