

NEWS RELEASE



**Consulate-General
of Japan in Chicago**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photo Exhibition: Edo/Tokyo - seen through its edifices

Edo/Tokyo as experimental crossroads of “East meeting West” in architecture

Introducing 50 historical photographs from an album entitled “*Assorted Japanese Sightseeing Spots*”, taken by an Italian Envoy/Commander, B. Bolanni 1877-1881. The exhibition “**Edo/Tokyo - seen through its edifices**” will be presented for the first time outside of Japan, from the 15th to 30th of April 2019 at the Japan Information Center Hall.

[Duration]

April 15th (Mon) – 30th (Tue), 2019

Opening Hours: **9:15AM – 6:00PM** (closed: Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays)

[Venue]

JIC Hall, Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago
737 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 1000. Chicago, IL 60611
www.chicago.us.emb-japan.go.jp

Special Event: Talk Event / Reception

Thursday, April 18th 2019 6:30 PM

- Greeting from *Consul General Naoki Ito*
- Short Lecture by *Miro Ito, Co-organizer*
- Short lecture by *Dr. Thomas Gaubatz, Assistant Professor, Northwestern University*
- Solo Ballet Performance by *Shunso*
(Artistic Direction by *Miro Ito* / Music by *Hagi*)
- Sushi and Refreshments

Presented by the *Japan Camera Industry Institute* (JCII, Tokyo) and **Media Art League** (Tokyo/Toronto), this exhibition seeks to present a lost Edo transforming into Japan’s new capital of Tokyo, providing a dramatic contrast of a wistful nostalgic longing for the old ways of “Samurai Society” with an exuberant anticipating mood towards the advent of the newly reborn and modernizing imperial Japan.

What makes this album particularly interesting is how it shows the unique architectural transformation from the Samurai Edo to the new imperial capital of Tokyo through both modification of existing Edo edifices and new construction of Western-style buildings.

The city of Edo/Tokyo itself became an experimental crossroads of “East meeting West” in architecture. The amazing photo album that contains these invaluable images was brought back to Italy after Envoy Bolani’s mission to Japan and it was only recently discovered and acquired by the *Japan Camera Industry Institute* (JCII).

[Background]

After the Meiji Restoration (of sovereign power to the institution of the *tenno* [“emperor”]) in 1868, the hastily formed Meiji government had no facilities of its own. So many of the daimyo (feudal lord’s) residences were turned into governmental buildings of diverse ministries, administrative bureaus, police or military garrisons, etc.

The Meiji* Restoration paved the way for Japan’s comprehensive modernization accompanied by rapid and drastic changes in its political, social, economic, industrial and educational systems, to meet the challenge by the West by adopting and emulating much from the modernized developed nations as its model.

* literally means *enlightened governance*

As with the architectural and construction field, a *Ministry of Industry* was established in 1870 to promote industry, civil engineering, mining, shipbuilding and railway expansion for the growth of new industrial sectors, hiring 249 staff from overseas. In the architectural field, a specialized educational institute named the *Imperial College of Engineering* was founded which, under the tutelage of its British architectural advisor, Josiah Conder, turned out many significant topnotch architects, the first of which was *Kingo Tatsuno*.

In 1872, large parts of the Ginza area, the heart of Edo/Tokyo including the Marunouchi, Ginza and Tsukiji areas were completely devastated by a huge fire. As at this time, many Western things were being openly welcomed, this resulted in extensive tracts of historical structures being replaced by European style fire-resistant red brick architecture which concurrently became a representative symbol of the Meiji “*Bunmei Kaika* (cultural rebirth)”.

From an architectural point of view, an outwardly diverse blend of Gothic, Victorian, Colonial/Indian-Saracen, Neo-Baroque, Beaux-Arts architecture styles with Japanese traditional elements and craftsmanship, resulted in a uniquely Japanese style of “*faux-occidentale*” architecture.

Since Edo/Tokyo suffered extensive destruction twice – during the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the Great Tokyo Air Raid in 1945 – very few of these “*East Meets West*” architectural jewels survive today.

For more information please contact wataru.inoue@cg.mofa.go.jp or call (312)280-0427.

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Japan Information Center

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Presented by Japan Camera Industry Institute and Media Art League
Hosted by the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago

Edo/Tokyo - seen through its edifices

Photo Exhibition: 15th - 30th April 2019
JIC Hall, Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago Admission Free

Ministry of Home Affairs. Photographed: 1874-1880, Designed by: Tadayoshi Hayashi

Ministry of Justice (Former Residence of Honda Family/Okazaki Domain). Photographed: 1877-1880



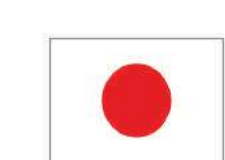
Tokyo Chindai Garrison, Photographed: 1871-1880

First National Bank and Kaiun Bridge, Designed by Kiusuke Shimizu II. Photographed: 1878-1880

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"Assorted Japanese Sightseeing Spots" taken by Italian Envoy, B. Bolanni, 1877-1881**

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JCII



MEDIA ART LEAGUE



English Editing by Andreas Boettcher