

FORM & ALLUSION





Front cover
Detail of catalogue item 1

Opposite
Detail of catalogue item 2

Back cover
Detail of catalogue items 4, 23 and 30

FORM & ALLUSION

The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.

Aristotle, 4th century, BCE

Beyond visual delight and technical skill, the central purpose of art is to create an emotional experience. Art resonates with the viewer through the power of its form and the ideas that it provokes. Allusions embedded by its creator have the power to transcend geographical and societal context. Recognition of such allusion reinforces cultural solidarity between maker and viewer, through the creation of a shared familiarity that bonds one to the other across time and cultural boundaries. The pieces chosen for this exhibition invite such reflection. These include historic pieces containing memories of use in a distant society, as well as contemporary works that encapsulate the drive of today's generation of artists to challenge preconceptions while remaining rooted in Japan's rich artistic tradition.

Simon Pilling
East Asian Art & Interiors

01 SERVING TRAY *Oshiki-type*

Muromachi period, 15th-century
Red over black lacquer, *negoro* style
36.8 x 36.8 x 2.8 cm

Contained within this simple piece is a narrative that epitomises an essential core value of the Japanese aesthetic and begs contrasting comparison with Western traditions, but presents a universal appeal that draws on the viewer's sensibilities to create rich allusion.

Prosaically, it is a wooden tray of Japanese cypress, *hinoki*, lacquer-coated firstly in black and then with a finishing coat of red – the colour traditionally believed to ward off evil and misfortune. Such trays, also sometimes called *zen* trays, were made primarily for temple mealtime servings – typically carrying a monk's food dish, sake container, cup and chopsticks – but might also be used for shrine offerings. Basically, therefore, this is a strictly utilitarian piece for use in a temple's dining hall, showing clear evidence of use, so that over years of service and cleaning its red finish has worn through to the black base-coat. To many western eyes such wear would traditionally be seen as damage that, at the least, requires refinishing if not total replacement. To the Japanese sensibility its

appearance has long been appreciated as the “beauty of use”, *yo no bi* – evidencing a history that increasingly enriches the piece, and commands respect for its long and valued service.

Such pieces – primarily a wide range of utensils and containers for the storage and serving of food and drink - have become known as *negoro* after the *Negoroji* temple, where it is believed the technique originated. The temple, founded in the late Heian period, had by the 15th century grown to a complex of over 300 sub-temples housing at least 3000 monks. In an act that draws parallels with England's Henry VIII's destruction of monasteries in the second quarter of the 16th century, warlord Hideyoshi, fearing the potential political influence of the *Negoroji* community, destroyed much of the complex in 1585.

Reflecting on this specific piece may prompt the viewer to appreciate the rich surface textures that have developed into an abstract imagery to rival a contemporary painting, or to

consider the circumstances that have led to its appearance – the repeated cleaning, the memories of food and drink vessels - imprints of which rise up through the finish, its everyday use. Perhaps more profoundly it causes us to reflect on the nature of beauty, the power of continuity, and the ability of a humble item to connect us back into the working life of a society distant in both time and place.



02 **WRITING BOX**
suzuribako

by **KODA Katei** (1886-1961)

Early Showa period, 1930s
Black and gold lacquer,
with shell and metal inlays
19 x 16.5 x 3.5 cm
Signed and sealed black lacquer *tomobako*

*tsu ra nu ki, to me, nu tama so, chi
ri, ke ri*

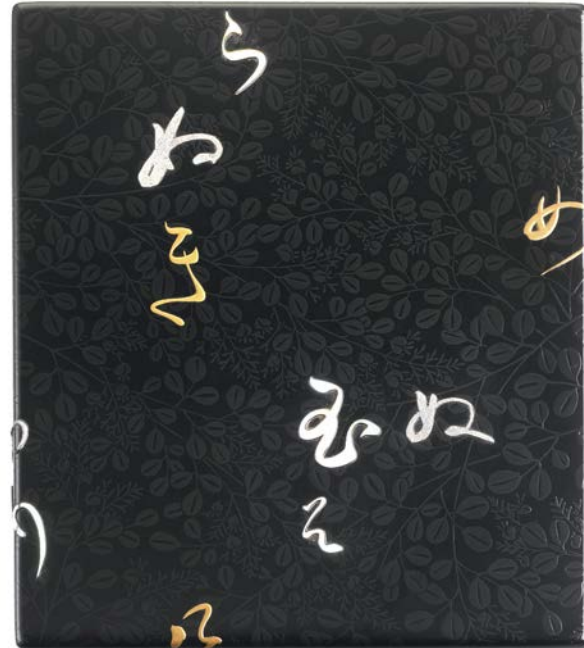
Glistening dewdrops
fiercely blown by the wind
across an autumn field.
Incessantly forced to scatter
Like pearls from a broken string

The title of this work *Asayasu waka suzuribako*, confirms that the artist has taken inspiration from the work of Heian period poet Funya no Asayasu (9-10th century).

