

KOKESHITRENDS

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Special Issue 6

こけし生活 二



FOLK ART: CELEBRATING WOMEN ARTISANS 2

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Want to learn more about Kokeshi? Visit us on Facebook @[KokeshiVillage](#) group and follow us on Instagram @[KokeshiTrends_kt](#)

INTRODUCTION

Women artisans have always been crucial in preserving and advancing traditional crafts worldwide. Their skills and creativity are often passed down through generations, ensuring that cultural heritage remains vibrant and relevant.

From intricate textile designs to hand-carved or turned woodwork, women artisans bring a unique perspective to their craft by blending tradition with innovation. Their work not only supports local economies but also uplifts communities by promoting cultural identity and gender equality.

Recognizing and celebrating these artisans is important in acknowledging the valuable role they play in the continuity and evolution of Kokeshi art forms. This is the 2nd special issue, in which Kokeshi Trends honors the "Kokeshi Life" of women artisans and the wooden treasures they create.

The women artisans featured in this issue are just a small representation of the many talented individuals who have made significant contributions to the art form. We plan to showcase more inspiring sōsaku and dentō creations from female artisans in future issues. Stay tuned for more beautiful and inspiring work!


Founding Editor

Title of Work: Komorebi (木漏れ日)
Sunlight Filtering Through the Trees

Size: 7 cm

Collection: Soulportals.com

As spring unfolds its gentle charm, Komorebi embodies the vibrant green leaves that dance with the sunlight. In this serene setting, she wears a delightful yellow beret. The lively sparkle in her bright eyes and the blush of her cheeks reflect the season's tender energy, showcasing the pure essence of youth.



Title of Work:
Akizono (秋園) Autumn Garden
Size: 9 cm

Ayaka-san is adorned in a colorful kimono. The fabric is vibrant with patterns that seem to capture the very essence of spring.

The artistic design is so finely crafted that it brings to mind a vision of her surrounded by a gentle snowfall of blossoms.

Her sweet soft facial elements create an impression that she is immersed in a serene moment, savoring the fleeting beauty of a springtime snow.



TOMIDOKORO CHIYA

Maker: 富所千弥 YOB: 1988 ~

Birth City: Born Gunma Prefecture

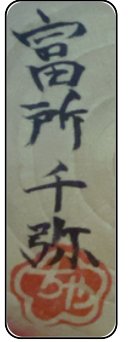
Master: Tomidokoro Fumio

Title of Work: Haru Omou (春想う) Thinking of Spring

Size: 18 cm

Collection: Soulportals.com

Tomidokoro-san's Kokeshi dolls are rapidly gaining popularity among collectors. Their vibrant colors and intricately detailed, multi-patterned kimono designs stand out. The gentle expressions on the faces evoke a sense of youthful innocence.



AOKI RYOKA

Maker: 青木 寥華 **YOB:** 1931 ~

Birth City: Shikishima Village, Gunma Prefecture

Title of Work: Nukumori (温もり) Warmth

Aoki Ryoka, formerly known as Aoki Toshiko, was born in January 1931 in Setagun Akagimura, Gunma Prefecture. She attended Gunma Prefecture's Shibukawa High School. Aoki-san is a Kokeshi Artisan by trade and enjoys Japanese painting and Buddhist painting as hobbies. She is also a member of the Japanese National Kyudo Archery Association and holds the title of Kyudo Master 6th dan.



In a previous interview by KokeshiTrends, Aoki-san explained that she received the name "Ryoka" while studying Japanese painting under Master Nozawa Ryoshu, a renowned Japanese painting master. He bestowed the name upon her. At the time, there were no active Kokeshi designers, making it difficult to earn a living from it. Aoki-san decided to officially establish a company and began creating and selling commercially available Kokeshi.

She is a multi-award winner, having had the honor of being presented with the Prime Minister's Award on four separate occasions.

Title of Work: Cold Wind

Aoki-san's dedication to using quality wood and approaching each design with love and devotion ensures that every piece is crafted with care and attention to detail. This commitment to excellence not only results in beautiful and unique creations, but also imbues each Kokeshi with a sense of warmth and positivity. When someone receives a Kokeshi doll, they are not just receiving a piece of art, but a token of joy and happiness that will bring a smile to their face every time they look at it.





