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HANDMADE – JAPAN
@ Tent London
18-21 September 2014



HANDMADE – JAPAN @Tent London
A Showcase of Traditional Beauty and Balance

HANDMADE-JAPAN is a brand composed of over 500 Japanese craft makers.

These Japanese craft makers have inherited techniques and traditions dating back many years, some as far back as 1600 years. All of these craftspeople share a common philosophy: "living with nature without trying to control nature by force". This philosophy of harmony and balance is evident in their products, which are made using eco-oriented materials and traditional methods.

13 of these Japanese craft makers are showcasing their products in the UK. These handmade products, carefully produced by skilled craft makers, are spectacular to behold.

HANDMADE – JAPAN @ Tent London

Thursday, 18 September to Sunday, 21 September 2014

Representatives of the following 13 craft makers will be at Craft London.

Handmade, hand-carved combs, Handmade Jeans, Hand-carved Chinkin Ornaments, Fashion Gloves, Handmade leather bags. Ceramic grilling plates, Gamaguchi cloth bags, Koshu Inden urushi lacquered on deer leather products, Handmade, all-natural-fibre brooms, Japanese chefs knives, Wooden Chopping Boards and Kimono

Demonstrations by the craft makers are scheduled during the exhibition.

This program has been made possible with the support of the Central Federation of Societies of Commerce and Industry Japan of the craft makers attending.



Wooden Chopping Boards by Kunisaki Rokugousya



Kunisaki Rokugousya uses a mixture of unique pieces of locally sourced wood and hard-grained, premium Hokkaido timber to create simple, hard-wearing solid board furniture and beautifully functional small wooden items for the home.

In recognition of the recent inscription of washoku (traditional Japanese cuisine) onto the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, the company has also developed a range of wooden chopping boards, essential for the preparation of any Japanese meal. The use of chopping boards in Japan dates back around 1,300 years ago, and the tradition has been passed down to the present day.

Kunisaki Rokugousya chopping boards are made entirely from Japanese wood—including ginkgo, Salix bakko willow, Japanese whitebark magnolia, and Japanese nutmeg-yew—carefully selected to be kind to knives, water resistant, resilient, and durable. The wood is cut, processed and finished according to bespoke techniques, then finished with a non-toxic varnish to enhance water resistance. Chopping boards of this quality are rare in Japan and almost impossible to source outside of the country.

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Kimono

by Tokyo Yamaki



A range of beautiful traditional kimono and yukata, or summer kimono, in sumptuous fabrics, stunning colours, and elegant patterns.

The kimono as we recognise it today dates back to the Azuchi Momoyama period (1573-1603), when the kosode robe, a kimono robe with small sleeve openings previously worn as an undergarment, became an increasingly decorative outer garment. The Edo period (1603-1867) was a golden age for kimono; the senshoku dyeing technique was also developed, allowing incomparable progress to be made with fabric design—depth, style and detail became possible to a level unlike anything that had come before.

After the Meiji Revolution of 1868, fashion from the West was introduced, and over time the trend for wearing Western clothes took hold. This move away from kimono only served to highlight the distinctive elegance of these traditional garments. Today, kimono are rarely a part of people's everyday wardrobes, but Japan's kimono tradition is increasingly valued for its beauty and refinement.

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Hand-carved Ornaments

by Suisha



All *SUISHA* products are lovingly hand-crafted by an artist who studied modeling and sculpture at the prestigious Tokyo University of the Arts. Each one-of-a-kind and original item is created using a modern twist on the traditional chinkin (literally, "sunken gold") method, a decorative carving technique of gold inlay dating back many hundreds of years. With the chinkin method, a sharp blade is used to carve patterns into plain lacquered surfaces, and pigment is then carefully pressed into the resulting incisions.

At *SUISHA*, this technique has been updated with the substitution of contemporary alternatives for traditional materials, including the use of animal bones and teeth as surfaces for decoration. The inspiration for each delicate *SUISHA* piece comes from traditional Japanese patterns, which are then painstakingly hand-carved and hand-drawn to create the finished products: each individual item is the result of precise and intricate craftsmanship. Products are painstakingly finished with super-fine, long-tipped menso-fude brushes, used for the precise application of colour.

