



ONISHI GALLERY

521 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001
212 695 8035 / info@onishigallery.com
onishigallery.com

ASIA WEEK 2019

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ONISHIGALLERY

COVER IMAGE:

ŌSUMI Yukie (1945-), Living National Treasure (2015)

Silver Vase *Zuiun* (Auspicious Cloud), 2018; hammered silver with *nunome zōgan* (textile imprint inlay) decoration in lead and gold; h. 8 7/8 x w. 18 1/8 x d. 9 7/8 in. (22.5 x 46 x 25 cm)

THE COSMOS WITHIN:

Contemporary Japanese Metalwork and Ceramics

In celebration of Asia Week New York 2019 and its 10-year anniversary as a leader of Japanese arts in the international art market of New York City, Onishi Gallery is proud to present a unique new exhibition to Western audiences: The Cosmos Within: Contemporary Japanese Metalwork and Ceramics. In this collection of contemporary Japanese *kōgei* arts (a class of artistic creations produced in close association with the needs and conditions of everyday life), Onishi Gallery demonstrates the vast cosmos and intimate nature that may be communicated through a delicate work of art. While European arts often express the wonders of the universe through dynamic artistry, Japanese *kōgei* artists use subtle techniques to represent the cosmos within—imagine the world that unfolds when one looks through the small lens of a kaleidoscope.

Bringing numerous leading metalwork and ceramic artists from the Japanese contemporary art scene, Onishi Gallery works with both renowned and emerging talents to introduce their work to American audiences, connect them with museum collections, and enable American arts and cultural institutions to discover and partner with these international talents. In 2019, Onishi Gallery continues to connect Japanese artists with American audiences, serving as a bridge between U.S. cultural institutions and the Japanese government.

As Japanese contemporary metalwork and ceramics are relatively new to American audiences (both museum institutions and individual collectors), Onishi Gallery is proud to specialize in this media and tradition in the United States, and are especially compelled to share the beauty and unique techniques of its Japanese character with the public. This ambitious exhibition helps fulfill that mission by showcasing the work of Japanese metalwork artists who are now stepping onto the international art stage by collaborating with Onishi Gallery this Asia Week 2019.

Impressively, this year's exhibition features 20 artists who fall into two categories based on their creative media; ceramics or metalwork. Within this talented group, 9 artists have been designated "Living National Treasures" by the government of Japan for their contributions to the preservation and transmission of traditional Japanese artistic heritage. These artists include the esteemed NAKAGAWA Mamoru, ŌSUMI Yukie, IMAIZUMI Imaemon XIV, ITŌ Sekisui V, TOKUDA Yasokichi III, MAETA Akihiro, YOSHITA Minori, NAKASHIMA Hiroshi, and ISEZAKI Jun. Additionally, four of the 10 featured metalwork artists are female, offering innovative designs characterized by organic, curved techniques that expand the reach of traditional Japanese creative expression.

Visitors will be awed by the diversity and depth of Japanese creative traditions on display within this exhibition, bringing the past into the present in metal and ceramic form.

Nana Onishi
Owner and Director, Onishi Gallery

GOLD AND SILVER WAVES

By Monika Bincsik, Diane and Arthur Abbey Assistant Curator for Japanese Decorative Arts
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Until the Portuguese reached Japan in 1543, Zipangu (Japan) held a place in the popular European imagination as the Land of Gold, following its description by Marco Polo in the thirteenth century, "They have gold in the greatest abundance, its sources being inexhaustible, but as the king does not allow of its being exported, few merchants visit the country, nor is it frequented by much shipping from other parts." Accordingly, Japan as a country of gold and silver was indicated on the map created by Matteo Ricci in the early seventeenth century. The application of gold and silver in Japanese art became so prevalent that it even defined the image of the island country.

The use of gold embellishment in Japan dates back to the Yayoi period (ca. 300 B.C.–300 A.D.). A look at the accessories, jewelry, and harnesses of the Kofun period (ca. 250–538 A.D.) reveals that all the basic techniques of metal workmanship, such as carving and engraving, forging, and casting were already developed. During the sixth and seventh centuries, the introduction of Buddhism from the continent brought along significant changes in metal craftsmanship.

Later, with the development of the Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi period (1392–1573) warrior culture, sword fittings and armor became decorated with precious metals. Beginning in the sixteenth century, there was an intense development in the processing and applying of gold and silver. The start of the evolution of metal craftsmanship coincided with the period of warfare preceding the country's unification in the late sixteenth century.

The establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate marked the start of the Edo period (1615–1868), which is characterized by peace, prosperity, and flourishing of the arts. The Japanese sword and its accoutrements are often considered as works of art and decorative sword fittings are usually made by forging, casting, and chasing. Scabbards gradually became decorated with elaborate lacquer techniques and mother-of-pearl inlays, while sword guards, and hilt fittings were also adorned. From the Momoyama period (1573–1615), the use of various precious metals, such as gold, silver, and copper, were introduced, and through the peaceful Edo period, highly ornamental sword fittings, armor, saddles and stirrups were created.

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the samurai class was abolished, and wearing swords in public was prohibited. Metalworkers lost their patrons and had to find new ways of supporting themselves. Some of them started producing objects for the Western market, adopting the flamboyant Victorian taste. The results were high quality and meticulously decorated large-scale exhibition pieces, incense burners, cigarette cases, and flower vases. These objects were highly prized at the World Expositions and later also gained fame within Japan.

In 1889, the Tokyo School of Arts (now Tokyo University of the Arts) was founded and it immediately offered courses in metalwork. Three disciplines were established based on the main techniques of the field, such as hammering (*tankin*), chasing (*chōkin*), and casting (*chūkin*). These categories still define the three major "schools" of metal art. Currently, ten Living National Treasure (Ningen Kokuhō) artists represent metalworking, including the above mentioned three categories as well as sword making. Works by two Living National Treasures are on view in the present exhibition.

Nakagawa Mamoru (b. 1947), based in Kanazawa, established a contemporary style within the framework of traditional metalworking. He specializes in the "flat inlay" (*hirazōgan*) technique, in which different metals and alloys are inlaid into each other to create multi-colored patterns. Nakagawa graduated from Kanazawa College of Arts in 1971, majoring in industrial design. He became attracted to the Kaga inlay technique and apprenticed to Takahashi Kaishū (1905–2004), and later became a regular contributor to the Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibitions.

The *hirazōgan* technique involves the carving out of areas to be inlaid as a shallow recess with square sides and flat bottom. Then, the bottom is slightly widened to create a grip for the inlaid piece. The inlays are cut out and precisely adjusted to fit into the prepared recess then hammered into place. After all the inlays are set, the surface of the piece is filed, burnished, and polished to create a smooth continuum.

To create complex designs, Nakagawa uses a multi-layered technique, in which the above-mentioned process is repeated with different colored inlays being inserted into increasingly shallow recesses cut into the previously inlaid areas.

The body of Nakagawa's works are often made of a cast copper alloy containing twenty percent silver and small amounts of tin and zinc, called *shibuichi* (four parts to one). The inlaid metal can be gold, silver, or variations of *shibuichi*.

The traditions of the "flat inlay" technique can be traced back to Fushimi (a southern district of Kyoto), where several specialized metal craftsmen worked for Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) to produce refined stirrups and *tsuba* (sword guard). After Hideyoshi's death many of these craftsmen were invited by the powerful lord of Kaga Province, Maeda Toshiie (1538–1599) to continue producing inlaid metalworks in his service. Several workshops established in Kanazawa, the capital of Kaga, carried on the Fushimi-style inlay of gold, silver, copper, and *shakudō* (billon of gold and copper) in iron. Later, the iron base was replaced by softer metals, such as copper and its alloys, which facilitated the application of even more delicate patterns. The Kaga inlay (*Kaga zōgan*) was used to create sophisticated decoration on helmets, *tsuba*, and stirrups and became well known for its beauty and durability.

Ōsumi Yukie (b. 1945) studied history of art at Tokyo University of Arts, from which she graduated in 1969, before starting to train as a metal artist. Her teachers were Sekiya Shirō (1907–1994) and Kashima Ikkoku (1898–1996), both Living National Treasures. As Sekiya specialized in hammering, and Kashima in chasing, Ōsumi mastered both disciplines. Since 1976, Ōsumi regularly exhibited her works at the Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibitions. Her signature technique is the "textile imprint inlay" (*nunomezōgan*), which involves hammering wire or metal leaf into a fine grid incised into the surface of the metal ground. Ōsumi's forms and decorative schemes make consistent reference to the natural world, exploring contemporary aesthetic through the use of traditional metalworking processes. She was designated a Living National Treasure in 2015 in hammering and became the first woman to receive this recognition in metal art.



Vase "Calm Sea," 2016
cast alloy of copper, silver, and tin with copper, silver, and gold inlay
h. 7 1/2 x w. 14 3/8 x d. 8 1/4 in. (19 x 36.5 x 21 cm)

NAKAGAWA Mamoru (1947–), Living National Treasure (2004)

Nakagawa Mamoru, recognized for his outstanding mastery of *zōgan* (metal-inlay), was designated a Living National Treasure in 2004 at the age of 56, the second youngest in history. Nakagawa has been a seminal figure in revitalizing metal-inlay as an important genre of decorative arts in Japan since its decline during the Meiji Restoration period. He has enlivened the traditionally monotone realm of metal casting with an unprecedented palette of colors.