The hiragana characters in gold *makie*, metal and shell inlay become the dewdrops, as if their fluid form has created the poem itself through the random act of the wind. They are set against an exquisite ground of black on black lacquer minutely detailing a field of bush clover, *hagi*. The choice of plant – a metaphor for the ephemeral nature of life – reinforces the transience of the scene. It is a night-time setting, confirmed on opening the box by the silver water

dropper, *suiteki*, in the form of a waning gibbous moon, which coupled with autumnal bush clover evokes the melancholy of the impending season.

The delicacy of the work and its smaller size suggest that this was a piece commissioned for a woman. The artist was the younger brother of Koda Shuetsu (1881-1933), here working in the innovative style of Shuetsu that was influenced by the work of 16th century artist Koetsu and the rinpa style. It is a work of *ashide-e* (lit. 'reed script picture'), a uniquely Japanese art form, where the cursive calligraphy serves as both text and illustration in the representation of a poem.



03 **TRACE 4 & 5**
& *kiseki*
04

by **TERUNUMA Ayako** (b. 1976)

Heisei period, 2014
Dry lacquer, *kanshitsu*
80 x 19 cm

Terunuma-san, a prize winning graduate of the Tokyo University of the Arts, is fascinated by the power of the calligraphic line. In these works she captures its energy in planes of black lacquer. Playing with the traditional wall-mounted scroll her pieces project perpendicular to the wall, from straight line to free form. Each sheet is perfectly balanced.

It is a simple, but powerful, concept that is technically extremely demanding to realise. To transform the design vision to reality first requires a mould to be made, roughly hewn from polystyrene before building up in plaster. Numerous layers of lacquer-soaked

hemp cloth are next laid over the mould, allowed to set and then removed to begin the process of creating a perfect base form. Working with increasingly fine lacquer mixes and polishing compounds, the challenge is to produce a perfectly true and smooth form that can finally receive the finishing layers of fine black lacquer to be polished to a mirror finish.

The work is painstaking, meticulous and time consuming. The end result relies on perfection for its impact. It is an extraordinary marriage of pure form and masterly technique, to achieve a perfect tapering form that intrigues and draws the viewer in.



05 **INCENSE BOX**
kogo

by **SASAKI Gakuto** (b. 1983)

Heisei period, 2014
Dry lacquer form, *kanshitsu*,
with innovative lacquer finishes, *kawarinuri*
8.2 (dia.) x 3.5 (h) cm
Signed

The works of Sasaki Gakuto invite the viewer to suspend preconceptions. At first sight the appearance is familiar – here are high-grade, tooled leather boxes, one perfect and new with black swallowtail butterfly decoration and double zip fastenings, the other clearly a much loved and used item showing the rich patina that comes with handling over years.

Touch them, however, and it is immediately apparent that the eye has been deceived. There is no leather, tooling, canvas ribbon or metal zips. All is recreated in lacquer.

For the Western viewer the question can be ‘why go to the trouble?’ Here our equivalent artistic tradition could be seen in ‘trompe-l’oeil’ paintings (lit. deceive the eye) – a playfulness to intrigue and amuse. In Japanese lacquer arts there is a similarly rich tradition, dating back to at least the 18th-century, of using lacquer in replication of materials. The 19th-century artist Shibata Zeshin

perfected such techniques. Sasaki-san is continuing this important tradition, bringing his work directly in line with contemporary values to question our current fascination with luxury goods.



