

SEIKATSU KOGEI

OBJECTS FOR INTENTIONAL LIVING

INTRODUCTION

This exhibition introduces the Japanese craft movement Seikatsu Kogei, which translates to “lifestyle crafts”. The Seikatsu Kogei movement has grown over the past 30 years as people have become more appreciative of objects that fit in with their daily lives. In the 1980s, many Japanese artists working in crafts were pursuing individuality, artistic expression and other artistic objectives, aiming to produce objects that could be considered art, such as avant-garde objects or traditional utensils with a focus on decoration.

From the 1990s, artists began to take an interest in crafts conceived with living and lifestyle in mind, and many toned down the level of individuality within their objects, shifting from creating “works” to making simpler utensils that would fit in well with modern living. This movement occurred naturally over time, rather than being helmed by a single individual or philosophy.

From around the turn of the millennium, anxiety about the new era led many people to seek solace in everyday life as a minimal sphere with fewer uncertainties. The Japanese media suddenly gained a strong interest in lifestyle, and magazines such as *liniere* and *ku:nel* were launched, extolling the joy of a neatly-ordered everyday life. The rise of Seikatsu Kogei paralleled the increase in lifestyle magazines, with many Seikatsu Kogei artists and users living through Japan’s economic boom. After the bubble economy burst and Lehman Brothers collapsed, more and more people became convinced that placing importance on familiarity in things and individuals was the key to leading a rewarding life. Having already experienced mass production and consumption, they turned their gaze inward, thinking about what was truly genuine and how to live free of excess consumption in a modern world. Thereafter, Seikatsu Kogei artists began to make crafts that addressed and suggested solutions to those questions.

The term “Seikatsu Kogei” first entered the public consciousness in 2010 in an exhibition at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, titled *Seikatsu Kogei (New Standard Crafts)*. For the first time in Japan, this exhibition gave Seikatsu Kogei a clear distinction from decorative arts and traditional crafts, and soon the term caught on and gained widespread acceptance.

One of the exhibiting creators, woodworker Ryuji Mitani, has long been a champion of the link between everyday living and crafts, patiently communicating that message through products, exhibitions, and writings. Mitani's aesthetic is not that of any formalised standard, but rather comes from beauty discovered in the ordinary life of a single individual. Including Mitani, this exhibition presents some 70 works by 22 currently-active Seikatsu Kogei artists within Japan. The objects on display are made from a variety of materials, including wood, ceramics, lacquer, glass, metal, bamboo, paper and clay. This exhibition represents a full-scale introduction to the efforts of Japanese Seikatsu Kogei artists to re-examine our relationship to the objects in our lives, presented together in Australia for the first time.

INSTALLATION



Seikatsu Kogei, or lifestyle crafts, is a Japanese craft movement that began in the 1990s, resulting from post-economic bubble Japan. Influenced by the earlier Japanese folk craft movement, Mingei, Seikatsu Kogei artists seek to mindfully produce ordinary objects that are utilitarian and designed for everyday use.

The most defining feature of Seikatsu Kogei is that the creator and future user both view the object with intentional living in mind. At its core, it is the desire to produce or acquire objects that harmonise with our lives and instil meaning through usability and timelessness, rather than simply complementing one's day-to-day experience.

Presented together in Australia for the first time, Seikatsu Kogei: Objects for Intentional Living offers a full-scale introduction to Seikatsu Kogei art forms made by currently-active practitioners from Japan. Through the use of a variety of materials, including wood, ceramics, lacquer, glass, metal, bamboo and unfired clay, this exhibition reflects their efforts to re-examine our relationship to the objects that we place at the centre of our lives.

ARTISTS


Masanobu Ando
Wataru Hatano
Tomoko Hayashi
Higashi Bamboo Studio
Yukiko Hosokawa
Kamizoe
Masaki Kanamori
Yoshitake Kihira
Masao Kozumi
Ryuji Mitani
Tomoaki Nakano

Yumi Nakamura
Hidetaka Nakayama
Tetsuya Otani
Akihito Sugita
Yuichi Takemata
Takashi Tomii
Kazushige Tsuchida
Kiyokazu Tsuda
Kaichi Uchida
Yoji Yamada
Ryohei Yamamoto

