

The Art collection as a scholarly resource and business-academia collaboration

R. Terakado

University of Tsukuba, Ten-nodai 1-1-1, Tsukuba, 305-8574, Japan
terakado@geijutsu.tsukuba.ac.jp

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Abstract

Among Japan's national universities, the University of Tsukuba (UT) is the only one with a complete fully functional art school. The Faculty of Art & Design (FAD) manages the University of Tsukuba Art Collection (UTAC) with more than 600 artworks together with exhibition facilities and well-designed storage spaces on campus. UT has, however, no affiliated university museum. UTAC consists of some 400 artworks that were donated by, or purchased from, university's faculty members (established artists/designers) as well as from students (emerging artists/designers); 100 Asian porcelains and 100 modern paintings. These include works of Max Ernst and Joan Miró donated by an entrepreneur who made a financial endowment to the library-management graduate course. FAD considers UTAC as a scholarly artistic resource, and has been seeking to utilize it effectively as a symbol of research, educational outcomes and industry-academia collaboration. For instance, symposia on UTAC have been organized from an art historical, as well as from other disciplinary points of view. Also, the Art Street, a linking of exhibition venues on campus, acts in a most important way to showcase UTAC from inside and outside the university. Those venues include the foyer of the library and even the gateway to the president's office, as well as the permanent exhibition at the university gallery. Last year, UT-FAD signed a contract with a bank, a leading local company, to use a part of their premises free of charge in order to showcase UTAC. The partnership with this bank is expected to function as a satellite of Art Street.

Rintaro Terakado is an associate professor of art history, particularly Flemish Art, as well as museology. While there is no official museum organization in the university, he is in charge of university art collection management, because of his career as an associate curator at Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art that extended for more than 10 years.