

**Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store in Tokyo to Launch Contemporary Art Exhibition
“KOGEI Future Forward” - 15 Japanese artists presenting works as contemporary art,
on Wednesday, February 15**

Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store of the Isetan Mitsukoshi Group will launch contemporary art exhibition “KOGEI Future Forward”, on Wednesday, February 15, showcasing 15 Japanese artists’ 30 contemporary art works.

The Isetan Mitsukoshi Group, the largest department store group in Japan, launched in 2015 the new corporate message, “this is japan.”, to rediscover values created by Japanese tradition, culture and aesthetic consciousness and offer them to its customers as new values. Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store, Japan's first department store (founded in 1673), strives to be more than a simple store, but a cultural resort for all our customers to enjoy.

"Kogei" is a Japanese word that was created at the dawn of the Meiji Period (1868-1912) to correspond to the English word "craft." Across the Meiji, Taisho, Showa and Heisei years, the artistry of kogei craft was refined as it underwent various changes. Today, kogei is highly regarded as fine art. This exhibition understands kogei in a free way, and spotlights 15 Japanese artists presenting works as contemporary art. The exhibition shows kogei to the world as a uniquely Japanese fine art.

KOGEI Future Forward

February 15 - 20, 2017 10:30 am - 7:30 pm

Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store, Main building ground floor, Chuo Hall

1-4-1 Muromachi, Nihombashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan

TAKURO KUWATA



10.6×16.5×15cm

©Takuro Kuwata, courtesy of KOSAKU

KANECHIKA

Photo by Hidenobu Saji

New challenges in ceramic techniques and materials

Takuro Kuwata's appeal lies in his broad expression that straddles both craft and contemporary art. Bold forms and bright pop colors give rise to contemporary textures and rhythms. He has been

actively presenting work at galleries and museums abroad that handle contemporary art. The works in this exhibition use “kairagi”, an effect produced when glazing cracks upon firing. Kuwata has used this kairagi effect with own interpretation, much as he employs “ishihaze”, which appears on the surface when stones mixed in the clay explode through firing, and “hizumi”, referring to distortions in the vessel, treating them as contemporary expressions. While reevaluating the rich history of ceramics, he continues to seek new forms of expression that may be seen as part of the genealogy of pop art.

MASAYASU MITSUKE



10.5xdiameter 48.2cm

©Masayasu Mitsuke, courtesy of Ota Fine Art

Delicate geometric patterns evoke an infinite mandala

Masayasu Mitsuke's work uses a technique called akae-saibyō from Kutani ware. Akae-saibyō is an intricate technique of painting thin lines with iron-red enamel paint. It was in fashion from the late Edo period through Meiji and the early Showa era, and was actively produced as Ishikawa Prefecture's main local industry. Mitsuke newly transformed akae-saibyō by updating stylized patterns such as karako (children in Chinese clothing) or dragons to contemporary designs. As if created by computer graphics, geometric designs characterize his work. Repeating patterns produce a space that conveys an obsessional sense of infinity. Iron-red mainly covers the ware, but the occasional gold or blue are added as an accent, complementing the sharpness of the design.

RITSUE MISHIMA



“MEDUSA” 37×40×41cm

©Ritsue Mishima

Photo by Francesco Barasciutti

Transparent glass created on the island of Murano

Ritsue Mishima creates organic forms that pursue the possibilities of glass in collaboration with the skilled artisans on the Italian island of Murano. The colorless transparent glass that is the product of a fusion of one thousand years of traditional technique and Mishima's free sensibility, radiates a new appeal when light passes through it. It is characteristic of Mishima that she does not stop at the works themselves, but extends her expressive attitude of being fixated on "things coming into view" by means of installations that situate her glass objects in space.

At present, she is based in Venice, but also runs an atelier in Kyoto and takes part in exhibitions throughout the world.

15 Artists

KOGEI Future Forward official website (works and biography):

<http://www.mitsukoshiguide.jp/kogei-futureforward/artists.html>

HIROSHI KITANI

KATSUYO AOKI

KODO AOKI

KOJI HATAKEYAMA

MASAYASU MITSUKE

MIDORI TSUKADA

NOBUYUKI TANAKA

NORITAKA TATEHANA

RITSUE MISHIMA

SHINKYO NAKAMURA

SHINYA YAMAMURA

TAKASHI IKURA

TAKUO NAKAMURA

TAKURO KUWATA

YOSHINORI TSUCHIYA

YUJI AKIMOTO profile

Yuji Akimoto was born in 1955 in Tokyo, is a professor at the Tokyo University of the Arts. Akimoto is Director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, as well as of the University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, and is a visiting professor at the Akita University of Art. He played a role in the establishment of "Kogei Kanazawa 2016," a project that holds a wide range of ceramic events. As curatorial supervisor, he is involved in the selection of artists for KOGEI Future Forward among other activities.

※This event will be conducted as a trial research project for the governmental "Basic Policy for Promoting Measures related to Preparations for and Management of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo in 2020."