Maker: Joanna McPherson
YOB: 1973 ~
Birth City: London, England
Title of Work: Super Folk Toy Stack!
Size: 52 cm
Collection: Soulportals.com

Standing at approximately 52 cm in height, this extra-large wood girl is a one-of-a-kind creation, numbered and signed as #32 on the base. One of the tallest pieces made by the artisan at the time of creation, she embodies Joanna's love for Japanese folk toys.

Adorned from head to toe, she carries a Maneki Neko lucky cat, a Tai Guruma (red sea bream on wheels), an Akabeko lucky cow, an Inu Hariko (papier mache dog), a Kokeshi head, and a Hato Guruma (woven pigeon on wheels). Completing her ensemble is a large, Grumpy Daruma.

BLUE BEAR VENDING CO

"My Favorite Things" is a wood girl series that reflects the places, things, and themes that hold a special significance to the artist, or celebrates a particular seasonal event. Crafted from sustainable American Tulipwood (also known as yellow poplar), these pieces are turned by a skilled wood turner in the UK according to Joanna's designs, then each piece is meticulously hand painted and finished with a matte acrylic top coat.

Title of Work: Kutani Calico
Size: 30 cm
Collection: Soulportals.com

Inspired by a vintage Kutani porcelain calico Maneki Neko adorned with a red bib, this girl wears a ceramic cat on her head embellished with intricate red, white, and gold patterns.

Contact Details

Facebook: [bluebearvendingco](https://www.facebook.com/bluebearvendingco)
Instagram: [bluebearvendingco](https://www.instagram.com/bluebearvendingco)
Website: [bluebearvending.com](https://www.bluebearvending.com)



KATAGAMI KOKESHI



“The butterfly is the symbol of total transformation. It shows us how to best achieve what we want to become.”

Maker: 蓮華(レンカ) Renka, Réka Tóth-Vásárhelyi

Birth City: Budapest, Hungary

Master: Aoki Ryoka

YOB: 1975 ~

Réka Tóth-Vásárhelyi was born in 1975, in Budapest, Hungary. She resides there with her husband and two daughters.

Katagami Kokeshi is the brand name for her work. It describes a method used by artists to create new designs by applying paper stencils on each other. Réka-san has been interested in Japanese art and culture from the very young age of ten. Later, she was inspired by Jun Tsukawaki, a sculptor whose class she had attended during university. She has also had the opportunity to learn from Master Kokeshi artisans like Aoki Ryoka. Réka-san has already won multiple awards for her works.



Award-winning Kokeshi titled Touch of Flowers

Reason for Being:

“KAIKA is a Japanese term for this feeling, ‘the moment I didn't plan.’ I just tried it; it made me happy, so I continued, in bigger steps, and finally it blossomed. Of course, I had a basis for comparison, since before that I had success in other jobs, but they involved a lot of energy, obstacles and constant difficulties.”

Réka-san discusses the Japanese term IKIGAI, which

refers to having a reason for existence or finding eternal happiness through your life's mission. She has been searching for meaning and fulfillment, and finds that IKIGAI and KAIKA (talent) brings her joy. She believes that combining IKIGAI, KAIKA, and time leads to MANKAI, the moment when one finds their talent and dedicates themselves to it, ultimately bringing happiness to themselves and others.



Maiko



KATAGAMI KOKESHI



Prince of the Forest

Réka-san believes that spirituality is essential in her work. She strives to imbue her creations with a soul, influenced by both internal and external vibrations. She follows her intuitions and incorporates symbols, internal messages and inspirational thoughts into her artwork. When making dolls, she first considers the soul of the wood, and becomes a channel for the creative process. The finished pieces reflect a blend of Japanese and Hungarian heritage.

There are over 250 types of dolls in Japan, each carrying a spiritual message. These ceremonies, which honor the body-soul connection, continue to be observed today.

The history of Kokeshi dolls is steeped in customs and ceremonies based on the belief that dolls have healing power and offer protection to their owners.

