

contemporary lacquer by
yamazaki mushû



erik thomsen 美 asian art

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Introduction

When I first met the lacquer master Yamazaki Mushû in Japan last year, I was deeply impressed, not only with the quality of his makie lacquer works, but also with his passion and his earnest commitment to make works of the highest possible quality. Mushû uses the rich heritage in lacquer of his native Northern Japan as a solid base from which he makes new works of art with innovative designs. I particularly value his newer works, which present us with unexpected details, such as the chestnut incense box with ants and the tea bowl netsuke with simulated gold lacquer repair.

It is with great pleasure that I present Mushû in this, his inaugural exhibit in the US.

Erik Thomsen

Yamazaki Mushû

山崎夢舟

Kaga Lacquer Master

Yamazaki Mushû was born in 1966, the eldest son of lacquer master Yamazaki Geishû. He started apprenticeship with Kaga lacquer master Nakamura Shôzô from 1985, becoming an independent lacquer master with the artist name Mushû in 1990. Since then he has worked in top-quality gold-lacquer studios and exhibited regularly at numerous exhibitions, including the annual Modern Arts Exhibition; Japan Traditional Arts Exhibition; Japan Traditional Lacquer Arts Exhibition; Ishikawa Traditional Crafts Exhibition; Kenrokuen Tea Meeting Exhibition; Yamanaka Makie Lacquer Exhibition; and the Netsuke Carvers' New Creations Exhibition. He is member of the International Netsuke Carvers Association and artist and artistic controller of Pelikan Pen's Lacquer Fountain Pen Project.

In 2006 he is showcased by Erik Thomsen Asian Art at the International Asian Art Fair, New York.

1

Phoenix Tea Container

Ônatsume »Hôô«

大棗「鳳凰」1990年(平成2年)

H 3" × D 3"

(7.4 cm × 7.4 cm)

Date: 1990

Natsume tea container, used for storing tea powder in the tea ceremony. Décor of a flying phoenix (*hōō*) in high-relief *takamakie* gold lacquer with inlaid mother-of-pearl on a *roiro* mirror-black ground with *kinpun* gold clouds. The inside and the bottom is with dense *nashiji* gold flakes. Signed on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



2

Ivy Tea Container

Ônatsume »Ishigaki Zuta Makie«

大棗「石垣蔦蒔絵」

2001年（平成13年）

H 3" × D 3"

(7.4 cm × 7.4 cm)

Date: 2001

Natsume tea container, used for storing tea powder in the tea ceremony. Décor of ivy leaves on a stone wall at autumn; the leaves executed in high-relief *takamakie* red and gold lacquer, the stone wall in silver *togidashi* lacquer on a *roiro* mirror-black ground. The inside and the bottom is with dense *nashiji* gold flakes. Signed in silver lacquer on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



3

Harvest Tea Container

Fubuki Natsume »Karita Makie«

雪吹棗「刈田蒔絵」

1999年（平成11年）

H 3" × D 2¾"

(7.5 cm × 7.3 cm)

Date: 1999

Natsume tea container, used for storing tea powder in the tea ceremony. Décor on the top of harvested bundles of rice in *kirigane* gold drying on a mother-of-pearl stand; the beveled shoulders with rice in gold *togidashi* surrounded by inlaid *kirigane* gold pieces; and the sides with rice fields and paths in gold *togidashi*. The inside is with dense *nashiji* gold flakes. Signed in gold lacquer on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



4

Sparrow Round Box

Makie Gôsu »Mai«

蒔絵合子「舞」

2004年（平成16年）

H 3½" × D 8¼"

(9.2 cm × 21 cm)

Date: 2004

Round serving box (*gôsu*) entitled »Dance«. Décor of three sparrows flying by bamboo and flakes of inlaid mother-of-pearl; the sparrows executed in high-relief *takamakie* gold lacquer, the bamboo in gold *togidashi*. Signed on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



5

Fish Incense Box

Ayu Makie Kôgô

鮎蒔絵香合

1998年（平成10年）

H 1" × L 3"

(2.7 cm × 7.5 cm)

Date: 1998

Hexagonal incense box (*kôgô*) with décor of two swimming trout (*ayu*) in high-relief *takamakie* lacquer on gold and silver *kirigane* waves and inlaid mother-of-pearl water splashes. The rims in solid silver, the inside and bottom with dense *nashiji* gold flakes. Signed in gold lacquer on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



6

Ginkgo Incense Box

Kanshitsu Kôgô »Ichô-mon Makie«

乾漆香合「銀杏文蒔絵」

1997年（平成9年）

H 1" × L 3¼"

(2.9 cm × 8.5 cm)

Date: 1997

Incense box (*kôgô*) in the shape of a ginkgo leaf, the top in flat *hiramakie* and high-relief *takamakie* gold lacquer, the sides with inlaid mother-of-pearl dew drops. The box is formed entirely in the *kanshitsu* dry lacquer technique. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



7

Chestnut Incense Box

Kanshitsu Kôgô »Kuri Makie«

乾漆香合「栗蒔絵」

2000年（平成12年）

H 1½" × L 2"

(3.7 cm × 4.8 cm)

Date: 2000

Incense box (*kôgô*) in the shape of a chestnut, formed entirely in the *kanshitsu* dry lacquer technique. On top are two ants in black high-relief *takamakie* lacquer moving away from a hole they nibbled into the surface; the inside is inlaid with innumerable pieces of *kirigane* gold. Signed in black lacquer on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



8

Pumkin Incense Box

Kôgô »Mushi no Oto«
香合「虫の音」
2002年（平成14年）

H 2" × L 2¾"
(4.9 cm × 7.3 cm)
Date: 2002

Incense box (*kôgô*) in the shape of a pumpkin which has been made into a cricket cage. Hence the title »Sounds of Insects.« The cricket is executed in high-relief *takamakie* gold lacquer, the wings inlaid with pieces of mother-of-pearl; the inside of the box with fine *nashiji* gold flakes. Signed in gold lacquer on the bottom: Mushû. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



9

Chawan Netsuke

Kanshitsu Netsuke »Chashin«
乾漆根付「茶心」
2004年（平成16年）

H 1½" × L 2"
(3.8 cm × 4.8 cm)
Date: 2004

Netsuke in the shape of a black raku tea bowl and whisk, the bowl formed entirely in the *kanshitsu* dry lacquer technique. The bowl is a highly realistic rendering of an old tea bowl, and even has a simulated gold lacquer repair. Inside the bowl is the green tea and the whisk, which has very fine details in gold lacquer. Signed on the bottom with an incised signature: Mu. With fitted *kiri* wood box inscribed, signed and sealed by Mushû.



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