

THE ISHIKAWA INTERNATIONAL URUSHI EXHIBITION 2026 APPLICATION GUIDE

Application Deadline: March 3 (tue) 2026

Purpose

Established in 1989 as an open-call international exhibition of Urushi ware (lacquer ware), the Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition will mark its fourteenth event in 2026. At each past event, the exhibition drew many excellent works from various countries and areas around the world. It has built a high reputation as a world showcase of contemporary Urushi arts and crafts.

The home of the exhibition, Ishikawa prefecture, is renowned as the “kingdom of traditional crafts” in Japan. For Urushi ware, in particular, Ishikawa has three of Japan’s major Urushi ware production areas: Wajima, Yamanaka, and Kanazawa. The tradition of Urushi ware has been matured in the living culture of the local people.

In such an environment, this exhibition has continued with the aim of revitalizing the Urushi-related industries, encouraging international exchanges through Urushi, and helping people rediscover the value of Urushi, a material that is friendly to both humans and the environment, as well as the exceptional craftsmanship of Urushi ware.

This year’s event also prays for the swift recovery of the Wajima-nuri region, still affected by the significant damage caused by the Noto Peninsula Earthquake and the subsequent heavy rain disaster.

As always, we expect many applications from Japan and abroad. Ranging from daily utensils that embody a new lifestyle to artistic expressions that bring new sensory experiences, we seek to discover diverse proposals for exploring the possibilities of Urushi.

Organizer

The Executive Committee of the Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition

[Composed of:]

Ishikawa Prefecture, Kanazawa City, Wajima City, Kaga City, The Kanazawa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Wajima Urushi Ware Cooperative Society, Yamanaka Lacquerware Cooperative Society, Kanazawa Urushi Ware Cooperative Society, and Design Center Ishikawa

Requirements

1. About Applicants: No specific requirements. Anyone may apply for this exhibition.
2. About Works:
 - The work must be coated with Urushi.
 - The work must be tangible and three-dimensional (ideas or drawings alone will not be accepted).
 - The work must be stable for display on a floor, wall, or pedestal.
 - Previously exhibited or commercially released works will also be accepted.
 - Dimensions must not exceed 1.8 meters (width, depth, and height in total).

- Weight must not exceed 30 kg.
- Each applicant (individual or group) may submit only one work (or one set of works).

Categories

There are two categories: Design and Art

Design category – The work should propose an Urushi-based product suitable for commercial release based on feasible production and distribution plans.

Art category – The work should prioritize artistic expression using Urushi.

Assessment

Criteria

The work must meet one of the following criteria:

1. The work is proposing a new lifestyle with Urushi ware or developing a new application of Urushi as a material.
2. The work is expressing or proposing a new artistic sensibility.
3. The work is highly utilizing techniques unique to a specific region.

Prizes

Prizes	Prize Money	
Grand Prize	¥1,000,000	(awarded to 1 work)
Gold Prize	¥200,000	(awarded to 2 work)
Silver Prize	¥100,000	(awarded to 2 works)
Honorable Mention	¥30,000	(awarded to 2 works)
Jurors' Special Prize	Award plaque	(awarded to 7 works)

Note:

- Grand prize will be awarded to one work from both categories together.
- As a general rule, one gold prize, one silver prize, and one honorable mention will be awarded for each category.
- Jurors' special prize will be awarded to seven works from both categories together.
- Income tax will be deducted from the prize money.

Jurors

Preliminary Assessment (based on digital images):

OHNISHI Nagatoshi	Urushi artist, professor emeritus at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music
YAMAMURA Shinichi	Design Consultant
MITARAI Teruko	Representative director of t.gallery and T-POT Inc.
YAMAMURA Shinya	Urushi artist, president of Kanazawa College of Art
SHIHO Masahito	Creative director of Design Center Ishikawa

Final Assessment (based on actual works):

OHNISHI Nagatoshi	Urushi artist, professor emeritus at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music
KAWAKAMI Motomi	Representative of Kawakami Design Room Ltd.
YAMAMURA Shinichi	Design consultant
MITARAI Teruko	Representative director of t.gallery and T-POT Inc.
TANAKA Nobuyuki	Artist, professor emeritus at Kanazawa College of Art

Urushi artist, president of Kanazawa College of Art

Creative director of Design Center Ishikawa

Application

Deadline: no later than March 3 (tue) 2026

The official website: <https://ishikawa-urushi.jp/>

1. Go to the official website and provide all the necessary information in the Online Application Form.
2. Upload three image files, each showing your work from a different angle.
3. Each image should be approximately 2000 x 3000 pixels, in JPEG format.

1. From the official website, download the Application Form. After you print it, fill in the necessary items in the form.
2. Prepare a CD-R containing three digital images of your work (each showing your work from a different angle). Then, send the Application Form together with the CD-R to the secretariat office.
3. Each image should be approximately 2000 x 3000 pixels, in JPEG format.
4. On the surface of the CD-R, write your name and the title of your work.
5. The three image files should be named as “01,” “02” and “03,” according to their priorities. If your work is accepted for the Exhibition, the image named “01” will be used for the exhibition catalog.
6. Make sure that your work is oriented correctly in each image. The executive committee shall not be responsible if the work is printed incorrectly in the exhibition catalog (e.g., reverse / wrong side up) due to the work being incorrectly orientated in the digital images.
7. The CD-R (and any other attached materials) will not be returned.

