

PRESS RELEASE 2023.06.06

Toyama Glass Art Museum Special Exhibition

# The Origins of Japanese Modern Glass

2023.7.8 sat–10.9 mon



## Overview

### The Origins of Japanese Modern Glass

**Dates:** 2023.7.8 sat – 10.9 mon

**Venue:** Toyama Glass Art Museum, Floors 2-3, Exhibition Rooms 1-3  
(5-1 Nishicho, Toyama City, 930-0062 Toyama, Japan)

**Organized by** Toyama Glass Art Museum

**Supported by** THE KITANIPPON SHIMBUN, THE TOYAMA SHIMBUN,  
Japan Broadcasting Corporation Toyama Station, Kitanihon Broadcasting Co., Ltd.,  
TOYAMA TELEVISION BROADCASTING CO., LTD., TULIP-TV INC.

**Hours:** Sun-Thu 9:30-18:00 (admission until 17:30), Fri-Sat 9:30-20:00 (admission until 19:30)

**Closed:** First and third Wednesdays (except August 16), August 23

**Admission:** General Public 1,200 yen (1,000 yen), University and College Students 1,000 yen (800 yen)

○( ) for groups of 20 or more

○High school students and younger: Free

○Tickets for The Origins of Japanese Modern Glass include admission to Permanent Exhibition

**Advance Ticket** (General Public: 1,000 yen): ASNET Counter TEL 076-445-5511, TOYAMA KIRARI 1F  
Information and Help Desk

### Contact

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## About the exhibition

Beginning in the Meiji period, Western methods of glass manufacturing spread throughout Japan and a wide range of glass products came to be produced. In this context, IWATA Toshichi and KAGAMI Kozo approached glassmaking as a means of self-expression and strived to raise glass's status as an art form. The number of artists pursuing unique expression using glass gradually increased. From the 1950s to the 1970s, many designers employed by glass companies were involved in both product design and creating works of art. At the same time, artists who did not belong to companies but created work in accordance with the *tsubogari* method, which involved hiring studios and craftspeople, and artists who set up their own furnaces after working for companies also appeared. In this exhibition, we explore the origins of modern and contemporary Japanese glass art by focusing on developments over the roughly 100 years from the 1870s to the early 1970s, introducing the highly creative works and product designs of the artists who broke new ground in each period and related materials from the time.

## Artists

IWAKI Takijiro, KOBAYASHI Kikuichiro, OKAMOTO Ichitaro, Shaved Ice Cup, Soy Sauce Cruet, etc. in Meiji-early Showa period (1868-1945), MATSUURA Gyokuho, IWATA Toshichi, KAGAMI Kozo, MYODO Chojiro, TAKAGI Shigeru, FURIHATA Masao, AWASHIMA Masakichi (OBATA Masakichi), SATO Junshiro, AONO Takeichi, KAGAMI Mitsuru, Kagami Crystal Works, Iwaki Glass Crafts Department, OGAWA Yuhei, KOSHIBA Sotoichi, YOSHIDA Takeo, SASSA Fumio, TAKEUCHI Denji, Sasaki Glass Co., Ltd., HOYA Corporation, FUNAKOSHI Saburo, SUGASAWA Toshio, IWATA Hisatoshi, IWATA Itoko, Iwata Glass Co., Ltd., FUJITA Kyohei, MASUDA Yoshinori, KOTANI Shinzo, FUNAKI Shizuho etc.

(in the order of display, company name is at the time of production of the exhibited works)

You can see the outline of this exhibition in multiple languages by scanning the QR code. It supports Japanese, English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, French, German and Italian.



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## Exhibition Contents

### Chapter 1. Prologue: Japanese glass during modernization

Glass manufacturing in Japan embarked on the road to modernization in the Meiji period. Established in 1873 with the aim of encouraging the domestic production of sheet glass, which until then was reliant on imports, Kogyosha was Japan's first full-scale Western-style glass factory. In 1876 the government bought the factory, which became the government-controlled Shinagawa Glassworks, but after becoming burdened with large debts it was privatized again before dissolving in 1892. Though unsuccessful as a business, a number of craftspeople called *denshusei* (apprentices) who had acquired skills at the glassworks later went on to found glass companies in various locations around Japan, in which sense the company played a central role in the development of the Japanese glass industry. Due to their efforts, Western-style methods of glass production spread throughout Japan, and from around the Taisho period, as productivity and quality improved, products and works with elements that could be called early signs of modern glass art also came to be produced. In this section we present works by artists involved in the dawning of the Japanese modern glass industry together with a selection of highly original and ingenious glass products from the same period.



