

“Japanese Bamboo Baskets” overseen by Masamitsu Saito**Dates: May 18 – June 27, 2021****Location: SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong****By appointment only****Please email tighk@takaishiigallery.com**

SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to announce “Japanese Bamboo Baskets”, an exhibition overseen by Masamitsu Saito and in cooperation with Akariya from May 18 – June 27, 2021.

Bamboo basket-making techniques of Japan is one of the oldest forms of craftsmanship passed between generations from the ancient times in the country. Apart from weaving as flower baskets and charcoal baskets for traditional Buddhist and tea ceremonies, bamboo crafts also take utilitarian forms of umbrellas, folding fans and teaspoons till today.

The development of bamboo basketry also remarkably presents cultural exchanges in Asia, as well as between the East and the West across centuries. Despite the establishments of authentic Japanese styles of different regions and schools, the *karamono*, or Chinese style has been an important source of inspiration for its delicate techniques and elegant forms for craftsmen in Japan during the Kamakura period (1186-1333), the Muromachi period (1333-1573), also in the late Edo to Meiji period (1868-1912). Since the 20th century, *kagoshi*, craftsmen who modernized baskets as an art form, promoted their works that show both technical excellence and individuality through exhibitions around the Tokyo areas. Before bamboo art was re-evaluated in scholastic research systems since the “Modern Bamboo Craft” exhibition at the Craft Gallery of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo in 1985, some of the most renowned shows include Iizuka Rokansai’s multiple solos, and the annual Living National Treasures exhibitions featuring Tanabe Chikuunsai II among others. The art of Japanese basketry has won international support, outweighing the demands in Japan. Several comprehensive collections of Japanese bamboo craft are preserved in the United States and Europe and travelled internationally for exhibition. Art lovers and collectors across the world have a growing appreciation towards the beauty of the oriental material which is resilient, yet flexible. Audience of different backgrounds can intuitively perceive and enjoy the artistic essence and sculptural effects of each highly technical piece.

The upcoming exhibition in Hong Kong will feature a stunning array of exquisite bamboo baskets made in the 19th - 20th century and important publications that chart the evolution of basketry techniques and unique expressions of the pioneering bamboo artists.

With

Hatanaka Hozan (1904-1991)
Iizuka Rokansai (1890-1958)
Iizuka Shokansai (1919-2004)
Maeda Chikubosai I (1872-1950)
Masuda Shinonomesai (-)
Matsuzawa Kazuyoshi (1936-2011)
Shiotsuki Juran (1948-2016)
Suemura Shobun (1917-2000)
Suzuki Kyokushosai (1872-1936)
Tanabe Chikuhosai (1868-1945)
Tanabe Chikuunsai II (1910-2000)
Uematsu Chikuyu (b.1947)
Yokota Hosai (1899-1975)

Masamitsu Saito

Masamitsu Saito collects and researches bamboo art. Besides maintaining a collection of bamboo works dating from the Edo period (1603-68) to the contemporary era, he actively engages in supervising and promoting art exhibitions in Japan and abroad. Exhibitions staged with his cooperation include “Iizuka Rokansai – Master of Modern Bamboo Crafts” (Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, 1989), “Bamboo Masterworks: Japanese Baskets from the Lloyd Cotsen Collection” (Nihombashi Mitsukoshi Main Store, Oita Art Museum, and travelling to 4 other museums in Japan, 2003-4), “New Bamboo: Contemporary Japanese Masters” (Japan Society, New York, 2008), “Lines and Shapes, Lines and Spaces: The Bamboo Work of Iizuka Rokansai and Tanabe Chikuunsai” (Musée Tomo, Tokyo, 2018), and “FENDRE L’AIR Art du bambou au Japon” (Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France, 2018-19). He has assisted with the planning of the bamboo art episode of the

NHK TV series "Bi no tsubo (The Mark of Beauty)" and numerous publications. His collected works are found in public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Saito introduces exquisite bamboo pieces in order to promote the appreciation of bamboo culture in Japan and abroad.



Unknown Author
Hanchiku bamboo (spotted bamboo) tray for sencha
(green tea),
ca. 1920s
Hanchiku bamboo (spotted bamboo)
17 x 30.3 x 41 cm
Courtesy of Masamitsu Saito



Unknown Author
Bowl-shaped large basket, 1980s
Madake bamboo (timber bamboo), rattan, urushi
lacquer
19.7 x 45.4 x 45.6 cm
Courtesy of Masamitsu Saito



Iizuka Rokansai
"Yama no sachi" (gift from mountain), 1930-1940
Nemagaridake (dwarf bamboo)
42.7 x 19.9 x 22.2 cm
Courtesy of Akariya / Photo: Hiroshi Nagaoka

SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery Inquiries: Stephanie Ho
Shops 4A & 4B, UG/F, Bo Fung Mansion, No.1 St. Francis Yard, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
tel +852 3619 0011 / fax +852 3618 9824 / web www.takaishiigallery.com / email tighk@takaishiigallery.com