

Toyota Municipal Museum of Art: Takahashi Setsuro Gallery

Works by lacquer artist Takahashi Setsuro (1914–2007) are on display in this gallery that sits across the sculpture terrace from the main Toyota Municipal Museum of Art building. It was designed by Taniguchi Yoshio (b. 1937), as was the museum's main building and the Dojien Teahouse. Most of the works on permanent display were donated to the city by Takahashi himself after he held a solo exhibition in Toyota in 1984.

Takahashi is best known for his innovative work with black *urushi* lacquer. This lacquer has traditionally been used in the fine and decorative arts as a finish for wooden objects, and occasionally as a medium to paint with. However, many of Takahashi's works involve coating a surface in black lacquer, carving patterns into it, adding more lacquer to the grooves, then filling them with gold leaf or powdered gold. Takahashi used these traditional craft techniques to create modern artistic works. His works are inspired by ancient cave paintings and clay figurines and feature ethereal, sometimes ghostly, patterns and shapes on a stark black background.

Many of Takahashi's works are on traditional folding screens and canvases. He also created wooden sculptures coated in lacquer, ink paintings, and he decorated everyday objects such as musical instruments and vases. The gallery is dark and quiet, allowing the golden patterns of the artworks to stand out. There is a lounge facing the garden and an area for special workshops.