

BAMBOO TRADITION IN CONTEMPORARY FORM

Artwork labels

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A celebration of bamboo

This special exhibition celebrates the creativity of Japanese bamboo artists through a collection of traditional baskets and contemporary sculptural bamboo art donated by Mr S. Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer. Mr Myer first visited Japan in 1945 while serving in the Allied naval forces.

This brief contact initiated a lifelong appreciation for the art and culture of Japan and led to his dedicated support of Asian studies in Australia that has included the donation of more than forty Japanese works of art to the NGV. Over the last several years Mr Myer and NGV curators have visited bamboo producing areas, artist's studios and galleries in Japan to research this fascinating art form and establish the first major collection of contemporary Japanese bamboo art in Australia.

Bamboo: tradition in contemporary form

Bamboo groves are synonymous with the Japanese landscape, and crafting items from bamboo is one of the oldest technical skills developed in Japan. Since ancient times skilfully crafted bamboo baskets have been used in Buddhist ceremonies and the Japanese tea ceremony with master-apprentice lineages established to pass skills down through the ages. During the twentieth century individual artisans reinterpreted these traditions to create imaginative forms and vessels for flower arrangements. Now, in the twenty-first century, a new generation of creative innovators from diverse backgrounds are creating an astounding variety of works of art that can be appreciated as contemporary sculptural forms.

HIROI Yasushi

廣井 靖

Japanese 1958

Mareta shell F

Shiosai F

しお さい

潮騒 F

2008

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

Yasuda Hiroi is one of the new generation of bamboo artists reinterpreting traditional craft techniques to create innovative contemporary sculptural forms. This piece uses strips of bamboo that become thinner as they move outwards from the centre, while the space between each strip increases, to create the form of a large spiralling shell. The technique skilfully produces variation within a regular structure, and a feeling of symmetry within a natural form.

SERIZAWA Keisuke

芹沢 銑介

Japanese 1895–1984

Kimono with character designs

Mojimon heyagi

も じ も ん へ や ぎ

文字文部屋着

1968

stencil-dyed banana-bark cloth (abaca)

Purchased with funds donated by
Allan Myers AO and Maria Myers AO, 2015

2015.407

Serizawa Keisuke is one of the most important Japanese textile artists of the twentieth century and a leading member of the Mingei arts and crafts movement founded by Yanagi Sōetsu in the 1930s. Using a stencil-dyeing technique and Okinawan-style fabric made from abaca banana leaf fibre, this boldly patterned work features clusters of calligraphic characters, including 月 (moon), 日 (sun) and 木 (tree) that are designed into a motif and repeated over the entire kimono. Serizawa is said to have believed that wearing garments inscribed with characters would impart the magical power of the words.

OKI Toshie

大木 淑恵

Japanese 1976

Outburst

Wakitatsu

わ た
湧き立つ

2008

bamboo, rattan

Purchased with funds donated by
Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

2016.102

Oki Toshie graduated from Waseda University, Tokyo, with a degree in literature, and in search of artistic self-expression became a dedicated student of the late bamboo master Iizuka Shōkansai. Her work *Outburst* capitalises on the illusionary possibilities that can be achieved from bamboo weaving. Its tubular double-woven structure rises to a peak and gracefully leans to one side, its form creating a mysterious illusion of the inner surface breaking through the outer surface and then returning to the inner side again.

JAPANESE

Bodhisattva

Shō Kannon Bosatsu

しょう かん のん ぼ さつ

聖觀音菩薩

Heian period 平安時代 12th century Japan
lacquer, gilt-Cypress (Hinoki), crystal

Purchased with funds donated by Allan Myers AO and Maria Myers AO, 2011

2011.118

Bodhisattvas are individuals filled with compassion who, rather than enter nirvana after attaining enlightenment, remain in the life-death cycle to redeem other unenlightened living souls. From the Heian period, Japanese sculptures developed distinct characteristics, including gentle facial features with long arched eyebrows extending to a thin nose, downcast eyes and small lips. The figure, standing on a lotus flower is surrounded by a halo of swirling lotus plant motifs (*karukusa*). At the top of the halo the Sanskrit character 'Sa' refers to saintly, sacred and virtuous qualities and designates this figure as Shō Kannon Bosatsu.

JAPANESE

Peony basket

Botan kago

ぼ たん かご

牡丹籠

late Edo period (mid 19th century) Japan
bamboo

Purchased with funds donated by
Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015

2015.505

This style of *Peony basket* is also known as a *Karamono* (Chinese-style basket) due to its large handle and symmetrical form – a shape imported from China. This style was popular in Japan during the Edo period and would be used to create large flower arrangements for formal tea ceremonies and decoration in large interior spaces. The basket's name indicates its classical use for an arrangement of peony flowers that traditionally would symbolise wealth and good fortune. This arrangement of peony and wisteria was created by the renowned flower artist Nanzawa Michiko.

