

# The Destruction and Rebirth of Exported Old-Imari ～The Tragedy of Loosdorf Castle～

November 3, 2020 (Tue/holiday) to January 24, 2021 (Sun)

Okura Museum of Art



Loosdorf Castle

Japanese export porcelain known as Old-Imari was shipped by the Dutch East India Company to various European countries from the 17th century. The European nobles were fascinated by porcelain and competed with one another to acquire the best porcelain from Asia. They displayed these wares in so-called “porcelain cabinets” rooms in their palaces and mansions specifically designed to display their prized collections, of which many can still be seen in Europe today.

Beautiful porcelain collection from Asia was also displayed at Loosdorf Castle in the suburbs of Vienna in Austria owned by the Piatti Family. However, in 1945, most of the collection was destroyed by Soviet troops who occupied the village after the Second World War where Loosdorf Castle is located. The family was overwhelmed with grief by this tragic incident, but decided not to discard the porcelain shards. Instead, they decided to treasure them as mementos, so as not to forget the tragic event until now.

About seventy years have passed after the War, and Japanese research team has investigated the porcelain shards of Loosdorf Castle. As a result, we have discovered that the Loosdorf Collection contains historically precious pieces as well as various masterpieces.

In this exhibition, both the Loosdorf Castle Collection from Austria and Old-Imari wares from Japan are displayed. With the help of the latest restoration technique, we have managed to restore various pieces from the shards to their complete forms.

Finally, we would like to express special gratitude to the Piatti Family of Loosdorf Castle, as well as to all the museums, collectors, and others, who have kindly loaned us their valuable collections, and contributed to this exhibition in various ways.



Large octagonal dish with overglaze polychrome enamel design of pine, bamboo, plum, and crane (restoration) Japan / Arita kilns



White porcelain large vase (assembling restoration) Germany / Meissen kilns



The Shard's Room" at Loosdorf Castle's museum



## ■ Chapter 1:

### Arita —the birthplace of Japanese porcelain

In Japan, the production of porcelain began in 1610 after the Korean potter Yi Sam-pyeong (-1655) discovered petuntse, a raw material used to make porcelain, at Mount Izumi in Arita, Saga prefecture. This discovery led to the production of white porcelain with underglaze light blue decoration known in Japanese as “*sometsuke*”. As this porcelain was shipped to other regions in Japan through the port town Imari, it came to be called “Imari ware” (*imari-yaki*).

Thirty years later, the overglaze, polychrome enamel painting technique “*Iro-e*” was developed at the kilns of Arita. With added colors like red, yellow, and green, the wares became more luxurious. Around that time, the Chinese ceramic industry slowed down due to the turmoil caused by the Manchu takeover of China in the mid 17th-century, leading to the establishment of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). When the Qing Emperor prohibited maritime trade (*haijin*), the Chinese export wares were replaced by Japanese Imari ware. The Dutch East India Company shipped Imari ware to Southeast Asian and European countries, fueling the development of Arita’s porcelain industry.

In the mid-18th century, Japan stopped exporting porcelain for almost a century. However, by the 1840s, the trade had recovered through the efforts of the powerful Hisatomi merchant family from Hakata in Fukuoka prefecture. Before long, Japan’s isolated, feudal society ended and during the transition to the Meiji period (1867-1912), Arita’s porcelain industry greatly expanded. In 1873, the Meiji government participated in the Vienna World’s Fair, where giant flower vases and other porcelain works were exhibited. Arita, the birthplace of Japanese porcelain, was now the leading region in the production of export ceramics in Japan.



Lobed dish with overglaze polychrome enamel design of pine, bamboo, plum, and rock Japan / Arita Kilns



Large lidded Jar with overglaze polychrome enamel design of plum and chrysanthemum Japan / Arita kilns



## ■Chapter 2:

### The Tragedy of Loosdorf Castle and Old-Imari Export Porcelain

Loosdorf Castle which is located 70km north of Vienna was built in the 10th century and was owned by various families of nobles until the late 18th century. The ancestors of the current owner, the Piatti family, were originally the Greek but had emigrated to Italy. In the late 18th century, the Piatti family moved to Dresden and became involved in the ceramic trade, during which they started collecting Chinese and Japanese ceramics.

In the 1820s, Sir. Friedrich August Piatti (1803-1872) purchased Loosdorf Castle, which has been in the hands of the family since then. Today, the castle is home to an abundant collection of ceramics thanks to the family's enthusiasm for porcelain.

The Loosdorf Castle Collection includes Japanese Old-Imari, Chinese Jingdezhen, German Meissen and Austrian porcelain, Italian faience, Dutch Delftware and other ceramics.

By glancing at the remains of these ceramics, one can easily imagine the gorgeous decoration of the castle in the past. Tragically, after the Second World War, the castle was occupied by Soviet troops on their way back home, and as a result, its ceramic collection was destroyed. The beautiful ceramics were broken into small shards. Nevertheless, the family has decided not to get rid of the shards, but instead, by keeping and exhibiting the broken shards, they have tried to keep the memory of the post-war destruction alive.



