

Noshudo Zero by Kenichi Mizuno Wins Gold in A' Cultural Heritage and Culture Industry Design Award

*Circular Japanese Symbolic Blade
Reinterprets Sword Craft as a Medium of
Self Reflection and Peace*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The A' Design Award has announced Noshudo Zero by [Kenichi Mizuno](#) as a Gold winner in the [Cultural Heritage](#) and Culture Industry Design category. The A' Design Award is one of the world's highly respected international [design competitions](#), and recognition within its Cultural Heritage and Culture Industry Design category holds considerable significance for practitioners working at the intersection of craft, culture, and contemporary design. Noshudo Zero is a circular Japanese sword reinterpreted as a symbolic blade for self reflection, and it stands as an outstanding example of good design. This recognition draws attention to a work that thoughtfully bridges traditional craftsmanship and modern cultural expression.

The honoring of Noshudo Zero carries relevance well beyond its creator, addressing a growing interest within the Cultural Heritage industry in reinterpreting traditional craft for contemporary audiences. As cultural practitioners and institutions seek ways to keep heritage skills socially relevant, Noshudo Zero demonstrates how a familiar cultural form can evolve through respectful reinterpretation. The work supports preservation of the sword craft heritage of Seki while proposing new social and design value for traditional making. For makers, museums, and communities, it offers a model of how craft heritage can be sustained and renewed rather than fixed in the past.



Noshudo Zero

Noshudo Zero is, to the best of available knowledge, the first documented circular Japanese blade realized primarily through traditional hand forging. Forged from high purity tamahagane and reclaimed historic iron, the blade was intentionally finished without a sharpened cutting edge, emphasizing cultural meaning, reflection, and presence rather than aggression. Inspired by the cultural role of the mirror in Japan as a medium of self reflection, the continuous circular geometry transforms the sword from an object of direction and confrontation into one of balance and contemplation. The uniform mirror surface reflects the viewer, while precision machined hilt and guard components are integrated only in limited areas. Three forged material sets were lost before the final form of approximately 300 millimeters was achieved, followed by several days of hand polishing to secure stable geometry.

This recognition affirms the value of practice based design research and may encourage further exploration of how traditional craft can gain renewed cultural relevance. For Kenichi Mizuno and the studio, the Gold A' Design Award serves as motivation to continue investigating the relationship between heritage, technology, and contemporary expression. Noshudo Zero remains on continuous public display in Seki City, functioning as a cultural bridge between craft and people.

Interested parties may learn more about Noshudo Zero, view detailed imagery, and read about its designer at the dedicated page on the A' Design Award website.

<https://competition.adesignaward.com/ada-winner-design.php?ID=180133>

About Kenichi Mizuno

Kenichi Mizuno is a designer from Japan who evolved from a technical engineer managing mechanical design and industrial production into a leading product designer. He developed a unique philosophy called Surprise and Logic, an approach that integrates regional heritage with modern technologies and transforms personal creative passion into products recognized internationally. His portfolio has been featured in over 50 major media outlets, including Axis and Newsweek Japan, reflecting the social and technical impact of his work.

About D-WEBER inc. : 4DESIGN

D-WEBER inc. is a design studio based in Anjo, Aichi, Japan, led by designer Kenichi Mizuno, working mainly in product design, automotive related design, 3D modeling, concept development, and design direction. Its project platform, 4DESIGN, explores the connection between design, craftsmanship, technology, culture, and surprise. The studio has developed its practice through close relationships with manufacturing industries, combining hands-on design sensibility with technical understanding and high-precision digital modeling. In recent years, D-WEBER has expanded beyond ordinary client work to explore how Japanese manufacturing culture, traditional craftsmanship, and contemporary industrial design can be connected, as reflected in projects such as Noshudo Zero. Working from a regional manufacturing area in Japan, the studio aims to show that small studios can create design with both local depth and international relevance.

About the Gold A' Design Award Recognition

The Gold A' Design Award is granted to designs that demonstrate a high level of innovation and a meaningful impact on their intended audience. Within the Cultural Heritage and Culture Industry Design category, evaluation considers criteria such as historical significance, cultural authenticity, design innovation, respect for tradition, interpretation of heritage, preservation techniques, and artistic merit. Recognized as a notable achievement by the A' Design Awards, Gold winning designs reflect considerable skill and a thoughtful approach on the part of their creators. These works serve as reference points for excellence, encouraging further innovation and supporting the advancement of art, science, design, and technology. They are distinguished by strong technical attributes, careful craftsmanship, and the capacity to deliver lasting value to their communities.

About A' Design Award

The A' Cultural Heritage and Culture Industry Design Award is an international competition that offers participants the opportunity to present their creativity and gain recognition for innovative contributions to the culture industry. Entries from around the world, including established brands, design agencies, and individual designers, are evaluated through a blind peer review process and assessed against pre-established criteria by an expert jury panel comprising design professionals, Cultural Heritage industry experts, journalists, and academics. Organized across all industries and open to entries from all countries since 2008 and now in its 18th year, the A' Design Award is driven by a philanthropic mission to enhance society through the power of good design. The ultimate aim of the A' Design Award is to recognize and promote superior products and projects that advance and benefit society, motivating designers and brands to develop work that positively impacts the global community. Interested parties may learn more about the A' Design Awards, explore jury members, view past laureates, and take part with their projects at the following url: <https://culturalheritageawards.com>

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