

白倉二峰展

SHIRAKURA
NIHO
Retrospective







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白倉 二峰

Shirakura Niho

Biography

Shirakura Kinichiro (Kinro, Niho or Jiho, Kanyu, 1896-1974) was born the first son of lawyer and scholar Shirakura Shigeichi in the former castle town of Shibata city, Niigata on October 2nd 1896. His father was a noted Kangakusha. Kangaku was the pre-modern Japanese study of China; the counterpart of Kokugaku (Japanese Studies) and Yōgaku or Rangaku (Western or "Dutch" Studies).

He was initially inducted into the Nanga school of painting at the age of 12 (by Japanese count) under Hattori Goro. Kinichiro quit school and moved to Tokyo at the age of 17, entering the Mitzuye school of Oshita Tojiro in Western Oil painting and learning western style watercolor under Ishii Hakutei. Two years later in 1914 his oil paintings "Evening in the Fishing Village" and "Drying Wood at the Bayside" were first accepted into the 8th Bunten National Exhibition under the name Kinro. That same year his work "Light in Winter" was honored in the Tokyo Taisho Hakurankai Exposition. In 1915 his watercolors "Going to the Ocean" and "Cooling" were again accepted into the 9th Bunten National Exhibition where they were awarded Nyusen status. Despite his initial successes, he paled on Western painting and in 1917 decided to return to the Nanga school joining his initial teacher Hattori Goro who had relocated to Kyoto, the former capitol and cultural heartland of the archipelago. It was from Goro that he received the name Niho (Two valleys) after the Ninouji Mountain overlooking his hometown. Two years later Hattori fell ill, and Niho moved by introduction to study under Tajika Chikuson. His work was first accepted into the newly reformed 1st Teiten National Art Exhibition, successor to the aforementioned Bunten. A set of 12 album paintings in the gallery collection mounted on a screen from this era reflecting the influence of these two mentors are signed equally both Kinro and Niho, and we can say that it was from 1920 that he officially adopted the name Niho. Also, from around this time he began signing his paintings with the prefix Kamonishi Kochi-kyo (He of the high pond of Kamonishi).

1921 would be a fortuitous year for the young artist. He met his future mentor Komura Suiun and, along with Suiun, Ikeda Keisen, Yano Kyoson, Mizuta Chikuho, Mitsui Hanzan, and Kono Shuson he became a founding member of the Nihon Nanga-In society of literati artists, submitting to the first national Nanga-In Ten exhibition. That same year his first collection of paintings was published, and he began a two year journey in China, which had become a Mecca for Japanese artists. His work from this era is mystical and full of color. The following year he would exhibit two paintings at the Nanga-in and his painting "Deep Autumn" would be awarded Nyusen status at the 4th Teiten.

His 2nd teacher, Tajika Chikuson, passed away and whether it was this loss or his travels is unknown, but he submitted no works for public viewing in 1923. However, he is back again in 1924 debuting two works in the Nanga-In Ten and his submission is again awarded Nyusen status at the 6th Teiten followed by the same award in 1925 at the 7th Teiten.

He would consistently display at the Nihon Nanga-In until 1938. In 1926 he would move to the tutelage of Komura Suiun in Tokyo, and be awarded at the First Shotoku Taishi Art Exhibition. He would be awarded again at the 8th and 9th and 10th Teiten exhibitions in 1927, 28 and 29 respectively, receiving Tokusen status for this last work, and again in 1930 at the 11th Teiten. He received Nyusen at the 2nd Shotoku Taishi Ten also held in 1930. That year his first mentor Hattori Goro dies.

There is a consistent move away from the grandeur of his early works during this time, and his paintings grow ever more sparse as we enter into the 1930s. The washes of color grow thin, and there is an increasing emphasis on Ma (empty space).

