

Press Release

REINSTALLATION

MAK Permanent Collection *ASIA: China – Japan – Korea*

Tadashi Kawamata with another spectacular artistic intervention

Press Conference	Tuesday, 10 May 2016, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Tuesday, 10 May 2016, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Permanent Collection Asia MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	permanent
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays from 6–10 p.m.

“I don’t believe in permanence, in eternity, that everything should stay as it is. An exhibition should remain ‘agile,’ the exhibits should be exchanged at frequent intervals,” believes Tadashi Kawamata, who was entrusted with the radical new artistic concept for the MAK Permanent Collection *ASIA: China – Japan – Korea* in 2014. Following this artistic credo, Kawamata has made yet another intervention in the spectacular design of the MAK Permanent Collection, as was envisaged from the outset. The renowned Japanese artist has “liberated” the artworks from their vitrines and opened up entirely new perspectives on the exhibits. The vitrines that Kawamata designed in 2014, which reach all the way to the ceiling and are made of unpolished wood, have been rearranged to create a surprising, new experience of the space. Embedded in this new reinstallation, the curatorial view of the art and cultures of East Asia as well as the influence of Asian art on Europe will also change from 10 May 2016.

Kawamata’s work not only changes the perception of the visitors to the museum, but moreover his rejection of a classical presentation also provides unfamiliar opportunities for the curator to reinstall the content of the MAK Permanent Collection Asia. Paintings and graphic artworks form the foci for the grouping of the newly selected exhibits and admit interdisciplinary comparisons of content.

Immediately upon entering the exhibition room, the visitors’ eyes are drawn to four historically significant paintings from the 13th to 14th centuries, whose subjects and

styles emulate the art of the Tang period (618–907) and which are presented alongside ceramics and lacquerware from the Tang to the Yuan dynasties (7th–14th century). The dense arrangement demonstrates how the tradition of “three colors/sancai” continued across disciplines well into the 14th century.

The Chinese term “sancai” denotes multicolored glazes, though the colors green, amber, and beige dominate. Cobalt blue is often added as a fourth color. This simply colored ceramic design was developed during the Tang era; the lead glazes make the pottery more durable and waterproof. “Sancai” ceramics were exported to Central and West Asia as long ago as the Tang period; they influenced the technology and design of ceramics in Muslim countries and subsequently European ceramics of the late Middle Ages.

In the center of the room, the visitors’ attention is drawn to Chinese objects from the Ming and Qing periods (14th–20th century), which are displayed alongside a large-format silk painting in the Tibetan style. The painting was created for the sojourn of the 6th Panchen Lama Lobsang Palden Yeshe (1738–1780) in Chengde, the emperor’s summer residence. The Qianlong emperor (1711–1799) had invited the Panchen Lama to his 70th birthday celebrations in the imperial seat and commissioned the imperial workshops to produce large-format paintings to mark the occasion. As in the arts and crafts objects of this time, it is possible to identify a stylistic mixture in these paintings that combines both Chinese and European elements.

The focus of the third group of exhibits is on works that are among the “founding objects” of the MAK Asia Collection, which comprises some 25 000 works in total. On display are the objects with which Japan participated in the world’s fair in Vienna in 1873. Subsequent to the fair, they were passed to the MAK Collection and have since had a lasting effect on the West’s view of East Asian art and aesthetics. A large-format still life by Watanabe Kai (1835–1887) is an indication of the crossroads faced by Japanese art after the end of the feudal state of the Tokugawa shoguns (1603–1868). The decision whether to continue with tradition or to turn towards Western art was still open at the time this painting was produced; in the picture, fruit that has been painted three-dimensionally “hovers” in front of a neutral, golden background.

A juxtaposition of porcelains from Japan and Europe is created by the viewing window, which connects the rooms of the MAK Permanent Collection Asia with the MAK Permanent Collection Baroque Rococo Classicism; the latter was designed by Donald Judd (1928–1994) in 1993. It serves as a vitrine for Japanese porcelains in the Kakiemon style from the 17th and 18th centuries as well as for porcelains from the Vienna Porcelain Manufactory (from 1718), while also revealing the famous “Dubsky Room” (from

1725). This porcelain room from the Dubsy Palace in Brno is an outstanding example of Viennese porcelain production, which began in 1719.

Tadashi Kawamata (born in Mikasa, Japan, in 1953; lives and works in Tokyo and Paris) gained international fame at the age of just 28 as a result of his participation in the 55th Biennale di Venezia, where he expanded the Japanese pavilion into the Giardini with the aid of a wooden construction. He is regularly included in international exhibitions, such as the documenta in Kassel, Germany, in 1987 and 1992. Kawamata was Artistic Director of the Yokohama Triennale in 2005, Japan's largest contemporary art exhibition. He has been teaching at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris [National School of Fine Arts] since 2005.

Artwork for the reinstallation of the MAK Permanent Collection Asia is available for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://www.mak.at/en/press).

Supplemental Program

Artist's Talk with Tadashi Kawamata

Wed, 11 May 2016, 5 p.m.

MAK Permanent Collection Asia

Curator-Guided Tours with Johannes Wieninger

Thu, 12 May 2016, 5 p.m.; Tue, 24 May 2016, 6 p.m.; Thu, 26 May 2016, 5 p.m.

Panel Discussion

“The Locked-up Exhibit—the Locked-out Visitor”: Vitrines in modern-day museums

Tue, 24 May 2016, 6:30 p.m., MAK FORUM

With Matthias Beitzl (Director, Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art), Michael Embacher (Architect, Exhibition Designer), Paulus Rainer (Curator, Kunstammer & Schatzkammer, Kunsthistorisches Museum), Christian Schicklgruber (Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Weltmuseum), and Johannes Wieninger

MAK SENIORS

Wed, 15 June 2016, 3 p.m.

Guided tour through the exhibition, followed by further discussion at the restaurant Salonplafond im MAK, total price € 15

Please register in advance: T +43 1 711 36-298, education@MAK.at

MAK4FAMILY

Sat, 11 June 2016, 2–4 p.m.

Fant-Asia—fantastic Asian painting

In the new Asia gallery, everything was turned around and rearranged—we will go on a journey to discover celestial beings, giant plates, and try to understand a bit of yin and yang. Using green, orange, and white, we will copy “the old masters” on cardboard and paper. Perhaps some blue color will be used as well?

Workshop for the whole family (ages 4 and older) Fee for materials: € 2, Accompanying adults: € 7,50

Please register in advance: T +43 1 711 36-298, education@MAK.at

MINI MAK Tour

Sun, 20 November 2016, 11 a.m.

Fant-Asia—fantastic Asian painting

Guided tour for the whole family (ages 4 and older), Accompanying adults: € 7,50

Please register in advance: T +43 1 711 36-298, education@MAK.at

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Curator	Johannes Wieninger, Curator, MAK Asia Collection
Artistic Design	Tadashi Kawamata
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 / Reduced € 7.50 / Family Ticket € 13 Free admission for children and teens under 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Sandra Hell-Ghignone Veronika Träger Lara Steinhäuser T +43 1 711 36-233, -229, -212 presse@MAK.at, www.MAK.at

Vienna, 10 May 2016