

The East-West Center Arts Program presents

Living Lacquer Traditions

Lacquer—glossy, durable, resistant to water and heat, has been used in Asia for more than 7,000 years. Artisans have created an extraordinary range of items using this sap from trees to cover wood, bamboo, metal, and ceramics. Utensils, bowls, water carriers, paintings, ritual items, objets d'art, boxes, containers, furniture, toys, building interiors, jewelry—the range is vast and the techniques multiple. Lacquer comes from the sap of trees from the cashew and sumac family. These trees are cultivated in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. East Asian lacquer is traditionally obtained from the Chinese lacquer tree, *Toxicodendron vernicifluum*, while in Southeast Asia, the Burmese lacquer tree, *Gluta usitata*, is the most widely cultivated.

Lacquer work was one of the earliest industrial arts of Asia. Although highly developed in India, it was the Chinese who spread the technique of inlaying lacquer with ivory, jade, coral, or abalone. Artistic techniques spread to Korea, then to Japan, where they took new forms, notably gold lacquer work. Fine Asian lacquer ware may have more than 40 coats, each being dried and smoothed with a whetstone before application of the next. The ware may be decorated in color, gold, or silver and enhanced by modeled reliefs, engraving, or carving. Buddhist monasteries encouraged the art and now preserve some of the oldest pieces extant. Decorative elements most often found in Asian lacquer traditions include inlaid semi-precious stones, mirror glass, gold leaf, engravings, and applied reliefs.

Many Asian countries have perfected the craft of making

Curator: **Michael Schuster** | Installation: **Lynne Najita**

Artist-in-Residence: **Suzanne Ross**

Consultants: **Suzanne Ross, Yoshihisa Oka** (President, Nosaku Lacquerware Co., LTD)



APPLYING LACQUER, WAJIMA CITY, JAPAN 21ST C.

lacquer artifacts, both for utilitarian and aesthetic purposes. Japan and Myanmar (Burma) have developed the craft into to a highly respected and creative art form. The exhibition features exquisite utensils, musical instruments, traditional tea preparation services, religious manuscript, dishes, and paintings. Although this exhibition focuses particularly on works from Japan

and Myanmar, it also displays items from China, Korea, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand. The exhibition demonstrates how works are formed, and illustrates the process and artistry involved in making each piece. Suzanne Ross, lacquer artist and teacher from Wajima, Japan, will be in residence for ten days to help celebrate the opening of the exhibition.

Arts Program, Office of External Affairs
1601 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96848-1601

Address Service Requested

EWC Arts Mailing List Notice:
To receive notices by email,
please visit our website
<http://arts.EastWestCenter.org>

East-West Center Gallery

John A. Burns Hall, 1601 East-West Road
(corner Dole St. & East-West Rd.)

Gallery hours: Weekdays: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Sundays: Noon-4:00 p.m.
Closed Saturdays, federal holidays, and July 6
Gallery admission is free

Parking on the UH-Mānoa campus is
normally free and ample on Sundays.

For further information: 944-7177
arts@EastWestCenter.org
<http://arts.EastWestCenter.org>
Free school & group tours available

 Printed with soy based inks on recycled paper



ITEMS FROM A SAKE SET, JAPAN
LATE 19TH / EARLY 20TH C.

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members, and other generous donors.

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Special Events

In the EWC Gallery with free admission, unless otherwise noted.

Sunday, May 25, 2:00–3:30 p.m.

Exhibition Gala Opening including reception and tour
with visiting artist Suzanne Ross from Wajima, Japan.

Monday, May 26 (Memorial Day holiday)

Workshops: **"Japanese Lacquerware Decorating:
Maki-e"** by visiting artist Suzanne Ross at the Honolulu
Museum of Art School (Linekona). Two workshop
times: 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. & 1:00–4:30 p.m.
\$50 fee; <http://arts.eastwestcenter.org>

Sunday, June 1, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Illustrated talk: **"Introduction to Urushi: The
Japanese Lacquer Process"** by visiting artist
Suzanne Ross.

Sunday, June 8, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Illustrated talk: **"The Female Noh Mask"** by Chizuko
Endo, mask maker, musician, and Japanese arts
specialist.

Sunday, June 22, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Illustrated talk: **"Images of Rakine State in Western
Myanmar"** by Karen Knudsen, EWC External Affairs
director and Derek Ferrar, EWC media relations
specialist.

Sunday, July 13, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Video: **"Nourished by the Same River
(Episode 12)"** a CCTV production
exploring the handicrafts found in six
countries along the Mekong River.

Sunday, August 3, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Illustrated talk: **"The Making of
Lacquerware in Myanmar"** by UH:KCC
Prof. Carl Hefner and UHM Prof. Michael
Aung-Thwin.

Sunday, August 17, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Summer Tea Gathering (chakai)
presented by students from 'Iolani,
Punahou, and Hongwanji Mission
Schools affiliated with the Urasanke
School of Tea. Enjoy a bowl of smooth
green tea and a seasonal sweet (*okashi*).

Sunday, August 24, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Illustrated talk: **"Japanese Lacquer
Paintings at the Honolulu Museum
of Art"** by Shawn Eichman, curator of
Asian Art at the Honolulu Museum of Art.