

Press release  
**Contemporary  
Japanese prints:  
Noda Tetsuya's  
'Diary' series**

A special display in the Mitsubishi Corporation  
Japanese Galleries  
5th April - 5th October 2014

Since the late 1960s, artist Noda Tetsuya (born 1940) has created an on-going series of prints under the title, 'Diary'. Intimate portraits of his family, landscapes experienced on his travels and objects from everyday life are recorded with sensitivity, wit and a certain mystery. Spanning almost fifty years and now reaching some five hundred works, the Diary series shows from within one individual's world, with evocative perspectives onto a wider society.

The unusual technique of the prints combines colour woodblock with photo silkscreen. Noda cuts woodblocks to print areas of colour and subtle shades of white background onto handmade Japanese paper. Photographic images which have been deliberately altered by the artist to express his personal sensibility are then printed over the colours using silkscreen. This adds the darker outlines and areas of shading. Noda describes the camera as his sketchbook, using it to fix the compositions that are most significant to him.

A special display in the British Museum's Mitsubishi Corporation Japanese Galleries presents twenty-two Diary prints by Noda Tetsuya, works that span his life and career. Commentaries by the artist accompany each print. The British Museum has been acquiring Noda's prints for over 30 years. Recent Noda acquisitions have been generously donated by the artist and also funded by the JTI Japanese Acquisition Fund.

The early pair of works *Diary: Aug. 22nd '68* and *Diary: Sept. 11th '68* celebrates Noda's engagement to Dorit Bartur, daughter of the then Israeli ambassador to Japan: "I made these two prints on the occasion of our engagement. They represent the similarities and the differences between our two cultures, as well as the characteristics and the individualities of each member of the families." The prints were awarded the International Grand Prize at the Tokyo International Print Biennale in 1968.

*Diary: May 7th '72* initiated an interest in still-life as a regular Diary subject: "The peaches I bought were a bit ripe and soft, so I placed them carefully on the pillow. So it has become a 'pillow picture', which in Japanese means an erotic picture."

More recently, the devastating Tohoku earthquake and tsunami is marked in *Diary: March 12th '11* a work begun the day after disaster struck. Images taken from TV news coverage are combined with personal mementos from the Rembrandt exhibition opening Noda was attending in Tokyo: "Watching the news on TV at home the next day, I was shocked to learn about the powerful tsunami, the explosion at the nuclear power plant and the awful disaster in the Tohoku area, northeast of Tokyo."

Noda's everyday subjects and colour and outline style sometimes recall traditional Japanese ukiyo-e prints. He has commented that he admires many ukiyo-e artists and how they observe everyday-life with the eyes of ordinary people, that is, with frankness and without ostentation.

**Notes to editors:**

Since winning the International Grand Prize at the Tokyo International Print Biennale in 1968, Noda Tetsuya has received many prestigious awards. His prints have been collected by major museums worldwide and have featured in numerous exhibitions in Japan and internationally.

In 2003, Noda was awarded the Medal with Purple Ribbon by the Japanese Government

In 2010, Noda served as a cultural envoy of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan in Israel and the UK

Until his retirement in 2007, Noda was Head of the Printmaking Department at Tokyo University of the Arts, he is now Professor Emeritus.

The Department of Asia at the British Museum has been acquiring Noda Tetsuya's prints since 1982 and currently has 131 works from the Diary series. Volume five of the complete catalogue of prints of Noda Tetsuya has recently been published by the Andrew Bae Gallery, Chicago

The Department of Asia at the British Museum has the UK's largest public collection of modern and contemporary Japanese prints, comprising some 2,000 works.

The Mitsubishi Corporation Japanese Galleries feature objects from the Museum's extensive Japanese collection, the most comprehensive in Europe. It includes objects, antiquities, ethnographic and historical items dating from ancient prehistory to the present day. The collection embodies the dynamic relationship between art, object and history in Japanese culture. These objects tell many of the

significant stories in the unfolding of Japan's past, encouraging us to enjoy a deeper engagement with its present and future. The galleries tell a chronological story highlighting the continuities of Japanese culture over the centuries, up to the most recent history. Star objects include the impressive Samurai lord's clock, enigmatic haniwa tomb figures, medieval Buddhist statues, Samurai armour and swords, beautifully crafted contemporary ceramics, and even modern manga.

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JTI is a member of the Japan Tobacco Group of Companies, a leading international tobacco product manufacturer. The JTI Japanese Acquisition Fund was set up in 2010 and helps the British Museum to expand its collection of modern and contemporary Japanese art. The project is part of JTI's wider Corporate Philanthropy programmes supporting the arts and less-advantaged adults. For further information please visit [www.jti.com](http://www.jti.com)

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