



7571 Attributed to Koderu Unto (1871 - 1930)

A silk kakemono (hanging scroll) painted in ink with the full moon and autumn grasses amongst hazy clouds

Signed: Unto

Seal: Ren

Japan 19th/20th century Meiji/Taisho period

Dimensions:

Scroll: H. 187.5cm x W. 177cm (74" x 69³/₄")

Painting: H. 70.5cm x W. 152cm (28" x 60")

Now lost the Awasebako (fitted wood box) was inscribed:

Lid: Unto hitsu Mangetsu no zu (Painting of the full moon, painted by Unto), Igeta zo (collection of Igeta

family)

Provenance: Igeta family, Japan

Kodera Unto was a master of nihonga (Japanese style painting) active in Nagoya in Aichi prefecture. Unto was born to a feudal warrior family from Owari province and was fond of painting from the early age. He studied Shijo-school painting under Okumura Sekiran (1834-1895) locally and later under Takeuchi Seiho (1864-1942) in Kyoto. The Shijo school was founded in the late 18th century and soon established itself as an important and popular style of nihonga in Kyoto with artists continuing the tradition to the present day. It inherits a great degree of realism through mastery of sumie (ink painting) of the Maruyama-school and a poetic spirit of Nanga (Southern school). The unpainted moon emerges amongst the subtle gradation of ink in this present work showing the artist's masterful technique and sophistication.

This subject matter is inspired by a Heian period tradition of meisho-e (pictures of famous scenic places). The scene is of the Plains at Musashino, a large flat expanse of land west of modern Tokyo, which was frequented during the Edo period by picnickers inspired by its haunting beauty and spectacular views of Mount Fuji. Whilst unlikely to have been a meisho in the thirteenth century, there is a poem written by Minamoto no Michikata included in the imperial poetry anthology of c.1265, the Shoku Kokinshu (collection of ancient and modern poems, continued). The translation reads:

The moon finds no hills to hide behind in Musashino
White clouds hang at the tips of the pampas grasses.

