

2016

Crafting the Elements Brochure

Fairfield University Art Museum

Tomoko Nagakura

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/craftingtheelements-ephemera>

Recommended Citation

Fairfield University Art Museum and Nagakura, Tomoko, "Crafting the Elements Brochure" (2016). *Crafting the Elements: Ceramic Art of Modern Japan - Ephemera*. 3.

<https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/craftingtheelements-ephemera/3>

This item has been accepted for inclusion in DigitalCommons@Fairfield by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Fairfield. It is brought to you by DigitalCommons@Fairfield with permission from the rights-holder(s) and is protected by copyright and/or related rights. **You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses, you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.** For more information, please contact digitalcommons@fairfield.edu.

CRAFTING THE ELEMENTS

Ceramic Art of Modern Japan from the Collection of
Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz

September 29 - December 16, 2016

Exhibition Checklist

1. Yagi Akira (b. 1955)
Seiji Shimamon Futamono (Celadon Glazed Covered Jar with Linear Patterns), 1980
Porcelain celadon glaze
7 ½ x 10 ¼ inches (19 x 26 cm)
2. Uematsu Eiji (b. 1949)
Mizu wo Tataete (Suffused with Water), 2006
Iga claywork
6 ¾ x 8 inches (17 x 20.3 cm)
3. Akao Fusako (b. 1950)
Memory M4, 2012
Stoneware, glazed
7 ½ x 7 x 4 inches (19 x 17.8 x 10 cm)
4. Suzuki Gorō (b. 1941)
Box #3, Yashichida, 2009
Oribe ware
20 x 10 inches (50.8 x 25.4 cm)
5. Kondō Hiroshi (b. 1936)
Budō Sometsuke Tsubo (Vase with Grape Vine Motif in Cobalt Blue Underglaze), ca. 2009
Porcelain
9 x 9 ½ x 9 ½ inches (23 x 24 x 24 cm)
6. Hayashi Kaku (b. 1953)
GEN (Dignity), Tetsu Guro (Iron Black Glazed), 2011
Stoneware
3 ½ x 4 inches (8.9 cm x 10.2 cm)
7. Matsuzaki Ken (b. 1950)
[Vase, Rectangular, Oribe Glaze], 2013-2014
Stoneware glazed
10 ¾ x 9 ½ x 4 ¼ inches (27.3 x 24.1 x 10.8 cm)
8. Mihara Ken (b. 1958)
Sekki Kigen '07 (Stoneware, Origin '07), 2007
Stoneware, natural ash glaze
13 ¾ x 18 5/8 x 5 inches (35 x 47.3 x 12.7 cm)
9. Mihara Ken (b. 1958)
Sekki Chawan (Stoneware Teabowl), 2011
Stoneware
Approximately 5 x 4 inches (12.7 x 10.2 cm)
10. Kawabata Kentarō (b. 1976)
Shuwari, 2012
Porcelain
Approximately 7 ½ x 3 ½ inches (19.1 x 8.9 cm)
11. Inoue Manji (b. 1929)
Hakuji Urigata Tsubo (White Celadon Jar in Melon Shape), 2012
Porcelain
6 ¾ x 9 ¼ inches (17 x 23.5 cm)
12. Wada Morihiro (1944-2008)
Sugimon Sekki (Cyprus Pattern Vessel), 1979
Stoneware
20 ½ x 11 7/8 x 8 ½ inches (51 x 30 x 21.5 cm)
13. Wada Morihiro (1944-2008)
Senmon Ki (Vessel with Abstract Design), 1993-1994
Stoneware, slip glaze
16 x 9 ½ x 5 ½ inches (40.6 x 24 x 14 cm)
14. Itō Motohiko (b. 1939)
Nunome Ichijiku-mon Kabin (Flower Vase with Fig Tree Decoration on Cloth-Imprinted Ground), 2000
Stoneware
15 5/8 x 11 inches (14.3 x 28 cm)
15. Yanagihara Mutsuo (b. 1934)
Gin Oribe, Shōkō Bin (Silver Oribe, "Smiling Mouth" Vase), 1998
Stoneware
16 x 10 x 12 inches (40 x 25 x 30 cm)
16. Aoki Ryōta (b. 1978)
Kai Seiji Chawan (Sea Blue Celadon Tea Bowl), 2009
Stoneware
Approximately 4 x 4 inches (10.1 x 10.1 cm)
17. Tsukamoto Seijirō (b. 1944)
[Vase, Cube Shaped], ca. 2001
Stoneware, nerikomi
5 7/8 x 6 x 6 ½ inches (2.25 x 15.25 x 16.5 cm)
18. Nagae Shigekazu (b. 1953)
[Disc Shaped Celadon Porcelain, from the Shokki (Tableware) Series], 2012-2014
Porcelain
Approximately 6 inch diameter (15.25 cm)
19. Fujihira Shin (1922-2012)
Shinsha tetsu-e small vase (Copper glazed small vase with iron glazing painting), 1989-1992
Stoneware, glazed
Approximately 8 x 4 ½ inches (20.3 x 11.4 cm)

