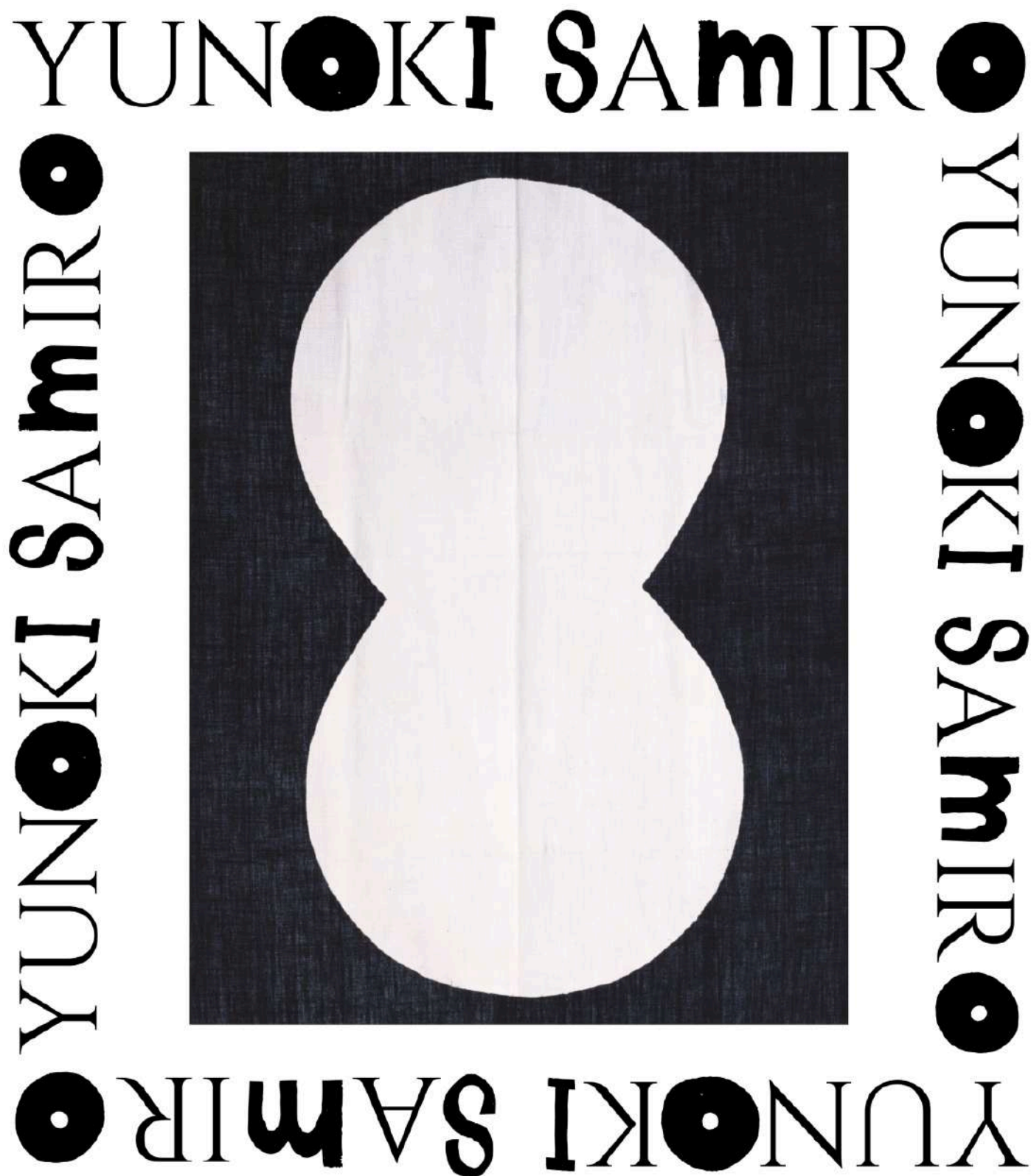


16 September, 2025

Yunoki Samiro: The Eternal Now



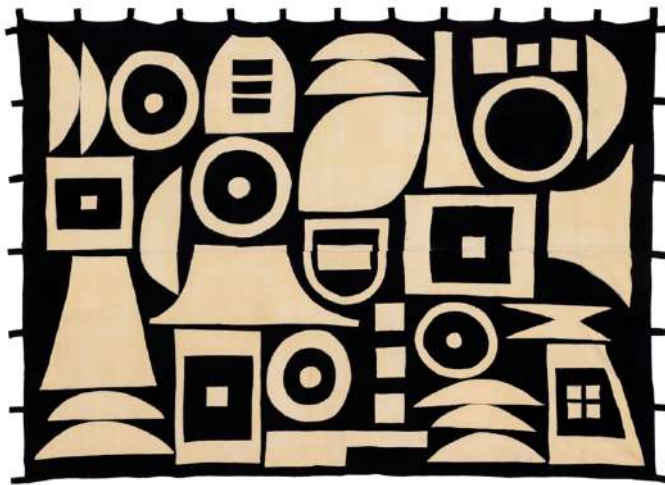
Cocoon (White) (detail) 2013 Stencil-dyeing, cotton Iwate Museum of Art

