

Personal History

Serizawa Keisuke was born on May 13, 1895 in Shizuoka City, the second son of a draper, Oishi Kakujiro. After graduating from Shizuoka Middle School, he entered Tokyo Higher Technical School (presently Tokyo Institute of Technology) and studied design. After graduation, he returned to Shizuoka. At the age of 22, in 1917, he married Serizawa Tayo and changed his family name to Serizawa.

He taught industrial design at the Shizuoka Technical Laboratory and Shizuoka Industrial High School. But two factors made him decide to become a dyeing artist. First, he discovered the existence of the craft in an essay by Yanagi Muneyoshi, the leader of the “Mingei Movement” and who later taught Serizawa throughout his life. The second factor was the chance to see the characteristic “Bingata” dyeing technique from the Okinawa District, where he deeply attracted by its beauty.

In 1929, he sent his first work, “Shakushinamon Kabekake” (wall drape), to the Kokugakai Exhibition and won the Kokugakai Prize. He was also admitted as a member of this group for his remarkable creative activity. In 1934, he and his family moved to Kamata, Tokyo, at the suggestion of Yanagi and he began dyeing full-time.

He went several times to Okinawa after 1939 to study “Bingata.” He improved on Bingata and other dyeing techniques by using “Katagami” (stencil paper). His new technique was called “Kataezome.” He sent many his “Kataezome” works throughout the world.

Late in his life he won great popularity through many personal exhibitions held in Japan and abroad. The 1976 exhibition “Serizawa” at the Grand Palais in Paris firmly established his fame.

- He received several honors during his lifetime. They include:
- Designated as a “Living National Treasure” in 1956
 - The Purple Ribbon Medal in 1966
 - Designation as an “Honorary Citizen of Shizuoka City” in 1967
 - The Fourth Order of the Sacred Treasure from the Japanese government in 1970
 - Designated as a “Person of Cultural Merit” in 1976
 - The “Contributor to the Arts” Award from the French government in 1983

Serizawa Keisuke died at the age of 88 on April 5, 1984.



Age 18 (Back row, center 1913)

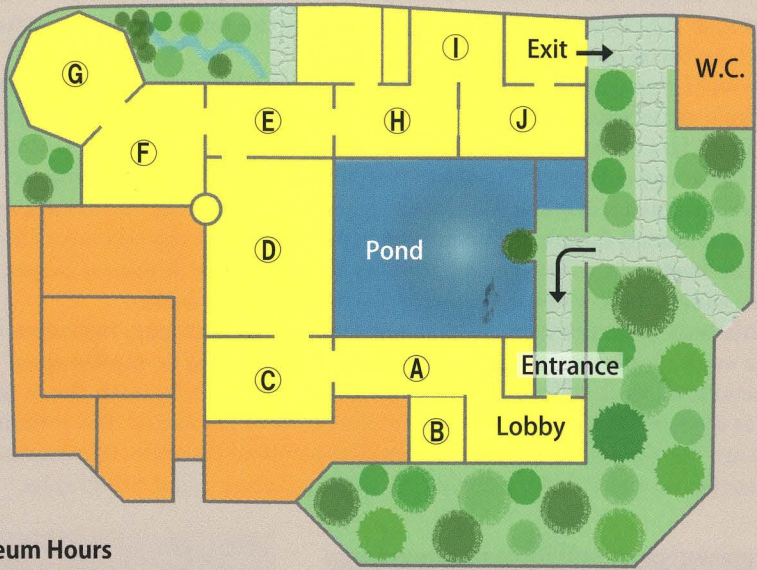


Age 46 (Back row, center 1941)



Age 81 (1976)

About the Museum



Museum Hours

Operating Hours 9:00 am — 4:30 pm

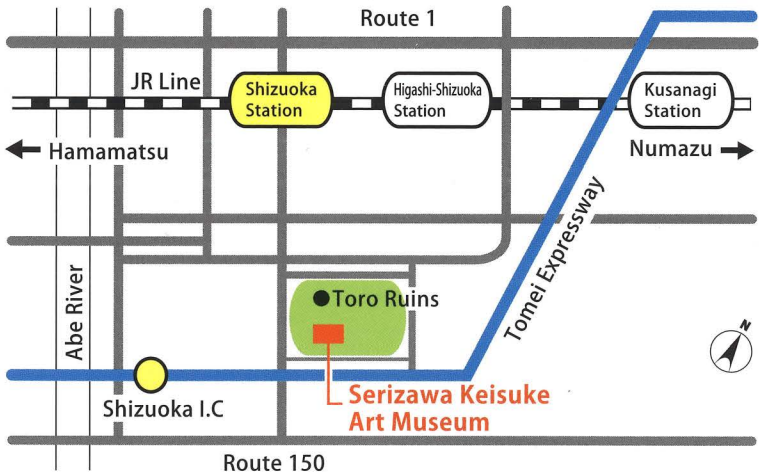
Closed on Mondays, the day after public holidays, the New Year holidays, and during exhibit changes

