

Harmony

A Perspective on Contemporary Japanese Ceramics

During the Heian period (794-1185), members of the Imperial court created a refined environment and ceramics were part of this aesthetic. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the focus was on ceramics for tea and this was likewise intense. The Nineteenth century was a time for refined ceramics to show its *savoir faire* on the international market. But in reaction against decorative artifacts emerged the *Mingei* Movement (Folk craft in the 1920s and 1930s) and finally at the end of the World War II the beginning of Contemporary ceramics.

Contemporary Japanese ceramics are fascinating often because of the tension between the veneration of deeply rooted traditional practice and the equally imperative desire to innovate. There are very few art forms where the wonder and burden of the past is so apparent, yet simultaneously the opportunity of the present so evident. The result can be a reconciliation of past and present.

In this exhibition are the works of some of the most remarkable Japanese artists, and a unique perspective of Japan today. These works reflect the diversity found in contemporary Japanese ceramics. And clearly, the artists are not confined by specific techniques, nor by traditional forms and formats.

I am drawn to the serenity and balance in Japanese art. Ceramic Art is rooted in history and simultaneously innovative. There is a spare and very deliberate use of line that reads as utterly simple, but also the technique is incredibly noble and heroic. It's a kind of paradox that simplicity can be unbelievably rich. I'm grateful for the trust, support and assistance of every participant: Artists as well as local galleries. A special thanks to my long-time assistant Kanae san in Fukuoka and the Patrick & Ondine Mesdtagh gallery who made it possible.

«To put everything in balance is good, to put everything in harmony is better.»
Victor Hugo

«Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.»
Mahatma Gandhi

« Harmony », a several years project we have the privilege to present with the complicity of Didier Delville, an unique opportunity to encounter new directions and discover new horizons.

Patrick Mestdagh

Introduction by Didier Delville
Curated by Didier Delville

Tomonari Hashimoto, born 1990

Hashimoto Tomonari (born 1990 in Wakayama, Japan) is a ceramic artist based in Shigaraki. He is exhibited widely across Japan and in 2020, his work joined the permanent collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

In 2017, after his graduation at the Kanazawa University of Art and his PhD in Fine Art, he became artist in residence at the Shigaraki Cultural Park. In 2019, he held his first overseas solo exhibition in Hong Kong and was selected as an on-site exhibitor at the Korean International Ceramic Biennale 2019 in Icheon World Ceramic Center. He was one of the youngest finalists at the LOEWE Craft Prize 2019 exhibited at the Sogetsu Kaikan in Tokyo.

Tomonari does not title any of his work, preferring to leave interpretation up to the viewer. After hand forming and sculpting the shapes, they are bisque fired, then glazed and fired again at a relatively low temperature (between 1000 and 1100 degrees, like *Raku* ware). Then he builds a brick oven around each piece and brings the temperature up to 500 degrees, and adds millet or rice husk, which carbonizes the surface, creating incredible colors and random patterns leaving the viewer with a feeling like rusted or heated metal. Many of his works are monumental.

The Heart Sutra, one of the most famous texts in Buddhism, states that “form is emptiness, emptiness is form”. This seeming paradox is a core philosophy of Japanese design and culture, where absence can be as important as presence. This principle can be summed up in the concept of *ma*, which evokes a sense of a gap or pause that gives new shape and meaning to the whole.

Untitled, 2020
Stone ware, saturated glaze, oxide metal multi fired
76 x 48 x 42 cm





Untitled, 2021
Stone ware, saturated glaze, multi-fired oxide metal
45 x 28 x 51 cm

Sakai Hiroshi, born 1960

Sakai Hiroshi (born 1960) has pursued his own artistic expressions in *Shino* wares by integrating traditional and innovative techniques with his aesthetic tastes. Since completing courses at the Tajimi City Ceramic Design Research Center in Gifu, he continued his studies with Kato Kozo (b. 1935), who is named a Living National Treasure. While Sakai's use of kairagi--the sharply textured hallmark glaze of *Shino* wares, pays homage to his respected master, he developed his own distinct coloring using blue zaffer, perfecting the "indigo *Shino*" glaze. The combination of exquisitely rendered shades of indigo with the crackled kairagi surfaces on his boldly designed vessels are highly regarded both in and outside of Japan.

His works are represented in public collections such as the British Museum, the Auckland Museum in New Zealand, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, the Kyushu Ceramic Museum in Japan, the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza, Italy, and the World Ceramic Exposition Foundation in Korea.



