KOHEI UKAI



Vestige 15-03
Manufactured by Kohei Ukai
Japan, 2019
Paulownia wood, Urushi lacquer, gold leaf, tin powder

Measurements
4 × 18 × 192h cm
1,6 × 7,1 × 75,6h in

Edition
Unique Piece

About
Kohei Ukai explores the relationship between natural materials and traditional Japanese craftsmanship through the combination of wood, Urushi lacquer, and metallic elements. In Vestige 15-03, Paulownia wood, lacquer, gold leaf, and tin powder form an exceptionally slender vertical composition, contrasting the organic grain of the timber with reflective, carefully treated surfaces. Its elongated proportions and interplay of textures reflect Ukai's investigation into material transformation, memory, and the traces preserved within natural forms.

Biography
Kohei Ukai (b. 1993, Aichi, Japan) is a contemporary Japanese artist specialising in wood and traditional Urushi lacquer. He graduated from Kanazawa College of Art in 2016 and completed his MFA in 2018, followed by a three-year residency at the Kanazawa Utatsuyama Craft Studio. His practice combines carving, layering, and polishing techniques to explore the relationship between the organic qualities of wood and the transformative properties of lacquer. Working primarily with Zelkova and camphor, he creates sculptural forms that merge traditional Japanese craftsmanship with contemporary artistic expression. In 2020, he was selected as a finalist for the LOEWE FOUNDATION Craft Prize and has exhibited internationally, including at the Ishikawa Wajima Lacquer Museum and Pierre Marie Giraud in Brussels.