

# Dresden · Europa · Welt

English



STAATLICHE  
KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN  
DRESDEN

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Unknown artist  
Two Beauties with Lotus Blossoms, from the album "New Year's prints, opera and novel scenes"

Suzhou  
Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, c. 1700

Colour woodblock print  
Illustration:  
34 × 18.8 cm  
Album:  
39.6 × 22.5 × 1.2 cm

SKD, KK, Inv. No.  
Ca 136/71

### Xiaoming (Anita) Wang



Large Plate  
China, Jingdezhen  
Qing dynasty, Kangxi period

Porcelain, on-glaze colours

Height: 7.9 cm  
Ø: 52.2 cm  
Ø Base: 30.5 cm

SKD, PS, Inv. No.  
PO 3047

The print depicts two women in a private intimate garden space. The women are wearing clothes and hairstyles of the late Ming (1368–1644) and early Qing dynasties (1644–1912). The woman on the left is holding a fan, and wearing a dress, a coat and a pair of small shoes, indicating that she has bound feet. In the past, small and narrow feet were appreciated in China for their perceived beauty. The woman on the right is wearing a pink shawl, holding a white handkerchief, and wearing regular-sized shoes which shows that she is a Manchurian woman. In the Qing dynasty, the practice of foot-binding was only widespread among women of the majority Han ethnic group, not among Manchurian women. Behind the woman is a boy, holding a vase with lotus lilies inside. In Chinese culture, the placing of lotuses alongside boys symbolize that the family will have consecutively born sons. In the Chinese tradition, having sons was regarded as bringing good fortune to a family. In the background, the two butterflies symbolize the beauty of the two ladies, and the banana tree leaves symbolize the coming of treasures to the family.

This *famille-verte* plate is exquisitely decorated with on-glaze, colour ed motifs. A small child in a green gown and yellow trousers hides behind a noble lady with a basket. Outfitted in a grey blouse with a collar and long salmon-coloured dress, an additional patterned skirt (*bixi*) in pale green, covers her knees. To their left, a woman sitting at a table is adorned in green, too. She wears a round-collared green blouse and beige skirt. Both are bejeweled with delicate earrings. A landscape of decorative shells and rocks occupy the plate's reverse rim. Although the two women are carefully depicted, the young boy is actually the focus of this scene. This is emphasized by the lavish maternal attention on him and in the meaning of the accoutrements. The seated woman offers a single blossoming branch to the youngster, most likely, a flowering osmanthus plant (*guibua*). In Chinese symbolism "breaking the osmanthus branch" (*zhegui*) refers to ranking first in the Imperial Examination system - the highest honor a Confucian scholar can achieve. The flower placed in the gu-shaped bronze vessel on the table also refers to social mobility; it appears to be a cockscomb (lit. rooster's crown, *jiguan*), a homophone for the term *jiaguan* which refers to "rise-in-rank." Both, the osmanthus and cockscomb flowers, reference

the young boy and eventually enforce the wish of a successful career for the male heir of the family.

The loose garments of the female figures may resonate with a larger iconography of Confucian morality as articulated in *The Pleasing Features* (*Yuerong bian*), a text composed by Wei Yong (active c. second half 17<sup>th</sup> century), which discusses feminine ideals. The antiquities or "bogu" depicted on the table include a bronze vessel, a jar with a *ruyi* scepter inside, and a censer. They signify scholarly interests, the women's superior morality, and knowledge of ancient Confucian rituals. The red fence and the *taibu* rock behind the three figures divide the space and suggest that they are in a corner of a classical garden. Their delicate garments, antique vessels and protected garden setting all serve as an analogy for the female figures as aesthetic objects consistent with literati taste. These scenes were popular across painting, porcelain, and prints in the late Ming (1368–1644) and early Qing dynasties (1644–1912).

