

Sueharu Fukami

深見 陶冶



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Erik Thomsen LLC
Asian Art

Foreword

It is my great pleasure to host a solo exhibition of works by Sueharu Fukami, the most famous Japanese ceramicist working today.

Over twenty years ago I found my first Fukami piece in Kyoto, a vase whose sleek lines and beautiful glaze fascinated me (catalog nr. 18). Four years later, in 1991, I met Sueharu Fukami for the first time at the wedding ceremony of my brother, who married the artist's niece. Since then I have kept in close contact with him, seeing his works in his home as well as at museums, galleries, and private collections, and adding gradually to my collection. This exhibition—the inaugural exhibit at our new gallery location in New York—marks the first time that I show my appreciation publicly.

My specialization has been in Japan's older classic arts—the arts that were created for the Japanese themselves and not produced for export to the West. In particular I have focused on objects that were carefully created by first-rate masters, by men and women with passion, who disregarded the great time and effort required to hone their skills in producing works of flawless beauty.

Here I sense a point shared by both the old masters and Sueharu Fukami. They all make sacrifices in order to perfect the skills and techniques needed to make their masterpieces. They all look at the finished products with unflinching eyes, allowing no mistakes and lapses in execution. They all attempt and reach a level of art that cannot fail to astound art lovers from any culture around our world.

This, in the end, is what I appreciate about Fukami's works. There is a timelessness and universality to his objects that is present in all truly great pieces

of art. His work transcends Japan and our era in its appeal. I see him as a profoundly great artist—one of the greatest ceramic artists of any generation—who will continue to awe his audiences, regardless of time and place.

It is my sincere hope that you will share my enthusiasm in the visionary works of this remarkable artist.

Erik Thomsen
New York, September, 2008

Sueharu Fukami: Visions from the Shards of Sennyūji

1. Introduction

How can we describe the art of Sueharu Fukami? His remarkable porcelain sculptures have been compared to samurai swords, ocean waves, space-craft, and warrior helmets; to wind-tunnel-shaped race cars, horizon lines, headrests, sword scabbards, floating feathers, falling leaves, and bird wings. Great efforts have been made to describe the works through references to the physical world, to understand the works in terms of something concrete, especially through objects that have a connection to Japan's history, culture, and traditions.

This urge to describe is also reflected in the artist's titles, which tend to express remote, poetic connections to natural phenomena, such as *Distant Ocean*, *Seascape*, *Distant View*, and *Space*. Fukami, however, distances himself from *specific* physical interpretations for individual works, and describes his inspirations as being partly visual and partly sensual in nature: he has often mentioned, for example, childhood memories of Tōfukuji Temple roof outlines as an influence, in addition to his experiences of sharp winter winds on ocean shores and views of spectacular mountain scenery. He has repeatedly rejected culturally-specific interpretations, such as samurai swords, and instead sees his work as having been conceived through universal ideas.

Looking through the artist's interpretations, are these works then distant ocean waves, temple roofs, or freezing winds cutting through the winter air? And could the act of describing be made easier by reducing the sculptures to any one object or idea? There is undeniably something about Fukami's works that invites the viewer to

similes—but while some objects might look like specific things (such as horizon lines or even samurai swords), others do not fit into such mental pigeonholes. There is clearly something at work here that is larger and more complex than any of these descriptive strategies.

Rather than using references to specific cultures, traditions or representative forms, Fukami insists that the objects are abstract in meaning and made as distant as possible from any one culture or tradition. Fukami has also spoken of being inspired as a young man by fellow artists, a select group that includes Japanese potters working in abstract forms, such as Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979) and the Sōdeisha potters, as well as non-Japanese sculptors and ceramicists, such as the Italian artist Carlo Zauli (1926–2002).¹

How then are we to understand his works and to what degree can we accept the words of artists and their interpretations? As stated above, many have responded by trying to see Fukami's works in terms of objects from their own past, or to a preconceived understanding of the artist, based on his culture: hence the many attempts to tie the objects to distinctly Japanese cultural phenomena, such as samurai swords and scabbards.

