

Edo Avant Garde

What is Modern?

FEATURED ART

[Screen with Scattered Fans by Tawaraya Sōtatsu](#)



Screen with Scattered Fans by Tawaraya Sōtatsu

Objective One

Students will be able to create a list of the steps it takes to accomplish a simple task, referencing previous knowledge and making a single moment significant.

Objective Two

Students will be able to identify the reasons why *Screen with Scattered Fans* is an outstanding example of the creativity and modernity of Edo-period artists.

Objective Three

Students will be able to illustrate or write about the most significant or powerful moment in the series of actions they have listed to create a collaborative work of art that references *Screen with Scattered Fans*.

Recommended Readings for Teachers

1. [Excerpts from “The Miracle of Edo Painting” by Kobayashi Tadashi in *The Flowering of Edo Period Painting: The Feinberg Collection*](#)
2. [Leighton Longhi interview excerpts](#)
3. [Screen with Scattered Fans Exhibit label](#)

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to create a list of the steps it takes to accomplish a simple task, referencing previous knowledge and making a single moment significant.

On [Google Slides Page 1](#)

Images	Screen with Scattered Fans by Tawaraya Sōtatsu Screen with Scattered Fans Detail #1
Video	Modernism: Scattered Fans

Students will start by making a list of the steps it took to do a simple task, such as walk to school, brush their teeth, move from one class to another, etc. Whatever the task, students should break it down into no less than ten steps but no more than fifteen. For example, leaving home to get to school:

1. Shut the back door
2. Walk across the back porch to the steps
3. Walk down the steps
4. Walk across the back patio
5. Open the gate
6. Walk through the gate
7. Close the gate
8. Turn left and walk across the driveway to the street
9. Walk on the sidewalk for four blocks
10. Turn left at the intersection
11. Walk one block
12. Arrive at school

Students will write the steps on post-it notes and number them. As students work on this, show *Screen with Scattered Fans*, explaining that screens were used to demarcate space within an interior, much like furniture. Screens could also be used solely for decorative purposes and were considered works of art.

The artist, Tawaraya Sōtatsu, scattered forty-two fans across this work. Scenes on the thirty completely open fans were painted on paper sheets and adhered to the screen. The random placement—called “fans afloat” or “scattered fans”—differs from the style in which fans are arranged in a pattern. Although it later became common to place used fans on older screens, Sōtatsu’s studio was known for pasting or painting fans on new screens.

Objective Two

Students will be able to identify the reasons why *Screen with Scattered Fans* is an outstanding example of the creativity and modernity of Edo-period artists.

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Images	Screen with Scattered Fans by Tawaraya Sōtatsu Screen with Scattered Fans Detail #2 Screen with Scattered Fans Detail #3 Screen with Scattered Fans Detail #4
Video	Modernism: Scattered Fans

Show the video *Modernism: Scattered Fans* that explains its reference to *Illustrated Legends of the Kitano Tenjin Shrine* from the late thirteenth century, one of many sources of imagery that Sōtatsu used for this artwork. Sōtatsu also referenced military epics, well-known literary works, and scenes of nature, all randomly scattered across the screen.

Ask students to select three post-it notes from their list they feel are most interesting or pivotal and have them consider what happens when they isolate three steps from their narrative. Return to the details of the artwork *Screen with Scattered Fans* and ask students to consider why the artist showed a series of images from different sources in a non-linear fashion. What is the effect? In both instances, isolating a scene from the whole encourages the viewer to reference previous knowledge and can highlight the significance of what could be an otherwise normal, daily moment. What famous artist is also referenced in the video? In mentioning Picasso, the curator is suggesting that Sōtatsu is important and that his work can be considered “modern” centuries before Modern Art emerged.

Objective Three

Students will be able to illustrate or write about the most significant or powerful moment in the series of actions they have listed to create a collaborative work of art that references *Screen with Scattered Fans*.

On [Google Slides Page 3](#)

Images	Screen with Scattered Fans by Tawaraya Sōtatsu Screen with Scattered Fans Detail #3
Worksheets	Fan 1 Fan 2

Students will select one of the two fan worksheets and briefly illustrate or write about one scene from their three previously selected post-it notes. This should be the most significant or powerful moment in the actions students initially listed. Have students explain their selection on the back of the worksheet.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Industrial Arts

Students will explore Japanese woodworking techniques to create a self-supporting, free-standing screen modeled on the *Screen with Scattered Fans* screen. Students could collaborate with math classes to calculate dimensions for similarly proportioned but smaller-scale screens.

Language Arts

In a future class session, students will select their favorite image from their peers' work and write about what they think the image illustrated.

Studio Art

The image created by the students can be a planning sketch for further refinement and embellishment before adhering to a gold-colored cardboard or foam board, folded into six sections similar to the proportions and/or scale of *Screen with Scattered Fans*.

Technology Education

Students familiar with Photoshop or other software can take photos while performing their selected simple task and incorporate text into their image, layered and rendered in the shape of a fan.