ARITA 400project: A New Beginning in Arita’s History

Arita, birthplace of Japanese Ceramics, will celebrate the 400th anniversary of its porcelain industry in 2016. As we celebrate 400 years of traditions and techniques refined over its long history, a new Arita is coming to the world.

This project, sponsored by Saga Prefecture’s Arita 400-year anniversary initiative, is produced by Ken Okuyama’s KEN OKUYAMA DESIGN company. Imari, Arita, Ureshino and Takeo being the four main regions where Arita porcelain is produced, trading companies and ceramic workshops from these four regions will hold exhibits at French international trade fair “Maison & Objet” and promote their products on the international stage ahead of their 400th anniversary in 2016. Eight companies will participate in the “ARITA 400project” from September 4 to September 8, 2015.

■ Reception Event:
4 September 2015 from 17:30
PARIS NORD VILLEPINTE Hall 7 SCENES D’INTERIEUR / GALLERY
Stands : J2 「 ARITA - 400project - 」
History and Concept

In 1616, quality ceramic rocks were found in Arita’s Izumiyama mountain, giving birth to Japan’s first locally produced porcelain. That year became the starting point of Arita porcelain’s 400-year history. Arita porcelain was the result of importing technology and means of production from the continent and adapting them to Japanese aesthetics (namely, importing cultural specialties from overseas and improving them based on local standards). From the middle of the 17th century until the middle of the 18th century, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) exported Arita Porcelain from Asia to Europe. In 100 years, the corporation transported several million Arita Porcelain products across the seas. In 1878 and 1900, Arita Porcelain received the Grand Prize at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. In 2016, Arita Porcelain will mark its 400th anniversary.

In Europe, Arita, known as “IMARI” was also called “White Gold” and European royal aristocrats soon started decorating their residences with Arita porcelain vases and dishes. Many copies were also produced in renowned kilns such as those of Chantilly and Meissen. In 1878 and 1900, craftsmen from Arita went on to challenge the world, earning Arita porcelain the Grand Prize at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. Throughout its long history, Arita has always looked outward to redefine world-class porcelain.

In 2016, Arita will mark its 400 year-anniversary.

Traditions cannot live on through heritage alone. Constant innovation is the real safeguard of Arita’s traditions. With the “ARITA 400project”, Arita is bringing about the innovation that will continue to shape its history for the next four hundred years.
【2015 Exhibitors】

ARITA PORCELAIN LAB
Founded in 1804, Yazaemon Pottery, Arita’s largest porcelain workshop, has refined its trademark glazing techniques through relentless testing processes spanning over 200 years. Today, Arita Porcelain Lab is reinventing the Arita brand, instilling into its traditional glazing technique a sense of modernity and contemporary lifestyle.

FUKAGAWA-SEIJI
The Fukagawa Seiji household, which lit its first ceramic kiln in 1650, founded its own crafts company in 1894. After being awarded the Grand Prize at the Paris 1900 Exposition Universelle, Fukagawa Seiji was appointed official purveyor to the Japanese Imperial Household. Making all materials, glazes and paints internally from their initial composition down to their finishing touches, this unique company has the largest expert workforce in all of Arita, with seven master artisans producing the world’s greatest-quality porcelain. Their elegant and sophisticated design has also gained prominence throughout the world.

Gen-emon
Since its establishment in 1753, Gen-emon has produced countless handcrafted ceramic creations ranging from fine dinnerware to houseware, adjusting to the needs of modern times. Today, Gen-emon porcelain is a world-renowned household name. Its production often involves the combination of many different materials into a wide array of delicately crafted objects.

Produced by KEN OKUYAMA DESIGN
ARITA EPISODE 2 BY SAGA PREFECTURE
HATAMAN
Hataman is at the origin of the Imari Nabeshima brand of porcelain. It inherits ancient traditions while constantly adapting their design to shifting trends throughout the ages. Producing unparalleled added value, Hataman’s manufacturing processes combine traditional Japanese aesthetics with skillful craftsmanship.

Kamachi-toho
Kamachi Toho develops ceramic ware for businesses. Their tradition-inspired modern design and world-class dinnerware make them a go-to ceramics provider for famous hotels and restaurants throughout the world. They use modern techniques with traditional crafting methods on Arita’s world-renowned rocks, which allows them to produce a wide array of custom-made, colorful products.

KIHARA
The Kihara brand provides great-looking, user-friendly ceramic wares that keep its users coming back for more. As a local Arita porcelain trading company, Kihara offers dinnerware for contemporary and modern lifestyles. Kihara combines 400 years of tradition with innovative designs in order to create unique products.
RISO porcelain
After having studied advanced ceramic production techniques from Tohen of Koimari at Akita porcelain founder Yi Sam-Pyeong’s house, Riso Ceramics established Heisei Koimari, continuously striving to develop new products that meet the demands of modern times. Riso Ceramics has not only inherited the techniques of traditional porcelain production, but also integrates cutting-edge technologies into those production processes.

224porcelain
224porcelain is a new porcelain brand produced by Hizen Yoshida Pottery in Ureshino City, Saga Prefecture, a region well known for its tea and hot springs. Using techniques and tools developed over a long history of pottery production both in the Ureshino region and neighboring Arita City, they provide innovative products that enrich our daily lives.

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〈 Exhibition of September 2014 〉