The objects, however, go distinctly beyond a traditionally Japanese cultural interpretation. When compared, for example, to ceramic objects made by other contemporary Japanese artists, say Tsujimura Shirō or even Raku Kichizaemon XV, we see objects that immediately announce connections to a widely understood Japanese identity. When compared with such pieces, it is clear that

¹ The Sōdeisha (Society for Mud Crawling) was established in 1949 and included, in addition to Yagi, the artists Yamada Hikaru (1924–2001) and Suzuki Osamu (1926–2001). For a comparison between the works of Fukami and Zauli, see Maezaki Shinya, »Fukami Sueharu, Ceramic Sculptor.« *Ceramic Arts and Perception* 63 (2006), 4–8.

Fukami's objects are in a different category altogether and that they aim for more universal ideas.

Must we then have concrete markers in order to understand these works? And why do we need to tie the abstract to something concrete in order to understand them? We may well ask what it is that drives us toward using such markers of memory. Is the process of understanding helped or hindered by linking the sculptures to objects of memory? What do we gain from using concrete objects as comparisons? Is it necessary to think of a conch shell when we see Sydney's Opera House?

For a closer understanding of Fukami's works, I believe it is more useful to look beyond titles and specific interpretations of objects and instead to examine the background of the artist and his cultural contexts. Although Fukami clearly and deliberately indicates the direction of his art and insists on the lack of connections to Japanese ceramic traditions and lineages of potters working in Japan—or anywhere in the world, for that matter—we still should examine these claims through the contexts of his own background.

Fukami's connections to abstract artists such as Yagi Kazuo and the Sōdeisha are often mentioned and there is an unmistakable debt to these early post-war Kyoto artists, especially so in his early, more experimental art. He himself has said that he felt a close connection to (literally, he uses the word *akogare*, or »yearning for«) the Sōdeisha artists and such a connection is also visible in his early work.² If one looks, however, at the work

² See, for example, Fukami's interview with Okuno Kenichi: »Fukami Sueharu: Seihaku no ji ni kūkan o gyōshimeru.« *Glass & Art* 1995, 11 (Autumn, 1995), 80–7.

³ For an illustration and discussion of this object, see Louise Cort and Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth*. Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2003, 168–71. For an analysis of the role of Yagi Kazuo in modern Japanese ceramics, see Bert Winther-Tamaki, »Yagi Kazuo: The Admission of the Nonfunctional Object into the Japanese Pottery World.« *Journal of Design History* 12, 2 (1999), 123–41.

that has made him famous, the abstract *seihakuji* or *qingbai*-glaze porcelains that became his sole project after his early thirties, few points of comparison remain.

On comparing Fukami's early work with an object that is most often brought out as a comparison, that is, Yagi Kazuo's iconic *Mr Samsa's Walk* (*Zamuza-shi no sampō*) of 1954, the objects share a playful abstraction in form that incorporates basic geometric shapes; in Yagi's case, the repeated circle, large and small.³ Key differences appear in the details: Yagi's surfaces are solidly grounded in the century-old traditions of the Japanese potter: we see the patterns of the traditional wood ash glaze, the traces of the potter's wheel, and the seamless connections between the individual parts. While Yagi's work is abstract and modern, it is nonetheless created firmly within the frames of the traditional Japanese ceramic world. We may well ask ourselves whether the work of Fukami shares similar roots.

2. Not traditional, but historical

First of all, what are we to make of the materials that Fukami uses in his works? The late work is composed of porcelains covered with a light blue glaze, the *seihakuji*, a type of porcelain with historical roots in the *qingbai* porcelains of the Song period. The *qingbai* (»blue-white«) porcelains were created at Jingdezhen kilns and were widely famous for their clear white porcelain body and elegant pale blue glaze.

The essayist Masahiko Shibatsuji suggested in a 2002 article that Fukami, by choosing this ancient model, created work that is »not traditional, but historical.«⁴ That is, Fukami makes a clear break with Japanese ceramic traditions of the mid-twentieth century—especially the *mingei* folk movement, by potters such as Hamada Shōji—and goes back to the Song and Yuan periods China, taking as his inspiration the historical *qingbai* porcelains. The artist has thus received historical Chinese techniques and aesthetics unrelated to his own Japanese background. Moreover, he has applied this model to abstract shapes born entirely of his own inspiration, rejecting Japanese ceramic traditions.

3. Biography of the artist

Yet the situation may be much more complex than a simple borrowing from the Song period. In order for us to ascertain the usefulness of the historical theory, it becomes necessary to look more closely at the artist's personal background.

