

## **Kofushiwaki Tsukasa**

***Flag-01*** 旗-01, 2013 (commissioned 2013)

Lacquer and hemp cloth

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1343

During a 1997 residency in New York, a city that lacked a lacquer tradition, Kofushiwaki saw that people there had difficulty grasping the concept of his work. So he decided to create works based on motifs that would resonate with New Yorkers, such as flags and boats. This wall sculpture, commissioned in 2013, is modeled after his original flag series but is twice the size of flags he made in New York.

## Fujita Toshiaki

### ***Layered Form 1*** 積層する形1, 2004

Lacquer, earth powder, and gold leaf

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1287

In 1992 Fujita began his Layered Form series, an experimentation with various forms, from long, boat-shaped sculptures to upright U shapes. It took him several years to develop his signature formula, which is reflected in this work and the nearby *Layered Form 5*, both from 2004.

## **Fujita Toshiaki**

### ***Layered Form 5* 積層する形5, 2004**

Lacquer, earth powder, and gold leaf

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1288

Fujita's overarching theme became the relationship of humanity to nature, and in making the Layered Form series he explored his own existence. He compared his instinctive way of working to the hive making of bees, the growth of trees, and the expansion of the exoskeletons of shellfish. Fashioning a plaster mold from gypsum, he covered it with layers of lacquer. Because lacquer hardens slowly, he could apply only one half-millimeter coating per day. After removing the mold, Fujita lacquered the empty space inside several times with a reddish brown color to give a sense of depth. He polished the interior but left the exterior rough and unrefined, its earthy brown tone resembling tree bark.

## **Tanaka Nobuyuki**

***The Tactile Memory: Floral Impression (2011-II)***,  
2011

Lacquer and hemp cloth

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2015.35.1

The title of Tanaka's series *Tactile Memory* alludes to the feeling experienced when touching a lacquered surface. The delicate elongated red shape of *Floral Impression* compellingly evokes flower petals. Tanaka formed a mold of the sculpture from Styrofoam, which he discarded after gluing together many layers of hemp cloth with lacquer.

## **Kurimoto Natsuki**

### ***The Dual Sun II* 二つの太陽II, 2008**

Lacquer and mother-of-pearl on automobile hood

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1291

In 2000 Kurimoto began using automobile hoods as a substrate, or base, for his lacquered wall panels. This marked a radical departure from his previous series. He united the mechanically made hoods with lacquer, a natural material, to make a philosophical statement. He chose car hoods because they function as a cover, rather like clothing, and decorated them with abstract and geometrical patterns having universal appeal. The circle, for instance, is a fundamental, globally understood design element suggesting the sun and moon.

## **Matsushima Sakurako**

### ***Undercurrents 2009-II*, 2009**

Lacquer, hemp cloth, bamboo, gold powder, gold leaf, silver leaf, and seashell (*Turbo marmoratus*)

Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts 2015.36.1

Matsushima's fascination with jewelry led her to create large "body jewelry." Although meant to be worn, it is not a casual accessory and is therefore unlike traditional lacquerware.

## **Matsushima Sakurako**

***Spiraled IV***, 2011

Lacquer on bamboo

Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts 2015.36.2

For this sculpture, Matsushima explored a coiling technique she learned in Myanmar that was originally used in crafting offering bowls and other vessels. She coiled split bamboo strips into the form she desired and soaked the object in lacquer to bond the strips. She then cut and sanded it before applying thin layers of lacquer to the outside.

## **Matsushima Sakurako**

### ***Elements II*, 2012**

Lacquer, hemp cloth, gold powder, gold leaf, silver leaf, tin powder, and metal wire

Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts 2015.36.3a,b

Japanese philosophy recognizes five elements: earth, wind, water, fire, and void. *Elements II* evokes water and void. It is an example of body jewelry that evolved into a wall installation because Matsushima eliminated the design feature that would have made it wearable. She spent six months producing this wavy work of hemp cloth lacquered in the *kanshitsu* technique. Metal wire on the underside strengthens the construction.



