

For Immediate Release



Chelsea Gallery Launches Special U.S.-Japan Exhibition To Mark Pioneering Japanese Craft Project

NEW YORK, N.Y. — March 2024: In celebration of Asia Week New York 2024, Onishi Gallery (521 W. 26th Street) is proud to announce its next exhibition “Inoue Manji / David Stanley Hewett,” bringing together the work of two prominent artists based in Japan, one Japanese and one American. The exhibition opens on March 14.

“Inoue Manji / David Stanley Hewett” is presented by Onishi Gallery to mark the inauguration of KOGEI USA, a nonprofit dedicated to revitalizing Japan’s world-famous KOGEI (art crafts) under the banner *Securing Our Heritage, Nurturing Our Traditions, Building Our Futures*. The exhibition promotes one of KOGEI USA’s key goals: the formation of new creative links between Japanese and non-Japanese masters who share a passion for preserving and handing on the best traditional hand-made arts.

The two artists’ practices convey contrasting aspects of Japanese visual expression. Inoue Manji—a “Living National Treasure” and the embodiment of his country’s dedication to traditional philosophies, materials, and techniques—uses the purity of *hakuji* (white porcelain) to create works that offer a new perspective on Japanese minimalism. David Stanley Hewett, an American living in Japan, works in the medium of finest Japanese gold leaf applied to canvas or wood, preserving and re-imagining a heritage of gorgeous decoration with its roots in elite samurai culture.

Born in 1929, Inoue started his career learning to make colorful enameled ware, but soon decided to specialize in *hakuji*, porcelain formed by pouring transparent glaze over white clay and firing it at a high temperature. Unforgivingly self-critical, Inoue demands absolute perfection in shape, rejecting even a millimeter of distortion in pursuit of his conviction that “*Hakuji* expresses itself through form rather than added decoration.” His pieces typically exemplify this truth through refined curves and pure rounded forms rather than distracting surface decor. Lately, however, he has begun to use a range of colored glazes. He continues to work into his nineties, creating masterpieces that affirm the timeless beauty of porcelain.

Inoue has received countless awards and honors, culminating in his designation in 1995 as a “Living National Treasure” of Japan in recognition of his contribution to his country’s intangible cultural heritage.

Hewett epitomizes the pre-modern samurai ideal of the warrior accomplished in the arts of peace. Born in 1967 and an honor graduate of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, Parris Island, he has resided in Japan for three decades, tirelessly pursuing his lifetime mission to support traditional Japanese art through contemporary practice. His work as an artist has been recognized at the highest levels. In 2017 his painting, *Majime*, was selected as an official gift from the wife of the Prime Minister of Japan to the First Lady of the United States, where it was

inducted into the National Archives. *Barrage*, a monumental work in acrylic and gold leaf, hangs in the main entrance of the United States Embassy in Tokyo. Hewett's work is also in the permanent collections of the Ritz Carlton, the Imperial Hotel, Oakwood Premier Tokyo, Okura Hotel Tokyo, the Peninsula Tokyo, and numerous public and private collections around the world.

For more information or appointments, please email nana@onishigallery.com or call 1.212.695.8035.

KOGEI USA

As well as highlighting the best of contemporary KOGEI, the exhibition marks the incorporation of KOGEI USA, an American not-for-profit organization formed with the goal of raising awareness of Japanese traditional arts outside their country of origin.

With official links to sister organizations in Japan and endorsement from several "Living National Treasures," KOGEI USA will build a nationwide collaborative network of museums and galleries, with its focus on emerging and mid-career artists. KOGEI USA will mount themed exhibitions; facilitate gifts of KOGEI to American museums; sponsor KOGEI artist workshops and other educational programs, both live and online, at leading institutions; and create a dedicated bilingual website.

Further details, including KOGEI USA's distinguished Board of Directors and inaugural programs, will be released over the coming months. Please check back at www.KOGEIUSA.org.