

MINGEI OF JAPAN



MINGEI OF JAPAN – Treasures New and Old from the Museum’s Collection

ON VIEW - April 2, 2016 – October 2, 2016

What is Mingei?

Almost a hundred years ago, the Japanese scholar Soetsu Yanagi coined the term *mingei*—everybody’s art—to draw attention to objects that were made by hand for daily use, according to the age-old traditions of Japan, Korea and other Asian countries. Yanagi was concerned that these craft traditions would disappear with the rise of industrialization in Asia. He was making the point, too, that the value of an object has little or nothing to do with the intrinsic value of the materials used to make it, and everything to do with the respect for the materials and the care that goes into its design and formation.

Objects of Use

Featured objects are used in everyday life in Japan. They include clothing, cooking and serving utensils, ceramic vessels, baskets, brooms, brushes, furniture and devotional objects.

Craftsmanship & Beauty

These objects were created by skilled craftspeople and meant to carry out particular functions, however they are also exceptionally beautiful in their simplicity, emphasizing the innate beauty of natural materials and the tradition of making objects by hand.

Tradition

Many of the works were created by artists who have not received an academic education or formal training, but rather, have learned traditions passed down through their families or as apprentices.

Process

Process is the way in which an art piece is created. Pottery, woodworking, metalsmithing, blacksmithing and weaving are all examples of highly skilled processes found in this exhibition.

Student will Explore:

- Japanese culture, art forms and aesthetics
- The impacts of progress and change (the Industrial Revolution) on traditional art practices in Japan
- Handmade objects of everyday use, and why these objects are important - both in Japan and elsewhere
- The connection between Soetsu Yanagi's writings on Mingei and how those aesthetics can be seen in the objects featured in this exhibition
- Various art forms and processes including ceramics, woodworking, metalsmithing, blacksmithing, weaving and dyeing



Tatsuzō Shimaoka (1919 – 2007)
Vase
Mashiko, Japan
c. 2000
Salt-glazed and rope-impressed
stoneware with inlaid slip



Serizawa Keisuke (1985 – 1984)
Summer Kimono (*Yukata*)
Japan
Mid-20th century
Hand-spun, hand-woven and sewn
indigo on banana fiber



Shinichi Nakagawahara (b. 1948)
Two Handled Basket (*Akebi Zuru*)
Yokote, Akita Prefecture, Japan
Fourth quarter of the 20th century
Woven *akebi* vine



Unknown Artist
Ema Votive Painting
Japan, 19th century
Painted wood

MINGEI-INSPIRED CLAY BOWLS

The art of ceramics is an important and longstanding tradition throughout Japan. Specific regions are known for their unique traditions, natural resources and processes. The aesthetic value of nature, its impermanence, imperfection, and natural beauty are all common threads seen in the many art forms of Japan on display in **MINGEI OF JAPAN**.

In both clay lessons listed below the recommended designs and glazing techniques are directly inspired by Japanese ceramic processes and aesthetic designs. The use of household items, such as rope, are used to press into the clay to create texture and designs. In addition, natural glazing techniques of dipping, dripping, and single brush strokes all highlight the natural properties of the material.

Slab Formed Bowls

Materials: Self Hardening Clay (freeformclay.com), clay tools, tempura or acrylic paint, elmers glue, wooden rolling pin, clay cutting tool

1. SET UP

CLAY CUTTING TOOL.

Hold the cutting tool as if you are holding a piece of dental floss. Use thumbs to steady hands and pull string so that it slices the clay.

PORTION CLAY.

Do this before the class starts. You can keep portioned balls wrapped in a plastic bag. This will keep the clay fresh if you prep more than 1 hour in advance.

CONDITION CLAY.

Smash the clay together either between your two hands or use the table and your body weight to press down on the clay.

RECYCLE LEFT OVER CLAY.