He would be awarded every year until 1934 at the Teiten, but would begin another 2 years of travel in China in 1935. The national exhibition would be reorganized in 1935, and he would be awarded there consistently until 1940. He began exhibiting at the newly formed Nanga Renmei Exhibition in 1937 and in 1938 he established his own art salon. In 1940 the Shinjuku Isetan Art Gallery would host a solo exhibition. That same year he would change his name from Niho to Kanyu. The following year he would serve as a judge at the National Exhibition, and his submission from that year is held in the collection of the Korean National Museum. From this time, he would dramatically expand his production, widely exhibiting in various venues, holding expositions with the students of his salon and publishing. It is believed that for at least part of the war years, he returned to Niigata prefecture. In 1945 Niho (Kanyu) is 50 years old by the Japanese count. His third mentor, Komura Suiun, dies, Tokyo is in ruins and Japan surrenders to the Americans ending the Second World War.

Following this time, with the country depleted and struggling to rebuild, his submissions grow sporadic, exhibiting in a limited manner with the Nitten, successor to the Bunten/Teiten National exhibitions in 1946, 49, 53, 54, 56, 58 and last in 1962. His style also undergoes a fundamental change, exploiting the western style water-coloring he had studied as a youth in a dappled style with little Ma. He held solo exhibitions at the Shirakiya in Nipponbashi district of Tokyo and Daimaru in Kyoto in the late 1950s. He was recognized in the English language book "Who's Who Among Japanese Artists" published in 1961 as one of the important artists to visit when in Japan. He lived a secluded life from 1962 until his death in 1974 at the age of 78.

His final known painting, of Nijo castle, created in 1972 is held in the Kyoto prefectural Archives. Other work by him is held in the collections of the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, the Kyoto Municipal Kyocera Museum, the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Art, the Tenmon Museum in Osaka, the Korean National Museum in Seoul, the Smithsonian in Washington DC, the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Honolulu Museum of Art and the Kaluz Museum in Mexico City among others.

Kinro



夕日図

Size: 35cm × 35cm

Description: Light color on Silk



Transition from *Kinr*



青綠山水

Size: 124.5cm × 349cm

Description: Pigment on Paper

O to Niho



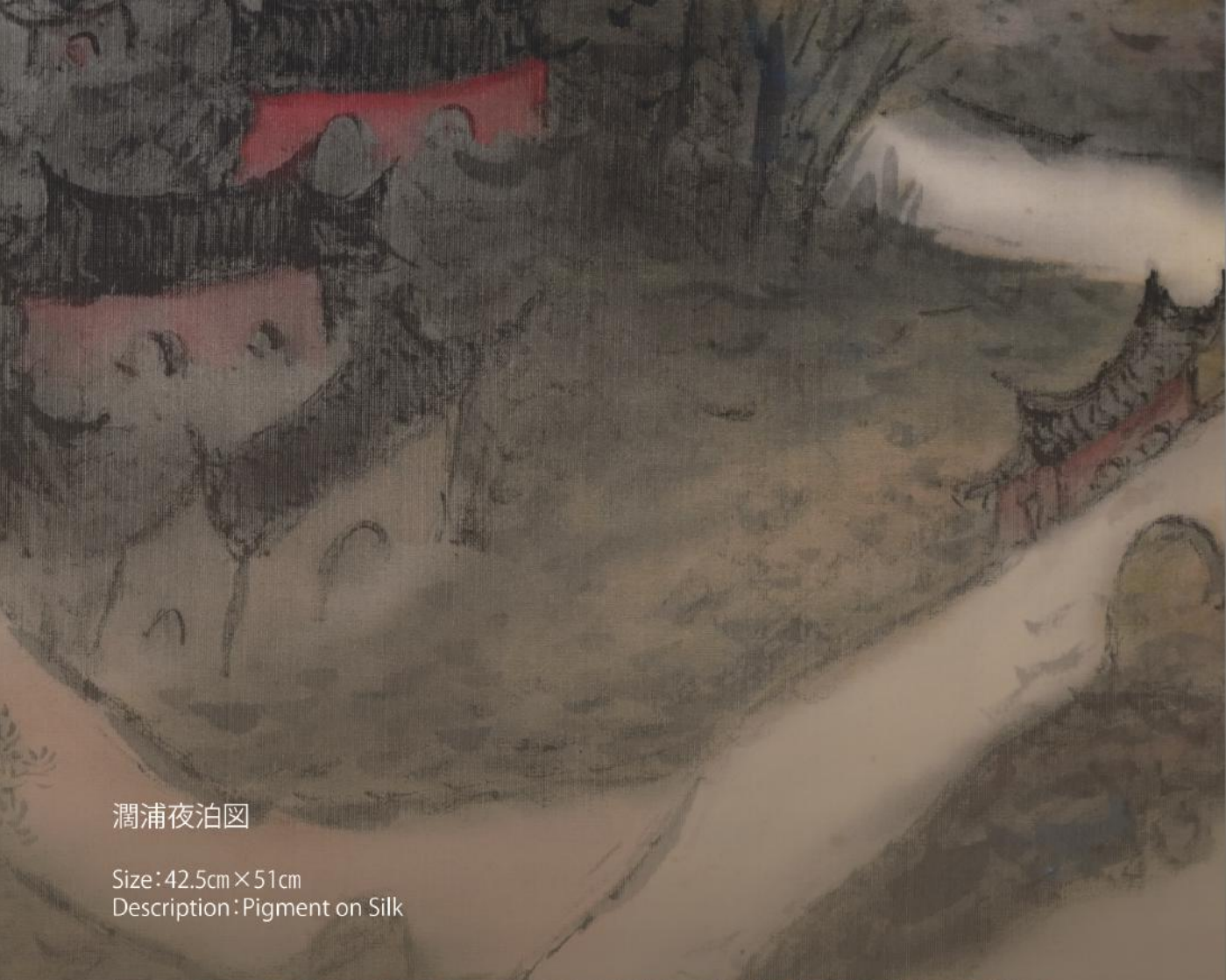
A set of 12 landscapes, originally likely created as an accordion album later mounted onto a six panel screen. Painted in a manner reflecting the conservative style of his teacher Hattori Goro, all the images are dated 1920, half signed Kinro, the other half signed Niho, and it is by this we might determine that it was during the production of this album in the summer of 1920 that he began using the name Niho.