## Sasai Fumie

***Look***, 1994

Lacquer, gold powder, silver powder, and seashell powder on Styrofoam

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2015.35.3.1, 2

Sasai made this two-part sculpture when she was about 20 and still an undergraduate. Her intention was to create eyes that seem to look inquisitively at the artist, as though trying to understand why she chose lacquer as her medium. She finished *Look* in about five months, decorating it with *maki-e*—different types of colored metal powders that she sprinkled on the soft lacquer before it hardened.

## **Sasai Fumie**

### ***Acceptable*, 1999**

Lacquer and hemp cloth

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1299

Sasai's femininity and her experience as a mother are reflected in this work and the nearby sculpture *Beloved*. Here, she sought to suggest the forms of a woman and a child.

## **Sasai Fumie**

***Beloved*, 2007**

Lacquer and hemp cloth on Styrofoam

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1298

*Beloved* and the nearby *Acceptable* both reflect Sasai's femininity and her experience as a mother. A baby's appearance inspired this sculpture.

## Sasai Fumie

***Substantial Fruit***, 2014 (commissioned 2013)

Lacquer and hemp cloth on Styrofoam

Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts 2015.36.4

Sasai spent about seven months completing this sculpture, which she based on the seeds of the Japanese horse chestnut tree. The blend of sharp lines and curved surfaces, enhanced by a glossy finish, communicates energy and strength.



## **Muramoto Shingo**

### ***Wing of Foliage #32* 枝羽# 32, 2010**

Lacquer, hemp cloth, wood, and metal

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1293a,b

This and the adjacent sculpture follow Muramoto's initial idea for the *Wing of Foliage* series, being delicate, small leaf- or wing-shaped sculptures originally mounted on a wall from which they protrude.

## **Muramoto Shingo**

***Wing of Foliage #37* 枝羽# 37, 2010**

Lacquer, hemp cloth, mother-of-pearl, and wood

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery

2013.29.1292a,b

## **Muramoto Shingo**

***Wing of Foliage #10-09*** 枝羽#10-09, 2012

Lacquer, hemp cloth, bamboo, and gold

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1345

As Muramoto continued to refine his technique for the *Wing of Foliage* series, he eventually made larger foliage wings that are freestanding lacquer sculptures expressing movement, delicacy, and tension. He won the Yamamura Shin'ichi Award at the 2012 Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition in Kanazawa for this one. A bamboo twig is integrated over the entire length of this delicate work, which is decorated with finely patterned gold.

## **Murata Yoshihiko**

### ***Living Ornamental Hairpin, No. 8***

いきものかんざし—その8, 2008

Lacquer and mother-of-pearl on maple wood

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1294a,b

In 2008 Murata introduced the series Living Ornamental Hairpin—works in red or black lacquer, often decorated with pieces of shell. His inspiration was woodblock prints from Japan's Edo period (1603–1868) that portrayed high-ranking prostitutes. Considered celebrities in their time, these women wore stunning robes and adorned their hair with elaborate pins and needles.



## Murata Yoshihiko

***Divider: Sleeping Mountain*** 結界「山眠る」, 2013  
Lacquer on maple wood

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2015.35.2

This work, one of Murata's largest, is his first sculpture alluding to scenery rather than flora or fauna. He took the shape from the silhouette of a mountain near his home that gives the illusion of floating at night when a crescent moon appears. This abstract sculpture also serves as a tea utensil. It is one of two dividers, or *kekai* (boundary markers), set up in traditional Japanese tea presentations to demarcate the tea-making area in a large room or outdoor space.

## **Igawa Takeshi**

### ***Voyage of Time* 時の航行, 2007**

Lacquer and hemp cloth on polyurethane

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1312

The natural world, especially the sky and sea, inspires Igawa, who is intrigued by how light breaks and reflects on mirrorlike surfaces. For this sculpture, created from a single block of polyurethane, he initially used traditional Japanese woodworking tools such as saws and chisels. Then he applied dry lacquer, which resembles obsidian, a black volcanic glass that in Neolithic times was often chiseled into hand axes and other tools. Concavities of varying depths form an irregular surface with reflections visible from every viewing angle.