SEIKATSU KOGEI

OBJECTS FOR INTENTIONAL LIVING

February 21 - May 23, 2020

PRESENTED BY
JAPAN FOUNDATION 
BRINGING JAPAN TO YOU

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Gallery yamahon

PART OF
ART
MONTH
SYDNEY
2020
8-29 March

SUPPORTED BY
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WORKS



1
Tomoaki Nakano
Black Nested Bowls
2019



2
Tomoaki Nakano
Small Bowl
2019



3
Tomoaki Nakano
Plate
2019



4
Tomoaki Nakano
Nested Bowls
2019



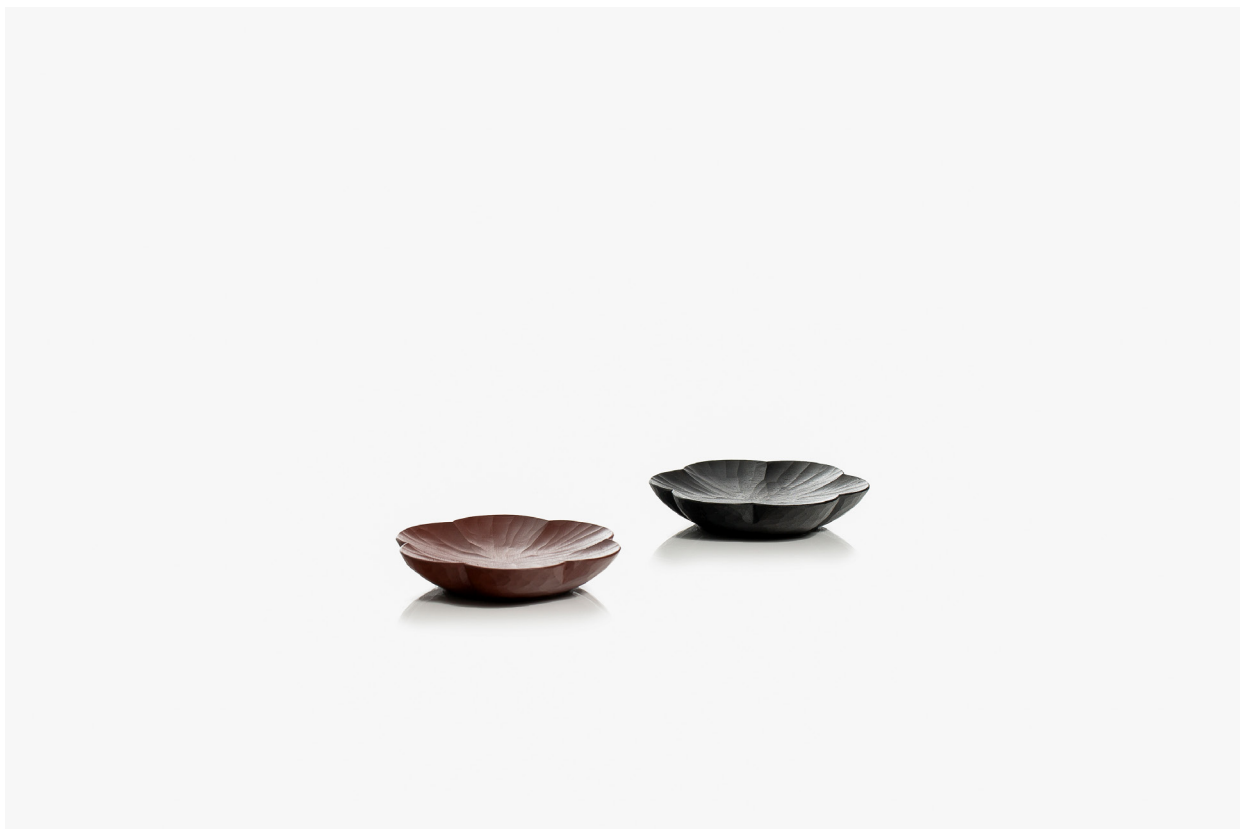
5
Takashi Tomii
Rectangular Plate
2019



6
Takashi Tomii
Square Plate
2019



7
Takashi Tomii
Square Plate
2019



8
Takashi Tomii
Small Plate
2019



9
Yoshitake Kihira
Plate
2019



10
Masaki Kanamori
Pitcher
2019



11
Masaki Kanamori
Plate
2019



12
Yuichi Takemata
Spoon
2019



13
Yuichi Takemata
Fork
2019



14
Yumi Nakamura
Kettle
2020



15
Tetsuya Otani
Cup & Saucer
2019



16
Tetsuya Otani
Pot
2019



17
Testuya Otani
Dripper & Server
2019



18
Tetsuya Otani
Bowl
2019



19
Masao Kozumi
Bottle
2019



20
Masao Kozumi
Cup
2019



21
Masao Kozumi
Cup
2019



22
Kiyokazu Tsuda
Cup
2019



23
Kiyokazu Tsuda
Cup
2019



24
Higashi Bamboo Studio
Fruit Basket
2019



25
Higashi Bamboo Studio
Cube Bucket
2019



26
Yukiko Hosokawa
Lunch Box
2019



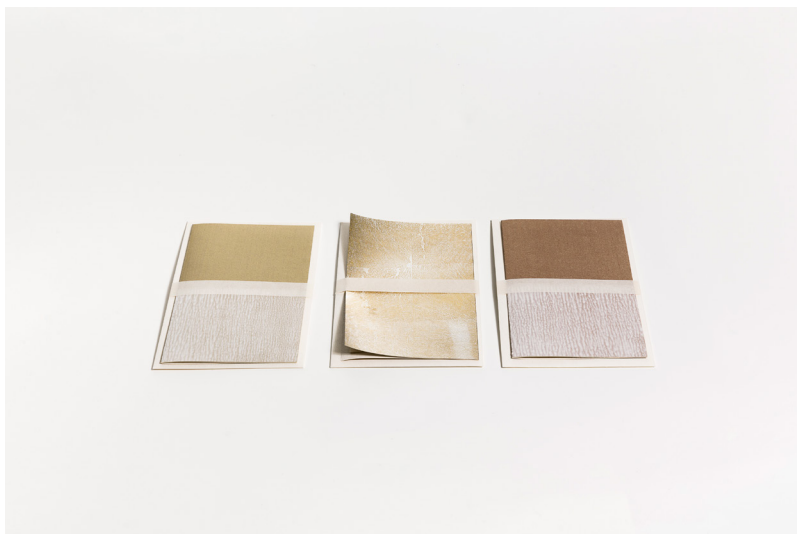
27
Yukiko Hosokawa
Basket
2019



28
Hideto Nakayama
Bamboo Container
2019



29
Hideto Nakayama
Round Basket
2019



30
Kamizoe
Card
2019



31
Kamizoe
Small Envelope
2019





33
Wataru Hatano
Box
2019



34
Wataru Hatano
Card Holder
2019



35
Ryohei Yamamoto
Grazed Bowl, Katade Ware
2019



36
Ryohei Yamamoto
Bowl
2019



37
Ryohei Yamamoto
Sake Cup
2019



38
Koichi Uchida
Small Bowl
2019





40
Kazushige Tsuchida
Buckwheat Noodles Cup
2019



41
Kazushige Tsuchida
Cup
2019



42
Kazushige Tsuchida
Small Soup Bowl
2019



43
Kazushige Tsuchida
Sake Cup
2019



44
Kazushige Tsuchida
Nested Bowls
2019



45
Akihiko Sugita
Rimmed Plate
2019



46
Yoji Yamada
Plate
2020



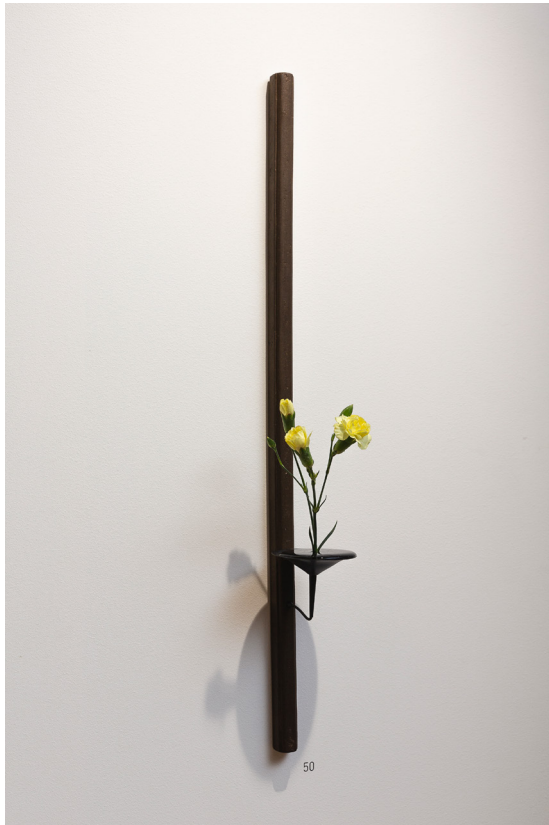
47
Yoji Yamada
Plate
2020



48
Yoji Yamada
Rectangular Bowl
2019



49
Yoji Yamada
Small Dish
2019



50
Tomoko Hayashi
Hanging Flower Vase
2019



51
Masanobu Ando
Plate
2019



52
Masanobu Ando
Bowl
2019



53
Yoshitake Kihira
Square Bowl
2019



54
Ryuji Mitani
Small Plate
2019



55
Ryuji Mitani
Small Plate
2019



56
Ryuji Mitani
Square Plate "usuzumi"
2019



57
Ryuji Mitani
Square Plate
2019



58
Ryuji Mitani
Wooden Ship "usuzumi"
2019



59
Ryuji Mitani
Octagonal Bowl
2019



60
Ryuji Mitani
Pitcher
2019



61
Ryuji Mitani
Butter Case (Half Pound)
2019



62
Ryuji Mitani
Fork
2019



63
Ryuji Mitani
Pasta Fork
2019



64
Ryuji Mitani
Dessert Spoon
2019



65
Ryuji Mitani
Spoon
2019



66
Ryuji Mitani
Spoon
2019



67
Ryuji Mitani
Tea Caddy
2019



68
Ryuji Mitani
Small Bowl
2019

69
Ryuji Mitani
Spice Spoon
2019



70
Ryuji Mitani
Bowl
2019



71
Ryuji Mitani
Round Tray "HAKUBOKU"
2019



72
Ryuji Mitani
Cup
2019



73
Ryuji Mitani
Cup "HAKUBOKU"
2019



74
Ryuji Mitani
Pitcher "HAKUBOKU"
2019



75
Ryuji Mitani
Plate
2019



76
Ryuji Mitani
Large-Rimmed Plate
2019

IN CONVERSATION WITH
RYUJI MITANI & TADAOMI YAMAMOTO