1. IWAKI Takijiro, *Cut Glass Bowl with Gold Red Overlay*, 1914, OKAMOTO GLASS Co.,Ltd., Photo: Tanaka Yuuki



2. OKAMOTO Ichitaro, *Smoke Glass Sake Bottle and Cup*, 1932, OKAMOTO GLASS Co.,Ltd., Photo: Tanaka Yuuki



3. (from left) *Footed Shaved Ice Cup with Polka Dots and Red rim*, *Footed Shaved Ice Cup with Red Spots Design*, *Footed Shaved Ice Cup with Ridges design and Opalescent Scalloped Rim*, *Footed Shaved Ice Cup with Killifish Design*, Taisho-early Showa period(1912-1945), private collection, Photo: Tanaka Yuuki



4. (from left) *Sauce Cruet with the Mark of Ikari Sauce*, *Sauce Cruet with the Mark of Mitsuya Sauce*, *Soy Sauce Cruet in the Shape of a Bird*, *Soy Sauce Cruet in the Shape of Barrel*, collection of SONE Kayo, Photo: Tanaka Yuuki

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## Chapter 2. Pioneers of modern glass art: IWATA Toshichi and KAGAMI Kozo

IWATA Toshichi and KAGAMI Kozo were two trailblazing artists in the field of Japanese modern glass art who established their own studios at around the same time in the early Showa period and aspired to glassmaking as a form of self-expression. In all respects their works are a study in contrasts. Whereas Iwata worked with blown glass produced by breathing air into molten glass with a blow tube, Kagami demonstrated his own creativity by using the techniques of engraving and cutting to embellish the surface of glass. As well, whereas Iwata aimed to create works that used colored glass in various ways, Kagami pursued expression using colorless and transparent crystal glass. In an age in which glass works were not accepted as art, both men used trial and error in an effort to get the public to recognize their artistic qualities, and in so doing broke new ground in different directions in the field of glass expression.



5. IWATA Toshichi, *Vase*, 1960, Shinjuku Historical Museum



6. IWATA Toshichi, *Vase*, 1960, Shinjuku Historical Museum



7. KAGAMI Kozo, *Vase with Hosoge Design*, year of creation unknown, private collection, Photo: Tanaka Yuuki



8. KAGAMI Kozo, *Vase*, 1954, KAGAMI CRYSTAL Co.,Ltd., photo: TANAKA Yuuki

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### Chapter 3. The rise of glass artists and glassmaking under the wartime regime

In 1934, Kagami Kozo founded Kagami Crystal Works, which also manufactured the materials used to make crystal glass. Kagami Crystal Works produced many fine artists, including SATO Junshiro, FURIHATA Masao and AWASHIMA Masakichi (then known as OBATA Masakichi), who joined the design department established at the time of the company's foundation, AONO Takeichi, who worked as an engraver, and KAGAMI Mitsuru, who was Kagami Kozo's son. At the same time, one cannot overlook the contribution made by Iwaki Glass Co., Ltd., which from 1932 conducted research into the glass technique known as *pâte de verre*. In 1936, KOSHIBA Sotoichi, SHIMIZU Yuzo and OGAWA Yuhei, who were all involved in this research, perfected the technique and began producing glass artworks featuring a wide range of motifs in translucent, soft colors. In this way, the number of glass artists in Japan gradually increased in the late 1930s, but in the 1940s conditions under the country's wartime regime would have a major impact on the operation of glass companies and the activities of glass artists.



9. SATO Junshiro, *Glass vase blown into forged iron work*, 1940, National Crafts Museum, photo: Fujikawa Kiyoshi



10. Kagami Crystal Works, (two pieces, left) *Cup and Saucer (Blue)*, (right) *Cup and Saucer*, year of creation unknown, private collection, photo: TANAKA Yuuki



11. Iwaki Glass Crafts Department, (clockwise from left) *Pâte de verre "Bowl"*, *Pâte de verre "Turkey"*, *Pâte de verre "Dove"*, *Pâte de verre "Gurnard"*, c.1938, AGC TECHNO GLASS Co.,Ltd., photo: RAPT Co., Ltd.



