



The museum houses a permanent exhibition of Toko Shinoda's abstract artworks. Image: Kikukawa.

Celebrating art and material: the stainless façade of Toko Museum

The newly opened Toko Museum in Gifu, Japan, is a tribute to the life and work of artist Toko Shinoda, known for her abstract ink and silver compositions. Its design thoughtfully blends art and architecture, using materials like vibration-finished stainless steel to reflect the essence of her work.

Text by Joanne McIntyre, Stainless Steel World

The Toko Museum, which opened its doors in March 2024 in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, is dedicated to the life and legacy of renowned Japanese artist Toko Shinoda (1913–2021). The museum houses a permanent exhibition of her abstract sumi ink and silver foil artworks, along with a faithful recreation of her original studio on the second floor. Located in the region she called her “spiritual hometown,” the museum is situated within an area newly named Toko Taichi in her honour. The architecture reflects Shinoda's distinctive artistic style, integrating elements of her brushwork directly into the building's design. The façade features the characters for Toko Taichi, rendered



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The soft sheen and diffused reflectivity of vibration finishing provides a subdued, elegant appearance without the glare associated with mirror finishes. Image: Kikukawa

in black natural stone and contrasted with panels of grade 304 stainless steel featuring a vibration finish. This combination is a deliberate material interpretation of ink and silver - core elements in Shinoda's work - evoking the visual texture of silver foil on washi paper.

The grade 304 stainless steel panels, each measuring 1,200 mm wide by 5,600 mm high, were manufactured by Kikukawa to strict quality standards. Their subtle, non-directional surface contributes a modern, abstract character to the structure, enhancing the minimalist aesthetic while also reflecting the layered geometry often seen in Shinoda's compositions. The building's stacked-box form further reinforces this visual connection.

Vibration finish stainless steel

Vibration finish is a decorative stainless steel surface treatment characterised by a uniform, non-directional texture created through mechanical polishing. It is especially valued for its ability to mask minor surface imperfections such as scratches and fingerprints, making it a practical choice for high-traffic or public-facing applications.

In addition to its aesthetic appeal, vibration finished stainless steel offers strong corrosion resistance, durability, and ease of maintenance. These properties make it a popular choice in architectural applications such as wall cladding, elevator interiors, and commercial facades. Its soft sheen and diffused reflectivity provide a subdued, elegant appearance without the glare associated with mirror finishes.

At the Toko Museum, this finish serves both form and function: visually echoing the silver leaf of Shinoda's artwork while delivering the performance needed for an exposed exterior application. The result is a structure that harmonises material, meaning, and environment - a fitting tribute to an artist whose work bridged traditional calligraphy and modern abstraction. ▲

About KIKUKAWA

KIKUKAWA is a bespoke architectural metalworker that provides comprehensive metalwork solutions. For ninety years, it has worked with notable architects and interior designers from Japan and abroad, producing unique metal interior and exterior works.