Sueharu Fukami was born as the sixth child to a family with strong connections to ceramics. His father Yoshiichi Fukami came from a village of potters near the ancient ceramic city of Seto, in present-day Aichi Prefecture. The father was a second son and thus had to search for a way to make his living. He sought to escape the limitations and competition of the Seto community and moved to Kyoto in the boom years before the Second World War. Here he first worked in another ceramic workshop before establishing his own kiln, Fukami Ryōsen, which first specialized in making Fukusuke figures, ceramic figures traditionally placed in shops and merchant

⁴ See Shibatsuji Masahiko. »Fukami Sueharu: Dentō no seihakuji o chōyaku saseta tenpu no zae.« In Shibatsuji Masahiko and Yonezawa Aritsune, eds. *Geijutsu no setsuri, fukashi no katachi ni semaru sakkatachi*. Kyoto and Tokyo: Tankōsha, 2002, 197–213.

homes to bring good fortune. Numerous other potters of his generation made the trip from the ceramic centers of Seto and Kyūshū to Kyoto in order to establish kilns in the Sennyūji pottery area, a relatively new area for Kiyomizu ware created at a later time than the more traditional Kiyomizu centers of Gojōzaka and Awataguchi. Sueharu Fukami's father and his elder brother, Takehisa, then reinvented themselves as makers of fine, hand-painted porcelain vessels for *kaiseki* food ceremonies, creating sets of exquisite tailor-made objects for the top-tier restaurants and inns (such as the Hiiragiya Inn) of Kyoto. In his old age, Fukami's father became an active member in the salons of Kyoto and cultivated connections to the contemporary cultural world.

Into this family Sueharu Fukami was born as the third son, a fortuitous act that released him from the onerous duties of elder sons. His two older brothers, Takehisa and Naokatsu, worked in the family kiln under the strict eyes of their father, while Sueharu, as the third son, was free to follow his own path. Here it is helpful to remember the contexts within which Fukami was born and grew up. The Sennyūji ceramic area, placed between the venerable temples of Sennyūji and Tōfukuji, was and remains a distinct neighborhood of potters on the outskirts of central Kyoto. Sueharu's childhood and youth were spent in constant contact with ceramics: even the dirt roads of the area were covered with multicolored pottery and porcelain shards, discarded from nearby kilns. Periodically, the large communal *noborigama* climbing kilns would belch out heavy, black smoke over the area, and the daily life of the pottery community would be punctuated by periods of intensive activity when the large kilns needed to be loaded or unloaded as quickly as

possible.⁵ Communal and family conversation was centered on ceramics: for the brothers working in the family shop, for the father as its head, and for the large group of helpers working within its confines—this in a kiln that was surrounded by over one hundred other kilns, all worked on by groups of potters, mainly from either Seto or Kyūshū areas, from families with various traditions of ceramic production.

Fukami learned his trade in his home, in the neighborhood, and in his schools. He first started out as a porcelain artist and initially did very well, with an early acceptance into the Nitten Exhibition (The Japan Fine Arts Exhibition) at the remarkable age of twenty. This early success was followed by setbacks, and his two subsequent entries failed to gain acceptance into the prestigious venue. He went through numerous changes: he first experimented with porcelain objects, then switched over to pottery, going through a large number of object types. For a while, he deliberately modeled himself on the popular Yagi Kazuo and his Sōdeisha group. Some of the objects from this period are, in fact, very close to the work of these artists.⁶

The period of Fukami's twenties was also a period of social unrest in Japan and other places, with violent student protests, the ongoing Vietnam War, the Apollo moon landing, and the hippie move-

ment, with abstract expressionism and the new rock music becoming leading art forms. Reflecting the instability of the period, Fukami's work took on a wide range of expression. Some of Fukami's works took on specific political meaning, such as the remarkable *The Artist, Buried in Information* (*Jōhō ni maibotsu sareta watashi*) of 1973, a pottery cylindrical vessel with a small seated pottery figure in the center, representing the artist buried under the weight of information bearing down from all sides: the sides of the vessel are impressed with a jumble of printed information, including almanac entries, newspaper articles, train schedules, and obituaries. The latter humorously announce the death and funeral services of the young artist, Sueharu Fukami.⁷