Vessel, 2020
Stoneware with indigo *Shino* glaze,
25 x 20 cm

Yui Tsujimura, born 1975

Born in 1975 as a son of master potter Shiro Tsujimura, Yui was no doubt influenced by his family as it comes to his artistic practice, visual language, and overall approach to the ceramic arts. Later Yui branched off into his singular visual style, focusing primarily on beautifully thrown silhouettes and the use of a particular blue-green ash glaze. Tsujimura's work is exhibited regularly throughout Japan and can be found both in private collections as well as museum collections in Japan and outside including The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2010, a solo exhibition was dedicated to him in New York.

The simple form and color of Tsujimura's stoneware vase is typical of the humble and austere quality of Japanese tea ceramics. Here is a vessel inspired by a bamboo vases used in tea gatherings, the mottled green-grey of the wood ash glaze is reminiscent of the hue of the mature plant. The beauty of asymmetry and imperfection, cracks and flaws are a product of nature and time beyond the will of the human being. All of his creations are pure and spiritual, where the passing of time and the art of imperfection play an important role. His work simultaneously universal and timeless, traditional and contemporary. Simplicity, purity, restraint, and humility: this is what Yui Tsujimura's art is all about.

Untitled, 2015
Stoneware
10 x 3 x 38 cm



Kaneta Masanao, born 1953

Kaneta Masanao, born 1953, likely needs no introduction, as he is certainly one of *Hagi* pottery's most well-known and easily identifiable names. An eighth generation *Hagi* potter, Kaneta Masanao has expanded beyond his hefty heritage to create a more sculptural oeuvre. Perhaps due to Kaneta's training in sculpture, his forms have a strong and dramatic presence that sets them apart from the works by other artists of this traditional Japanese ceramic center. Using the centuries-old Hagi white-pink glazes, Kaneta creates unique and readily identifiable functional and non-functional contemporary ceramic forms. His signature technique of *kurinuki*, in which he digs or scoops-out a form out of the clay instead of shaping it on a wheel, further allows him to boldly depart from ancient *Hagi* traditions.

His work evokes a distinct tension between both function and form, and technique and tradition.

He is exhibited in countless museum exhibitions, including the 400-year Hagi retrospective at the Suntory Museum, and a major group exhibition at the Ibaraki Prefecture Ceramic Art Museum. Kaneta's works are also in public collections including over twenty international museums such as the National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo, Yamaguchi Prefecture Museum, Gifu Modern Ceramics Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, and the Metropolitan Museum among many others.



Untitled, 2021
Rock-like vase with multi-plane body and *Hagi* kohiki-glaze with kiln effects fires to earthy tones. Scooped-out sculptural Vessel
43 x 33 x 40 cm

Untitled, 2021
Rock-like vase with multy plane body,
Scooped-out vessel with *Hagi* and ash glazes
with greys, pink coloration and extensive kiln
effects, glazed stoneware
34 x 20 x 27 cm



Untitled, 2020
Rock-like vase with multy plane body,
Scooped-out vessel with Hagi and ash glazes
with greys, pink coloration and extensive
kiln effects, glazed stoneware
21,5 x 13 x 11 cm



Hirotake Imanishi, born 1984

Hirotake Imanishi was born 1984 in Nara, Japan. At University he studied biology, mitochondria, cancer and immunity. He received a Ph.D. in molecular biology from University of Tsukuba in 2012. After his Ph.D. he started to study basic ceramic skills at Shigaraki Ceramic Research Institute. His career change as a ceramic artist was influenced by his father, ceramic artist Masaya Imanishi. At Shigaraki he studied the traditional potter's wheel technique and learned about clay, glaze, and kiln firing. After two years, he moved to Ishikawa prefecture to study Kutani pottery techniques such as over glaze painting.

His work is produced with the theme of fundamental biology. In both his forms and decorative motifs, he often refers to patterns found in common molecular structure and in the shape of cells. He makes original clay and glaze using his scientific knowledge. In addition, he modifies and uses traditional Japanese Kutani-ware over glaze painting technique for his works.

He now lives in Kanazawa and teaches at Kanazawa College of Art as a part-time lecturer and is actively engaged in his own creative activities. His works are in the possession of Tata Consultancy Services (Pune, India), University of Pune (Pune, India), Grand Prince Hotel New Takanawa (Tokyo, Japan), Hokuriku University (Ishikawa, Japan) and have been used in many installations and collaborative events.

