



de Gournay

## Byōbu Collection

From the snow-dusted flowers of early spring to the golden grasses of autumn, the natural beauty and rhythmic changing seasons of Japan have captivated its artists for centuries. It was during the prosperous Edo period (1603 – 1868) — one of the great ages of Japanese painting — when depictions of nature reached its zenith as new, exuberant styles of artistic expression flourished.

Upon the era's famed *byōbu*, or folding screen, stylised scenes of land, sea, and sky came alive through vivid brushstrokes and layers of rich colour. Traditionally made of silk or paper, the screens provided vast decorative surfaces on which to paint, enabling the portrayal of large-scale subjects and dramatic landscapes.

It is these striking, singular works of art, historically emblematic of affluence and sophistication, that serve as inspiration for the Byōbu Collection, de Gournay's latest collection which has launched at the 2024 edition of Paris Déco Off. Incorporating many of the innovative techniques that developed during the Edo period, the company's own artists pay homage to the dynamic spirit of the original references, but unveil, too, a distinctive interpretation to chime within contemporary settings.

Amongst gently arching willow trees on gilded grounds, morning glory vines trailing on bamboo fences, and harvest moons glowing against midnight blue skies, a celebration of Japan's flora and fauna and the fleeting evanescence of nature elegantly unfolds over ten exquisitely hand-painted and hand-embroidered designs.

Photography by Stephan Julliard

To fully convey the story of the Byōbu Collection, de Gournay's Paris apartment has been dramatically transformed to transport viewers on an enchanting journey through Japan's ephemeral changing of the seasons. The apartment is elegantly designed to pay homage to the eclectic international style of the 20th-century design firm Maison Jansen, skilfully marrying European artistry with Anglo-Japonisme and Art Deco influences.

Cocooned in pale silks, soft, silvery metallics, and dramatically swagged satin curtains, one first enters an ode to Spring and Summer, a light and airy reverie of flowers in full bloom, delicate bamboo trellis, and native fauna like elegant long-necked cranes and red-billed magpies. From there, a transition from Autumn to Winter is revealed, a dark and moody autumnal tableau of wild grasses, harvest moons, and rich colour and texture. Designed to conjure an Art Deco era train car, the room's wallpaper is overlaid with bespoke, crimson-painted treillage by Accents of France that evokes the traditional Japanese shoji screens seen at the pavilion of Elsie de Wolfe's Villa Trianon, designed by Maison Jansen. Elsewhere, secret doors cleverly open to unveil a shimmering bar featuring an underwater scene hand-painted on a silver ombré ground.



Photography by Stephan Julliard



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## TSUKIMI

Japan's traditional harvest moon festival, or *tsukimi*, lends its name to this hand-painted design that elegantly portrays the three stages of the rising moon against a radiant night sky. Illuminating a wild and riotous frieze of autumnal grasses and wildflowers with its shimmering glow, the brilliant crescent, half, and full moons are rendered in gold leaf on a contrasting textured silk ground. Gestural depictions of maiden flower, Chinese bellflower, peonies, and chrysanthemums come alive with painted pearlescent accents.

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TSUKIMI

Original colourway on gilded silk with antiquing



Photography by Stephan Julliard



#### FOURSEASONS

Since the 6th century, expressive paintings of the cycle of the four seasons, or *shiki-e*, flourished in Japan upon folding screens and hand scrolls, none more gracefully than the work of the late-16th century artist Kano Mitsunobu, whose work enhanced many Kyoto palaces and temples. In our striking, au courant interpretation of this common theme, a medley of flowers and plants - peonies, chrysanthemums, chestnut, and wild grasses hand-painted upon a pearlescent gold ombré Xuan paper - are depicted at exuberantly enlarged scales, fully immersing the viewer in the lyrical changing of seasons.

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FOUR SEASONS

Original colourway on painted Xuan paper with gold ombré



Photography by Stephan Julliard



## JAKUCHU

A lively underwater scene of towering lotus, shoals of fish, swimming frogs, and whimsical seaweed on an ombré gilded silver ground, 'Jakuchu' looks to the work of Ito Jakuchu, the mid-Edo period artist renowned for his realistic depictions of nature in the *Ukiyo-e* style. Translating as 'pictures of the floating world', our ode to the *Ukiyo-e* painting technique involves outlining shapes with pigment and then dripping watercolour within the forms which spreads softly out to the edges, infusing the design with an extraordinarily inky and translucent presence.

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JAKUCHU

Original colourway on Tarnished Silver gilded paper





## THE PLAIN OF MUSASHI

Across the once-wild plain of Musashi, a frequently depicted vista now in modern-day Tokyo that was historically known for its moon-viewing, a daytime version of a graphic landscape in autumn unfolds on an antiqued, white-painted Xuan paper ground. Set against a horizon of hand-gilded mist from which undulating mountains rise, a graceful field of Eulalia grasses and wildflowers stand upright in repeating patterns. Across the wide, open sky, flecks of gold leaf dusting the surface, made using the traditional *sumago* technique, lend a subtle luminescence.



Photography by Stephan Julliard

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THE PLAIN OF MUSASHI

Original colourway on painted Xuan paper with gold ombre



## MORNING GLORY

Curling tendrils of morning glory unfurl around a glimmering bamboo arbour of hand-gilded 22-carat gold stretching across the scene as an abstract structure. Long symbolic of summertime in Japan, the trailing blooms reference early 17th-century depictions of the flower in Japanese art and, in our rendition, are hand-painted using opaque watercolour pigments that have been thickly applied to bestow a vivid, graphic appearance.



