

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

2012.4.20

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ART CRAFTING

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TOWARDS

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THE FUTURE



2012年4月28日|土|—8月31日|金|

Exhibition Title	Art Crafting towards the Future		
Period	Saturday, April 28 – Friday, August 31, 2012 10:00 - 18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays) Note: Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing		
	Closed: Mondays (open on April 30, July 16, August 13), July 17 (Tue)		
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Galleries 1-6 and corridors	Number of Exhibited Works	around 130 pieces
Participating Artists	AOKI Katsuyo, IKURA Takashi, Unryuan: KITAMURA Tatsuo, OHI Toshio, KUWATA Takuro, TAKEMURA Yuri, NAKAMURA Kohei, NAKAMURA Shinkyō, NOGUCHI Harumi, HAYAMA Yuki, MITSUKE Masayasu, and YAMAMURA Shinya (in the order of the Japanese syllabary)		
Admission	General: ¥1,000 (¥800) / College students: ¥800 (¥600) / Elem/JH/HS: ¥400 (¥300) / Seniors over 65: ¥800 (Prices in brackets for groups of 20 or more, and advance tickets) Tickets also allow admission to the Collection Exhibition Advance Tickets: Ticket PIA (Tel 0570-02-9999) P code: [Exhibition ticket code] 765-067 Lawson Ticket (Tel 0570-000-777) L code: [Exhibition ticket code] 54043		
	Period of sales: From March 28 to August 31		
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)		
Supported by	NHK Kanazawa, THE HOKKOKU SHIMBUN		
Inquiries	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Tel +81-(0)76-220-2800)		

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About the Exhibition

“Art Crafting towards the Future” inquires into the contemporary validity of *kôgei* (Japanese artisan craft) and universality of its appeal. The exhibition, this is to say, asks: Is *kôgei* an art genre expressive of our times, capable of speaking to people everywhere? Like other visual media, today’s *kôgei* is subject to the post-modern trends of the times. Like animation, *manga*, design, and contemporary art, it is an expressive medium used to create compelling new images. To this end, it employs methods specific to *kôgei*, and it references *kôgei*’s historical vision. Yet, today’s *kôgei* takes a clearly different approach from past *kôgei*. In its visual imagery, for example, today’s *kôgei* resonates with animation, *manga*, design, and contemporary art—genres from which it has previously stood apart. In its attitude towards exhibiting, as well—while exhibit methods differ contingent on the creativity of each artist—today’s *kôgei* is turned to face the world at large. There is, thus, a clear trend of *kôgei* artists working in widely varying styles who are showing their works as art of the present day.

For this exhibition, I would like to refer to *kôgei* work of such character as “futurist,” in the sense of “*kôgei* of a new age” and “future-oriented *kôgei*.” The exhibits by the 12 featured artists are all *kôgei*, but I would like viewers to see and enjoy them as today’s art.

(Exhibition curator: AKIMOTO Yuji, Director, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Exhibition Features

An exhibition personally curated by the Museum’s director

Since becoming 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa’s director in 2007, AKIMOTO Yuji has had contact with the vital spirit of Kanazawa’s *kôgei* art. He has enjoyed personal exchange with *kôgei* artists and the people around them, and surveyed and researched *kôgei* from the perspective of his field of expertise, contemporary art. Akimoto will apply his experience, as such, in personally planning and curating this exhibition.

From *kôgei*’s “now” to *kôgei*’s “future”

All of the featured *kôgei* artists assume the stance of the “modern artist” and work as independent individuals. They are either creating *kôgei* as contemporary art or their work is sufficiently contemporary in expression that they can be understood as doing so. What they share in common is a stance, as artists, of speaking to their times and creating *kôgei* with an awareness of the future. Their destination—the place to which their path through today’s world will lead them. Their endeavor is not to catch up with Western art but rather to seek new horizons in *kôgei* expression.

Works displaying virtuosity and creativity

Each artist’s virtuosic skills will be a highlight of the exhibition. Viewers will feel astonished at how rich in variety and exquisite detail the artworks are, without losing their craft-like purity. Never simply a re-cooking of traditional techniques, the works display a wealth of creative invention. Above all, in each case, is the artist’s peerless technique. Among the artists are some who resurrect traditional *kôgei*, in concept, and take it in a new direction. Their ideas are extremely close to contemporary art. By rethinking the traditional production process, they have placed *kôgei* born from history and systemization into an objective context and realized new styles of *kôgei* expression.