Phenotype, 2019
Pottery, *Kutani* overglaze painting
52 x 28 x 3 cm



Tanoue Shinya, born 1976

Tanoue Shinya, born 1976, is a ceramic artist from Kyoto. His work is already placed in the Museum of Kyoto and the Hyogo Ceramic Art Museum as well as being shown at US museums (Cincinnati, Phoenix, Crocker) as part of the Horvitz Collection of Contemporary Japanese Ceramic Art. A unique and quickly emerging ceramic artist and that will surely change as his awards pile up: Prize of Excellence at the Mainichi Newspaper Prize at the 19th Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition, as well as a prize at the Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition in 2007. Tanoue's works were also selected for the 2006 Mashiko Int'l Ceramic Art Exhibition, as well as the 41st Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition in 2003 and the 7th International Ceramics Exhibition in Mino. His thin-walled sturdy shell forms are fired twice, and he uses three kinds of clay and two slips, while he meticulously adds his mesmerizing minute lines that look like pine needles. He adds a blue glaze-here that pools as well-and darkens parts of the slip. His work speaks of the birth of life itself. Tanoue is deeply interested in this theme as he pursued religious and philosophical studies at Doshisha University.

Kara is a Japanese word that has a double meaning: it means a shell but also emptiness. The seeming simplicity of the sculpture contains depth and intelligence. A shell is like a container of the void and frames the emptiness. This aspect of emptiness is known as *Ma* in Japanese. His pieces are quite simple but feature details like lines and curves that have a notable sinuous vibe to them.



Kara-Shell Vessel, 2019
Stone ware with blue glazed
62 x 32 x 41 cm

Keiichi Shimizu, born 1962

Keiichi Shimizu, a 4th-generation potter, was born in 1962 in Tanba Tachikui, where one of the six ancient kilns of Japan is located. Following the footsteps of his father, a respected potter in the Tanba tradition, he went to Kyoto to study pottery. After graduation in 1984, he launched his highly productive career in his hometown as an independent artist. Today, Keiichi Shimizu is one of the most innovative among the contemporary Tanba ceramists.

Shimizu explores three-dimensional interplay of lines, surfaces, colors and textures through ceramics. His works show a strong minimalist influence, with clean lines and taut surfaces. The deceptively simple forms belie great conceptual sophistication and meticulous attention to details, an exciting marriage between creative visions and Tanba heritage. To achieve his artistic visions, Shimizu does not shy away from new techniques, and he uses both gas kiln and traditional wood-firing. In the past several years, he has been working to integrate a traditional *Tanba* clay with natural ash glaze into a uniquely personal style. The *tambaguro* glaze is made from wood ash. This vessel shows some of the finest examples of his works, striking a balance between traditional Japanese aesthetic harmony and dynamic tension in form.

Untitled, 2021
Tanba vessel with *Tambaguro* glaze
28 x 21 x 39 cm



Takatsu Mio, born 1976

An amazing ceramic sculpture by Takatsu Mio accompanied by the artists signed wooden placard titled *-Soko ni Seisoku Aru-* "It Thrives There". Takatsu Mio chooses to work with a limited palette. She wants to emphasize the forms of her sculptures instead, which she creates with mysterious silhouettes. Takatsu Mio spends many days refining the shape of each piece she makes, and her output is thus very low. Here is a ribbon of iron glaze, a quintessential work by the artist.

Takatsu Mio, born 1976, was raised in Gifu prefecture among the scattered kilns of Mino. She graduated from the Osaka University of Arts Sculpture Department in 1999, moving on to advanced studies which she completed in 2001. Her first exhibited works were in 1999, and then again in Tokyo in 2001. The following year she exhibited with the 6th International Ceramics Exhibition in Mino with several private exhibitions over the following years in some of Japan's top venues. In 2005 she made her overseas debut and in 2009 her work was featured in Women Ceramic Artists in the 21st Century (Paramita Museum/Mie Japan). In 2011 she was accepted to the Faenza International Ceramics Exhibition in Italy, as well as the Nihon Togeiten National Ceramics Exhibition. She shared an exhibition with another renowned ceramist Yamaguchi Mio, at the Sokyo Gallery in 2018.



