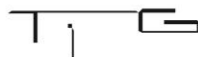


# SHOP



Taka Ishii  
Gallery

## Group Show “The Mingei”

Curated by Nicolas Trembley

Dates: Oct 9 – Nov 15, 2020

Location: SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong

By appointment only

Please email [tighk@takaishiigallery.com](mailto:tighk@takaishiigallery.com)

SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to announce “The Mingei”, a group show curated by Nicolas Trembley, featuring Japanese crafts, prints, design and publications from Oct 9 – Nov 15, 2020. Artworks and products presented in cooperation with Gallery Kojima, KOMIYAMA TOKYO, Kurodatoen, LYAN ARTS' COLLECTION, Shikama Fine Arts, as well as collectors Terry Ellis & Keiko Kitamura and Masamitsu Saito.

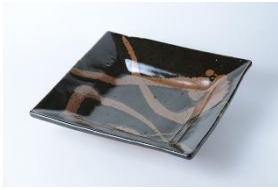
This exhibition explores the presence and legacy of Mingei—the Japanese Folk Craft Movement founded in the late 1920s by philosopher and critic Soetsu Yanagi. Based on handcrafted art, the movement originally finds beauty in everyday ordinary and utilitarian objects created by nameless and unknown craftsmen. Yanagi has a core concern for the functional qualities of objects, which he described as an “honesty with regards to their intended use”, leading to the well-known expression of “YOnoBI” or functional beauty. Perceived through intuition, the inherent beauty of Mingei arts can be enjoyed by all walks of life.

“The Mingei” borrows its title from the magazine published since 1952. A selection of copies will be presented in the exhibition alongside with Kogei magazines published by the Japan Folk Craft Association (Nihon Mingei Kyokai) from 1931 until 1951, which are designed by Keisuke Serizawa with illustrations by Shiko Munakata. Both publications served as significant channels to engage the public in the Mingei philosophy.

Besides vintage magazines, SHOP will also display historic pieces from Joseon Dynasty and master ceramicists including Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai and Bernard Leach, along works produced by contemporary potters for the design and craft brand Fennica in Tokyo, as well as the “Keramikos” project (2012 - 2013) by artists Matthew Lutz-Kinoy and Natsuko Uchino. Antiques from Okinawa and Hokkaido will dialogue with contemporary designers such as Sori Yanagi, and will be exhibited on a long shelf running on the walls. A selection of posters and books related to the Mingei Movement, vintage and new, with a special poster produced by the experimental graphic design group Norm will be on view and available for purchase.

With

Shoji Hamada  
Tomoo Hamada  
Yoichiro Kai  
Kanjiro Kawai  
Sumio Kawakami  
Haruko Kayama  
Keramikos  
Jiro Kinjo  
Tatsuaki Kuroda  
Bernard Leach  
Kengo Matsuda  
Kyoshi Matsuda  
Yoneshi Matsuda  
Shiko Munakata  
Norm  
Seiichi Otsuka  
Keisuke Serizawa  
Kenkichi Tomimoto  
Shinman Yamada  
Yoji Yamada  
Soetsu Yanagi  
Sori Yanagi



Shoji Hamada

"Black glazed plate with rust flowing", n.d.

Ceramic

27.4 x 27.4 x 6 cm

© Shoji Hamada

Courtesy of Kurodatoen



Keramikos

Matthew Lutz-Kinoy & Natsuko Uchino

"Ceramic bowl in Buncheong style", 2019

Ceramic

Ø 20 cm

© Keramikos

Courtesy of Keramikos

Photo: Miguel Rózpide Pazó



Tatsuaki Kuroda

"Negoto tea caddy", n.d.

Lacquer ware

Ø 7.1 x H7.2cm

© Tatsuaki Kuroda

Courtesy of Kurodatoen



Bernard Leach

"Untitled ", n.d.