### Zhao Yang

#### IV. Acting Femininity



Unknown photographer  
Portrait of a Japanese Woman with a Parasol  
1890–1910

Gelatin silver print, coloured

13.5 × 25.2 cm  
SKD, MVD, Inv. No.  
F 1984-4/31

Unknown photographer  
Portrait of a Japanese Woman with a Fan Sitting on the Ledge of a House

1890–1910

This group of Japanese souvenir photographs features the same geisha model smiling at the camera. Post-1880 Japanese commercial photography that targeted a Western audience increasingly depicted geisha as models; in contrast, works produced in the 1860s and early 1870s frequently featured neighbors or Japanese temporary wives of expatriate residents. There are several reasons for this shift. Due to their enormous popularity among foreign consumers, geisha were synonymous with "Japanese women" in late 19<sup>th</sup> century discourse. At the same time, geisha were highly praised as the apex of ideal femininity and the epitome of "national elegance" in Meiji period's society (1868–1912); that might be the reason why the first Japanese beauty contest in 1891 only permitted entries by geisha. The choice of the sitter may have been inspired by this contemporary geisha discourse as Japanese photographers dominated the souvenir photography industry in Yokohama from the 1880s. These works contain quite an exceptional motif for souvenir photography. Images with a smiling geisha – as described in the poem below – were probably adjusted to the taste of Western clientele. Domestic Meiji portrait photographs both commercial and privately commissioned by Japanese clients, feature geisha showing little emotion. Contrary to that practice, the souvenir photographs in discussion include a model smiling or laughing. The anonymous photographer successfully captures the exuberance of the young girl, a decisive distinction from

Gelatin silver print,  
coloured

30.9 × 25.2 cm

SKD, MVD, Inv. No.  
F 1984-4/33

Unknown photographer  
Portrait of a Japanese  
Woman with a Fan

1890–1910

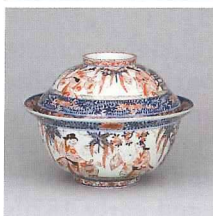
Gelatin silver print,  
coloured

31.5 × 25.4 cm

SKD, MVD, Inv. No.  
F 1984-4/32

### Liang Shixin Mio Wakita

25



Bowl with Lid

Japan, Arita

Edo period,  
c. 1690–1720

Porcelain, underglaze  
cobalt blue painting,  
on-glaze colours and  
gold

Height: 34 cm

Ø: 46.2 cm

Ø Base: 17.8 cm

SKD, PS, Inv. No.

PO 5776



Large Plate

Japan, Arita

Sponsel-Raum

the normative performances of women in Meiji photos, and staged a relaxed, private moment with the entertainer conveying amusement and fun.

*“The laughing geisha – humming-bird  
With such resplendent wings!  
When laughter dies, shall falling skies  
Blot out such futile things? [...]”*

Henry Van Dyke, et al., *A Book of Princeton Verse*, II, Princeton 1919, p. 165.

Featuring a typical colour scheme consisting of an underglaze blue with a red and gold overglaze decoration, both pieces – a bowl with a lid, and a large plate – are Imari export porcelain in the *kinrande* style. The rim of the plate is decorated with a narrow border of chrysanthemums set against a cobalt blue background and a wider border of blossoming plum branches executed in a scrolling design in underglaze blue. The plate's center features two Japanese women clad in kimonos with plum and cherry blossoms. Other accoutrements include a fan, cherry blossom branch, and a cage with a butterfly. Set in a landscape with a Japanese-style building, two young ladies dressed in long sleeves – idealized signs of beauty and youth – are shown walking through hanging strands of cherry blossoms and wisteria on a footbridge. The same figurative motif and border design are repeated twice on the lid and on the bowl's exterior, while plum flower branches are scattered across the underside of the plate.

The recurring floral designs of plum blossoms, cherry blossoms, and wisteria refer to spring; the sensitivity to the season is also manifested in the women's garment designs. The composition might allude to hanami flower viewing in spring. The tradition originally emerged in the Heian period (794–1192) as a part of court rituals, and by the Edo period (1603–1868) it had evolved as a pleasure outing, popular among a broad social strata. The figures depicted on these pieces represent an emblem of the season's alluring beauty full of sensual appeal. Considering that urban life in Edo Japan was shaped by the display of fashion and commercialization of beauty and sex, a setting such as the spring flower event belonged to one

Edo period, 1690–1720

Porcelain, underglaze  
cobalt blue painting,  
on-glaze colours and  
gold

Height: 10.2 cm

Ø: 54.9 cm

Ø Base: 27.1 cm

SKD, PS, Inv. No.

PO 5715

### Mio Wakita

26



Plate

China, Jingdezhen

Qing dynasty, Kangxi  
period, late 17<sup>th</sup> c.

Porcelain, underglaze  
cobalt blue painting

Height: 5 cm

Ø: 34.7 cm

Ø Base: 19.2 cm

SKD, PS, Inv. No.