At other times, his work took on a poetic, whimsical nature, such as the *The Dream of the Picture Book* (*Ehon no yume*) of 1972, a pottery book that opens to reveal a blue-and-white porcelain balloon, on which Fukami asked his seven-year-old niece to draw pictures of popular animated characters.⁸ The relentless experimentation of this decade reveals Fukami's ultimate dissatisfaction with his many different directions. He felt in the end that he had only succeeded in creating ephemeral work that connected with local issues and contemporary politics. The various directions he tried were eventually products of their time and rep-

⁵ The traces of the discontinued communal *noborigama* kilns can still be traced on the maps of the area by the location of later structures. The *noborigama* kilns were outlawed within city limits in 1974, due to their intensely polluting smoke. The individual potters were then forced to create their own individual kilns, powered by either propane or electricity, reflecting the present situation of the district.

⁶ See images of his earlier work in Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, ed., *Genesis of a Genius: The Early Ceramics of Fukami Sueharu*. Hanford, CA: Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, 2003. The Institute, renamed as the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, is the single most important repository of objects and documents related to the work of Sueharu Fukami. It contains, among numerous other objects, most of the earlier work of the artist. See also article by Maezaki Shinya. »Chasing Perfection.« In Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, ed., *Genesis of a Genius: The Early Ceramics of Fukami Sueharu*. Hanford, CA: Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, 2003, 7-27.

⁷ For image, see *ibid*, page 10.

⁸ His niece, Chikako Fukami, still remembers her excitement in actually being encouraged to draw on the clay, something that was usually only done by adults working in the kiln. For image, see *ibid*, page 9.

resented echoes of objects and ideas created by other artists. For the perfectionist artist they lacked appeal: Fukami continually sought to create works that were uniquely his own; works that had universal appeal and a permanence of vision.

His wife, Chieko Fukami, may have played a role in her husband's eventual decision to concentrate on *seihakuji* porcelain. She had arrived at the family kiln at a young age as an apprentice, and had worked together with Sueharu Fukami in creating different types of objects. With his help, she created a new type of bowl and tray, small porcelain vessels with sharp geometric edges and forms, with thick applications of light celadon glaze that exposed white porcelain at the edges. She submitted these objects under her name to ceramic competitions and won prizes for them. This was perhaps a prod in the right direction for Sueharu Fukami as well, for the pieces created by Chieko in collaboration with Sueharu Fukami resemble the future *seihakuji* objects in form, color, and idea—if not in scale.

Another factor was Fukami's decision to move away from the somewhat claustrophobic ceramic community of Sennyūji. He built a house on an empty lot by a bamboo grove on a green, grassy hillside in the Fushimi area and started producing his own works. The move was intended to mark a clear break with his past, from the communal atmosphere of the Sennyūji ceramic world into independence. He developed a new kiln, experimented with a new glaze, developed new techniques, and created radically different objects. With his wife, he went through endless experi-

mentations, and, with his brother Naokatsu's help, finally settled on the pressured slip casting that turned into the main technical element of his new creations.⁹ In the end, through much restless search, repeated failures and experimentation, he finally stretched the material to, literally, its breaking point. He has exerted greater challenges to the medium of porcelain than probably any other ceramic artist and created objects of startling originality and vision.

4. The Artist as an Artisan

Revisiting the phrase by Shibatsuji on whether Fukami's art is informed by tradition or history, we see Fukami removing himself from the tradition-centered world of Sennyūji potters in both physical and metaphorical senses, by setting up an independent atelier and by creating porcelains on his own with techniques that he learned through experimentation.

Yet, although Fukami's works have points of connection to the millennia-old Chinese art form, there is clearly more at work. In the case of Fukami, as is often the case with cultural connections in art, there is a sense of multiple receptions: the artist has made a series of careful choices from both the past and the present and no one single source can be singled out as a unique factor. After all, Fukami himself has indicated a wide range of influences including sensations on viewing landscapes, reading abstract ideas, and viewing sculptural artists.

⁹ Naokatsu was in charge of this technique at the family kiln and had used it for creating chopstick stands for use in expensive restaurants. For a closer discussion of Sueharu Fukami's unique technique and overall production method, see Matsuyama Tatsuo. »Fukami Sueharu.« *Hono'o Geijutsu* 94 (Summer 2008), 70-7; Maezaki Shinya. »Chasing Perfection.« In Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, ed., *Genesis of a Genius: The Early Ceramics of Fukami Sueharu*. Hanford, CA: Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, 2003, 7-27; and Würmell, Core. »Die japanische Gegenwarts Keramik zwischen Moderne und Tradition: Fukami Sueharu und Tsujimura Shirō, Zusammentreffen künstlerischer Vision und technischer Meisterschaft zweier Keramik-künstler der Gegenwart.« MA Thesis, University of Heidelberg, 2006.