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Koshu Lacquered Deerhide

by *Inden Yamamoto*



Koshu lacquered deerhide, also known as inden, is the product of more than 400 years of tradition. By the late Edo Period (1603-1867), lacquered deerhide goods were already well known; reference is made to them in Tokaidochu Hizakurige, a humorous book published in the same period. In 1692, craftsmen were inspired by the vivid colours of leather items given to the feudal government by foreign visitors, and started to produce imitations. These imitations were initially referred to as "Indea leather", and it is from this name that the current term, inden, was derived.

Inden sacks and pouches are light, soft and durable, while the lacquer ensures that wallets and purses do not easily slip out of pockets. The more they are used, the softer and easier to use they become. The lacquer patterns include delicate cherry blossoms, irises, and diamond shapes, many of which were introduced when samurai began to incorporate items made of deerhide into their armour.

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Gamaguchi Clasped Cloth Bags

by *Kataoka*



These sweet and versatile cloth bags with metal clasps are known as gamaguchi, literally "toad mouths", and combine traditional techniques with modern and colourful Kyoto fabrics.

The history of the gamaguchi clasped purse dates back to the Meiji period (1868-1912), when it was first introduced in the early 1870s. A critical factor in the rising popularity of gamaguchi was likely the issue, by the national government, of low value bills, as well as the introduction of clasps made from cheaper metal, which drove the price of the bags down. The steady Westernisation of Japanese fashion and lifestyles would also have been a factor.

Kataoka gamaguchi bags are all made with textiles featuring original designs. They are large enough to fit credit cards (short side up). They can also be used to hold keys, medicine, and small items. Each bag is strengthened with elastic in the base, as has piping around the outside, to ensure durability and help the bag to hold its shape.

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Boxwood Combs and Brushes

by *Kita Tsuge Seisakujo*



Tsuge (boxwood) combs from the Satsuma region of Japan are made with wood from the Ibusuki region of Kagoshima Prefecture, and date back to the mid-Edo period (1716-1789). Satsuma boxwood is valued for its dense quality, which helps to prevent the comb teeth from breaking, and for its beautifully lustrous sheen.

To create the combs, boxwood is harvested, cut into comb shapes, naturally air-dried, then hung to create a defined curve. The wood is then smoked for several days. This smoking is a unique production stage, conducted only by *Kita Tsuge Seisakujo*, and results in finer colour and shine in the finished product. The combs are then planed and the teeth shaped and finished. Finally, the combs are finished with multiple coatings of camellia oil.

These combs do not create the static electricity that can result from combs made from artificial materials, and are kind to the hair. They improve over time, gaining a deep shine. These are products to treasure for a lifetime.

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Handmade Leather Bags

by *Kobo Aki*



Kobo Aki bags are created to embody the key design themes of the atelier: lightweight, soft, simple, easy-to-use. Working only with leather, *Kobo Aki* seeks out new creative expressions of these themes through tireless experimentation.

Leather is a material to be treasured, a gift from the animals from which it is derived. *Kobo Aki* is committed to communicating the inherent beauty of the texture and sheen of natural leather. Bags are created to ensure that, over time, they will grow supple and develop a rich lustre. The characteristics of each piece of this luxury material handled defines how each bag is made, with the hope of translating the natural beauty of leather into practical bags which are nevertheless a joy to own. *Kobo Aki* bags are classic investment pieces which can adapt to meet the diverse needs of modern women.

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Ceramic Cookware

by *Daigamoriyaki*



The Daigamori area has a long history of ceramics, thanks to its soil, which is rich with copper and iron, and has high levels of lignite. This sort of volcanic cohesive soil is ideal for making pottery. In 1976, Shosai Abe, the founder of the *Daigamoriyaki* brand, built three types of kiln in Daigamori: up-draft, down-draft, and through-draft. These three kilns are used to fire locally sourced clay into the range of cookware and tableware that makes up the *Daigamoriyaki* brand.

In particular, *Daigamoriyaki* ceramic plates are excellent to cook on, thanks to the infrared effect of the material. This ensures that the heat penetrates right through to the core of the ingredients, be it fish, meat, or vegetables. These plates are ideal for drawing out the natural deliciousness of ingredients, and make it so simple to cook authentic toban cuisine. The brand also produces a range of "cookware for men", of which the gohan-kama, or rice cooker, is the best selling item.

Daigamoriyaki

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Handmade Jeans

by *Maruni Nishiwaki*



Maruni Nishiwaki is a specialist jeans company, founded in 1972 in Myoko City, Niigata prefecture. Since launching sales of its own jeans, lovingly designed and produced in-house, the company has built up a strong fan base throughout Japan.