ORNAMENTAL BOX
kobako

PSYCHE

by **SASAKI Gakuto** (b. 1983)

Heisei period, 2013
Dry lacquer form, *kanshitsu*,
with innovative lacquer finishes, *kawarinuri*
23 x 20 x 8 (h) cm
Sealed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

Sasaki-san is a graduate of Tokyo University of the Arts where he now teaches. His fascination is with the concept of ‘fine quality’ craft and the essential role that this plays in our daily lives. He believes that a piece created by a dedicated maker with fine tools only starts to develop its personal story when it is handed to a user, continuing the tradition of ‘beauty of use’, *yo no bi*. In the incense box shown here he has already started the process through imitation of wear.

‘Fine quality’ always adds joy to our life and makes our life more colourful. I am hoping that great stories will be composed by using my works, and I will keep striving for this purpose. Craft work made by hand can be a turning point for us to consider what can be a truly wealthy life with fine quality in this society of mass consumption
(Sasaki-san, 2012)

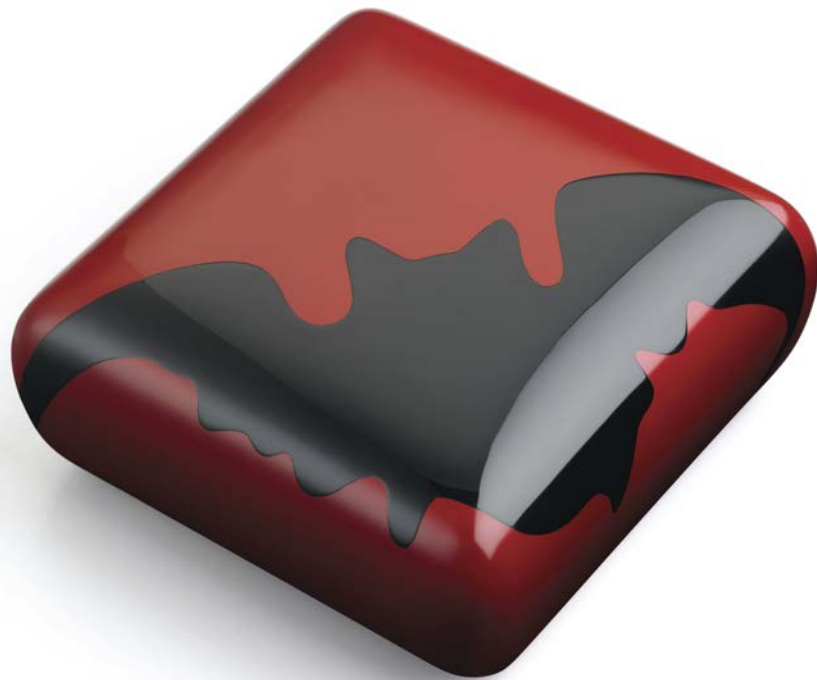


07 **ORNAMENTAL BOX**
kobako

by **WAKAMIYA Takashi** (b.1964)

Heisei period, 2014
Black and red lacquer
15 x 15 x 6.5 cm.
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

A beautiful pure box form of gently swelling proportions finished in a rich red lacquer over a black ground in *negoro* style. Across one corner, depicted in highly polished black lacquer, is the outline of a bat. Throughout East Asia, unlike in the West, the bat is considered a symbol of good fortune. Various theories have been put forward for this, ranging from long life through their consumption to shared ideographs with the writing of 'luck'.



08 **NETSUKE**

by **WAKAMIYA Takashi** (b.1964)

Heisei period, 2014
White lacquer on carved camphor wood
8 x 4 x 2.5 cm.

For 2000 years the Japanese *ama*, women of the sea, have harvested abalone, shellfish and seaweed from the seabed. Solely using breath control they can reach depths of 10 metres, and as such hold an almost mythic status. Long depicted in Japanese art, an infamous 19th-century image by Hokusai entitled 'Dream of the Fisherwoman', scandalised the French critic Edmond de Goncourt. Here the *ama* comes back to the surface clutching a giant squid.



SAKE CUP
sakazuki

09

by **WAKAMIYA Takashi** (b.1964)

Heisei period, 2014
Gold and coloured *makie*
10.2 (dia.) x 2.4 cm.
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

This extraordinarily fine and delicate work is based on a design by the Kyoto Buddhist priest Nakagawa Manabu (b.1966) to illustrate the reprint of 'Ketyo' - a work by renowned Japanese novelist Izumi Kyoka (1873-1939). It shows an idyllic summer evening scene along a grassy river bank. Light rain is falling, and a series of characters are silhouetted against the purple sky of twilight. In a design that wraps over the face and back of the cup, a young woman under a brilliant red umbrella strolls across the front, while on the reverse side rests a monkey trainer whose charge is about to take the persimmon fruit being offered by a third figure. It is a timeless scene that immediately evokes the lazy quietude of a balmy evening.



