



Komura Settai in Perspective: A Secret Sense of Beauty
The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

Komura Settai, *Butterflies*, 1925 | color on silk | Kawagoe City Art Museum

| Second exhibition period

■ Exhibition Outline

Settai Komura (1887–1940) was born in Kawagoe, north of Tokyo in present-day Saitama Prefecture, and studied nihonga (Japanese-style painting) at the Tokyo Fine Arts School. Until his death at the age of fifty-three, he worked across a wide range of disciplines, including book design, novel illustration, stage design for Kabuki, and the creation of original paintings. Many of Komura's works survive today. They include striking decorative designs, figures rendered with delicate linework, and richly colored stage settings imbued with emotional depth. Closely reflecting the creative intentions of the novelists and Kabuki actors with whom he collaborated, these works were realized with a level of artistry and craftsmanship that surpassed expectations.

Many leading cultural figures placed their trust in Settai Komura and commissioned his work, including novelists such as Kyoka Izumi and Kanji Kunieda, nihonga artists such as Kiyokata Kaburaki and Eikyu Matsuoka, and celebrated Kabuki actors including Kikugoro Onoe VI. This exhibition explores Komura's artistic career through the lens of his relationships with others, examining how his exchanges and collaborations with these distinguished cultural figures gave rise to many celebrated works. It presents a

comprehensive overview of his oeuvre, featuring everything from the original drawings for the book illustrations that earned widespread acclaim during his lifetime to the original paintings that remain popular today. The exhibition also showcases a wealth of rare works and archival materials that have never before been featured in exhibitions devoted to Komura. We invite you to discover the remarkable breadth and richness of Settai Komura's artistic legacy.

■ What to see

1. Featuring Many of Settai Komura's Signature Works

This exhibition brings together many of the works regarded as Settai Komura's signature achievements. Highlights include *Nihonbashi*, written by Kyoka Izumi, Komura's debut work as a book designer, as well as preparatory drawings and original illustrations for Kanji Kunieda's novels *Osen* and *Oden Jigoku*, which established his reputation as an illustrator. The exhibition also features original illustrations for the serialized newspaper novels *Sankai Hyobanki* and *Edo Yakusha*. The whereabouts of these works were only identified in recent years, and this exhibition marks the first time they have been shown outside their respective home institutions—the Izumi Kyoka Kinenkan Museum and the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

2. Works by the Writers and Artists Who Influenced Settai Komura

Throughout his life, Settai Komura held Kyoka Izumi in the highest regard and belonged to a circle of writers and artists centered around the novelist. In addition to materials related to Izumi, this exhibition presents works by artists and writers who admired him, including Kiyokata Kaburaki and Ton Satomi. The exhibition also features works by Eikyū Matsuoka, whose art had a profound influence on Komura's nihonga. In addition, *Junikagetsu Zu Renpuku* and *Kusamakura Emaki*—collaborative works created by Matsuoka and his pupils—are being exhibited for the first time in a solo exhibition devoted to Komura. Also on view are outstanding examples of ukiyo-e by Harunobu Suzuki and Utagawa Kunisada I, artists whose work had a significant influence on Komura.

3. The Largest Exhibition of Settai Komura's Work to Date

This exhibition presents a chronological overview of Settai Komura's creative activities, highlighting the many different fields in which he worked throughout his career. Organized into eight chapters, it traces approximately twenty-five years of Komura's artistic career. Approximately 700 works and archival materials are presented in two rotations, with different selections on view during the first and second exhibition periods.

■ Chapter Structure

Prologue	A Secret Sense of Beauty
Chapter 1	The Birth of Settai Komura
Chapter 2	<i>Nihonbashi</i> by Kyoka Izumi: The Beginning and Flourishing of Book Design
Chapter 3	An Artist-Designer's Eye: From Classical to Modern
Chapter 4	A Time of Challenge and Exploration: 1926–1931
Chapter 5	Gatherings of the Kyukyukyukai
Chapter 6	The Essence of Illustration: The Aesthetics of Chic and Sensual Beauty
Chapter 7	Responding to Public Demand: Book Design, Stage Design, and Original Paintings in the Mature Years
Chapter 8	A Time of Farewell: 1939–1940
Epilogue	Honoring His Legacy