February 22, 2020 2:30-3:30pm at The Japan Foundation, Sydney Seikatsu Kogei: Objects for Intentional Living Talk Event

Tadaomi Yamamoto:

My name is Yamamoto, here today representing gallery yamahon. I manage the gallery, which is located between Kyoto and Iga, an area known in Japan for its ninja.

I would first like to extend my sympathies to all those affected by the devastating bushfires in Australia.

On behalf of gallery yamahon, I am thrilled that The Japan Foundation, Sydney reached out to us to collaborate on a Seikatsu Kogei exhibition here in Sydney.

Seikatsu Kogei (objects with specific uses made from natural materials) are gaining more and more interest in Japan and abroad as essential items that can be used and enjoyed in our daily lives. While the world pursues the convenience of technological advancements, Seikatsu Kogei offers a different kind of fulfilment. Since ancient times, Japanese people have made bowls and other containers, and they continue to be made and used even now, further enhancing their value.

I hope you are able to feel that value through the Seikatsu Kogei pieces in this exhibition. Including the woodworker Ryuji Mitani-san, there are 22 currently-active Seikatsu Kogei artists featured in the exhibition. For today's talk event, however, I will be speaking with Mitani-san, a leading proponent of Seikatsu Kogei, about the craft movement and his practice.

Mitani-san established a woodworking studio in Matsumoto City in 1981, where he creates primarily bowls, cutlery, lacquerware and furniture. Thank you for joining us here today.

Ryuji Mitani:

Thank you. Where I live in Matsumoto, located in Nagano prefecture, is about three hours from Tokyo by car. Those of you who like to ski might know the Hakuba or Shiga Kogen ski resorts. Matsumoto is located between tall mountains 3,000 meters high, and from 1945, after the war, it was a popular area for the Mingei movement. It continues to be a popular town for craft artists.



TY:

Thank you for the introduction. Can you begin by telling us about your first experience with woodworking?

RM:

The first time I was exposed to woodworking was when I purchased a chisel at an art exhibition. For someone like me who didn't attend an arts college, the barrier of entry for things that require a kiln like ceramics and glasswork is quite high. With wood carving, all you need is a single chisel to get started, so it was easy for me to get into. From those unexpected beginnings, I saw how interesting wood was as a raw material and how profound the world of woodworking was, which only increased my interest. Plywood and other industrial materials are common in modern living, but I wanted to find a way for people to experience the pleasure of coming in contact with pure wood in their daily lives. That was how I decided to make tableware out of wood. When people think of woodworking, they think of furniture, and there were already many furniture woodworkers in Matsumoto. But furniture culture only goes back 100 years, and I was more interested in Japanese crafts, which have a longer history, so I started making bowls and other containers.