The leather label on each pair of original Maruni jeans depicts a mountain, Mount Myoko, which the local people revere as a symbol of protection. Labels also feature a kanji character which refers to a Buddhist god of fortune, Bishamonten. This god was the symbol of Uesugi Kenshin, a feudal lord who ruled Niigata prefecture during the Warring States period of Japanese history. Myoko locals believe that Bishamonten gives them the strength and the courage to succeed, just like the brave lords of the Warring States.

Maruni Nishiwaki original jeans are produced with only the best materials sourced from Japan. The made-to-order denim in Okayama is hand-worked into beautiful items by experienced craftspeople using vintage sewing machines. Every stage of production is conducted by hand, to ensure the highest quality finish.

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Sakai Forged Blades

by Sakai Okuzen



Sakai forged blades are characterised by their very sharp blade edge which is produced by hammer-welding an iron and carbon steel blade edge. This combination of the relatively soft iron and the hard edge creates a blade which does not break or bend easily and cuts exceedingly well. The Sakai region is renowned for the production of various kinds of kitchen knives for every purpose; it is said that most knives that Japanese restaurant chefs use have Sakai forged blades on them.

Sakai blades first came to prominence when the Edo government granted the Sakai craftsmen an official seal of approval, which led to Sakai products being sold all over the country. Later, during the Genroku era (1688-1704) of the Edo period, production of deba bocho, a uniquely shaped Japanese cooking knife, began in Sakai. This marked perhaps the most important point in the beginning of the Sakai knife brand as it continues to this day.

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Nanbu Hoki

by Takakura Kogei



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Traditional, handmade, all-natural-fibre brooms and brushes known as Nanbu Hoki. These brooms are made with Kochia, or "broom grass", and excel at the removal of fine dust while being gentle on surfaces. Production of Nambu Hoki brushes begins with preparing the soil, which is tilled and composted with organic material. Seeds are then carefully planted by hand. The broom grass is harvested at the end of August, when it is still lush and green, and then blanched and air-dried.

Veteran craft workers then carefully select only the finest blades of grass, by hand, then begin the process of creating the brushes. The work is divided into 15 stages, and takes up to five people up to one month, while premium products can take up to three years. The blades of the grass are bound together, then woven with silk thread in intricate patterns. Takakura Kogei products more than 60 products, including long- and short- handled brushes, swirl-shaped brushes, and even miniature brushes for computer keyboards.



Fashion Gloves

by *Guntie / AREC (Aizawa Kikaku)*



Gunte, or cotton work gloves, have been widely used in Japan's craft and manufacturing industries since the middle of the 19th century. Vibrant and practical Guntie gloves reimagine traditional gunte as a fashion accessory, thanks to the innovation of undergraduates majoring in product design at Japan's only university with a specialist textile faculty.

Guntie gloves are made from high quality, 100% cotton towelling produced in Imabari, a city renowned for its fabric production. Each pair is finished with meticulous stitching, and is beautifully flexible and comfortable when worn. *Guntie* gloves meet the fundamental functional requirements of traditional gunte—comfort, safety, and protection—while also adding colour and design to result in a uniquely versatile fashion item.

Over 60,000 pairs of gloves have been sold since the *Guntie* brand was launched, and the gloves are now a must-have item for Japan's leading athletes, celebrities, and politicians alike. Orders for bespoke designs are also accepted, with a minimum order of 100 pairs.

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Leather Bags and Purses

by *Gum-A-Mama Leathers Kobe (Aizawa Kikaku)*



These original designs, by Gum-A-Mama designer Koji Honda, are the perfect balance of functional beauty and beautiful functionality. The designs are also quite unique; you will not find items like these anywhere else in the world.

All products are bench-made, meaning that each stage of the production process has been undertaken by a single highly experienced craftsman. Particularly crucial in the production process is how the edges of the leather are turned; getting this stage just right means that the durability of the finished product will be greatly enhanced.

Every item is the result of the spirit of Gum-A-Mama's skilled Japanese craftsmanship. This means uncompromising dedication and attention to detail to every part of the product. All Gum-A-Mama products are made with horsehide, carefully tanned with natural materials sourced from Japan to create leather that is both durable and supple, and core yarn, a material produced in Japan and currently also being used in space development.

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