

***hime* – The Princess of Japan –**
***Was I born to Play? Was I born to Frolic?* (“Ryōjin Hishō” (1179))**
March 12-30, 2015



Kumi Nakata, Doll of Sakura (2014)
H12 W14 D11 1/2in H30.5 W35.5 D29cm

NEW YORK, NY, February 24, 2015 - Ippodo Gallery New York is delighted to announce that it will present the ‘*hime* — The Princess of Japan —’ exhibition from March 12–30. This will coincide with New York’s Asia Week presenting the pinnacle of Japanese art crafts associated with *Hime*.

The *samurai* lived for victory in the battles that swept the country, creating the history of Japan in the process, but they could not have done so without the support of the brave yet elegant *hime*, who ran their homes, pursued beauty and produced a vibrant culture unique to Japan. These *hime* were the daughters of the most powerful families in the land, the Emperors, nobles, shogun and daimyo. Sometimes they served as bridges between rival families, other times they were used as political pawns. They devoted themselves to raising the fortunes of their families whilst being buffeted by the storms of life. Perhaps, that was why they strove to cultivate the refined arts, enjoying extravagant pastimes and living in graceful beauty.

The customs of each household were passed down from woman to woman, leading to the development of rich traditions in every aspect of life. They wore twelve-layered ceremonial kimono. The delicate combinations of color at the collar displayed their taste and sophisticated sensibilities, turning them into walking works of art. They were accomplished in *ike-bana* flower arranging, calligraphy and incense appreciation, bringing elegance and dignity to these ancient arts. If we compare the culture developed by the *hime* with that of the valiant *samurai* we see that much of it tends towards the delicate and decorative. The items created for their trousseaus were particularly outstanding, true jewels of Japanese traditional art crafts. They exemplified the highest possible levels of aesthetic technique.

The *kimono* and *obi* sashes that they wore and the items they used in their daily lives were epitomized by the *Hatsune maki-e* lacquer furnishings tended to be decorated with numerous lucky symbols: chrysanthemum, pine, plum, iris, bamboo, peony, gourd, flowing water, crane, turtle, and assorted treasures. All of these represented their parents’ wishes for a bright future for their daughters who were born into a world of strife. These objects doubtlessly served to help the *hime* to forget the sorrows of a life dedicated to fate and family tradition. In effect these became their symbolic guardians and friends allowing them brief moments of joy.

For this exhibition, Ippodo gallery has gathered various items that would have once delighted the *hime*. The beautiful silk kimonos and obis exhibit outstanding dyeing and weaving techniques; a fan with a *yamato-e* painting of a scene from the ‘Tale of Genji’ (1008); decorated *hagoita* battledores, *kai-awase* shell games, *maki-e* lacquer items dating from the 16th to 19th centuries, including incense and cosmetics boxes. Additionally, we present outstanding examples of contemporary art crafts, including dolls and small items utilizing kimono textiles.



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1. Unknown
Kimono (Circa 2000)
Silk, gold leaf, embroidery
2. Unknown
Gold Makie lacquer shell shaped incense box
(Meiji period 1868-1912)
Gold *maki-e* on lacquer ground
H2 W5 1/2 D4 1/2in H4.2 W14 D10.5cm
3. Unknown
Gold lacquer pear shaped container set with tray
(Meiji period 1868-1912)
Gold *maki-e* on lacquer ground
H3 1/2 W6 1/2 D3in H8 W16 D7.5cm
4. Unknown
Gold lacquer cosmetics box (Edo period)
Gold *maki-e* lacquer
H8 W9 D10 1/2in H20.5 W22 D26.5cm
5. Mikiko Hayashi
Selection of *Kai-awase*, shell-matchings (2003)
Gold leaf, paint, *gofun* on clamshell
6. Mikiko Hayashi
Kawahori-ohgi, bat wing fan, named "The Typhoon"
(Tale of Genji) (2006)
Yamato painting
7. Mikiko Hayashi
Incense container "Butterfly" (2003)
Silver leaf, paint, *gofun* on wood



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Hours: Open by appointment 7 days a week (when Director Shoko Aono is in New York)