■ Exhibition Information

Title	Komura Settai in Perspective: A Secret Sense of Beauty
Dates	July 11 (Sat)–September 23 (Wed, national holiday), 2026 First Rotation: July 11–August 16 Second Rotation: August 18–September 23 The exhibition will undergo a major rotation between the first and second rotations. In addition, selected works will be rotated several times during the exhibition.
Closed	Mondays (Open July 20 and September 21)
Hours	10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Final entry to exhibition room: 5:00 p.m.)
Admission	General: ¥1,400 (¥1,120), university/high school students: ¥1,120 (¥900) • Prices inside parentheses () are for groups of 20 or more. • Visitors of junior high school age and under and those who present a physical disability certificate (including one accompanying person) may enter free of charge. • Visitors with a themed exhibition ticket (excluding Gurutto Pass) may also view the MOMAS Collection (1F exhibition room).
Number of pieces	About 700
Organizers	The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, The Mainichi Newspapers
Grant	Japan Arts Council
Sponsor	DNP (Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd.)
Special Cooperation	Kawagoe City Art Museum
PR assistance	JR East Omiya Branch, FM NACK5

I Venue Information

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

9-30-1 Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi 330-0061 TEL: 048-824-0111 FAX:048-824-0119

<https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/>

- Three minutes on foot from the Kita-Urawa Station West Exit on the JR Keihin-Tohoku Line (Inside Kita-Urawa Park). Approximately 35 minutes from JR Tokyo Station or Shinjuku Station to Kita-Urawa Station.
- There is no museum parking lot, but the affiliated Times Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan Higashi (Times Museum of Modern Art, Saitama East) parking lot offers discounted parking (¥300 off with a themed exhibition ticket, ¥100 off with a MOMAS Collection ticket). We ask that group buses contact us in advance.
- Business parking spaces are available for visitors with physical disabilities. Spaces are limited, however, so please contact us in advance.
- The museum may be closed and the exhibition schedule may be changed due to various circumstances. Please check our website for the latest information before visiting.

I Related Projects

Film Screening

Enjoy a screening of *Shunkinsho: Okoto to Sasuke* (1935), the first film for which Settai Komura served as the principal historical and artistic consultant, along with other rare films from the 1930s.

Date: August 9 (Sun)

Venue: Auditorium, 2nd Floor

Capacity: 50 (No advance registration required; admission on a first-come, first-served basis.)

Admission: Free

Details of the screening program and schedule will be announced on the museum's website once they have been finalized.

Lectures

Venue: Auditorium, 2nd Floor

Capacity: 80 (No advance registration required; admission on a first-come, first-served basis.)

Admission: Free

Time: 3:00–4:30 p.m. (Doors open at 2:30 p.m.)

Numbered tickets will be distributed in front of the Auditorium on the Second Floor from 1:30 p.m. on the day of each lecture.

①Settai Komura as an Illustrator

Date: August 16 (Sun)

Speaker: Koji Sanada (Book designer, Settai Komura scholar, Specially Appointed Professor, Osaka University of Arts)

②The Pleasure in the Palm of the Hand: Settai's Book Design

Date: August 30 (Sun)

Speaker: Masaki Hirata (Proprietor, Gacho Bunko)

③The Fruits of Travel: Kyoka Izumi, Settai Komura, and Senshokan

Date: September 5 (Sat)

Speaker: Tamaki Anakura (Curator, Izumi Kyoka Kinenkan Museum)

④The Allure of Stage Design in Kabuki

Date: September 20 (Sun)

Speaker: Tetsuya Okazaki (Advisor, Shochiku Co., Ltd.; President, Kabukiza Butai Co., Ltd.)

Slide Lecture by the Exhibition Curators

Date & Time ① August 22 (Sat) ② August 29 (Sat) 3:00 p.m. (Approximately 1 hour)

Program ① The exhibition curator will introduce the highlights of the exhibition.
② Three museum curators will discuss Settai Komura and share behind-the-scenes stories from their research.

Venue Auditorium, 2nd Floor

Capacity 80 (No advance registration required; admission on a first-come, first-served basis.)