12 Album pages







澗浦夜泊圖

Size: 42.5cm × 51cm

Description: Pigment on Silk





梅溪仙隱圖

Size: 34cm × 36.5cm

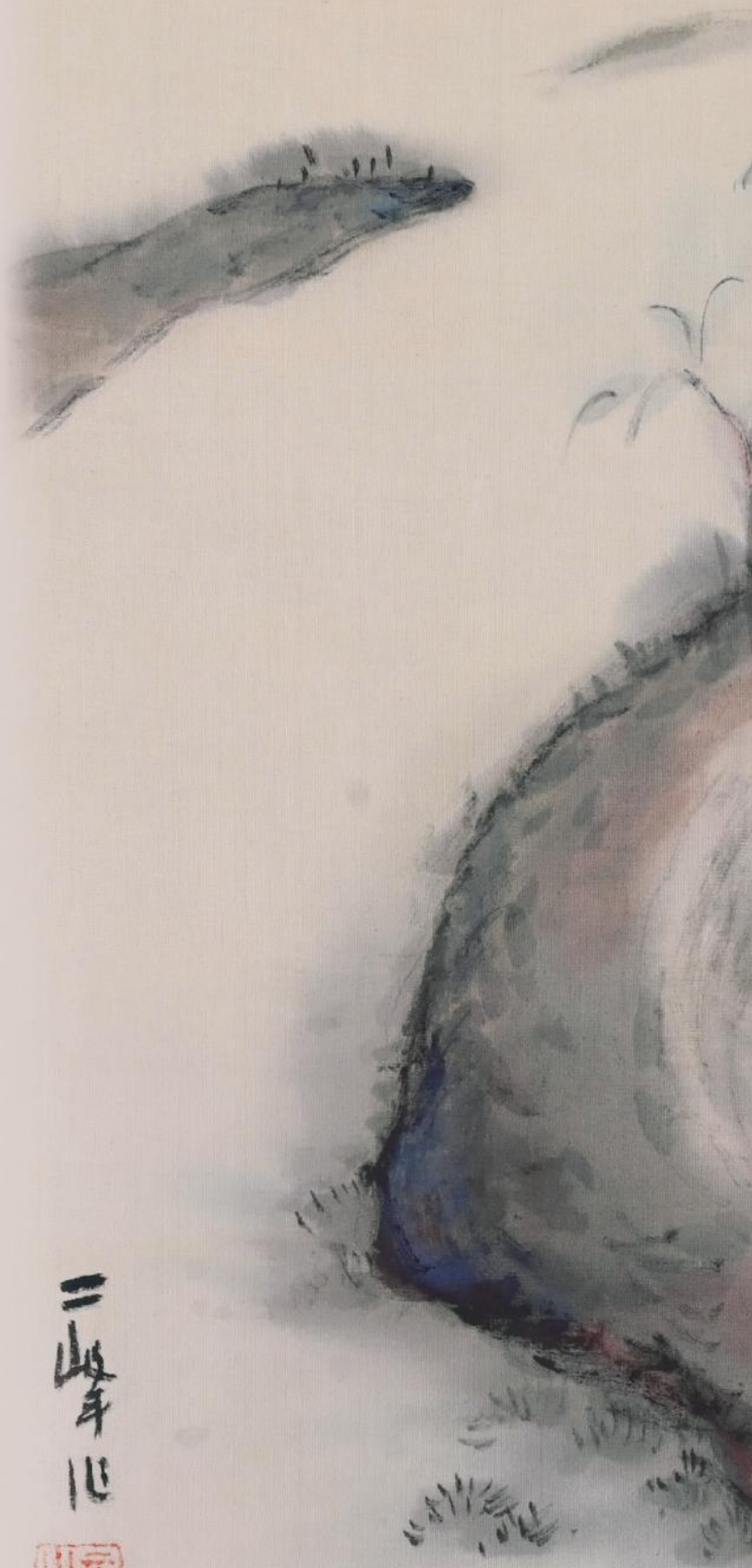
Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk



