



Guide of Special Exhibition

made on September 10, 2010

Outline

Meiji Imari features elegance and delicacy. The purpose of the exhibition is to provide the people of the United States an opportunity to learn about the beauty of Japanese porcelain, especially Meiji Imari, and the current status of traditional crafts in Japan. This project introduces the complete reproduction process for this elegant porcelain and the challenges that faced the 19th century craftsmen who strived to combine a 400-year-old tradition and new styles.

Greeting

In the 19th century, after Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States visited Japan and the Japanese government opened the country to foreign trade, Japanese porcelain gained worldwide popularity. In Europe, "Japonisme" became the fashion and Japanese arts, such as ukiyoe, commanded attention. At the great world exhibitions, German Meissen, French Sebourg, and Japanese Meiji Imari attracted westerners' attention. Imari design had a unique mixture of Japanese and European elements. For example, a series of western-style Meiji Imari tableware and ornaments were decorated with traditional Japanese motifs of flowers, birds, wind, and the moon. These products gained a high reputation in the expositions held in Paris and Vienna. It is also said that Meiji Imari influenced the Art Nouveau movement.

With the Japanese government encouraging export industries to promote modernization, a number of ambitious craftsmen in Hizen-Arita started the Seiji Company in 1879. As the company name, "Seiji," stands for refinement and finesse, the craftsmen dedicated themselves to producing elaborate pieces of porcelain, winning the gold medal at the Amsterdam World Expo in 1883. By combining the highest level of traditional Japanese skill and modern western technology, they created an original style of beauty that differed from Japanese traditional porcelains such as Koimari, Kakiemon, and Nabeshima. However, the Seiji Company vanished into obscurity after ten years or so, leaving only a small number of complete works.

In 2016, Imari and Arita Porcelains will have their 400th anniversary. Prior to this celebration, a "renaissance" project was begun with the goal of reproducing the works of the Seiji Company, which had once achieved the highest level of production in the world. The project aims to pass down the wisdom and skills of traditional craftsmen to the next generation.

With the cooperation of Kinokuniya Bookstores of America, we are honored to present our achievements outside Japan. We exhibit the replica of the first Japan-made dinner set, which was produced in 1882 by the Seiji Company under the guidance of the Arthur French Company of Boston, and the replica of the vase which was presented at the World Expo in Philadelphia in 1876, held in the 100th anniversary year of America's independence. We hope that visitors fully enjoy the elegance of Japanese porcelain and appreciate the master skills of traditional craftsmen.

Tetsuo Saijo, Producer, Meiji Imari Renaissance Project
Tetsu Matsumoto, President, Arita Seiyo Co., Ltd.

The porcelain that fascinated the world in the 19th Century

Meiji Imari Renaissance

麗しの明治伊万里

Exhibition Period	Oct.23 (Sat.), 2010~Nov.7 (Sun.), 2010 Mon-Sat 10:00~20:00, Sun 11:30~19:30
Exhibition Venue	Kinokuniya Bookstores, New York Main Store 1073 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10018
Organizers	Kinokuniya Bookstore of America Arita Seiyo Co., Ltd. Meiji Imari Renaissance Project.
Co-Organizers	Arita Town JC Arita
Sponsors	Munemasa Brewing Company, Ltd. Yamashita Kogei Inc. M.Tec Co., Ltd.
Cooperation	Yohin-Keikaku Co.,Ltd. Tomoshige Design Office Tsuji Cooking School
Installation Design	Yasuo Ohdera (JIN Woodscaps), Architect Hiro Odaira (Precious Pieces), Japanese paper artist

M.Tec Co.,Ltd.
Yamashita Kogei Inc.
Munemasa Brewing Company
Arita Seiyo Co., Ltd.
Meiji Imari Renaissance Project.

<http://www.mtec-con.co.jp/>
<http://www.takebito.com/>
<http://www.nonnoko.com/>
<http://www.aritaware.com/>
<http://www.meiji-imari.com/>

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