Ceramic

28 x 26.5 x 26.5 cm

© Bernard Leach

Courtesy of Shikama Fine Arts

Photo: Yuji Imamura



Kenkichi Tomimoto

"Unglazed flat vase with brush pattern", 1920s

Ando-cho, Nara prefecture

Ceramic

21 x 13.9 x 20.8 cm

© Kenkichi Tomimoto

Courtesy of Kurodatoen

## Curator Biography

Born 1965 in Switzerland, Nicolas Trembley is an international art critic, curator and advisor based between Paris and Geneva. He started his career at the New Media Department at Centre Georges Pompidou where he worked as curator and member of the Acquisition Committee for video artworks till 1996. In 1994, he co-founded Bureau des Videos, a platform for the editing, broadcasting and production of video artworks by contemporary artists.

In 2004, he joined the Centre culturel suisse in Paris (CCS) and curated exhibitions such as “Swiss-Swiss Democracy” by Thomas Hirschhorn (2004 - 2005), “John Armleder: Jacques Garcia” (2008), and “Around Max Bill” with Wade Guyton (2008). He is currently a curator at The Syz Collection in Geneva since 2009 and is advising at large.

He is especially interested in the interaction between design and contemporary art as well as the exhibition displays. “The Mingei” at SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong is his fourth related project on the Mingei movement.

## Artist Biographies & Brand Story

Shoji Hamada (1894 - 1978) was born in Kanagawa Prefecture. He graduated from the Department of Ceramics in Tokyo Higher Technical School (now Tokyo Institute of Technology) in 1913. Beginning his career in the Kyoto City Ceramic Research Institute with Kanjiro Kawai, Hamada acquainted Bernard Leach in a visit to Soetsu Yanagi’s household in Abiko. In 1920, he journeyed to England as Leach’s assistant. Returning to Kyoto in 1923, he joined Yanagi and Kawai advocating the Mingei movement. His artistic practice displayed exquisite craftsmanship which incorporated multi-cultural techniques. Hamada was appointed as a successor of Yanagi in being the second director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum in 1961 and became the president of Japan Folk Craft Association in 1974. His many awards and honors include the designation as a Living National Treasure (1955), Japanese Government Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon (1964), Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from the University of Michigan (1967), Order of Cultural Merit (1968), Honorary Doctorate from Royal College of Art, London (1973). His major retrospective exhibitions include “The Retrospective Exhibition of Shoji Hamada”, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (1977); “Okinawa & Hamada Shoji Exhibition”, Urasoe Art Museum, Okinawa (2006); “The Unknown Face of Shoji Hamada”, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts (2010); “HAMADA SHOJI: Works from the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka’s Horio Mikio Collection”, Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo (2018).

Kanjiro Kawai (1890 - 1966) was born in Yasugi city in Shimane Prefecture. He graduated from Tokyo Higher Technical School (now Tokyo Institute of Technology) in 1914, majoring in ceramics. By the same year, he began to work in the Kyoto City Ceramic Research Institute, where he explored the usage of various glazes and met Shoji Hamada. In 1920, Kawai built a kiln in Gojozaka, Kyoto. As a key figure in the Mingei Movement who valued practical use and simple design, he explored different pottery forms and styles, from Sansai (three-colored ware), celadon, Mishima style to folk art style. His works received numerous awards, including Grand Prix in Paris World Expo (1937) and the Grand Prix at Milan Triennale International Pottery Exhibition (1957). Kawai declined honorary merits such as the designation of Living National Treasure and the Order of Culture. His retrospective exhibitions included “Kanjiro Kawai Exhibition – commemorating 120 years since his birth”, Kawai Kanjiro’s House, Kyoto & The Japan Folk Crafts Museum, Osaka (2010); “Kawai Kanjiro”, The Japan Folk Crafts Museum, Osaka (2016), “Exhibition of Kanjiro Kawai”, Panasonic Shiodome Museum of Art, Tokyo (2018); “Potter Kawai Kanjiro: Works from the Kawakatsu Collection”, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (2019).

Keramikos is a ceramic project founded by interdisciplinary artists, Matthew Lutz-Kinoy and Natsuko Uchino. The exhibition toured at the Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Kunsthalle Baden-Baden; Elaine Museum für Gegenwarts Kunst, Basel and Villa Romana Florence from 2012 - 2013. The photographer of this project is Miguel Rózpide Pazó.