Note: If you cannot download the Application Form from the website, please contact the secretariat by email, fax, or postal mail, to request a hardcopy. Your message should be titled as “Request of Application Form” and contain your name, address, country, phone number, and how many copies you need.

Application Charge

1. **Applicants who reside in Japan are requested to pay ¥7,000 of application charge.**
 - The amount must be transferred to the bank account below by no later than March 3 (tue) 2026.
 - Please make the payment under the applicant's name to ensure proper deposit confirmation.
 - The remittance fee must also be paid by the applicant.
 - After the payment is completed, the application fee will not be refunded under any circumstances.

Account Type: Ordinary Account

Account Holder: The Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition
c/o Design Center Ishikawa

Preliminary Assessment

2. Applicants who reside overseas are free of charge.

In mid April 2026, the appointed jurors will conduct the preliminary assessment based on the digital images of the works.

Notification of the Results

1. The names of the applicants who have passed the preliminary assessment will be disclosed on the official website within one week after the assessment.
2. Those works accepted in the preliminary assessment will be eligible for the final assessment and the Exhibition.

The following information is intended solely for those who have successfully passed the preliminary assessment. However, all applicants are requested to read it carefully to understand the complete process of the Exhibition.

Exhibitor Agreement

1. Those who successfully passed the preliminary assessment will receive a formal letter of result notification, along with the "Guide for Exhibits" documents and the "Exhibitor Agreement" form.
2. Those who agree to participate in the final assessment should submit the "Exhibitor Agreement" to the secretariat office, by the due date specified in the "Guide for Exhibits."

Sending the Works

1. After submitting the "Exhibitor Agreement," the applicants should then prepare for shipping of their works. The destination and the deadline are both specified in the "Guide for Exhibits."
2. The shipping expenses and insurance must be covered by the applicants themselves.
3. The work should be secured in a package (stowage box) which is durable enough to protect the work from any shocks during the transportation as well as repeated opening and closing. Works without a package will not be accepted. In addition, please have your work insured against loss or damages as you deem appropriate. The executive committee shall bear no liabilities for loss of or damages to the work during the transportation.
4. The works will be unpacked and inspected on the day before the final assessment. If any damage is found in the work upon unpacking, the executive committee will notify the applicant. Negotiation on such a damage shall be between the applicant and the shipping company.
5. The executive committee shall bear no responsibility if the work cannot be displayed in the final assessment or be exhibited in the Exhibition due to any damage caused during the transportation.
6. If the submitted work is not identical to the one shown in the digital images selected in the preliminary assessment, the applicant shall be disqualified, and the work will neither be assessed nor be exhibited.
7. In the final assessment and the Exhibition, the works will be displayed referring to the digital images. If your work requires a specific instruction for the correct assembling/installing, however, please include a sketch or a note in your package. Also, attach the sketch/note to your "Exhibitor Agreement" as well.
8. The works will be handled by the official art specialists throughout the entire processes of the Exhibition. The executive committee, however, shall take no responsibility if the work cannot be displayed in the final assessment or exhibited in the Exhibition due to its extremely complicated assembling/installing requirements.

The items 9 to 16 below apply only to the applicants from overseas:

9. For the works submitted from overseas, customs clearance will be obtained on a “re-export” basis, which means that the work will be returned (re-exported) from Japan after the Exhibition.
10. Customs clearance will take approximately one week. Consider this period when you ship your work so that it will reach Ishikawa in time.
11. Customs duties that may arise at the Japanese international airport, as well as the domestic transportation fees, will be covered by the executive committee.
12. When shipping your work, please use the "INVOICE" attached to the “Guide for Exhibits.” Be sure to fill in each field of the INVOICE. The price of the work must be the same as the amount specified in your Application Form. Your work may fail to clear customs if the INVOICE does not contain sufficient information about the work or if the price of the work specified in your INVOICE differs from the amount in your Application Form.
13. The executive committee shall bear no responsibility if the work cannot be displayed in the final assessment or in the Exhibition because of its failure in customs clearance due to the deficiency of the INVOICE.
14. If an applicant, or his/her appointed person, directly delivers the work to the secretariat (or to the consignee), all the expenses that may be required (such as domestic transportation fees, Japanese customs duties, etc.) shall be paid by the applicant.
15. Except for plywood, do not use wooden packing materials for shipping.
16. Works which are submitted from China, the USA, and other countries where private import is tightly regulated will be returned by EMS after the Exhibition. Therefore, applicants from these countries must ensure that their package meet the size conditions of EMS in their own country.

Final Assessment

In early July 2026, the actual works will be assessed by the final assessment jurors, and the “prize-winning” works will be finalized (Those works not selected for the prizes will thereafter be called as "accepted works," for which no official certificate or prize money will be presented).