PO 1289

### Feng He Sarah E. Fraser

of the stylish public venues for ostentatious performance of the self, especially for 'beautiful people.' These scenes were also featured in "Pictures of the Floating World" (*ukiyo-e*).

This dish is decorated in cobalt-blue under a transparent glaze. In the centre it features a dance performance. On the outer rim, four female figures stand in front of *taibu* rocks beholding a dance scene. Five female musicians play classical instruments, namely bells, a bamboo flute, a *sheng* (wind instrument), wooden clapping boards and a *shugu* drum. The seated woman, a co-star of the performance, stares at the lead actress. The latter figure dances in a leisurely, delighted mood. She stretches her arms and raises her right leg slightly while glancing toward the balustrade. Her line of sight signals the location of the show's true audience: the viewer of the dish itself. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was in fashion among the Chinese scholar-officials to write plays and view them performed by actresses. On the other hand, images of Chinese females and musical instruments were highlights of *Chinoiserie* in the court of Louis XIV, an ideal for August the Strong (1670–1733). The girl dancing on a rug, surrounded by female musicians, has fourteenth-century roots. The motif appeared subsequently in paintings by the Ming dynasty artist, Qiu Ying (1494?–1552). In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the composition was adapted to the woodblock print format and six-fold lacquer screens. Half a century later, it appeared as central decoration on polychrome and underglaze blue porcelain. The motif endured transculturally and circulated in Europe. It appeared on Delftware, Berlin faience vases, German lacquer products such as a harpsichord in the Schloss Charlottenburg collection, and even on a Dutch doll's house.

## V. Commodification / Circulating of Images

27



Unknown photographer  
Staged Scene with  
Four Japanese Women  
in a Bathroom

1870–1900

Albumen print,  
coloured

20.4 × 26.6 cm

SKD, MVD, Inv. No.  
F 1984-4/2

This intimate photograph depicting a female bathing scene represents a private moment shared between these young Japanese women. In the center a woman is immersed in a traditional wooden tub, called a *goemonburo*, filled with hot water; she wipes the sweat off of her neck with a patterned *tenugui* cloth. In the foreground, another kneels on a mat cleansing her body. The third figure, standing in the bathing queue, poses as a *badanugi* (revealing the upper part of the body). A fully dressed woman wearing a cloth around her head diligently blows on a fire lit under the bathtub to control the water temperature. The box-like lamp shade commonly attached to the external wall of a building indicates the staging of an outdoor scene. The vivid hand-coloured photograph enchants the beholder with the instant illusion of entering a secret world. This magical atmosphere becomes disenchanting when the viewer notes that the anonymous photographer has (un)intentionally exposed the wooden stage tools in the photograph's uppermost section and captured mannequin-like, monotonous facial expressions on the women – who were probably geishas hired for the shooting of this photograph. Bathing women were often depicted in 19<sup>th</sup> century visual culture of Japan, and were on sale in photographs and paintings for Western globetrotters. The composition's popularity was undoubtedly fostered by contemporary Western accounts of Japan (travelogues, tourist guides, and 'authoritative' books), in which the public bathing and nudity that visitors often witnessed made for popular topics of discussion. The different concept of nudity in early Meiji Japan provoked both bewilderment and praise among Western tourists, with some lauding Japanese as the 'Greeks in East Asia.'

Sono Yuan Tang  
Mio Wakita

28



Unknown photographer  
Courtesans in the  
Latticed Parlor of a  
Brothel in the  
Yoshiwara Quarter

Edo (Tokio)

1870–1900

Albumen print,  
coloured

Yoshiwara, the red-light district, existed in Edo (today's Tokyo) from 1617 to 1958. As the center of state-licensed prostitution during the Edo period (1603–1868), the Yoshiwara area was marked by moats and walls, which clearly separated it from the rest of the city. The Tokugawa Shōgunate sought to keep control over the social sphere of the sex industry through the establishment of such quarters. *Harimise*, featuring prostitutes on display, was a practice that became an essential part of the architectural landscape of Yoshiwara until the prohibition of this practice in 1916. In this photograph, young apprentices in the front row, and, in the back, courtesans in formal kimonos with the brothel's crest, appear in a latticed parlor facing the street. This exhibition of women as commercial commodities of the pleasure industry was used to attract customers.