Admission Free

Gallery Talks by the Exhibition Curators

Date & Time ① July 12 (Sun) ② July 26 (Sun) ③ August 23 (Sun) ④ September 6 (Sun)
3:00 p.m. (Approximately 1 hour)

Accessibility ② Sign language interpretation provided
(In collaboration with Able Art Japan, a nonprofit organization)
④ Live captions provided
(In cooperation with Magnolia Unitas)

Venue Special Exhibition Gallery, 2nd Floor

Admission to the special exhibition is required.

Museum College 2026: The World of Settai Komura

Presented in conjunction with this exhibition, this public lecture series is jointly organized by the

Faculty of Liberal Arts at Saitama University and The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama.

Venue Auditorium, 2nd Floor

Capacity 80 (No advance registration required; admission on a first-come, first-served basis.)

Admission Free

Time 3:00–4:30 p.m. (Doors open at 2:30 p.m.)

① The Hidden Hand: Bodily Expression in Settai Komura's Bijinga (paintings of beautiful women)

Date: July 17 (Fri)

Speaker: Norie Shimizu (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University)

② Settai Komura's Design Work

Date: July 19 (Sun)

Speaker: Eriko Tsuji (Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University)

③ Rethinking the Age of the 'Masses': Through the Lens of Settai Komura's Work

Date: July 24 (Fri)

Speaker: Susumu Sugiura (Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University)

④ Settai Komura's Travel Writings

Date: August 2 (Sun)

Speaker: Mao Kikuchi (Curator, The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama)

■ Slide Show and Talk

Interested groups may view a slide show on the highlights of the exhibition (reservations required). For inquiries and reservations, contact the person in charge of education and PR activities (TEL: 048-824-0110).

■ Concurrent Exhibitions

MOMAS Collection (1F Exhibition Room)

• Saturday, June 6 – Sunday, August 30

"Selection," "Settai Komura and Junichiro Tanizaki," "Contemporary Humor v2.0"

- Saturday, September 5 – Sunday, November 29
- “Selection,” “Feature: Kosai Hori—Practice from Zero”

■ Catalogue

The official catalog, “Komura Settai in Perspective: A Secret Sense of Beauty”(modified B5 size; 3,600 yen, tax included) is available for purchase at the museum shop.

■ Inquiries

Curators in charge of the exhibition: KIKUCHI, SHINOHARA

PR and image inquiries: SATO

TEL: 048-824-0111 (main number) | 048-824-0110 (direct to curators)

FAX: 048-824-0118 (direct to curators)

p2401115@pref.saitama.lg.jp (person in charge of themed exhibitions)

■ PR Images

Please contact the museum if you would like to request image data. Inquiries should be addressed to SATO at p2401115@pref.saitama.lg.jp.

- When posting images, please include the title of the piece and credits.
- Please refrain from trimming or adding text to images.
- Feel free to contact us for images other than the ones shown.