Since the *zōgan* technique is said to have originated around Turkey, the artist has traveled there many times, following the Silk Road, the cultural crossroads of eastern and western Asia. In 2008, he visited the United States on a cultural exchange fellowship from Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs. While on the fellowship in Washington, D.C., he taught a master class on the *Kaga zōgan* technique at the Corcoran College of Art and Design.

Selected Exhibitions

2013–2019	Asia Week New York, US
2018	The 65th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2017	The 64th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2016	Creating Handicrafts, Living National Treasures Exhibition, Wako, Tokyo, Japan
2013	Contemporary Kōgei Styles in Japan, Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, Delray Beach, Florida, US
2007	Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan, British Museum, London, UK

Selected Public Collections

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US; British Museum, London, UK; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan



Silver Vase "Zuiun" (Auspicious Cloud), 2018
hammered silver with *nunome zōgan* (textile imprint inlay) decoration in lead and gold
h. 8 7/8 x w. 18 1/8 x d. 9 7/8 in. (22.5 x 46 x 25 cm)

ŌSUMI Yukie (1945–), Living National Treasure (2015)

Ōsumi Yukie was designated a Living National Treasure in 2015, and is the first female metalwork artist to receive this honor in history. She specializes in *tankin*, or hammered vessels. Ōsumi graduated in 1969 from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts. Afterwards, she studied under Kashima Ikkoku (1898–1996), Sekiya Shirō (1907–1994), and Katsura Moriyuki (1914–1996). She also trained as an artist in the United Kingdom for a year under the sponsorship by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs. She has received many honors and awards, and most recently in 2014, was the first to be awarded a residency at The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the Smithsonian Museum of Asian Art in Washington, D.C.

Ōsumi applies the traditional technique *nunome zōgan*, or textile imprint inlay, in her works. This involves hammering metal-leaf or wire into a fine, mesh-like grid incised into the metal surfaces. Ōsumi creates decorative and functional objects, such as vases and tea utensils. Through her designs of wind, waves, clouds, and streams, she strives to create an affinity with nature as formless and flowing.

Selected Exhibitions

2015–2019	Asia Week New York, US
2018	The 65th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2017	The 64th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2016	Creating Handicrafts, Living National Treasures Exhibition, Wako, Tokyo, Japan
2015	SOFA Chicago, Illinois, US
2013	Contemporary Kōgei Styles in Japan,

Selected Public Collections

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Royal Museum in Edinburgh, Scotland; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan



Incense Burner "Springen," 2016; hammered copper with gold and silver leaves, and lost-wax casting with silver; h. 4 3/4 x dia. 6 in. (12 x 14 cm)

MIYATA Ryohei (1945–)

Miyata Ryohei is a metal-smith craftsman from Sado in Niigata Prefecture. His father is Miyata Rando II, a certified craftsman of Sado's traditional craft "waxed type casting." He completed his major in Metalsmithing at the Tokyo University of Arts Graduate School in 1970. His major work 'Springen' is a series of dolphin motifs, which has been exhibited at numerous exhibitions in Japan as well as Germany, Israel, Korea and China. After graduating from Sado High School in Niigata, on his way to the examination at Tokyo University of Arts, the ferry became surrounded by dolphins, which was the source of Miyata's inspiration. He was deeply moved by the dolphins, of which seemed to congratulate him on his departure. Miyata has thus created numerous works with dolphin motifs. In one of his works, several dolphins are facing the same way, except for one that is different from all the others. That dolphin is Miyata and shows Miyata's way of life.

The 'Nitten' Prime Minister Award and Japan Contemporary Crafts Art Exhibition Prime Minister Award are among the numerous awards received, as well as the Japan Arts Institute Award received in 2011. He also assumed the position of Tokyo University of Arts President in 2005. Since 2016, Miyata is the Minister of the Agency of Cultural Affairs.

Selected Public Collections

Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Japan; Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Japan; The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan; Hoki Museum, Chiba, Japan; Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan; Tokyo Station, Japan; Niigata Airport, Japan; The Niigata Nippo Co., Ltd., Japan

SAKO Ryuhei (1976–)

Born in 1976 in Tamano City, Okayama Prefecture, Sako Ryuhei graduated from Hiroshima City University in the Department of Design and Applied Arts in 1999, and then earned his master's degree in 2002 from the same institution.

