# WASHI: Japanese Paper in Collections Outside Japan (Budapest, 5-6 Nov 26)

Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre (OMRRK), Building C, 33–35 Szabolcs Street, Budapest 1135, Hungary, Nov 5–06, 2026

Mirjam Dénes

WASHI: Japanese Paper in Collections Outside Japan – Research, Diagnostics, Preservation, and Conservation

International Conference

Organised by the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre, Budapest, in connection with the exhibition Washi – The Thousand Faces of Japanese Paper, held at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts from 25 September 2026 to 31 January 2027. The project is supported by the Japan Foundation, Grant Program for Japanese Studies Projects.

Theme, Objectives, and Scope

WASHI: Japanese Paper in Collections Outside Japan aims to establish a sustainable interdisciplinary framework for the study and preservation of Japanese paper-based objects in Hungary, the broader Central European region, and cultural institutions both in and outside Japan. By connecting Japanese Studies, art history, conservation, and material diagnostics, the conference seeks to strengthen professional knowledge, encourage international exchange, and create a regional knowledge hub for institutions caring for Japanese paper collections outside Japan.

Washi, traditional Japanese paper, inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, is a material of deceptive simplicity. Composed of bast fibres from plants such as kōzo, mitsumata, and gampi, it possesses physical and chemical characteristics distinct from European wood-pulp or rag papers. In the context of Asian art, washi is not merely a substrate for imagery: it may function as a structural component, a binding material, and often as an object of art in itself.

European collections hold a vast number of Japanese paper-based artefacts, ranging from books, woodblock prints, handscrolls and hanging scrolls (kakemono) to folding screens (byōbu), manuscripts, maps, albums, stencils, and ritual or everyday paper objects. However, a critical knowledge gap remains in many institutions outside Japan. European conservation curricula have traditionally focused on Western paper traditions. Consequently, many museums and collections lack the specialised expertise required to diagnose biological degradation, mechanical damage, or chemical deterioration specific to Asian papers and mounting structures.

Furthermore, most small- and medium-sized museums cannot send objects to Japan for traditional hyōgu mounting or conservation. This leaves a significant part of Japanese cultural heritage outside Japan in a vulnerable position: stored in conditions often designed for Western artworks, handled within institutional frameworks not always adapted to their material needs, and sometimes affected by earlier repairs that may prove damaging in the long term.

The conference aims to bridge the gap between high-level Japanese expertise and the realities of European museum collections. We ask: How can institutions outside Japan maximise the lifespan of these fragile artworks using available resources, advanced diagnostics, preventive conservation, and chemically compatible minor treatments, without necessarily requiring full-scale intervention in Japan?
The programme will include keynote lectures by invited specialists, including Kyoko Kusunoki, Senior Conservator for Japanese Paintings at the British Museum's Hirayama Studio, and Yoan Rosenziveig, conservator specialising in Japanese and East Asian paintings, and founder of Shōendō. Their expertise connects Japanese conservation traditions, Western museum practice, and the adaptation of Japanese methods to collections outside Japan.

The conference will combine scholarly papers, institutional presentations, a roundtable discussion, and guided visits to the OMRRK facilities and the Washi exhibition at the Ferenc Hopp Museum. The current programme structure includes thematic panels on case studies, regional perspectives, advanced research, and methodology.

Preliminary programme:
https://hoppmuseum.hu/files/inlineattachments/Preliminary_programme_Washi_FINAL.pdf (see detailed preliminary programme below)

Registration and ticket purchase
Conference participation requires both the purchase of a conference pass and completion of the registration form.

Ticket purchase link:
https://ligetplusz.hu/international-conference-hopp-2026
Tickets are available from 16 September 2026.

Registration form:
https://nextcloud.szepmuveszeti.hu/index.php/apps/forms/s/nNLPGG5sZAJW9qxdyjbzzcRE

After purchasing your ticket, please complete the registration form and provide your purchased ticket number. If you purchase a student pass, please upload proof of current higher education enrolment in the registration form.

Conference passes
Full conference pass, 2 days: 120 EUR / 44,000 HUF
Student conference pass, 2 days: 60 EUR / 22,000 HUF

The conference pass includes:
1. Two-day access to the WASHI conference
2. Access to all presentations and roundtable discussions

3. Guided tour of the National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre
4. Guided tour of the exhibition Washi – The Thousand Faces of Japanese Paper at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts on 6 November
5. Free weekend entrance to the Washi exhibition at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts on 7–8 November
6. Coffee breaks, refreshments, and buffet lunch on the conference days

Please note: the conference pass does not include workshop participation. Workshop tickets must be purchased separately.

Workshops:
Introduction to the handling, housing and exhibition of Japanese hanging scrolls and handscrolls

Two small-group workshops will be held on Friday, 6 November 2026. Workshop availability is very limited, so make sure to buy your ticket on time!

