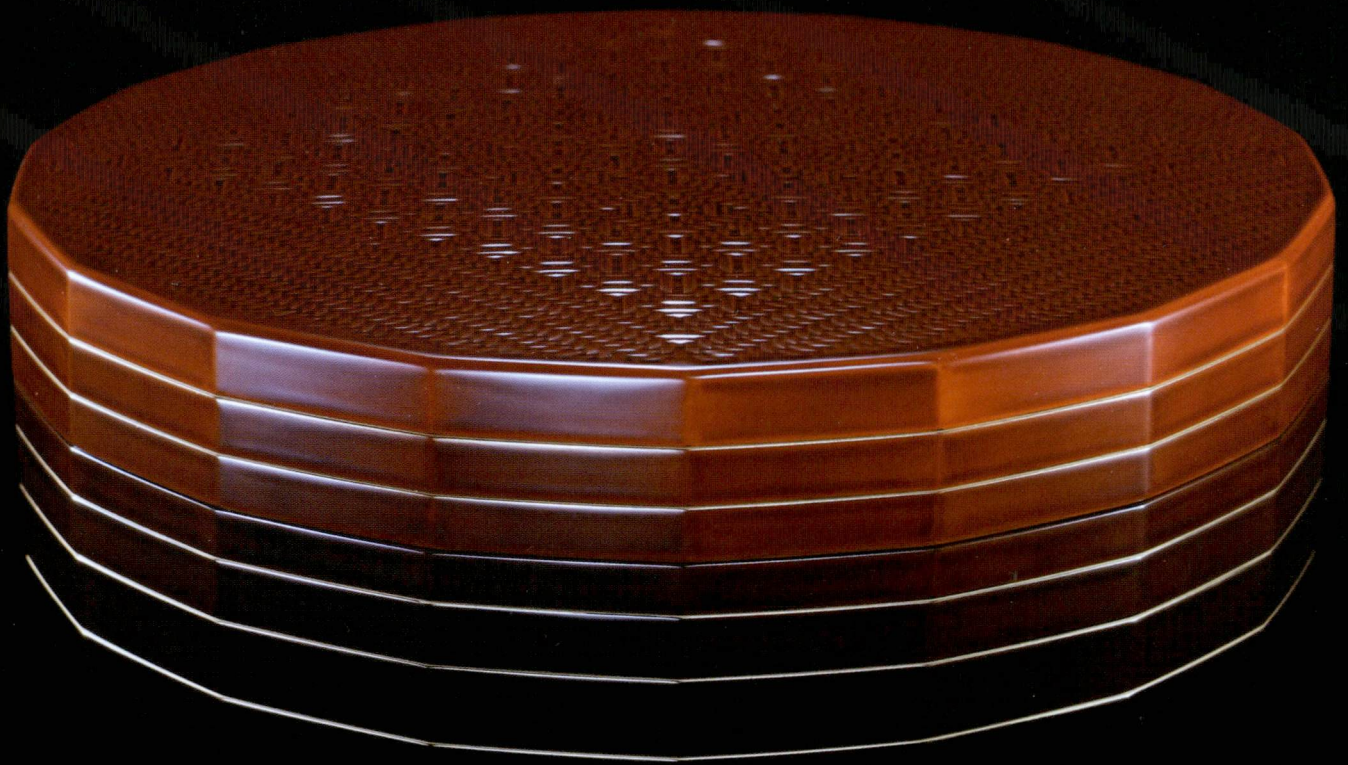


Craft Technique Documentary

KYUSHITSU

The Art of KOMORI Kunie



Kyushitsu simply means to apply lacquer, but to KOMORI Kunie, it refers to the overall process involved in giving life to the exquisitely lacquered forms that he envisages. Each step, from the creation of the substrate to the application of the *shitaji* and the *uwanuri* final coating, requires the utmost skill and precision. It's a time-consuming process, but the result is a work of art that reflects KOMORI's refined sensibilities and innovative spirit.

This video, recorded at KOMORI's studio in the city of Wajima, Ishikawa Prefecture, documents the art and dedication with which he pursues his creative vision.

FY2012 35mm/Color 37min.

Presented by The Agency for Cultural Affairs Produced by Sakura Motion Picture, Co., Ltd.



Prologue

Kyushitsu artist KOMORI Kunie employs a wide range of specially designed tools for the many complex processes involved in producing his work.



Procuring the *madake* bamboo

The first step in KOMORI's work involves cutting lengths of *madake* giant bamboo.



Lacquer Research and Training Institute

KOMORI started out as a *chinkin* artist. To further refine his skills, KOMORI joined the Wajima Lacquer Research and Training Institute to study under artists who were regarded as Living National Treasures. Inspired by his masters and their art, KOMORI realized he could combine different lacquering techniques to create new artistic possibilities.



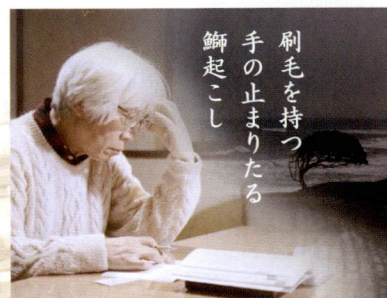
Encountering his mentors

Under the guidance of AKAJI Yusai, a *kyushitsu* artist who was considered a Living National Treasure, KOMORI made up his mind to dedicate his life to *kyushitsu*.



