

# Journal

## ELSA PERETTI AND JAPAN

“The impact I felt on my first trip to Japan in 1969 was the speed and technology of a train from Tokyo to Kyoto and the exquisite craftsmanship of the things I saw.

With Yasuyoshi Morimoto’s help and patience, like a capricious child I managed to persuade the best craftsmen to manufacture some of my forms.”

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti, *Fifteen of my Fifty with Tiffany & Co*  
exhibition catalogue, F.I.T., New York 1990.

“Sometimes a group of craftsmen, who worked in different and distant towns, all contributed to the same piece of work. The object traveled throughout the wonderful geography of Japan, over a road of perfection, led by the wisdom of my friends, among them David Kidd, a writer. I have a deep feeling for all of these artisans, and it delights me to sit in Kyoto drinking tea, watching a vague idea come beautifully through, while the children play in the back.”

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti, *Fifteen of my Fifty with Tiffany & Co*  
exhibition catalogue, F.I.T., New York 1990.

For Elsa Peretti, travel was important for the mind; it awakened her innate curiosity, nourished her soul, and inspired her creations. In 1969, she visited Japan for the first time: “The beauty of the country, the way they do things, even the way they serve food... Yes, Japan is inspiring,” she later told to *Palmer Beach Magazine*. In Japan, Elsa Peretti lived in the spirit of the moment, “*ichigo ichie*” as the Japanese culture and tea masters describe it, treasuring every single thing she saw and experienced, from the moon reflected in a sake cup to the speed and technology of the train that took her from Tokyo to Kyoto.

In June 1974, just a few months before her first collection for Tiffany and Co. launched and sold out (that same day), Elsa Peretti traveled to Japan with then-Design Director Mr. George O’Brien and then-Chairman Mr. Henry B. Platt, finally free to “turn these feelings into reality.” With the help of her friend, the master in Asian arts David Kidd, and Yasuyoshi Morimoto’s unparalleled knowledge of the finest traditional artisans, Elsa Peretti began to bring her forms to life in lacquer, bamboo and silk:

Letter by Mr. Shimofuri to Elsa Peretti, 1990

“Madame Peretti, A golden carp, swam against the muddy torrent a thousand miles upstream, met the barrier of a waterfall, struggled, and suddenly leap clear, transformed into a shining dragon to fly free into the translucent air.”

Mr. Shimofuri

## Japan Emergency: support for the victims of the Japan earthquake, 2011

Elsa Peretti’s deep affection for Japan prompted her to help during the 2011 natural disaster through the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation. On March 11, 2011, Japan was hit by a massive 8.9-magnitude earthquake, the most powerful in the nation’s recorded history. The seismic event triggered devastating tsunamis, unleashing 30-foot waves

that obliterated rice fields, wiped out towns, and wreaked havoc on the landscape, tossing cars and boats as if they were mere toys.

In the wake of this calamity, the international community rallied to offer support, among them the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, willing to secure a prompt action to address the emergency. Collaborating with the UNHCR, the Foundation facilitated the provision of 1,794 solar lamps to the Japanese government, ensuring they were distributed within two days to those most impacted by the quake. These solar lanterns, developed and vetted by UNHCR, are designed not only to enhance the protection of refugees by introducing new technologies but also serve dual purposes in refugee camps: bolstering security and mitigating environmental impacts.

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Furthering its humanitarian efforts, the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation also partnered with Malteser International to extend immediate assistance to a children's home in Ichinoseki, a small city within Iwate prefecture, situated roughly 100 kilometers north of Sendai's coastal area—devastated by the tsunami—and 150 kilometers from the compromised Fukushima nuclear power plant. Malteser International's team was on the ground to offer crucial psycho-social support to the children, aiding in their emotional recovery from the disaster's impacts.