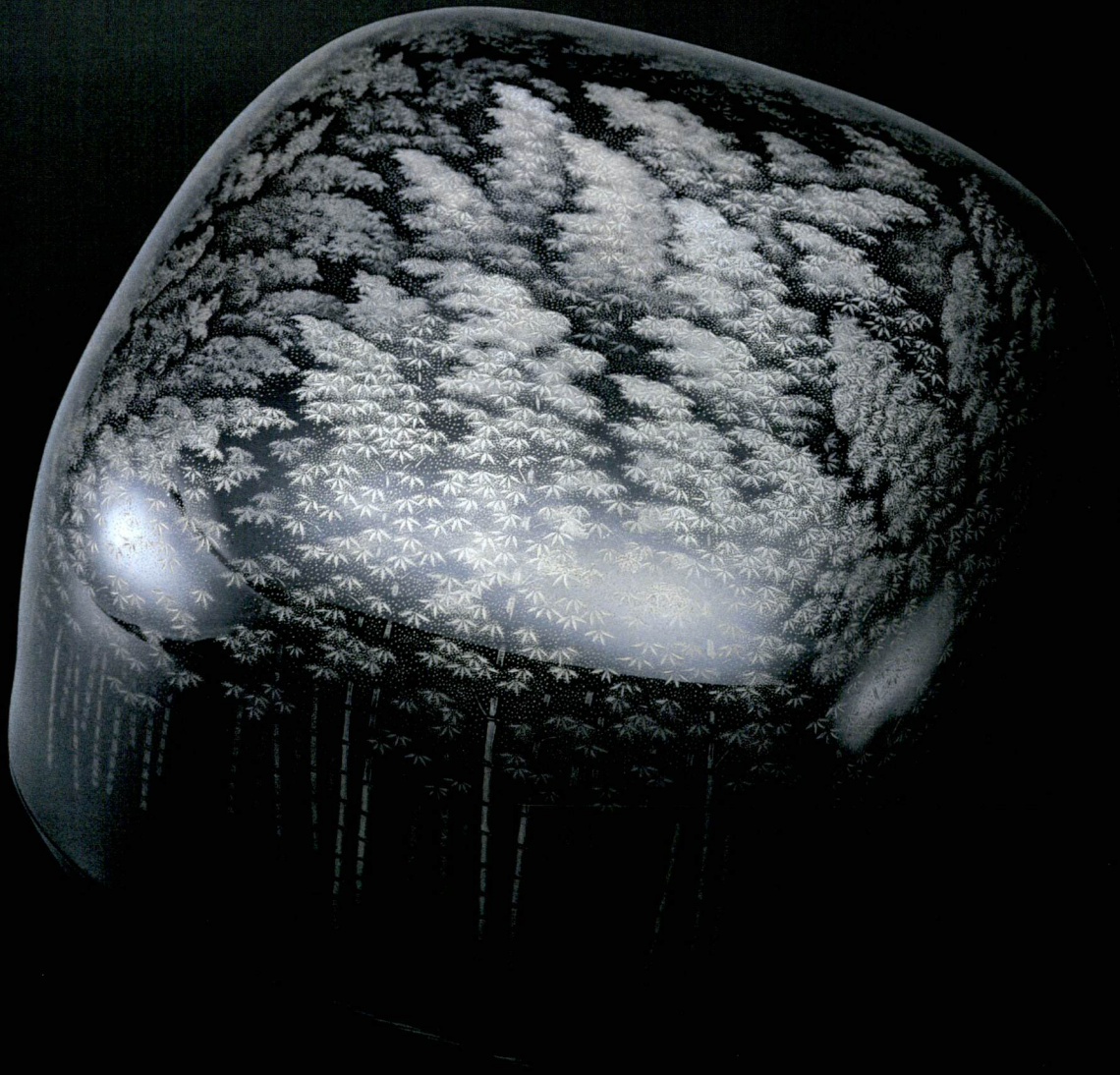


Craft Technique Documentary

CHINKIN

The Art of MAE Fumio



This video shows MAE Fumio, holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property, *chinkin*, as he creates a *chinkin* box called “*Yugen*” using chisels of his own design.