20. Hamada Shōji (1894-1978)
Haku-yō Ho Hei (White Glazed Rectangular Vase), 1960
Stoneware, glazed
11 ¾ x 5 ½ inches (30 x 14 cm)
21. Michikawa Shōzō (b. 1953)
[Twisted Pot, White Kohiki Glaze], 2009
Stoneware, natural ash glaze
7 x 14 ½ inches (18 x 37 cm)
22. Itō Tadashi (b. 1952)
Saidei Hachi (Clay Colored Bowl), 2007
Stoneware
7 ¼ x 3 ¼ x 4 ¾ (18.1 x 7.9 x 12 cm)
23. Morino Taimei (b. 1934)
Sōmei Jōmon Henko (Flattened Vase with Blue Sea Stripe Pattern with Iron Glaze), 2005
Stoneware, glazed
13 x 11 x 6 ½ inches (33 x 28 x 16.5 cm)
24. Nakamura Takuo (b. 1945)
Zōgan Iroo Utsuwa (Inlaid Polychrome Glazed "Vessel Plus"), 2012
Stoneware, glazed
7 7/8 x 10 5/8 x 10 inches (15 x 15.25 x 16.5 cm)
25. Mori Tōgaku (b. 1937)
Bizen Mentori Mizusashi (Bizen Faceted Water Jar), ca. 1990
Stoneware, unglazed
6 ½ x 10 ½ inches (16.5 x 29.7 cm)
26. Mori Tōgaku (b. 1937)
Henko "Samui Iro" (Vessel "Cold Color"), ca. 1990
Stoneware
10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.3 cm)
27. Katō Tsubusa (b. 1962)
[Vase, Pale Green Glaze on Porcelain], 2008
Porcelain
12 x 6 ½ x 6 inches (30.5 x 16.5 x 15.25 cm)
28. Shimizu Uichi (1926-2004)
Tetsuyō Henko (Iron Glazed Vessel), 1987
Stoneware, glazed
12 5/8 x 9 x 7 7/8 inches (32 x 22.9 x 20 cm)
29. Izumita Yukiya (b. 1966)
Sekisō (Layers), Small Flower Vase, 2011
Stoneware
Approximately 4 x 4 inches (10 x 10 cm)
30. Terai Yōko (b. 1972)
Pool Variation, 2010
Stoneware
Approximately 15 x 8 inches (38 x 20.3 cm)
31. Fujimoto Yoshimichi (1919-1992)
Sagi no Zu Hana Tsubo (Flower Vessel with a Heron Design), 1967
Stoneware, glazed
11 ¾ x 12 inches (28.9 x 30.5 cm)

Titles are given in Japanese transliteration, followed by an English translation. When the artist has not assigned a title an English description is provided in square brackets.

Photography credits:
Figure numbers 4, 10, 22, 25, 27 and cover illustration photography by Ben Bocko.
Figure numbers 12 and 24, photography by Richard Goodbody, image courtesy of Joan B Mirviss LTD.
Figure number 17 photography by Okamura Kichiro, image courtesy of Joan B Mirviss LTD.