10 IF I WAS AN OCTOPUS

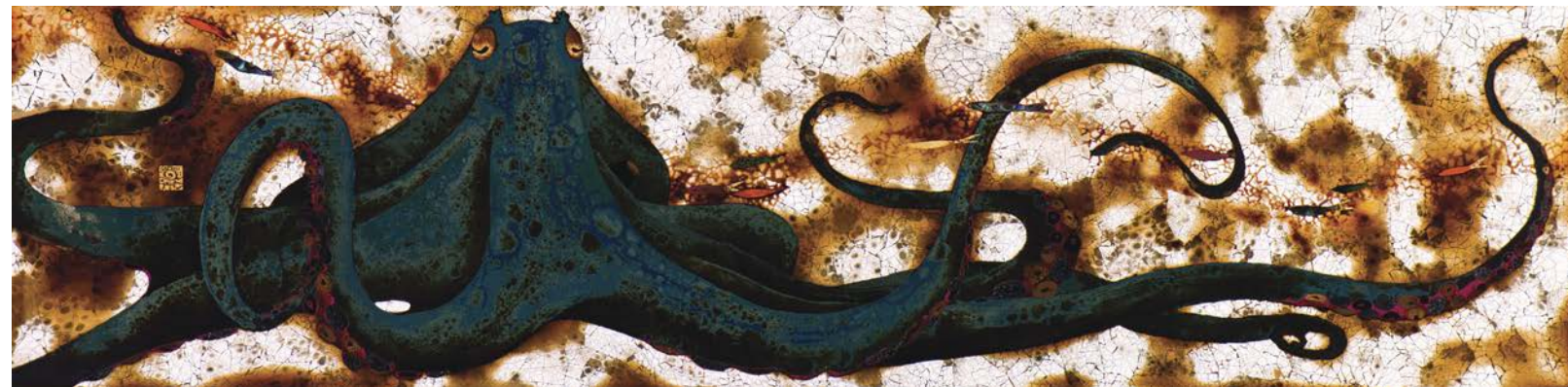
11 by ANDO Saeko (b.1968)

12 Coloured lacquers, shell, egg-shell and metal inlays
Each panel 60 x 15 x 1.8 cm
Sealed

Showing for the first time in the West, the work of Ando-san combines two lacquer traditions – those of Japan and Vietnam. While Vietnam shares a long-standing East Asian tradition for lacquered utilitarian objects, its lacquer paintings, *son mai*, are an art form dating only from the arrival of French colonists and the establishment of the École Supérieur des Beaux Arts de l'Indochine in 1925. Thus local tradition and materials were blended with a more Western-centric familiarity, to become a unique fine art for which Vietnam is rightly acclaimed.

Ando-san, based in Hanoi for almost 20 years researching and practicing every aspect of the Vietnamese skill, has brought to it a further rigour and technique taken from the Japanese tradition of *togidashi-e* where repeated layering and polishing results in a mirror finish of great depth.

Underwater creatures fascinate me because of their diverse colours and patterns, not just found on the skin surface but lying somewhere deep amongst the translucent cells. Many of them, just like these octopuses, cleverly change their colours and patterns to protect themselves and to catch their prey. It seems to me that Vietnamese lacquer is the only material in the world which can metamorphose into such magical composition. Though natural Vietnamese lacquer may lack the strong glow of Japanese urushi, it has very high transparency compared to lacquer from any other country. Additionally, this transparency is not so prominent at the beginning, but as time passes, and the layers of lacquer continue their chemical reaction with the atmosphere, a greater transparency occurs, colours brighten, and details increasingly reveal themselves.
(Ando Saeko, September 2014)



THREE-TIERED FOOD CONTAINER

kojubako

by **ICHINAKA Yuukei** (b.1939)

Heisei Period, 2012
Red on black lacquer, *negoro*
12.3 x 21.0 x 19.0 cm
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

Few objects speak so strongly of a unique Japanese aesthetic as the 'lunchbox', *makunouchi bento*. A simple ordering device that provides a framework to the visual delight, care and complementary variety that epitomises the Japanese approach to food. Within it can be encapsulated a season, a festival and a celebration.