Matthew Lutz-Kinoy (b. 1984) was born in New York and currently based in Paris. His interdisciplinary practice takes various art forms such as dance, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics and painting. He completed his undergraduate degree at the Cooper Union School of Art, New York, and the Rijksakademie international artist residency in Amsterdam in 2007 and 2010 respectively. Recent solo exhibitions include “Two Hands on Earth”, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels (2019); “Hudson Bathers”, Mendes Wood DM, New York, USA (2019); “Sea Spray”, Vleeshal, Middelburg (2018); “The Meadow”, Centre d’édition Contemporaine, Geneva (2018); “Southern Garden of the Château Bellevue”, Le Consortium, Dijon (2018). His major group exhibitions include “Scalable Skeletal Escalator”, Kunsthalle Zürich (2020), “Sculpture Garden”, Geneva Biennale, Switzerland (2020).

Natsuko Uchino (b. 1983) was born in Kumamoto, Japan, currently lives and works in Saint-Quentin-la-Poterie, France. Her artistic practice is defined by experiences in agriculture and crafts. Using ceramics as a medium, her works relate art to ecology, food and conviviality. After graduating from the Cooper Union School of Art, New York, she joined the research program at the Center for Contemporary Art Kitakyushu, Fukuoka (2012 - 2013). Recent solo exhibitions include “Clay, Tiles

& Redwood", Last Resort Gallery, Copenhagen (2018); "That Attitude is Rude", Green Tea Gallery, Kyoto (2015); "Moving Landscapes", V8 Plattform für Neue Kunst, Karlsruhe (2015). Her major group exhibitions include "Complicity", Foundation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles (2020); "Je t'épaule tu me respirez", Galerie Marcelle Alix, Paris (2018).

Jiro Kinjo (1912 - 2004) was born in Naha City in Okinawa. Kinjo joined master craftsman Arakaki Eitoku's pottery workshop in Tsuboya in 1924. In the same year, he met Shoji Hamada who was a lifelong friend of Arakaki. Influenced by Soetsu Yanagi's admiration of Okinawa traditional folk art, he was motivated to produce more works with techniques such as line engraving, finger drawing to decorate vessels of daily use. After the war, Kinjo reopened the kiln in Tsuboya and presented his works in the First Ryukyu Folk Crafts Exhibition organized by the Japan Folk Craft Association in Tokyo in 1951. His works were included in Kokuten exhibitions since 1955 and won him the New Face Award and Kokugakai Prize in 1956 and 1957 respectively. Throughout his lifetime, he actively promoted Ryukyu ceramics with oceanic motifs. Kinjo received a number of awards and honors, including the Okinawa Times Art Award (1967), the Sixth Order of the Sacred Treasure (1981), the designation as a Living National Treasure (1985), the Fourth Order of the Sacred Treasure (1993). His major retrospective exhibitions include "JIRO KINJO EXHIBITION", Miyake Museum of Art, Kagoshima (2012 - 2013); "Ceramics: Jiro Kinjo and Okinawan Crafts", Kurashiki Museum of Folkcraft, Okayama (2017).

Tatsuaki Kuroda (1904 - 1982) was born in the home of a lacquer craftsman in Gion, Kyoto. Kuroda taught himself wood lacquer crafts at his father's studio. In 1924, Kuroda joined Soetsu Yanagi at the beginning of Mingei Movement and co-founded Kamigamo Folk Craft Cooperative (Kamigamo Mingei Kyodan) with Goro Aota in 1927. Referencing crafts and furniture from the Korean folk culture, he was inspired to express his creativity through varying the shape, size and decoration of the lacquerware. Kuroda enlivened his craft by emphasizing its materiality, by deeply engraving the pattern onto the wood surface and inlaying large shells into the objects. Influenced by western furniture design and Van Gogh's painting, he attempted to create chairs, which he perceived as a kind of furniture beyond the Japanese context. In 1968, Kuroda created a series of sophisticated furnishings that were acquired and moved to the new Imperial Palace in Tokyo. His sophisticated craftsmanship was honored by the Japanese government as Preserver of Important Intangible Cultural Properties (1970), awarded with the Japanese Government Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon (1971), Person of Cultural Merit (1976). His works are in the permanent collection of The Living National Treasures Museum, Kanagawa; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi; Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art; Sagawa Art Museum, Shiga.

