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Japan Society & Japan Institute of Portland Japanese Garden Present

## ***Bingata Textiles: Preserving a Royal Tradition in Okinawa***

The First Live Webinar of the 2022-23 *Living Traditions* Series, A Multi-Part Program Designed to Examine Iconic Facets of Japanese Culture  
From Ancient Roots to Modern Day

Tuesday, October 18, 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)



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**New York, NY (September 22, 2022)**—To launch the new season of the celebrated [Living Traditions](#) series, a multi-part program co-presented by Japan Society New York and Japan Institute of Portland Japanese Garden focusing on Japanese culture from the historical to the contemporary, we are pleased to present *Bingata Textiles: Preserving a Royal Tradition in Okinawa*. The *bingata* method of textile dyeing is a vibrant artistic tradition with a long history on Japan's subtropical Okinawan islands. Originally reserved for the sumptuous garb of the royalty

and ruling class of the Ryukyu Kingdom, these traditional hand-dyeing techniques are still being carried on by craftspeople in Okinawa today. This program explores the fascinating history, unique methods, and current state of *bingata* with textile specialist **Ginny Soenksen**, and *bingata* craftsman **Touma Chinen**. This lecture is also a part of Japan Society's *Okinawa in Focus: Revisiting the Archipelago 50 Years After Its Reversion to Japan*, a special year-long series commemorating the 50-year anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan from the United States.

### Agenda

7-8 pm ET (4-5 pm PT)      Discussion and Q&A

**Program Details:** This is a free event, with advance registration required. The program will be live-streamed through YouTube, and registrants will receive the viewing link by email on the day before the event. Participants can submit questions through YouTube during the live stream. Register [here](#).

### Participants:

**Virginia "Ginny" Soenksen** is the director of the Madison Art Collection and Lisanby Museum at James Madison University. She has previously worked at the Fralin Museum of Art, the Ringling Museum, the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, and the Frist Art Museum. Her work on educational programming and audio-visual exhibition components earned several awards from the Southeastern Museums Conference and the Tennessee Association of Museums. Her publications include several articles in *Textiles Asia*, and *Textiles of Japan: The Thomas Murray Collection* (Prestel, 2019). She earned a BA in Psychology from the University of Mary Washington and an MA in Art History from Tufts University. She is currently a candidate for a Ph.D. in Strategic Leadership Studies at James Madison University.

**Toma Chinen** and his studio, Chinen Bingata Institute, are derived from the Chinen family. Dating back to the Ryukyu Dynasty, the Chinen family has a long history of producing *bingata*. The Chinen family is one of the three oldest *bingata* studios in Okinawa. Originally, they were called "Shitagibo-Chinen." Today, Chinen Bingata Institute is mainly producing kimono and obi. Toma Chinen, the current head of the studio, studied design in Kyoto and overseas. He works vigorously on a dyeing method that requires especially complex techniques and focuses on using *oborogata*, a layered technique, and *ryōmengata*, a technique of dyeing both sides of a textile. He took over the studio in 2017 and has started various collaborations with other production areas and industries.

**Masato Ishida**, Associate Professor of Philosophy, and the Director of the Center for Okinawan Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, received his academic training in Japan, Canada, and the United States. He joined the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 2009 after completing his PhD in philosophy at the Pennsylvania State University. Masato Ishida has been serving as Director of the Center for Okinawan Studies at the University of Hawai'i since 2018. He specializes in classical American Philosophy and traditional Japanese philosophy and is particularly interested in modern intellectual movements in Okinawa. He has published articles on prewar and postwar Okinawa and has given numerous talks on Okinawa-related themes in mainland Japan, Okinawa, and the United States.

### **About the *Living Traditions* Series**

Many of today's most popular and newest trends are rooted in ancient Japanese tradition going back centuries, if not millennia. Through multiple distinct, single-topic webinars, the *Living Traditions* series unravels the historical journeys of some of the most iconic facets of Japanese culture through conversations between thought-provoking experts and cultural stewards on how they maintain deep-rooted traditions in the present day. *Bingata Textiles: A Royal Tradition in Okinawa* is the first event this season of the multi-part *Living Traditions* series. Upcoming programming will continue to be announced. Previous lectures focused on topics including Japanese gardens, Zen and spiritual practices, manga and anime and architecture. They can be viewed [here](#).

### **About Japan Society**

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan more fully. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

*Okinawa in Focus: Revisiting the Archipelago 50 Years After Its Reversion to Japan*, is a multi-faceted, year-long programming series exploring the fascinating history and culture of this unique archipelago and its people. This first-of-its-kind commemoration, which kicked off on March 15, 2022, highlights Okinawa's rich culture and society through dynamic performances and presentations across various platforms, including dance, film, photography, video, lectures, and panel discussions.

### **Connect With Us!**

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### **About Japan Institute of Portland Japanese Garden**

Portland Japanese Garden is a nonprofit organization founded in 1963 to promote cross-cultural understanding in the wake of World War II. Considered one of the most authentic Japanese gardens outside of Japan, Portland Japanese Garden has become a beloved landmark within Oregon. Using nature, art, and cultural programming to engage diverse audiences in pursuit of nurturing a more peaceful and sustainable world, in 2020, the Garden established the Japan Institute as a sibling organization. Both share the mission of Inspiring Harmony & Peace. Japan

Institute acts as an international hub for world leaders, artists, gardeners, and scholars, through its three programming centers: International Exchange Forum, International Japanese Garden Training Center, and the Global Center for Culture and Art. Organizing symposia, gatherings, and educational experiences, Japan Institute's vision is to be a leading voice for transcending differences and fostering cultural understanding across the globe.

**Connect With Portland Japanese Garden!**

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). For further information, please visit [www.japanesegarden.org](http://www.japanesegarden.org)

*Living Traditions webinar series is co-presented with the Japan Institute of Portland Japanese Garden and supported by the Government of Japan.*

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