Réka-san has been privileged to participate in Shinto ceremonies for master Kokeshi artisans, receiving blessings for her work and expressing gratitude. The use of symbols is a significant aspect of Japanese culture, reflecting the changing of seasons and covering all aspects of life. She incorporates symbolic decorations into her works, adding an extra layer of meaning, akin to cryptography.



Lotus Essence

KATAGAMI KOKESHI

Butterflies Soul



During the 2020 quarantine, Réka-san felt a need for personal transformation, likening it to a butterfly emerging from a cocoon.

She has been painting dolls with this theme and plans to create a big butterfly as the final stage of their transformation.

Inspired by a meeting with sculptor Nóra Szirmai, she will explore the themes of butterflies and silk cocoons in an upcoming exhibition.

Réka-san decided to use a traditional Japanese technique called shibari, which means "to bind" or "to tie tightly," to represent the mental and physical transformation process. While this technique is typically used on humans, she applied it to Kokeshi dolls to represent the essence of human existence. Through this unique combination of art forms, she hopes to showcase the transformation of a soul bound to a body.

Réka-san's artistic mission:

"I would like to bring the cultures of the world even closer to each other through Kokeshi. I would like to open people's hearts with my creations to love and respect the natural, simple, volatile and imperfect gifts of life."

Reka's slogan: "From Japanese folk art to contemporary doll art, from Kokeshi to KAKO."



Silk Thread

In Japan, it is customary for a student to adopt one of the kanji characters from their master's name into the "Go" art-name (pseudonym) given to the student by their master. Reka adopted the character "華" from her master's, Aoki Ryoka (青木 寥華), name into her "Go" name, "Renka 蓮華(レンカ)", meaning "Radiant Lotus Flower".

Contact Details

Facebook: [Réka Tóth-Vásárhelyi](#)
Instagram: [Katagami Kokeshi](#)
Website: www.katagamikokeshi.com



Our Bonds

HODSDON KOKESHI



Maker: Lisa Holt-Hodsdon
Birth City: Myrtle Beach, SC
YOB: 1973 ~

Maker: Jacob Hodsdon
Birth City: Syracuse, New York
YOB: 1979 ~



Title of Work: Lola Naki
Materials: Oak burl, Maple, Tulip Poplar, acrylic paint
Production Year: 2024
Size: 4"(w) x 3"(d) x 5.5"(h)



Title of Work: Haratoshi and Baby Yai
Materials: Algerita burl, Monkey Pod, Maple, Gingko, acrylic paint
Production Year: 2024
Size: 7.5"(w) x 4"(d) x 7"(h)

About the Artist:

Lisa and Jacob Hodsdon are a creative wife and husband team who have been working together for over 17 years.

Lisa, a Japanese-American artist, designs and paints each doll by hand, drawing inspiration from the Japanese wooden dolls she grew up with.

Jacob is a wood turner who is inspired by nature and aims to bring out the natural spirit of the wood in his creations.

Together, they create unique and spiritually organic treasures known as the Hodsdon Kokeshi.

HODSDON KOKESHI



Title of Work: Okinomo Banksia

Materials: Banksia pod, Maple, Ginkgo, Rosewood, acrylic paint

Production Year: 2024

Size: 5"(w) x 4"(d) x 12"(h)

Awards

- 2014 - Professional Excellence Award, AAW Saratoga Springs
- Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen, Master Artisans
- 2019 - Benchmark Award, PA Guild of Craftsmen

Publications:

- Turned and Sculpted, Wood Symphony
- Art Doll Quarterly Magazine 2018
- American Woodturner, feature article 2018
- Kokeshi Trends Online Journal 2018
- Japanese Kokeshi Dolls, Manami Okazaki
- Sway Gallery London-Kokeshi exhibition
- VPRCOMM
- Masters of Contemporary Wood Art, Volume 1, 2, 3, 4

Title of Work: Nico Moon

Materials: Mopani, African Blackwood, Tulip Poplar, Maple, acrylic paints

Production Year: 2024

Size: 3.5"(w) x 2.5"(d) x 8.5"(h)

Broadcasting:

TV Asahi, Nationwide Japan 2019

Exhibitions

- American Craft Show, American Craft Council
- Art Expo, NYC
- Smithsonian Craft Show, May 2024, Creating Peace
- Ann Marie Sculpture Garden exhibition 2024

Contact Details

Facebook: [Naomi Gallery](#)

Instagram: [hodsdon_kokeshi](#)

Website: [HodsdonKokeshi.com](#)



MIURA SETSUKO

About the Artist:

Miura-san, born in 1952 in Akita prefecture, has been a prominent figure in the art of Kokeshi since 1997, earning multiple accolades at the All Japan Kokeshi Competition and the National Modern Kokeshi Exhibition. Her creations are distinguished by their originality and inventive flair, infused with a vibrant sense of humor and an expressive quality reminiscent of manga comics.