Sako Ryuhei creates pieces using *Mokume-gane*, a Japanese metal technique dating back to the 17th century. First, very thin different colored alloyed metal sheets are layered and bonded. Then the layers are cut into, or drilled, and reworked. Achieving a successful lamination takes a very skilled artist, and although his work is based on research and experimentation using this tradition process, he manages to create very contemporary pieces.

In 2004, he became a member of the *Nihon Kōgeikai* (Japanese Handcrafts Association) and in 2013, during his first exhibition outside Japan, the Victoria and Albert Museum purchased one of his pieces for their public collection.



Mokume-gane Tea Caddy 02, 2017; silver, copper, shakudo and shibuichi; h. 3 3/4 x w. 2 7/8 x d. 2 7/8 in. (9.5 x 7.3 x 7.3 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Hiroshima City University, Hiroshima, Japan; Machiko Hasegawa Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK



Leaf-shape Tray, 2013; metal casting with *fukiwake* technique; h. 4 x w. 21 1/2 x d. 9 1/4 in. (11 x 56 x 23 cm)

Selected Public Collections

National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; Takaoka Art Museum, Toyama, Japan; Yakushiji Temple, Nara, Japan

HANNYA Tamotsu (1941–)

Hannya Tamotsu is a 16th generation metal master of Takaoka, Toyama Prefecture who creates art using the *fukiwake* casting technique. Hannya excels in this casting method in which three different metals are individually poured into a mold within five seconds of each other. Due to the different melting points of the three metals, they do not blend together when combined but rather, form unique patterns instead. Hannya is the only artist ever known to have created three-metal cast work.

“Hannya Tamotsu is the foremost master of the *fukiwake* casting technique, artfully weaving together bronze and brass to create works with mysterious patterns,” states Takazu Ishii, Governor of Toyoma Prefecture. In fact, there is a long tradition of metal production in Takaoka which included Buddhist ritual implements and flower vessels and, during the Meiji period, works from the region were submitted to the Paris World Exposition. Hannya is an artist who has not only upheld this tradition but has gone beyond it by creating complex yet elegant, contemporary metal design. In 2016, he received the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Silver Rays from the Emperor of Japan.

HANNYA Taiju (1972–)

Hannya Taiju was born in Takaoka City in Toyama Prefecture, which flourished as a cast metal producing locality dating back over 400 years. In the foundry that he operates with his father Tamotsu, numerous metals such as cast iron, iron sand, bronze, brass, and sahari (an alloy of copper, tin and lead) are melted and made into art castings.

Hannya works in the *fukiwake* method, in which three different metals are individually poured into a mold within five seconds of each other. Due to the different melting points of the three metals, they form distinguished patterns rather than being mixed together. Taiju and his father Tamotsu are the only known artists to have ever made three-metal cast pieces. Hannya uses the designs of the separate metals to create mystical weavings characterized by artistic contrasting and curving gestures. The characteristic of *fukiwake* is the mysterious gradation patterns created by the complex mixture of different metals. This distinctive expression is unique to *fukiwake* and cannot be achieved by any other metalworking technique, and can be linked to ink painting and calligraphy, which represent the Japanese arts.



Fukiwake Vase, 2014; metal casting with *fukiwake* technique; h. 14 1/4 x w. 4 1/4 x d. 3 3/4 in. (36.2 x 10.8 x 9.5 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Takaoka Art Museum, Toyama, Japan



Kakuhanmon Vase Sazare Gumo (Little Clouds), 2017; silver, *shakudo* and copper; h. 6 1/2 x w. 10 1/4 x d. 3 3/4 in. (16.5 x 26 x 9.5 cm)

OSHIYAMA Motoko (1958–)

Oshiyama Motoko is a masterful female artist who is inspired by nature and natural phenomena. Fascinated by the challenges and beauty of metalworking, she seeks to seamlessly incorporate her medium's idiosyncrasies into her work instead of using force. She creates swirling patterns through her technique of welding together two or more metals such as silver and shakudō (a mixture of gold and copper). Oshiyama gives distinction to her works with her modern sense of design, focusing on geometric and abstract patterns.

The results are works that straddle the separation between “art” and “craft,” aiming to create objects that aesthetically enrich our environments and lives. Oshiyama studied metal carving, chasing, and hammering techniques at the Bunka Gakuen University in Tokyo, where she graduated in 1981. Following graduation, she studied further with Katsura Moriyuki (1914– 1996) and the Living National Treasure, Okuyama Hōseki (b. 1935). Oshiyama currently teaches metalwork and jewelry making at her alma mater.