## Igawa Takeshi

### ***To the Night*** 夜へ, 2008

Lacquer and hemp cloth on polyurethane

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1289

Besides monumental works like the nearby *Voyage of Time*, Igawa makes smaller black and red polished sculptures like this one, which brings to mind flight into the night sky. Their minimalist shapes have something in common with the elegant, razor-sharp, pale blue glazed porcelain sculptures of the contemporary artist Fukami Sueharu exhibited in gallery 253.



Fukami Suehara, *Windy Seascape*, 2001, porcelain with pale bluish glaze  
Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.30.64a-c

## Igawa Takeshi

### ***Sound of the Wind*** 風音, 2011

Lacquer and hemp cloth on thin bamboo (*misudake*)

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1265

This is an example of Igawa's leaf-shaped forms, which he sometimes embellishes with metallic powders of various colors. Here, he aligned strips of thin bamboo (*misudake*) so that the nodes cause an uneven surface reminiscent of feathers, giving the work the appearance of a bird's wing.

## Yokouchi Mie

### ***This One*** 此方, 2006

Lacquer, hemp cloth, Japanese mulberry paper, seashell, eggshell, and gold powder on Styrofoam

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1340

Yokouchi's largest and finest work to date, *This One* confronts the viewer with what appears to be an all-seeing eye. The artist spent about six months making this object, which showcases the myriad textures lacquer artworks can have.

After drawing a rough sketch, Yokouchi carved the core from Styrofoam and then covered it with hemp cloth and Japanese mulberry paper, affixing both materials with *mugiurushi*, an adhesive made of wheat flour mixed with lacquer. To fashion a smooth surface, she applied multiple layers of coarse and then finely grated clay powder mixed with lacquer. Finally, using traditional techniques, she decorated the sculpture with gold powder, mother-of-pearl, eggshell, and seashell.

## Ishizuka Genta

### ***Flatland #2***, 2009

Lacquer and metal on plywood

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1290

This is from a twelve-part series titled after the satirical novella *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884), by the Englishman Edwin A. Abbott, which Ishizuka read in college. Abbott described life in a two-dimensional world inhabited by lines and polygons with no concept of a third dimension.

Ishizuka embedded three-dimensional objects in a two-dimensional format. He placed thick pieces of metal in the lower layer of lacquer and thinner pieces in layers above it. This surface-decoration technique, called *togidashi*, has been practiced since the Nara period (710–794). The smooth, glossy finish was achieved by polishing the final layer of lacquer with charcoal powder mixed with a small amount of *roiro-shiage* (iron).

## Aoki Kōdō (Yōsuke)

### ***Protection Box: Snails*** 守箱「蝸牛」, 2011

Lacquer, hemp cloth, gold powder, and opal

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.189a,b

Aoki got the idea for this work after observing a snail crawling on part of a plant stem after a rainfall. This is his only example of using lacquer to produce the likeness of a creature.

First, he made a clay mold for three segments—the lid, the bottom of the base, and the body of the base. Then he covered the mold with hemp cloth and layers of lacquer, according to the *kanshitsu* (dry lacquer) technique. He built the snails' bodies with *kiko* (sawdust) from Japanese boxwood, wheat flour, and hemp fibers mixed with *noriurushi*, a combination of lacquer and rice flour. Finally, he added decoration of gold powder and inlaid opal.

## Yoshino Takamasa

### ***Kai-sao—The Hen Who Conceived a Child***

カイサーオ (子供を宿した雌鶏), 2009

Lacquer, hemp cloth, gold powder, and glass

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery

2013.29.1297

While spending a month traveling around Tibet, Yoshino noticed a cage of chickens kept by a food vendor.

Unaware, of course, that they would be eaten, the birds were themselves eating and seemed full of energy.

