

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI AND ART OF SAIKEI

PRESENTS

SAIKEI

THE HISTORY AND ART OF JAPANESE LANDSCAPE PLANTING

HISTORY

- Saikei literally translates as “planted landscape”
- Saikei combines miniature living trees, accent plants, ground cover with soil, rocks, water, in a pot, slab, or stone / grouping
- Uses younger, juvenile stock to create a finished piece quickly - often in an afternoon.

Image courtesy of Phillipe Massard



Tray landscapes have existed for centuries in both China and Japan.
Below is a Ukiyo-e wood carved print from the 14th century.



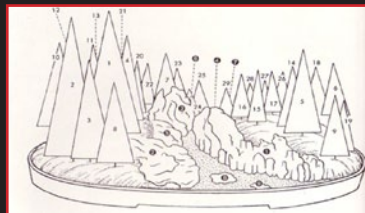
Image courtesy of NHK World Japan

Toshio Kawamoto set the standard for saikei composition, such as the mandatory use of stones, and the placement of trees and roots above the rim of the tray. Through his school, The Nippon Bonsai-Saikei Institute, he taught his methods to students from Japan and throughout the world.

Image courtesy of David Penny



Kawamoto
also published
several books
on saikei that
have become
the bible to
many saikei
practitioners.



TECHNIQUE

To make your landscapes look natural, the following should be considered:

- Accurate, consistent scale
- Composition - create a focal point, follow rule of thirds
- Choose plants that are similar to style of planting
- Style trees in a naturalistic way
- Include elements both good and bad
- Follow the laws of nature



SCALE - In miniatures, the scale of every element is kept consistent which leads to extremely accurate representations of furniture and houses. Oftentimes, you can barely tell they are miniatures.

The same rules should be adhered to when creating landscape plantings.

The Ferd Sobol Editions
presents a peek Behind the Workshop Door as we build



The Library Chair

This amazing Library Chair represents one of only two fine in the history of The Ferd Sobol Editions, that due to the ever popular demand of miniaturists worldwide, a third edition was created of a favorite piece.

Many potential clients wait for years for the edition of their dreams to come off of the workshop bench. Many do reserve their collection in advance and take advantage of the friendly and easy Layaway Plan to assure that their purchase is secured prior to a limited edition being sold out.

We anticipate that unfortunately for many this edition will also join our Legacy Editions (sold out very shortly). So if this edition is your heart's desire, please do not wait.



Long before the days of Kindle, a library was a serene place of quiet, comfort and knowledge. A personal library was a much treasured space in the home devoted to such creature comforts and lofty ideas. This latest edition honors that spirit of appreciation of the wisdom of generations.

As this edition creates many questions in the minds of viewers, we thought you might wish to take a moment to peek behind the workshop door at the edition in progress.

Kindly join us for a moment to view some of the many steps we completed as we built The Library Chair. Please enjoy.

In this Nigel Saunders video, he explains his experiment where he planted wheat grass to complement the moss ground cover. He came to the conclusion that since the scale is off, it does not look natural.



In this Hòn Non Bo composition, the scale of the soaring mountains determine how tall the plants must be in order to look realistic.

Just one tree that is too tall, or has leaves that are too large, is enough to throw off that illusion.



PLANTING STYLES

Whether you are replicating an actual scene from nature, or from a vision you have, you need to embrace the style of landscape you're recreating. Studying images in the particular style you're creating is invaluable for an authentic look and feel. Here are some images that show different landscape styles to consider.



Sweeping vistas from a far away vantage point are excellent inspiration for Hòn Non Bo and Penjing plantings. The mountains (hardscape) will always determine scale.



Rivers that run through forests often create lush green vegetation that can be recreated accurately if you pay attention to the details.









EXAMPLES - Saikei; a completely natural scene is portrayed



EXAMPLES - Saikei



EXAMPLES - Landscape Penjing; often utilizes man made elements, and the composition typically evokes a sense of fantasy.



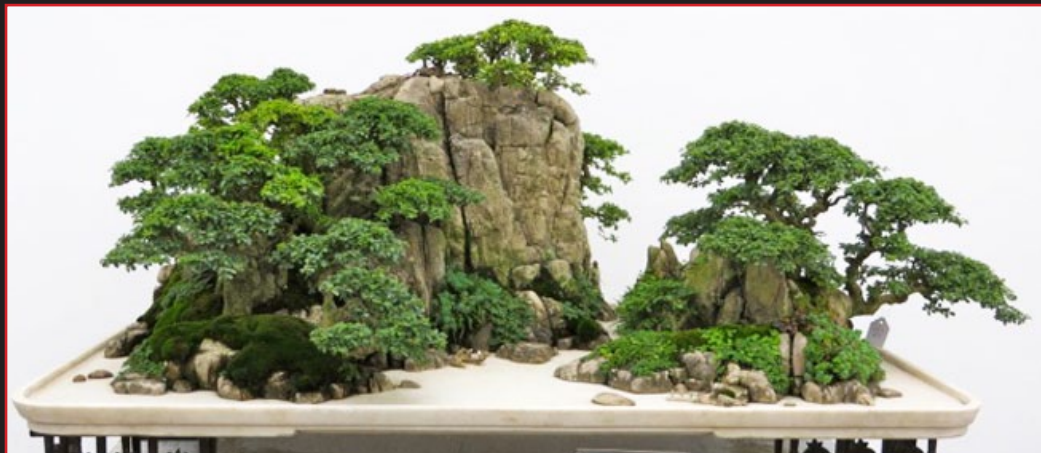
EXAMPLES - Landscape Penjing



EXAMPLES - Hòn Non Bo; utilizes a grand scale, typically of a mountain scape that towers over oceans or valleys. Often utilizes man made elements.