HATA Shunsai III (1976–)

Born in 1976, Hata Shunsai III is a metal artist whose family has been rooted in Kanaya-machi for generations. Kanaya-machi is a district in Takaoka, a city in Toyama prefecture, which is steeped in history. This area of Japan has been well known for centuries for its exceptional metal ware crafts. To this day, some of the best metal artists, including Living National Treasures, hail from this area. Hata has carried on his family's tradition of making teakettles, learning the craft by observing his father at work since his youth.

He says, “I select water as my main theme, and I create designs that give an impression of transparency so that the viewer becomes unaware of the underlying iron; I make it a policy to create works unique to myself, by incorporating contemporary elements while maintaining time-honored traditions.” Among the several awards he has received is the NHK Chairman's Award at The 60th Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition in 2013.



Tea Kettle with Stripes, 2014; iron and copper; h. 7 1/2 x w. 7 1/2 x d. 7 1/2 in. (19 x 19 x 19 cm)

Selected Public Collections

National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; Yakushiji Temple, Nara, Japan; Sano Culture Center, Tochigi, Japan



Silver Vase *Yū* (Distant), 2007; silver metal carving with gold decoration; h. 12 x w. 9 1/2 x d. 6 in. (31 x 24 x 15 cm)

ŌTSUKI Masako (1943–)

Ōtsuki Masako graduated from the Department of Design at Tama Art University, Tokyo, in 1966, and has incorporated design skills into her metalwork pieces. Ōtsuki has stated that in artwork, highly developed techniques should meet refined designs to appeal to audiences. She applies the *hatsuri* (shave and carve) technique in her works, carving distinctive and fine angled lines by using chisels onto the base metals. This technique gives the work three-dimensional effects with perspective and shadows. Gold, silver, copper, and a copper silver alloy, all of varying degrees of solubility, are precisely handled by Ōtsuki with great focus and intensity. In addition, skilled engraving gives her work the finishing touch, lending metal, a cold medium, a feeling of warmth and life in the artist's forms.

HAGINO Noriko (1949–)

Hagino Noriko works with a technique called *hagiawase*, metal forging and heat welding, which she learned from Living National Treasure Sekiya Shirō (1907-1994). Intrigued by Sekiya's works, Hagino became an apprentice in Sekiya's studio upon graduating from Musashino Art Junior College. From the inception of her design to the arduous process of hammering metal, Hagino takes almost six months to complete each project. She uses the natural hues of the metals as colors to create fluid patterns on her work, silver becoming white, copper becoming red, and an alloy of a mix of gold and copper becoming gold.



Hagiawase Vase "Line," 2018; silver, *shakudō* and *kuromidō*; h. 15 3/4 x dia. 2 3/4 in. (40 x 7 cm)

THE ESSENCE OF JAPANESE CERAMICS

By Kazuko Todate, Art Critic and Art Historian, Tama Art University

In Japan, pottery has a history extending back 16,000 years or more. From the far north to the far south of the Japanese archipelago, each region's pottery has its own distinctive characteristics. There are various well-known styles specific to the place of production, such as *Arita* ware, *Kutani* ware and *Bizen* ware.

From the 20th century onward, works of pottery began to convey the original touch and vision of their creators, in addition to regional characteristics, these creators began attending universities of art or incorporating insights and experience from overseas, their works began to show an increasingly wide range of variation and personal expression unrelated to regional conventions.

As of 2018, Japanese pottery, rooted in long history and surrounded by a dynamic contemporary environment, is in the midst of unprecedented expansion. Yet for all its apparent breadth and diversity, Japan's pottery today retains the concentrated essence of its people's spirituality and mentality.

One aspect of this is the coexistence of history and creativity. The history of Japanese pottery begins with unglazed earthenware, with glazed ceramics and *yakishime* pottery (unglazed but fired at high temperatures to harden it) gradually developing, and porcelain emerging in the 17th century. However, this did not mean that potters throughout Japan all switched to porcelain at once, and even today there are people making unglazed *yakishime* in ancient-style *anagama* (lit. "cave kilns") that have operated since medieval times. Even after learning new techniques and methods, they do not totally abandon the old ones, but rather each creator adapts established methods in a unique way according to the vision he or she wants to express. The maintenance of a constant equilibrium of an accumulation of experience and creativity enriches the culture of Japanese pottery.

The second aspect is the position of cooperation, or collaboration, with the materials. While the work of each Japanese ceramic artist from the 20th century has its own unique beauty and originality, individual artists do not forcefully bend materials to their will and force them to express their vision. Ceramic and porcelain artists use different types of clay and thus their works have different qualities, but also each artist must communicate with the clay, shaping the clay they have chosen according to its properties, while taking environmental factors like temperature and humidity into consideration and monitoring the state of the kiln. This approach – the artist collaborating with the materials to create the work – is shared to a considerable extent by all ceramicists.

