

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF IPPODO GALLERY NEW YORK

## Terumasa Ikeda: Iridescent Lacquer

March 16 - April 20, 2023 | Opening Reception with the Artist: March 16, 5-8 PM



百千寸五香合 (Laquer, Cypress, Mother-of-Pearl, Gold), H1.5 x  $\Phi$ 1.6in, H3.8 x  $\Phi$ 4.1cm

NEW YORK, NY – In celebration of Ippodo Gallery’s 15 year anniversary, we are pleased to announce Terumasa Ikeda’s first overseas solo exhibition. Coinciding with Asia Week 2023, TERUMASA IKEDA: IRIDESCENT LACQUER is an unveiling of the artist’s signature alluring *raden* lacquerware. Since Japan’s first encounter with the cultures of Europe some 500 years ago, lacquer has become representative of the great treasures the archipelago has to offer the world and a long-favored subject of international trade. Thus, “lacquer” has become synonymous with “Japan.” Extracted from trees and mildly processed, lacquer is a varnish applied to the exterior surface of an object, forming a lustrous film with a mesmerizing sense of depth. Beyond its beauty, lacquer is a highly sustainable product completely devoid of harmful additives that prove toxic to the planet’s environment.

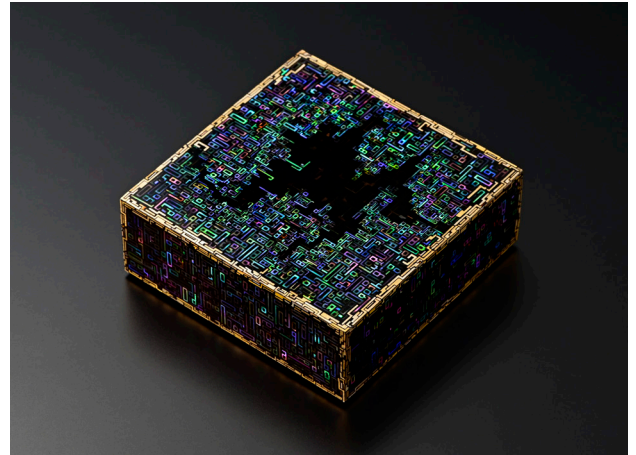


百千虹彩香合 (Laquer, Cypress, Abalone Shell, Gold), H1.3 x  $\Phi$ 2.3 in, H3.5 x  $\Phi$ 5.8cm

Terumasa Ikeda (born 1987) is an innovative lacquer artist who fabricates shimmering mother-of-pearl designs ingrained into the surface of wood in the *raden* technique. Ikeda’s idea is strikingly modern; the high-tech motifs that transform the surface into an electronic interface bridge the worlds of classical and contemporary lacquer. As if emanating luminescence from within, Ikeda’s works have become highly prized for the artist’s most technologically advanced method, and never before have his works been available for direct purchase by audiences outside of Japan.

Ikeda, who earned his B.A. and M.A. from the Kanazawa College of Art, was drawn to the city as Kanazawa is considered the historical hub for lacquerware in Japan. Under the tutelage of lacquer master Shinya Yamamura, Ikeda trained in the mother-of-pearl inlay technique's traditional and highly technical aspects. As a student, Ikeda's experiences in Nepal fostered a deep appreciation for craftsmanship and everyday handmade objects. The vibrant and complex wooden architecture and the culture of making that included every generation of the family from elder to child sparked inspiration inside Ikeda. The Nepalese encounter pushed Ikeda to question the parameters of craftsmanship as an age-old method of interpersonal communication. In this modern day, is there a shared visual language? The visual language of *raden*, which began as ornamentation and opulent treasures part of the Shosoin Repository in the 8th century, historically projected images of *kachōfugetsu*, "the beauties of nature."

Though Arabic numerals are by no means a modern invention, Ikeda's iridescent depictions against the infinitely deep black *urushi* lacquer immediately evoke a mental image of a computer screen or the internationally iconic title sequence from the film "The Matrix" (1999). Ikeda's objects—ceremonial tea utensils, treasure boxes, and precious containers—push to refashion the visual language of *raden* to include the electronic realm of data that now dominates the globalized world. Ikeda's meticulous process took eight years to develop: from native Japanese kiso hinoki cypress, Ikeda sculpts and refines the shape until the thin walls allow for the passage of light. Encased within black *urushi* lacquer, the grain of the kiso hinoki is wholly saturated and densified. Whereas the interior is finished with coats of gold in the *maki-e* style, Ikeda's true innovative artistry is in his treatment



青貝迷宮回路図香合 (Urushi lacquer, Cypress, Turbo Snail Pearl, Mother-of-Pearl, Silver Lip Oyster, Black Lip Oyster, Gold), H0.8xW2.2xD2.2in, H2.1xW5.7xD5.7cm

of the nacre-inlaid surface. Designed by hand and then interpreted digitally with a computer program as a stencil, Ikeda's iconic numerical pattern is intricately engraved from the prepared abalone shell using a laser cutter. Placing the perforated shell into water, Ikeda uses ultrasonic waves to free the glyphs, which are then set onto the adhesive lacquer by hand. The result is a futuristic *miyabi* artwork—eternal, never tarnishing, mesmerizing—that invites viewers to enter the virtual world through a conventional medium that has been cherished and coveted for more than a millennium.

Please join us in celebrating the unique creations of Terumasa Ikeda, who is debuting his work in the United States for the first time, on display from March 16th until April 20th, 2023. The artist will attend a forthcoming reception hosted by Ippodo Gallery at 32 E 67th Street, New York, 10065, to discuss his work and answer questions. All are welcome.

#### References :

Rong Lu, Takashi Yoshida & Tetsuo Miyakoshi (2013) Oriental Lacquer: A Natural Polymer, *Polymer Reviews*, 53:2, 153-191, DOI: 10.1080/15583724.2013.776585

### About the Gallery

Committed to creating shared craft- and Japanese culture-oriented experiences, Ippodo Gallery has worked directly with over 200 artists and held thousands of exhibitions over three decades. Keiko Aono founded Ippodo Gallery Tokyo in 1996, with two locations in the heart of Ginza and the residential area of Gotenyama. Daughter Shoko Aono opened Ippodo Gallery in New York in 2008, forging new connections with a global audience. Since then, she continues to witness the timeless cross-cultural impact of Japanese *kogei* art that transcends language.

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