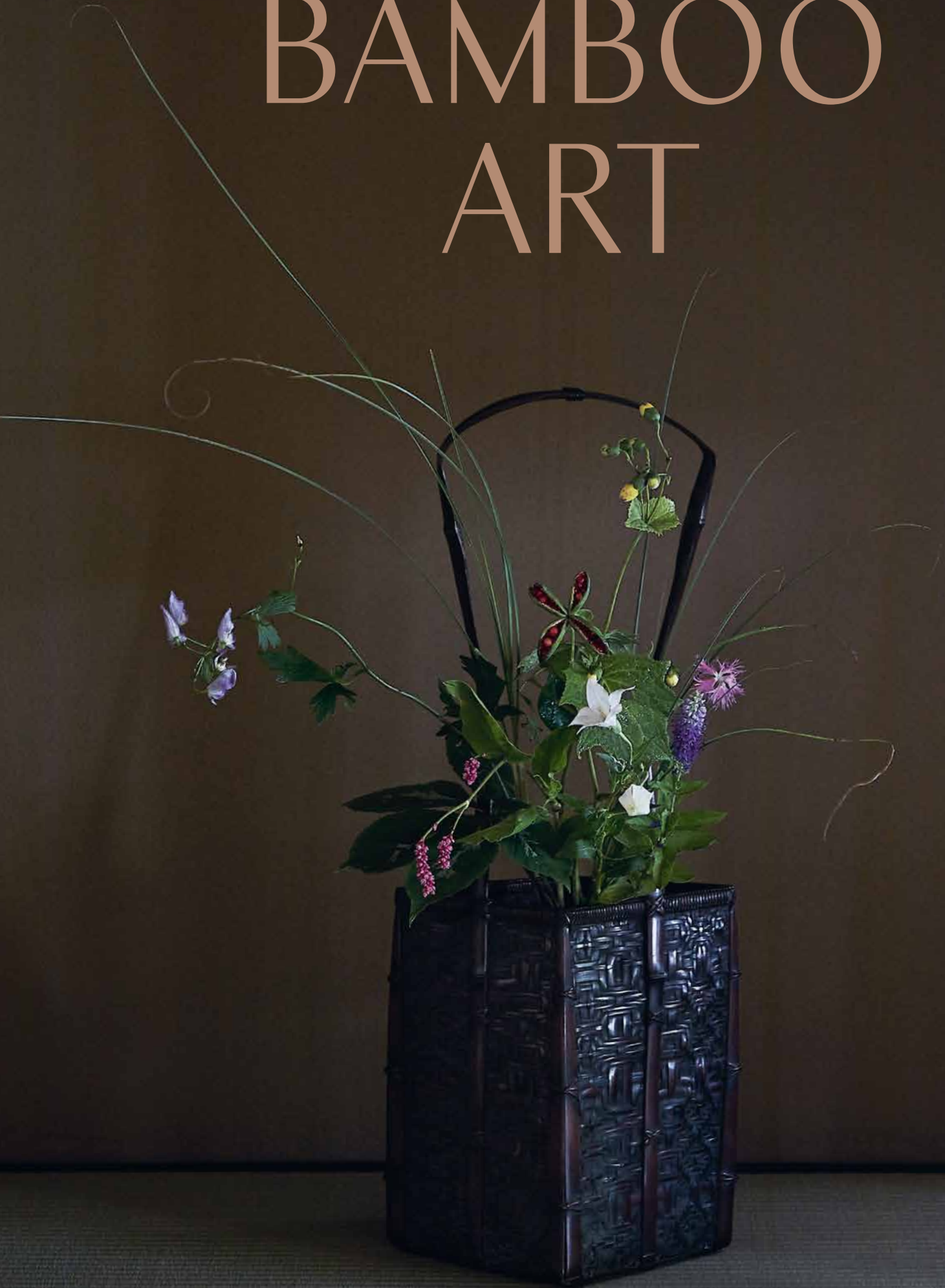


# JAPANESE BAMBOO ART







# JAPANESE BAMBOO ART

## TRADITION AND SIMPLE FORM

Bamboo forests are intimately linked to the Japanese landscape, and crafting items from bamboo is one of the oldest technical skills developed in Japan. Since the 8th century, finely made bamboo baskets have been used in Buddhist ceremonies and later in the Japanese tea ceremony. Master-apprentice lineages that enabled the knowledge required to create them to be passed down through the ages were established early on.

During the twentieth century, individual *kagoshi* (basket makers) reinterpreted these traditions to create imaginative forms and vases for the *ikebana*, the art of flower arrangements. Now, in the twenty-first century, a new generation of artists, from diverse backgrounds, are creating an amazing variety of artworks that can be appreciated as contemporary sculptural forms. The Mingei Gallery is pleased to present its collection of Japanese baskets whose creations range from the late 19th century to the present day.

*The warbler sings  
among the new bamboo sprouts  
of old age to come*

Matsuo Bashō  
(1644-1694)

In Japan, bamboo is the natural symbol of the plenitude of nothingness. It grows around empty space (its core is hollow), a void that is central to the spiritual development of the Zen masters. Bamboo wickerwork is one of the oldest traditional techniques in Japan, probably because of this grass' abundance and its unique qualities of durability and strength. The Shōsō-in, the imperial treasure house of the Tōdai-ji in Nara, houses wickerwork objects from the Nara (710-794) and Heian (794-1185) periods. These

baskets, which were used for floral arrangements at Buddhist ceremonies, display the use of many basic techniques that are still prevalent in modern wickerwork today. With the introduction of esoteric Buddhism in the Kamakura Period (1186-1333) and particularly during the Muromachi period (1333-1573), sophisticated wickerwork objects were imported from China. Known as *karamono*, these functional works were widely appreciated for their elegance. Beginning at the end of the Muromachi period and throughout the Momoyama period (1573-1603), tea masters Murata Jukō (1423-1502), Takeno Jōō (1502-1555), Sen-no-Rikyū (1522-1591) - initiator of the rustic *sōan* (literally "thatched hut") style better known by its adjective *wabi* - and Hisada Sozen (1647-1707), turned away from the *karamono* and focused instead on using very simple bamboo utensils (vases, baskets for charcoal, and other wickerwork objects) which they often made themselves.

In spite of wickerwork's very long history in Japan, it was not until the Meiji period (1868-1912) that the first *kagoshi*, craftsmen specialized in the creation of bamboo pieces that combined a very high level of technical perfection with undeniable artistic individualities, began to appear. These creations are now seen as the precursors of modern wickerwork.

This period of intense creativity associated with the *chadō* was followed in the middle of the Edo period (1603-1868) by an unprecedented infatuation with *sencha* tea infusions and an admiration for Chinese intellectual culture, whose aficionados were mainly found in the *bunjin* circles of Kyoto and Osaka. Several *kagoshi* with refined taste were sponsored by wealthy merchants and *bunjin* artists and commissioned to produce works that would satisfy an ever-increasing demand for *sencha* tea ceremony objects. Thanks to their originality, the bamboo wickerwork pieces with handles for *ikebana*, sometimes in the Chinese style (and known as *karamono utsushi* in those cases), made it possible for these craftsmen to become full-fledged artists in their own right.

In the Kansai area, some of these "craftsmen-artists" - Hayakawa Shōkosai I (1815-1897), his son Shōkosai II (1864-1922), Yamamoto Chikuryusai I (known as "Shoen") (1868-1945), Wada Waichisai I (1851-1901) and his disciple Tanabe Chikuunsai I (1877-1937) - were the pioneers of this dawning art. A number of national and international expositions

produced for the purpose of promoting industry, most notably the Japanese Pavilions at the Universal Expositions in London (1910) and Paris (1925), were events that helped the *kagoshi* gain notoriety. In the first quarter of the 20th century, this recognition engendered a wickerwork renaissance that became the starting point of an artistic movement that continues to thrive today.

It was at this time that the first ensemble of bamboo wickerwork objects outside of Japan was acquired by Justus Brinckman (1877-1915), the director and founder of the Museum of Art and Industry in Hamburg. These works, which date to between 1850 and 1890, are for the most part attributed to Hayakawa Shōkosai I (1815-1897), the first *kagoshi* to sign his bamboo works, which became known at the time as “*bunjin* baskets”. His creations, characteristically made of very tightly woven bamboo with an occasional decorative rattan insert, were primarily intended for use in the *sencha* ceremony.