Panel Discussion

A panel discussion with all the final assessment jurors will be held on the next day of the final assessment, where the prize winners will be disclosed. The date, venue, and other details will be announced to all the applicants as soon as they are fixed (However, attendance will be solicited only from the applicants in Japan).

Final Results Announcement

The prize winners will be disclosed on the official website of the Exhibition. In addition, the final results, along with the notice of the upcoming Exhibition, will be delivered to the press in Ishikawa prefecture as well as to major organizations and publications in Japan related to art, craft, and design.

Final Results Notification

Each applicant who participated in the final assessment will receive a written notification of the final results by postal mail approximately two weeks after the final assessment.

Exhibition

All the works assessed in the final assessment will be exhibited in The Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition 2026:

The Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition 2026

Period: From October 28 (wed) to November 9 (mon), 2026 (tentative)

Venue: Shiinoki Cultural Complex, Ishikawa Prefecture (1-1-2 Hirotsuka, Kanazawa, Ishikawa)

Exhibition Catalog

An exhibition catalog will be published, which contains the pictures of all the works submitted to the final assessment. Each applicant (individual or group) who participated in the final assessment will receive a free copy.

Sales of the Works

1. Works that receive purchase requests during the Exhibition will be sold by the executive committee. The actual sales process, however, will be entrusted to a designated professional agent.
2. Please understand that, in some cases, the retail price may almost double the Artist Price.

Safe Handling of the Works

1. From the moment the work is officially received by our consignee, the executive committee will take full responsibility for the safe handling of it, in cooperation with the official art specialists who will handle the work with utmost care, until it is returned to an international airport in the applicant's country. However, the executive committee shall bear no responsibility of compensation for loss of or damage to the work due to any inevitable causes such as natural disaster.
2. **Each applicant must specify the price of his/her work ("Artist Price")** in the Application Form. The price must not exceed 2,000,000 yen (including tax). If there is a purchase request for the work, the executive committee will sell it at the retail price calculated based on the Artist Price.
3. All the submitted works will be covered by insurance, which is paid for by the executive committee. The insurance amount will be calculated based on the Artist Price. Please understand that, since the actual amount of compensation will be appraised by the insurance company, the beneficiary may not necessarily be able to receive the full amount of insurance.
4. The intellectual property rights to the submitted works reside entirely with the respective artist (applicant). Our policies with regard to the use of the intellectual property rights are as follows:
 - (a) The executive committee, the local government of Ishikawa prefecture, and other related public organizations shall be allowed free use of the intellectual property rights to the submitted works for public relation and exhibition purposes.
 - (b) This shall include free use of the submitted digital images for creating the exhibition catalog, posters, postcards and any other printed materials, as well as for posting on the official website and SNS of the Exhibition for PR purposes.
 - (c) No time limit shall be placed upon such use of the intellectual property rights.
 - (d) In some cases, the awarded/accepted works may be re-photographed at the discretion of the executive committee.

Return of the Works

1. After the Exhibition, all the works except for the sold/donated ones will be returned to the applicants through the official carrier.
2. For the works submitted from within Japan, the transportation expenses as well as the insurance fees shall be paid by the applicant (or the recipient). The repacking costs, however, will be paid by the executive committee.
3. The works will be returned approximately two months after the exhibition is closed.

The items 4 to 7 below apply only to overseas applicants, which include important guidance to avoid financial issues during the return transportation of their works. Review the items 4 to 7 carefully to have a full understanding about them before deciding to participate.

4. For the work submitted from overseas, all the expenses required to return the work shall be paid by the executive committee until the work reaches the designated international airport in the applicant's country (this international airport will be designated by the executive committee).
5. Customs duties and any other charges imposed at the international airport in the applicant's country, as well as the transportation expenses from the international airport to the applicant's residence, shall be paid by the applicant.
6. The applicant will be unable to receive the work if he/she refuses to pay the customs duties and any other charges and/or the domestic transportation expenses. In such a case, the work will be disposed of at the international airport.
7. If an applicant from overseas asks for his/her work to be returned to a person/place in Japan, the entire expenses for the in-Japan domestic transportation and the insurance shall be the recipient's responsibility. In addition, if the executive committee has paid any kind of expenses for the work (such as customs duties or domestic transportation expenses) on behalf of the applicant upon the arrival of the work in Japan, the recipient will also be requested to repay such amount to the executive committee.

Other Matters

Any matters not detailed herein shall be summarily handled as deemed appropriate by the executive committee.

Inquiries

1. Inquiries should be sent to the secretariat office (below) by mail, fax, or email, either in Japanese or English. Inquiries from overseas must contain the country name.
2. Each inquiry should be concise within 350 words.
3. Please understand that, as each inquiry will be discussed in the secretariat, it may take one or two weeks to return an official answer.
4. Inquiries by telephone will not be accepted.

Contact

Secretariat Office of the Executive Committee

The Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition

c/o Design Center Ishikawa

2-20 Kuratsuki, Kanazawa, Ishikawa 920-8203 JAPAN

FAX: +81-76-267-5242

Email: info@design-ishikawa.jp

The details of the previous Exhibition

("The Ishikawa International Urushi Exhibition 2023") can be found at:

<https://ishikawa-urushi.jp/2023/>