A pair of jars with openwork design of tortoise-shell pattern (kikko-mon) and overglaze polychrome enamel design of Chinese lion and peony (partial restoration) Japan / Arita kilns



Babouche slippers with deep cobalt-blue (ai-yu) and gold design of landscape (restoration) Germany / Meissen kilns



A pair of lidded jars with overglaze polychrome enamel design of Chinese lion and peony Europe

## ■ Information

【Date】 November 3, 2020 (Tue/Holiday)-January 24, 2021 (Sun)

【Hours】 10:00 to 17:00 (Last admission 16:30)

【Closed】 Every Monday (the following weekday if it is a holiday),  
year-end and New Year holidays (Dec 28 to June 1)

### 【Admission Fee】

Adults	1,300 yen,
University and high school students	1,000 yen
Junior high school students and younger	Free

- There is a 200 yen discount for repeat visitors to an exhibition (please bring the ticket from your previous visit)
- There is a 100 yen discount for groups of 20 people or more
- Admission is free for persons with disability certificates and one accompanying person

### 【Venue】Okura Museum of Art

2-10-3 Toranomom, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001

TEL: 03-5575-5711, <https://www.shukokan.org/>

【Official twitter】 <https://twitter.com/KoimariLoosdorf>

### 【Access】

- (Tokyo Metro Nanboku Line) 5 minutes' walk from Roppongi-itchome Station  
(in the direction of Izumi Garden)
- (Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line) 7 minutes' walk from Kamiyacho Station Exit 4B
- (Tokyo Metro Ginza Line and Nanboku Line) 10 minutes' walk from Tameike-Sanno Station Exit 13
- (Tokyo Metro Ginza Line) 10 minutes' walk from Toranomom Station Exit 2
- (Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line) 8 minutes' walk from Toranomom Hills Station Exit A1 or A2

\*Exhibitions and events may be cancelled or changed depending on the spread of COVID-19 infections.  
For the latest information, please visit our website.

■Lectures and Gallery talk \*All lectures and talks will be held in Japanese only without language assistance.

◆Old Imari Reviving Project-Connecting Porcelain pieces, connecting the World

【Lecturer】 Machiko Hoshina (Representative, ROIP Japan Association, Inc.)

【Date】November 14, 2020 (Sat)

【Time】 14:00 to 15:30

【Venue】 Okura Museum of Art B1F Hall

【Fee】 Free with Museum admission

【Limit】 40 seats (first-come first-served)

【Reservations & Inquiries】 Okura Museum of Art Tel:03-5575-5711 (in Japanese)

◆What do the Loosdorf porcelain pieces talk about?

【Lecturer】 Masaaki Arakawa (Professor, Gakushuin University, supervisor of the exhibition)

【Date】 December 5, 2020 (Sat)

【Time】 14:00 to 15:30

【Venue】 Okura Museum of Art B1F Hall

【Fee】 Free with Museum admission

【Limit】 40 seats (first-come first-served)

【Reservations & Inquiries】 Okura Museum of Art Tel:03-5575-5711 (in Japanese)

◆About restoration of Loosdorf Castle Collection

【Lecturer】 Koji Mayuyama (Restorer)

【Date】January 9, 2021 (Sat)

【Time】 14:00 to 15:30

【Venue】 Okura Museum of Art B1F Hall

【Fee】 Free with Museum admission

【Limit】 40 seats (first-come first-served)

【Reservations & Inquiries】 Okura Museum of Art Tel:03-5575-5711 (in Japanese)

◆Gallery talk

A gallery talk will be held by Miho Moriya (art historian)

【Date】 November 17 (Tue), December 15 (Tue) and January 13, 2021 (Wed)

【Time】 All from 14:00

【Venue】 Okura Museum of Art

【Fee】 Free with Museum admission

## ■ Related Events at The Okura Tokyo

【Reservations & Inquiries】 The Okura Tokyo Sales Planning Division, Planning & Promotion Dept.  
TEL: +81(3)3224-6726 (Mon. - Fri. 10:00 – 17:00, closed on holidays)

### ◆ Lunchtime Concert & Talking Event \*Reservation required

A multi-course lunch will be offered following a talking event about the exhibition in a Banquet Room of The Okura Tokyo. A mini-concert will also be performed by a wonderful cello-and-piano duo with connections to Vienna. This will be an elegant experience as you enjoy thoughts and discussion about the city of Vienna.

【Time & Date】 11:30, January 15 (Fri), 2021

【Price】 ¥12,000 (includes multi-course lunch; price includes consumption tax & service charge)

【Lecturer】 Masaaki Arakawa (Professor, Gakushuin University) (in Japanese)

【Performers】 Sakura Toba (Cello), Yasuko Toba (Piano)

【Venue】 The Okura Prestige Tower 41st floor Banquet Room



Sakura Toba (Cello)



Yasuko Toba (Piano)

### ◆ Offering Austrian food and sweets at our restaurants

The Okura Tokyo All Day Dining “Orchid” (5th Floor, The Okura Prestige Tower) and Bar & Lounge “Starlight” (41st floor of the same tower) will be offering Austrian food and sweets during the exhibition period.