

Lecture

The History and Conservation of Picture Frames in Britain and Japan

Organized by:

National Center for Art Research

Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

- Center for Conservation Science

National Museum of Western Art

Registration

Deadline: October 20



Date	: November 1st (Sat), 2025, 13:20-16:20 (Registration starts at 13:00)
Venue	: Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties – Basement Seminar Room
Registration	: Prior registration is required. (Up to 100 people) (https://forms.office.com/r/ycC1MmiaE4)
Participation fee	: Free
Access	: https://www.tobunken.go.jp/japanese/navi/map.html

※Spoken language will be Japanese.

This lecture will not be live streamed, partial archives will be posted on NCAR's website.

Purpose of the Lecture

When we appreciate easel paintings, frames are inseparable from the paintings themselves. However, in Japan, their importance has not been widely recognized, and information on their conservation and restoration remains scarce. This has long been an obstacle for museum professionals.

The history of oil painting in Japan begins in the modern period, and older artworks in museum collections are generally housed in frames. Yet, as traditional frames have increasingly fallen out of use over time, knowledge and resources concerning their history, conservation, and restoration have become difficult to access today.

In this lecture, we are pleased to welcome Ms. BARROW Yukiko, a furniture and frame conservator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Ms. NAKAE Kana, a curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and a specialist in the study of modern Japanese frames. They will present on the historical transition of frame styles and production techniques, as well as approaches to frame restoration.

Program

13:00	Registration
13:20	Opening Remarks
13:30 ~ 14:20	Presentation 1: BARROW Yukiko, "Techniques and Influences in Framing Paintings: the Museum Frame Conservation in Britain and Anglo-Japanese Design Exchange"
14:20 ~ 14:35	Break
14:35 ~ 15:25	Presentation 2: NAKAE Kana, "From Meiji, Taisho and toward Showa: Western-style frame in Japan between mid-19th century and mid-20th century"
15:25 ~ 15:40	Break
15:40 ~ 16:20	Discussion and Questions & Answers
16:20	Closing Remarks

Speaker Profile



BARROW Yukiko

Ms. Barrow is a Senior Conservator at the Victoria and Albert Museum (UK). She studied Furniture Conservation at West Dean College (affiliated with the University of Sussex, UK), obtaining accreditation as a BADA-certified conservator and a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip). She subsequently completed the university's Masters Program in Conservation Studies. She has worked in frame conservation at leading London museums, including the National Maritime Museum, Tate Gallery and private workshops. Since 2016, she has worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum, specializing in furniture, frames, and gilded decoration. Through her extensive conservation practice and research, she has contributed to both cultural heritage preservation and the advancement of art historical understanding.



NAKAE Kana

Ms. Nakae is a curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. She previously worked as a research assistant at the National Art Center, Tokyo, and as a research associate at the University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts. During her time at the University Art Museum, she began her research on frames in modern Japanese Western-style painting. She currently leads a research project titled "A Comprehensive Study of Frame Shops in Modern Japan as seen through Magazine Advertisements: A Case Study of Isogaya-Shoten" (JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [C]). Her research examines the development of frames and frame-making businesses in modern Japan, considering both Western influence and Japan's unique trajectory.

Presentation Overview

Presentation 1

Techniques and Influences in Framing Paintings: the Museum Frame Conservation in Britain and Anglo-Japanese Design Exchange

This lecture introduces the history of frame conservation at the Museum and the work of conservators in Britain. Drawing on examples from the conservation studio, it will explain in an accessible way how important cultural paintings and their frames are conserved and preserved for. The talk also explores how Japanese art influenced British frame design from the mid-19th century, and how British frame styles in turn influenced Japan. By looking at the often-overlooked frame, the lecture offers a fresh and engaging perspective on the history of artistic exchange between Britain and Japan.

Presentation 2

From Meiji, Taisho and toward Showa: Western-style frame in Japan between mid-19th century and mid-20th century

Since the Meiji period, oil paintings have been frequently exhibited in Japan, and frames became necessary for mounting works on walls. Oil painters who had studied abroad sought frames that were on par with those in the West, rather than the traditional Japanese-style frames, and frame makers responded to this demand by creating "Western-style frames." Western-style frames in Japanese museums today actually have their roots in the Meiji period. The lecture introduces some little-known stories about the people who worked hard to create Western-style frames in Japan, and will also discuss how early Western-style frames were influenced by Western art and how they developed.

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