The approach to balancing tradition and creativity, and regarding materials and tools as partners in a collaborative effort, is rooted in fundamental Japanese values and is an equally integral part of Japanese cuisine, which has gained global recognition in recent years. Both Japanese ceramics and Japanese cuisine are created based on their materials and processes. With their delightful colors, forms and textures, Japanese pottery is kept and admired in many people's homes overseas, and when non-Japanese people dine with close friends from dishes crafted in Japan, a profound spiritual exchange between the Japanese and people of other nations unquestionably occurs.



Vase with *Zuika* (Mullein) flower patterns, 2013
porcelain with *iro-e* polychrome enamel painting with light *sumi* and *sumi-hajiki*
h. 14 1/2 x dia. 12 1/4 in. (36.6 x 31.2 cm)

IMAIZUMI Imaemon XIV (1962–), Living National Treasure (2014)

In 2014, Imaizumi Imaemon XIV received the ultimate distinction as the youngest artist in Japan at age 51 to be designated a Living National Treasure. *Iro-Nabeshima*, a polychrome, enamel painted porcelain, was developed during the Edo period (1615–1868) under the support of the Nabeshima domain in the current-day Saga prefecture. Highly praised for the meticulous enamel designs with both Asian and Western motifs, Nabeshima ware has been one of the most celebrated porcelains in Japan and abroad.

Imaizumi Imaemon became the 14th generation head of this lineage after studying traditional metalwork in college and working in the product design industry. Among the artist's signature techniques is *sumi-hajiki*, a dyeing process that takes advantage of the repellent nature of sumi ink by creating patterns on white porcelain prior to firing. Imaizumi's personality emerges in the combination of both classical motifs (plum and hydrangea) and modern designs (snowflakes). In 2009, he received the Medal with Purple Ribbon from the Emperor of Japan.

Selected Exhibitions

2013 –2019	Asia Week New York, US
2018	Iro-Nabeshima of Imaemon, Sogo Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan The 65th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2017	The 64th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2016	Creating Handicrafts, Living National Treasures Exhibition, Wako, Tokyo, Japan
2014	Japan from Prehistory to the Present, British Museum, London, UK Contemporary Japanese Ceramics, Embassy of Japan, Washington D.C., US
2013	Contemporary Kōgei Styles in Japan,

Selected Public Collections

British Museum, London, UK; Auckland Museum, New Zealand; Kyushu Ceramic Museum, Arita, Saga, Japan; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; Museum of Ceramic Art, Sasayama, Hyogo, Japan



Mumyōi Neriage Round Jar with Flower Patterns, 2016
Stoneware
h. 7 1/2 × dia 7 7/8 in (19.1 × 20 cm)

Itō Sekisui V (1941–), Living National Treasure (2003)

Itō Sekisui V, a 14th generation ceramic potter, was recognized for his work in *mumyōi* in 2003, when he was designated a Living National Treasure. *Mumyōi* is a reddish brown, ferric oxide clay extracted from gold mines native to Sado Island in Niigata prefecture, where the artist was born. After completing ceramic studies at Kyoto Technical University, Itō returned to Sado Island to experiment with *mumyōi* and create his signature aesthetic, red on black. Itō is known for *ne-riage* ware characterized by delicate patterns and created by layering and patching clay of different reddish brown tones. To bring out the vibrancy of the red, Itō does not apply glazes; rather, his firing technique, *yōhen*, uses different flame streams inside a wood-fired kiln. The areas directly hit by the flames create a black hue. Itō says that the creator's destiny is to, "Bring forth what has never existed, something new and attractive." In 2005, he received the Medal with Purple Ribbon and in 2011, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, from the Emperor of Japan.

Selected Exhibitions

2015 – 2019	Asia Week New York, US
2018	The 65th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2017	Itō Sekisui V: Red Soil, Onishi Gallery, New York, US
	The 64th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition, Japan
2016	Creating Handicrafts, Living National Treasures Exhibition, Wako, Tokyo, Japan
2015	SOFA Chicago, Illinois, US
	Tradition Reborn: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics, Indianapolis Museum of Art, US
2007	Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan, British Museum, London, UK

Selected Public Collections

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, US; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, US; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana, US; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Nagaoka, Japan; Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Japan; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan



Incense Burner with *Komon* Pattern, 2005; porcelain with vivid colored glaze (*yōsai*); h. 4 3/4 × w. 4 1/4 × d. 4 1/4 in (12.1 × 10.8 × 10.8 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US; British Museum, London, UK; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, Massachusetts, US; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., US; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan

TOKUDA Yasokichi III (1933–2009) Living National Treasure (1997)

Tokuda Yasokichi III was one of the world's most famous Kutani potters. Born in Ishikawa prefecture, he was designated a Living National Treasure in 1997 for his mastery of the *saiyu* glaze technique. Yasokichi III was the one responsible for innovating this glaze technique which was based on traditional Kutani colored glaze enamels.