21 × 27 cm

SKD, MVD, Inv. No.  
F 1984-4/1

Liang Shixin  
Mio Wakita

29



Unknown photographer  
Dressing (Staged  
Scene with a Japanese  
Woman Dressing  
Her Hair in Front of a  
Mirror)

1870–1910

Albumen print,  
mounted on cardboard

20.5 × 25.7 cm

Cardboard base:  
32 × 41.5 cm

SKD, MVD, Inv. No.  
F 1983-1/1.2

Mio Wakita

30



Ryūji Senda

Yet, only lower-class courtesans were shown in this space. With the introduction and rising popularity of photography in Japan, another form of this *barimise* display, *shashinmise*, was occasionally practiced from the 1870s on: prostitutes represented themselves in portrait photographs. Yoshiwara fueled popular curiosity and misconceptions of Japanese women as licentious and sexually open, as was often discussed in western travel accounts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Photographers did not fail to cater to such sensationalized fixations on legal prostitution in Meiji Japan; the portfolio of major souvenir photo studios included photographs from Yoshiwara in a range of variations.

This photograph features a domestic scene with a Japanese woman sitting before a make-up cabinet with a mirror. The anonymous photographer staged this female model as if she were checking her coiffure in the back by utilizing an additional mirror. As demonstrated by the *ukiyo-e* print on view in this exhibition (cat. 31), the motif with a female beauty at her toilet is a key theme in *bijinga*. The subject ensures the desirability of those depicted both as an advertising figure and as a fashion icon, relevant for both female and male audiences from a wide range of social classes. In the following Meiji period (1868–1912), this motif survived in the new visual culture of photography, introduced in the early 1850s. As one of the standardised visual codes to signify elegant women, this iconography sometimes was used for staging portrait photographs of celebrity geishas in post-1890s catalogues available in the Japanese domestic market. At the same time, it also appeared in many portfolios of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese souvenir photography studios as one of the popular modes to represent local customs. This photograph testifies to dynamic cross-media transformations of this image type. Starting from early modern popular archetypes to stimulate the commodified status of idealised female beauties, the “beauty at her toilet” became the perfect representational mode to pander to Euro-American customers' expectations in search for “Things Japanese.”

This photograph features the crew of the ship SMS Arcona (“Seiner Majestät Schiff Arcona”) built by the Imperial German Navy. It was presumably taken by the local photographer Ryūji Senda (dates unknown) in the port city of Hakodate located on the southernmost tip of the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan, during Arcona's oversea deployment between 1907 and 1910. As a result of the Convention of Kanagawa, Hakodate was one of the first international trade ports in Japan that was open

## Abbreviations

GG	Grünes Gewölbe
KGM	Kunstgewerbemuseum
KK	Kupferstich-Kabinett
MPS	Mathematisch-Physikalischer Salon
MVD	Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden
MVL	Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig
PS	Porzellansammlung
RK	Rüstkammer
SES	Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen
SKD	Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden
SLUB	Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek

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## Imprint

Catalogue accompanying the special exhibitions

### Dresden • Europa • Welt

Presentation of the cross-collection “Europa/Welt” research programme being run by Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in the Residenzschloss from 3 March to 5 June 2017

The “Europa/Welt” research programme was made possible by generous support from Museum & Research Foundation GmbH. The former Director General of Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Hartwig Fischer, initiated the research programme by dint of his commitment and shaped the nature of its contents. The exhibitions present the findings of the research programme projects. We are grateful to Dirk Syndram, Director of the Grünes Gewölbe and the Rüstkammer for allowing us to use the Sponsel-Room and the Studiolo. Support from Sparkassen-Finanzgruppe likewise aided implementation of projects.

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Stories in Miniatures. The collection of Indian Paintings in Dresden's Kupferstich-Kabinett

Women Cross Media. Photography, porcelain and printed graphics from Japan and China in the Sponsel Room

Global Player in the Studiolo

Albero Bubach, Ruth Cruse, Steffen Dietrich, Andreas Frauendorf, Matthias Herbst, Kai-Uwe Metzler, Rainer Richter

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## Cover

Jahangir (reg. 1605–27), Deccan Muhgal(Golkonda), late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century, water colour and gold, 28,7 × 20 cm, image: 21,1 × 14,1 cm, SKD, KK, Inv.-Nr. Ca 110/Bl. 2r

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