Wada Waichisai I (1851-1901), one of these pioneers, became very important, not only because he was awarded several prizes for his very refined works, but because he was the mentor of his disciple Tanabe Chikuunsai I (1877-1937), the first of a long line of artists that remains active today. His profound grasp of *ikebana* and of the *sencha* ceremony helped Chikuunsai I develop his art in the heart of a highly regarded Osaka studio. Chikuunsai II (1910-2000) and Maeda Chikubōsai I (1872-1950), whose work highlighted the natural qualities of bamboo through the integration of strange forms of the plant’s twigs and rhizomes, were among his disciples. His works were especially appreciated by the royal family and nobility. His son, Chikubōsai II (1917-2003), was named a Living National Treasure in 1995.

At the end of the Taishō period (1912-1926), the *Iizuka*, a *kagoshi* family from Kantō, were commissioned by the Imperial Household Agency to create an ensemble of wickerwork pieces called *Shinpuku iremekago* for Emperor Taishō’s enthronement ceremonies. The *Iizuka* studio, which was located in Tochigi at the time, was well-known for its Chinese style wickerwork objects (*karamono utsushi*), but *Iizuka Hōsai* II quickly cut loose from these constraints and developed his own creations. In so doing, he cleared the path for his younger brother Rōkansai, nowadays considered the most important bamboo artist of the 20th century.

*In Japan,  
there is Tanabe Chikuunsai  
in the west  
and Iizuka Rōkansai  
in the east.*

Bruno Taut, 1933

In the family studio, the young Rōkansai displayed exceptional talent. Although he was forced to accept that his older brother would sign his creations, he took no offense at the fact, and continued to pursue his artistic education in the areas of calligraphy, Chinese art studies, and poetry with an emphasis on *haiku*. In 1933, Bruno Taut (1880-1938) called Rōkansai’s works “modern”. Taut was a German architect, urban planner and author who was very active in the Weimar Republic. In 1933, in a very hostile political context, he fled first to Switzerland and then to Japan. He settled in Takasaki (in Gunma prefecture) and wrote three books on Japanese culture and architecture. He also produced a work on furniture and interior design and was invited to direct the Institute for Industrial Design in Sendai. He was seduced by the beauty of the bamboo wickerwork pieces used for *ikebana* floral arrangements, and in particular by those used in the context of the *sencha* tea ceremony.

Rōkansai moved in the intellectual milieu of his time, and proclaimed himself an artist, while refusing the status of craftsman that Sōetsu Yanagi, the founder of the movement, had suggested he adopt. He developed the concept of the three states: *Shin* (真), *Gyō* (行) and *Sō* (草). *Shin* signifies “formal” and describes the pieces that are symmetrical and very neatly plaited - often *karamono utsushi* objects, and very few have survived. The semi-formal pieces are *Gyō*, may be symmetrical with irregular weaving, or conversely of asymmetrical shape with regular weaving, or a combination of the two. Lastly, *Sō* is the term for informal wickerwork pieces. The latter are often more audacious, free-form, and might for instance integrate a handle made of a rhizome. Rōkansai also introduced new plaiting techniques (*sashi-ami* and *tabane-ami*) and gave his works poetic names that evoke nature.

*Iizuka* Shōkansai (1919-2004) extended the family tradition by completing an arduous apprenticeship with his father. The first ten years

of his adult life were spent cutting bamboo and preparing its fibers for weaving. At the end of the 1940s, he began to submit his creations for display at the annual exhibition at the Japan Art Academy (*Nitten*) and was the recipient of numerous prizes. In the middle of the 1970s, he participated successfully in the exhibitions of traditional craft (*Nihon dento kogei ten*). He was named a Living National Treasure in 1982.

In the United States, industrialist Lloyd Cotsen put together one of the most important collections of Japanese wickerwork objects in the world over a period of about thirty years. It is now in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The pioneers of this art, who were so little known in Europe but acclaimed in the United States, have been succeeded by generations of artists who, over the course of the 20th century, have gradually abandoned the tradition of functionality and evolved towards the attainment of a supreme degree of abstraction that puts their work squarely in the realm of contemporary creation.

On the island of Kyushu, and particularly in Oita prefecture, several cutting-edge artists like Sugiura Noriyoshi, Yonezawa Jiro, Honda Shōryū, Nakatomi Hajime or Jin Morigami explore the avant-garde. The complex dynamics of their wickerwork pieces make them into extravagant sculptures in which different kinds of bamboo, rattan, soya roots and even metal, interact. Each work is a poem, a dream, a breath. In the suburbs of Shizuoka on Honshu, Nagakura Ken’ichi (1952-2018) continues to test the limits of creation by combining driftwood and earth with bamboo in an homage to nature. In Niigata and on Sadogashima, Honma Kazuaki (1930-2017) and his son Honma Hideaki are creating new forms with abundant volutes and curves.

In these early years of the 21st century, some artists are emerging on the global contemporary art scene. Among them is Tanabe Chikuunsai IV, one of the masters of our time, whose monumental creations have now and henceforth found a place in the some of the world’s most important museums (MET, Guimet, etc.).

While calligraphy and painting in Japan are experienced as a kind of meditation, wickerwork art has sublimated its traditional status as an artisanal practice to become the quintessential expression of a Japanese aesthetic imbued with Zen influence and thinking. Bamboo is a foundation for the spirit.

To the painter and the calligrapher, it is the perfect symbol of beauty. The gardener cultivates it to make a space sacred. The tea master uses it as an inspiration to perfect the simplicity of his art. And the warrior of yore sought the philosophy of his bow and arrow in it. Its extraordinary qualities, unrivaled in the vegetal kingdom, have made bamboo a part of Asian people’s lives since time immemorial.

These bamboo works are technically virtuosic pieces that could never have been created were it not for the marvelous material’s amazing properties. Supple, light (some wickerwork objects weigh only tens of grams!) and astonishingly flexible, the bamboo stalk has more mechanical resistance than steel. When heated to high temperature, it can be worked easily and retains its given shape without losing its dynamic qualities. Impermeable, and subject to neither rot nor oxidation, bamboo is truly a gift of the gods.

Philippe Boudin  
Galerie Mingei - Paris



# ART DU BAMBOU AU JAPON

## ARTISANAT

### TRADITION ET FORME SIMPLE



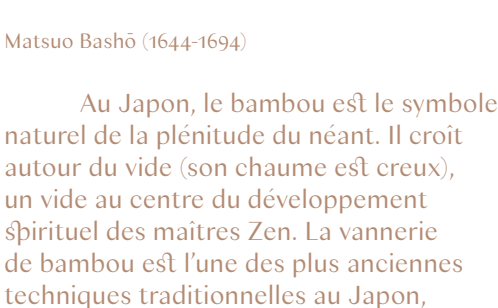
Philippe Boudin

Galerie Mingei Japanese Arts

Les bambouseraies sont intimement liées au paysage japonais, et les objets en bambou témoignent de l’un des plus anciens savoir-faire « techniques » à s’être développé au Japon. Dès le VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, de délicats paniers tressés ont été utilisés au cours de cérémonies bouddhistes. Puis, des vanneries furent créées pour les cérémonies du thé engendrant des dynasties de maître-apprenti nécessaires à la transmission des connaissances. Au cours du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, des *kagoshi* (vanniers) indépendants des formes et des vases conçus pour *l’ikebana*, l’art de l’arrangement floral. Aujourd’hui, au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, une nouvelle génération d’artistes, d’horizons divers, crée une fascinante variété d’œuvres d’art qui peuvent être considérées comme des sculptures contemporaines à part entière.

La galerie Mingei est heureuse de présenter sa collection de vanneries japonaises datant de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours.