Admission

General Admission ¥20; Sr. High and University Students ¥250; Elementary and Jr. High Students ¥100; younger children free

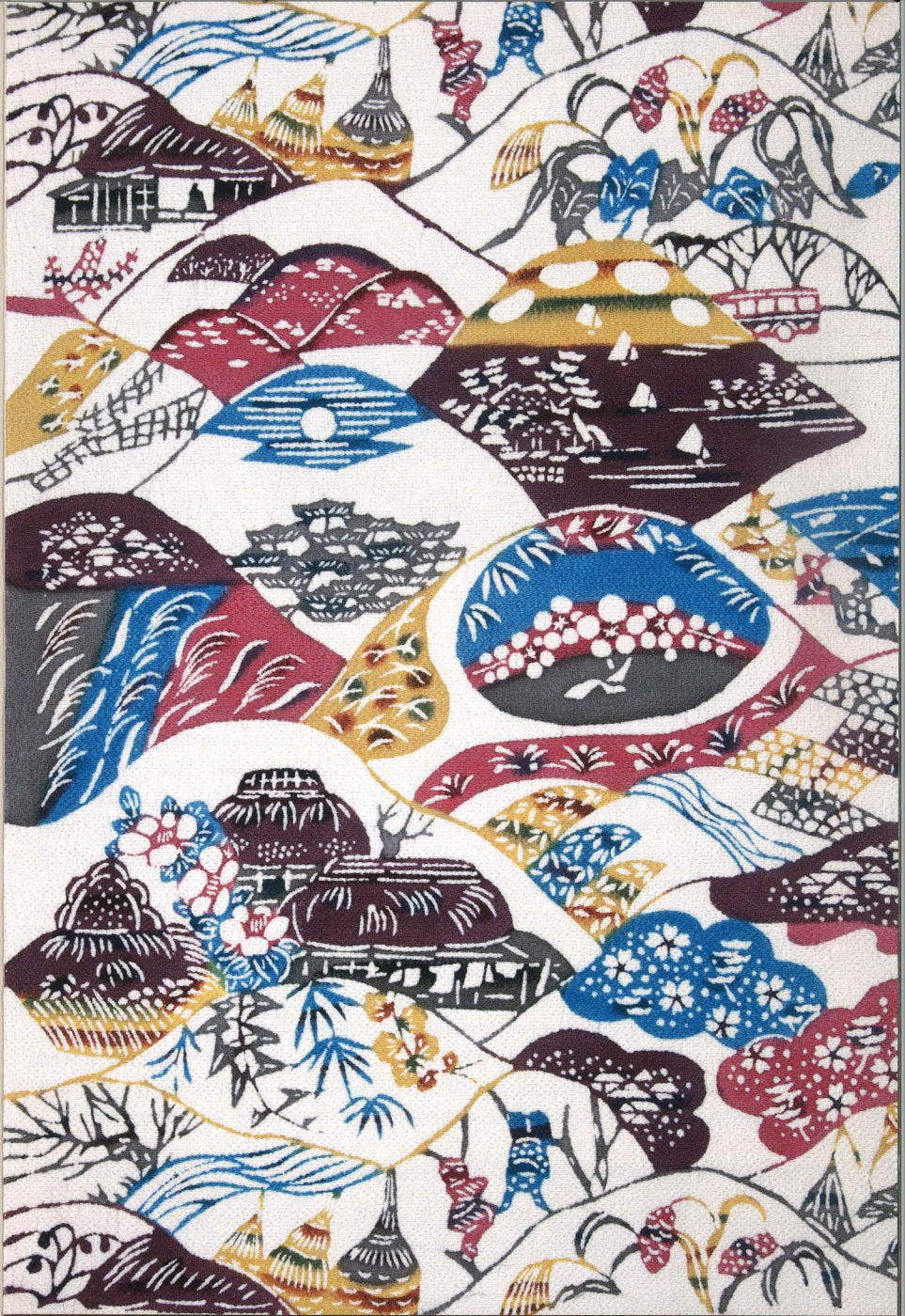
(Group Discounts, 30 people or more: Elementary and Jr. High Students ¥20 off; all others ¥50 off)

Elementary and Jr. High Students, senior citizens age 70+, or disability passbook holders and one assistant who reside in Shizuoka City are free



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Shizuoka City

Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum



Cover: Kimono: “Tsumura Shiki” (a pattern of a view of mountains of Tsumura)



沢沢 敬久

Serizawa Keisuke
(1895-1984)

Outline

The Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum was established to house the works and personal collection of Serizawa Keisuke, a prominent leading dyeing artist in Japan. These were donated by Serizawa himself to his hometown, Shizuoka City. Since opening in June 1981, we have continued collecting, preserving and researching Serizawa's works. And by conducting various exhibitions, we offer information about his art in order to preserve his works for future generations. As an art museum of a unique dyeing artist, it attracts many fans from inside and outside Japan.