There is an austere elegance to this example, entitled Spring & Autumn – suggesting its intended use during the seasons of cherry blossom and maple – that works in the *negoro* lacquer tradition. Wajima artist Ichinaka Yuukei has taken the traditional stacking tiered box form and brought a twist to its design by the incorporation of the braid which secures the whole to its base. Ichinaka-san's work was first accepted at the Nitten in 1966, since when he has regularly exhibited, receiving awards in 1991 and 1996. Since 1999 he has been a judge for the Nitten and in 2000 received the Prime Minister's Award for his work.



THREE-TIERED FOOD CONTAINER

kojubako

by **YOSHIDA Hiroyuki** (b.1961)

Heisei Period, 2013
Red and black lacquer
22 x 22 x 17.5 cm (nested)
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

A work that further celebrates the ritual of a meal, by initial presentation in the form of a mountain. This is a traditional design of the three-tiered box with the ingenious model of nesting when stored into a single box. It has a striking architectural quality.

The eye is further satisfied by the rich quality of the red lacquer. The formula for this relies on the precise mix of mercury added to the formula. Yoshida-san is a master of this colour, and indeed worked the finish seen in the previous item. He first graduated in science in 1983, before returning to Wajima to apprentice under his father Yoshida Keichi, subsequently graduating from the Wajima Lacquer Arts Training Centre. Initially developing his craft as a team contributor in the traditional manner, specialising in the red lacquer finish coat, he has since 2005 headed his own studio. His work has been widely exhibited and awarded in Japan.





RICE SERVING SPOON *shakushi*

by **ICHINAKA Yuukei** (b.1939)

Heisei Period, 2012
Red on black lacquer, *negoro*
28 x 3.9 cm
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

An exquisitely elegant form carved from Japanese cypress, *hinoki*, and lacquered in black with a red finishing coat, *negoro*. The origin of this form can be dated back to at least the 13th century, when such spoons were being used in temple dining halls for the serving of rice and soup.



PORTABLE WRITING SET *yatate*

Late Edo/early Meiji period, 19th century
Coloured lacquers with metal fittings
Length: 39 cm

Throughout the Edo period the carrying of swords was first restricted to the samurai class and later extended to the rising merchant class, albeit only for the carrying of a short sword or dagger. After 1876 it was banned altogether. This piece clearly tested the convention, appearing to be a

dagger, *tanto*, held in a lacquer scabbard in the popular shape of a lobster tail. In reality it is a writing set. Removing the letter-opener blade, which locks the whole into shape, enables the piece to be swung open to reveal the brush, and ink container.



FLOWER VASE *hanaire*

by **HIRAISHI Kosho** (1910-1989)

Showa period, 1950s
Dry lacquer form, *kanshitsu*,
36 x 10 x 18 (h) cm
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

This stylised form of a mandarin duck, sleeping with its head turned back, creates an elegant flower container. Two uniform lacquer finishes are used - the outside a rich vermillion red, the interior

a dark green. The base is over-coated with a translucent brown and carries the artist's gold lacquer signature.

Fifties' Japan was a time of great austerity and challenge, with materials in short supply. Hiraishi-san has nevertheless created a piece of calm beauty. His work was first exhibited at the Teiten of 1934, and he continued to show regularly at the Nitten after the second world war. Recipient of numerous awards, he was also a professor

at the Kyoto Municipal School of Arts and Crafts. Among his students were lauded pupils such as Hattori Shunsho (b. 1943) and Okada Yuji (b. 1948).



KETTLE *chagama*

by **KAWABE Shozo** (b. 1952)

Heisei period, late 20th c
Cast iron
21.5 (dia.) x 15 cm
Sealed – *Sho*. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

Iron kettles first appeared in Japan's Nara period, 645-781, dating to the introduction of tea drinking from T'ang dynasty China. Their use continues to this day as a central component of the Tea

Ceremony – a ritual which has fascinated the West since it was first recorded by Jesuit priests in the mid 16th century: ***It is customary with the noble and wealthy Japanese, when they have an honoured guest, to show their treasures as a sign of esteem. These are the utensils they use in drinking a powdered herb called cha.*** (Padre Luis D'Almeida, 1565)

Placed over a fire, the kettle's boiling water is removed using a bamboo ladle.