Maker: 三浦 節子 **YOB:** 1952 ~

Birth City: Ikawa-cho,
Minamiakita-gun, Akita Pref.

Title of Work: Melody

Size: 35 cm

Collection: Soulportals.com



Awards

- 1997 All Japan Kokeshi Competition, Forestry Agency Commissioner's Award
- 1998 All Japan Kokeshi Competition, Maebashi Chamber of Commerce and Industry President's Award
- 2005 All Japan Kokeshi Competition, Fukushima Chamber of Commerce and Industry President's Award
- 2007 National Modern Kokeshi Exhibition, Newcomer Award
- 2008 All Japan Kokeshi Competition, Shiroishi Chamber of Commerce and Industry President's Award
- 2008 National Modern Kokeshi Exhibition, Tokyo Shimbun Award
- 2009 National Modern Kokeshi Exhibition, Encouragement Award
- 2010 National Modern Kokeshi Exhibition, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Encouragement Award

Photo Credit: 2013 National Creative Kokeshi Art Exhibition In Shibukawa 20th Anniversary Magazine. Colorized by Soulportals.com

MIURA SETSUKO

Daikokuten (大黒天)

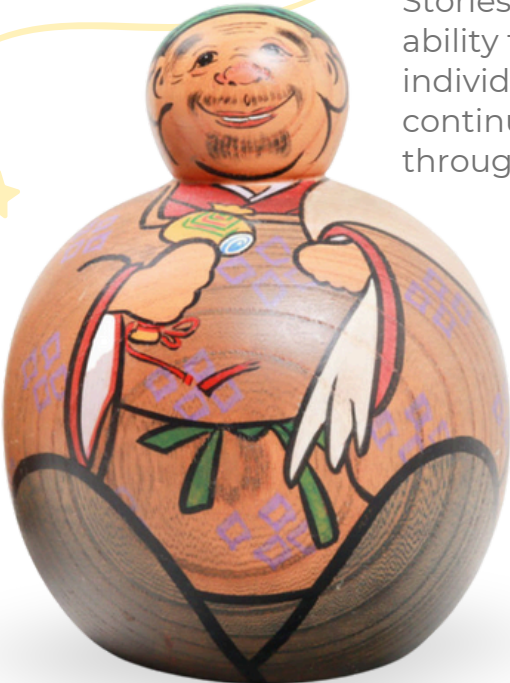
Daikokuten, also known as Daikoku [大黒], is a prominent deity in Japanese folklore and revered as the god of fortune, wealth, and prosperity. With roots deep in Japanese mythology, Daikokuten holds a significant place in the pantheon of Japanese deities.

In Japanese mythology, Daikokuten is associated with agricultural abundance, bountiful harvests, and overall good luck. His presence is believed to ward off misfortune and attract prosperity, making him a popular figure in rituals and ceremonies related to wealth and success.

Various myths and legends surround Daikokuten, portraying him as a benevolent deity who bestows wealth and prosperity upon those who seek his favor.

Stories of his magical powers and ability to bring abundance to both individuals and communities continue to be passed down through generations.

Daikokuten is commonly associated with symbolic objects such as the mallet of prosperity, a bale of rice representing abundance, and a bag of treasures signifying wealth. These objects serve as reminders of Daikokuten's blessings and are often used in rituals and offerings dedicated to him.



Ebisu (恵比須)

Ebisu and Daikokuten are significant figures in Japanese mythology, celebrated for their connections to fortune, wealth, and plenty. Each deity embodies distinct characteristics and symbolism, which enhances their popularity within Japanese culture. Exploring the extensive history, meanings, and practices associated with Ebisu and Daikokuten offers valuable perspectives on the enduring beliefs and customs which foster admiration and devotion to these auspicious gods in modern Japan.

