



# The Artist Asai Chū and Paris in the Early 1900s

Professor Dr. Seishi Namiki



Monday, 30th October 2017, 17:15–18:30  
Seminarraum, Gablerstrasse 14, 8002 Zurich

As a representative oil painter of modern Japan, Asai Chū (1856-1907) was appointed professor of Western Painting in 1898 at the newly established Tokyo Art School (today's Tokyo University of Art and Music). Shortly after his appointment, however, he visited Paris in 1900, a travel that triggered a change of course for the artist. Just a year later, in 1902, he accepted a professorship at the Kyoto School of Art Crafts (today's Kyoto Institute of Technology), and began his activities as a pioneering educator of design in Kyoto.

This change of professional direction has hitherto been explained as a result of Asai's awareness of the importance of design, which he had witnessed in Paris during the heyday of the Art Nouveau Movement. Asai did in fact show an interest in crafts while in Paris by, for example, painting on ceramic wares. At the same time, he started to question the importance of his own oil paintings and their expressions, in which he had believed up to this point. This change of heart might have been the result of his doubts regarding the idea of realism, a key symbol of the modern era. In my lecture, I will discuss this major artist of the modern era and examine the importance of oil paintings and design in early twentieth century Japan.

Professor Seishi Namiki is Professor at the Department of Art History and Design at the Kyoto Institute of Technology, Japan. In addition, he is the Director of the Museum of Art and Design, and the Director for the Center for Education and Research of Cultural Heritage, both at the same university.

This lecture is open to the public. For questions, please contact the Section for East Asian Art History: [kgoa@khist.uzh.ch](mailto:kgoa@khist.uzh.ch)