Yamamoto BAIITSU

山本 梅逸

Japanese 1783–1856

Flowers of the four season

Shikisōga-zu

し き そ う か ず
四季草花図

1849

ink and pigments on paper

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria

with the assistance of Mr S. Baillieu Myer AC, Founder Benefactor, 1998

1998.246

In contrast to the imported Chinese symmetrical style of the *Peony basket* and arrangement, sixteenth-century Japanese tea masters developed a unique style of tea practice and aesthetic known as *Wabi cha* (rustic tea) and found the natural tactile qualities of bamboo ideal for producing new styles of tea utensils and baskets. This Edo-period painting by Yamamoto Baiitsu features an asymmetrical Japanese-style flower arrangement that includes magnolia, hydrangeas, lilies, chrysanthemums, mountain rose, lotus flowers, jasmine, dandelion, peony, cherry blossom and the fringed pink flower.

JAPANESE

Pagoda reliquary

Sharitō

しゃりとう

舍利塔

late Edo period – Meiji period

江戸時代 - 明治時代 19th century Japan

copper, brass, nickel plate, silver plate, gilt, glass

Purchased, 1887

2043.a-b-D1A

Pagodas are generally constructed to house relics of the historic Buddha, eminent priests or saints. The Japanese term *sharitō* literally means ‘bone of the throat’ and ‘tower’ and the throat bone of a deceased Buddhist was regarded as an important relic to be enshrined. Other relics often enshrined included teeth, hair, bones, ashes, crystals, beads or small personal possessions.

JAPANESE

Bodhisattva

Jizō Bosatsu

じ ぞう ぼ さつ
地蔵菩薩

Kamakura period 鎌倉時代 1185–1333 Japan
wood, lacquer, gold paint, pigment, metal, glass

Felton Bequest, 1957

1736.a-d-D4

Jiz Bosatsu assists the living on their path of salvation to paradise. Represented as a monk he holds a wish-granting jewel and a long staff. The staff has six rings and can open the six gates between the realms of incarnation that humans must negotiate before reaching paradise. These are the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, demons, humans and heavenly beings. In Japan, Jiz is best known as the guardian and patron deity of children.

JAPANESE

Gyōdō mask of Bodhisattva

Gyōdōmen Bosatsu

ぎょうどうめん ぼ さつ

行道面菩薩

Kamakura period 鎌倉時代 1185–1333 Japan
lacquer and gold paint on wood

Felton Bequest, 1955

1535-D4

Gyōdō masks were used for Buddhist processions, festivals or inauguration ceremonies for a new hall of worship. Representing figures of the Buddhist pantheon, the masks are larger than human proportions giving them a superhuman presence and clear visual recognition. They were used from the Heian to Muromachi period (AD 792–1568).

YAMASHITA Kōchikusai

山下 巧竹齋

Japanese 1876–1947

Ryurikyo-style hanging flower basket

Ryūrikyō-shiki tsurī hanakago

りゅう り きょう しき つり はな かご

柳里恭式吊花籠

early 20th century

bamboo, rattan

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

This rare work by the Osaka-born bamboo artist Yamashita Kōchikusai is in a style that was appreciated by the literati, scholars and intellectuals of the Edo and Meiji periods. Its title, *Ryūrikyō-style hanging flower basket*, refers to the distinguished eighteenth-century poet and painter Yanagisawa Ryurikyo (1703–58) who was famous for his paintings of hanging flower baskets in this style.

JAPANESE

Amida Buddha

Amida Nyorai

あ み だ に よ ら い

阿弥陀如来

Heian period 平安時代 12th century Japan

lacquer, gold and pigment on Cypress (*Hinoki*), crystals

Cypress (*Hinoki*), crystals

Purchased with funds donated by Allan Myers AO and Maria Myers AO, 2010

2010.3

Amida Buddha is the central icon of Pure Land Buddhism (*Jōdo Shinshū*) and resides over Buddhist paradise or heaven. Until the twelfth century he was usually represented seated on a lotus flower waiting for our arrival to the next life. However, from the twelfth century the concept of *raigō* (welcoming descent) flourished and Amida Buddha was often represented in a standing pose, descending from the heavens to fetch his devotees and transport them back to blissful paradise.

JAPANESE

Mouth organ

Shō

しょう

笙

Edo period (1600–15–1868) Japan

lacquer on bamboo, lacquer on wood (*maki-e*), silver

Purchased, 1887

2007.a-s-D1A

The *Shō* is a mouth organ that was used in ancient *gagaku* (court music) from the eighth century onwards. It consists of a lacquer wooden cup-shaped body into which seventeen narrow bamboo pipes are inserted vertically to symbolically form the shape of raised phoenix wings. Two of the pipes are mute, and the remainder are fitted with small metal tongues that vibrate to create sounds. The player can maintain a continuous sound by sucking and blowing alternately.