The workshops will demonstrate the proper handling, examination, and preventive care of Japanese paper-based objects, using selected works from the Ferenc Hopp Museum's collection. Through objects in varying conditions and degrees of damage, participants will observe the challenges that may arise during storage, handling, display, and long-term preservation. The workshops aim to provide practical guidance on what can be done safely in an institutional setting, what precautions are necessary, and when the assistance of a specialised conservator should be sought.

Workshop with Yoan Rosenziveig, conservator specialising in Japanese and East Asian paintings, and founder of Shōendō
Friday, 6 November, 14:15–15:45 Workshop fee: 80 EUR / 30,000 HUF

Workshop with Kyoko Kusunoki, Senior Conservator for Japanese Paintings at the British Museum's Hirayama Studio
Friday, 6 November, 16:00–17:30 Workshop fee: 80 EUR / 30,000 HUF

Workshop tickets are available separately from the conference pass. The workshop fee includes access to one 90-minute small-group workshop, including theoretical and practical elements, tools, observation of selected artefacts, and Q&A.

Registration form:
All participants are kindly asked to complete the registration form after purchasing their ticket. The form collects the information necessary for conference administration, including ticket number, affiliation, workshop registration, dietary restrictions, food allergies, accessibility requests, and GDPR consent for photo, video, and audio documentation during the conference.
https://nextcloud.szepmuveszeti.hu/index.php/apps/forms/eNwrCgCqy92FHKF7/submit

Important note for student participants
Participants purchasing a student pass are required to upload proof of current higher education enrolment in the registration form.

For questions regarding registration, please contact:

washi@hoppmuseum.hu

We warmly invite you to join us in Budapest for two days of lectures, discussions, workshops, and professional exchange dedicated to the research, diagnostics, preservation, and conservation of Japanese paper in collections outside Japan.

Conference Organisers
Dr Györgyi Fajcsák
Director, Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts

Mirjam Dénes
Curator of Japanese Art, Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts

Dr Béla Tamás Kónya
Director of National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre

Emőke Csollány
Head of Administration, Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts

WASHI: Japanese Paper in Collections Outside Japan
Research, Diagnostics, Preservation, and Conservation
International Conference - Preliminary Programme

Day 1 (5 November 2026)
Venue: Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre (OMRRK) , Budapest, Building C - Bródy Zsigmond & Adél Event Space, H-1135 Budapest, Vágány utca 4, Hungary

9:00-9:30 Registration

 9:30–9:40 Welcome Address
Speaker: Dr. Györgyi Fajcsák, Director, Museum of Fine Arts – Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts
 9:40–9:50 Introduction to the Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre
Speaker: Dr. Béla Kónya, Director, Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre
 9:50–10:00 Japan Foundation welcome address
 10:00–10:20 The Hopp Collection and Washi: History, Successes, and Challenges
Speaker: Mirjam Dénes, Curator of Japanese Art, Museum of Fine Arts – Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts

10:20– 10:35 Coffee break

 10:35–11:20 Keynote I: Ethics, Interpretation, and the Conservation of Japanese Pictorial Art Overseas: Case Studies from the British Museum
Speaker: Kyoko Kusunoki, Senior Conservator for Japanese Paintings at the British Museum’s Hirayama Studio

 11:20–12:05 Keynote II: Conserving Kakejiku Outside Japan: Objects, Skills, and Networks. From Training in Kyoto to Conservation Practice in Europe
Speaker: Yoan Rosenziveig, Conservator of Japanese paintings, and founder of Shōendō
 12:05–12:20 Q&A Morning session

12:20– 13:15 Buffet lunch

Panel I – DIAGNOSTICS OF JAPANESE PAPER-BASED OBJECTS
 13:15–13:35 Mapping the Colours of Genji: An Analytical Study of Pigments on Washi in the Budapest Genji Monogatari Album
Speaker: Edina Kránitz, Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre
 13:40–14:00 New perspectives in Ukiyo-e prints conservation: exploring the properties of nanocellulose for the treatment of weakness and tears
Speaker: Carolina Rigon, Istituto Centrale per il Restauro and Universitá La Sapienza, Rome
 14:05–14:25 Shining Light on Floating Worlds: Revealing the Materiality of Five Japanese Paper Scroll Paintings through a Multi-Analytical Study
Speaker: Babett Túrós, Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre
 14:30–14:50 Japanese Prints – a Closer Look: Collaborative Research at the Rijksmuseum
Speakers: Juliet Baines, paper conservator, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Leila Sauvage, Paper Conservator and Researcher, Rijksmuseum
 14:50 – 15:00 Q&A