Yunoki Samiro was a stencil-dyeing artist who was active until 2024 at the age of 101. His works brought fresh air in the world of stencil-dyeing. With their unconstrained and humorous forms, they captivate viewers with their beautiful colors that harmonize pleasantly and are full of life. After encountering Yanagi Soetsu and others in the Mingei movement, Yunoki began his career as a dye artist under Serizawa Keisuke. Then he transcended the boundaries of genre to broaden his creative world into areas including book illustration and collage. This exhibition looks back at his 75-year career and also examines the theme of cities and places that are connected to him, inviting viewers on a journey through Yunoki's life. Yunoki's work, woven from his affection for the objects around him and the joy he finds in everyday life, shows us that the "now" is something to cherish, especially in times of change. Yunoki Samiro was a person who loved and enjoyed life, and with Mingei as a starting point, we hope you will enjoy the full breadth of his creative endeavors.



Little Bird
1992

Stencil-dyeing, pongee
Sakamoto Zenzo Museum of Art



Curtain
1961

Stencil-dyeing, cotton
Sakamoto Zenzo Museum of Art

Yunoki Samiro: The Eternal Now

Period: Friday, 24 October - Sunday, 21 December, 2025

Venue: Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery

Opening hours: 11:00 - 19:00 (Last admission at 18:30)

Closed on Mondays (except public holidays, 3 November, 24 November).

Closed on Tuesdays 4 November, 25 November.

Admission: adults 1,600 [1,400] yen / university and high school students 1,000 [800] yen
free for junior high and under

* Rates include admission to *Highlights from the Terada Collection part1 / From the Terada Collection 085 and project N 100 Tomita Masanori*

* Rates in brackets indicate discount.

* Free for person with disability certificate along with an attendant.

* Only one concession or discount can be applied at a time.

* Nonrefundable.

Organisers: Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation,
NHK Promotions Inc.

Sponsor: Nippon Life Insurance Company

Cooperation: Sogo Development Co., Ltd.

People in a Line (detail)
1982

Stencil-dyeing, silk
Iwatate Folk Textile Museum



■Inquiries

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Yunoki Samiro (1922-2024)

Born in Tokyo in 1922 as the second son of oil painter Yunoki Hisata, Yunoki Samiro was drafted into the military while studying aesthetics and art history at Tokyo Imperial University. After the war, he returned to Kurashiki, where his father was born. While working at the Ohara Museum of Art, he encountered the Mingei philosophy of Yanagi Soetsu as well as Serizawa Keisuke's *katazome* (stencil-dyeing) calendars, and he decided to become a stencil-dyeing artist. After learning the basics of stencil-dyeing under Serizawa, Yunoki participated exhibitions at Japan Folk Crafts Museum, Kokugakai (National Painting Association), and through the solo exhibitions he gave the world a huge number of dyed works of art with free and flowing shapes and rich colors. He also devoted himself to developing the next generation of artists. He was involved in teaching at Joshibi University of Art and Design for many years, starting in 1950, and from 1987 to 1991 he served as the university's president. While dye art remained the focus of his practice from the 1980s onward, his oeuvre transcends genres and includes prints, collages, picture books, three-dimensional works, and glass paintings. Starting in the 2000s, he became known for endeavors connected to modern life, such as exhibitions at the IDÉE interior design shop, artwork for cafés and hotels, and product development collaborations. At the same time, he continued to create dye artworks as a form of free expression, separate from works with practical applications.



photo: Kidera Norio

Highlights

Complete picture of 75 years of creative endeavors:

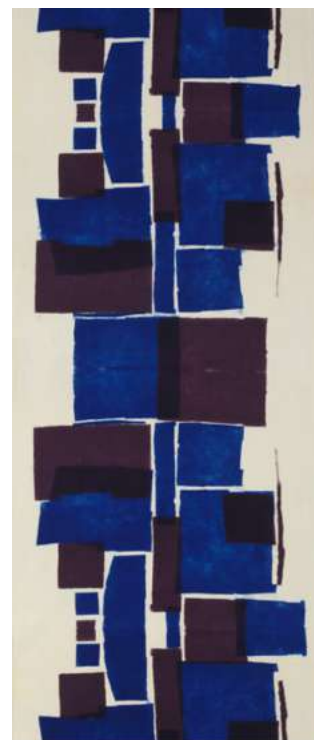
This exhibition provides a complete picture of Yunoki's 75 years of creative endeavors, from his first *katazome* (stencil-dyeing) fabrics to collages he produced at the age of 101.