TY:

You opened your Matsumoto studio in the 80s. What was it like in Japan and Japanese crafts at the time? What kind of works were you creating then?

RM:

After the 1973 oil crisis, Japan experienced a great shift. The rapid economic growth that continued during the postwar period ground to a halt, and the Japanese people lost the goal of being able to escape poverty and become wealthy that had been their motivation up until that point. It was an era of lost direction. As issues related to things such as pollution and inequality between first-world and developing countries rose to the surface, people began to doubt the system of modernism. Having lost faith in that system, it became necessary to seek value in things that weren't associated with the economy and material objects. This was referred to as the "path to maturity". But for Japanese people, who excelled at making a living through hard work, they couldn't answer what "maturity" meant to them.

Things that can't be bought with money, things humans can't approximate, connections between people, everyday life with family, making things with your own hands, living in the countryside... Seikatsu Kogei tried to find value in these things.

Crafts in the 1980s centred around works that could be displayed in public exhibitions and department store art galleries such as traditional crafts with a high level of technique and mainstream fine art carvings. Crafts that were aesthetic pieces, rather than things to be used, were what was popular at the time. These works had a strong emphasis on the individual, but that individuality and uniqueness grew stale, and these works lacked charm. On the other hand, mass-produced products were unappealing, and people found themselves wanting something between the two. It was from here that handmade crafts that could be used in everyday life came to be. Fundamentally, these were homewares - implements that could be used in daily living.

The first tableware I made was a butter case and cutlery. The butter case was carved from a pure piece of wood that I felt could be used for a long time. Other items I made during this period that could be used in the home included a tray and saucer, but not much else. I wanted to bring pure wood into the home to be enjoyed, so I took on the important role of sharing the value wood has in our lives through cutlery.

TY:

Between 1990 and 2010, the situation surrounding crafts in Japan has changed significantly. From 1990 to 2000, individual objet d'art, tea bowls used in traditional tea ceremonies were prominent, but after 20 years, simple, unassuming objects without too much personality have become more mainstream. In particular, objects made for use in the home were kept to a low, fair price. I think this aspect was inherited from the Mingei movement in the 1930s. Mingei recognised the beauty in essential handmade objects used in everyday life, and that way of thinking as a Japanese movement that focused on things used in everyday life has been carried through the 21st century to the present day. However, I feel there is a disparity between the Mingei crafts of the 1930s and the living spaces of today, now more than 70 years after the movement began.

While Seikatsu Kogei comes from this way of thinking, as the one who coined the term "Seikatsu Kogei", what were you thinking when you came up with the term?

RM:

Seikatsu Kogei has been used for Mingei and other things, so I don't really think of it as something I coined myself. I think the term "Seikatsu Kogei" just kind of harmonised with a group of us who participated in the Craft Fair with everyday objects and crafts related to daily life.

I think an important part of Seikatsu Kogei is bringing crafts that were made for aesthetic purposes into our homes as things to be used. By shifting away from a strong focus on the artists and the works themselves, the objects are able to connect with many people's lives.

One large difference from mass-produced objects is that the sense of the raw materials is very important, care is given down to the finest details, and not losing the traditional Japanese way of perceiving things which regards distortions or imperfections such as dirt or insect damage as representations of nature. I believe the delicate nuances of something made by hand can be felt just as you feel the appeal of a work by seeing it in a gallery.

TY:

After "Seikatsu Kogei" was coined, the term became widely used throughout Japan. What do you think about the current state of Seikatsu Kogei?

RM:

Seikatsu Kogei has continued for nearly 30 years, and I believe the fact that more Japanese crafts are made from the bottom up than those facilitated by the government is important, because we've gained a degree of freedom. What will that freedom look like going forward? However, even now, democracy and liberalism are deteriorating. Also, while Seikatsu Kogei started in the 1980s, where it was said everyone was middle class, now disparities are rising, the middle class is decreasing, and the foundation of "daily living" is starting to crumble. I think that has had an impact, but people live conservatively, and that doesn't change. I believe Seikatsu Kogei will continue on with that as its base.

TY:

An important concept of Seikatsu Kogei is the value of simplicity, which has been an important concept to Japanese people since ancient times. Could you discuss your feelings about that?

RM:

There is no limit to human desire. Thus, if you always pursue that desire, you will always feel lacking. That is why the saying "be content with what you have" is so important. But rather being about suppressing your desires, it's about finding a different kind of value in things. Finding beauty in simplicity is the exact opposite of pining away over extravagant beauty and is an important way of thinking for creating a sustainable planet. I believe if you find value in the simple things, you will never feel dissatisfied.

If I had the choice to choose between something fit for a king and something simple made out of wood that had been thoroughly used, I would choose the wood, because you can see the life of a person in it. Decorative things may catch one's eye, but they've lost their fundamental essence.

You can compare this to tea ceremonies. In the beginning, it was popular to have Japanese tea ceremonies as a big party, almost like a banquet, but people felt that these lacked spirit, so they shifted to thoughtful ceremonies held in simple, humble tea rooms.

I continue to incorporate the value of simplicity in my environment, and teach the art of living abundantly within one's means.

TY:

Could you share the relationship between your works, nature and the raw wood materials you use?

RM:

In Japan, people's lives have long been connected to nature. However, Western culture had a strong impact when it was introduced, and there was a period where people became frantic to adopt Western ways to the detriment of their own culture. But since the 1970s, Western advancements have slowed, and people have started to question whether it was right to modernise the way we did. Japanese civilisation has been blessed with forests, and we have figured out ways to do things sustainably, without over clearing the forests, so our nature has remained intact. I've come to feel that that is the true meaning of civilisation.

