



Japanese Ceramic Tableware from Tochigi

February 7 - 11, 2017

Onishi Gallery, 521 W 26th Street, New York, NY 10001

Opening Reception: Tuesday, February 7, 6-8pm

*** Remarks via video message by Mr. Tomikazu Fukuda, Governor of Tochigi Prefecture at 6:30pm.**

Onishi Gallery is pleased to host “Japanese Ceramic Tableware from Tochigi,” a stunning exhibition organized by Tochigi Prefectural Government that runs February 7—11 at Onishi Gallery in New York City. This rare show will introduce for the first time to the New York City public approximately 230 pieces of Mashiko ware, Koisago ware, and Mikamo ware, traditional crafts of Tochigi Prefecture. Although these items are considered prestigious ceramics in Japan, they will be presented in this exhibition as daily use functional ware offered at an affordable price .

Tochigi prefecture, located 62 miles north of Tokyo, attracts many tourists for its beautiful nature, hot springs, and its world heritage shrines and temples of Nikko. Nikko, a small city in the mountains, is the site of Toshogu, the famed Shinto shrine established in 1617 as a lavish memorial for Tokugawa Ieyasu, founding ruler of the Tokugawa shogunate, or Edo Period. The shrine is comprised of the gilded Yomeimon Gate, the main sanctuary set in a cedar grove and the tomb itself. The prefecture is also known as a place rich in craftsmanship, from traditional artisans to high-tech companies, but is most famous for its ceramic ware.

About the ceramic wares in this exhibition:

1) Mashiko ware

Mashiko ware emerged in the 1850s and spread widely throughout the Metropolitan area of East Japan. Its products, mainly housewares such as pots, came to be recognized as works of art in the 1920s due to their beauty. They were also useful in ordinary life, however, and so thus became one of the crafts that represented the Japanese folk art movement, “Mingei.” Today’s beautiful Mashiko ware developed from everyday utilitarian tableware.

2) Koisago ware

Koisago ware arose in 1830, when the lord of the Mito clan, Nariaki Tokugawa, started using Koisago clay at the Mito clan’s pottery barn. When kilns were built in Koisago in the 1850s, pottery making in Koisago officially began. The main characteristic of Koisago ware is the use of gold crystals with black glaze and copper red glaze.

3) Mikamo ware

Mikamo ware is a fairly recent style of pottery that began in Iwafune-cho, the southern part of Tochigi, in the 1970s. Braziers and flowerpots were commonly made in this area due to its richness in clay and firewood, and that same technology was used to make Mikamo ware. The soil used contains a high concentration of iron, which makes each piece simple yet elegant.

In addition to featuring these traditional arts for the first time in New York City, this exhibition will showcase the ceramic artwork of Yasumitsu Morito, a sculptor hailing from the famous ceramic district of Mashiko in Tochigi Prefecture. In 2011, Morito was awarded the title of Cultural Ambassador of the Tochigi Prefecture in New York by the governor of Tochigi for his dedication to his craft, his work conveying his hometown experience while merging Eastern and Western aesthetics. Sculpting Western-positioned human figures together with Eastern-crafted vases and pots, Morito's work raises questions about the aesthetic and practical functions of ceramics, and the boundaries between cultures. Morito currently lives in New York and teaches at the Art Students League.

For more information on the exhibition, please contact Nana Onishi at 212-695-8035, or by email at nana@onishigallery.com. Or, please visit the gallery website at www.onishigallery.com.

Organizer: Tochigi Prefectural Government

Cooperation: Conference for Promoting Tochigi Prefecture Ceramic Production