Bernard Leach (1887 - 1979), regarded as the father of British studio pottery, was born in Hong Kong and spent part of his formative years in Japan. With training in the London School of Art in Kensington, he returned to Japan in 1909 and began ceramics-making after apprenticing himself to Kenzan Ogata VI in 1911. Inspired by Soetsu Yanagi, Leach became deeply engaged in the Mingei movement and played a key role in instructing and supporting artists in the movement. He built two kilns in Yanagi's household in Abiko and St. Ives, England in 1917 and 1920 respectively. As an international artist who traveled across Japan, England and America, Leach incorporated artistic elements from East and West in his works to emphasize the mutual connection of different cultures. Leach won numerous awards, including Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) (1962), the Second Order of the Sacred Treasure (1966) in Japan, Companions of Honor (1973), The Japan Foundation Awards (1974). His major retrospective exhibitions include "The Art of Bernard Leach", Victoria & Albert Museum, London (1977); "Bernard Leach and His Circle", Tate Modern, London (2009); "Bernard Leach - Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Leach's career as a potter", The Japan Folk Crafts Museum, Tokyo (2012); "The 40th Memorial of Bernard Leach from Tamesaburo Yamamoto Collection", Asahi Beer Oyamazaki Villa Museum of Art, Kyoto (2019).

Shiko Munakata (1903 - 1975) was born in Aomori Prefecture. He moved to Tokyo in 1924 and had his first oil painting accepted in the 9<sup>th</sup> Imperial Fine Arts Exhibition in 1928. Inspired by Sumio Kawakami's woodblock print, Munakata shifted his medium with the brief guidance of Unichi Hiratsuka, who was one of the leaders of the Sosaku Hanga ("creative print") art movement. Influenced by Mingei movement and supported by Soetsu Yanagi, Munakata established his Buddhist imagery that won him many international awards, including the Special Prize for Excellence at the International Woodblock Print Exhibition in Lugano, Switzerland (1952), First Prize in San Paulo Biennial, Brazil (1955), and the International Woodblock Print Award at the Venice Biennial, Italy (1956). After travelling to the United States in 1959 to launch exhibitions and returned with honorary awards from his home, namely the Japanese Government Medal with Blue Ribbon (1963), the Asahi Shimbun Culture Prize (1964), the Order of Cultural Merit (1970). Later exhibitions in tribute to him include "Munakata Shiko: Japanese Master of the Modern Print", Philadelphia Museum of Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2002 - 2003); "Retrospective of Munakata Shiko: Woodcut Prints", Fuchu Art Museum, Tokyo (2019).

Norm, is an experimental graphic design studio based in Zurich, Switzerland, co-founded by two Swiss designers Dimitri Bruni and Manuel Krebs in 1999. Influenced by functionalism, the team is renowned for their ty-po-graphy projects for the Cologne Bonn Airport with strong modernist features.

Keisuke Serizawa (1895 - 1984) was born in Shizuoka Prefecture and studied design in Tokyo Higher Technical School (now Tokyo Institute of Technology). Upon graduation, he returned to his home town and engaged in design and craftworks. He started to explore dyeing craftsmanship since his exposure to Soetsu Yanagi's essays, whom Serizawa considers as his lifelong teacher. He won the Kokugakai Prize in 1929 and became part of Kokugakai (National Art Association). He further delved into Bingata, a traditional resist-dyeing technique originated from Okinawa with his journeys to this island since 1939. He is also known for the unique invention of "Katazome" (stencil dyeing). His outstanding craftsmanship won him the honor of Living National Treasure (1956), as well as awards of the Japanese Government Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon (1966), the Fourth Order of the Sacred Treasure (1970), the Person of Cultural Merit (1976), and the Order of Arts and Letters from the French government (1983). His major retrospective exhibitions include "The Art of Keisuke Serizawa", Mingei International Museum, San Diego (1998); "Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design", Japan Society, New York (2009); "「Text」 tiles by Serizawa Keisuke from the Kaneko Kazushige collection", The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2015).