CRAFTING THE ELEMENTS



Ceramic Art of Modern Japan from the
Collection of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz

Created from the fusion of earth, fire and water, ceramic art is an ancient, enduring, and vibrant form of creative expression in Japan. Japanese ceramic artists today are deeply mindful of this venerable tradition, and their works frequently abound with resonant historical references. At the same time, many of these practitioners boldly bend and stretch artistic conventions to create or incorporate new forms and ornamental language. Echoes of ceremonial vessels and implements co-exist beside fluid, organic, and evocative shapes that push the allied media of clay and porcelain to their most daring and elastic possibilities. This exhibition presents a choice selection of contemporary Japanese ceramics from one of the most distinguished private collections in America. Seen together, the more than thirty works on view highlight the creative dynamism and innovation that enlivens this most traditional art form as practiced by Japanese ceramic artists today.

We are indebted to Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz for the loan of these splendid examples from their peerless collection and for their fulsome collaboration on the project. For invaluable assistance throughout the planning process thanks are also due to Tomoko Nagakura, curator of the Horvitz Collection and author of the following text. At the Fairfield University Art Museum, Carey Mack Weber, Assistant Director, Tiffany Davidson, former Museum Assistant, and student intern Kristin Ryan '16, ably assisted in many aspects of the organization and implementation of the exhibition and related academic and public programs. Dr. Ive Covaci of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, faculty liaison for the exhibition, consulted on the project, shared her expertise in Japanese art, and authored and recorded the audio tour.

Crafting the Elements is complemented by a program of lectures and events, free and open to the public. (For details and information consult the museum's website: fairfield.edu/museum.) Generous funding for the exhibition was provided by the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Foundation, the Japan Foundation, New York, and Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz. *TownVibe* is the media sponsor of the Fairfield University Art Museum's 2016-17 season in the Bellarmine Hall galleries.

Linda Wolk-Simon
*Frank and Clara Meditz Director and Chief Curator
 Fairfield University Art Museum*



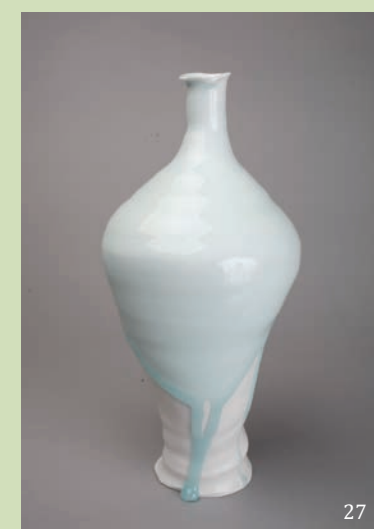
Daiseigama Kiln, Mashiko, Japan (May 2013). Tony McNicol Photography

Introduction to Contemporary Japanese Ceramics

Tomoko Nagakura
Curator, Horvitz Collection of Contemporary Japanese Ceramics

Making ceramics in contemporary Japan has evolved according to distinct aesthetic tastes that reflect the history of a long tradition of production and appreciation. Indigenous ceramic production dates back to Neolithic times. Different types of wares developed through close contact with imported Korean and Chinese pottery since the 5th and 8th centuries, respectively. Fast forward to the Momoyama period (1568–1603), and ceramics played a key role in *sado*, ‘the way of tea,’ when a specific taste was cultivated by the famous tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591).

If the Momoyama period was the peak of ceramic art production in the pre-modern era, another shift occurred during the last 150 years. Once modern Japan opened its doors to the rest of the world under pressure from the U.S. government during the early years of the Meiji era (1868–1912), Japanese politicians promoted industrialization and modernization to compete with the West. Gaining access to western ideas and technology, artists working in different traditional art forms experienced a new era, working with tradition while exploring novel ideas from the West. Ceramic art was no exception.



Following the seminal decades of modern ceramic production during the Meiji, Taishō (1912–1935), and early Shōwa (1936–1945) eras, Japanese ceramics reached a pinnacle during the postwar years. The following terms will highlight the key aspects of ceramic art in Japan from modern to contemporary times.