TY:

Recently, exhibitions like this have increased outside of Japan. How do you feel about Seikatsu Kogei from an international perspective?

RM:

Japan is a country that has had a considerable amount of influence from the West, such as pop and jazz music, Italian and French cuisine, and homes adopting more Western designs. I think Seikatsu Kogei, which exists with this lifestyle culture as its background, can be easily accepted by people outside of Japan. Japan has become a more eclectic culture from its exchange with other cultures, and this trend will likely continue throughout the world. In this way, if the tradition of Japanese crafts helps enrich the lives of people in other countries, then I think that's a good thing.

TY:

Are there any movements similar to Seikatsu Kogei outside of Japan? Also, what do you think about the similarities/differences between movements in Japan and movements in other countries?

RM:

I had an exhibition in New York last year, and at the time I went to a famous restaurant that served salads in small bowls that were meant to be shared, and that was accepted as normal. However, up until recently this wasn't really seen in Western food culture, and I heard that the change is partially due to the influence of Japanese cuisine. This shows how eating habits around the world are slowly changing, and I think people's understanding of tableware is deepening, as well. However, this is something you tend to see in large cities with many people interacting, whereas I don't think it's really happening in older towns. Thus, it's really something that's changing little by little. In Japan, Seikatsu Kogei started in an era when it was said that everyone was middle class. I think Seikatsu Kogei had a strong image of the middle class as its base, but since then, the middle class has started to crumble, and a divide has appeared between the rich and the poor. With our way of life itself out of balance, it becomes difficult to share many things. For example, in Denmark, furniture designs for everyday living flourished during the postwar revival period, and most designs from this era had a richness to them. From this perspective, losing the foundation for our way of living makes it more difficult to create a foundation for Seikatsu Kogei.

TY:

In your speech at the exhibition's opening reception, you spoke about the relationship between bowls and dishes and cooking. Would you be able to speak more in-depth about that?

RM:

Humans do not have an anthropocentric way of creating where we first come up with a plan inside our heads and then actualise it. Rather, when we start working on something, we first listen to the voice of the ingredients and create something while having a conversation with the ingredients. I believe this behaviour is common to both crafts and cooking. We do it this way because borrowing the power of the ingredients makes the end product taste better and be more appealing.

In Japan, we have something called sacred groves that are located near people's homes, and we live together with the gods and nature of the forest. There are so many gods in Japan that there are seven gods in every grain of rice, and so it was customary to offer thanks and prayers to our crops. Even now, that custom remains ingrained in our subconscious, and lives on in both cooking and craft making in the ways we place importance on all things, such as using all of a vegetable or making sure not to waste even the smallest scrap of wood.

Moreover, it's not just about the appreciation of a work an artist created on an aesthetic level, but how the work changes depending on the story and context it's used in, such as the food inside a bowl or the pleasures of different combinations of objects. The artist is aware of these different readings and readily accepts them.

Thus, works are created from the perspective of the users and the materials, lessening the focus on the artist.

TY:

You make three-dimensional works out of wood and paper as well as two-dimensional paintings. What is the creative process like for you? Could you also speak about the appeal of art and the appeal of craft?

RM:

150 years ago, before Western art came to Japan, Japan only had crafts. Japanese people were bewildered by the new Western culture, and threw themselves into it, discarding everything from the past. However, from around the 1970s, people began producing works that made room to express the good aspects of the East and West in relation to one another and return to things that were previously tossed aside.

In crafts, we have acquired eyes that see things without restrictions such as East/West or old/new. I believe when we bathed in the shower of modern art, we naturally connected it to the sensitivity to raw materials and sense of creation that has been cultivated in Japanese crafts since ancient times. Thus, unlike conventional fine art, there is the sense that this is a world where only things with an inherent Japanese culture and sensibility are able to be produced.

Currently, we are under the influence of Western European fine art sensibilities. When there are crafts that are designated not for use, they are quickly rejected and classified as fine arts. But when you think about it, the act of separating fine art and crafts itself is a Western way of interpreting things. We already do not consciously distinguish between fine art and crafts, but simply create things with a more abstract meaning based on whether they will be useful for living, or making living more enjoyable.

For example, in alcoves of Japanese houses, we hang pictures painted on hanging scrolls, place flowers, and display decorations. Each item is not thought of individually, but rather as part of a whole, blending into the lives of each and every one of us. Nowadays, there aren't many houses with alcoves, but there is still the desire to create a space in proximity to our daily lives, and there are still things that respond to that desire. Artworks carry a strong connection to exhibition spaces, but by making them small and viewing them up close, they can become objects with a rich sense of the materials.

TY:

Finally, what's next for your work?

RM:

I've been painting since I was about 40, but I've neglected it since I started focusing on making objects. When you use a paintbrush, it is almost like an extension of your body, which is a little different from creating bowls and other objects. I think I'd like to use that to do painting or sculpture.



ARTIST BIO

Masanobu Ando (b.1957)

Masanobu Ando is a ceramic artist and the owner of Galerie Momogusa based in Tajimi, Gifu Prefecture. He creates works that often invite the viewer to re-evaluate their relationship to mass consumption. His works are characterised by his use of the technique called tatara, which is shaping clay using plaster molds. Ando's highly popular tableware is designed to present both Eastern and Western food.

Wataru Hatano (b.1971)

Wataru Hatano is a washi paper artisan based in Ayabe, Kyoto Prefecture. In addition to creating the traditional washi paper itself, his portfolio spans a wide range of connected products like book covers and writing paper. He also produces non-traditional washi items such as business cards holders, furniture, interior decorations, and artwork. His products maintain the essence of traditional washi but contemporises them with his use of bright colours and abraded texture.

Tomoko Hayashi (b.1968)

Tomoko Hayashi is a sculptor based in Tokyo. She primarily produces wood-based two dimensional works that incorporate materials such as plaster (coloured clay, sand, straw) and foil. She uses the textures and colours of natural materials to produce abstract expressions that evoke nature.