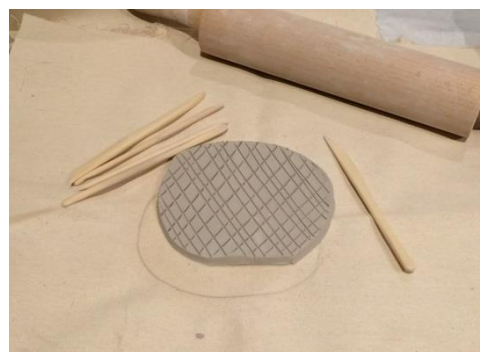
Keep in a sealed plastic bag and store in a cool place.

2. CREATE A SLAB

Slabs are flat but sturdy pieces of clay. Use rolling pin to roll out clay



Roll Out Clay



Carve and Make Your Mark



Clay Cutting Tool

MAKE YOUR MARK

Add texture using a variety of techniques

HANDS ONLY

Smooth with your fingers. Use your fingernails and make fingerprints.

ROPE

Press a piece of rope into the clay. Carefully roll and press to create a patterned mark.

CARVING TOOLS

Use carving tools to gently scrape marks into the clay. Be sure to wipe away excess clay while you are working.

HOUSEHOLD TOOLS

Use tools commonly available such as plastic forks, beads, natural materials or fabric. Consider what other items you could use to mark or press into the clay.

4. CARVE AND SMOOTH

Use a tool of your choosing to carve out a desired outer shape of the clay form. Press firmly on the table, wipe away excess clay after each cut. Smooth edges with a bit of water.

5. LIFT & MOLD

Lift the edges of the slab or use a bowl to mold your bowl shape.

Note! *Keep clay bowl wrapped in plastic and in cool place if you are not finished. Let clay dry when you are finished.*

6. Paint

Use a range of different techniques to paint your clay bowl. These techniques mimic a few Japanese glazing techniques seen in Mingei's exhibition.

GRAVITY DRIP

Gather paint on a paint brush and drip on bowl, let paint move over surface.

BRUSH STROKES

Use the paintbrush just once so that the natural brush stroke is visible.

DIP

Dip part of the bowl in paint, hold it over the bowl to remove most of the paint. Dip another part of the bowl again after it dries. Overlap part of your piece.

Let paint dry when finished.



Smooth the Edges



Lift and Mold



Gravity Drip



Brushstrokes



Dip

7. GLUE

Cover entire piece with Elmer's glue to create a glazed effect. The glue also adds strength to the bowl. Use a generous amount of glue. Remember the glue will dry clear.

PINCH POTS

1. Create a round ball by pressing and rolling the clay in between the palm of your hands.
2. Press your thumb into the top of the ball and cup the ball with your other hand.
3. Press gently against the part of the clay that is cupped and then rotate and repeat, continue until you are finished. Notice how the thumb and fingers are pressing on the clay at the same time (it looks like a duck beak)
4. Press evenly throughout. Be careful not to make the walls too thin or poke through the bowl. The thinner the walls are, the easier it will break.

The trick is to move slowly and methodically.



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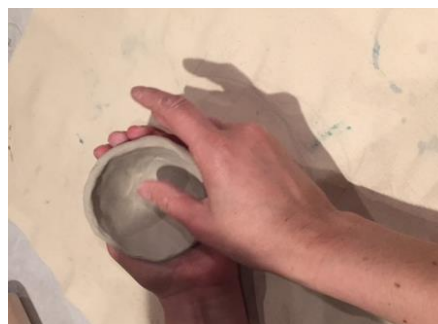
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IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR VISIT

Schedule a Museum visit and Docent-led tour through the Education Department. Mingei offers free admission for all K-12th grade and college groups and transportation reimbursements for Title 1 schools.

Email: sfoley@mingei.org

Call: 619-704-7495

Complete an online tour request form: www.mingei.org/education/museum-tour-request

- Review the information in this hand-out with your students; build their knowledge, excitement and confidence before they arrive.
- Discuss museum etiquette and review the Tour Guidelines document that will be sent to you when your tour is confirmed.
- Explain to students that a Museum Docent will guide them through the exhibition. Explain that a Docent is a knowledgeable Museum-trained volunteer who will share valuable information with them.
- Explain that Mingei International is a museum of folk art, craft and design that shows work from all over the world, and that “*mingei*” is a Japanese word that means “art of the people.”