遠山船族図

Size: 138.2cm × 41.5cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk



二
山
年
心



梅花書屋図

Size: 37cm×41cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk



A Pair of scrolls

A Pair of scrolls depicting hermits in an idyllic landscape, sage of the plum forest and sage sage of the bamboo forest. The silk mounting is in the fresh green of Spring and yellowing green of Autumn respectively, both sharing the same patterns woven into the cloth.



竹林隱居圖

Size: 127cm × 26cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk





梅林隱居圖

Size: 126.8cm × 26cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk

梅徑書居圖

Size: 35.7cm×42cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk





深山通幽图

Size: 126cm×36cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk





深緑幽居図

Size: 145cm × 36cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk





清泉仙居

Description: Ink & Pigment





歲寒三友

Size: 137cm×41.2cm

Description: Ink, Gofun & Light color on Silk



青山霽後

Size: 130.5cm × 28cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Silk





遠浦帆影圖

Size: 123cm×28cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Silk





No.21 夏傍居釣

Size: 43.5cm42.8cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Silk



賀茂雪景

Size: 127.2cm × 33.5cm

Description: Ink, Gofun & Light color on Silk



雪庭小禽

Size: 127cm × 28cm

Description: Ink, Gofun & Light color on Silk





閑居聴泉

Size: 37cm × 42.5cm

Description: Ink & Pigment on Silk



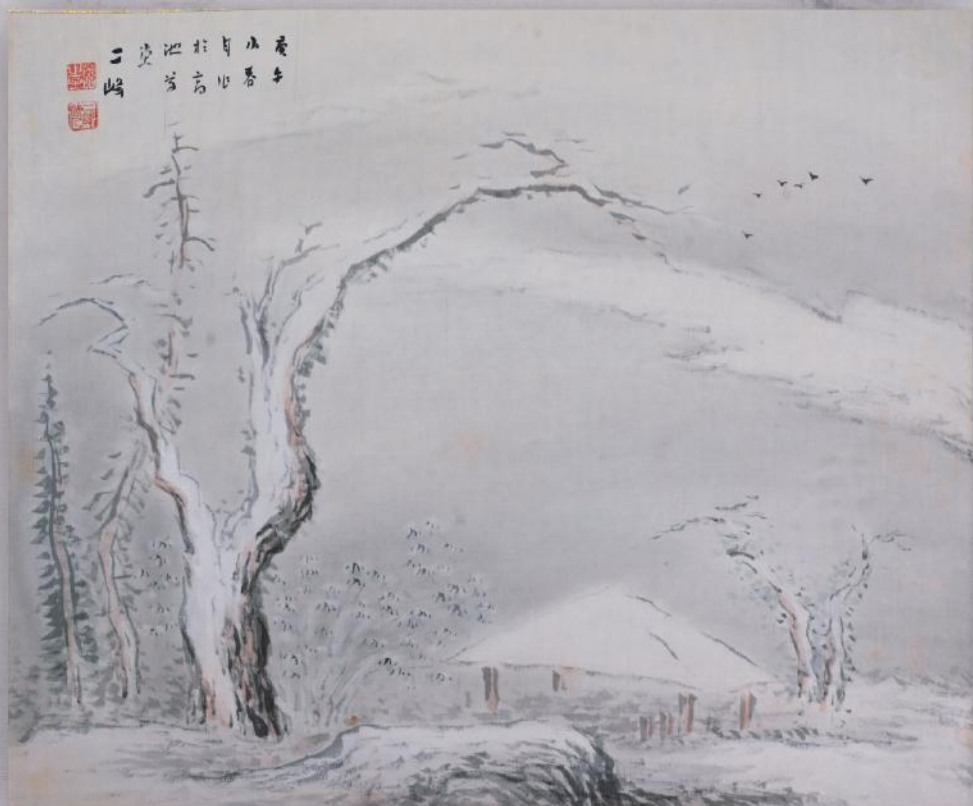


里山風景圖

Size: 30cm × 39.3cm

Description: Ink on Paper





丘天暮雪

Size: 41cm × 50cm

Description: Ink, Gofun & Light color on Silk



遠浦歸帆

Size: 45.5cm × 50.5cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Silk





春風駘蕩

Size: 42cm × 42.5cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Silk

停舟相對

Size: 128cm×27cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Silk





閑居幽趣

Size: 116cm × 28.3cm

Description: Pigment on Silk





獅子戲蝶圖

Size: 43.5cm × 51cm
Description: Pigment on Silk