Higashi Bamboo Studio | Hiroaki Higashi (b.1984)

Founder of Higashi Bamboo Studio, Hiroaki Higashi's interest in bamboo began when he was living on an island in Ehime Prefecture working at the Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture. He considers bamboo to be "a material that is easy to obtain and can be worked without large tools. It is also suited to producing hand-made items for everyday life". Higashi's modern design style is based on rethinking bamboo baskets from an architectural design perspective.

Yukiko Hosokawa (b.1977)

Yukiko Hosokawa is a bamboo crafts artist based in Cihba Prefecture. She graduated from the Oita Prefecture Bamboo Artisan Training Support Center in 2013. She focuses on bamboo baskets known as kakumono; a traditional container for carrying tofu that was first created in the Meiji Era.

Kamizoe | Ko Kado (1975)

Kamizoe is a studio established by Ko Kado in Nishijin, Kyoto Prefecture. He specialises in kataoshi, a traditional embossing technique used in printing. The workshop creates handembossed patterned paper from its large range of wooden patterns.

Masaki Kanamori (b.1975)

Masaki Kanamori is a metal-based artist based in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. The hard metals he uses transform into pliant shapes and wellformed vessels in his hands, and he attempts to create unadulterated forms that are devoid of artificiality. His works evoke an unassuming beauty expressed by cultural aesthetics such as wabisabi and shibumi, showing us a beauty that Kanamori feels is increasingly distant from today's Japan.

Yoshitake Kihira (b.1982)

Yoshitake Kihira is a woodworking artist based in Toyota City. He creates delicate handcarved wooden utensils and tableware with a distinct quality that comes from polishing without leaving chisel marks. Kihira removes machinery from his production process in order to move away from mass production, instead using woodworking lathes and pottery wheels, and uses various types of woods as well as finishings such as oil, fuki-urushi (wiping lacquer), and iron mordant.

Masao Kozumi (b.1979)

Masao Kozumi is a glassware artist based in Gifu Prefecture. His glassworks evoke the austere elegance of antiques due to his interest in and study of Edo Period (1603-1868) glass blowing techniques. He utilises mold-blowing, which enables glass to be blown into any form at will. The result is dignified works that exude serenity.

Ryuji Mitani (b.1952)

Ryuji Mitani is a woodworker based in Matsumoto, Niigata Prefecture. He has long been an advocate of the connection between daily living and crafts, patiently communicating that message through products, exhibitions, and writings, as well as activities such as the Crafts Fair Matsumoto in Matsumoto City, which he has been involved in running from the time of its inception in 1985. Mitani established PERSONA STUDIO in Matsumoto City in 1981, where he makes bowls and other utensils for everyday use out of hand-carved wood.

Tomoaki Nakano (b.1975)

Tomoaki Nakano is a lacquerware artist based in Sabae City, Fukui Prefecture. His works are characterised by his application of multiple layers of urushi (Japanese organic lacquer) so that his works can continue to be used for many decades to come. His rhythmic technique creates a rich, deep colour and artistic feel in his works.

Yumi Nakamura (b.1981)

Yumi Nakamura is a metal-based artist based in Nara Prefecture. She studied interior design at Musashino Art University, after which she discovered a fascination with manual craftwork and decided to take up metalwork. Inspired by antiques, she focused on how to make kettles, and went on to produce kettles that are designed with both Japanese and Western-style interiors in mind.

Hideto Nakayama (b.1986)

Hideto Nakayama is a bamboo crafts artist based in Kagawa Prefecture. Due to his interest in traditional Japanese crafts, he conducted research at the Urushi Lacquer Ware Institute in Kagawa and then went on to study at the Oita Prefecture Bamboo Artisan Training Support Centre. His products fuse traditional Japanese methods of artistry with the concept of intentional living, which is a key component of the Seikatsu Kogei craft movement.

Tetsuya Otani (b.1971)

Tetsuya Otani is a porcelain artist based in Shigaraki, Shiga Prefecture. His work focuses on simplicity. He produces hand-thrown ceramic wares such as plates and earthen pots made for daily life. His work can often be characterised by his signature pure white works, which can be attributed to a Western style of dining ware. His work features in many restaurants in Europe and other parts of the world.

Akihiko Sugita (b.1978)

Akihiko Sugita is a lacquerware artist based in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture. He is inspired by the texture and appearance of aged items. He uses this to express his own distinctive sensibility, focusing mainly on lacquerware. Working from his studio in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, he utilises texture in unique ways to produce works that give the impression of abstract paintings. Recently he has been experimenting with creating two-dimensional works using lacquer.

Yuichi Takemata (b.1975)

Yuichi Takemata is a metal-based artist based in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture. He works with hammered metal to create made-to-order jewellery, cutlery and everyday tableware. Maintaining his signature emphasis on aesthetics, he now creates hammered flatware and other tableware from sheet metal.

Takashi Tomii (b.1976)

Takashi Tomii is a woodworker based in Nagaoka, Niigata Prefecture. His interest in woodworking originates from his childhood spent in Oregon, USA where forestry is a major industry. Since moving back to Japan, he has continued to nurture his love for woodworking by carving various kitchen tools from materials gathered around his local area. He draws inspiration from artists such as Tadashi Inamoto and Hiroshi Fujikado by instilling a practice wherein his choice of materials reflects his concept of renewable resources that connect us to nature and natural materials.

Kazushige Tsuchida (b.1977)

Kazushige Tsuchida is a lacquerware artist based in Wajima, Ishikawa Prefecture, a wellknown centre for lacquerware production. Starting in 2006, he apprenticed with the master lacquer artist Akito Akagi, and after intense traditional training in Wajima, he was inspired to create lacquerware that is both orthodox and contemporary, bearing a lightness that suits the current age and becomes increasingly imposing and beautiful as time goes on.