### La fauvette chante parmi les nouvelles pousses de bambou de la vieillesse à venir



Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694)

Au Japon, le bambou est le symbole naturel de la plénitude du néant. Il croit autour du vide (son chaume est creux), un vide au centre du développement spirituel des maîtres Zen. La vannerie de bambou est l'une des plus anciennes techniques traditionnelles au Japon, probablement du fait de l’abondance de cette graminée et à ses qualités uniques. Le Shōsō-in, le dépôt impérial du Tōdai-ji à Nara, abrite des vanneries des périodes Nara (710-794) et Heian (794-1185). Ces paniers, qui servaient pour des compositions florales lors de cérémonies bouddhistes, utilisent de nombreuses techniques de base que l’on retrouve dans la vannerie moderne. Avec l’introduction du Bouddhisme ésotérique pendant la période Kamakura (1186-1333) et particulièrement pendant l’ère Muromachi (1333-1573), des vanneries sophistiquées furent importées de Chine. Connues sous le nom de *karamono*, ces œuvres fonctionnelles étaient appréciées pour leur élégance. À partir de la fin Muromachi et pendant la période Momoyama (1573-1603), les maîtres de thé Murata Jukō (1423-1502), Takeno Jōō (1502-1555), Sen-no-Rikyū (1522-1591) – instaurateur du style rustique *sōan* (littéralement « paillotte ») plus connu par son qualificatif *wabi* – et Hisada Sozen (1647-1707), se détournèrent des *karamono* au profit d’ustensiles en bambou d’une

grande simplicité (vases, vanneries, paniers pour le charbon de bois, etc.) qu’ils créèrent souvent eux-mêmes.

Cependant, malgré la très longue histoire de la vannerie au Japon, ce n’est qu’à la période Meiji (1868-1912) qu’apparurent les premiers *kagoshi*, artisans spécialisés dans la création de vanneries de bambou qui associaient un très haut niveau de perfection technique à d’indéniables individualités artistiques. Ces créations sont désormais considérées comme la genèse de la vannerie moderne.

Cette période d’intense créativité liée au *chadō* fut suivie, à partir du milieu de la période Edo (1603-1868), par un engouement sans précédent pour le thé infusé *sencha* et une admiration pour la culture chinoise des lettrés dont les aficionados se retrouvaient principalement dans les cercles *bunjin* de Kyoto et d’Osaka. Plusieurs *kagoshi* aux goûts raffinés étaient parrainés par des riches marchands et des artistes *bunjin* pour créer des œuvres répondant à une demande croissante d’objets pour la cérémonie du thé *sencha*. Grâce à leur originalité, les vanneries de bambou à anse pour *l’ikebana*, parfois de style chinois et alors nommée *karamono utsushi*, permirent à ces artisans de devenir des artistes à part entière.

Dans le Kansai, certains de ces « artisans-artistes », Hayakawa Shōkosai I (1815-1897), son fils Shōkosai II (1864-1922), Yamamoto Chikuryusai I dit « Shoen » (1868-1945), Wada Waichisai I (1851-1901) et le disciple de ce dernier, Tanabe Chikuunsai I (1877-1937) furent les pionniers de cet art naissant. De nombreuses expositions nationales et internationales destinées à promouvoir l’industrie - notamment les Pavillons japonais des Expositions Universelles de Londres (1910) et Paris en 1925 – furent autant d’événements permettant aux *kagoshi* de gagner en notoriété. Dans le premier quart du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, cette reconnaissance engendra une renaissance de la vannerie à l’origine d’un mouvement artistique ininterrompu jusqu’à nos jours.

C’est à cette époque que fut acquis par le directeur-fondateur du musée d’art et d’industrie (MKG) de Hambourg, Justus Brinckmann (1877-1915), le tout premier ensemble de vanneries de bambou constitué en dehors du Japon. Celles-ci, datées des années 1880 à 1890, sont attribuées pour l’essentiel à Hayakawa Shōkosai I (1815-1897), le premier *kagoshi* à signer des œuvres en bambou, connues à l’époque comme « paniers de *bunjin* ». Ses créations, caractérisées par un bambou tressé-serré avec parfois des inserts décoratifs en rotin, étaient principalement destinées à la cérémonie du thé *sencha*.

Parmi ces pionniers, Wada Waichisai I (1851-1901) eut une importance considérable, non seulement en remportant de nombreux prix pour ses œuvres raffinées, mais surtout en formant son disciple Tanabe Chikuunsai I (1877-1937), premier d’une longue lignée d’artistes toujours active aujourd’hui. Sa compréhension profonde de *l’ikebana* et de la cérémonie *sencha* aidèrent Chikuunsai I à développer son art au sein d’un studio réputé d’Osaka.

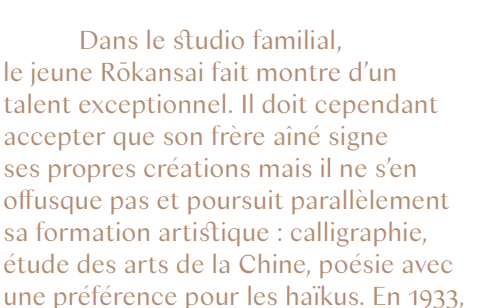
Il compte parmi ses disciples son fils Chikuunsai II (1910-2000) et Maeda Chikubōsai I (1872-1950) dont les vanneries soulignaient les qualités naturelles du bambou en intégrant les formes étranges de tiges et de rhizome de cette plante. Ces œuvres étaient particulièrement appréciées de la famille royale et de la noblesse. Son propre fils, Chikubōsai II (1917-2003), fut désigné *Trésor national vivant* en 1995.

Au début de l’ère Taishō (1912-1926), une famille de *kagoshi* du Kantō, les Iizuka, fut commissionnée par le bureau de la Maison impériale pour réaliser une série de vanneries nommée *Shinpuku iremekago* pour les cérémonies d’intronisation de l’empereur Taishō.

Le studio Iizuka, situé à l’époque à Tochigi, était réputé pour ses vanneries de style chinois (*karamono utsushi*), mais très vite Iizuka Hōsai II s’affranchit de ces contraintes et développa ses propres créations, ouvrant ainsi la voie à son jeune frère Rōkansai, considéré de nos jours comme le plus important artiste du bambou du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle.

### Au Japon il y a Tanabe Chikuunsai à l’Ouest et Iizuka Rōkansai à l’Est

Bruno Taut, 1933



Dans le studio familial, le jeune Rōkansai fait montre d’un talent exceptionnel. Il doit cependant accepter que son frère aîné signe ses propres créations mais il ne s’en offusque pas et poursuit parallèlement sa formation artistique : calligraphie, étude des arts de la Chine, poésie avec une préférence pour les haïkus. En 1933, Bruno Taut qualifie de « modernes » les œuvres de Rōkansai. Bruno Taut (1880-1938) est un architecte, un urbaniste et un auteur allemand très actif lors de la République de Weimar. En 1933, dans un contexte politique très hostile, il s’enfuit en Suisse puis au Japon. Il s’installe à Takasaki (préfecture de Gunma) et écrit trois livres sur la culture et l’architecture japonaise. Il produit également un travail

d’ameublement et d’aménagement d’intérieurs et est invité à diriger l’Institut d’art industriel de Sendai. Il est séduit par les vanneries de bambou utilisées pour les arrangements floraux *ikebana*, en particulier dans le cadre de la cérémonie du thé *sencha*.

Fréquentant les cercles intellectuels de l’époque, Rōkansai s’autoproclame artiste et refuse le statut d’artisan que Sōetsu Yanagi, le fondateur du mouvement Mingei, lui propose d’adopter. Rōkansai développe le concept des trois états *Shin* (真), *Gyō* (行) et *Sō* (草). *Shin* signifie « formel », les vanneries sont symétriques et le tressage ordonné, il s’agit souvent de *karamono utsushi* ; et peu ont survécu. Les pièces semi-formelles appartiennent au *Gyō*, si elles ne pas sont symétriques leur tressage est irrégulier, à l’inverse elles peuvent être de forme asymétrique mais avec un tressage ordonné, ou bien avec une combinaison des deux. Enfin *Sō* correspond aux vanneries informelles. Elles sont souvent les plus audacieuses, de forme libre, intégrant par exemple une anse en rhizome. Rōkansai introduit également de nouvelles techniques de tressage (*sashi-ami* et *tabane-ami*) et donne également à ses œuvres des noms poétiques qui évoquent la nature.