A focus on cities connected to Yunoki:

A special exhibit examines the theme of cities within Japan and abroad connected to Yunoki. With a wealth of his works and materials related to the artist, the exhibition invites viewers on a journey through his life.

Free forms and rich colors:

Enjoy the free forms and rich colors of an artist who loved and enjoyed life even at more than 100 years of age.



left: *Original art for DEAN & DELUCA Café* 2021 Collage, paper DEAN & DELUCA photo: Okuda Masaharu

right: *Textile with geometric pattern, stencil-dyeing (chūsen)* (detail) 1950s Chūsen dyeing, cotton The Japan Folk Crafts Museum
photo: Murabayashi Chikako

Exhibition

1. Mingei is Always Inside My Heart

Inspired by Serizawa Keisuke, Yunoki embarked on a career in dyeing, learning *katazome* and tackling *chūsen*, a particular *katazome* dyeing technique. After much trial and error, he successfully applied the *chūsen* dyeing technique—originally used to dye the narrow fabric for items such as yukata (light cotton robes) and *tenugui* (light cotton towels)—to broadloom fabric, expanding his range into dyed products that suited Japan's increasingly Westernized lifestyle.

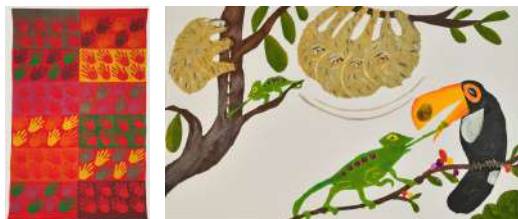


left: *Bingata style textile, stencil-dyeing (katazome)* (detail) 1948 Stencil-dyeing, cotton The Japan Folk Crafts Museum
photo: Murabayashi Chikako

right: *Textile with Romanesque pattern, stencil-dyeing (chūsen)* (detail) 1959 Chūsen dyeing, cotton The Japan Folk Crafts Museum
photo: Murabayashi Chikako

2. You Have to Be Filled with Excitement at All Times

In the 1980s, Yunoki feared that his own work was becoming too self-imitating, and so he sought new forms of expression such as printmaking, glass painting, and three-dimensional forms. His creative world became even richer as he delved into other areas, such as making picture books. As the demand for hand-dyed textiles used to make clothing shrank, dyed works were freed from the constraints of practical applications, and he naturally shifted to creating “works” for himself.



left: *Textile with hand pattern, stencil-dyeing (katazome)* 1983 Stencil-dyeing, silk Private collection

right: *Original illustration for picture book "Toko, Googoo, and Kiki"* 2004 Watercolor, paper
Izumi Museum of Art

3. The Joy of Travel

With the theme of “A journey through Yunoki's life,” this section showcases works and materials related to places connected to the artist and his travels both inside and outside of Japan. There are works and materials that tell the story of each place's connection to Yunoki: there is Okayama Prefecture, where he first encountered Mingei folk art; Nagano Prefecture, where he spent his youth; Shizuoka Prefecture, where he began to learn the art of dyeing; Iwate Prefecture, the hometown of his role model, poet Miyazawa Kenji; and Shimane Prefecture, home to the Funaki family of pottery makers, who were close friends with Yunoki. The exhibition will also show the products of his voyages to India, which had a major influence on his work, and Paris, a city that he admired.



left: *Original art for picture postcard "The Restaurant of Many Orders"* c.1975 Stencil-dyeing, pigment, paper
Kogensha photo: Iwane Daisuke

right: *Original art for KAIUNDO advertisement* c.2000 Stencil-dyeing, paper
KAIUNDO

4. Tomorrow, Today Will Be Yesterday

“I didn't really come of age until I was 80 years old,” joked Yunoki. Yunoki's practice actually became even broader in the 2000s. Collaborating with the younger generation provided him new inspiration. He exhibited his works at the IDÉE interior design shop and created works for commercial spaces like cafés and hotels. In times fraught with hardship—like the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and the pandemic that took hold in 2020—the freedom and strength of Yunoki's works shines even stronger and brightens our lives.



left: *2016, stencil-dyeing (katazome)* 2016 Stencil-dyeing, pongee The Japan Folk Crafts Museum photo: Murabayashi Chikako
right: *Sunlight Through Trees* 2019 Stencil-dyeing, cotton Matsumoto City Museum of Art
photo provided by Gallery TOM