Kiyokazu Tsuda (b. 1973)

Kiyokazu Tsuda is a glassware artist based in Katsuragi, Nara Prefecture. He became interested in glassblowing after seeing an artisan blowing glass during a trip to Hokkaido. His fascination in glass extended to developing a career, and after 10 years of formal training, he formed his own studio in Nara in 2008. He is known for creating works with a distinctive appearance, produced by adding metal foil or stone dust to the glass surface before firing.

Koichi Uchida (b.1969)

Koichi Uchida is a ceramics artist based in Yokkaichi, Shiga Prefecture. His work is informed by the many pottery-making regions in the world that he has worked in; from his choice of style to the shapes and textures of his work. He creates a multitude of objects from porcelain plates to bronze tea-ware, all imbued with a sense of calm and strength. Aside from producing ceramics, he established the BANKO Archive Design Museum in Yokkaichi, which archives Yokkaichi Banko-ware made during the Meiji and Showa era. He has also held exhibitions and created works in various countries throughout the world, including in Asia, Europe, the United States, and South America.

Yoji Yamada (b.1980)

Yoji Yamada is a ceramic artist based in Shigaraki, Nagano Prefecture. He completed his studies at the Shigaraki Ceramic Research Institute and went to the UK in 2007 to study for a year under Lisa Hammond, the pioneer of soda glaze. He creates pottery using traditional British slipware techniques as well as yellow glaze, which conveys an impression of softness, and iron glaze, which allows for varied forms of expression. In recent years, he has focused on creating slipware fired in makigama kilns and simple pottery with a rich feel.

Ryohei Yamamoto (b.1972)

Ryohei Yamamoto is a ceramics artist based in Arita, Saga Prefecture. He is fascinated by early Japanese Imari-ware called Shogen Imari, which dates back to medieval times when porcelainware was first made in Japan. He recreates ceramics that are simple and possess a fine, rural beauty by making his own clay by grinding Izumiyama and Amakusa pottery stone and sandstone that he collects in the mountains of Japan.

LIST OF WORKS

1
Tomoaki Nakano
Black Nested Bowls
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
150mm x 150mm x 90mm

2
Tomoaki Nakano
Small Bowl
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
86mm x 86mm x 37mm
93mm x 93mm x 40mm
100mm x 100mm x 46mm

3
Tomoaki Nakano
Plate
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
210mm x 210mm x 25mm

4
Tomoaki Nakano
Nested Bowls
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
127mm x 127mm x 63mm

5
Takashi Tomii
Rectangular Plate
2019
Chestnut, lacquer
150mm x 300mm x 22mm

6
Takashi Tomii
Square Plate
2019
Oak, cera, perilla oil
200mm x 200mm x 20mm

7
Takashi Tomii
Square Plate
2019
Chestnut, lacquer
210mm x 210mm x 22mm

8
Takashi Tomii
Small Plate
2019
Cherry tree, lacquer
90mm x 90mm x 18mm

9
Yoshitake Kihira
Plate
2019
Japanese cypress
180mm x 180mm x 16mm
210mm x 210mm x 20mm
240mm x 240mm x 23mm

10
Masaki Kanamori
Pitcher
2019
Porcelain enamel
110mm x 100mm x 75mm
135mm x 120mm x 87mm

11
Masaki Kanamori
Plate
2019
Porcelain enamel
200mm x 200mm x 17mm
247mm x 247mm x 20mm

12
Yuichi Takemata
Spoon
2019
Stainless steel
100mm x 12mm, 130mm x 12mm
130mm x 13mm, 170mm x 35mm,
200mm x 37mm

13
Yuichi Takemata
Fork
2019
Stainless steel
97mm x 7mm, 130mm x 7mm
130mm x 13mm, 170mm x 20mm
200mm x 19mm

14
Yumi Nakamura
Kettle
2020
Copper
155mm x 155mm x 185mm

15
Tetsuya Otani
Cup & Saucer
2019
Porcelain
165mm x 165mm x 80mm

16
Tetsuya Otani
Pot
2019
Porcelain
110mm x 160mm x 95mm

17
Tetsuya Otani
Dripper & Server
2019
Porcelain
95mm x 130mm x 170mm

18
Tetsuya Otani
Bowl
2019
Porcelain
150mm x 150mm x 100mm

19
Masao Kozumi
Bottle
2019
Glass
90mm x 90mm x 230mm

20
Masao Kozumi
Cup
2019
Glass
80mm x 80mm x 85mm

21
Masao Kozumi
Cup
2019
Glass
75mm x 75mm x 93mm
78mm x 78mm x 110mm

22
Kiyokazu Tsuda
Cup
2019
Glass
78mm x 78mm x 63mm

23
Kiyokazu Tsuda
Cup
2019
Glass
70mm x 70mm x 115mm

24
Higashi Bamboo Studio
Fruit Basket
2019
Bamboo
240mm x 240mm x 95mm
300mm x 300mm x 125mm

25
Higashi Bamboo Studio
Cube Bucket
2019
Bamboo
260mm x 265mm x 220mm

26
Yukiko Hosokawa
Lunch Box
2019
Bamboo
270mm x 220mm x 185mm

27
Yukiko Hosokawa
Basket
2019
Bamboo
200mm x 220mm x 95mm

28
Hideto Nakayama
Bamboo Container
2019
Bamboo, leather
85mm x 85mm x 200mm
85mm x 85mm x 250mm

29
Hideto Nakayama
Round Basket
2019
Bamboo
265mm x 250mm 330mm

30
Kamizoe
Card
2019
Paper, Chinese ink
Paper, gofun (pigment)
192mm x 142mm

31
Kamizoe
Small Envelope
2019
Paper, gofun (pigment)
127mm x 70mm

32
Kamizoe
Card
2019
Paper, Chinese ink
Paper, gofun (pigment)
192mm x 142mm

33
Wataru Hatano
Box
2019
Washi paper, pigment
320mm x 228mm x 45mm

34
Wataru Hatano
Card Holder
2019
Washi paper, pigment
109mm x 109mm x 62mm
120mm x 70mm x 23mm

35
Ryohei Yamamoto
Grazed Bowl, Katade Ware
2019
Ceramics
160mm x 160mm x 50mm

36
Ryohei Yamamoto
Bowl
2019
Ceramics
120mm x 123mm x 65mm

37
Ryohei Yamamoto
Sake Cup
2019
Ceramics
80mm x 83mm x 45mm

38
Koichi Uchida
Small Bowl
2019
Ceramics
85mm x 85mm x 60mm

39
Kazushige Tsuchida
Lacquered Plate
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
145mm x 145mm x 31mm
160mm x 160mm x 37mm