15:00 – 15:20 Coffee break

Panel II – CONSERVING WASHI IN ALL SHAPES AND FORMS
 15:20–15:40 A Learning Curve, The Conservation of a Palanquin
Speaker: Susan Catcher, Senior Paper Conservator at the Victoria and Albert Museum
 15:45–16:05 Byōbu: Wild Geese and Reeds, from the National Museum in Poznan or from Japan? How Conservation Decisions Influence the Perception of Object of Art
Speakers: Joanna Kokoć, National Museum in Poznań. Head of the Ethnographic Objects of Art Conservation Studio, Heejae Won: Associate Professor, Tohoku University of Art and Design
 16:10–16:30 Conservation of Japanese Books in the British Museum: Evolution of Treatment and Decision Making
Speaker: Matthias Sotiras, Conservator for Japanese Paintings at the British Museum’s Hirayama Studio
 16:35–16:55 From Tool to Heritage: Conservation Challenges of Katagami
Speaker: Laura Basset, Paper Conservator, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris
 16:55–17:05 Q&A

17:05–17:15 Short break

Panel III – A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PAPER THROUGH RESEARCH I.
 17:15–17:35 From Whole to Fragment and Back Again: Turning Text into Paper, Remaking the Material Past for the Present
Speaker: Julie Nelson Davis, University of Pennsylvania

 17:40–18:00 Introduction to the "Sumiyoshi Family Funpon" at Tokyo University of the Arts: Through a Comparison with the Tale of Genji Album at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts
Speaker: Kikuchi Ayako, The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts
 18:00–18:10 Q&A

18:20–19:00 Roundtable Discussion: "Washi and Realistic Strategies for Western Museums" followed by drinks and bites

20:00 Building closes

Day 2 (6 November 2026)
Venues: Museum of Fine Arts – National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre (OMRRK), Building C (Conference) and Building A (Workshops and tours), H-1135 Budapest, Vágány utca 4, Hungary
Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts (Exhibition visits), H-1062 Budapest, Andrássy út 103.

09:00 – Building open

09:50–10:00 Greetings & Daily Schedule (Mirjam Dénes)

Panel IV – CONSERVING JAPANESE PAINTINGS ON PAPER
 10:00–10:20 The Nirvana of Nichiren: Conservation and Restoration of a Japanese Hanging Scroll as a Collaborative Conservation Project
Speaker: Mayumi Nishikawa, Paper conservator, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden State Art Collections
 10:25–10:40 The comprehensive restoration of an emakimono from the Stibbert Museum in Florence and the pilot project for the restoration of the kakejiku's collection from the Castle of Agliè at the Central Institute for Restoration: comparison of methods
Speaker: Maria Vera Quattrini, Istituto Centrale per il Restauro, Roma
 10:45–10:00 The Conservation of Seventeen Western-Mounted Japanese Paintings from Castello di Agliè – Turin
Speaker: Ambra D'Aleo, La Venaria Reale, Turin
 11:05–11:20 Man on a Carriage with Horses: Restoration of a Japanese Painting from the Ducal Castle of Agliè
Speaker: Michela Corona
 11:20 –11:30 Q&A

11:30 – 11:50 Coffee break

Panel V – A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PAPER THROUGH RESEARCH II.
 11:50–12:10 Japanese Paper, Mughal Images: Rembrandt's Drawings and the Material Traces of Cross-Cultural Encounter
Speaker: Carissa Ho, Culture, Criticism and Curation, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London
 12:15–12:35: Silk Surfaces, Paper Structures: Washi as Structural Element in the Ishuretsuzo – Kakizaki Hakyō Ainu Chief Portraits and the Challenge of Conserving a Japanese Work within

French Collections
Speakers: Amandine Royer, Curator for Drawings and Prints, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie de Besançon and Dr. Coralie Legroux, Senior Conservator of Japanese Paintings in private practice, accredited for the Musées de France
 12:34–12:45: Q&A

12:45– 13:45: Buffet Lunch

WORKSHOPS, NATIONAL MUSEUM CONSERVATION AND STORAGE CENTER (OMRRK) LABORATORY TOURS AND WASHI EXHIBITION VISITS
 13:45 – 14:05 – Plenary session: Introduction to the handling, housing and exhibition of Japanese hanging scrolls and handscrolls
Speakers: Yoan Rosenziveig and Kyoko Kusunoki

 14:15 – 15:45 – Workshop A: practical session led by Yoan Rosenziveig

 14:15 – 15:45 – Parallel options for participants not attending the workshop:
o guided visits to the diagnostic laboratories of the OMRRK
o guided visit to the exhibition Washi - The Thousand Faces of Japanese Paper at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts
participants can register for tours and visits of their choice in advance

15:45 – 16:00: Coffee Break

 16:00 – 17:30 – Workshop B: practical session led by Kyoko Kusunoki

 16:00 – 17:30 – Parallel options for participants not attending the workshop:
o guided visits to the diagnostic laboratories of the OMRRK
o guided visit to the exhibition Washi - The Thousand Faces of Japanese Paper at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts
participants can register for tours and visits of their choice in advance

18:00 Building closes

Reference:
CONF: WASHI: Japanese Paper in Collections Outside Japan (Budapest, 5-6 Nov 26). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 18, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54263>.