Ebisu, the god of fishermen and good fortune, like Daikoku, is believed to be one of the Seven Lucky Gods in Japanese mythology. Despite his humble origins as a son of the Japanese deities Izanami and Izanagi, he is revered for his kindness and generosity, and is often depicted holding a red snapper, a symbol of prosperity.

Seeking the blessings of Ebisu and Daikokuten typically involves acts of reverence, gratitude, and faith. This can include visiting their temples or shrines, making offerings of food or items symbolizing wealth, and partaking in rituals believed to attract good fortune.



WATANABE MIYOKO

Maker: 渡辺みよ子

Retired: ~ 2009

Master: Watanabe Yuji

Collection: Trish D. Carpio

Title of Work: (L) Haruno (春野) Spring Field

Size: 20 cm



About the Artist:

Watanabe Miyoko is the wife of Yuji-san and the daughter-in-law of Masao-san. She decided to not turn the wood herself, but instead painted the wooden dolls crafted by her husband, Yuji-san.

Regrettably, her artistic contributions frequently go unrecognized and are not adequately acknowledged, which complicates the process of finding her works on public auction sites. Additionally, the existence of similar designs by Yuji-san adds to the difficulty of visually distinguishing her pieces.

Nevertheless, Kokeshi dealers who have connections with the family and are familiar with her artistic legacy may occasionally offer Miyoko-san's work.

Although she has retired and stopped producing new Kokeshi dolls, her creations are characterized by a consistent body shape and a unique short hairstyle, with the dolls dressed in kimono featuring a V-neck and flowing sleeves.





Title of Work: Small Beauty
Size: 6.5 in.
Collection: Soulportals.com

About the Artist:

Cynthia Carden is a talented designer-turned-pyrography-artist. She is based in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She discovered pyrography

in 2008 and has since developed her own unique style of pyro-engraving. Having been inspired by Kokeshi, Cynthia creates these wonderful Amazing Dolls in her home studio. She uses unique and beautiful coloring techniques in her work and includes charming embellishments for their hair designs.

In addition to creating dolls, Cynthia has also worked with well-known woodworking artists from around the world. She is a highly sought-after teacher of her techniques, and her collaborative works have been published in national and international journals.

Contact Details

Facebook: [Cynthia Carden](#)
 Instagram: [cynthiacardenpyrography](#)
 Website: [cynthiacardenpyrography.com](#)



THE AMAZING DOLL

Maker: Cynthia Carden
Birth City: Warwick, Rhode Island **YOB:** 1956 ~
Title of Work: A Love of your Own
Size: 5 in.
Collection: Soulportals.com

Awards:

2013 Award of Excellence, American Association of Woodturners (AAW) International Symposium

2015 Award of Excellence, Artists Guild of Spartanburg, South Carolina

2020 Award from the National Endowment for the Arts and the South Carolina Arts Commission in collaboration with the South Carolina Arts Foundation and the South Carolina Artists Relief Fund

2021 Award from the National Endowment for the Arts and the South Carolina Arts Commission in collaboration with the South Carolina Arts Foundation and the South Carolina Artists Relief Fund





Maker: 大関 青園
YOB: Unknown
Birth City: Yonezawa City
Title of Work: Shunkou,
Spring Light
Size: 18 cm
Collection: Soulportals.com

About the Artist:

Ohseki Seien-san's real name is said to be Yae (八重), and only after the passing of her husband did she begin to create Kokeshi. She graduated from Tokyo Women's Art School and studied Japanese painting under Master Hirafuku Hyakusui (平福 百穂).

Ohseki Seien's unique style and attention to detail made her a standout artist during her time. Her collaboration with the Daimaru Department Store helped bring her work to a wider audience, and the "Hitakami Kokeshi" series remains highly coveted by collectors for its historical significance and craftsmanship.