Iizuka Shōkansai (1919-2004) poursuit l’œuvre familiale par un apprentissage très dur auprès de son père. Les dix premières années de sa vie d’adulte sont consacrées à la coupe du bambou et à la préparation des fibres avant tressage. A la fin des années 40, il commence à soumettre ses créations à l’exposition annuelle de l’Académie des arts du Japon (*Nitten*) et remporte de nombreux prix. Dans le milieu des années 70, il participe avec succès aux expositions d’artisanat traditionnel (*Nihon dento kogeï ten*). En 1982, il est nommé *Trésor national vivant*.

Aux Etats-Unis, l’industriel Lloyd Cotsen construit pendant une trentaine d’années l’une des plus importantes collections de vanneries japonaises au monde. Celle-ci est désormais abritée au musée des arts asiatiques de San Francisco. Aux pionniers de cet art, méconnu en Europe mais acclamé aux Etats-Unis, ont succédé des générations d’artistes qui, au cours du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, se sont peu à peu affranchis de la tradition et du fonctionnalisme pour atteindre un sommet dans l’abstraction et rejoindre la création contemporaine.

Sur l’île de Kyushu, et particulièrement dans la préfecture d’Oita, plusieurs artistes, tels Sugiura Noriyoshi, Yonezawa Jiro, Honda Shōryū, Nakatomi Hajime ou Jin Morigami explorent l’avant-garde. Leurs vanneries aux dynamiques complexes

forment des sculptures extravagantes où interagissent différentes espèces de bambou, de rotin, de racines de glycine, voire de métal. Chaque œuvre est un poème, un rêve, un souffle. Dans les faubourgs de Shizuoka, sur Honshu, Nagakura Ken’ichi (1952-2018) pousse encore plus loin la création et mêle au bambou le bois flotté et la terre dans une ode à la nature. À Niigata et sur Sadogashima, Honma Kazuaki (1930-2017) et son fils Honma Hideaki créent de nouvelles formes aux volutes généreuses.

À l’aube du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, quelques artistes émergent dans l’art contemporain globalisé. Tel Tanabe Chikuunsai IV, l’un des maîtres de notre époque, dont les créations monumentales prennent désormais place dans les plus grands musées du monde (MET, Guimet, etc.).

Si la calligraphie et la peinture sont vécues au Japon comme une forme de méditation, l’art de la vannerie sublime la pratique artisanale traditionnelle pour atteindre la quintessence d’une esthétique japonaise emprunte de pensée Zen. Et le bambou est un support de l’esprit. Pour le peintre et le calligraphe il est le symbole parfait de la beauté ; le jardinier le façonne pour sacraliser un espace ; le maître de thé s’en inspire pour parfaire la simplicité de son art ; et le guerrier y puisait autrefois la philosophie de l’arc et de la flèche. Par ses qualités inégalées dans le monde végétal le bambou accompagne le quotidien de l’homme asiatique depuis les temps les plus anciens.

Ces œuvres de bambou sont des prodiges de techniques irréalisables sans les multiples qualités de ce matériau merveilleux. Souple, léger (certaines vanneries ne pèsent que quelques dizaines de grammes !), flexible à volonté, le chaume du bambou offre une résistance mécanique supérieure à celle de l’acier. Soumis à une température élevée, il se travaille aisément et conserve sa forme artificielle sans perdre ses qualités dynamiques. Inoxydable, imperméable et imputrescible, le bambou est un cadeau des dieux.



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*Ryūrikyō hanakago*  
Flower basket with handle,  
Ryūrikyō style

Madake bamboo, rattan  
and *urushi* lacquer  
1925  
58.5 (h) x 31.5 x 31.5 cm  
Double box

Provenance: Tanabe family's  
heirloom collection

*Ryūrikyō hanakago*, awarded bronze  
prize in 1925 at the International  
Exhibition of Modern Decorative  
and Industrial Arts in Paris, is an  
emblematic and iconic artwork in the  
history of bamboo art in Japan.

This artwork was exhibited  
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Chirac, 2018, cat. P. 106-107



*Karamono-shiki rokuryogata wachigai-fuchi teiryō hanakago*  
(Chinese-style flower basket with six-ridged shape, with a design of inter-linked circles opening at the top)

ca.1925-1930  
78.5 (h) x 37.5 x 29.5 cm  
Madake bamboo, rattan and urushi lacquer

*Shikibako* storage box  
by Tanabe Chikuunsai II (1910-2000)

Provenance: Tanabe family's heirloom collection

Ikebana by Chikako Kaji



*Karamono-utsushi hishigata hanakago*  
(Chinese-style diamond-shaped bamboo basket)

Madake bamboo, rattan and urushi lacquer  
Circa 1925-1930  
70.5 (h) x 29.3 x 25.5 cm  
*Shikibako* storage box by Tanabe Chikuunsai IV (born in 1973) in Heisei 29 (2017)

Provenance: Tanabe family's heirloom collection

Exhibited and published in *Fendre l'Air, Art du Bambou au Japon*, exhibition in National museum of Quai Branly Jacques Chirac (November 2018- April 2019)

Ikebana by Chikako Kaji







*Karamono yurigata morikago*  
Chinese style hanging flower  
basket lily-shaped

Madake bamboo and rattan  
Circa 1914-1937  
46.5 (h) x 20 x 18.6 cm  
*Tomobako*

Very similar basket  
in the MET NYC Collection.



*Ryūrikyō style tsuri-hanaike*  
Hanging basket in the style  
of Ryūrikyō

*Susudake* (smoked bamboo)  
and rattan  
1926  
36.6 (h) x 28.7 cm x 28.7 cm  
*Tomobako*

The basket is made in the style of  
Ryū-Rikyō (Yanagisawa Kien, 1703-  
1758) who was a literati *Nanga* artist  
and often painted pictures of bamboo  
baskets filled with seasonal flowers  
and fruits. The Tanabe Chikuunsai  
First was deeply influenced by  
Yanagisawa Kien and made several  
baskets honoring the artist. In 1914

(Taisho 3), when the Taisho Emperor  
visited Osaka, he made some *Ryūrikyō*  
style baskets for the occasion. Later,  
a *Ryūrikyō* style basket made by him  
was exhibited at the 1925 Paris Expo  
and won a bronze prize (fig. 01).

Very similar basket in the Lloyd  
Coşten Collection





*Karamono yurigata hanakago*  
Chinese style flower basket  
lily-shaped

*Madake* bamboo and rattan  
46.5 (h) x 20 x 18.6 cm  
*Tomobako*



*Tsubogata hanakago*  
Jar-shaped flower basket

*Kanchiku* bamboo  
("Winter bamboo")  
Circa 1925-1937  
54 x 22 x 21 cm  
*Tomobako*

Tanabe Chikuunsai I was the originator of an uninterrupted and still active and over a century old family lineage, and instrumental in the training of many prestigious artists in the Kansai

area. He was himself a scholar in the Chinese tradition (*bunjin*), practicing the art of ikebana and calligraphy while studying Chinese painting and the *Sencha* tea ceremony.





*Rasenmon hanakago*  
Flower basket with spiral pattern

*Madake* bamboo, rattan  
and *urushi* lacquer  
17 (h) x 48.5 x 48 cm  
Shōwa period, ca. 1952  
Provenance: Tanabe family's  
heirloom collection

8 Nitten exhibition Highest Award  
Tokusen.  
Exhibited and published by the  
National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo  
(MOMAT) in *Modern Bamboo Craft*, 1985  
and in *Fendre l'Air, Art du Bambou au  
Japon*, Musée du quai Branly – Jacques  
Chirac, 2018, cat. P.104–105

This work is the most perfect example  
of the *sukashi-ami* plaiting technique  
where Chikuunsai II excelled. He  
plaited extremely thin bamboo stalks  
diagonally and created another  
pattern by plaiting the rattan. The  
visual effect forms a spiral.