12. Iwaki Glass Co., Ltd., Design: KOSHIBA Sotoichi, *Rose Platter*, 1960s, design: c.1930s, AGC TECHNO GLASS Co.,Ltd., photo: RAPT Co., Ltd.

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## Chapter 4. The advancement of design and glass designers in the postwar era

After World War II, amid the economic recovery and influx of Western culture of the 1950s, artists exploring new possibilities in contemporary craft and design formed various groups and energetically presented new works. Progress was also made toward the formation of a trade association for designers in Japan. In particular, Sato Junshiro of Kagami Crystal Works and SASSA Fumio of Hoya Corporation, both designers employed by glass companies, and Awashima Masakichi, one of a number of designers who had left Kagami or Hoya and struck out on their own, were actively involved in and made important contributions to this cause. In the 1960s, a large number of designers employed by glass companies started to become actively involved in both product design and the creation of artistic works. As expression using glass evolved due to the activities of a variety of artists, the Japan Glass Artcrafts Association was formed in 1972 as a full-fledged glass artists' organization that welcomed members irrespective of their position or company affiliation, with IWATA Hisatoshi of Iwata Glass Co., Ltd. appointed as its inaugural chairman.



13. SASSA Fumio, *Ornament "APOSTROPHE"*, 1955, collection of SASSA Eiko, photo: TANAKA Yuuki



14. SATO Junshiro, Kagami Crystal Works, *Whisky Bottle, "Super Nikka" (Handblown), Tokyo Olympic 1964 Model*, (from left, Blue, Yellow, Black, Green Red), c.1964, Koriyama City Museum of Art



15. (both) AWASHIMA Masakichi, *Vase "MA-Balloon"*, c.1966, Sogetsu Foundation, photo: TANAKA Yuuki



16. IWATA Hisatoshi, *Compote*, 1983, Machida City Museum

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## Chapter 5. Towards individual creative activities

Until the early 1970s, most artists involved in glassmaking belonged to glass companies and created works by arranging for craftspeople to perform the tasks that involved handling the materials. At the same time, among the artists who became involved in glassmaking after the war, there were some who from an early stage adopted methods different from this mainstream. By employing the *tsubogari* system, which involved hiring studios and craftspeople for fixed periods of time, MASUDA Yoshinori and FUJITA Kyohei developed a new style of glass sculpture that focused on the essence of the materials while creating works without belonging to glass companies. Meanwhile, there appeared among artists involved in the *Mingei* movement a tendency towards a hands-on approach to dealing with glass, as seen in the work of KOTANI Shinzo, who began making blown glass items on his own in Kurashiki, and FUNAKI Shizuho, who in the search for a space where he could express himself freely while still employed by Kagami Crystal Works established a shared furnace with his work colleague ITO Makoto. In the late 1970s, due to the introduction of overseas tendencies and the establishment of glass educational facilities, the circumstances surrounding artists dealing with glass in Japan began to change dramatically, and the activities of the artists introduced in this section attest to how Japanese modern and contemporary glass art had already reaching a turning point.



17. MASUDA Yoshinori, *God's Walk*, 1992, Toyama Glass Art Museum, photo: SAIKI Taku



18. FUJITA Kyohei, *Rainbow Colors*, 1964, National Crafts Museum, Photo: S & T PHOTO



19. KOTANI Shinzo, (from left) *Cups, Square Bottle with Handle, Goblet, Goblet*, year of creation unknown, collection of the artist, photo: TANAKA Yuuki



20. FUNAKI Shizuho, *Bowl with Mosaic Design, Blue and Yellow*, year of creation unknown, Matsuoji-sho Co., Ltd. ©2015 Hachiyama Publishing

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## Related Programs

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### Opening Ceremony

**Date:** Friday, July 7, 2023 at 16:00-

Reception desk opens at 15:30 (Preview ends at 18:00.)

