



Smithsonian
*Freer Gallery of Art and
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

Bill Maris Shibui Photographs

FSA.A2023.02

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October 2024

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
Title:	Bill Maris Shibui Photographs
Date:	undated
Identifier:	FSA.A2023.02
Creator:	Maris, Bill, 1924-1986
Source:	Semel, Julie, 1941- Maris, Bill, 1924-1986
Extent:	0.3 Cubic feet (1 flat box (11 transparencies and 4 photoprints))
Language:	English .
Summary:	Four photoprints and eleven transparencies created by Bill Maris, demonstrating "shibui" aesthetics. These photographs were possibly taken in the 1960s for the magazine <i>House Beautiful</i> , although they were not used.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Gift of Julie Semel in 2023.

Related Materials

The Elizabeth Gordon Papers, FSA.A1988.03. National Museum of Asian Art Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Elizabeth Gordon, 1988.

Lacquer tray, 17th century / National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Gordon Norcross, F1986.17

Bill Maris and Julie Semel Collection, 2012.MARIS. Pratt Institute School of Information On-Site Archives and Special Collections, New York City, NY. Gift of Julie Maris/Semel.

Preferred Citation

Bill Maris Shibui Photographs. FSA.A2023.02. National Museum of Asian Art Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce and publish an item from the Archives is coordinated through the National Museum of Asian Art's Rights and Reproductions department. Please contact the Archives in order to initiate this process.

Biographical / Historical

Bill Maris (1924-1986) was a photographer, known primarily for his architectural photography. He was born in Queens, but grew up in Ohio, where his father operated a photography studio. Both his mother and one of his sisters were professional photographers, and Maris began learning about photography from a young age. During WWII, he enlisted in the army as a photographer, and after the war, he moved to New York City to continue his photography work. In New York, he met Ezra Stoller, who was known for his architectural photography. They formed a creative partnership and worked together from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s.

During this time, Stoller was commissioned to provide photographs for the August 1960 issue of *House Beautiful* magazine, also known as the "shibui" issue. This issue was a culmination of years of research and travel to Japan by *House Beautiful* editor in chief Elizabeth Gordon, and it is often credited with introducing American audiences to the concept of "shibui," along with renewing interest in Japanese style post-WWII. The photographs in Maris's collection were not used in the August 1960 issue or its follow-up September issue, which was about how to achieve the "shibui" aesthetic with American things. However, a lacquer tray owned by Gordon is featured in one of the transparencies. Gordon later donated this tray to the Freer Gallery of Art.

After ending his business partnership with Stoller, Maris continued to provide photographs for *House Beautiful*, along with other magazines such as *House & Garden* and *Traditional Home*. He also continued his architectural photography and worked for clients such as I.M. Pei, Robert A.M. Stern, and Richard Meier. In 1969, he hired Julie Semel as a photography assistant, and they later became equal creative partners. They married in 1977.

Scope and Contents

Four photoprints and eleven transparencies created by Bill Maris, demonstrating "shibui" aesthetics. Maris worked with Ezra Stoller, who was credited as the primary photographer for the August 1960 issue of *House Beautiful* magazine, also known as the "shibui" issue. These photographs were possibly taken in the 1960s for the magazine, although they were not used. A lacquer tray featured in one of the transparencies was later donated to the Freer Gallery of Art by Elizabeth Gordon, editor in chief of *House Beautiful*.

Arrangement

Arranged by format.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Aesthetics, Japanese
Art, Japanese. -- United States
Interior decoration

Types of Materials:

Home furnishings
Photographs
Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin

Names:

Maris, Bill, 1924-1986
Semel, Julie, 1941-

Places:

Japan

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Transparencies, undated
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Box 1, Folder 2	Photoprints, undated
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