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October at Traver Gallery – Tacoma

Jiro Yonezawa: *Discoveries in a Forest*

Exhibition Dates: October 16 – November 7, 2010

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 16, 5 – 8 pm

**Jiro Yonezawa:
*Discoveries in a Forest***

Traver Gallery is pleased to present *Discoveries in a Forest*, an exhibition featuring contemporary sculpture in woven lacquered bamboo by artist Jiro Yonezawa. Twenty-five sculptures ranging from 4-1/2 inches to 5-1/2 feet in height explore the interaction between time and the elements of the forest landscape. Influenced by time spent in the wooded countryside of Kyushu, Yonezawa creates intricate, textured sculpture with disciplined formality in technique and freedom in form.



A native of Japan, Yonezawa trained in traditional techniques in Beppu, Japan, and lived in Portland, Oregon, for nearly twenty years developing original methods and what has been described as Western-influenced character. Returning to Japan in 2007, he reconnected with local artisans and the traditions that captured his attention when he began experimenting in the medium thirty-one years ago. In the Japanese countryside of Kyushu where Yonezawa now lives and works, more than 70% of the area is forested. “Bamboo when cut, grows back,” says Yonezawa. “This regenerative quality lured my imagination and drew me into becoming a maker of bamboo objects.” *Daruma*, pictured, appears to have no beginning and no end, referencing a sense of endlessness. Today Yonezawa is among an exclusive group of contemporary masters who focus primarily on experimental sculptural forms, though traditional applications—baskets, objects for the tea ceremony, and vessels for flower arranging—are gently referenced in such works as the eleven wall-mounted *Tree* sculptures that, at more than five feet long and just a few inches in diameter, hold small copper inserts for a single flower. Channels of red dye trace contours of densely plaited and loosely woven, wound and bound baskets and slender articulations.

Of the new suite of work for the *Discoveries* exhibition, Yonezawa says, “This body of work is an exploration of the interaction between time and the elements of the forest landscape.” Mastery complements experimentation in Yonezawa’s combinations of natural and manmade materials—cane, roots, steel, and even plastic and styrofoam—and bamboo that he harvests and prepares himself.

Jiro Yonezawa was born in 1956 in Saiki, Oita Prefecture, Japan. Initially self-taught, he gravitated to the Occupational School in Beppu and later apprenticed with a local craftsman. Yonezawa is one of ten bamboo artists in Japan to receive the prestigious Lloyd Cotsen award. His work was among that featured in the 2007 exhibition of the Cotsen Bamboo Basket Collection at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and the 2008 exhibition *New Bamboo: Contemporary Japanese Masters* at Japan Society, New York. His work was accepted for showing at the highest ranking artistic organization in Japan, Nitten, in 2009.

Image: *Daruma*, 2010, bamboo, cane, urushi lacquer, 21"h x 11"w x 13"d

Located on Tacoma’s Thea Foss Waterway and adjacent to the Museum of Glass, Traver Gallery is among the nation’s premier exhibition spaces for contemporary studio glass. Traver Gallery is admission-free and open to the public Wednesday-Saturday 10am – 6pm and Sunday 12 – 5pm. For more information, please call 253-383-3685 or visit our website at www.travergallery.com.