

# Unleashing Color: How Art Is Transforming Society in Ginza

In Tokyo's Ginza district, vibrant canvases are reimagining perceptions of difference, proving that art can dissolve boundaries and bring communities together.

Oshioka Marie, CEO of  
HERALBONY EUROPE.

**H**ERALBONY is a creative company that works with artists with disabilities, transforming their creations into products, experiences, and spaces.

The impulse is rooted in the story of founders Matsuda Takaya and Fumito, twin brothers who grew up with an older sibling on the autism spectrum. Seeing their brother subjected to prejudice and treated differently, they envisioned a world where he—and others like him—could thrive with pride. The discovery of art became their breakthrough: if these works were admired as stylish and desirable, society's perception of disability itself could change.

## Encounters That Reshape Perceptions

In Ginza, HERALBONY operates HERALBONY LABORATORY GINZA, an experimental space designed to decrease social boundaries through art. It is a place where visitors can encounter new values through the creations of artists with disabilities—whether in the form of products, exhibitions, or live artistic activity.

The first floor houses a shop selling art-based goods alongside a gallery that hosts rotating exhibitions with different artists and themes. Upstairs, the

office functions as a workshop for ideas: prototypes are tested and tried, sometimes spilling directly into the gallery as live painting sessions or hands-on workshops. Visitors can watch in real time as new connections are born.

Surrounded by luxury boutiques, the sight is striking—and deliberately unlabeled. Passersby encounter the works first as compelling, contemporary art, before learning about the creators. “The sequence is important,” says Oshioka Marie, CEO of HERALBONY EUROPE, who is leading the company's expansion in Paris. “When people spend not hundreds but thousands of yen on these products, they are saying the art is worth it. That alone reshapes perceptions.”

## Respecting Every Artist's Integrity

The company's model is built on respect. Many artists do not communicate verbally, so meaning is understood from their process or community. A single patch of red or yellow might be essential; cropping it out would erase intent. Every use of an artwork requires approval, and partners are asked to design within the integrity of the original.

Equally important, HERALBONY rarely commissions works on deadline. Instead, it licenses existing pieces created in the natural rhythm of daily life. “We never say, ‘please paint something in three weeks,’” Oshioka explains. “The art exists because the artist wanted to create it. That respect is non-negotiable.”

## Ginza and the Global Context of Art Brut

“Ginza represents authenticity—you have to be real, because people here can tell,” says Oshioka.



Colorful, vibrant HERALBONY products for everyday use. Photo: courtesy of Kitagawa Kouta

For the company, establishing a presence in this district is a step toward joining Japan's cultural core. But the vision does not stop at home.

Europe—especially Paris—has long been associated with art brut, a term coined by Jean Dubuffet in the 1940s to describe raw, untrained creativity outside academic traditions. By situating its presence in both Ginza and Paris, HERALBONY connects Japan's story with this international lineage, showing that works by artists with disabilities are not marginal, but part of a global cultural conversation.

## Toward a Creative Future

Everyday encounters are changing perceptions: children watch live painting, travelers purchase scarves, executives meet artists in person. These moments ripple outward, gradually reshaping how society views difference.

From northern Iwate Prefecture to Tokyo and Paris, HERALBONY has grown from a family story into an international movement. Its mission is clear: to unleash the beauty and integrity of art created by people with disabilities, and to show

that true innovation lies not in machines or patents, but in the human act of creation.

Each work of art carries a new way of seeing. And in every brushstroke, HERALBONY reminds us that inclusion is not a distant goal, but a reality we can choose—here and now.



The first floor of HERALBONY LABORATORY GINZA combines a retail shop and gallery space. Photo: courtesy of Kitagawa Kouta