



# 150 YEARS of ART

This year France and Japan are celebrating 150 years of diplomatic relations, which began with the signing of a Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858. The Tokyo National Museum marked this anniversary with a tableware exhibition to highlight the influence of Japanese aesthetics on French art. Entitled "France Meets Japan," the joint project with the Musée d'Orsay in Paris ran until early August.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the West enjoyed a love affair with all things Japanese. Originating in Paris, this "Japonisme" craze spread throughout Europe and America. Its influence on the art world is well known, particularly through the work of impressionists such as Van Gogh and the Art Nouveau movement.

The Tokyo National Museum exhibition featured



**KAWANABE KYŌSAI**

From *Kyōsai's Drawings for Pleasure*, vol.1  
*Duck and chick* (Chiba City Museum of Art)

**SERVICE LAMBERT**

Dinner plate • *Duck and chick design*  
(LEFT)



**UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE**

"Carp" from the series *A Variety of Fish*  
(Tokyo National Museum)

**SERVICE ROUSSEAU**

Fish dish • *Carp and morning glory design*  
(BELOW)

the "Service Rousseau" tableware series created by ceramics manufacturer François-Eugène Rousseau (1827–1890) based on a design he commissioned from etcher Félix Bracquemond (1833–1914). Bracquemond is reputed to have been the first to recognize the artistic merits of Hokusai woodcuts used as packing material around a shipment of ceramics from Japan. This series, inspired by the works of Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige, was an enormous hit at the Paris Exhibition of 1867.

The Lambert Series of tableware, also displayed at the Tokyo National Museum, similarly used motifs from Hokusai, Hiroshige and Kawanabe Kyōsai.

A product of nineteenth century artistic rivalry between France and Japan, these innovative designs continue to enchant us today.