Katsukawa SHUNZAN

勝川春山

Japanese active c. 1782–98

Catching fireflies in the garden of a mansion

Yashiki no niwa no hotaru gari

やしき にわ ほたる が

屋敷の庭の蛍狩り

left panel of a triptych

c. 1785–98 Edo period Japan

colour woodblock

Purchased, 1961

900.a-5

JAPANESE

Insect cage

Mushi kago

むし かご

虫籠

20th century

bamboo, lacquer on wood, silk cord

Collection of Joan Gunn, Melbourne

Japanese culture's close association with nature and the changing seasons led to insects and their habitat being a common subject in literature, painting and woodblock prints. Collecting insects has been a popular pastime for both adults and children throughout history, and the production of meticulously crafted bamboo insect cages is a tradition that continues to this day. The example that appears in the woodblock print is square in shape, a design that arrived from China; however, the dome-topped basket on display is a design developed in Japan.

NAGAKURA Ken'ichi

長倉 健一

Japanese 1952

Woman

Hito

ひと

女

2014

bamboo, lacquer, clay

Purchased with funds donated by
Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015

2015.502

Nagakura Ken'ichi's passion for beach-combing and fossicking in nature, combined with an appreciation for sculptors such as Alberto Giacometti, Henry Moore and Okamoto Tarō, has resulted in his creation of natural amorphic shapes suggestive of human forms. The simple construction of his beautifully balanced work *Woman* is magnificent. One long piece of bamboo is split into many fine strips which are interlaced densely along its entire length, except for the last few centimetres. A mix of lacquer and powdered clay is rubbed into the weave to give it an organic finish and the appearance of a natural rather than man-made object.

MORIGAMI Jin

森上 仁

Japanese 1955

Big wave

Ōki na nami

おお なみ

大きな波

2014

bamboo

Purchased with funds donated
by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015

2015.501

Morigami Jin was born in the bamboo-producing town of Beppu to parents who are also bamboo artists. He is recognised as one of the new generation of innovative bamboo artists establishing an international reputation. His work *Big wave* is a simple and elegant basket that has been made with an irregular combination of twined (*nawame*) and twill (*ajiro*) plaiting. Its large undulating shape and woven horizontal weave – which gives it a slightly see-through appearance – create a rhythm of lines that give the impression of flowing water, or ocean waves.

YUFU Shohaku

油布 昌伯

Japanese 1941

Flower basket Niō

Hanakago Niō

はな かご に よう

花籠仁王

2015

bamboo

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015 2015.497

Yufu Shohaku is one Japan's most respected senior bamboo artists. His monumental works combine a wide variety of parts from the bamboo plant, including giant stems, sturdy straps, thinly sliced strips and gnarly roots. *Flower basket Niō* features a flower basket with the authoritative presence of a fierce Buddhist temple guardian (Niō), and can be interpreted as a preserver of the rustic qualities of Japan's bamboo-crafting past.

YAMAGUCHI Ryuun

山口 龍雲

Japanese 1940

Dawn

Yoake

よ あけ

夜明

c. 1969

bamboo, rattan

Gift of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2012

2012.180

Yamaguchi Ryuun is one of the many artists in *Bamboo: Tradition in Contemporary Form* who lives and works around the town of Beppu in southwest Japan. After spending several years apprenticed to the famous bamboo artist Shōno Shounsai, Yamaguchi has become a leading figure in the bamboo arts movement. In this ingenious work, groups of bamboo strips that start splayed at the edge of the basket become layered on top of each other as they interlock in the centre to form a hexagram star, and then splay out again at the other side of the basket.

Shugetsu

週月

Japanese active 20th century

Bamboo flute

Shakuhachi

しゃく はち

尺八

20th century

bamboo, lacquer

Collection of Scott Rogers, Melbourne

Taking its name from its length, one *shaku* and eight (*hachi*) *sun* (*shaku* and *sun* being traditional Japanese measurements), this style of flute is known as a *Shakuhachi*. Made from bamboo that is severed at the root, this spayed section becomes the bell of the instrument. *Shakuhachi* are capable of producing three octaves by blowing on the sharp edge, which is cut obliquely and fitted with a hard material, such as water buffalo horn or ivory. The unique sound of the *sakuhachi* is synonymous with Japan and evocative of itinerant musicians and Zen monks.

HATSUTA Toru

初田 徹

Japanese 1980

Basket in 'thousand-line' construction

Sensuji moriki

せん すじ もり き

千筋盛籃

2008

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

Hatsuta Toru is the youngest bamboo artist in *Bamboo: Tradition in Contemporary Form*. His *Basket in 'thousand line' construction* demonstrates his skills with the technique of *sensuji-gumi* (thousand-line construction) which consists of fixing thin bamboo strips at regular intervals between supports. In this work the basket section has been raised slightly using six thicker strips of bamboo as supports. This results in an elegant and contemporary basket that is simple yet sophisticated, which could be used in a tea ceremony for serving sweets.