Soko ni Seisoku Aru
It Thrives There
2021
Black glaze with kaki edge
68 cm

Takauchi Shugo, born 1937

Mashiko-based Takauchi Shugo (born 1937) used to be a salary man, a term that refers to a company employee in Japan. His path in life changed after he visited Mashiko, Tochigi Prefecture, and found the power in renowned ceramist Hamada Shoji's work. He left the routine life of a salary man and established his own kiln in 1968. He's had a tremendous career with a huge following for his Shino, Oribe, ash-glazed and black creations. Takauchi fires all his *Mino* wares in gas kilns. His work is in major museum collections, and he was awarded the Tochigi Prefectural Cultural Prize in 1998. He is featured in the authoritative publication *Japanese Studio Crafts* by Rupert Faulkner. He was also chosen as one of Japan's top 100 potters in the quarterly ceramic publication *Honobo Geijutsu* (issue #30, 1991).

"... I have rarely heard any other potters talk of themselves in this humble tone. Takauchi is one of Japan's most dynamic ceramic artists..." - Ceramic specialist Robert Yellin.



Autumn, 1984
Glazed stoneware
28 x 28 x 25 cm

Shunichi Yabe, born 1968

Shunichi Yabe, born 1968, is the grandson of the Living National Treasure of Bizen, Toshu Yamamoto (1906-1994). Bizen is a municipality in Japan famous for its rustic pottery. Its wares represent one of the great refinements of technique and style. Yet Yabe's soaring sculptures are worlds apart from the traditional vessels of his famous grandfather. Yabe exhibits in his work a penchant for the sculptural, as can be seen from his degree in Sculpture at the Nagoya University of Arts. It is his ability to create dynamic objects, not fettered by the ghosts of Bizen tradition and freed from functionality, which has made Yabe one of the most exciting artists to come forth.

Yabe has a keen and natural sense of line. The artist takes great care in first drawing an image of the work, and after hand-building the basic form, the piece is carved with a knife into the form he had envisioned. After carving, the piece is first bisque-fired and its main-firing is executed in a small wood kiln for 3 days at a temperature reaching 1180 degrees. The resulting futuristic forms of Yabe's stoneware present new possibilities for Japanese Bizen clay in the 21st century.

Among public collections of Japanese ceramics, the British Museum has already bought some of his works.



Gyogetsu, Moonlight, 2019
Bizen Stoneware
59,2 x 36 x 25 cm

Yasuda Zenko, 1926 - 2011

Yasuda Zenko, born 1926, studied at the Kyoto Craft-Fabric University where he specialised in the making of kilns, after which he studied pottery under the artist Kiyomizu Rokubee (1901-1980). Zenko creates unique and distinctive stoneware using complex glazing techniques. He is a well-respected 20th century Japanese potter.

First displayed nationally in 1950, he was awarded the Japanese Ceramic Society prize in 1958 and since has often been included in the *Nitten* (annual and renowned Japan Art Academy Award). His work was acquired by Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1963. He was awarded at the *Nitten* in 1964, followed by the national Craft Exhibition 1967 and collected by the Japanese Government in 1971. A private exhibition of the artist's work was held in San Francisco in 1978. The Museum of Modern Art in Shiga prefecture boasts no less than 10 works in their collection.

In this piece the rich red underscores the feldspathic glaze running wispy tendrils across the vase in a style the artist calls "flowering clouds".



Untitled
Post war
Ceramic vase glazed in white and red
21 x 7x 15 cm

Satoshi Kino, born 1987

Having first created ceramics as a teenager, Kino Satoshi, born in 1987, was given his first museum solo exhibition at a young age at the New Taipei City Yingge Ceramic Museum, Taiwan. Originally interested in pursuing a career as a stone sculptor, Kino encountered the powerful sculptural ceramics of Nishida Jun (1977-2005) in an exhibition and decided to major in ceramics. Inspired by Nishida's powerful large and dense forms, he initially attempted to follow in that sculptural perspective but soon realized this did not suit his own aesthetic sensibility.

Fascinated by the potential of fired porcelain to become like stone when polished, Kino chose to focus on this. His sculptures resemble long, billowing ribbons of celadon-glazed porcelain. First throwing a spherical band on the wheel, rather than mold-casting, Kino then severs this tapered band into segments. Using the centrifugal force of the wheel, he manually transforms these thin, attenuated, sections into flowing works of art. After drying, he thoroughly sands the entire work prior to bisque firing. Then, before the final firing, he applies translucent bluish white (seihakuji) glaze with a compressor before firing in a reduction atmosphere. The artist credits his unique process as enabling works to be integrated into the surrounding space, as he is inspired by nature, particularly the phases of the moon.