He developed techniques handed down from his grandfather, Tokuda Yasokichi I (1873–1956) and later, his father, Tokuda Yasokichi II (1907–1997). Through his *saiyu* glaze (vivid enamel glaze) technique, Yasokichi III created his own designs characterized by delicate shading and beautiful color contrasts. His honors include the acceptance into The Issui-kai Pottery and Porcelain Exhibition (1958), and multiple prizes such as the Japan Traditional Art Crafts Association Chairman's Award (1977), the Grand Prize of The International Pottery and Porcelain Exhibition (1990), and the Medal with Purple Ribbon given by the Emperor of Japan (1993).

MAETA Akihiro (1954–) Living National Treasure (2013)

Maeta Akihiro is a highly influential artist and is considered the leading white porcelain ceramicist of his generation. Maeta does not form his pieces on a potter's wheel but uses the wheel only for the initial throw of his works. He forms the faceted designs of his pottery by hand, through free form sculpting and molding with just his fingers and palms. Then, prior to the glazing process, he uses a single blade to trim and erase any traces or marks of his hand. Finally, the works are fired in a relatively low temperature gas kiln. The resulting white porcelain sculptures are elegant tributes to simple beauty without excess.

His porcelain works are uniquely pure, serene, and perfect. In 2007, he received the Medal with Purple Ribbon from the Emperor of Japan.



White Porcelain Faceted Jar, 2017; porcelain; h. 11 3/8 x dia. 11 1/2 in. (28.9 x 29.2 cm)

Selected Public Collections

British Museum, London, UK; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana, US; MOA Museum of Art, Shizuoka, Japan; The Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan; Tottori Prefectural Museum, Tottori, Japan; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, US



Plate with Peony and Dry-grass Patterns, 2012; porcelain with gold underglaze; h. 4 x dia. 19 1/2 in. (11 x 49.5 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Embassy of Japan, Washington D.C., US;
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington D.C., US

YOSHITA Minori (1932–) Living National Treasure (2001)

The Yoshita family runs the Nishikiyama kiln, which specializes in *akae kinrande*, a highly decorative porcelain technique involving gold and red enamel painting in brocade-patterns on Kutani wares from Ishikawa. In 1951, Yoshita Minori, who had been making pottery since high school, took over the family business and became the 3rd generation head of the family. Since then, he has been experimenting with various traditional techniques characteristic to the Nishikiyama Kiln while refining them in innovative ways.

The artist is recognized for his graceful application of *yūri-kinsai*, an underglazed gold decorative porcelain developed during the 1960s in Kanazawa, in which gold-leaf cutouts are applied prior to glazing rather than painted by brush. Yoshita's technique is a perfect marriage of elegant Kutani porcelain traditions with *kinpaku* or gold-leaf, the highly prized local product of the former Kaga domain, Ishikawa. His method opened a new frontier in the world of gold-colored porcelains in Japan and he is regarded as the premier artist of this technique. In 2001, he was awarded the Medal with Purple Ribbon, and in 2006, he received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, from the Emperor of Japan.

NAKASHIMA Hiroshi (1941–2018) Living National Treasure (2007)

Nakashima Hiroshi was born in Takeo City, Saga Prefecture and at the age of 28, established his own kiln and became an independent potter. In 1977, he received an honorable mention in The Japan Traditional Applied Fine Arts Exhibition, and in 1983, received the Prime Minister's Award at The First Annual Western Japan Ceramic Fair. Following the awards given to him in 2006 by The Japan Potter's Association, the very next year, in 2007, he was designated a Living National Treasure, receiving the highest honor awarded to ceramic artists in Japan.

His celadon works are highly sought after and he has received great praise for his unique style of ceramic works known as 'Nakashima Blue.'