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MORNING GLORY  
Original colourway on shot slub silk



## TSURO CRANES

As a symbol of happiness, good fortune, and longevity, the majestic crane, or *tsuru*, is frequently portrayed in Japanese art, literature, and mythology. This design is inspired by an early 19th-century Edo period screen with cranes both gracefully in flight and standing along a winding, pine tree-lined river. It is hand-painted using a combination of matte and glossy pigments in a bold and opaque style onto a gleaming silver gilded paper.



Photography by Stephan Julliard

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TSURO CRANES

Original colourway on Tarnished Silver gilded paper

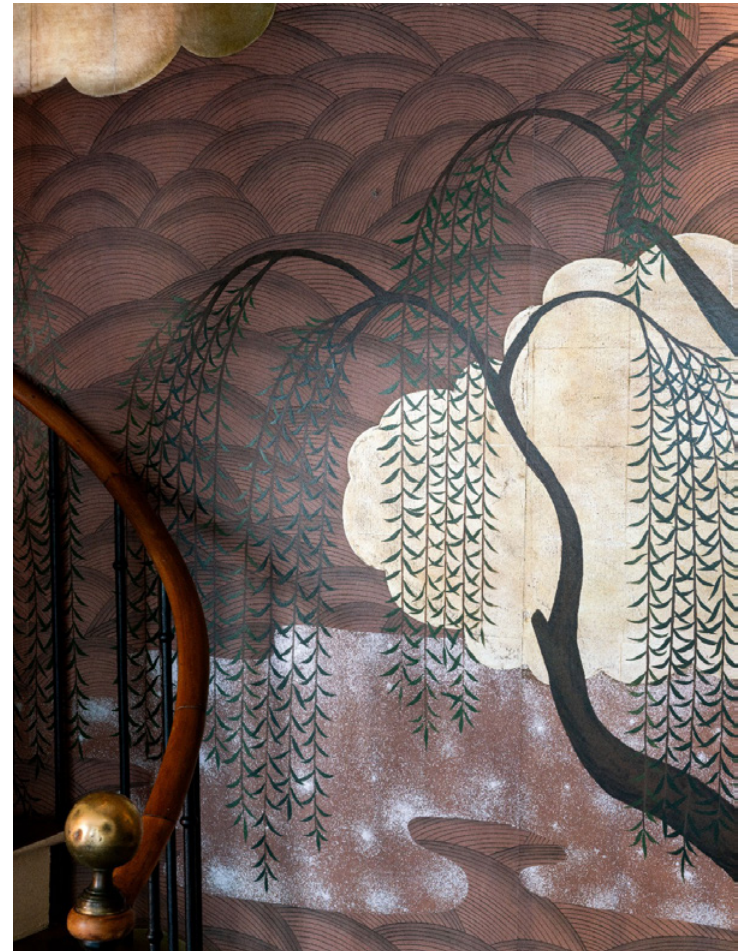


## TILED MEADOW

Juxtaposing the natural with a strong, graphic structure, this design references the tiled wall motif often represented in antique Japanese folding screens and scroll paintings. Upon hand-gilded horizontal tiles extending across a slub silk ground, over-scaled chrysanthemums, lilies, poppies, and wild grasses float through the panels in a spirited array as symbols of the four seasons. Rendered in shining metallics with bold contrasts, 'Tiled Meadow' has a futuristic appearance ideal for contemporary interiors.



Photography by Alexandra Shamis



## WILLOW & WAVES

Against a vast sky brimming with scallop-edged golden clouds, gracefully bowing willow trees hang over southeast Kyoto's Uji river, an iconic scene often described in Japan's literary works like *The Tale of Genji*. Inspired by a 17th-century Japanese folding screen, 'Willow and Waves' is brilliantly rendered using luminous metallic pigments on an aged painted silk ground. The stylised trees and wavy ribbons of water depicted in flat perspective imbue the design with a modern spirit that recalls Art Deco era artistry.



## NADESHIKO

A field of wispy, fringe-petaled dianthus flowers called *nadeshiko* - an emblem of idealised feminine beauty in Japanese culture - grows in delicate shades of red, pink, and white amidst a simple bamboo trellis. The dark, tinted gold background evokes the aged character of gold leaf surfaces distinctive of antique Japanese folding screens. Drawing from an 18th-century example, the large-scale design incorporates the traditional Rinpa painting technique of dripping colour onto wet areas, which creates a lively and whimsical visual effect.





Photography by Stephan Julliard



## HANAMI

A Japanese-inspired take on traditional chinoiserie, 'Hanami' presents a melange of Japan's native flora and fauna hand-painted with a contemporary elegance across a uniform plane. Poetic watercolour depictions of a spring garden - blossom trees, mimosa, peonies, chrysanthemums, kerria roses, and lantern flowers all in full bloom - intermingle with red-billed magpies, dragonflies, butterflies, and praying mantises. Upon delicate petals and bird feathers, exquisite embroidered silk details add further luminosity to the lustrous Almost Mauve slub silk ground.

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Photography by Stephan Julliard

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PRESS ENQUIRIES & IMAGE REQUESTS  
Harald@degournay.com  
+44 (0) 20 7349 8338