

Light and Abundance: Gold in Japanese Art

March 13 - April 17, 2025

New York, NY — Ippodo Gallery is pleased to present its grand opening of our new flagship location in New York's historic TriBeCa district at **35 N. Moore Street**, beginning a new chapter in the gallery's history as a leading bridge to Japanese kogeï art since 2008. The inaugural exhibition, **Light and Abundance: Gold in Japanese Art**, coinciding with Asia Week New York celebrates the immutable beauty of gold featuring a group of fourteen master artists' latest pieces in lacquer, metal, Nihonga painting, and ceramics from **March 13 to April 17, 2025**.

The pure material, never to tarnish nor rust, is the object of fascination and admiration for more than a thousand years in Japan. Gold represents divinity, the eternal, and symbolizes spiritual enlightenment since ancient times, serving to cover statues of Buddha, temples like Kinkaku-ji in Kyoto, and the feudal lord Hideyoshi Toyotomi's famous Gold Tea Room. Under shadows the gold leaf adorned folding byōbu screen thrives; "in the darkness, where sunlight never penetrates, gold leaf will pick up a distant glimmer, horizon at sunset" (Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*).

'Zipangu, the Land of Gold' as Marco Polo named the archipelago more than five-hundred years ago, reminds how the country was once the foremost global producer of gold, which empowered the development of a distinct Japanese visual culture. While modern minimalist and wabisabi philosophies rise, flamboyance remains a quintessential element of Japanese aesthetics.

Ippodo Gallery presents fourteen top emerging Japanese artists in contemporary kogeï for whom gold persists as a medium of innovation and virtue.

Rising star lacquer artist **Terumasa Ikeda** leads the tradition of raden inlay with mother-of-pearl and gold leaf towards the timeless. Each bejeweled box, tea caddy, and incense container is the thinnest Kiso hinoki wood enveloped in layers of brushed lacquer. The final hand-laid gold and mother-of-pearl sparkle with iridescence in patterns evocative of electronics and the extraterrestrial. **Noriyuki Furutani** elevates the tea bowl to its most formal form as the works from his kiln singularly focus the tenmoku—perfectly rounded walls of equal height slanted outward, culminating in a sublime shaped lip. Golden glaze, his latest advancement, realizes the beauty of the play between light and ceramic. **Hiroto mi Maeda** crafts by hand meticulous metalworks that incorporate ancient hand-beaten methods for molding sheets of pure gold and silver into forms of exceptional intricacy and function. The precious metals are inlaid with patterns in scintillating Japanese shibuichi alloy of gold, silver, and copper. Painter **Kaori Someya** nurtures the deep and rich hues of mineral pigments with the nobility of gold; the rusticity of the powdered earth-based mediums made from precious ore, animal shells, and sumi charcoal set off the subtle details of her gilded figures. The light dances as it strikes the gold, textured washi paper, and voluptuous paints, giving animated life to the woman and kimono this is her debut showcase at Ippodo Gallery

Featured Artists

Noriyuki Furutani
Yuki Hayama
Hiroto mi Maeda

Ken Matsubara
Daisuke Nakano
Kaori Someya
Shota Suzuki

Koji Hatakeyama
Terumasa Ikeda
Masahiro Maeda
Jihei Murase

Junko Narita
Hiraku Sudo
Kodai Ujiie



Light and Hope for New Beginnings

There is a certain color that people use to represent light.

The color of gold. It radiates a dazzling energy, overwhelming purity, and emits the brilliance of truth. If silver represents the moon (yin) in Japanese art, then gold has come to symbolize the sun (yang).

Gold (Au79), believed to be the first metal discovered by humankind, is an imperishable substance—impervious to rust, unaffected by external forces, and never to lose its luster. When ancient people first unearthed gold and witnessed the radiant glow, the experience must have felt like an encounter with the fundamental energy of the universe itself. For thousands of years, across cultures and civilizations, gold has been revered as a symbol of immutability, immortality, eternity, and protection from malevolent forces.

Gold possesses high thermal conductivity and vibrational frequency; seventy-nine atomic electrons moving at an astonishing speed of 160,000 km per second. In recent years, nanotechnology has highlighted the exceptional stability of gold at the atomic level—resistant to oxidation and stable even at room temperature—making it a promising material for energy-efficient applications.

For Japan, described by the Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters) in the early 8th century (CE 711–712) as the Land of Abundant Rice, the endless golden fields of ripening rice in autumn represent an essential and timeless landscape.

Japanese culture is often associated with subtlety and the wabi-sabi aesthetic, but a magnificent and resplendent artistic tradition flourishes in reality. The exhibition highlights this alternative aesthetic sensibility. Through painting, metalwork, lacquerware, ceramics, and textiles, more than ten Japanese artists bring to life gold in its many diverse forms and textures.

Ippodo Gallery New York celebrates its 17th anniversary and will mark the milestone this March with the opening of a new street-level location in TriBeCa, New York. With heartfelt gratitude, we aspire to bring light and hope for new beginnings as we inaugurate this premier exhibition.

Gold is not only a symbol of dignity, majesty, and strength, but it is also a well of boundless purity and unwavering permanence. We invite you to experience the power of gold—not just with your eyes, but with all senses—as a force that illuminates the darkness.

Shoko Aono

Director, Ippodo Gallery New York

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About the Gallery

Ippodo Gallery is a cultural bridge to Japan's living master artists. Founded in Tokyo (1996-), the New York gallery (2008-) presents fine handcrafted and rare works created using traditional materials and methods. Each piece selected embodies Japanese aesthetic sensitivity that is born of a spiritual bond with nature. Ippodo's exhibition program features unique objects — fine ceramics, lacquerware, metal crafts, sculpture, paintings, and works on paper — that celebrate human invention, the natural world, and sublime beauty.