Decoration driven by narrative

Another feature of today’s *kôgei* is the artist’s focus on “surface.” The artwork’s points of interest are concentrated in the vitality of its surface. Overall, the works appear extremely decorative. Decorative pattern rules formal development and is carried to the point of excess, until covering the entire work like lush, interlacing foliage. This strong creative focus on surface is a distinguishing feature of the works exhibited this time. There is one more feature—the artist characteristically extends the repetitive reproduction of decoration infinitely, but it is an evolving progression that does not find completion in a single work. In a sequence of works that continually present new developments, we find an element of story. The decoration is never simply mechanical repetition but reflects a certain worldview. That worldview, then, is full of ephemeral, apocalyptic imagery mass-produced by such media as the Internet, news programs, movies, *manga*, and animations.

Related Events

Consecutive Artist Talks

Date/time: Saturday, April 28 10:00 – 17:00 and Sunday, April 29 10:00 – 17:00

Venue: Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Admission: No charge (with same-day ticket to this exhibition)

Capacity: 80

Language: Japanese

Lecture by the Curator: "Future-Oriented *Kôgei* Artists"

Speaker: AKIMOTO Yuji (Director, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Date/time: Saturday, May 19 14:00-15:30

Venue: Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Admission: No charge (with same-day ticket to this exhibition)

* Changes in planning are apt to occur. Please consult the Museum’s website for the most recent schedule information.

Images for publicity

Photos of artworks no. 1 to 23 below are available for promotional purpose.
Interested parties should contact the Public Relations Office upon reading the conditions below.
Email: press@kanazawa21.jp

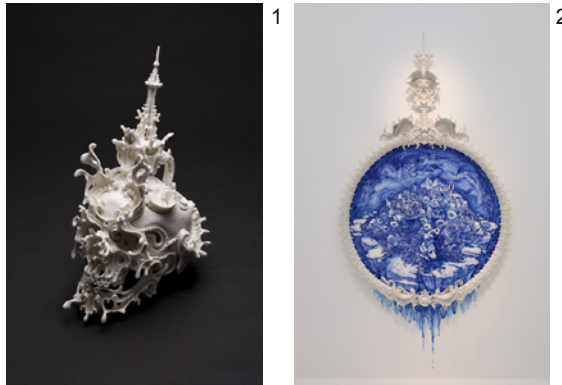
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Gallery 6

AOKI Katsuyo

- 1.
AOKI Katsuyo
Predictive Dream XIII, 2010
Photo : SUEMASA Mareo
- 2.
AOKI Katsuyo
Toraldom, 2010
Photo : OHTANI Ichiro



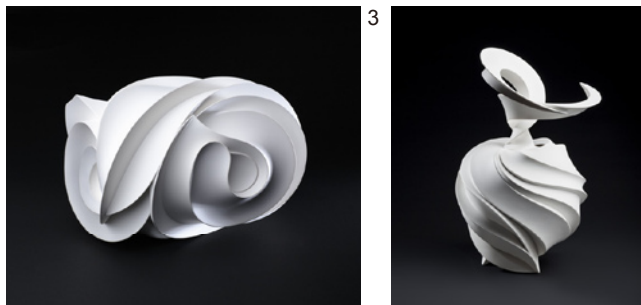
Born in Tokyo in 1972. Lives and works in Tokyo.

Aoki Katsuyo creates works of pure expression so free from traces of craft, they might more aptly be called contemporary art. In Aoki's works, the development of the ornament is not extra but essential to the expression of the piece. The works take narrative character and decorativeness as their main features. Insistently repetitive and multiplying to excess, Aoki's decorative style appears almost like a kind of exorcism or prayer to purge society of its deep, nebulous anxiety.

Gallery 6

IKURA Takashi

- 3.
IKURA Takashi
Where Shadow Meets Form 2008-1, 2008
Photo : OYA Takao
- 4.
IKURA Takashi
Where Shadow Meets Form 2011-3, 2011
Photo : OYA Takao



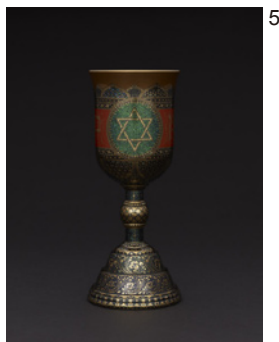
Born in Toki, Gifu in 1962. Lives and works in Toki.

Although retaining aspects of vessel character, the works of Ikura Takashi can well be called sculptures. They are works showing the relationship between *kôgei* and design, and between *kôgei* and contemporary art. Still, as Ikura forms his image, strong craft-like qualities appear and control his formative method. The details of the piece emerge naturally from his focus on form, and in artworks of white tone, those details produce a sharp and fascinating "surface." A form so precisely rendered is not reproducible; Ikura's works show us how every object is a one-of-a-kind existence.

Gallery 3

Unryuan:
KITAMURA Tatsuo

- 5.
KITAMURA Tatsuo
KIDDUSH CUP - Sacred Chalice (Seiha), 2011
Photo : WATANABE Osamu



Born in Wajima, Ishikawa in 1952. Lives and works in Wajima.