*Tsutsugata hanakago*  
Flower basket tube-shaped

*Madake* bamboo, *yadake* arrow shaft  
for handle, rattan and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1944-1955  
45 (h) x 12.5 x 12.5 cm  
*Shikibako*



*Uroko-ami Suehiro hanakago*  
Fish-scale plaiting flower basket  
named *Expanding Prosperity*

*Madake* bamboo, rattan  
and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1944-1955  
43.5 (h) x 16.5 x 16.5 cm  
*Tomobako*

For a similar hanakago see: "*Baskets: Masterpieces of Japanese Bamboo, 1850-2015 - The NAEJ Collection*"





*Yadake hanakago*  
Flower basket made  
with arrow bamboo

*Yadake* (arrow bamboo), *madake*,  
rattan and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1944-1955  
43 (h) x 13 x 13 cm  
*Tomobako*



*Man'yo hanakago*  
Flower basket named *Ten thousand*  
*leaves* (meaning Ancient Times)

*Madake* bamboo, rattan  
and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1944-1955  
18,2 (h) x 28.8 x 14 cm  
*Tomobako*





*Fukukai hanakago*  
Flower basket named A bountiful sea

*Shichiku* (purple bamboo)  
and *urushi* lacquer  
After Showa 51 (1976)  
12 (h) x 31.5 x 29 cm  
*Tomobako*



*Hōryō hanakago-morikago*  
Flower basket named  
*Abundant catch of fish*

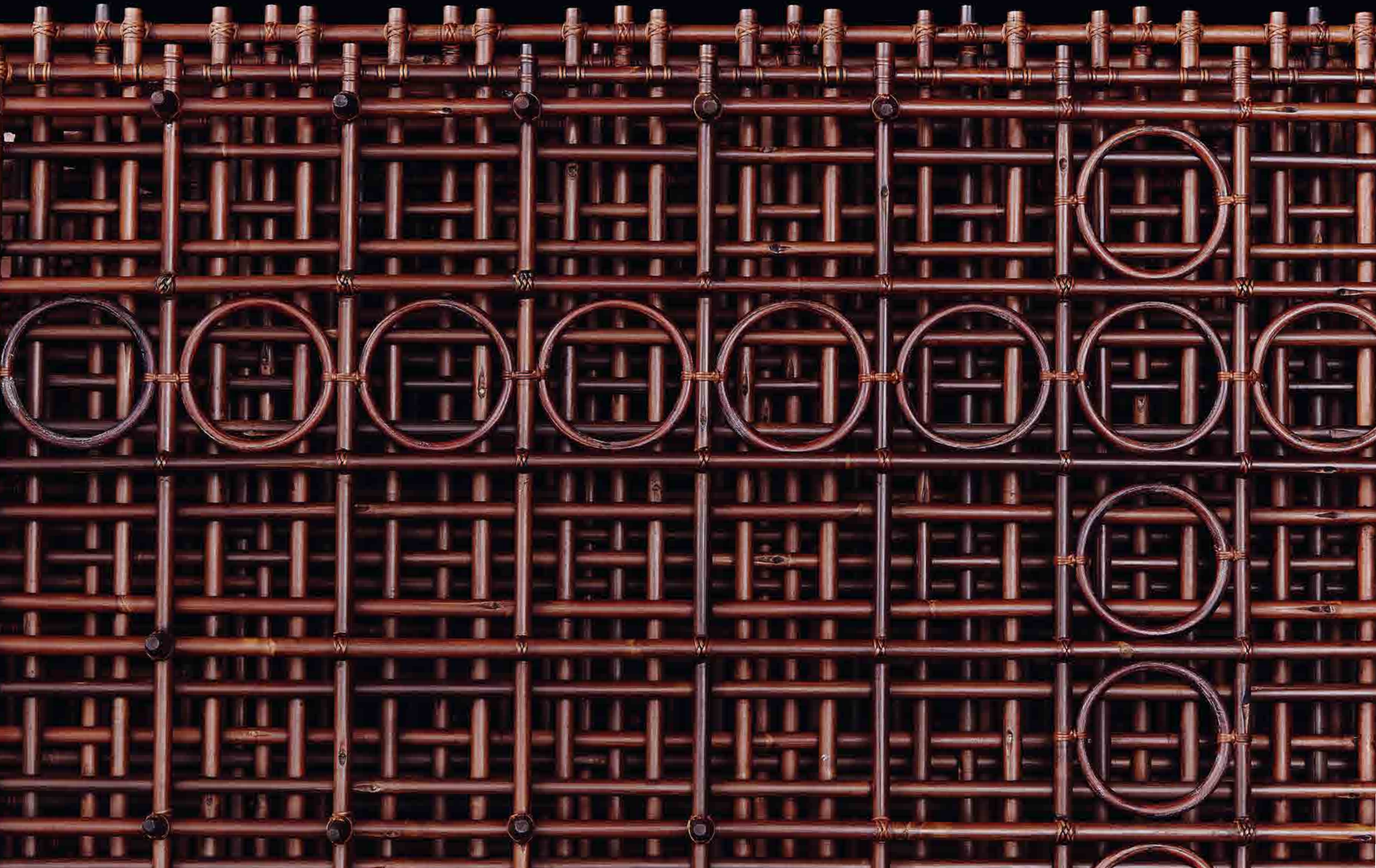
*Hōbichiku* bamboo and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1944-1955  
16 (h) x 43 x 25 cm  
*Tomobako*



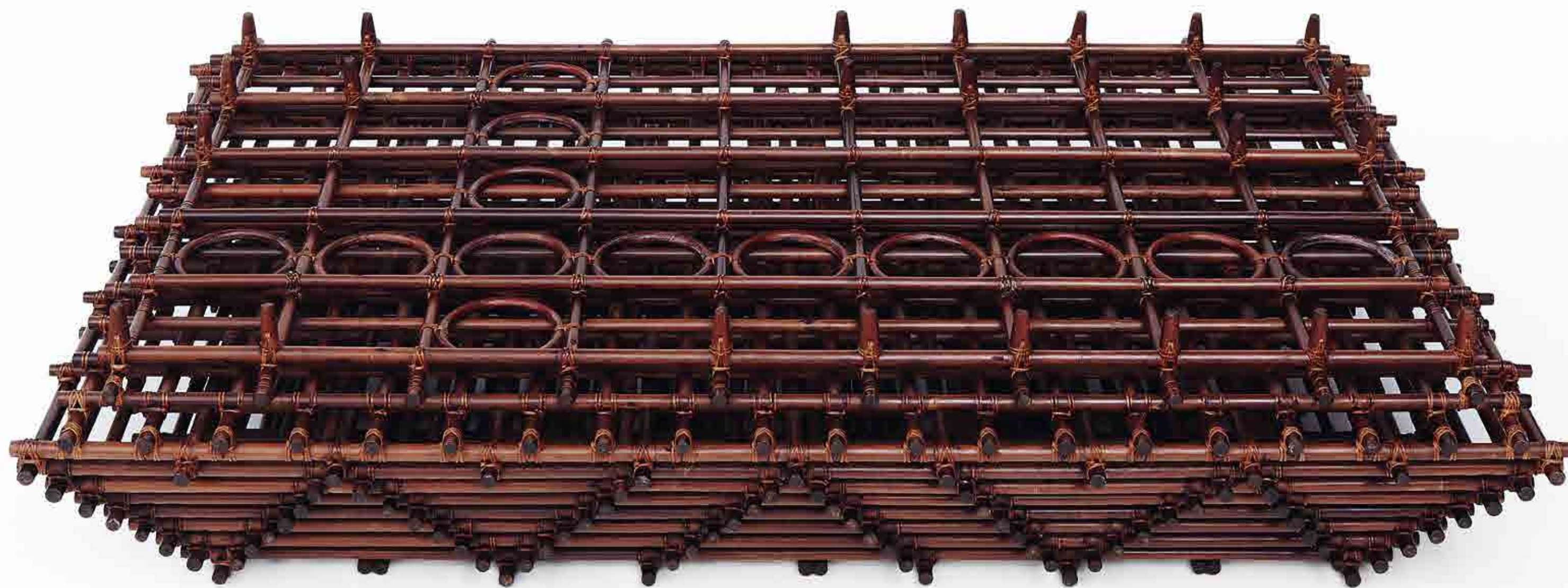
*Magaki hanakago*  
Flower basket named *Rustic Fence*

*Susudake* (smoked bamboo) and  
rattan  
Circa 1944-1955  
13.5 (h) x 41.5 x 13.5 cm  
*Tomobako*









### Multiplication

*Yadake* bamboo, rattan and *urushi* lacquer  
 21.0 (h) x 86.0 x 53.0 cm  
 Piled Square  
 Shōwa period, ca. 1972  
 Provenance: Tanabe family's heirloom collection

Tanabe Chikuunsai III, who exhibited his works at the Nitten and the Japanese Traditional Art Crafts exhibitions, employed *yadake* bamboo (the latter is called "arrow" bamboo because its slifness makes it ideal for making arrow shafts) to create geometric, sculptural forms. Using the parallel construction (*kumi*)

technique, he juxtaposed lines of squares and triangles with circles to conjure a sense of depth and three-dimensionality. In this sculpture, the intricate cross sections are tied together with rattan and the completed work finished with a coat of lacquer.