Satoshi Kino's porcelain sculptures are inspired by the serenity inherently found in water, the air, plants, and other natural elements. Furthermore, he tries to replicate the tension that quietly exists in our surroundings and convey that through his works.

(...)



Evening Tide Choseki 21-1c, 2021
Glazed porcelain
34 x 29 x 3,5 cm

(...)

Kino draws inspiration for many of his pieces from the Japanese words used to describe the natural world. For example, *Oroshi* is the Japanese term for a strong wind blowing down the slope of a mountain; the delicate edges of his sculptures evoke the sharpness of the wind, and the celadon blue glaze represents the chill on one's skin. *Evening tide* is a quiet reference of the beach. By combining the use of porcelain as a medium, and the challenge of using the potter's wheel, Kino's work conveys a distinctive narrative.

Statement from the artist: "The forms of my porcelain sculptures are expressed solely in lines, and I want to leave a resonance of the piece in the air as well as in the hearts of people who see my work. It was exciting for me to discover that when I am throwing a piece, I could stretch the clay into very thin forms, and this process would erase the marks of my hands and fingers. It's as though the chunk of clay becomes absorbed into the air, and only a thin outline remains on the wheel. To me this is a resonance of something that has vanished.

I am also fascinated by the nature of porcelain which can simultaneously express two extremes—solidness and delicacy, or stress and tranquility. It is as though these contrasting aspects react upon each other like an echo. Inspiration for my sculptural forms usually comes from nature—formless things like wind, air, water, but sometimes also the appealing forms of plants and the landscape. The beautiful balance I see in these things inspire my creations."



Evening Tide Oval 21-7c, 2021
Glazed porcelain
33 x 3 cm



Orosbi Wave T18-1, 2021
Glazed porcelain
81 x 7,5 x 48 cm



Ravine, 2021
Glazed porcelain
41,5 x 18 x 17,5 cm



Orosbi Twist T20-6N, 2021
Glazed porcelain
45 x 8 x 18,5 cm

Minegishi Seiko, born 1952

Minegishi Seiko, (born 1952) is considered one of Japan's most accomplished celadon ceramic artists. However, he came to celadon indirectly having first worked in the Kohiki style, an iron-rich clay body covered with a white slip modelled after Korean Yi Dynasty (1392-1910) Punch'ng wares. He achieved success in this style but found there was a discrepancy between the Kohiki style and the more precise forms that he wanted to make. After seeing a large Chinese celadon bowl in the Tokyo National Museum, Minegishi was inspired to create the perfect celadon deep crackles.

From then on Seiko specializes in the notoriously difficult crackled-celadon glaze on a wide range of vessel forms. His thickly applied glazes span the classical range of celadon colors from pale green to gray to beige and are characterized by *kan'ny*, or deep crackling that serves to accentuate his elegant forms.

Untitled, 2020
celadon-glazed stoneware
18 x 12,8 x 29,4 cm



Akashima Yasushi, 1938 - 2017

Akashima Yasushi (1938-2017) was born in Hyogo prefecture and graduated from the Kyoto Municipal University of Art in 1962. While still at university he was accepted into the Mainichi Kogyo Design exhibition. He began his career as a designer for Hino Automotive, in charge of their top model the Contessa. He also worked at Nisshin Denki where he headed the lighting design department. He left Nisshin in 1974, and began his own career as an independent artist, focused on the plastic arts of glass and ceramic while maintaining his contacts in the design world. With his past in lighting, he was innovative in creating works which combined glass, pottery, metal and electric lights. This did not deter him from consulting in other areas of design, and he was awarded at the National Catalog and Poster Exhibition in 1978. Although he would remain unaffiliated, a difficult place to be in group-conscious Japan, he would be accepted into many national exhibitions including the National Traditional Crafts Exhibition and awarded at several important events, including the National Craft Exhibition, National Modern Ceramic Sculpture Exhibition and the Shigaraki Ceramics Exhibition in 1999. One monumental work stands in the park in Toki City, Gifu prefecture.

His work is held in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Ringling Museum among others.