A boxed set of 4 landscape scrolls showing a variety of his styles
to date exhibited at the Nihon Nanga Inten in 1936



秋江遠岫

Size: 47.6cm × 52cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Paper



山居聽泉

Size: 47.7cm × 52cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Paper



春風駘蕩

Size: 47.3cm×52cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Paper



寒江宿禽

Size: 47.3cm × 52cm

Description: Ink & Light color on Paper

Kanyu



蓬莱仙境图

Size: 46cm × 50.7cm

Description: Pigment on Silk





比叻山

Description: Pigment

Collaboration *with Niho*

This last category of artworks is, by far, the most unusual and difficult to find, but ever so rewarding, like jewels in the collection.

In the later 19th and early 20th century the borders between craftsmen were much less severe. Literati influence demanded that an artist be adept at multiple pursuits. *Tenkoku* (seal carving), painting, *Shodo* (calligraphy), *Kado* (flower arranging), Poetry, musical instruments martial arts and sword connoisseurship were all considered part and parcel to the literati lifestyle, often with some aspects of Zen meditation. Understanding of the Confucian classics, Sino-studies and an ability to hold one's liquor!

In addition to literati pursuits, it was not uncommon for artists, priests, and prominent figures to apply their brush to decorative items which furnished the spare rooms of the Japanese domicile at the time.

Here are several examples of items for daily use decorated by Shirakura Niho.







煙草盆

Size: 20cm × 7.6cm

Tabaco-bon smoking set, the "bon" containing a *Hi-ire* ceramic urn for containing a burning coal, and a bamboo pipe tap. The trays are decorated with colorful landscapes by Shirakura Niho.



茶器

Size: 5cm × 6cm × 6cm³

Set of Tea Cups made by the 19th generation Unrinin Hozan uniquely decorated with seasonal flora and accompanying verses in Sometsuke blue by Shirakura Niho.



梅花図菓子器

Size: 19.5cm × 19.5cm × 4.5cm³

Kashiki Sweets Dish decorated with plum blossoms by Shirakura Niho



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