

PRESS RELEASE

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM APPOINTS TANYA UYEDA INAUGURAL CONSERVATOR OF ASIAN PAINTINGS

Expert conservator and researcher to develop the museum's
Atsuhiko and Ina Goodwin Tateuchi Conservation Center

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SEATTLE - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) announced that Tanya Uyeda is the museum's inaugural Senior East Asian Paintings Conservator. In this new role, she oversees the Atsuhiko and Ina Goodwin Tateuchi Conservation Center, which opened as part of the renovated and expanded Seattle Asian Art Museum in February 2020. She joined the museum in April 2023 with over 28 years of experience in the field, including over 20 years as a conservator of Japanese paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

A leader in conservation practice, education, and research, Uyeda arrives at SAM to assume responsibility for the care of the museum's East Asian painting collection, focusing on conservation treatments and sourcing the necessary specialized materials and tools. She hopes to share her knowledge of the role and practice of conservation with the public, in support of SAM's mission to connect art to life. Uyeda will work to establish the Tateuchi Conservation Center as a regional resource for the care of East Asian paintings.

The Tateuchi Conservation Center is the only museum studio of this type in the western US and one of only a handful of museum studios nationwide dedicated to the comprehensive treatment of East Asian paintings. Nicholas Dorman, Jane Lang Davis Chief Conservator, led the project to develop the center beginning in 2015. Thanks to a \$3.5M challenge grant from the Mellon Foundation in 2017, the center was established and built as part of the museum's comprehensive renovation and expansion that opened in 2020. Matching funds from the Atsuhiko and Ina Goodwin Tateuchi Foundation in 2021 enabled the center's staffing. With a traditional setting of tatami mats and low work tables shielded by shoji screens, this elegant space is viewable to the



public via glass doors, and a monitor outside of the studio shows videos on conservation practices.

Uyeda entered her field with a background in Japanese history, art history, and literature. Her academic credentials and Japanese fluency gained her admittance to a graduate-level conservation program in Japan, as well as an apprenticeship at a private conservation studio in Tokyo. There are no conservation training programs for East Asian paintings outside of Asia, and Uyeda is one of only four American conservators of a similar background working in a US institution.

Uyeda is particularly versed in treatments using a combination of techniques drawn from traditional and contemporary conservation practices. Many East Asian artworks represent multicultural identities that span geopolitical borders, and Uyeda is especially interested in the complexity posed by objects whose mounting style, format, and materials carry important clues about their journey to US collections. She has a special fondness for the hanging scroll mountings associated with *ukiyo-e* paintings of the Edo period (1603-1867).

“Tanya is a highly skilled and innovative conservator, and I’m thrilled to bring her expertise to join the other talented members of our conservation department,” says Nicholas Dorman. “The arrival of Tanya and the official launch of the work of the Tateuchi Conservation Center is a remarkable moment for SAM, our partners in the region, and the entire conservation field.”

“Although the West Coast has been well served by private conservators based both in the US and Japan, the Tateuchi Conservation Center represents an exciting opportunity for a new level of collaboration among institutions, conservators, and collectors in the preservation of these important artworks,” says Uyeda. “This field has a long and storied history based on traditional technique, craftsmanship, and proud cultural traditions. I hope to facilitate accessibility and understanding, and I look forward to sharing my knowledge and experience with colleagues and visitors.”

Prior to joining SAM, Uyeda worked as a conservator of Japanese paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston since 2000. She supported an active touring exhibition program, working with a team of conservators on a high volume of comprehensive treatments. She treated many of the paintings in *Hokusai: Inspiration and Influence, from the Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, which is currently at the MFA Boston and travels to SAM this fall. She has published and presented extensively on various aspects of Japanese painting conservation, including a forthcoming article in a special issue of the Smithsonian and University of Michigan co-published journal *Ars Orientalis* on reuse and recycling in Japanese art.

Born in Eugene, Oregon, Uyeda received a Bachelor of Arts in East Asian Studies: Japanese Language and History from Oberlin College in Ohio. She studied in programs at Doshisha University in Kyoto and the University of Nagoya before earning a Master’s Degree in Preservation of Cultural Properties from Tokyo University of the Arts. She apprenticed at the Handa Kyuseido, Co., Ltd., a member studio of the Association for Conservation of National Treasures. She is a longtime fellow of both the American Institute for Conservation and the Japan Society for the Conservation of Cultural Property.

Photo credit: Alborz Kamalizad.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.