*Uyoku hanakago*  
Flower basket named *Wings*

*Madake* bamboo, rattan & *urushi*  
lacquer  
2021  
28.5 (h) x 132 x 24 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published in "*In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV*", Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)





*Funagata hanakago takaho*  
High Sail boat-shaped flower basket

Madake bamboo, yadake (arrow bamboo), rattan & urushi lacquer  
2021  
28 (h) x 60.5 x 26.5 cm  
Tomobako

Exhibited in "In Praise of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe Chikuunsai IV", Baur Foundation, Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)

In ancient times, culture was brought from abroad by ship. Sakai, the residence of Chikuunsai, was a port city and one of the most important trading ports in Japan. During the Warring States period, the city flourished through the Namban trade, reflecting its economy and culture.

Ships signify wealth and prosperity. The ship-shaped basket represents the spirit of crossing the ocean by boat to find a new world, and also a new beginning, such as «setting sail».





*Mononofu*  
Samurai Spirit

Madake bamboo, rattan  
& urushi lacquer  
2021  
50.5 (h) x 73.5 x 26 cm  
Tomobako

"In Japan, there are "ways" to culture such as Tea ceremony, flower arrangement, kendo, judo etc. Whether drinking tea or fighting a battle, the Japanese have a philosophy called *michi*. It means to be grateful to others, to discipline oneself and to train oneself. I aspire to create my work with a philosophy based on the Way. The concept of *Mononofu* is based on the samurai's philosophy of *bushido*. It is inspired by the samurai's formal dress, *kamishimo*." Tanabe Chikuunsai IV

Exhibited and published in "*In Praise of Light, Pierre Soulages – Tanabe Chikuunsai IV*", Baur Foundation, Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)





*Kuchiku Kutsuwa*  
Decayed bamboo *Kutsuwa*

*Hōbichiku & kurochiku* bamboo,  
rattan, bamboo root and *urushi*  
lacquer  
2021  
45 (h) x 70.5 x 36 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published in "*In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages – Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV*", Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)









*Godai kokū*  
The Five Elements Void

Tiger bamboo  
2021  
90 (h) x 149 x 59 cm

Exhibited in *"In Praise of Light, Pierre  
Soulages – Tanabe Chikuunsai IV"*,  
Baur Foundation, Geneva (November  
2021- March 2022)





*Kuchiku Daruma*  
Decayed bamboo Daruma

*Hōbichiku & kurochiku* bamboo,  
rattan, bamboo root and *urushi*  
lacquer  
2021  
58.5 (h) x 56 x 53 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published in "*In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV*", Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)











*Kuchiki Syouritsu*  
Decayed bamboo stand

*Hōbichiku & kurochiku* bamboo,  
rattan, bamboo root  
and *urushi* lacquer  
2021  
147 (h) x 54 x 48.5 cm

Exhibited and published in *"In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages – Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021– March 2022)





*Disappear XII*

Geometric design  
by Sawako Kaijima

Madake bamboo & rattan  
2021  
91 (h) x 8,5 x 26 cm  
Tomobako

Exhibited and published in *"In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages – Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)



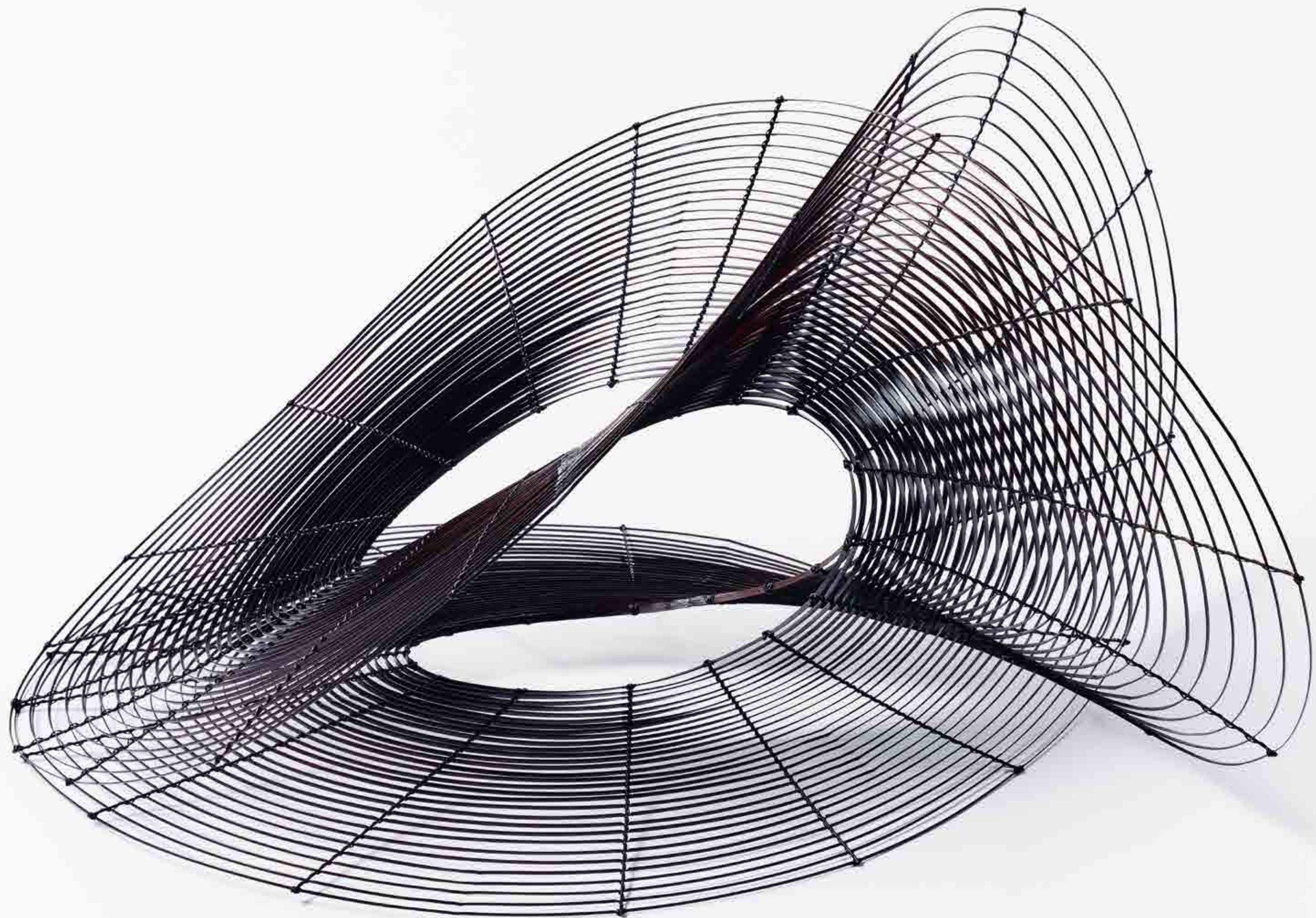




*Mugen*  
Infinity  
Tiger bamboo  
2015  
45 (h) x 50 x 85 cm

Exhibited and published in *"In Praise of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur Foundation, Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)





*Hanamushin II*  
Empty mind II

Geometric design  
by Sawako Kaijima

Madake bamboo & rattan  
2021  
41 (h) x 74 x 42.5 cm  
Tomobako

Exhibited and published in *"In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)

"Flowers do not bloom in order to  
invite butterflies, and butterflies do  
not have a mind to visit flowers."  
These words express the wondrous  
mystery of the relationship between  
nature and man. This "Flower with  
no-mind" series uses the world's most

beautiful mathematical algorithm to  
express the order that gathers around  
beautiful things. The most beautiful  
mathematical formula in the world :  
Enneper surface. In the subdivisions  
of mathematics, Differential  
Geometry and Algebraic Geometry, an

Enneper surface is a self-intersecting  
surface which can be written in the  
following parametric representation.  
This surface was introduced in 1864  
by Alfred Enneper in connection  
with the theory of minimal surface.  
The Weierstrass-Enneper parametric

display is very simple, and the  
representation in real variables can be  
easily calculated from this formula.  
This surface has a conjugate minimal  
surface which coincides with itself.