ISOHI Setsuko

磯飛 節子

Japanese 1964

Layered lotus petals

Renben

ねん べん

蓮弁

2011

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Purchased with funds donated
by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

2016.107

ISOHI Setsuko

磯飛 節子

Japanese 1964

Tray with handle

Miemutsume-ami morikago

み え む め あ もり かご

三重六つ目編み盛籃

2008

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

These two works by Isohi Setsuko display her development as a bamboo artist; from producing functional baskets for flower arrangement to creating works that are to be viewed as sculptures. Isohi, who originally studied Sogetsu-style flower arrangement and the sencha tea ceremony, started studying bamboo weaving techniques to create baskets for her own flower arrangements. Her *Tray with handle*, which features hexagonal plaiting (*mutsume-ami*), is a traditional-style basket produced for this purpose. Isohi's background in flower arranging is also evident in her more recent sculptural work *Layered lotus petals* which is composed from six juxtaposed lotus petal shapes.

TANABE Shōchiku

田邊 小竹

Japanese 1973

Ensō

Ensō

えん そう

円相

2014

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

Tanabe Shōchiku was a graduate from the Sculpture Department of Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music and is a fifth-generation bamboo artist of the Tanabe family, founded by Tanabe Shinjō (1821–94). This beautifully balanced contemporary work references the traditional Zen symbol of a circle, which symbolises enlightenment, strength, elegance and the universe. In meditative terms the *ensō* represents an experience of the ‘absolute void’ and a moment when the mind is free to let the body and spirit spontaneously create without boundaries.

HONDA Shōryū

本田 聖流

Japanese 1951

Clean light

Seiki

せい き

清輝

2014

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

Honda Shōryū's visually dynamic bamboo works express a feeling of energy and movement. His most recent series employs precisely spaced round bamboo strips with *nawame-ame* (twining) that take advantage of the natural flexibility and spring of the bamboo. The work's undulating shape is created by using hot water to soften the entire piece which is then kneaded into shape. Finally, a coating of lacquer is applied to achieve an overall gloss and preserve the work's eccentric shape.

BABA Shodo

馬場 松堂

Japanese 1925–96

Flame

Honoo

ほのお

炎

c. 1970

bamboo, rattan, metal

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

Baba Shodo was born in Niigata and suffered serious injury while serving in the Japanese navy during the Second World War. After returning to Japan he started his career as a bamboo artist in 1946. He is acknowledged as one of the most important and innovative bamboo artists of the mid twentieth century; renowned for creating new symbolic shapes and experimenting with the combination of metal and bamboo to create contemporary vessels for flower arrangement.

Kanō School

狩野派

Japanese 15th century –19th century

Bamboo, plum blossom and mandarin ducks

Take ume oshidori zu

たけ うめ おしどり ず

竹梅鴛鴦図

18th century

two-panel folding screen: ink, gold paint and pigments on gold leaf on paper, lacquer on wood, paper, silk, metallic thread, brass

Collection of Konfir Kabo, Melbourne

UENO Masao

上野 正夫

Japanese 1949

Wave

Nami

なみ

波

2011

bamboo, rattan, lacquer, gold powder

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

2016.104

Ueno Masuo, from central Japan, was a graduate in architecture before studying bamboo weaving in rural areas near his hometown of Nagano. To conceive the mesmerising formation of infinite geometric spiralling lines found in *Wave*, Ueno employed computer design software and then, in contrast to this digital process, constructed the work's delicate structure by subtly bending thin bamboo strips into spirals before finally applying lacquer for strength and gold powder for decoration.

JAPANESE

Surging waves

Dotō

どとう

怒涛

20th century

bamboo, rattan

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

This sculptural form by an unknown artist is in the style of one of the most influential bamboo artists of the twentieth century, Shōno Shounsai (1904–74). Designated a Living National Treasure, Shounsai was an artistic pioneer who pushed bamboo basketry to new heights and sparked a revolution in the art form that influenced a new generation of artists during the second half of the twentieth century. This piece is reminiscent of Shounsai's wave and swirling water series produced during the 1950s.

SUGIURA Noriyoshi

杉浦 功悦

Japanese 1964

Void

Kokū

こくう

虚空

2014

bamboo, rattan

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015 2015.500

Sugiura Noriyoshi was born in northern Japan and studied engineering in Osaka. After graduating, his desire to create three-dimensional forms with natural materials led him to study bamboo-weaving techniques in Beppu. Sugiura's engineering studies distinguish his creations from other bamboo artists through a complex geometric formation of zigzagging struts that create an impression of structural strength from lightweight material.

YONEZAWA Jiro

米澤 二郎

Japanese 1956

Fossil

Kaseki

か せき

化石

2015

bamboo

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015 2015.498

Yonezawa Jiro gained his bamboo-crafting skills from senior bamboo artists in his home prefecture of Oita. During his thirties and forties he established a career as a bamboo artist in Portland, United States, before moving back to Oita in 2000. Yonezawa currently works in a studio surrounded by bamboo forests and abundant nature, and his works appear organic in shape and derived from nature rather than manmade.