Untitled
Post war
Glazed stone ware
70 x 42 x 3 cm

Kosi Hidama, born 1968

Kosi Hidama was born in Okayama, Japan. He came to Belgium in 1993 and worked as a dancer. His carrier in dance and performance with Belgian and European artists brought him to the essence of Occidental aesthetics. Meanwhile living as a foreigner in Europe, Kosi Hidama discovered the profound value of Japanese culture that could still offer various possibilities of beauty and philosophy. After the catastrophic earthquake followed by a tremendous tsunami and nuclear accident in Fukushima, Kosi Hidama met potters who had to evacuate for their life. This experience gave him sorrowful feelings to not only artisans in Fukushima but also all the traditional skillful works that are disappearing internationally.

At the same time Kosi Hidama was fascinated by the possibility of pottery as art. He decided to start creating pottery work to see what Japanese culture could offer in Europe. Soon after he started studying pottery at Academie Beeldende Kunsten Anderlecht in Brussels. Axel Vervoordt became interested in Hidama's work. And in the end of 2013 Vervoordt asked him to produce pottery. Kosi Hidama is working for both Axel Vervoordt Company's production and his own creation then. Kosi creates one-of-a-kind, hand thrown and signed ceramics. He uses clay from a clay pit in the Ardennes (Belgium) and from Germany and Spain. For glaze he prefers wood ash and some metal oxide, feldspar, quartz.



Untitled
Stone ware with ashes
22,5 cm



Untitled
Stone ware with ashes
35 cm

Chisato Yasui, born 1984

Chisato Yasui is a ceramic and mixed media artist. She graduated with an MA in Art and Design from the University of Tsukuba in 2010 and currently lives in Tsukuba City, Ibaraki, where she creates her work while raising three children together with her husband.

Yasui's aim is to visualise the things we cannot see such as harmony and relationships by making viewers conscious of them through her work. She thinks art work can exist like groundwater vein to connect various things. For example, connecting the everyday to the extraordinary, oneself to others, the subconscious to the conscious. She wants her work to function in this way.

In the artist's own words, "I work with ceramics because it is a material that allows me to maintain my flexibility, and to follow my instincts as I create. When I go to my studio, I consciously allow space between myself and society, and when I interact with clay, I can follow my intuition, feel the world at will, and open my senses to the not-yet-identified contexts.

The subject of my creation is the unseen changes of my feelings. The heart seems to be chaotic but I feel it is very rational and clever in that it has a simple and beautiful structure, like nature. In the ceramic process, we find shapes through the changes of the material, from clay to ceramics. To me, the process is like a mathematical formula. I hope to find common ground in both humanity and nature while I am trying to capture my changing feelings with ceramics."

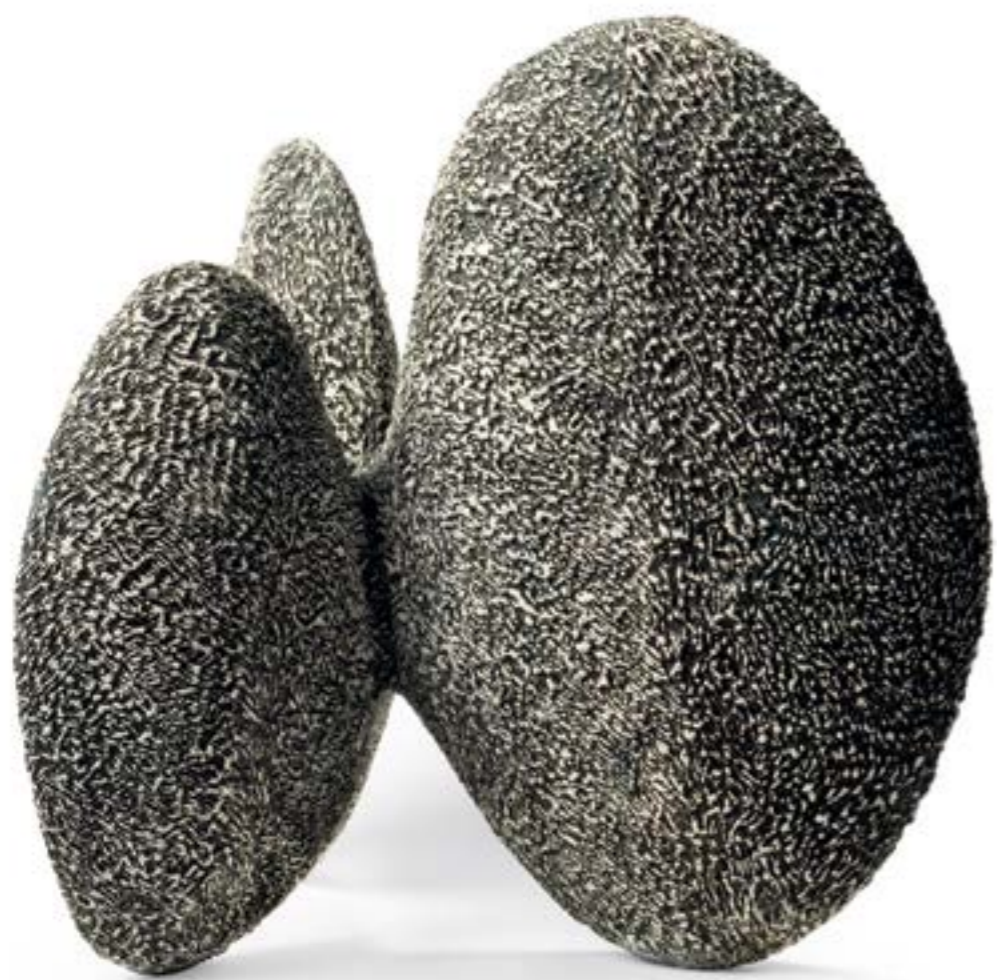
Theobroma - favorite food of gods I, II, III, 2020