Mingei and the Folk Art Movement

The *Mingei* (Folk Art) movement was formed officially in 1926 in opposition both modern views of art, which emphasized individual self-expression, and the rapid changes in society resulting from modernization and industrialization. The founding members of the *Mingei* movement included the philosopher Yanagi Sōetsu (1889–1961) and ceramic artist Hamada Shōji (1894–1978). Inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and by Western artists such as Bernard Leach (1887–1979), *Mingei* members valued utilitarian and humble objects associated with daily life and saw beauty in works created by anonymous artisans. As epitomized by their expression *yō no bi* (“beauty of necessity” or “beauty of usage”), members of the *Mingei* movement found harmony and aesthetic delight in the functionality

expressions of ceramic-making in contemporary Japan.

Avant-garde Ceramics in the Post-war Era: Sōdeisha

Immediately following World War II (1939–45), a group of artists in Kyoto – historically considered the center of traditional culture – formed an avant-garde ceramic association called *Sōdeisha*. Its founding members, which included Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979) and Yamada Hikaru (1924–2001), explored new possibilities in clay as a medium for seeking sculptural expression, challenging the precepts of the widely accepted *Mingei* movement. Inspired by Western artists such as Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), and Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), *Sōdeisha* artists sought to bring ceramics into the wider field of fine art, calling their works *objet-yaki* (*objet* ceramic). They fearlessly worked to free ceramics from restrictions imposed by the demands of functionality in vessels. By closing the mouth of a vessel made to contain food, drinks or flowers, and altering the standardized and expected shape through the potter’s wheel, totally new non-functional forms were created.



Their aim, however, was not to disrespect traditional ceramics to make room for the new. Rather, their creations were based on thorough training and deep understanding of tradition and a true respect for ceramics. In fact, Yagi was born into a traditional potter family in *Gojō-zaka*, the very center of Kyoto ceramic production. Through experimentation, these artists wanted to challenge the validity of the established paradigms of ceramics in Japan, which they felt had long been unquestioned and taken for granted.

These paragons of postwar Japanese ceramics have continually proven to be benchmarks for subsequent artists such as Yanagihara Mutsuo (b. 1934), inspiring them to define their own paths and ceramic art. Most of the younger ceramic artists today have an affinity for creating non-functional sculptural forms. However, without the burgeoning of the *Sōdeisha* movement, the trajectory of modern Japanese ceramic production might have been completely different.



Tradition and Innovation: “Living National Treasures”

At historically important kiln sites such as Shigaraki, Seto (both in Aichi), Mino (in Gifu), and Bizen (in Okayama), some artists from the prewar years were engaged in rediscovering and reviving traditional ceramic-making techniques by studying earlier examples and archaeologically excavated kiln sites. Arakawa Toyozō (1894–1985) strove to revive Mino wares from the Momoyama period (late 16th to early 17th centuries), which would otherwise have

been forgotten. Although such efforts were interrupted during World War II, belief in the importance of preserving tradition and passing it on to the next generation was reinvigorated after the war through the “Living National Treasure” system established by the Japanese government.

In 1955, as part of the newly created laws for the protection of cultural properties, this system was designed to safeguard tradition by a nation that experienced radical changes in social systems after the war. The Living National Treasure system acknowledges mastery of particular techniques rather than the resulting works of art. Among the first to receive the designation were Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886-1963), who was recognized for his polychrome porcelain painting technique, and Ishiguro Munemaro (1893–1968), for his iron-glaze ceramic painting techniques. More recently, this distinction has been awarded to Kondō Yūzō (1902–1985), father of Kondō Hiroshi (b. 1936), for *sometsuke* (cobalt-glaze painting) in 1977, Shimizu Uichi (1926-2004) for iron glaze painting in 1985, and Inoue Manji (b. 1929) for white and blue celadon in 1995.



Contemporary Japanese ceramics thus reflect a long history of tradition, innovation, and revival. It is not a linear history, but rather a constellation of diverse, rich, and sometimes controversial aesthetics.