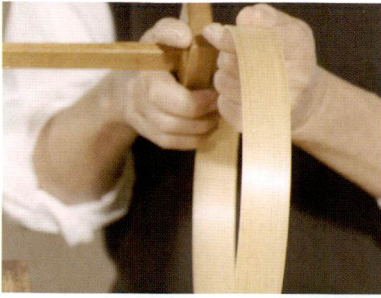
Weaving the *ajiro*

In *ajiro*, a kind of twill plaiting, the bamboo is interwoven to create designs by changing the number of strips in the weave. He uses strips that are 0.2mm thick and 2mm wide.



His other creative outlet, Haiku

In between work, KOMORI indulges in a favorite hobby – composing *haiku*.



Forming the *magewa* substrate

When forming *magewa* hoops, KOMORI prefers to use Noto cypress because the grains are straight and it's easy to process. He forms a number of hoops with different dimensions, guided by his design drawing.



Forming the lid

Using a plane, he shaves paulownia wood into a circle, giving it a slightly convex shape, to form the core of the lid to which he glues the *ajiro*.



Assembling the *magewa* hoops

Magewa or hoop-building involves applying an undercoat and overcoat to each hoop. Individual hoops are then stacked together and assembled.



Completing the substrate

KOMORI never stops exploring new design ideas. He decided to try transforming the rounded shape of the *magewa* into a polyhedron.



Teaching at the Institute

KOMORI is the first graduate of the Institute to be considered a Living National Treasure. He is now one of the Institute's chief instructors. Caring but strict, he teaches in the style of the famous masters he studied from in this very place.

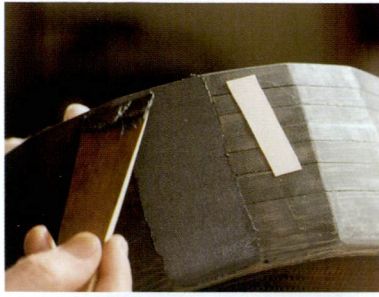


Nunokise, covering the substrate with fabric

The grain of the fabric is placed diagonally over the substrate to prevent shrinking or stretching.

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Shitajitsuke, applying the foundation layer

A mixture of *nori-urushi* and powdered diatomite is applied to the substrate over and over again. With each layer, he uses a finer *jinoko* diatomite powder to strengthen the bonds between layers.



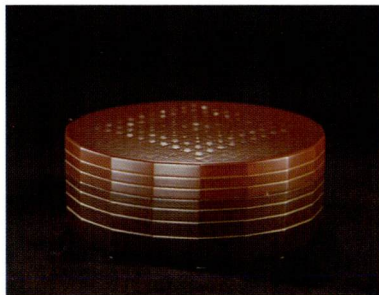
Nakanuri middle coating

Using a brush, KOMORI applies a thin coating of lacquer, repeating the process numerous times for a deep and lustrous finish.



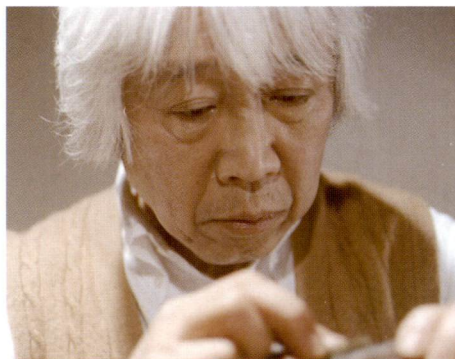
Uwanuri final coating

KOMORI uses *nuritate*, a finishing technique which relies on the inherent luster of lacquer and brushwork alone.



The completed work, an 18-Faceted Magewa and Rantai Food Box

The gradation from dark to light expresses the passing of time. KOMORI's sense of the passing of time is captured beneath the semi-translucent lacquer.



KOMORI Kunie

KOMORI was born in 1945, in Wajima, a city in Ishikawa Prefecture. In 1975 after mastering the technique of *chinkin* or gold inlaid decoration, he joined the Wajima Lacquer Research and Training Institute to further his studies of *kyushitsu*, the application of lacquer. There, he learned the *magewa* or hoop building technique from AKAJI Yusai and the *rantai* technique from OTA Hitoshi. *Rantai* is a technique in which woven bamboo strips are used to form the substrate.

Komori incorporates both *magewa* and *rantai* techniques in his work to create exquisitely formed shapes and designs over which he applies various *kyushitsu* techniques to emphasize the intricate pattern of the bamboo weave. His works are noted for their elegant refinement. In 2006, he was recognized as the holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property, *Kyushitsu*, and is considered a Living National Treasure.

Special Thanks

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Nakacho Konishi Arts

Producer YAMAMOTO Takayuki

Writer and director INOUE Minoru

Assistant director DOI Koichi

Camera operator YAWATA Yoichi

Assistant camera operators

FUJIWARA Yukihito, KONNO Seiki

Lighting EMORI Seihachi

Lighting assistant NOMOTO Toshiro

Sound recording ARAI Tomiyasu

Sound effects SHIBASAKI Kenji

Editing ISHII Kanoe

Music SHIMIZU Kentaro

Film editor KOCHI Toshiyuki

Titles

TSUDA Teruo, SEKIGUCHI Saori

Recording studio Aoi Studio Co., Ltd.

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Narrator Barry GJERDE