

# Genichiro Inokuma: There are things

Date: Saturday, December 13, 2025 – Sunday, February 15, 2026

Venue: Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Gallery A

Organized by Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art / The MIMOCA Foundation

This exhibition focuses on examples of still-life expression from among the figurative paintings of Genichiro Inokuma, dating from the artist's student years up to 1950.

Still-life painting has been a feature of art in both East and West for centuries. In Western painting, still lifes depicting items from everyday living spaces, such as tableware, pots, flowers, fruit, plaster models, musical instruments, and reading material, emerged as an important genre particularly in 17th-century Holland. In the late 19th century, the tabletop still-life paintings of Cézanne, as a revolutionary form of expression that brought multiple viewpoints to the painterly space, ushered in a number of subsequent trends in art, including Cubism.

In the first half of his life as a painter, Genichiro Inokuma (1902–1993), born at the start of the 20th century, took a similarly figurative approach to still-life expression. Observing the familiar and depicting it could be described as a foundational, moreover vital, perspective for painting production. Enrolling at the Tokyo Fine Arts School (now Tokyo University of the Arts) in 1922, Inokuma came under the tutelage of Takeji Fujishima, a noted painter in the Western style. Fujishima had no hesitation in telling the budding artists that their drawing skills left much to be desired.<sup>\*1</sup> This was a lesson Inokuma carried with him for the rest of his days, that ensured he would continue to think about the importance of observing his subject carefully through drawing.

As a student, and after graduation, Inokuma also tackled traditional Western still-life motifs such as plaster models, and skulls. He also depicted various inanimate objects in paintings centered on human subjects. Motifs such as books, musical instruments, pots, and fruit make an appearance in paintings of people close to Inokuma, models in the studio, and individuals he met while studying in Paris. In works devoted solely to inanimate objects, and those depicting both objects and human figures, Inokuma's ingenuity in the color, form, and arrangement of motifs as a means to craft the overall composition of the picture plane is apparent.

*There are things* approaches this still-life expression from three angles. "Gazing at objects" presents early works featuring objects as central motifs, while "With human figures" shows objects limned alongside people, indoors and outdoors. "Tabletop" focuses on the depiction of motifs on tables.

Throughout his life Inokuma was an avid collector of everything from items found on the roadside to priceless artefacts from antique shops, treasuring all as if they were "good friends" or "lovers."<sup>\*2</sup> This affection for the things that sit on the sidelines of our lives, shaping the everyday, is also evident in Inokuma's paintings. Note the various objects Inokuma turned his gaze on and gave expression to, at times as motifs guiding his explorations of painting, and at others, as elements indispensable to the composition of the canvas.

\*1 Genichiro Inokuma, *Watashi no rireksho* [My resume] (Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art / The MIMOCA Foundation, 2003), 56.

\*2 Genichiro Inokuma, *Gaka no omocho bako* [An artist's toy chest] (Bunka Publishing Bureau, 1984), 138.