In this striking example, the artist has substituted winged handles in place of the traditional lifting lugs to create a wonderfully lyrical object, whose *tomobako* alludes to it reflecting true Chinese style.

Shoso Kawabe is the third generation head of this notable metal working family from Nara.

19 **FLOWER VASE**
hanaire

by **TAKAMURA Toyochika**
(1890-1972)

Showa period, 1950/60s
Patinated bronze
15 (dia.) x 26 cm
Sealed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

A fluid design of simplicity and beauty that epitomises the best work of this important artist, who was designated a Living National Treasure in 1964 for his metal casting, *chukin*, technique. Subtle gradations of rich reddish-ochre patination embellish the mallet-shaped vase around which flow stylised forms, possibly alluding to a flight of phoenix. It is a study in pure form.

Son of the sculptor Takamura Koun (1852-1934), the artist graduated from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1915. From 1926 he taught at the Tokyo School, later becoming a professor at the Kanazawa College of Arts in the 1950s. For three years running from 1927 he was awarded the Gold Prize, *tokusen*, at Japan's national art exhibition, the *Teiten*.



FLOWERVASE
hanaire

by **HONGO Yoshihiko**

1950/60s
Bronze with metal inlays
30 (dia.) x 21 cm
Signed in silver reserve to base, Yoshihiko
Signed and sealed *tomobako*

The southward migration of wild geese, *kari*, in autumn has been so celebrated in Japan that the eighth lunar month was traditionally known as *kanraigetsu*, the month of the geese's return. It is an enduring

artistic motif. Here it is used as a stylised depiction of a flight of five birds incised into a generously full-bodied bronze vase whose form perfectly matches the artistic ambition.

The technique, employing silver and shakudo inlay, is termed *kaga zogan*. It was named after the early 17th-century lord of Kaga (modern day Ishikawa Prefecture) who first

brought a Kyoto metalworking family into his region specifically to develop ornamental techniques that could provide unique gifts to important visitors, in particular armour. It is based on a combination of flat and thread inlays set in to a metal surface. As with many traditional Japanese craft techniques it had been in danger of dying out in modern times, before being gradually revived in the Showa period. The Hongo metalworking family became one of its leading exponents.



21 **FLOWERVASE**
hanaire

by **HONGO Toshihiko** (b.1947)

1970/80s
Bronze with metal inlays
28 (dia.) x 13 cm
Signed in silver reserve to base, Toshihiko
Signed and sealed *tomobako*

A powerful, flattened vase whose traditional East Asian form exhibits a virtual mirror to the viewer. On its surface four stylised flower heads are laid out in *shakudo* threads and flat copper inlays in the *kaga zogan* technique.

Apprenticed under his father Yoshihiko, Toshihiko's work first received the Nihon Kogei-kai award in 1977 and has since been widely exhibited.



HANGING FLOWERVASE
hanaike

22

by **TAKAHASHI Kaishu**
(1905-2004)

mid/late 20th-century
Patinated bronze with metal inlays
25 x 18 x 16 cm
Signed and sealed *tomobako*

Providing constant evidence of the passage of time, one of the most powerful images in Japanese iconography is the moon. The *Nihon Dai Saijiki* (Comprehensive Dictionary of Seasonal Words) cites almost thirty aspects of the moon as appropriate themes for *haiku*, and more than 175 terms for capturing poetic expression. The vast majority concern autumn – a season for reflection.

This work's creator, Takahashi Kaishu, was born in Kanazawa and graduated from the Tokyo School of Fine Art in 1929. Such was his talent that his work was immediately accepted for exhibition in the Teiten. International awards followed, including the gold medal at the Chicago International Exposition of 1933. After 1945 he founded the Ishikawa Prefectural Art and Culture Association and continued to regularly exhibit at the Nitten. Specialising in bronze casting and soft metal inlay, he was named a Living National Treasure in 1982.



23 **FLOWER VASE**
hanatate

by **TERADA Yasuo** (b.1948)

Showa period, 1987
Handbuilt stoneware with gold glaze
16 x 17 x 21 cm.
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomokako*

Not afraid to embellish his traditional roots with innovative inspirations, Yasuo Terada sets new boundaries in modern Japanese ceramics with his uninhibited forms, designs and glazes. His work, flowing from abstract to naturalistic, represents a fusion of age-old tradition and contemporary vision (Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada).