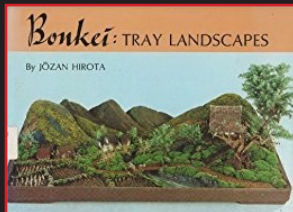
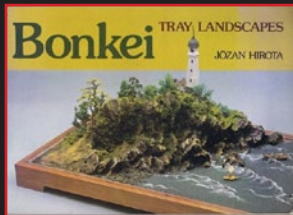
EXAMPLES - Hòn Non Bo



EXAMPLES - Rock Plantings



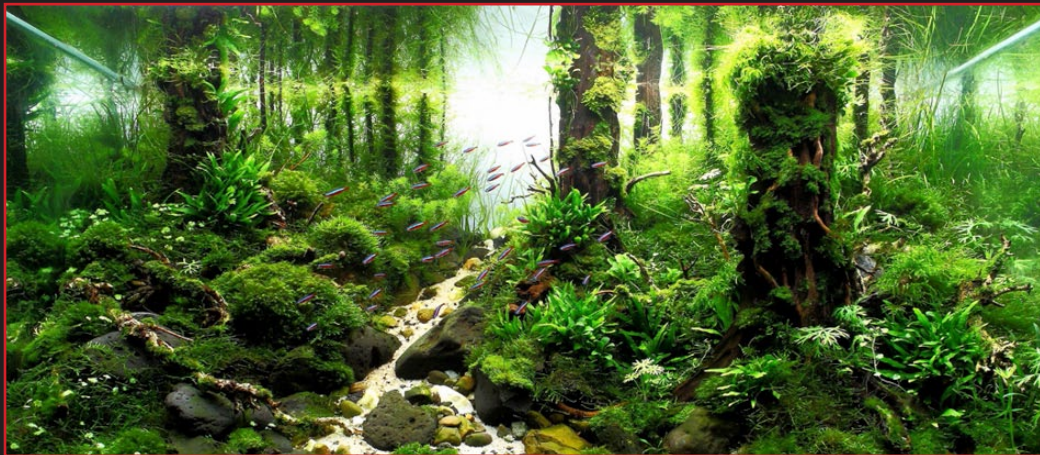
EXAMPLES - Bonkei; landscape diorama using 100% man made material.



EXAMPLES - Fairy Gardens; depicts a fantasy environment with mixed elements.



EXAMPLES - Aquascaping; naturalistic representations of landscapes under water.





EXAMPLES - Driftwood planting



MATERIALS - Rocks and Stones

SEIRYU STONE



TUFA ROCK



MEXICAN BOWL ROCK



Other rocks and stones suitable for Saikei

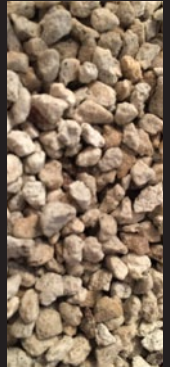
**FEATHER ROCK, LAVA ROCK (RED, BLACK),
OR ANY INERT STONE THAT MATCHES YOUR LANDSCAPE**

MATERIALS - Soil

PLANTING SOIL



TOP SOIL



MATERIALS - Muck

FINE PLANTING SOIL



SANDY LOAM



POTTER'S CLAY



NZ SPHAGNUM MOSS



Additionally, you can add small percentages of moisture retaining additives such as:

**AKADAMA DUST, PERLITE, VERIMICULITE,
FINE SIFTED REDWOOD BARK, ETC.**

MATERIALS - Trees

JUNIPER



BOXWOOD



CHINESE ELM



Other trees suitable for Saikei

**DWARF MYRTLE, HINOKI CYPRESS, DWARF AZALEA, COTONEASTER...
ANY TREES WITH SMALL/REDUCEABLE LEAVES**

MATERIALS - Accent Plants

ERODIUM



DWARF MONDO GRASS



PLATT'S BLACK



Other accents suitable for Saikei

**PINCUSHION, COOPER'S LEDBOURIA, SMALL LEAVED GROUND COVER...
ANY PLANTS WITH SMALL/REDUCEABLE LEAVES**

MATERIALS - Pots



MATERIALS - Pots



MATERIALS - Slabs, Slate



You can use any flat, solid slab or slate as your planting base. Color and texture choices are varied and readily available.

Slabs can be shaped with a grinder and a diamond cutting wheel, chisels, and hammers.



Please refer to your handouts for
more detailed information:

HISTORY OF SAIKEI

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK GOYA

RECIPES

SUPPLIERS

RESOURCES

MATERIAL GUIDES