*Funagata hanakago amatsukaze*  
Heavenly Wind: Boat-shaped  
flower basket

*Madake* bamboo, *yadake* arrow,  
rattan & *urushi* lacquer  
2021  
30.5 (h) x 78 x 32 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published in *"In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)

This is an anecdote preserved in a document that has remained in the Tanabe family. There was a time when Chikuunsai I was struggling to create a new work of art. A collector and supporter of Chikuunsai I asked him to create a novel and unprecedented work. He was struggling with the problem of creating a new series of his works. Then he found an arrow from a bow in a samurai house. As the Edo period, the

era of the samurai, came to an end and the new Meiji government came into power, laws such as the abolition of the sword and the abolition of clans were enacted, so the bow and arrow were no longer needed. Chikuunsai I bought this bamboo and used it innovatively in his works successfully to create new works for the changing times. Later, this became the representative work of Chikuunsai I.









*Kazari musubi hanakago takitsuse*  
Waterfall: Decorative knot-weaving  
flower basket

Madake bamboo, rattan and urushi  
lacquer  
2021  
22.5 (h) x 45 x 14.5 cm  
Tomobako

Exhibited and published in "*In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages - Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV*", Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)





*Kazari musubi hanakago takitsuse*  
Waterfall: decorative knot-weaving  
flower basket

Madake bamboo, rattan  
and urushi lacquer  
2021  
22 (h) x 46 x 14.5 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published in "*In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages – Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV*", Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)



*Kazari musubi hanakago kiyotaki*  
Pure Waterfall: decorative  
knot-weaving flower basket

Madake bamboo, rattan and urushi  
lacquer  
2021  
36.5 (h) x 36 x 15 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited in "*In Praise of Light, Pierre  
Soulages – Tanabe Chikuunsai IV*",  
Baur Foundation, Geneva (November  
2021- March 2022)





*Sōzō toshi*  
Creative City

*Madake* bamboo, rattan  
and *urushi* lacquer  
2018  
56.5 (h) x 28 x 17 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published  
in *"In Praise of Light,  
Pierre Soulages – Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur  
Foundation, Geneva  
(November 2021-  
March 2022)



*Disappear VI*

Geometric design  
by Sawako Kaijima

*Madake* bamboo & rattan  
2021  
52.5 (h) x 26.5 x 24 cm  
*Tomobako*

Exhibited and published in *"In Praise  
of Light, Pierre Soulages – Tanabe  
Chikuunsai IV"*, Baur Foundation,  
Geneva (November 2021- March 2022)





Installation  
by Tanabe Chikuunsai IV  
for Kyotography 2021  
in Nijō castle.  
Kindly supported  
by the LOEWE Foundation.





*Hanakago*  
Hobichiku bamboo  
40.7 (h) x 25.7 x 24.5 cm  
No box

Wada Shigekazu was born in 1899, the oldest son of Shikazo and grandson of the famous Wada Waichisai I. Shigekazu began training under his father with the artist's name of Issai.

He won the best Show Prize in 1924 at the Osaka art exhibition. In 1933, his father died and he became the third Wada Waichisai.



*Renzan hanakago*  
Flower basket named  
*Mountain ranges*

Madake bamboo, *nemagari-dake*,  
rattan and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1950-1975  
45 (h) x 30 x 29 cm  
*Tomobako*

The triangular plaiting (*uroko-ami*)  
resembles mountain ranges (*Renzan* in  
a poetic Japanese expression)





*Yūjun hanakago*  
Flower basket named *Yūjun* which evokes a Confucian Chinese thought on the respect of order and harmony, and morality in society.

Madake bamboo with handle in *Akebia quinata* (*Akebiae caulis*) also called "chocolate vine"  
Circa 1920- 1930  
41.5 (h) x 17 x 17 cm  
*Tomobako*

Hōsai I's first son, Iizuka Sadakichi, used the name of Kikuji from 1902, before taking up his father's name when the latter abandoned his *gō* (artist's name). Iizuka Hōsai II was the elder brother of Rōkansai.

Although he was famous for his *karamono* Chinese-style baskets, Hōsai II produced innovative works using highly sophisticated weaving techniques.



*Senju hanakago*  
Flower basket named Longevity

Hōbichiku bamboo & chocolate vine (*Akebia Quinata*)  
Circa 1940-1955  
29.5 (h) x 22 x 19.5 cm  
*Tomobako*

The sixth son of basket maker Hōsai, Iizuka Rōkansai was born Yanosuke in Tochigi Prefecture. At the age of 12, he began to study the art of bamboo basketry with his father and quickly became very skilled at it. As a student at the Tokyo Fine Arts School, he

practiced calligraphy, studied sinology, and composed haiku and poems, thus receiving a training in various artistic practices that explains the wide range of his creations. Rōkansai is considered the greatest artist in the history of bamboo basketry.





*Ie-tsuto hanakago*  
Flower basket named cocoon or  
souvenir

*Hōbichiku* bamboo and *urushi*  
lacquer  
Circa 1938-1945  
27 (h) x 24 x 24 cm  
*Tomobako*

The term "*tsuto*" is a poetic and old-fashioned, but elegant, name for a parcel wrapped in straw and similar to a cocoon but which is used to designate a souvenir or a gift. The word "*ie*" means house.