MIMURA Chikuhō

三村 竹萌

Japanese 1973

Droplet

Shizuku

しずく

雫

2016

bamboo, lacquer

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

Mimura Chikuhō originally studied to be a trombonist in Germany; however, after returning to Japan in 1997 he became interested in making sculpture from natural materials and studied for several years under Yufu Shohaku and Honda Shōryū whose work is also included in this exhibition. Mimura's coarse and powerful weaving references Yufu's work, and his animated shapes reference the movement of Honda's work. Mimura's *Droplet* is a preeminent example of his most recent style that uses open hexagonal plating interwoven with broad strips of bamboo.

SATO Haruo

佐藤 治生

Japanese 1961

Begin-V

Hajimu-V

はじむ

創-V

2015

bamboo, rattan

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

2016.103

The highly developed skills of Sato Haruo are highlighted by the centre of *Begin-V* where a fine circular plaiting technique of very thin strips of bamboo is perfectly symmetrical and tightly woven. From this refined central core, wider strips of bamboo splay out to form a dynamic structure that could be interpreted as a blossoming organic form or an industrial spinning machine part or blade. This original approach to structure and shape can be attributed to his studies in mechanical engineering and previous career working at an international semiconductor company.

Tea and bamboo

Throughout Japanese history the tea ceremony and bamboo have had an intimate relationship. This toriawase (selection of tea utensils and accoutrements) includes a tea scoop, whisk, water ladle and ladle stand crafted from raw bamboo. The tea caddy in this arrangement is made from black and red lacquer on a cylindrical piece of bamboo that utilises the diaphragm joint as its lid. The water container is made from a giant bamboo root, the incense container is made from a small section of bamboo stem and the flower basket is contemporary bamboo sculpture. Although not made from bamboo, the iron pot and hanging scroll feature bamboo as a decorative motif.

JAPANESE

Pot

Kama

かま

釜

early Edo period 江戸時代 17th century Japan
iron, copper alloy (Ise Ashiya style)

Brazier

Furo

ふる

風炉

Momoyama period 桃山時代 1568–1615 Japan
bronze (Hakata Ashiya style)

Brazier base

Shikiita

しきいた

敷板

Meiji period 明治時代 1868–1912 Japan
lacquer on wood

Purchased with funds donated by Yoko and Adam Ryan, 2012

JAPANESE

Water ladle

Hishaku

ひしゃく

柄杓

20th century Japan
bamboo

Gift of Mr W. P. Wilkinson, 1926

2777-D3

JAPANESE

Tea bowl

Chawan

ちゃ わん

茶碗

Momoyama period 桃山時代 (1568–1615) Japan
stoneware (Narumi Oribe ware 鳴海織部焼)

Purchased with funds donated by Mitsubishi Corporation, 2012

Oribe ware was made in the taste of the military man and tea enthusiast, Furuta Oribe (1545-1615), and is considered by many to be the most stylish ceramic ware of the Momoyama period. This rare example of early Nurumi Oribe displays a visually intriguing design of white interlocking squares and dark dots joined by black thin lines representing a constellation of stars and planets in the sky.

JAPANESE

Tea scoop

Chashaku

ちゃしゃく

茶杓

20th century Japan

bamboo

Gift of Mr W. P. Wilkinson, 1926

2779-D3

JAPANESE

Whisk

Chasen

ちゃ せん

茶筴

20th century Japan
bamboo, cotton thread

Gift of Mr W. P. Wilkinson, 1926

2781-D3

SUGANUMA Michiko

菅沼 三千子

Japanese 1940

Bamboo root water container

Wagaenuri chikukon mizusashi

わ が え ぬ り ち く こん み ず さ し

和賀江塗竹根水指

1987

lacquer on bamboo

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

This unusual water container made for the tea ceremony is ingeniously crafted from an actual bamboo root. The work is fitted with a custom-made red lacquer lid. The bamboo stem's circular joint marks and many small dots, from where roots would shoot from, have become decorative features.

SUGANUMA Michiko

菅沼 三千子

Japanese 1940

Kappa style bamboo tea caddy

Kuroro-iro take natsume

くる ろ いろ たけ なつめ

黒呂色竹棗

2003

lacquer on bamboo (Kamakura-bori)

Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2004

2004.51.a-b

YONEZAWA Jiro

米澤 二郎

Japanese 1956

Sea horse

Tatsu no toshigo

たつ と び
竜の落とし子

2014

Bamboo, lacquer

Purchased with funds donated by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015