Yoshino saw that the lives of people and chickens are connected, and he respected the birds for sacrificing themselves—however unwittingly—to us. He decided to create sculptures of fantasy beings that would reflect his respect for chickens and for all creatures. In 2003 he made the “idol” *Kai-roun—Dignity*, resembling a venerable rooster.

One day, seeing a pregnant woman on a train in Tokyo, Yoshino remembered the hens in Tibet. That prompted him to produce this lacquer idol in the form of a hen that looks rather like a woman who is with child. *Kai-sao* is a term used in rural Thailand, where respect for chickens is a cultural norm.



## **Sano Akira**

### ***A Magician of the Forest*, 2008**

Lacquer, hemp cloth, silver, gold, mother-of-pearl, gourd, wood, nuts, and other materials

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1295a-c

*A Magician of the Forest* is one of a series of wall pieces for which Sano used natural materials such as a gourd, pieces of wood, and nuts.

## Sano Akira

### ***Bear: Glittering*** くまさん giragira, 2010

Lacquer, hemp cloth, mother-of-pearl, and gold on polyurethane foam

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist with the assistance of Keiko Gallery  
2013.29.1296

Sano's signature works—meant as social satire—are cute panda-like bears (Kuma-san) often shown with incongruous objects. The craze among Japanese high school girls for decorating their belongings with glittering plastic bits inspired this iridescent piece. Sano shaped the core of the bear from polyurethane foam, covered it with lacquer using the *kanshitsu* technique, and finally covered it with mother-of-pearl—a process that took about half a year.

## Someya Satoshi

***Mount Bull*** やまぶる, 2013 (commissioned 2012)  
Lacquer, wood, rattan, horn, metal, mother-of-pearl,  
seashell, leather, and pigment

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1313a,b

*Mount Bull* recalls Someya's first successful work, *Praying for Rain* (2005)—a sculpture of a cow almost entirely covered with variously colored lines and circles, leaves, clouds, and raindrops, with only the old wood of its lower legs left undecorated. In *Mount Bull*, the animal's back suggests Mount Fuji, with a red "peak" reminiscent of the crimson "circle of the sun" on Japan's national flag. Japanese cultural motifs from past and present adorn this fantasy beast, along with imagery associated with California, such as Mount Whitney and the state's official Bear Flag. Japanese pine trees spring from a Route 66 sign.

# 5 Videos

Continuous loop, total running time 23 minutes



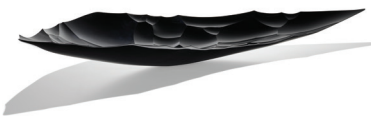
## **Introducing Contemporary Lacquer, 2013 (6:02)**

An overview of contemporary Japanese lacquer artists and their methods.



## **Lacquer Sculpture: Floating Forms by Muramoto Shingo, 2016 (3:42)**

Muramoto makes his signature small wing-like and leaf-like shapes by stretching hemp cloth over bowed bamboo twigs.



## **Line and Surface: Igawa Takeshi, 2013 (4:36)**

Using expanded polyurethane as a base instead of traditional wood, Igawa fashions large free-form works resembling steel blades or shards of broken glass.



## **Silhouette by Murata Yoshihiko, 2015 (4:05)**

In sculptures he calls Silhouettes, Murata challenges himself to suggest shadows with black luster lacquer.



## **The Nature of Urushi by Matsushima Sakurako, 2017 (4:22)**

Drawing inspiration from the prevalence of ornamentation throughout Asia, Matsushima makes body ornaments and objects that she coats with lacquer.

All videos © Keiko Art International

# Video

Runs continuously, 14½ minutes

## **Bone, Flesh, Skin: The Making of Japanese Lacquer,** 1987

Japanese lacquer, or *urushi*, has developed over the last 9,000 years. Made from toxic tree sap, powdered metals, and bits of shell, it is extremely durable and resistant to moisture, with an incomparable natural gloss. Lacquer can be painted, carved, or molded, allowing a wide range of artistic expression, which may require months or even years of patient labor.