①



②



③



④



⑤



⑥



⑦



⑧



⑨



⑩



⑪



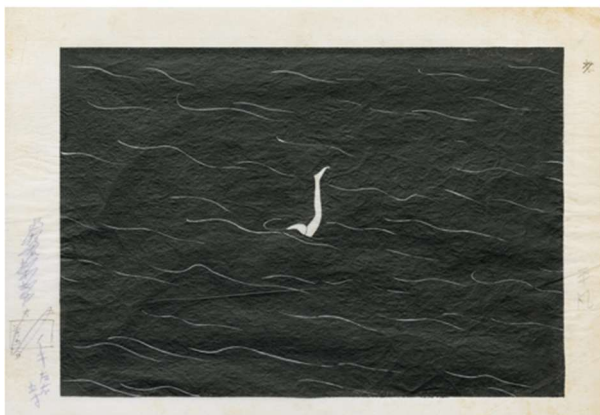
⑫



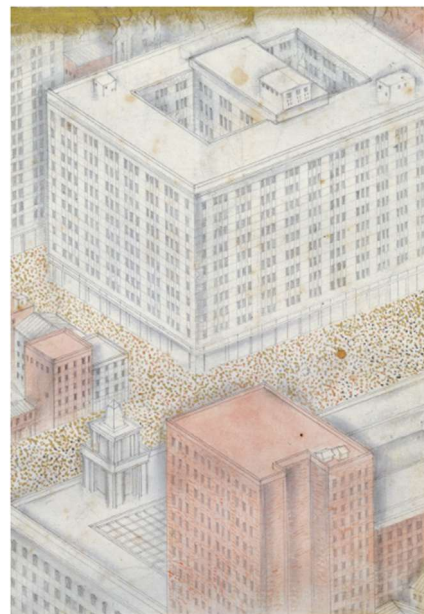
⑬



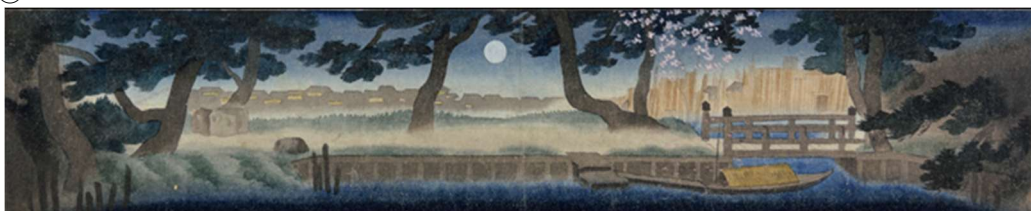
⑭



⑮



⑯



⑰



⑱



Captions

- 1 Komura Settai, *Green Willow*, c.1924 | Color on silk | The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama | First exhibition period
- 2 Komura Settai, *Begonia*, 1905 | Color on paper | Private collection, on deposit at Museum of Modern Art, Saitama | Second exhibition period
- 3 Izumi Kyōka, *Nihonbashi* (designed by Komura Settai), 1914 | Izumi Kyōka Kinenkan Museum, Saitama Museum of Literature, Gacho-bunko, and Tanakaya Co., Ltd.
- 4 Izumi Kyōka, *Oshidori-chō*, back endpaper (designed by Komura Settai), 1918 | Izumi Kyōka Kinenkan Museum, Saitama Museum of Literature
- 5 *Otome*, no.1, January, 1916 | Mr. Sanada Kōji
- 6 Matsuoka Eikyu et al. *Kusamakura*, Illustrated Novel written by Natsume Sōseki, c.1926 | Color on silk | Nara National Museum | Second exhibition period
- 7 Komura Settai, *Butterflies*, 1925 | Color on silk | Kawagoe City Art Museum | Second exhibition period
- 8 Komura Settai *Shōjo no tomo*, original painting for cover of vol.13, no.6, *Rain Clears*, 1930 | Color on paper | Kawagoe City Art Museum | First exhibition period
- 9 Komura Settai, Plan of Stage Setting for “*Ashikaga Takauji*” Act2(1) In Front of Jōdo-ji Tahōtō, 1928 | Ink and color on paper | Tokyo University of the Arts | July 11–July 26
- 10 Komura Settai, *Hachiman Tarō*, 1931 | Color on silk | Hachimaki Okada
- 11 Komura Settai, *Hanshan and Shide Likened to Two Women* | Sumi ink on silk | Kiyomizu Sannenzaka Museum | Second exhibition period
- 12 Komura Settai Illustrations to the Novel “*Edo Yakusha*” by Kunieda Kanji, 1932 | Sumi ink on paper | The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo | Pages of books will be turned every two weeks
- 13 Komura Settai, Yoshikawa Eiji, “*Yūgi Bosatsu*,” original drawing for illustration Part5, no.2, 1935 | Sumi ink on paper | Kiyomizu Sannenzaka Museum | Second exhibition period

- 14 Komura Settai, Kunieda Kanji, "*Oden Jigoku*," original illustration "*Ohatsu Thrown into the River*," 1935 | Sumi ink on paper | Tanakaya Co., Ltd. | Second exhibition period
- 15 Komura Settai, *Fujin no tomo*, vol. 26, no.1, original painting for cover, 1932 | Color on paper | FUJIN-NO-TOMO-SHA Co., Ltd. | First exhibition period
- 16 Komura Settai, Plan of Stage Setting for "*Keiko ōgi*," 1934 | Color on paper | Yayoi Museum | First exhibition period
- 17 Komura Settai, *Star Festival* | Color on silk | Mr.Kaneko Osamu(Studio KANEKO) | First exhibition period
- 18 Komura Settai, *Osen*, c.1941 | Woodcut | The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama | Second exhibition period