2015.499

SUGANUMA Michiko

菅沼 三千子

Japanese 1940

Bamboo incense container

Take kōgō

たけ こう こう

竹香合

2003

lacquer on bamboo

Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2004

2004.52.a-b

AZUKAWA Junko

東川 潤子

Japanese born 1981, worked in Australia 2005–

Bamboo grove and the dragonfly

Chikurin ni tombo

ちくりん とんぼ

竹林に蜻蛉

2016

ink on paper

Purchased with funds donated by the Hon. Michael Watt QC and Cecilie Hall, 2016

TANABE Chikuhosai

田辺 竹保齋

Japanese 1868–1945

Basket handbag

Teiran

てい らん

提籃

Taisho period early Showa period (1912–1945) Japan
bamboo, rattan, gourd, cotton, glass, silk, silk cord

Gift of Colonel Aubrey H. L. Gibson (Rtd), 1971

AS16-1971

This basket, known as a *teiran*, could be used as a handbag to carry personal effects or a basket to carry a small portable tea set for outdoor tea ceremonies. Tanabe Chikuhosai, born at the dawn of Japan's modern era, was a second-generation artist in the important Tanabe family lineage to which the contemporary bamboo artist Tanabe Shōchiku, also included in *Bamboo: Tradition in Contemporary Form*, is a current fifth-generation member.

UEMATSU Chikuyu

植松 竹邑

Japanese 1947

Haze

Kasumi

かすみ

霞

1995

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

WATANABE Chikusei

渡辺 竹清

Japanese 1932

Flower basket

Hanakago

はな かご

花籠

2005

bamboo, rattan, lacquer

Purchased with funds donated
by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015

2015.504

WATANABE Chikusei

渡辺 竹清

Japanese 1932

Tea basket

Chakago

ちゃ かご

茶籠

2005

bamboo, rattan, silk cord

Purchased with funds donated
by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2015

2015.503

Watanabe Chikusei is the second son of a traditional bamboo crafting family. From a young age he studied under his father and in 1966 took the artist's name Chikusei, succeeding his father as the family's head bamboo artist. *Tea basket* and *Flower basket* are examples of traditional baskets produced to perfection. *Tea basket* is used to contain a travelling tea set for outdoor tea ceremonies, and *Flower basket* is used to hold a small flower arrangement for display in a traditional Japanese interior. In recent years Chikusei has gained attention for his collaborations with Tiffany & Co. to make a line of bamboo handbags bags.

SUZUKI Shōnen

鈴木 松年

Japanese 1848–1918

Plum blossom, bamboo and sparrow

Baichikujaku zu

ばいちくじゃくず

梅竹雀図

from *The World of Art*, vol: 4 (*Bijutsu sekai ni jūni kan*

美術世界 二十二寒) compiled by Watanabe Seitei, published

by Shunyōdō, Tokyo 1890–1894

colour woodblock, silk thread

Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria

Watanabe SHOKA

渡辺 小華

Japanese 1835–1887

Flower basket

Hanakago

はな かご

花籠

from *The World of Art*, vol: 22 (*Bijutsu sekai ni jūni kan*
美術世界 二十二卷) compiled by Watanabe Seitei, published
by Shunyōdō, Tokyo 1890–1894
colour woodblock, silk thread

Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria

MARUYAMA Ōkyo

円山 応挙

Japanese 1733–1795

Waves and eccentric rocks

Kigandōzo zu

き がん ど と う ず

奇巖怒涛図

from *The World of Art*, vol: 21 (Bijutsu sekai niyūni kan
美術世界 二十二卷) compiled by Watanabe Seitei, published
by Shunyōdō, Tokyo 1890–1894
colour woodblock, silk thread

Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria

GANKU

岸駒

Japanese 1749–1756–1839

Tiger and bamboo

Tora ni take

とら に たけ

虎に竹

from *The World of Art*, vol: 21 (Bijutsu sekai ni jūni kan
美術世界 二十二卷) compiled by Watanabe Seitei, published
by Shunyōdō, Tokyo 1890–1894
colour woodblock, silk thread

Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria

JAPANESE

Box with flower baskets, birds and flowers

Hanakago to kachōe zu hako

はな かご か ちょう え ず ふた つき はこ

花籠と花鳥画図蓋付箱

late Edo period, early Meiji period (1860–80) Japan
lacquer on wood, gilt, gold paint, metal, shell

Purchased, 1880–1881

2004.a-b-D1A

Shigeyoshi

重義

Japanese

Sword guard with bamboo design

Take zu tsuba

たけ ず つば

竹匁鍔

Edo period (1600–1615–1868) Japan

iron, gilt, copper

Felton Bequest, 1921

2270-D3

Masakata

正方

Japanese

Sword guard with bamboo leaf design

Take zu tsuba

たけ ず つば

竹匁鍔

Edo period (1600–1615–1868) Bushū, Japan

iron, gilt

Felton Bequest, 1921

2271-D3

JAPANESE

Sword guard with bamboo design

Take zu tsuba

たけ ず つば

竹匁鍔

Edo period (1600–1615–1868)