Asian Art Museum © Toshi Washizu

## Kofushiwaki Tsukasa

***Fallen Moon 1*** 落下月1, 1994

Lacquer, hemp cloth, and plaster

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1341a,b

To create this work, Kofushiwaki first made a cardboard mold covered with a thin layer of plaster. Moisture in the plaster softened the cardboard, allowing him to form the approximate shape he desired. Once that hardened, he applied pieces of hemp cloth soaked in lacquer in two to three overlapping layers (*kanshitsu*). After everything had hardened, he removed and discarded the cardboard mold and continued with the *kanshitsu* technique, adding more layers of lacquer-soaked hemp cloth on all sides. He produced the irregular surface by bending, twisting, or cutting away segments and then sandpapered the final form to achieve the dustiness of the finished surface.

## **Kofushiwaki Tsukasa**

### ***A Leaf, So It Has a Back and Front***

葉っぱなのでウラオモテがある, 2000

Lacquer, hemp cloth, and stone

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1342a-d

Using his bare hands instead of a mold, Kofushiwaki spent about a month creating this sculpture. To support the freestanding form, a heavy boulder serves as the base, suggesting the roots of a tree. The title calls attention to the two distinct sides of this monumental leaf.

## Tanaka Nobuyuki

### ***Form Remaining in Memory 2012***

記憶にある形 2012, 2012

Lacquer and hemp cloth

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of  
Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.196

To sculpt this work, Tanaka used the same method as for *The Tactile Memory: Floral Impression*. However, the two works look very different. Here, he ground the surface of the black outer layer unevenly, to expose glimpses of the brown base layers, whereas he gave *Floral Impression* a shiny, polished finish.



## Tanaka Nobuyuki

***Inner Side—Outer Side***, 2014 (commissioned 2013)  
Lacquer and hemp cloth

Gift of Willard and Elizabeth Clark and gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture, by exchange 2015.80

The series Inner Side—Outer Side is meant to suggest both sides of a bowl or pot and also the organic form of a cave or a womb. This version is built of nine layers of hemp cloth and coated with two black layers of lacquer, one to two red layers, and another three black layers. Only on the backside of the sculpture did Tanaka grind the surface to reveal the underlying red layers. Before making this work, he had reconfigured the U form to resemble the wavy line of an S only in small models, or *maquettes*.

## **Muramoto Shingo**

### ***Wing of Foliage: Bending in the Wind***

枝羽 風にしなう, 2015

Lacquer, bamboo, and hemp cloth

The Curtis Dunnavan Fund for the Purchase of Asian Art 2017.11

To date, this is Muramoto's largest work from the ethereal Wing of Foliage series. While the red color confirms its identity as a lacquer object, the intentional irregular holes and imperfections give it the natural appearance of a leaf.

## **Aoki Chie**

### ***BODY 07-2*, 2007**

Lacquer and hemp cloth on polystyrene foam

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1338

Hanging from the ceiling and hovering slightly above the floor, this work is meant to evoke loneliness and anxiety. Aoki cut polystyrene foam to a scale that accorded with the shape of her own body and then covered it with layers of hemp cloth, polishing the outer layers to achieve a glossy, mirrorlike surface. The upward extension is intended to suggest ceaseless pondering. The red left leg renders the body at once beautiful and frightening.

## Aoki Chie

***BODY 09-1 “Impact” BODY 09-1*** 「衝撃」, 2009  
Lacquer and hemp cloth on polystyrene foam

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1339

This is Aoki's masterpiece. Having refined her technical skills, she sought to make a more complex object that would better express her ideas and demonstrate balance as well as struggle. The result is a glossy black version of her earlier works.

A body squatting on the floor appears to be swallowed by a lump representing helplessness and loss of willpower; this seems to morph into a body that stands firm and determinedly pushes forward. These entities represent two human beings in states of conflict and convergence, movement and tranquillity. Intentionally modulated dents and protrusions are visible from all vantage points.