

About the Artist

The aesthetics enshrined within the material of bamboo – its lustre, strength and resilience, represent the foundations of Japanese beauty, cherished for centuries on this island nation in the world of tea and in the daily rhythms of everyday life. Yet at the same time, bamboo has come to symbolise the very persona of Japan and the Japanese people, who have endured with steadfast resilience the hardships borne from both human and natural disasters. Bamboo, however, is not simply a material suited for the creation of traditional arts and crafts. Rather, a new generation of artists have wielded the material with a new-found vigour, breathing life into its unique textures as a compelling material within contemporary art. The youthful Osamu Yokoyama (b. 1980 –) is one such artist, who finds within bamboo an ideal material for self-expression. For it is within its bends and curves, its ability to be cut, bound and stretched to its limits, that one can find the meandering, ethereal and poignant vicissitudes of life itself.

Yokoyama does not hail from a storied lineage or distinct tradition, unlike many of the 3rd or 4th generation bamboo artists working today. Instead, Yokoyama was a graphic designer who eschewed a salaried position to delve into the world of bamboo, taking his wife and young daughter to Beppu, the mecca of Japanese bamboo art, and apprenticing to leading bamboo artist Jin Morigami. To capture a beauty unable to be expressed by any other means, Yokoyama wields bamboo with the resolute urgency of now.

1980 Born in Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, Japan

2016 Apprenticeship, Jin Morigami Studio
Lives and works in Beppu

Selected Awards

2015 New Artist Award, The 20th Japan Bamboo Art Exhibition
Honourable Award, The 55th Japan Crafts Exhibition
2016 Award of Excellence, The 21st Japan Bamboo Art Exhibition
2018 Grand Prize, The 23rd Japan Bamboo Art Exhibition

Selected Exhibitions

2016 Spring Masters New York, USA
2017 Keisho-ha IV: A New Materialism, Yufuku Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
TEFAF New York Spring, USA
rewind – osamu yokoyama – Debut Exhibition, Yufuku Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Art Miami, USA ('18)
2018 TEFAF Maastricht, The Netherlands ('19, '20, '21)
Seattle Art Fair, USA ('19)
Yufuku Gallery NYC Pop-Up, USA
2019 silhouettes of you – osamu yokoyama – Solo Exhibition, Yufuku Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Silhouettes of Tomorrow, Yufuku Gallery, London, UK
West Bund Art and Design, Shanghai, China ('20)
2020 Opening Ceremony, A Lighthouse called Kanata, Tokyo, Japan
2021 Art Fair Tokyo, Japan

Public Collections

The Klorfine Foundation, USA

About the Work

Using only madake bamboo that is indigenous to Japan, Yokoyama differs from his contemporaries in that his works are predominantly ‘bound’ rather than ‘woven’, thereby allowing the artist to create large, sculptural forms that are almost architectural in their dynamism, accentuating the raw and material beauty of bamboo. Much of the techniques used by Yokoyama are self-taught inventions used to augment and shape bamboos in ways that would traditionally be frowned upon, such as heating and gluing. Yet it is during the dialogue with his material that the artist finds the final form of his work, and the techniques and materials used are the means to an end – the expression of an inner beauty that can only be realised by bamboo.