Kenkichi Tomimoto (1886 - 1963) was born in Ando Village, Osaka Prefecture (now Nara Prefecture). He graduated from Tokyo Fine Arts School (now Tokyo University of Art) and pursued further studies in London under the influence of William Morris and James Abbott McNeill Whistler. In 1911, he returned to Japan and apprenticed himself to Kenzan Ogata VI while working as a translator for Bernard Leach. As an early supporter of the Mingei movement, Tomimoto co-signed the proposal of establishing Japan Craft Museum with Soetsu Yanagi, Kanjiro Kawai and Shoji Hamada in 1926. After the war, he moved to Kyoto to become a professor of Kyoto City University of Arts in 1950. He continued to create artworks with evolving formulas and sophisticated styles with enamel, silver and gold decorations. He received national awards and honors, including being appointed as a Living National Treasure (1955) and Order of Cultural Merit (1961). His works are included in the permanent collections of Ohara Museum of Art, Okayama; the Living National Treasures Museum, Kanagawa; Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum and Nara Prefectural Museum of Art. His major retrospective exhibitions include "TOMIMOTO Kenkichi", Crafts Gallery, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (1991); "Tomimoto Kenkichi: A Retrospective" The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (2006); "A Guide to 'TOMIMOTO Kenkichi' —Why is he called a great master of the modern ceramic art of Japan?", Nara Prefectural Museum of Art (2019).

Soetsu Yanagi (1889 - 1961), also known as Muneyoshi Yanagi, was born in Tokyo. Graduated from the Department of Psychology of Tokyo Imperial University (now University of Tokyo), he became an art critic, philosopher, and the first advocator of the Mingei Movement. His deep interest in arts and philosophy of religion started in 1910, when he co-launched the literary journal "Shirakaba". In 1916, Yanagi set off his first trip to Korea exploring Korean crafts, which led to the establishment of the Korean Folk Crafts Museum, Seoul in 1924. A year later, Yanagi coined the term "Mingei" with potters Kanjiro Kawai and Shoji Hamada and devoted himself to the Mingei Movement. Finally, the Japan Folk Crafts Museum was founded in 1936. Being the first president of the museum, the museum exhibited subjects of diverse cultures, from craftworks of mainland Japan to objects of Okinawa, Joseon, Ainu and Taiwan tribes. In his lifetime, Yanagi owned a rich collection of 17,000 handicrafts produced in Japan and abroad. Among his many publications, "The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty" (1972) remains influential since its first release in English. Yanagi was designated a Person of Cultural Merit by the Japanese government and awarded the Bogwan Order of Cultural Merit (1984), as the first non-Korean awardee by the South Korean government.

Sori Yanagi (1915 - 2011) was born in 1915 in Tokyo. Son of Yanagi Soetsu. Graduated from Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts in 1940, he studied both art and architecture and worked in the practice of the designer Charlotte Perriand in the early 1940s. By merging simplicity and functionality with elements of traditional Japanese crafts, Yanagi played a distinguished role as an industrial designer in Post-War Japan and founder of the Yanagi Industrial Design Institute. His various cross-disciplinary designs include Olympics torch holder, kiosk, lighting, cutlery, children's toys, as well as underground rail stations, cars and motorbikes. His renowned furniture design, the handmade "Butterfly" stool (1954), is in the permanent collection at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Louvre Museum, Paris; Victoria and Albert Museum, London. He became the chairman of the Japan Folk Craft Association in 1977 and the director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum in 1978. His awards and honors include Gold Medal of the Milan Triennale (1957), the Japanese Government Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon (1981) and Honorary Royal Designer for Industry, U.K. (2008). Yanagi was designated a Person of Cultural Merit by the Japanese government in 2002.

Special thanks to: Seiichi Yoshino and Yu Mayuyama

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