Fukami adapted the Chinese *qingbai* glaze and its sense of sharpness, the silky whiteness of the porcelain, the textile sense of the edges, and the thinning of the glaze at the edge where a pristine white ground appears—all this is very much part of both *qingbai* porcelains and the Fukami pieces. Yet the forms are no longer the same. Fukami states that the early *qingbai* forms reached their perfection in the Song, leaving him to go in new directions. These are then directions that owe more to contemporary artists—ceramic, sculptural, and others—of the twentieth century than they do to Song-period China.

How then does his search for new directions relate to his own background, and to what degree does he make a clean break with his own past in order to seek out connection to a historical past? And how did he as an artist negotiate the balance between rebellion and acceptance, between new and old, between innovation and tradition?

It is important here to remember the complex specializations within the world of Japanese ceramics. There were many people working concurrently in different fields and traditions. Fukami's family kiln had, for example, no connections to the *mingei*-style kilns and the so-called folk artists, such as Hamada Shōji or, more close to home, Kawai Kanjirō, who worked a few kilometers away in the Gojōzaka area. Nor was the kiln one of the traditional Kyoto tea-related families, such as the line of Raku Kichizaemon XV, creating select and costly objects for the tea ceremony. Nor did it have connections to the cheap, daily porcelains that are still mass produced at ceramic centers in Kyūshū or Seto, using stamps and machine-produced stencils for quick, high-volume production.

And finally, it was not one of the houses specializing in the creation of *sencha* ceramics, such as the Chikusen kiln.

Rather, the family specialized in the creation of porcelains in underglaze blue for restaurants and luxury inns, and this is the tradition that should form the basis of comparisons with Fukami's work.¹⁰ The family kiln porcelains were created with remarkable precision, and were designed to be used as sets of objects in luxury settings. The precision is all the more remarkable when one remembers the shrinkage in the firing process and the fact that some of the objects are composed of sections that contract at different rates. All the details were done by hand, every stroke of the often extensive designs, every curve of the clay. In order to accomplish this remarkable feat, the potters use complex sets of tools, carved bamboo sticks, and other traditional tools (looking at the potter's working space one realizes their great love of such tools) to measure the sizes, shrinkage and other details. The competition in the ceramic field was and remains vigorous and thus the standards had to be very high, with the smallest slip in line or execution causing an object to be relegated to the piles of ceramic shards that once littered the roads.

No artist can be born in a vacuum, and the birth of the artistic genius of Fukami Sueharu is in large degree due to his birth and upbringing within the contexts of the Sennyūji pottery district and the family kiln. And indeed, several points of similarity can be seen between the family kiln and the artist Fukami; for example, in Fukami's extreme attention to detail. Fukami will hone and re-hone his surfaces endlessly and the extensive time it takes

him to prepare and whittle down objects to size and the great care taken to prepare the exact shades of glaze for the objects have no relation to mundane factors such as customer deadlines or the final cost of the objects. There is absolutely no leeway for failure: objects with the slightest defect are immediately thrown away, adding to the pile of shards outside the artist's atelier. While the motive for the production of Fukami's art is no longer centered on commercial success, the artist and the family kiln share an absolutely uncompromising view of perfection.

Despite Fukami's adherence to the Western cult of the artist as a reclusive individual, he works closely with a group of specialists, reflecting the emphasis on communal production within the family kiln. Fukami's wife, Chieko, also a ceramic artist in her own right, remains a constant partner in the creative process and construction of the works. The basic technique that Fukami uses, pressurized injection of liquid clay, is one that he developed with his brother, a specialist in the process. Fukami also works with other accomplished artists and technicians who create the wood and metal parts for the stands of the finished works. All these are masters of their own fields, working closely with Fukami to create the optimal work of art. Here, attention to material, color, and form is absolute and nothing is left to chance.¹¹ Through the various specialists, Fukami seeks absolute control of the object and its immediate surroundings. Even his seals have been carved by an expert Korean seal carver, and Fukami's complex system of different seals (outlined on page 76 in an appendix) symbolize the level of control that he imposes on his works of art and their immediate contexts.