Photo Credit: Yamanaka, N., & Toshiya Kano. (1973). Contemporary Kokeshi: The People and Their Works. Kyoei Shobo. Colorized by Soulportals.com

Title of Work: Yuya (Yōkyoku)
Size: 36 cm
Collection: Soulportals.com

The connection to the Hitakami region (ancient name for northeastern Japan) adds another layer of depth to Seien's work, as it reflects her appreciation for traditional Japanese culture and nature. The Kokeshi from this series are not only beautiful pieces of art but also serve as a reminder of the rich history and heritage of Iwate prefecture.

Ohseki Seien's legacy as a sōsaku Kokeshi artist continues to be celebrated today, with her works being treasured by collectors around the world for their beauty, craftsmanship and cultural significance.



大関 青園

FUKUSHIMA HIROE

Maker:	福島汪江 YOB: Unknown
Awards:	Multi-award winning artisan
Title of Work:	Okaa-chan (お母ちゃん) Mom
Size:	17.5 cm
Material:	Wood, Natural Dyes
Collection:	Soulportals.com

Title of Work:	Hidemari (陽だまり) Sunshine
Size:	12 cm
Material:	Wood, Natural Dyes
Collection:	Soulportals.com



About the Artist:

The late Fukushima Hiroe-san was based out of Haramachi, Agatsuma-machi, Gunma Prefecture.

Despite the lack of information available about Fukushima-san, her unique style and subject matter have captivated Kokeshi enthusiasts around the world. Her use of bold colors and intricate details bring her characters to life, creating a sense of innocence and wonder in each piece.

The vegetables and fruits Kokeshi she created are among the most sought-after in Kokeshi collector communities, frequently showcased in baskets as central display pieces.



FUKUSHIMA HIROE

Title of Work: Vegetables
Size: Various
Material: Wood, Natural Dyes



Title of Work: Akari mo iro (灯もいろ)
Lights are Colorful
Size: 11 cm
Material: Wood, Natural Dyes
Collection: Soulportals.com



Theme: Lady with a Parasol
Size: 23 cm
Material: Wood, Color: Sumi-e Black
Collection: Soulportals.com

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SHIBATA EIKO



Artist:	柴田栄子 YOB: 1924 ~
Title of Work:	Pigtails, Jar, Other
Size:	Various
Material:	Various
Awards:	Multi-award winning
Collection:	Soulportals.com

About the Artist:

Shibata Eiko, a Kokeshi artisan from Shiroishi City, Miyagi, gained recognition for her outstanding craftsmanship in creating depictions of young girls wearing traditional kimonos. She won several awards including the 1993 Prime Minister's Award, one of the highest recognitions at the All Japan Kokeshi Competition.

The fine details and delicate features of each Kokeshi showcase the artisan's dedication to preserving the cultural heritage and artistic traditions of Japan. Through meticulous attention to detail, Shibata-san brings these Kokeshi to life with vibrant colors, intricate patterns, and delicate facial expressions that captivate viewers and evoke a sense of nostalgia.

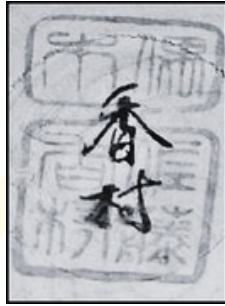
Image Source: National Creative Kokeshi Art Exhibition in Shibukawa 1994-1998; used under the guidelines of "fair use" in title 17 § 107 of the United States Code meant for educational and informational purposes only. Colorized by soulportals.com

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Sato Kouson - Komura Kogei

Artist:	佐藤香村 YOB: Unknown
Title of Work:	Autumn leaves
Size:	34 cm (L) 44 cm (R)
Material:	Dogwood
Awards:	Multi-award winning
Collection:	Soulportals.com



About the Artist:

Sato Kouson is a distinguished female wood artisan celebrated for her unique and large-scale Kokeshi creations. She explores a variety of cultural themes with a blend of creativity and originality. Her work often showcases autumn foliage designs and serene landscapes, highlighting her remarkable skill and deep understanding of wood as an artistic medium. Her Kokeshi are sold through their business, Komura Kogei Co., Ltd., which currently offers a limited selection of designs for sale, as their main emphasis has shifted towards Natural Mineral Water as their primary product.



