

Art Beyond the West

ART 200.01

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Visual Analysis Paper

Freshwater Jar (Mizusashi) with Procession of Grasshoppers is a Japanese artwork by Makuzu Kōzan I, made in 1870-80s. The jar is a simple cylindrical form that is elevated by a circular foot that lifts the jar enough to appear to be floating. It is slightly taller than it is wide, making it feel taller than it truly is. The jar has a wooden, shallow dome lid with an ivory knob. The knob appears to have two dragon-like figures struggling to hold up a sphere of flowers. The surface treatment of the jar is very minimalistic with a cream background and a tiny bit of washed-out blue at the bottom to give the figures a ground to walk on. The surface has a crackle effect on it, this could have been intentional or from the natural aging of the work. There are gold dots above the grasshopper and wasps that could be several things: clouds, wind, or tinier bugs.

The grasshoppers are generally all drawn in the same style and appear to be walking in a line. They are not in any rush and are walking slowly, almost like they are waiting their turn in line. They are slightly different shades of green, with yellow bellies. They each hold a flower, leaf, or fruit. There is a variety of flowers and they are all very dainty and either pink or purple, but they stand tall above the grasshopper that is holding it. Each grasshopper is slightly facing away from the viewer, just enough to see one of their eyes. They all are hunched over as if they are sad or in sorrow. In the middle of the line of grasshoppers are three wasps. The wasps are yellow and black

striped with their wings up as if they are flying low to the ground. They are facing slightly different ways like they are confused but still flying in line with the grasshoppers. Unlike the grasshoppers, they are not holding anything. There is a straw or wooden box that appears to look like a casket, it is wrapped with a dainty, red ribbon and is standing on four wooden legs.

First looking at this jar you see a line of grasshoppers and wasps. All the grasshoppers have something in their hand, whether that be a flower or fruit. They are all drawn the same with dainty limbs and flowers blowing in the wind. They seem to be walking towards this box or casket. Since there are so many grasshoppers in line, this casket must have an important figure in these bugs' life, for example, their fallen Queen. They all have saddened expressions and are slightly turned away from the audience as if they are in shame or cannot look at the viewer right now. They seem to be moving slowly, shuffling towards their queen. They all have a flower or fruit in their hand waiting to give it to their dead Queen, as an offering. The wasps do not have an offering in hand, so why would they visit the queen empty-handed? They are not in line to visit the queen. They are the ones who killed the queen, and the other grasshoppers captured them to honor the queen. The wasps look confused and as if they are just regaining consciousness. The wasps could remain captured as prisoners or sacrificed to the queen.

The ivory knob on top, with the two dragons, complements the imagery on the jar. The two dragons are trying to work together in keeping the sphere of roses off the ground. This is because whatever supported the flower sphere before is now gone, much like the queen. The queen is the support system of the grasshopper society, but

she is no longer with them. The two dragons are now trying to scramble to support this sphere of flowers before it crashes to the ground and breaks. The flower sphere represents the community that the grasshoppers come from, and the two dragons represent whoever next in kin would be.