The building, which was designed by the architect Shirai Seiichi (1905-1983), is also admired by visitors. It is located in Toro Park, famous for ancient remains from the Yayoi Period (about 200 B.C. to 200 A.D.). Shirai constructed the building chiefly with stone, wood and water to harmonize it with its surroundings and make it a comfortable place to view Serizawa's works.

This art museum now holds about 800 pieces of Serizawa's work and approximately 4500 pieces of his folk art collection. These materials are exhibited in our art museum by rotating exhibitions three times a year.



Six-fold screen: "Ogawa Kamisuki" (the Japanese paper making process in Ogawa Village)

Serizawa's Work

Serizawa Keisuke (1895-1984) was acknowledged as a "Living National Treasure" in 1956 for his stencil dyeing technique called "Kataezome." This is a technique that uses stencils (katagami) to dye the original artistic patterns on cloth material or Japanese paper.

This word was created by the Agency for Cultural Affairs to express Serizawa Keisuke's style when the late artist received the title of "Living national Treasure." His creations cover a large range of works: Kimono, Obi (sash), Noren (door way curtains), Kabekake (wall drapes), and Byobu (folding screens). All were designed using the Kataezome technique improving various Japanese traditional stencil dyeing crafts, in particular Bingata in the Okinawa District. He is the first man to try dyeing not only cloth but also Japanese paper. His success widened the scope of dyeing beyond that of just cloth.

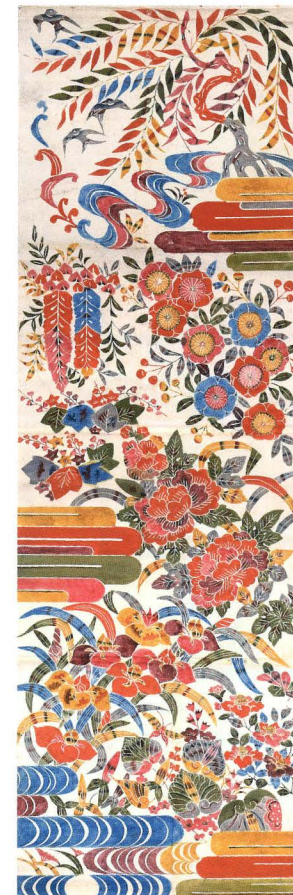
In his bold descriptive style and construction of patterns, Serizawa uses motifs such as plants, animals, domestic wares, people, landscapes, and characters, as well as bright and lively color tones. Along with these traits, there is a warm feeling that runs throughout all of his works. His prominent works are not limited to dyeing and can also be found in other creations: books, thick curtains, stained glass, furniture, glass paintings, and calligraphy.



Kimono: "Tai Oyogumon" (a pattern of swimming sea bream)



Stencil-dyed: "Uchiwa"
(Japanese fan)



Design of the Ornaments for Chion-in, Kyoto.



Obi sash material: "Kiri Botanmon"
(a pattern of paulownias and tree peonies)



Doorway curtain: "Otakizu" (water fall)



Two-fold screen: "Shiki Mandarazu"
(a mandala composed with four characters depicting the four seasons)

The Serizawa Collection

The art critic Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889-1961) discovered the beauty of handicrafts made by unknown craftsmen and began the "Mingei (folk craft) Movement" to introduce it to the public. Serizawa Keisuke, who shared the same ideal, always made a point to collect folk craft at home as well as abroad. He was attracted by their vivid beauty born out of daily life. Moreover, it became an inspiration for his own creations.



Miharu doll, Edo Period, 19c
(Japan)



Songye Mask (Africa)

This collection includes such items as textiles, folk paintings, pottery, lacquer ware, books, furniture, toys, masks, and woodwork. They are very interesting as folk material. But if we observe these works bearing in mind that they influenced the creative momentum of the artist, we can find a unique sense of beauty in their selection and insight into the artist's world.

This collection is called the "Serizawa Collection." Most of the approximately 4,500 piece collection is preserved and exhibited in our art museum.