iron, copper

Felton Bequest, 1921

2168-D3

JAPANESE

Box with flower basket and musical instruments

Hanakago to gakki zu hako

はな かご がっ き ず ふた つき はこ

花籠楽器匳蓋付箱

late Edo period, early Meiji period
(1860–80) Japan

ivory, metal, brass, coral, shell, gold paint

Felton Bequest, 1930

3216.a-b-D3

JAPANESE

Inrō with bamboo grove

Chikurin zu inrō

ちくりん ず いん ろう

竹林図印籠

late Edo period, Meiji period 19th century Japan

lacquer on wood, mother-of-pearl, gold, pigments, silk cord

Gift of Mr Geoffrey Innes in memory of Mr Guy Innes, 1960

136-D5

JAPANESE

Flower basket

Hanakago

はな かご

花籠

early 20th century

bamboo, rattan, wood

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

Displaying vertical strips of bamboo woven in a technique known as *yoroi gumi* (armour plating), and featuring a gnarly wooden handle, this basket is an excellent example of *Mingei*, literally 'arts of the people', and exhibits the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic of beauty and raw emotion found in objects made by unknown craftsmen.

BUSEKI Suishin

武関 翠心

Japanese 1888–1983

Flower basket

Hanakago

はな かご

花籠

mid 20th century

bamboo

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

JAPANESE

Flower basket

Hanakago

はな かご

花籠

early 20th century

bamboo, rattan

Collection of Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, Melbourne

This tall simple flower basket signed by 光月 (Kōgetsu), an unknown twentieth-century artisan, is an excellent example of early twentieth-century basket weaving that was produced as souvenirs for visitors to hot spring towns such as Beppu. Techniques practised in the production of the baskets in this display case can be seen as preserving historical weaving traditions and setting the foundations for the twentieth-century creative bamboo arts movement.

Bamboo in daily life

Throughout Japanese history bamboo has been a part of everyday life, art, craft, design, literature and cuisine. The bamboo grove is regarded as a place of scholarly retreat, and bamboo's lightness, strength, flexibility and cylindrical structure has been suited to the creation of artistic products and functional objects. In these Edo-period woodblock prints and early photographs that depict bamboo groves and everyday life we see bamboo being used to make an astounding array of objects, including baskets, umbrellas, fences, water ladles, flower vases, whistles, walking sticks, lanterns, smoking pipes, hats and plumbing systems to carry flowing water.

Katsukawa SHUNCHŌ

勝川 春潮

Japanese active 1780–95

**Parody of the seven sages of the
bamboo grove**

Chikurin no shichigen

ちくりん しちげん

竹林七妍

right panel of a diptych

c. 1788 Edo period (1600–1615–1868) Japan

colour woodblock

Purchased, 1993

AS32-1993

Kitagawa UTAMARO

喜多川 歌麿

Japanese 1754–1806

Winter morning

Fuyu no asa

ふゆ あさ

冬の朝

late 18th century Edo period

(1600–1615–1868) Japan

colour woodblock

Felton Bequest, 1909

409-2

Utamaro is the most celebrated *ukiyo-e* artist of *bijin-e* (pictures of beautiful women). In this depiction of an early winter morning, two courtesans discover the bamboo ladle of a stone cistern frozen in a block of ice. This scene, complemented by the red berries of the heavenly bamboo tree (*nanten*), indicates the arrival of winter. The ice is rendered with a transparent mika shell-powdered pigment.

JAPANESE

Buddhist priests

Sōryo

そうりょ

僧侶

1880s

albumen silver photograph, colour dyes

Purchased, 2004

2004.561

Kitagawa UTAMARO

喜多川 歌麿

Japanese 1754–1806

Chrysanthemum festival 9 September

Kugatsu no kokonoka choyōnōsekku,

gosekku

く がつ この か ちょうよう せっく こ せっく
九月の九日重陽の節句, 「五節句」

left panel of a pentptych, from the

Five festivals series

c. 1803

colour woodblock

Utagawa KUNISADA (Utagawa TOYOKUNI III)

歌川 国貞 (三代 歌川 豊国)

Japanese 1786–1865

The hour of the boar, Fourth hour of night

I no koku, Yoru yottsu toki

い の こく よる よつ とき
亥ノ刻 夜四つ時

from the *Twelve Hours of a modern clock series* (今世時計十二時 *Imayo tokei jyuniji*)

1818–24

colour woodblock

Felton Bequest, 1909

434-2

In historical Japan, each day was divided into twelve segments named after the animals of the zodiac calendar. The fourth segment – from 9 to 11 pm – was attributed to the boar. During the evening, temples, shrines, restaurants, shops and inns would use lanterns made from paper and bamboo to advertise or announce that they were open for trade. In this image by Utagawa Kunisada we see a woman with a portable, collapsible lantern carried at the end of a stick. Such lanterns were popular and often featured a painted or stencilled family or business crest.

