

For Immediate Release



*Onishi Gallery and KOGEI USA to Host Two Exhibitions of Japanese Art in Support of Wajima Lacquer*

**Onishi Gallery**, a New York City gallery specializing in Japanese art, and **KOGEI USA**, a not-for-profit committed to promoting traditional Japanese craft, are proud to announce two exhibitions: *The Spirit of Noto: Urushi Artists of Wajima* and *Waves of Resilience*.

Held in collaboration with the **Wajima Lacquer in New York Executive Committee**, the exhibitions will assist earthquake recovery efforts in the Noto Peninsula, a historic center of high-quality lacquer production. Opening on October 1 and remaining on view through October 25, they will also inaugurate Onishi Gallery's new 1,200-square-foot Upper East Side location in the historic Sidney Ripley mansion, built in 1905 and designed by Warren and Wetmore in Neo-Georgian style.

Curated by Onishi Gallery owner Nana Onishi, *The Spirit of Noto: Urushi Artists of Wajima* features masterpieces by three **Living National Treasures** and twelve outstanding local artists, all working with *urushi*, the sap of the Japanese lacquer tree.

*Waves of Resilience* showcases luxury tableware conceptualized, curated, and art directed by New York-based interior designer **Melissa Bowers** in collaboration with **Senshudo**, a long-established Wajima lacquerware company, as a celebration of Noto's coastal scenery and the resilience of its people.

On January 1, 2024, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck the Noto Peninsula, causing over 200 deaths and devastating the town of Wajima, famed for its traditional lacquer industry. More than

half of Wajima's 300 lacquer studios were destroyed, forcing many craftspeople to abandon their work and homes. Seven months on, few have been able to return.

The organizers have pledged 10% of exhibition sales revenue toward reconstruction efforts, helping artists to both regain their economic wellbeing and mental health and reconstruct the intricate skills network essential to Wajima lacquer production.

"These exhibitions not only address the immediate crisis in Wajima but also support KOGEI USA's mission to promote KOGEI (contemporary craft art) in the United States," says Nana Onishi. "Under the banner 'Securing Heritage, Nurturing Traditions, and Building Futures,' KOGEI USA showcases Living National Treasures and promotes new opportunities for artists in overseas markets."

Committee Chair **Mimi Yamazaki** commented, "When I saw the devastation caused by the earthquake, I decided to help. I'm thrilled to collaborate with Nana Onishi, whose gallery represents many prominent figures in Japanese craft, including Living National Treasures and leading lacquer artists."

To learn more about the exhibitions, please visit Onishi Gallery's website:  
[www.onishigallery.com](http://www.onishigallery.com).

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### **Exhibition Venue**

Onishi Gallery

16 E 79th Street, Ground Floor, New York, NY 10075

### **Exhibition Dates and Hours**

October 1 – 25, 2024

Opening Reception: Tuesday, October 1, 6 – 8pm

Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 10am – 5pm

\* The Gallery opens at 6pm on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Gallery Contact**

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www.onishigallery.com

### **About *The Spirit of Noto: Urushi Artists of Wajima***

The exhibition highlights three Living National Treasures—Yamagishi Kazuo, Komori Kunie, and Mae Fumio—alongside fourteen other artists: Ebata Toshio, Ebata Hiroyuki, Mizushiri Kota, Mizushiri Satomi, Mizushiri Seiho, Nakamuro Sōichirō, Ōkado Yūji, Onihira Keiji, Sakamoto Yasunori, Sakashita Yoshiharu, Shiota Junji, Suzutani Toyoshi, Teranishi Shōta, and Urade Katsuhiko. (All names appear in Japanese order, family name first.)

### **About *Waves of Resilience***

This eleven-piece luxury tabletop collection reflects Japan's seas, skies, and journeys of healing, using the traditional art of lacquer to reflect the normally tranquil beauty of the earthquake-affected local landscape and the strength of its people. Featuring an incense holder, trays, cup, vase, platter, charger, trays, a bar, a coaster set, and other vessels, it merges classical techniques with contemporary aesthetics.

### **About Onishi Gallery**

Since its opening in 2005, Onishi Gallery has featured contemporary Japanese artists working in a range of media—ceramics, metalwork, lacquer, glass, sculpture, and painting—who are united in their embrace of traditional techniques, yet distinct in their exquisite and diverse modes of expression.

### **About Melissa Bowers**

Melissa Bowers, founder of M.A. Bowers Inc., is redefining the landscape of luxury interior design through a series of prestigious projects and innovative ventures. With a keen eye for detail and a passion for timeless elegance, Bowers continues to set new standards in the design world, combining her deep appreciation for vintage aesthetics with a contemporary sensibility.

### **About KOGEI USA**

KOGEI USA is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization recently established with the goal of raising the reputation of Japanese traditional arts and culture outside Japan by holding exhibitions and cultural events at major museums in the US and Europe.

### **About Senshudo**

Founded during the Meiji era (1868–1912), Senshudo is the leading specialist in *Wajima-nuri*, a type of lacquerware that has played an essential part in the lives, culture, and heart of the Japanese people since ancient times. *Wajima-nuri* involves over one hundred processes done entirely by hand, from the undercoating through intermediate and surface coatings to the final decoration in *maki-e* sprinkled metal powders.

### **About Living National Treasures**

“Living National Treasure” (*Ningen Kokuhō*) is the term popularly applied in Japan to individuals designated “Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties” (*Jūyō Mukei Bunkazai Hojisha*) by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology under a system inaugurated in 1955.

### **Special Thanks to**

Mimi Yamazaki

### **Supported by**

Ishikawa Prefecture

Japan Kōgei Association

KOGEI USA

### **Receiving Entity**

Revenue from the exhibitions will be paid to and managed by KOGEI USA.

### **Media Contacts**

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