Kitamura Tatsuo is the head and producer of a lacquer craft studio, Unryuan. The studio's works are created with Kitamura performing as master craftsman. Kitamura's use of the studio style may appear retrogressive, but it stands to reason, considering the complex processes entailed in producing high-level lacquer works. Kitamura is uncompromising when it comes to workmanship. Technical skill is the motivating power behind his production and, in this sense, is central to the work. The technical virtuosity displayed is astonishing.

Gallery 6

OHI Toshio

6.
OHI Toshio
White Raku Tea Bowl
"Colorado Raku Clay", 2005
Photo : WATANABE Osamu
7.
OHI Toshio
Ohi Amber Tea Bowl authenticated by
Urasenke 15th Grand Tea Master
Hounsai Sen Genshitsu named
"Chokyu-Forever", 2010
Photo : WATANABE Osamu



Born in Kanazawa, Ishikawa in 1958. Lives and works in Kanazawa. Ohi-ware has a history of 350 years. Ohi Toshio's work is therefore, of a necessity, founded on tradition. The problem is nevertheless how an artist approaches tradition and gives it validity. Ohi gives contemporary meaning to tradition by traveling. Going to foreign locations, he encounters the people living there and holds workshops. These workshops he regards as integral to his own production. Involving others in production, he teaches them traditional methods, thereby opening and expanding tradition.

Gallery 5

KUWATA Takuro

8.
KUWATA Takuro
Yellow green - slipped
platinum Kairagi Shino bowl, 2011
©Takuro Kuwata, courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery
Photo : ICHIKAWA Yasushi
9.
KUWATA Takuro
Tea Bowl, 2009
©Takuro Kuwata, courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery
Photo : ICHIKAWA Yasushi



Born in Fukuyama, Hiroshima in 1981. Lives and works in Toki, Gifu. Kuwata Takuro is one of a number of young *kôgei* artists who have debuted owing to the influence of the *manga*, *Hyouge Mono*. Kuwata's works are characterized by bizarrely exaggerated forms and bright Pop color sensibilities. He initially sets out to produce a jar or vessel, but amid his playful forming process, the piece gradually thaws and becomes an object expressive of "process." Kuwata's taunting "playfulness" is what gives his works their refreshing lightness, their point of greatest charm.

Corridor before Gallery 6

TAKEMURA Yuri

10.
TAKEMURA Yuri
Bowl "Meditation", 2010
11.
TAKEMURA Yuri
Bowl "Meditation", 2011



Born in Nagoya, Aichi in 1980. Lives and works in Kanazawa, Ishikawa. Takemura Yuri's works show the link between *kôgei* and design. Like *kôgei*, design intends utility, so both are distinguished from art. But we forget that distinction on seeking Takemura's works, for so rich are they in formal play, they possess expressive power as art objects. In recent years, she has focused on creating tea bowls. When rhythmically arrayed, the harmony of colors and shapes they produce is bright and beautiful.

Gallery 6

NAKAMURA Kohei

12.
NAKAMURA Kohei
RESURRECTION, 1999
Photo : HATAKEYAMA Takashi

13.
NAKAMURA Kohei
Throne of Idea, 2004



12



13

Born in Kanazawa, Ishikawa in 1948. Lives and works in Kanazawa.

The “end of the modern age” is a phrase of repeated. Nakamura Kohei’s works are art objects for a story that begins after the end. Fragmented pieces are united, and they endeavor towards a new form and new energy but are plagued by a somehow unfulfilled or impotent image. The artworks exhibit a trend toward a fetishism of things, and demonic imagery. A fragmented world and auxiliary images. Nakamura is another artist who spins a narrative through decoration.

Gallery 4

NAKAMURA Shinkyō

14.
NAKAMURA Shinkyō
“Roma Seiko”,
Roman saint looking at holy light, 2006

15.
NAKAMURA Shinkyō
“Kagayaku Umi”, *Shining sea*, 2006



14



15

Born in Fukuoka, Fukuoka in 1957. Lives and works in Fukuoka.

We will tentatively refer to Nakamura Shinkyō’s works as “dolls.” By using this word, however, we overlook their real essence. Nakamura’s endeavor will be understood more clearly if seen from the perspective of a comparison between Japanese sculpture, which includes both Buddhist statues and dolls, and Western sculpture. Nakamura crosses the strong points of Japanese sculpture with those of Western and realizes a hybrid figurative sculpture. Taking the Tensho embassy four hundred years ago as a subject, he introduces symbolic elements—ocean, sun, and moon—and inquiries into problematic aspects of Japan’s cultural relationship with the West and the concepts of world and frontier.

