

WATANABE AKIRA (B. 1959)

Watanabe Akira is a glass artist whose primary technique is *kiriko* ('faceted cut') glass. While in college at Kyoto University, Watanabe became interested in glass art through his exposure to Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Upon graduation, the artist went to work for the Kamei Glass Co. where he learned to cut glass.

Since he became an independent artist in his late 30s, Watanabe has developed a unique process called *sekiso* ('lamination layer'), in which powdered gold, colored glass grains, or the like, are dusted between several glass sheets to give a decorative effect; the sheets are then fused by using an electric furnace to create the base material with patterns of light captured inside the glass. He gives even further meaning to his work by carefully hand polishing then with a piece of felt and an abrasive compound. In 2008, he received the Medal with Purple Ribbon from the Emperor of Japan.

SELECTED AWARDS AND EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 Asia Week, New York, US
- 2014 From Crafts to Kōgei: In Commemoration of the 60th Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
Tradition and Creation by Kyoto Prefectural Intangible Cultural Property Holders, Museum of Kyoto, Japan



Vessel with kiriko Design Ryokuen, 2014; glass; h. 8 1/4 x w. 12 1/4 x d. 12 1/4 inches (21 x 31 x 31 cm)