

For Immediate Release



## *Chelsea Gallery Announces Special Exhibition To Launch 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 “KOGEI and Art,” marking the inauguration of KOGEI USA, a non-profit dedicated to the revitalization of Japan’s world-famous KOGEI (art crafts). The exhibition opens on March 14.

Originally coined to translate the word “craft,” today the term KOGEI has a higher significance, denoting works that, even at their most innovative, use materials and methods that have stood the test of time and reflect an unrivalled dedication to technical perfection and refinement, from generation to generation over many centuries.

Gallery director Nana Onishi has given the exhibition the title “KOGEI and Art” to reflect the unique character of KOGEI, not seen in other cultures, and to emphasize its separate but complementary status compared to “Art” in the conventional Western sense.

Admired for promoting the best contemporary practitioners of KOGEI, for this exhibition Onishi has selected recent work in ceramics, metal, and lacquer by both well-established artists and newcomers to the field.

Alongside masterpieces by “Living National Treasures” such as Imaizumi Imaemon XIV, Nakagawa Mamoru, Ōsumi Yukie, and Murose Kazumi, the exhibition includes recent work by Rusu Aki and Konno Tomoko, two younger women who are building international reputations with sculptural pieces that combine technical rigor with an inventive approach to materials and processes.

Rusu uses ironworking techniques to make primal, assertive forms that exploit the processes of rusting and decay, showing us how rough-hewn matter can impact its surroundings to create visual rhythms that are both stimulating and reassuring. Rusu’s work has been collected by several institutions in Japan as well as London’s Victoria and Albert Museum.

Konno makes organic, otherworldly forms out of myriad components of marbled, multicolored porcelain clay, creating worlds—simultaneously colorful and grotesque—that inspire conflicting emotions of aesthetic delight and existential dread. Konno is featured in “Radical Clay,” a major exhibition of work by contemporary Japanese woman ceramic artists currently on view at the Art Institute of Chicago.

For more information or appointments, please email [nana@onishigallery.com](mailto: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](http://www.KOGEIUSA.org).