

# Brushstrokes bring black and white to life

To celebrate the beginning of 2023, the Dokuritsu Shojindan Foundation is holding its annual *sho* (Japanese calligraphy) exhibition in the National Art Center, Tokyo, in Minato Ward this month.

The 71st Dokuritsu Sho Exhibition will showcase some 1,900 expressive works in the spacious venue, offering visitors an unusual ambience of only black and white. The organization's works are characterized by free expression and creativity, making them look more like works of contemporary art than calligraphy. Works of different sizes, some as large as an entire wall in an exhibition room, emanate such dynamics as rising and easing tensions, heaviness and lightness, wetness and dryness, and softness and hardness, allowing viewers to feel various emotions.

The foundation has about 2,200 members who are independent sho artists and enthusiasts from Hokkaido to Okinawa. The openness and freedom of the foundation, with an emphasis on individuality and creativity, pose a stark contrast to many other schools of sho that value distinct styles. This characteristic is based on the philosophy of the founder, Teshima

Yuhkei, a highly distinguished calligrapher in Japan who made great contributions in promoting sho worldwide. He established the foundation as a nonprofit organization in 1952 with a mission to create a new form of sho that can be appreciated internationally based on uniquely eastern traditions.

One part of the exhibition will showcase works from foundation members and associate members. Foundation judges will award three prizes to outstanding works by these artists. Another part is for the works of both members and nonmembers. Five prizes will be given to excellent works in this category. Entries from nonmembers between the ages of 18 and 23 that received high evaluations will be awarded a special prize. A third section will be reserved for smaller pieces submitted by enthusiasts 15 or older, who will also be eligible for awards. Finally, this year's event will feature a separate space for a special exhibition titled "Showcasing Dokuritsu's heritage, special large works."

For the third year in a row, presentations by distinguished calligraphers in Japanese with English interpretation, as well as the



**The 71st Dokuritsu Sho Exhibition runs until Jan. 22 at the National Art Center, Tokyo.**

calligraphy workshops, have been canceled over coronavirus concerns. The exhibition, however, will continue to stimulate visitors' imaginations and present a space for reflection.

With the exception of Jan. 17, the exhibition will be held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily until Jan. 22. Admission is free.

Visit <https://www.dokuritsu.or.jp/english/> for more information about the Dokuritsu Shojindan Foundation.