*Minomushi hanakago*  
Flower basket named Bagworm

*Hōbichiku* bamboo and *urushi*  
lacquer  
Circa 1940- 1955

49 (h) x 16 x 13.5 cm  
*Tomobako*





*Hanakago Teitei hanakago*  
Flower basket named Towering  
loftiness

Madake bamboo and urushi lacquer  
Circa 1927-1934

52.5 (h) x 11 x 11 cm  
Tomobako

Ikebana by Ryu Kubota



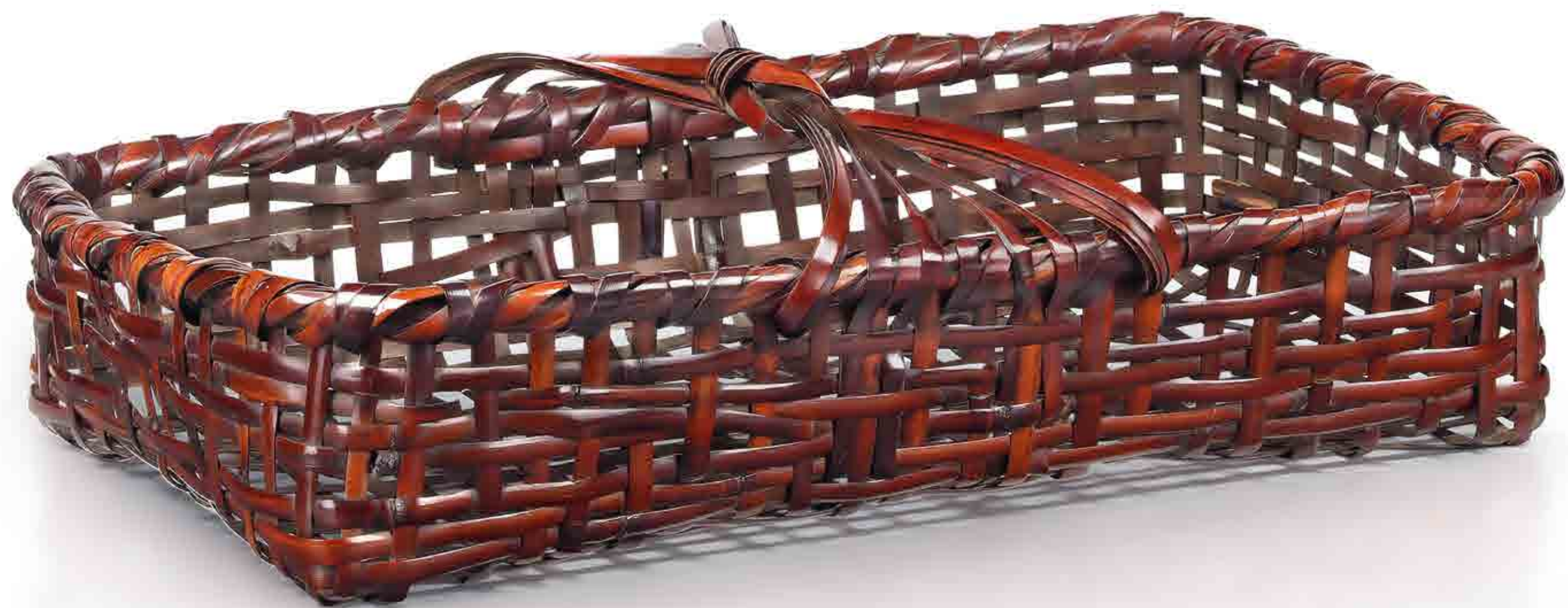
*Nemagari hanakago*  
Flower basket

*Nemagaridake* bamboo  
(*Sasa kurilensis*)

Circa 1927-1934  
45 (h) x 17 x 17 cm  
Tomobako

Ikebana by Ryu Kubota









*Senjō kakehanakago*  
Hanging flower basket named  
Thousand lines

*Madake* bamboo and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1950-1958  
19 (h) x 15 x 10 cm

*Shikibako* (storage box with  
certification par Iizuka Mari,  
grand-daughter of the artist)



*Jōfū hanakago*  
Flower basket named  
Merciful wind

*Susudake* (smoked bamboo)  
and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1960  
36.5 (h) x 14 x 14 cm  
*Tomobako*

Iizuka Shigetoshi, the second son of Rōkansai, graduated from the painting department of the Fine Arts School in Tokyo in 1942, and was mobilized during the Second World War. On his return, in 1946, he abandoned the idea of becoming a painter following the death of his older brother Mikio and began to study the art of bamboo under the strict authority of his

father. He was awarded a prize in 1948 at the Nitten exhibition where his works were exhibited twenty times. He took the name Shōkansai the next year, which had previously been that of his deceased brother. His works became resolutely modern and showed a willingness to experiment with various materials. But the call of the traditional bamboo craft was

stronger than these autonomous creative impulses, and after four years of absence, he returned to the "*Nihon Dento Kogeï Ten*" (Traditional Arts and Crafts Exhibition) and received the Minister of Education's Award in 1974. In 1982, at the age of 63, Shōkansai became the second bamboo artist to be named a Living National Treasure (*Ningen Kokuhō*).



*Hanakago*

*Susudake* smoked bamboo  
and *urushi* lacquer  
Circa 1950

36 (h) x 27 x 27 cm  
No box



*Karamono utsushi hanakago*  
Flower basket in Chinese style

*Madake* bamboo and rattan  
1963

40 (h) x 21 x 17 cm  
*Tomobako*



*Waltz*

Madake bamboo and rattan  
2020  
84 (h) x 42 x 24 cm  
Tomobako

Honda Shōryū is a native of Kagoshima, on Kyūshū, the most southwesterly of Japan's four main islands. The town of Beppu, where he trained, is the most important center for artisanal bamboo production on the island. His current sculptures mark a new approach to the art of bamboo. Inspired by nature, time, and space, kinetic forms are the basis of the stylistic evolution of his sculptures. He now lives and works in Matsumoto (Nagano Prefecture), in the middle of the Japanese Alps.



*Tayutau*  
Madake bamboo and urushi lacquer  
2020  
38 (h) x 35 x 30 cm  
Tomobako

Born into a family of weavers, Morigami Jin is one of the most talented creators among the living bamboo artists. Recognition of his work by American collectors and museums breathed new life into

his career. In 2004, he was a finalist in the prestigious Cotsen Bamboo Prize competition. Since then, the artist has enjoyed renewed success, especially recently at the Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac in Paris,

where he was acclaimed for his pieces in the *Fendre l'Air, Art of Bamboo in Japan* exhibition. Morigami's works are part of many American and European public and private collections.





*Koseibutsu*  
Ancient Creature  
Madake bamboo and urushi lacquer  
2017  
34 (h) × 62 × 47 cm  
Tomobako

A native of Sendai, on Japan's main island of Honshu, Sugiura Noriyoshi is a graduate of the School of Engineering, Osaka University. In 1997, he decided to train in the arts of bamboo and moved to Beppu (Kyūshū), where he studied for two years at the Oita Prefectural Beppu

Technical College and then at the Beppu Industrial Art Crafts Institute, now unified as the Oita Prefectural Bamboo Art Crafts and Training Support Center. When he finished his training, he became the apprentice of Watanabe Chikusei II (b. 1932), then of Okazaki Chikubōsai II (b.1933), before

opening his own studio. During the National Sports Festival of Japan events held in Oita in 2008, one of his baskets for ikebana entitled *Sugomori* was presented to the Emperor of Japan.





*Noshidake hanakago*  
Madake bamboo and rattan  
2018  
45.5 (h) x 32 x 36 cm  
Tomobako

Matsumoto Hafū is one of the two last disciples of the great master Iizuka Shōkansai (1919-2004), himself the son of the great Iizuka Rōkansai (1890-1958). Matsumoto Hafū mastered to perfection the stripping, flattening, and shaping of very large pieces of bamboo, techniques invented by the Iizuka family. His works respect

the golden rules of *shin*, *gyō*, and *sō* (formal, semi-formal, and informal styles) that guided his masters. In 2004, he received the Second Prize at the Lloyd Cotsen Bamboo Prize; the following year the Rooky Prize at the fifty-fourth Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition (*Nihon Kōgeikai*); and in 2007 the Governor of Tokyo Award.

In 2009, he was invited to participate in the exhibition *New Bamboo: Contemporary Japanese Masters* at the Kyūshū National Museum, and exhibited his works in 2011 in Ōita for the Memorial Exhibition of the National Treasure Iizuka Shōkansai event.



*Daruma Branch*  
Madake bamboo and dyed urushi lacquer  
2021  
40.5 (h) x 28 x 28 cm  
Tomobako

A native of the island of Kyūshū, Ōita Prefecture, Yonezawa Jirō has been practicing the art of bamboo for more than thirty-five years. He is the only artist in his field to have sejournd in the United States, where he lived and worked for eighteen years. Influenced by and influencing the American fiber art movement, his work became bolder, making way for sculptural works. Since 2008 he has been living

in his native village, where he built his studio. Exhibited throughout the world, his works are held in many American collections, both public and private. The regenerative quality of bamboo inspired his fascination for this hollow grass. The images, sounds, and sensual and emotional experiences of daily life find a new expression through his hands, from which woven sculptures and vessels

spring forth. For him, "the process of preparing strips to weave and then weaving forms from those strips is inherently meditative. The cacophony of life dissipates; the sculpture emerges vigorous and vibrant. Form, contrast, balance, and the interplay of space, color, and texture" are constitutive elements of his œuvre.







# There is no essential difference between the artist and the artisan. The artist is an exalted artisan.

Walter Gropius, Bauhaus Manifesto, 1919

This catalog presents the latest creations by Japanese artist Tanabe Chikuunsai IV recently exhibited at the Baur Foundation (Geneva) alongside paintings by Pierre Soulages. It also includes works by other great bamboo masters of Japan, including Chikuunsai I, II and III, Hōsai II, Rōkansai and Shōkansai, as well as some by artists from Ōita Prefecture.

Ce catalogue présente les dernières créations de l'artiste japonais Tanabe Chikuunsai IV, récemment présentées à la Fondation Baur (Genève) au regard de peintures de Pierre Soulages; mais également des œuvres d'autres grands-maîtres du bambou au Japon, et notamment Chikuunsai I, II et III, Hōsai II, Rōkansai et Shōkansai, ainsi que de quelques artistes de la préfecture d'Ōita.



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