

browngrotta arts presents

Transforming Tradition: Japanese and Korean Contemporary Craft

An online exclusive exhibition on Artsy

March 1 - 31, 2020

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In honor of Asia Art Week 2020 this March, browngrotta arts has collated contemporary works by 12 artists born in Japan and Korea for an online exhibition, *Transforming Tradition: Japanese and Korean Contemporary Craft*. The works include ceramics, weavings, baskets and sculptures made of paper and silk.

Notable in the exhibition are paper sculptures by **Naomi Kobayashi** and an elegant silk thread assemblage by her late husband, **Masakazu Kobayashi**. The couple often collaborated, working on installations that combined elements created by each of them. "These works express a shared vision and such common themes as the tranquility of nature, the infinity of the universe and the Japanese spirit," Masakazu once explained. "Naomi and I work in fiber because natural materials have integrity, are gentle and flexible. In my own work, I search for an equilibrium between my capacity as a creator and the energy of the world around me."

Keiji Nio's interlaced wall work is inspired by a haiku, *Rough Sea of Sado*, from Japanese haiku master **Matsuo Basho's** haiku series. In it, Basho describes the deep blue waves of the Sea of Japan as they are reflected in the night sky and the light blue waves hitting the beach. The work incorporates ribbons on which Nio has screened images from the sea and tiny pebbles from the shore. Nio is a faculty member at the Kyoto University of Art & Design, who combines industrial and natural materials in his works to make statements about nature and man's relationship to the world.



Jiro Yonezawa

Several ceramics by **Yasuhisa Kohyama**, are included in *Transforming Tradition*. Kohyama is a renowned *Shigaraki* potter who uses ancient techniques to explore new forms. He gained widespread attention in Japan in the 60s when he built one of the first *anagama* kilns since medieval times. Collectors and museums have been quick to acquire his works, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Gardiner Museum of Art in Toronto, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Museum of Art and Craft in Hamburg and the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park in Shiga, Japan. Kohyama's work graces the cover of *Contemporary Clay: Japanese Ceramics for the New Century* by collectors Alice and Halsey North and curator Joe Earle.

Bamboo sculptures by **Jiro Yonezawa** are also part of browngrotta arts' exhibition. Yonezawa has been recognized with the Cotsen Prize, a commission from Loewe to work in leather and inclusion in the prestigious Japan Nitten National Fine Arts Exhibit. Yonezawa has explained his work: "Bamboo basketry for me is an expression of detailed precision. These baskets represent a search for the beauty and precision in nature and a way to balance the chaos evident in these times."

Korean artist **Chang Yeonsoon**, who creates ethereal works of starched indigo, was Artist of the Year at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul in 2008. For 35 years, **Jin-Sook So**, also of Korea, has been creating dimensional works -- sculptural vessels and wall pieces -- from stainless steel mesh to international acclaim.

You can view *Transforming Tradition: Japanese and Korean Contemporary Contemporary Craft* online by visiting browngrotta arts' YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCV7IjwPD34cF-U88hB5e4aw.

You can see each individual work in the exhibition on Artsy: www.artsy.net/browngrotta-arts/shows and learn more about the artists included by visiting arttextstyle.com and browngrotta arts' website: www.browngrotta.com

Artists included:

Chiyoko Tanaka (Japan), Jiro Yonezawa (Japan), Masakazu Kobayashi (Japan), Naomi Kobayashi (Japan), Kyoko Kumai (Japan), Kiyomi Iwata (Japan/US), Yasuhisa Kohyama (Japan), Keiji Nio (Japan), Hisako Sekijima (Japan), Toshio Sekiji (Japan), Jin-Sook So (Korea), Chang Yeonsoon (Korea)

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For all media inquiries, contact State Public Relations at (646) 714 - 2520 or browngrotta@statepr.com.



About browngrotta arts

For over 30 years, browngrotta arts has been advancing the field of contemporary fiber arts by curating and exhibiting renowned contemporary artists who celebrate the exploration of fiber art techniques and drive the unique possibilities of soft materials. Representing many of the artists who have helped define modern fiber art since the 1950s, browngrotta arts reflects the cultivated eye and intellect of its directors, husband-and-wife team, Tom Grotta and Rhonda Brown.

Founded in 1987 in Wilton, Connecticut, browngrotta arts showcases unique sculptural and mixed media works with an emphasis on concept, supported by technique. The focus of the work is on the materials and the technical mastery of the artist as intrinsic to the significance of the work, prioritizing aesthetic value over utility. Museum-quality artworks by more than 100 international artists are represented through art catalogs, art fairs, co-partnered exhibits at museums, retail spaces, and an online gallery.

Each Spring, the couple opens their private home - a two-story barn built in 1895 expanded and contemporized by architect David Ling in 2000 - for "Art in the Barn", a unique annual salon-style exhibition for 10 days. Over 3500-square feet of space with a viewing vista of 55' allows for experiencing works that reflect complex illusionary space. The 21' high ceilings permit the installation of tall sculptures and two free-standing walls enable dramatically shaped fiber structures best hung off the wall. The living environment also grants the artwork to be shown in situ.

browngrotta arts has published nearly 50 art catalogs and placed works in private and corporate collections in the US and abroad, including the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Arts and Design, Art Institute of Chicago, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum. They also regularly work with architects and interior designers offering consultation for commissioned artworks and site-specific installation for commercial and residential spaces. A selection of works is on view and available for sales inquiries at browngrotta.com.

Tom Grotta graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology with a fine arts degree in photography. He has been recognized for his extensive knowledge of contemporary art textiles and fiber sculpture and his photography of fiber art. He has lectured on these subjects at museums and art programs in New York, California, Hawaii and elsewhere. Grotta's art photographs are included in several private collections, that of the Serralves Museum of Art in Portugal and numerous magazines and books, including *Toshiko Takaezu: Earth and Bloom* (University of Hawaii Press, 2007), *California's Designing Women 1896-1986* (Museum of California Design, 2013), *Fiber Sculpture, 1960 - Present* (Prestel, 2014), *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010) and *Tapestry: A Woven Narrative* (Black Dog Publishing, 2012). He photographed and designed *The Grotta House by Richard Meier: a Marriage of Architecture and Craft* (Arnoldsche, 2019).

Rhonda Brown works as an attorney for a publishing company in Manhattan and works at browngrotta arts as managing editor for the catalogs, its blog www.arttextstyle.com, and online content. She is the co-author of *Making Room: Strategies for Small Spaces* (Perigee, 1983). Her writing on textile arts has appeared in several exhibition catalogs and publications including *selvedge*; *Fiberarts*; *NBO Quarterly Review* and *Weston Magazine*.

browngrotta arts' website www.browngrotta.com and its blog, www.arttextstyle.com are destination sites for art consultants, interior designers, collectors and practitioners.