

Turn it over! — PART FOUR

by Judy Stopke

Shiho Murota brings masterful Japanese craftsmanship to National



Surely the most surprising “Turn It Over” button we’ve seen was the Satsuma above, created by Shiho Murota of Tarumizu, Kagoshima Prefecture (formerly Satsuma Domain), Japan, displayed at Mika Jarmusz’s table at National. The delicately painted bird on the front depicts Shiho’s pet java sparrow name Ume-chan. Ume means plums. Turn it over. Revealed is a richly decorated overall design of plum blossoms!

Between the two is the precision openwork art of the award-winning Mr. Gafu Kamibeppu of the Nanpu-zan kiln of Kagoshima, Japan. The openwork is hand cut on the greenware before firing, as shown in the series above. Mr. Kamibeppu also makes incense burners and lamps using this method.



Photo series: permission granted by Mr. Kamibeppu

Unlike most of the antique and vintage Satsuma button painting methods used in locations other than Satsuma, the traditional painting method Shiho uses was handed down in the Satsuma Domain. It involves applying gold (which looks brown before firing) and platinum outlines BEFORE all other colors are added, creating hydrophobic compartments containing colors that are added afterward to pool within the lines.

Shiho’s first trip to a National Button Convention was last year at Manchester, New Hampshire, where she impressed onlookers as she demonstrated her art in



the hotel lobby. She also demonstrated and sold her buttons at Mika Jarmusz’s table and generously donated to the auction a button that she had painted in the showroom. The button had to be completed in Japan, then shipped to the winning bidder, Nancy Boyer of Pennsylvania. This year, Shiho designed a button filled with symbolism supporting the Denver show theme, “Mining in Button Mountains.” George Gauthier of New Hampshire was the lucky winner, and his bid was the highest paid



With the tiniest brush Shiho meticulously paints the glazes on the button.

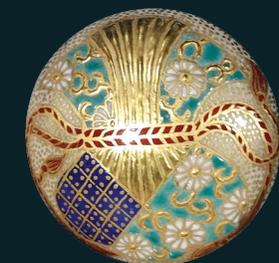
for a single button at the auction.

Shiho has shown us that Satsuma craftsmanship is alive and well in Japan.

Shiho explains her art to Emily and Abigail Hurst and their mother Kathy Hurst.



The “treasure pouch” design, symbolizing the magical powers of fortune, requires eight stages of painting and several firings. Four of the eight stages are shown here.



Photos: Reggie Ruth Barrett and Judy Stopke