

Unknown Japanese

Trousseau Box, mid-to-late 17th century

Edo period (1615-1868)

Black lacquer ground on wood with decoration in gold and colored Kōdaiji *maki-e*, *nashiji*, gilt metal ring-fittings, and pewter rims

Yale University Art Gallery; Gift of Peggy and Richard M. Danziger, LL.B. 1963, 2001.80.1

This large trousseau box follows the famous Kōdaiji style of lacquers, known for its contrasting zig-zag design of black and red pear-skin (*nashiji*) grounds. Developed in the 16th and early 17th centuries, the style is named for the memorial temple of the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) in Kyoto, where it was used on lacquer objects and architectural elements. Workshops in the capital continued to produce lacquers in this much-sought-after style.

Motifs from various seasons cover the sides of the box, including snow-covered bamboo, pine and camellia, wisteria, and peony flowers. The top of the lid features pine trees, cherry and plum blossoms, cranes and tortoises, representing wishes for longevity and good fortune. This box was likely intended as a luxurious wedding or anniversary present or included in a wealthy bride's dowry. Metal fittings in the form of paulownia crests support silk threads used to secure the lid and for carrying.

Okada Yoshio 岡田嘉夫 (b. 1977)

“Figured Patterns” Dried-Lacquer Tray with Sprinkled Design, 2016

Heisei era (1989-2019)

Kanshitsu lacquer body with black-lacquer ground; *maki-e*, *hirame* and inlay decoration

Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

Okada Yoshio 岡田嘉夫 (b. 1977)

Box with Full Moon Above the Clouds, 2016

Heisei era (1989-2019)

Togidashi maki-e kanshitsu box with gold foil moon

On loan from Erik and Cornelia Thomsen

Okada, a celebrated contemporary lacquer artist working in Kyoto, exemplifies the use of traditional lacquer techniques to generate completely new expressions. He creates the underlying surface of this box and tray in a process called “dry lacquer” (*kanshitsu*), building up layers of hemp cloth soaked with lacquer and modeling them into the shape of the object. This ancient technique was also used for 8th-century sculpture in Japan. Okada decorates the box using the painstaking burnished sprinkled-picture (*togidashi maki-e*) technique, wherein sprinkled metal designs are covered with another layer of black lacquer before being polished down to reveal the pattern on an entirely smooth surface. For the design of the tray, Okada has taken inspiration from motifs found in pre-modern textiles and lacquers.