KUSAKABE Kimbei

日下部 金兵衛

Japanese 1841–1934

Vegetable peddler

Yaoya

や お や

八百屋

1880s

albumen silver photograph, colour dyes

Gerstl Bequest, 2000

2000.73

Tamagawa SHŪCHŌ

玉川 舟調

Japanese active 1790s – c. 1800

Komurasaki and Gonpachi

Komurasaki Gonpachi

こむらさき ごん ぱち

小紫 権八

c. 1800

colour woodblock

Felton Bequest, 1909

412-2

One of most popular stories of tragic and forbidden romance during the Edo period was that of Komurasaki and Gonpachi, based on a true story. Gonpachi, desperate to buy the freedom of his lover, the courtesan Komurasaki, turned to crime, was apprehended and executed. Upon hearing of her lover's fate Komurasaki escaped from the pleasure district and took her own life by his graveside. In this sensitively designed pillar print we observe a peaceful and intimate moment the couple had before their tragic end. Komurasaki relaxes, smoking a traditional Japanese bamboo pipe (*kiseru*) and Gonpachi gazes into the distance, contemplating a blissful future together.

Keisai EISEN

溪齊 英泉

Japanese 1790–1848

Spring rain

Harusame

はる さめ

春雨

c. 1820

colour woodblock

Felton Bequest, 1909

455-2

Felice BEATO

フェリーチェ・ベアト

Italian / English 1832–1909, worked throughout Asia and Europe 1853–90

Barbers

Kamiyui

かみ ゆ

髪結い

1863–68 Japan

albumen silver photograph, colour dyes

Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of The Herald & Weekly Times Limited, Fellow, 2001 2001.5

Felice Beato's images capture Japanese street life during the closing years of the Edo period. Here we see barbers plying their trade in a streetside setting with items made from bamboo, including the fence, umbrella and broom. The man on the right is having his hair arranged in a topknot (*chonmage*) that was originally worn by samurai and also adapted by the merchant class during the latter half of the Edo period.

Baron Raimund von STILLFRIED

ライムント・フォン・シュティルフリート

Austrian 1839–1911, worked throughout Europe and Asia

1871–1910

Blind shampooer (Blind masseur)

Mōmoku no anma shi

もうもく あんまし

盲目の按摩師

c. 1875 Japan

albumen silver photograph, colour dyes

Gerstl Bequest, 2000

2000.71

Written accounts by Western visitors to Japan in the 1870s invariably describe life on the streets. A noted character that often captured their attention was the so-called 'blind shampooer' who was, in fact, a masseur. In this elegant and restrained studio reconstruction we see a young man holding a bamboo whistle to announce his presence to potential trade.

Suzuki HARUNOBU

鈴木 春信

Japanese c. 1725–70

**Under pink plum blossom a green
bamboo water pipe**

Kōbai ni aoku yokotau kakei kana

こう ばい あお よこ かけひ かな
紅梅に青く横たふ筧哉

from the *Elegant versions of ink in five colors series* (風流五色墨 *Fūryū goshiki-zumi*)

1768

colour woodblock

Purchased, 1945

1431-4

Harunobu is credited as being one of the first artists to create polycrome nishiki-e (brocade) prints during the 1760s. His refined depictions of women are imbued with a visual lyricism that encourages us to experience the scene through intimate human relationships, poetry and visual references to nature. This composition that depicts a young woman and man playfully wrestling over the possession of a romantic poem evokes the aroma of spring, from the plum blossom, and sound of running water, from bamboo pipes in the garden. The poem, signed Chōsui, is by the Edo period haiku poet Sakuma Nagatoshi.

SUGIURA Noriyoshi

杉浦 功悦

Japanese 1964

Heaven's nest

Tenmō

てん もう

天網

2014

bamboo, rattan

Purchased with funds donated
by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

2016.105

Sugiura Noriyoshi's engineering background is evident in the complex geometric structure of *Heaven's nest*. Couplings of thin strips of bamboo are gently curved and woven to create a large, spherical see-through shape. The work's delicate outer shell contrasts with a robust inner tube that acts as the basket's central core and a receptacle to hold a flower arrangement.

HAYAKAWA Shōkosai V

五世 早川 尚古齋

Japanese 1932–2011

**Flower basket using uneven weaving
technique**

Shichiku-mizore-ami-hanakago

し ちく あみ はな かご
紫竹みぞれ編花籃

c. 1980

bamboo

Purchased with funds donated
by Baillieu Myer AC and Sarah Myer, 2016

2016.106

The plaiting style used as a visual feature in this beautifully balanced flower basket is typical of the Hayakawa family style that has been passed down a master–apprentice lineage since the late nineteenth century. The artist’s great-great-grandfather Hayakawa Shōkosai I (1815–79) was one of the first bamboo artists to sign his work, and according to family tradition only one son of each generation is allowed to inherit the family title and profession. In 2003 Hayakawa Shōkosai V received one of Japan’s highest honours when he was designated a Living National Treasure.