



18 East 64th Street, Suite 1F, New York, NY, 10065
info@daiichiarts.com | beatrice@daiichiarts.com | 212-230-1680

Murata Gen: The Heart's Eye

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The first ever solo exhibition of Mashiko ceramic artist Murata Gen in North America. We are delighted to celebrate the collectors of Mingei, and the Folk-Craft legacies of Modern Japan.

Exhibition dates: April 24 - May 17, 2023 | Accompanying exhibition catalog featuring essays by Beatrice Chang, and interview with Mingei collector Jeffrey Montgomery, whose collection will be shown in April 2023-2024 in the Crow Museum of Asian Art.



Pair of works: Tea bowl & Jar by Murata Gen with iron glazes.

NEW YORK, NY — Dai Ichi Arts is delighted to present the first ever solo exhibition of the works of Mingei artist Murata Gen in North America. The show will explore the plethora of vessels & functional forms Murata created, with an emphasis on his sensitivity for painted clay surfaces. “Murata Gen: The Heart’s Eye” illustrates an affectual and emotional side of Mingei craft expression through the works of Murata Gen alongside the works of his contemporaries (Shimaoka Tatsuzo, Hamada Shoji, Kawai Kanjiro, Matsuzaki Ken, and more) in modern & contemporary Japan.

Murata Gen has been a favorite of Mingei collectors for decades, but his works have never received the recognition they deserve. Considered as the underdog of the Mingei folk-craft canon in the world of Japanese ceramics, Murata Gen's works are underestimated, influential, and remarkable, all foregrounded by his training in classical painting. This exhibition aims to canonize him as an important part of Mashiko, Mingei, and Japanese folk-craft modern history.

FROM TOKYO TO MASHIKO — Born in 1904, Murata Gen grew up in a humble family in Ishikawa prefecture. He studied classical painting at the Kansai Bijutsu Gakuin (Kansai Art Academy) in 1922 for several years before the onset of war forced him to abandon his dreams of being a painter. Murata Gen was a dedicated and masterful Mingei potter. His first encounter with pottery was late, relative to many potters in his life, when he visited a folk craft exhibition showcasing Mashiko wares in 1934 Tokyo. It was then that his path took an unlikely turn, and his dreams of art were given a second chance. Inspired by the modest beauty of Mashiko pottery, he decided to relocate permanently to Mashiko in 1924, where studied for many years under Hamada Shoji and affiliated closely with the Mingei school.

Murata's training in classical painting foregrounds his mastery over surface-scape. His functional wares employ unique glaze decoration to express scenic vistas. Like Hamada Shoji, Murata Gen chose to use only clay and glazes indigenous to Mashiko; he was a mindful Mingei practitioner that built his clay works with intention. However, he decisively departs from Hamada Shoji in choosing to use the exterior of his jars and bowls as, as it were, "canvases" to express his deeply-held artistic intentions. This exhibition focuses on his beautiful glazes and surfaces on his ceramics.

Please note that all Japanese names in this press release are provided in Japanese sequence with family name first, and given name second.

Gallery Contact details:

- For all sale, acquisition, loan, consignment or other enquiries, please get in touch via email [beatrice@daiichiarts.com] or phone [+1 212 230 1680].
- For all press & media related inquiries, please get in touch with Kristie Lui via email [kristie@daiichiarts.com] or [info@daiichiarts.com]. High resolution images & press package provided upon request.