40
Kazushige Tsuchida
Buckwheat Noodles Cup
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
80mm x 80mm x 60mm

41
Kazushige Tsuchida
Cup
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
80mm x 80mm x 65mm

42
Kazushige Tsuchida
Small Soup Bowl
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
145mm x 145mm x 30mm

43
Kazushige Tsuchida
Sake Cup
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
65mm x 65mm x 40mm

44
Kazushige Tsuchida
Nested Bowls
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
135mm x 135mm x 97mm

45
Akihiko Sugita
Rimmed Plate
2019
Japanese zelkova, lacquer
220mm x 220mm x 15mm
260mm x 260mm x 15mm

46
Yoji Yamada
Plate
2020
Ceramics
160mm x 160mm x 30mm

47

Yoji Yamada

Plate

2020

Ceramics

205mm x 205mm x 45mm

48

Yoji Yamada

Rectangular Bowl

2019

Ceramics

188mm x 220mm x 48mm

49

Yoji Yamada

Small Dish

2019

Ceramics

85mm x 100mm x 25mm

50

Tomoko Hayashi

Hanging Flower Vase

2019

Clay, iron powder, copper, lime

80mm x 110mm x 650mm

51

Masanobu Ando

Plate

2019

Semi-porcelain

270mm x 270mm x 14mm

52

Masanobu Ando

Bowl

2019

Semi-porcelain

185mm x 185mm x 85mm

53

Yoshitake Kihira

Square Bowl

2019

Cedar, iron mordant

330mm x 320mm x 60mm

54

Ryuji Mitani

Small Plate

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

125mm x 125mm x 25mm

55

Ryuji Mitani

Small Plate

2019

Japanese zelkova, lacquer

90mm x 90mm x 45mm

56

Ryuji Mitani

Square Plate "usuzumi"

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

180mm x 180mm x 25mm

57

Ryuji Mitani

Square Plate

2019

Chestnut

155mm x 142mm x 25mm

58

Ryuji Mitani

Wooden Ship "usuzumi"

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

55mm x 190mm x 45mm

59

Ryuji Mitani

Octagonal Bowl

2019

Japanese pagoda tree, lacquer

330mm x 330mm x 45mm

60

Ryuji Mitani

Pitcher

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

130mm x 90mm x 55mm

61

Ryuji Mitani

Butter Case (Half Pound)

2019

Cherry tree, oil

145mm x 83mm x 55mm

62

Ryuji Mitani

Fork

2019

Ostrya japonica, oil

133mm x 12mm

63

Ryuji Mitani

Pasta Fork

2019

Ostrya japonica, oil

185mm x 23mm

64

Ryuji Mitani

Dessert Spoon

2019

Cherry tree, oil

140mm x 29mm

65

Ryuji Mitani

Spoon

2019

Cherry tree, oil

177mm x 30mm

66

Ryuji Mitani

Spoon

2019

Cherry tree, oil

185mm x 35mm

67

Ryuji Mitani

Tea Caddy

2019

Cherry tree, oil

58mm x 58mm x 70mm

68

Ryuji Mitani

Small Bowl

2019

Cherry tree, oil

65mm x 65mm x 35mm

69

Ryuji Mitani

Spice Spoon

2019

Cherry tree, oil

77mm x 12mm

70

Ryuji Mitani

Bowl

2019

Cherry tree, oil

270mm x 275mm x 85mm

71

Ryuji Mitani

Round Tray "HAKUBOKU"

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

270mm x 270mm x 20mm

72

Ryuji Mitani

Cup

2019

Walnut, lacquer

75mm x 75mm x 60mm

73

Ryuji Mitani

Cup "HAKUBOKU"

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

80mm x 80mm x 60mm

74

Ryuji Mitani

Pitcher "HAKUBOKU"

2019

Cherry tree, lacquer

80mm x 75mm x 100mm

75

Ryuji Mitani

Plate

2019

Japanese zelkova, lacquer

170mm x 170mm x 25mm

76

Ryuji Mitani

Large-Rimmed Plate

2019

Japanese zelkova, lacquer

330mm x 330mm x 45mm

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The Japan Foundation Gallery

SEIKATSU KOGEI

Objects for Intentional Living

February 21 to August 29, 2020

*Exhibition dates extended due to COVID-19.

ARTISTS

Masanobu Ando
Wataru Hatano
Tomoko Hayashi
Higashi Bamboo Studio
Yukiko Hosokawa
Kamizoe
Masaki Kanamori
Yoshitake Kihira
Masao Kozumi
Ryuji Mitani
Tomoaki Nakano
Yumi Nakamura
Hideto Nakayama
Tetsuya Otani
Akihito Sugita
Yuichi Takemata
Takashi Tomii
Kazushige Tsuchida
Kiyokazu Tsuda
Koichi Uchida
Yoji Yamada
Ryohei Yamamoto

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The Japan Foundation, Sydney
Yurika Sugie,
Susan Bui, Simonne Goran,
Anne Lee, Aurora Newton

IN COLLABORATION WITH

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