**Venue:** Toyama Glass Art Museum 2F Lobby

**Language:** Japanese

\*Invited guests only

### Special Lecture: Shinagawa Glassworks and Modern Glass Art in Japan

**Lecturer:** INOUE Akiko (Glass Art Historian)

**Date:** Saturday, August 5, 2023 at 14:00-15:00

**Venue:** Toyama Glass Art Museum 2F Lobby

**Language:** Japanese

\*No reservation required

\*Free of charge

### Curator's Talk

**Date:** July 22, August 19, September 16, October 7, 2023 each at 14:00-

**Venue:** Toyama Glass Art Museum, Floors 2-3, Exhibition Rooms 1-3

**Language:** Japanese

\*No reservation required

\*Free of charge

### Workshop: Modeling Pâte de Verre Experience

**Lecturer:** KATSUKAWA Natsuki (Artist)

**Date:** Sunday, September 3, 2023 at ①10:00-11:30 ②14:00-15:30

**Venue:** Toyama Glass Art Museum 2F Conference Room

**Subject:** 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of elementary school or older

**Capacity:** 8 people / each time

**Participation fee:** 2500 yen

**Language:** Japanese

\*Advance reservation required. For information on how to apply, visit the website.

\*Ticket for this exhibition is required for admission to the exhibition rooms.

\*Details events will be announced on the museum's website and official SNS sites, etc.

\*These events are subject to cancellation or change by certain reasons.

Please check the museum website for the latest information.

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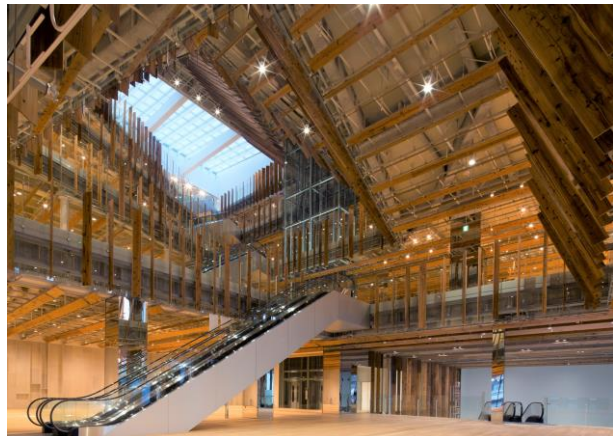
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## About Toyama Glass Art Museum



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With the grand vision of creating a ‘Glass Art City, Toyama’ Toyama Glass Art Museum opened in August 2015.

Toyama Glass Art Museum was built in TOYAMA KIRARI, a composite facility, which is also occupied by the Toyama City Public Library Main Building. As the Art Museum is located in the city centre of Toyama City, it not only serves as a hub of art and culture, but it also plays a role of generating new attraction for the city centre.

Kengo Kuma, a world- renowned architect, designed this building. The Exterior of the building resembles the ever-changing Mt.Tateyama, and was built with a combination of different materials, such as granite, glass, and aluminum. The interior, on the other hand, makes full use of louvers that use materials from Toyama Prefecture to create an atmosphere of warmth and openness.

The museum holds Permanent Exhibitions, such as the Collection Exhibition showcasing the contemporary glass artwork collected by Toyama City. In the murals of the display rooms and the library, there is the ‘Glass Art Passage’ that displays artwork from artists associated with Toyama.

On the 6th floor, there is the ‘Glass Art Garden’ that displays installations by the studio of the great master of con- temporary glass artwork, Dale Chihuly. In this museum, a variety of art styles are introduced with a focus on contemporary glass artwork after the 1950s.

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**Access**

[From Toyama Station] ○20-minute walk. ○Take the tram (Shinaidensha) for Minamitoyamaeki-mae. Get off at Nishicho. 1-minute walk. ○Take the Loop Line tram (Shinaidensha Kanjō-sen). Get off at Grand Plaza-mae. 2-minute walk. (Tram takes approx. 10 minutes from Toyama Station. to Nishicho/Grand Plaza-mae.)

[From Toyama Airport] ○Take the Airport Bus to Toyama Station (Airport Express Bus/Local Bus (Route no.36)) and get off at Sogawa. 4-minute walk.

**Museum official SNS accounts**



Instagram

Account name

toyamaglassartmuseum



Facebook

Account name

toyamaglassartmuseum



Youtube

Channel name

ToyamaGlassArtMuseum

■ Images

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