Corridor before Gallery 4

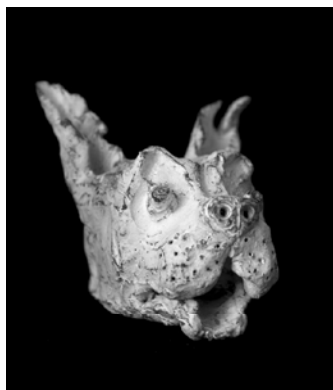
NOGUCHI Harumi

16.
NOGUCHI Harumi
Oni-no-ko (Demon Child), 2011
Photo : SATO Hitomi
Courtesy of Ginza Ippodo Salon

17.
NOGUCHI Harumi
Odoroki-Inu (Surprising Dog), 2011
Photo : SATO Hitomi
Courtesy of Ginza Ippodo Salon



16



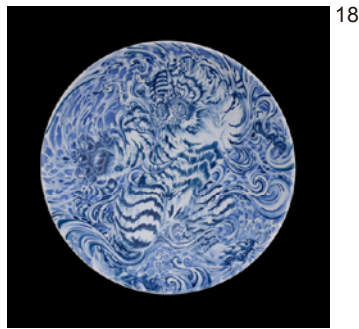
17

Born in Tokyo in 1948. Lives and works in Yoshimi, Saitama.

Noguchi is a self-trained ceramist who makes sculptures from clay. Because she kneads the clay by hand, her works are not so very large. The forms she makes—imps, sprites, children, and animals, look like figures from fairytales, but their formation is primitive and this, along with their size, makes them friendly and approachable. The vitality they exude, however, is related to animism, a belief rejected by modern society.

Gallery 2

HAYAMA Yuki



18



19

18.
HAYAMA Yuki
*Large Vase with Four Guardian Gods:
White Tiger (Byakko)*, 2005

19.
HAYAMA Yuki
Large Vase with Emperor Long Sun, 2006 -07

Born in Arita, Saga in 1961. Lives and works in Takeo, Saga.

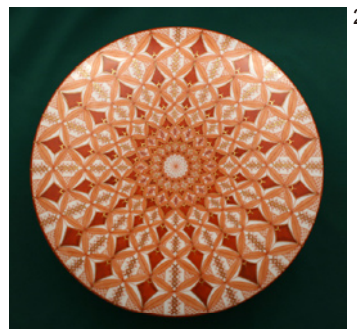
Hayama Yuki undertakes everything from pattern creation to etsuke hand-painting on china. He begins by composing a story then creates a porcelain work to accompany that story. Many of his stories have their origins in history and are set in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, India, China, and Japan. The story, which is depicted with powerful figurative expression, is given play through the distribution of the porcelain vessels. Hayama Yuki's works are characterized by rich narrative character and matchless etsuke technique.

Gallery 1

MITSUKE Masayasu



20



21

20.
MITSUKE Masayasu
Untitled, 2007
Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts
Collection: Ota Fine Arts

21.
MITSUKE Masayasu
Untitled, 2009
Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts
Private collection

Born in Kaga, Ishikawa in 1975. Lives and works in Kaga.

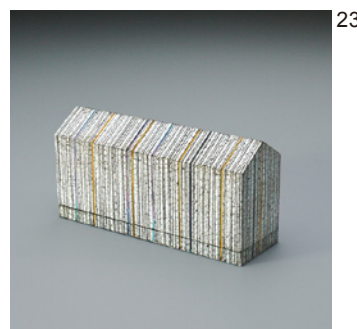
Mitsuke Masayasu employs a method of drawing fine lines borrowed from traditional red enamel overglaze painting. The picture-like image he thereby achieves is the distinctive feature of his works. Composed using abstract patterns, his designs are contemporary in feel and unlike anything seen in red enamel painting until now. They have the homogeneity of pictures drawn with computer graphics and bring to mind infinitely multiplying patterns.

Gallery 3

YAMAMURA Shinya



22



23

22.
YAMAMURA Shinya
*Tea container of lacquered
with wings of mother-of-pearl*, 2009

23.
YAMAMURA Shinya
*House shaped box of lacquered
with egg shell*, 2011

Born in Chofu, Tokyo in 1960. Lives and works in Kanazawa, Ishikawa.

Yamamura Shinya employs urushi (lacquer). His methods are, in every case, traditional methods fostered through the long history of lacquer craft, and yet Yamamura has chosen them freely for use in self-expression. Devising elaborate designs, contemporary in mood, he takes the work to completion using minimal forms and techniques. Each work is small and rich in poetic feeling, like a fragment of the world he has picked up.

Related Publication

Art Crafting towards the Future

An exhibition catalog featuring photographs of participating artist' s works will be published.

Author: AKIMOTO Yuji (Director, 21st Century Museum of Art, Kanazawa; Exhibition Curator)

Expected price: ¥2500 (net)

Scheduled launch: April 26

* Changes in planning are apt to occur.