Ten Seiji (Sky Blue) Celadon Jar with Carved Line, 2014; porcelain; h. 12 1/4 x dia. 10 3/4 in. (31 x 27.3 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, US; National Museum of Modern, Tokyo, Japan; Museum of Kyushu Sangyo University, Fukuoka, Japan; Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum, Japan; Jingu Museum, Mie, Japan



Bizen Square Flower Vase, 2016; wood-fired stoneware; h. 21 x w. 10 7/8 x d. 7 1/8 in. (53.4 x 27.4 x 18.1 cm)

Selected Public Collections

British Museum, London, UK; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, US; Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art, Okayama, Japan; Musée de Sèvres, Sèvres, France; Canterbury Museum, New Zealand

ISEZAKI Jun (1936–) Living National Treasure (2004)

Isezaki Jun, the second son of potter Isezaki Yōzan, is one of the most renowned masters of Bizen pottery, a traditional ware that emerged nearly a thousand years ago in the Inde district of Bizen, Okayama prefecture. He is the fifth artist of Bizen pottery to be designated a Living National Treasure by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Isezaki brings back the anagama traditional kiln form, that is dug into a hillside like a tunnel. Of significance in Bizen pottery production is the yakishime style glaze - glazes that are the results of natural wood ash and burn-products that occur in the kilns during the firing process. Isezaki therefore emphasizes the importance of the placement of his works inside the kiln. Even as an experienced potter, the artist cannot completely predict how the works will turn out; the firing process often brings out unexpected beauty that even the artist does not plan. The finest works are often results of the combination of careful design and fortuity. Isezaki's works, which have bloomed from tradition, continue to emerge and expand in exciting new ways.

SAKAIDA Kakiemon XV (1968–)

Sakaïda Kakiemon XV took on the challenge of producing Arita pottery in Saga Prefecture at age 26, when he decided to learn to use the potter's wheel. In 2014, upon the death of his father, Kakiemon XIV, who was a Living National Treasure, Sakaïda became the 15th generation head of the family. As the eldest son, he said, "I had known that I would have to inherit the pottery tradition someday. I hope to work in a way that will not disgrace this name, which has been handed down for many years." The Kakiemon style, dating back to the mid-17th century during the early Edo Period (1603–1868), is known for combining a milky white base called *nigoshide* with colorful painting. Although Arita porcelain has received international recognition, Kakiemon XV said he has come to think of it as "unfinished work." At a ceremony to celebrate the assumption of the title, Kakiemon XV said he wants to return to the 17th century style, which he believes achieves a sense of unity with the *nigoshide* painting mix. After several trials, he ceased to use red, which is symbolic of the Kakiemon style.



Nigoshide White Vase with Acorn Patterns, 2015; porcelain; h. 10 7/8 x dia. 8 in. (27.6 x 20.3 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US; British Museum, London, UK; Kyushu Ceramic Museum, Arita, Saga, Japan; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands



Jar - *Loulan* 01, 2010; porcelain with colored glaze (*yōsai*); h. 17 x dia. 8 1/2 in. (43.2 x 21.6 cm)

Selected Public Collections

British Museum, London, UK; Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana, US; Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, Massachusetts, US

TOKUDA Yasokichi IV (1961–)

Born in 1961, Tokuda Yasokichi IV succeeded her father, Tokuda Yasokichi III, a revered Kutani potter and a “Living National Treasure” artist. Tokuda inherited the techniques of their family style of Kutani porcelain production, that features *saiyu* glazing. Tokuda’s personal sensibility as a female artist lends her a unique perspective on the tradition that is reflected in her choices of color and interpretations of form.

Tokuda is one of few female heads of a traditional potting lineage in Japan, due to those succeeding the family are most often male. However, her father decided to pass on the family’s name and practice to her. It was a challenge to make a place for herself as head artist of the family tradition in a still male-dominated social structure, but Tokuda succeeds in defining her own signature style and creative voice all her own.

YOSHITA Yukio (1960–)

Born into the Yoshita family of porcelain artists and the son of Living National Treasure, Yoshita Minori (b. 1932), Yukio forged an independent style in his work that echoes the traditional Kutani overglaze techniques of his native Kanazawa. At the same time, his work reflects his own aesthetic sensibilities.

Yoshita’s experimentation with colors such as the faded pastel shades that recall frescoes of the Italian Renaissance and the poetic representations of color akin to watercolor drawings on porcelain surfaces, are his special achievements. His work standout among the bold-colors and smooth surfaces of traditional Kutani ware, and he applies pastel matte glazes to the white porcelain bodies of elegant vessels, often painted in overlapping or blurred abstract patterns. He also uses metallic gold overglazes to highlight the designs. In 2017, for the first time, Yoshita introduced Kinzangama Kiln which was founded in 1906 by the Yoshita family to Maison & Objet, Paris.



Bowl 01, 2014; porcelain with enamel and gold in the *kinran-de* style; h. 7 5/8 x dia. 20 1/8 in (19.5 x 51 cm)

Selected Public Collections

Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana US; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Komatsu City Museum, Ishikawa, Japan; Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art, Kanazawa, Japan

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CONTACT

Nana Onishi / Onishi Gallery
212.695.8035
nana@onishigallery.com
onishigallery.com