

## **Takakura Katsuko Art Museum**

Toyoma-born artist Takakura Katsuko (1923–2015) is celebrated for her warm, gentle style of painting. She is especially known for her works in the Nihonga style, in which traditional Japanese painting techniques and materials are applied to modern themes. The museum showcases her versatility in works ranging from large ink wash paintings to storybook illustrations.

Takakura studied Japanese painting techniques at Joshibi University of Art and Design in Tokyo. After graduating, she moved to Hiroshima. When the atomic bomb was dropped on the city in 1945, she was living 3 kilometers from the blast epicenter. She miraculously survived, and after the war she returned to Toyoma and taught art to schoolchildren. Her career as a schoolteacher lasted many decades, and she continued to pursue painting during this time.

In her Nihonga paintings, Takakura often portrayed young girls and industrious women using warm colors and soft expressions. These large works, along with her peaceful depictions of temples and Buddhist figures, fill the main gallery space of the museum. These works are a far cry from the horrors of the Hiroshima bombing. Takakura struggled with her wartime memories, but with the encouragement of her community, she created a set of autobiographical paintings that reflect her experience of the atomic bomb. These paintings are displayed in a separate room.

Takakura wrote in an artist statement, “I grew up in the countryside, so I

do not have any sophisticated, urban-style works of art... but I am touched by the richness of humanity, and I till the soil... I let each of my paintings tell a story of the flow of eternity.”