In this work, a narrow path leads our eye into the bamboo grove, where the leaves rustle in the delicate breeze of a dream-like world. This imaginary landscape, inspired by the artist’s deepest feelings, is in perfect harmony with the gentle roundness of the box.

FY2009 35mm/Color 37'

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

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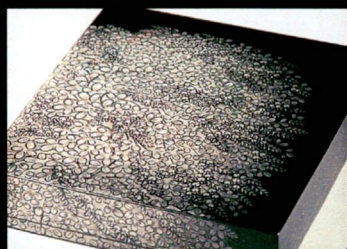
Prologue

MAE Fumio sketches a bamboo grove. He carries a small sketchbook wherever he goes, and aims to create at least one new design every day.



What is *chinkin*?

Chinkin means 'sunken gold.' It's an ornamental technique in which designs are carved into lacquered surfaces. Additional lacquer rubbed into these incisions is decorated with gold leaf or powder.



MAE Fumio's works

MAE Fumio's expressive works are evocative of Japanese-style paintings. His recent works are more delicate and lyrical, with the monochromatic look of ink brush paintings.



MAE Fumio's studio

MAE Fumio's studio stands on a quiet street close by the Wajima City morning market.



Designing

All his works begin from designs made in his sketchbook. His theme this time is a bamboo grove. He's trying to express the swaying of the rustling bamboos and the breeze that moves them.



Preparing the box and foundation layer

After deciding the concept and shape of the work, he begins with a plain wooden box. Wajima *jinoko*, baked and crushed diatomite powder, is applied to form a foundation layer on the box that can withstand all kinds and depths of carving.



MAE Fumio's encounter with *chinkin*

MAE Fumio's father and teacher, MAE Taiho, developed a new technique of dot engraving to give a more three-dimensional, pointillist effect.





Box in *chinkin* “Takamura – Bamboo Grove”

Awarded the President of Japan Crafts Association Prize at the 39th Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition (1992).
For this work, MAE Fumio designed a special angled chisel to carve the individual leaves.



Chinkin chisels

There are five main kinds of *chinkin* chisels.



Preparing the design

Referring to his bamboo grove sketches, MAE paints a sketch of his design.

In *chinkin*, once cutting begins there is no room for error so he spends a lot of time carefully preparing the design.



Okime (transferring the design)

He turns the paper over and traces the design with white pigment, then brushes the paper to transfer the white pigment design onto the box. This process is called *okime*.



Carving with the angled chisel

He starts with the angled chisel he designed himself, using it to cut the bamboo leaves. The angled chisel produces a V-shaped cut, allowing him to create a sharp, symmetrical leaf with just one incision.



Carving with the three types of chisels

He uses round-bladed, scraping, and pointed chisels for the bamboo trunks.



Carving dots with the pointed chisel

Adding dots between the leaves creates contrast and gradation, adding both perspective and atmosphere to the image of the bamboo grove.

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Applying lacquer

After carving, he applies an even coat of lacquer over the entire box and then wipes away the surface lacquer using *washi* paper.



Inlaying (1)

With a wad of cotton, he lightly dusts platinum powder onto the lacquer-filled incisions.



Inlaying (2)

Working from the top to the sides of the box, he uses the soot to add gradation to the silver platinum, and then further adjusts the contrast by adding carbon.



Finishing

He adds more platinum powder to certain parts with his fingertips to create the overall effect.

With the inlaying process completed, the silver bamboo now stands out in striking contrast to the black lacquer.



The completed work: Box in *chinkin* "Yugen"

A bamboo grove dusted with white shimmers in the winter sunlight, which will soon melt the soft snow. Its beauty is like that of an ink brush painting, the subtle and profound world of *yugen*.



MAE Fumio

Born in Wajima, Ishikawa Prefecture, in 1940. After studying Japanese-style painting (*nihonga*) at Kanazawa College of Art, in 1964 he began studying the traditional craft technique of *chinkin* as an apprentice to his father, MAE Taiho, researching new techniques and producing *chinkin* works while at the same time teaching art in public schools. Utilizing innovative techniques based on his researches into *chinkin* chisel design, he developed an emotive style that has been highly praised. In 1999, he was recognized as the holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property, *chinkin*.

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