



Toyohiko Nishijima (西嶋豊彦)

Artist Biography & Statement

Born in 1966 in Kohoku Town, Nagahama City, Shiga Prefecture, Toyohiko Nishijima was raised near Lake Biwa, surrounded by nature—trees, water, flowers, insects, and birds. This early environment deeply shaped his animistic worldview.

After high school, he worked to fund his own art education, eventually enrolling in art college. There he met painter Hirohiko Nakano, who introduced him to the spiritual and philosophical dimensions of painting. Nishijima held his first solo exhibition in 1993 and has since dedicated over 30 years to refining his vision. His creative path continues to evolve, constantly pushing the boundaries of traditional Japanese art.

Artistic Practice

Nishijima is known for his unique integration of three traditional Japanese techniques: handmade **washi** (paper), **urushi** (lacquer), and **nihonga** (Japanese-style painting). Each is rooted in history and requires deep technical mastery and sensitivity to materials and nature.

Washi (Paper)

Nishijima personally cultivates the plants used to make his washi, crafting sheets as thin as 0.03 mm with a soft gloss and translucency. During the forming process, he embeds delicate watermark-like drawings into the paper, creating subtle and poetic visual layers.

Urushi (Lacquer)

Drawing on a 9,000-year-old tradition, Nishijima applies multiple layers of lacquer, then polishes them meticulously by hand. The result is a deep, luminous black finish with a refined texture. The lacquer's hardening process—sensitive to humidity—reflects his careful dialogue with nature.

Nihonga (Japanese Painting)

He uses traditional pigments derived from minerals, plants, and shells, applied to washi using nikawa (animal-hide glue). His nihonga works exemplify a deep respect for Japanese aesthetic traditions and material culture.

Artist Statement

"We ourselves keep on changing, and that shows that we are alive."

— Toyohiko Nishijima

Nishijima's work embodies a lifelong journey of personal transformation, spiritual inquiry, and material exploration. His art is both a reflection of tradition and a vibrant continuation of it—celebrating life, change, and the poetic interplay of nature and human touch.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2025: Ashinoko Narukawa Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan
Evolving "Korin School" Daimaru, Kyoto, Japan
Evolving "Korin School" Mitsukoshi, Sapporo, Japan
Blooming "Korin School" Semiconductor x Flower, Daimaru, Osaka, Japan
Evolving "Korin School" Matsuzakaya, Nagoya, Japan
- 2024: *Evolving Kyo-Rimpa and Semiconductors*, Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo
Solo Exhibition, Keio Department Store, Shinjuku
- 2023: *Change of the Future Exhibition*, Ryomon Ossuary, Hiroo, Tokyo
Solo Exhibitions: Tobu Department Store, Ikebukuro; Matsuzakaya, Ueno
- 2022: *Hilton Exhibition*, Matsuzakaya Nagoya
New Otani Exhibition, Osaka Daimaru
Solo Exhibitions: Matsuzakaya, Nagoya; Keio Department Store, Shinjuku
- 2021: *A Day with Flowers* (collaboration with ikebana master Shogo Kariyazaki), Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo
Color is Light, Water is Blessing, Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo
- 2018: *Liberation – Challenge to Nihonga*, Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo

- 2016: *Washi, Urushi and Nihonga*, Nihonbashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo
Solo Exhibition, Shinjuku Isetan, Tokyo
Brand New Japanese Fusion Art, Kyoto Daimaru
- 2015: *Faces of the Gods of Japan*, Tokyo; Solo Exhibition, Hotel New Otani; Solo Exhibition, New York
- 2010: *Inner Light: Brilliance in Silhouette*, Takashimaya (Kyoto, Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya)
- 2007: *Floating Flowers in the Sky*, Takashimaya, Tokyo
- 1993–2024: Numerous exhibitions throughout Kyoto, Tokyo, Osaka, Paris, and New York

Group Exhibitions & Special Projects (Selected)

- 2023: Mitsukoshi Entrance Installation, Tokyo
- 2020: Art on Paper, New York
- 2019: Seattle Art Fair, Seattle
From Japanese Painting to Nihonga – Poetry of Aki, Mitsukoshi, Tokyo
- 2016–2018: *Scope Art Fair* (NY, Miami, Basel), *Context Art Miami*, *AAF London*
- Annual participation since 2009 in *Kan-Hikari Art Expo*, Nijo Castle, Kiyomizu-dera, and Sennyu-ji Temple (UNESCO sites)
- 2015–present: Annual exhibitions at Kodai-ji and Higashi Hongan-ji Temples

Awards & Recognition

- 2006: Kyoto City Prize for Emerging Artists
- 2003: Yomiuri Shimbun Prize (Museum of Kyoto)
- 2002: Work acquired by Kyoto City; Selected for Young Artists of Kyoto (Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art)
- 1999: Grand Prize Exhibition, Tatehiko Suga

Academic Positions

- 2007–present: Lecturer, Kyoto Saga University of Arts
- 2000–2011: Lecturer, Kyoto University of Art and Design
- 1995–2000: Lecturer, Kyoto College of Art