

Paintings

The sliding doors (*fusuma*) and partitions of the Main Hall are adorned with paintings by the renowned artist Insho Domoto (1891–1975), who created the works to coincide with the hall's opening in 1969. Unlike murals in other temples, which tend to depict orthodox imagery such as Buddhist scenes and landscapes, the paintings here are highly abstract, a result of Domoto's studies in Europe when abstract expressionism was in vogue.

Domoto combines this European influence with conventional aspects of the Nihonga style of painting for which he is best known. His work eschews oils and acrylics in favor of natural pigments, gold leaf, and Indian ink to create a quintessentially Japanese-style abstraction. Many see the direct influence of Saihoji's grounds in the works, some of which seem to resemble flora and fauna, while others hint at the Buddhist world view.

There are 104 paintings in total. For most of the year only some of them are on display, but visitors who come to Saihoji from mid-January to late March are treated to a complete view of these works by one of Japan's most celebrated Nihonga masters.