Stoneware with glaze

48 x 32 x 50 cm

39 x 26 x 40 cm

36 x 26 x 40 cm



Takiguchi Kazuo, born 1953

Takiguchi, born 1953, was the son of a tableware wholesaler in Gozaka, Kyoto, at the center of production of traditional Kyoto ceramics. After twice dropping out of university, he studied under ceramists Kiyomizu Rokubei VI (1901-1980) followed by Yagi Kazuo (1918-1979). He also frequented Kondo Yutaka (1932-1983) and Fujihira Shin (1922-2012). It is Yagi's aesthetic and focus on non-traditional, sculptural forms that made a lasting impact on Takiguchi. Years later he also studied at the Royal College of Arts, London, graduating in 1992. Living overseas made him realize the important role the Japanese language played in his life and how it impacted his artwork. Since then, he has focused on words as a source of inspiration. The artist emphasizes that just as he is free to use language according to his own desires and needs, he endeavors to give each work a presence unique unto itself. It is important to him that his works touch the viewers' hearts outside of the context of functionality. This has earned him a slew of awards, including the Foreign Minister's Award at the 1985 Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition and the Grand Prix at the same exhibition three years later, and the Kyoto Arts and Crafts Exhibition Grand Prize as well.

His sculptural process is both complicated and highly creative. Using pulleys, he first flattens a slab of thinly pounded clay between 3 to 6 mm thick and lays it in a canvas sheet. With the use of pulleys, he then hoists it and suspends in the air, molding it into the amoebic form he wishes. His ambitiously abstract forms have made him one of the standard-bearers of contemporary Japanese ceramics.



Untitled
Glazed stoneware
7 x 43 x 34 cm

Jun Matsumura, born 1986

Jun Matsumura was born in Chiba Prefecture on the outskirts of Tokyo in 1986. He graduated from the University of South Alabama in 2010, and from the Tajimi Municipal Ceramics Research Facility in 2015. He then went on to the Utatsuyama Research Facility in Kanazawa, leaving there in 2018. His transcendent, innovative forms have set the heart of the ceramic world racing and he has been awarded at the exhibition Tradition and Innovation-Japanese Ceramics Now as well as in the 3rd Triennale of KOGEI in Kanazawa and have been presented at TEFAF in Maastricht, Art Fair Tokyo in 2018, Art Collect in London and Art Kyoto in 2019.

The sculpture *Dissection of Awe* has been exhibited at in the Paramita Museum in June 2021, one of the most well-known ceramics venues in Japan. Having grown up surrounded by the Japanese philosophy and subcultures, he creates work based on the practice of *Kogei* (Japanese traditional arts and crafts) and he uses porcelain as the medium to reflect on modern culture, prompting the audience to rethink about the current situations in society and the underlying consequences. The form of this sharp streamline sculpture has affinity with architecture. Jun's work touches the ambiguity between function and non-function.



Dissection of Awe, 2021
Porcelain
12.4 x 59.8 x 13.9 cm

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