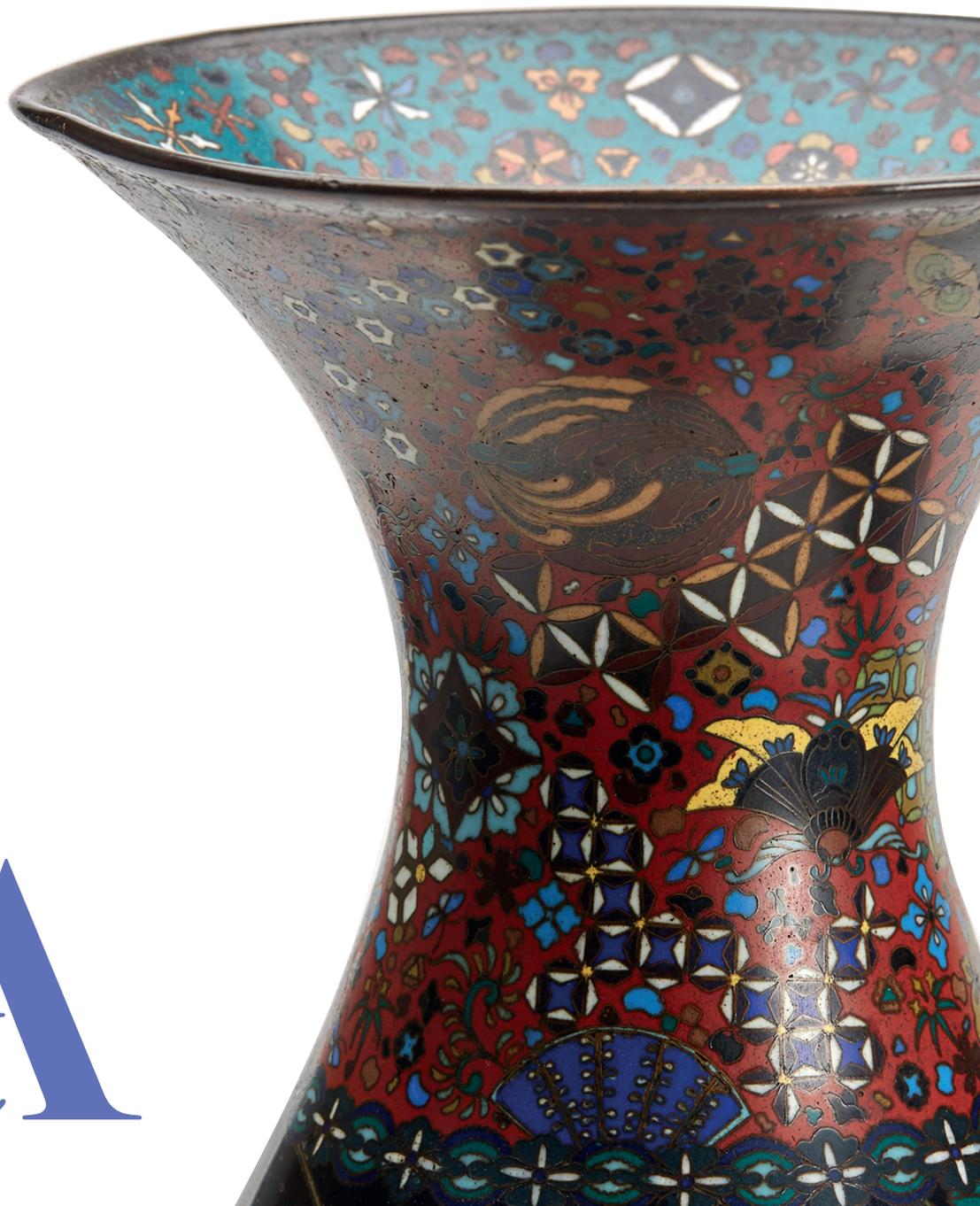


Japanese Enamels: A Suggestion of Endless Patience

A display to commemorate Edwin Davies CBE
From 9 September 2019
Japan, Room 45

V&A



Japanese Enamels: A Suggestion of Endless Patience

This display comprises Japanese enamels selected from the gift of 89 objects donated in 2011 by Edwin Davies, CBE (1946 – 2018) and those subsequently acquired through The Edwin Davies Fund. One of the museum's most generous benefactors, Eddie was captivated by the superb craftsmanship of Japanese enamels and encouraged the promotion of this refined art form. Eddie's gift of objects and the endowment Fund he created have ensured that the V&A can continue to collect exceptional examples of cloisonné enamels, facilitate curatorial expertise, create publications, promote study opportunities, practical workshops and further enrich our world-class collections in this area.

In *The Studio* of 1910, Professor Harada Jirō referred to Japanese enamels as having 'a suggestion of endless patience' in their production. The exquisite enamels in this display reveal the technical and artistic expertise evident in works from the Meiji period (1868-1912) through to that of contemporary makers.

The art of cloisonné enamelling became one of Japan's most successful forms of manufacture after its renaissance around 1840. It reached a peak of artistic and technological sophistication between 1880 and 1910, a period referred to as the 'Golden Age'. At this time Japan was at the height of fashion in the West and museums and collectors were avidly acquiring Japanese objects from dealers and international exhibitions. The V&A was no exception and acquired Japanese enamels from the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867.



Images clockwise from top: Vase, cloisonné enamel on copper with gilded brass wires; decoration of chrysanthemum, iris and prunus on a transparent enamel background which permits the copper body to be seen; decorative borders of karakusa (Chinese grasses). Japan, probably made by Namikawa Yasuyuki, ca.1875

Group of cloisonné enamel vases decorated with butterflies and flowers, mark of Namikawa Yasuyuki, Kyoto, Japan, c.1880-90

A pair of Japanese cloisonné enamel vases, each worked in gilt wire, one with geese amongst wild flowers and grasses, the other with quail beneath pinks, a crane in flight overhead, the neck with geometric and formal borders, the interior of the rim also with geometric panels. Nagoya, c.1880