Entitled 'Gold Drop *hanatate*' the firing of this work has created droplets of gold that rise out of the glaze. A fourth-generation Oribe style potter, Terada has published extensively on clay, glazing and kiln building, having built many traditional Japanese kilns and restored several of the 16th-century dragon kilns of the Momoyama period in the Seto area. A graduate of Tokyo's Tama University of Art, Terada was awarded at the 1982 Asahi Ceramics Exhibition, going on to exhibit at the Taipei Modern Art Museum in 1985. His work has been widely exhibited internationally and is held in private and public collections worldwide.



FLOWER VASE
hanaire

24

by **SHIMIZU Uichi** (1926-2004)

Showa period, 1960s/80s
White glazed stoneware
18 (dia.) x 25 cm
Seal to base. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

Understated elegance - an egg-shaped vase with delicately crackled ivory glaze achieving the purest of forms. Its creator, Shimizu Uichi, was recipient of the ultimate Japanese craft recognition – Living National Treasure – in 1985.

Shimizu-san was apprenticed to the potter Ishiguro Munemaro (1893-1968) at the age of 14. Later training at the National Porcelain Laboratory and working as an assistant at the Kyoto Municipal Industrial Research Centre, he became independent in 1945. In 1970 he moved to Shiga to set up his climbing kiln at the foot of Mt Horai on the shores of Lake Biwa, which he named Horai-yo (Elysium). With work first exhibited at the Nitten in 1951, he went on to receive numerous awards there. In 1963 the International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art in Washington named him as one of the six greatest ceramic artists in the world. Works by Shimizu Uichi are held in the collections of the Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto Museum of Modern Art and the Freer.



25 **FLOWER VASE**
hanaire

by **MORINO Taimei** (b.1934)

Late Showa/early Heisei period, 1980s/90s
Stoneware with resist glaze motifs over an iron red ground
14 (dia.) x 22 cm
Signed. Signed & sealed *tomobako*

Enigmatic shapes of red and black, redolent of traditional lacquer hues, flow over a thickly-potted, open-mouthed vase to create a subtle and satisfying visual composition. Now a leading Kyoto-based artist respected for meticulously crafted exercises in form and colour, Taimei first studied at the Kyoto University of Fine Art. Such was his talent that his work was accepted into the Nitten a year before his graduation in 1958. In 1960 he received the Nitten's prestigious Hokutosho prize and went on to work as a guest professor at the University of Chicago. Returning to Japan in the late 1960s he was awarded a second Hokutosho Prize at the Nitten, followed by the governor's prize and others at the Gendai Kogei Ten (Modern National Crafts Exhibition).

In 2007 he received the Japan Art Academy Prize, an award to a work of art similar in weight to the bestowing of Living National Treasure status.



FIVE SAKE FLASKS
tokkuri

by **TAKAHASHI Koichi, *Dohachi VII***
(1910-1982)

Showa Period, 1960s
Porcelain with silver glaze
6 (dia.) x 12 cm
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

Individual sake flasks, generically termed *tokkuri*, are perfect, functional forms. Their full body and tapering neck ensures that when placed into hot water to warm the sake, the narrow neck retains the

heat. They are an essential component of Japanese life.

This set of five is by the seventh-generation head of the Dohachi, a leading family of Kyoto potters founded in the 18th century. An exquisite silver glaze has been used that displays many of the characteristics of burnishing and oxidation that would be associated with the metal, to create work that captures the quintessential Japanese understated elegance traditionally associated with Kyoto.

27 **LARGE VESSEL**
tsubo

by **MISAKI Mitsukuni** (b. 1951)

Showa period, 1985
Stoneware with inlaid decoration, *zogan*
42 (dia.) x 34 cm
Sealed. Signed and sealed storage box.

Here we see a monumental, powerful work of unglazed stoneware. Inlaid coloured slip decoration creates a delicate flowing stylised decoration that

perfectly complements the strong globular form that terminates in a sophisticated tapering wide mouth.

This piece was exhibited at the 13th Chunichi International Exhibition of Ceramic Arts, *Chunichi Kokusai Togei-ten*. Sponsored by the Nagoya-based Chunichi Newspaper, the exhibition was held annually from 1973-88 to become one of the four main Japanese ceramic exhibitions.

