



For immediate release:

**WASARA Announces Participation in the National Design Triennial: Why Design Now?
Exhibition by Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Museum (Following the Contract with
Official Distributor in North America)**

Tokyo – April 20, 2010 –WASARA disposable tableware is now officially available in North America under the partnership contract signed with San Francisco based distributor Branch (245 South Van Ness Ave., Suite 304 San Francisco, CA) in January 28, 2010. This partnership is expected to contribute to leverage WASARA's brand awareness and sales in the potential U.S. market.

Coinciding with this new step forward, WASARA disposable tableware will be featured in the “National Design Triennial: Why Design Now?” exhibition to be held at the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in Manhattan, New York from May 14 – January 9, 2011, as unique paper plates brand representing Japan.

The Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum is the only museum in the nation devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. The museum presents compelling perspectives on the impact of design on daily life through active educational programs, exhibitions and publications. Inaugurated in 2000, the Triennial program seeks out and presents the most innovative designs at the center of contemporary culture. In this fourth exhibition in the series, the National Design Triennial will explore the work of designers addressing human and environmental problems across many fields of the design practice, from architecture and products to fashion, graphics, new media, and landscapes.

WASARA will be exhibited as an innovative, eco-friendly, yet elegant paper plate brand combining Japanese aesthetic and functionality. Furthermore, WASARA is honored to be designated as the official tableware brand at the opening reception to be held at the museum on May 13th. WASARA paper cups will be supplied to serve guests refreshments, enabling WASARA to be widely exposed to the public. Also, WASARA's collection will become available at the museum shop in May.

During the exhibition, WASARA's creative director Shinichiro Ogata will give visitors an opportunity to learn more about WASARA through a 3 minute movie, available through an iTouch digital guide offered by the museum.

These opportunities together are expected to greatly contribute to widely spread WASARA in North American market, not only through the power of design but also by the innovative concept behind the brand.



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About WASARA

Since its launch in May 2008, WASARA offers a new solution to paper tableware.

Inspired by traditional Japanese aesthetic and values, WASARA offers both beauty and eco-awareness through design, in addition to high function sought in conventional paper tableware.

The products are made from three materials: bagasse sugar cane fiber, bamboo and reed pulp. All are readily available and rapidly renewable resources. While the materials are not recycled, and thus 100% sustainable.

Taking more than 3 years of product development before the launch, WASARA is an extension and embodiment of the ultimately sophisticated Japanese food culture and warm hospitality. It has received high acclaim both in Japan and internationally. Distributed in many shops and department stores in Japan, its simultaneous focus on ecology, function, design, and high quality have earned a wide range of followers, and has been used at various official and culture receptions.

Producer Michiyo Tanabe

After studying fashion in Tokyo and Paris, Michiyo Tanabe became chief of the press of Takeo Kikuchi. In 1991, started office M16 representing stylists and photographers, and men's fashion brand. In 2002, Tanabe became PR director for JUN CO., LTD., and also became a director of Montoak, luxury café lounge in Tokyo. Meanwhile, she has opened the restaurant Café M at foot of Mt. Fuji in 1999.

Since 2006, she has been involved with WASARA as a brand producer.

Creative Director Shinichiro Ogata

Founder and owner of SIMPLICITY, as known for his dedication to creating a contemporary vision of Japanese culture and its expression. Ogata's talent spans various areas of design including interior, product, graphic as well as culinary. His vision for design is applied also to the business realm, as space, product, food. His designs respect and reference Japanese tradition and its history of craft and knowledge.

Since 2006, he has served as Creative Director of WASARA and is responsible for design and development.



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