



**THE FREER HOUSE**

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**Still Making Waves:**  
**Charles Lang Freer and Sotatsu's *Waves at Matsushima***  
**Sunday, November 19, 2:00 pm**

by

Frank Feltens, PhD

Curator of Japanese Art, National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution



Tawaraya Sotatsu (Japanese, active ca. 1600–43), *Waves at Matsushima*, early 1600s, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1906.231–232.

**LECTURE LOCATION**

Detroit Institute of Arts  
Danto Lecture Hall

*FREE with  
DIA general admission.  
Registration requested,  
please scan QR code*



*Co-hosted by*

Japan America Society  
of Michigan and  
Southwestern Ontario

Friends of  
Asian Arts & Cultures,  
Detroit Institute of Arts

One of America's leading experts on Japanese art, Frank Feltens, Curator of Japanese Art, Freer Gallery of Art, National Museum of Asian Art (FGA, NMAA), Smithsonian, will focus his lecture on one of the great masterpieces in the museum's collection, the pair of 17th c. folding screens, *Waves at Matsushima*, by Tawaraya Sotatsu. His talk will highlight the screens' unique association with Detroit and the museum's founder, Charles Lang Freer, and their recent high-resolution reproduction.

Canon, Inc., the Kyoto Culture Association, and the FGA, NMAA have created stunning replicas of some of the museum's most important works of Japanese art, including *Waves at Matsushima*, using a combination of advanced technology and traditional crafts. The Tsuzuri Project facsimiles can travel and be seen by wider audiences, expanding Freer's and the museum's goal of cross-cultural understanding between Asia and America through the arts.

Freer acquired *Waves at Matsushima* in Japan in 1906 and displayed it in his Detroit home. Upon his death in 1919, the screens were donated to the Smithsonian with the rest of his extraordinary collection of Asian and American art, to be installed in the newly built Freer Gallery of Art he established in Washington, D.C.. The museum, with deep roots in Detroit, is celebrating its centennial year as America's first National art museum, first Asian art museum, and first art museum of the Smithsonian.

**LECTURE SPONSORS**



## SPEAKER'S BIO

**Frank Feltens** is Curator of Japanese Art, Freer Gallery of Art, National Museum of Asian Art (NMAA), Smithsonian Institution. A native of Germany, he received his PhD in art history from Columbia University. He is a specialist in Japanese painting with a particular focus on the late medieval and early modern eras.



Before joining the NMAA, Dr. Feltens held research positions at MoMA, the National Museum of Asian Art in Berlin, and the Nezu Museum in Tokyo. He has organized several exhibitions at NMAA, most recently *Mind Over Matter: Zen in Medieval Japan*, with Yukio Lippit. Dr. Feltens is the author of six books, including *Hokusai's Brush* (Smithsonian, 2020), *Ogata Korin: Art in Early Modern Japan* (Yale, 2021), and with Yukio Lippit, *Sesson Shukei: A Zen Monk Painter in Medieval Japan* (Hirmer, 2021).



Freer in Japan with the Hara Family and others, Sannotani, Yokohama, 1907, Freer Gallery of Art Archives, National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Charles Lang Freer: America's Great Collector of Japanese Art

Freer's first Asian art purchase in 1887 was a painted Japanese fan. As Freer became increasingly interested in Japanese art, he visited Japan five times between 1895 and 1911, building a pioneering collection including: Buddhist works from the 7th–17th century; significant examples of both Rimpa and Kano school paintings; major works by the artists Hon'ami Kōetsu and Tawaraya Sōtatsu; Ukiyo-e paintings from the early 17th–19th century; the world's premier collection of paintings by Katsushika Hokusai; and the largest selection of ceramics outside of Japan by Ogata Kenzan.

Between their origins in Japan and ultimate installation at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., these works, together with the rest of Freer's Asian and American art collection, were documented, conserved and displayed for visitors at his Detroit home. In 1906, Freer's collection was officially designated as part of the Smithsonian Institution. From 1906–1919, as his collection continued to grow, the Freer House served as the original Freer Gallery of Art and birthplace of today's National Museum of Asian Art.

## JOIN US



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**The Freer House** (1892) is ranked as one of the most important historic buildings in Michigan. Its fine architectural detail and rich cultural history are both locally and internationally significant. The Freer House is also recognized for its role in child and family development as the home of the renowned Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute since 1920.

The Freer House membership organization works to support WSU's commitment to preserve this cultural landmark through community engagement, events and restoration.



Photo by Alexander Vertikoff

Recent accomplishments include the reproduction of original paintings for the main hall and parlor, an historically appropriate roof and court yard garden.