OKI IZUMI

Artist:	沖いづみ YOB: 1956~
Master:	Sekiguchi Sansaku
Title of Work:	Yuki no Kaze (雪の風) Snow Wind
Size:	15 cm
Material:	Dogwood, Natural Dyes
Awards:	Multi-award winning
Collection:	Soulportals.com

About the Artist:

Oki Izumi, the daughter of renowned Kokeshi craftsman Sekiguchi Sansaku, honed her skills as an apprentice under her father's expert mentorship, ultimately creating her own distinctive approach to Kokeshi making.

Yuki no Kaze is adorned in a sophisticated winter kimono outfit featuring a stunning fur collar scarf and wrist cuffs. The solid black kimono embellished with subtle snowflake patterns, along with the carefully styled hair and accessories, showcases the artisan's exceptional craftsmanship. This Creative Kokeshi doll transcends mere decoration; it embodies the essence of Japanese culture and tradition, symbolizing elegance, grace, and beauty.



Awards:

- 1983 Chairman of the Japan External Trade Organization Award
- 1984 Newcomer Award at the National Kokeshi Competition
- 1994 Crafts Association Award at the National Kokeshi Crafts Exhibition
- 1997 Tokyo Shimbun Award at the National Kokeshi Crafts Exhibition
- 1998 1st place at the National Kokeshi Crafts Exhibition, Minister of Education Award

Contact Details

Instagram: [sirohae](#)

Website: [zenworld.jp](#)

OKI IZUMI

Title of Work: Odekake (お出かけ) Going Out

Size: 11 cm

Material: Wood, Natural Dyes

Collection: Soulportals.com

This artisan's portrayal of the concept of "going out" offers a distinctive and imaginative interpretation of the desire for social engagement and adventure. Dressed in fashionable attire and carrying a petite purse that represents the spirit of a delightful "day in the city", she embodies the essence of exploration. The meticulous craftsmanship evident in this Kokeshi highlights Oki-san's



expertise in design, rendering it not only aesthetically pleasing but also culturally significant. By encapsulating the thrill and escapism linked to social outings, this Kokeshi reflects society's inherent longing for leisure and companionship.

In summary, this creatively-designed Kokeshi symbolizes the joy of going out, serving as a playful yet elegant representation of human interaction and recreational pursuits, making it a fascinating addition to any collection.

Title of Work: Asagao (朝顔) Morning Glory

Size: 11 cm

Material: Wood, Natural Dyes

Collection: Soulportals.com

Oki-san adorned this Kokeshi with a lovely Morning Glory kimono design, a stunning representation of Japanese culture and craftsmanship. The intricate hand-painted details on the kimono symbolize elegance and grace, while the vivid colors evoke a sense of beauty and harmony.

The Kokeshi doll itself is expertly crafted, with smooth contours and a content expression that projects happiness. Its simplistic yet sophisticated design captures the essence of Japanese aesthetic principles, displaying a perfect balance between simplicity and intricacy.



OKAMOTO YOSHIE

Artist:	岡本 芳江 YOB: 1950
Awards:	Multi-award winning artisan
Birth City:	Shibukawa, Gunma Pref.
Master:	Okamoto Usaburo
Title of Work:	Shiawase (しあわせ) Happiness
Size:	17.5 cm
Material:	Wood, Natural Dyes



Awards

- The first female Kokeshi artist to receive the Prime Minister's Award at the All Japan Kokeshi Competition, in 1985 for "The Flow of Time"
- The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Award at the All Gunma Kokeshi Competition in 2011

About Artisan:

Okamoto Yoshie-san was born in Shibukawa City, Gunma Prefecture in 1950. She studied Kokeshi making under the first Usaburo from the age of nineteen.

These exquisite pieces, titled "*Shiawase*," which translates to "Happiness" are crafted from dogwood. The artwork on the left showcases stunning gradients of green and yellow. On the right, a vibrant combination of bright red and light pink hues captivates the viewer. Both pieces evoke a sense of serenity as they seem to gaze towards the sky or perhaps at blooming plum blossom trees.

Image Source: Usaburo Kokeshi's craftsmen: USABURO Kokeshi online store. 卯三郎こけし公式オンラインストア. (n.d.). [Link](#)

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FOLK ART: CELEBRATING WOMEN ARTISANS



Kachou Fugetsu
花鳥風月
Beauties of Nature



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