Misaki-san was born in Chiba, established his own kiln in 1979, and has been a regular and awarded exhibitor at the Asahi Togei-ten, the Nihon Togei-ten and Nihon Dento Togei-ten.



LARGE FACETED JAR
tsubo

by **TAKENAKA Ko** (b.1941)

Heisei period, 1990s/2000s
Porcelain
38 (dia.) x 30 cm
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

With great presence, this huge thickly-potted jar of elegant pure form shows an organic reference point – a flowerhead or segmental fruit. The work epitomizes the style

for which the artist is now universally acclaimed - white porcelain forms inspired by the austere Korean plain wares of the Choson period. Working in the traditional Korean manner, this piece has been first thrown in two pieces, joined and then faceted through meticulous carving before glazing and firing.

In 1961 Takenaka-san was apprenticed under Living National Treasure Kondo Yuzo. His work was

first publically exhibited in 1966 before establishing his own Kyoto kiln in 1970. Since 1971 he has been a permanent member of the Japan Craft Association. In 1980 he received the Japanese Ceramics Society Award, and in 1995 was designated an Intangible Cultural Property of Kyoto, *munkei bunkazai* (Prefectural Treasure). His works are held in major museum collections in both Japan and the West.





29 **WOODBLOCK
TRYPTYCH**
*UJIGAWA KASSEN
NO DZU*

by **ICHIYUSAI Kuniyoshi**
(1797-1861)

Edo period, 1849
Publisher: Yenshu-ya Hikobei
Censor: Kinugasa-Yoshimura
75 x 36 cm

Japan's Genpei civil war was fought for five years from 1180 to finally resolve authority between two branches of the Heian Imperial Court – the Taira and the Minamoto. The ultimate victory of the Minamoto was to lead to the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate in 1192, the rise of military power and a reduction of the Emperor's authority

that would stretch through to the Meiji Restoration of the mid 19th century. Seen as a seminal point in Japan's history - reflecting truly heroic and timeless values – the war's artistic legacy has been immense.

This work by Kuniyoshi is a masterpiece of composition that shows the competition between Minamoto generals Kagesue, Takatsuna and Shigetada to race across the Uji River before the second battle of Uji in 1184. The *Heike Monogatari* records that the bridge had been destroyed, leading the Minamoto clan leader Yoritomo to give the samurai his best horses with instruction to cross the river and establish the route that could be used by the rest of his army.



SILKSCREEN PRINT
MARK OF THE FAN

by **TAKEDA Hideo** (b.1948)

Showa period, 1985
39.5 x 53 cm
87/125
Signed

In 1985 contemporary artist Takeda Hideo returned to the Genpei War in a series of works to mark the 800th

anniversary of the final battle that defeated the Taira – *Dan-no-Ura*. His is a satirical reading of the events, implying an almost fetishistic obsession by Japanese society to repeatedly return to this distant time of supposed true values. As the battle of Yashima raged, the Taira noblewoman *Tamamushi-no-maye* raised a fan on the mast of her boat claiming that it would protect the ship from attack,

and daring the Minamoto to shoot it off. Riding into the waters Minamoto archer *Nasu no Yoichi* achieved the seemingly impossible feat with a single arrow. Takeda-san's interpretation infuses the scene with visceral overtone – the naked figure of a Taira noblewoman has climbed the mast, while the water is a writhing mass of tattooed enemy bodies, from which emerges a limb attempting to dismount the archer.



31 **SWEET BOWL**
kanshiki

by **Enbo**

Showa period, 1970s/1980s
Red & black lacquer on carved wooden base
19 (dia.) x 11 cm
Signed. Signed and sealed *tomobako*

A dramatic organic form exploiting the striking pairing of traditional black and red lacquer, applied to a carved wooden core. This work is a fine example of contemporary Ryukyu lacquer, the southern islands of the archipelago whose lacquer tradition has traditionally had a unique character.



SWEETBOWL
kashibashi

by **Heain Zohiko**

Early 20th century, 1900-1930
Red on black lacquer, *negoro*, with silver rim,
gin fuchitsuki
17.3 (dia.) x 11.5 cm
Signed and sealed *tomobako*

An elegant form, with rich red lacquer finish and delicate silver rim binding by the historic Kyoto lacquer workshop Heian Zohiko – founded in 17th century and still active today.



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