Another aspect of Fukami's art that reveals the influence of his family background is his balance between individual expression and seriality. This balance comes through more clearly in some objects than others—such as the calendar boxes of his youth and the incense burners and cylindrical vessels of his later years. While similar, each piece in these series is unique. The larger objects are almost always created in small editions, usually two to eight pieces. Due to the intensive process of honing, there is, in the end, a great degree of individual variation, yet the objects are nonetheless created in editions.

Fukami's love of tools also reflects his background in the artisan worlds of the family kiln. Fukami searches out the various tools for his remarkable techniques, and has collected tools from Japan, the USA and Germany so that he is able to respond with the correct tool for any aspect of the work. His love of tools and machines reflects, on one hand, a legacy of twentieth century aesthetics, but, on the other, a relationship to Kyoto porcelain potters, and to their love of precision.

Finally, the oft-repeated refusal by Fukami to leave any traces of human hands on his objects is rightly seen as an important difference between him and other folk-art influenced potters, such as Tsujimura Shirō. The refusal to leave traces of the hand is also a point that he holds in common with his family kiln and their finely produced matched sets of porcelain. Here individuality and spontaneity would have been detrimental to the final product—the aim was to create objects that in their perfection came as close as possible to the *appearance* of having been produced by machines, while in fact created by hand. In this aspect as well, Fukami's work can be placed

¹⁰ The kiln has also created works in celadon and overglaze colors in response to special orders and has at times produced *sencha* ceramics. The kiln has also attracted attention through numerous television documentaries. In 1996, Takehisa Fukami was recognized by the national government with the official title of Master of Traditional Arts (*dentō kōgeishi*) for his life-long work with Kiyomizu ware. The Fukami Ryōsen kiln has also taken part in numerous exhibitions, including a 1997 porcelain exhibit in Paris.

¹¹ The wood, for example, is carefully chosen and comes from a luxury wood dealer in Shikoku who, according to Fukami, was also used by the Japanese-American furniture artist George Nakashima for some of his works.

within the family *shokunin*, or artisan tradition, and placed as a stark contrast to the traditions of the tea and *mingei* artists.

Although the objects created by Fukami and his family kiln seem, at first glance, radically different, important connections do exist between the two. In fact, the study of these connections becomes important for a closer understanding of the artist and his background and art. The technique used, the approach to production, the perfection, and the idea of seriality are all aspects of the family tradition of porcelain production that lives within his art as well. While historical aspects of his art, especially the connection to Song dynasty *qingbai* porcelains, do exist as a factor, many of the important aspects of the daily production of artwork come, in fact, from the childhood and youth spent in the family kiln in the Sennyūji ceramic community. The work of Fukami could not exist without the family traditions of porcelain production.

5. Creating Tea Bowls

Going back to Yagi Kazuo and the Sōdeisha potters, Yagi himself came from a similar pottery community and created greatly innovative works of abstraction, justly receiving international attention for his art. He famously said that he is »just a tea bowl maker.« (»Uchira chawanya desse«). Yet these are, of course, the words of someone who clearly does *not* see himself as a tea bowl maker and knows very well that he has gone beyond the level and fame of ordinary tea bowl potters of his neighborhood (who, in any case, did not call themselves *chawanya* »tea bowl makers« at this time).

Yagi's ironic expression was at the expense of the artisans still at work in his boyhood areas, and spoken in the secure knowledge that he had gone very much beyond the work of artisans. At the same time, he bore a deep debt to the community of potters around him. Without their traditions, their expertise, and their techniques—developed by a community working together over generations—there would not have been the background necessary for an artist such as Yagi to emerge. Had there been no Kiyomizu pottery district there would also have been no Yagi Kazuo. His ironic statement may well mask his knowledge of the deep connections between his success and the potters around him.

For Fukami, too, the connections to the pottery district that bore him into the world is at the heart of what he is and does: in the daily techniques, in his outlook to the production, in his expertise, and in numerous other ways. He, like Yagi, bears a deep debt (and ambivalence) to his roots in the traditions of Japanese ceramic production, a debt that reaches beyond the physical distance built between Fushimi and the ceramic center of his upbringing.

As with any original contemporary artist, Fukami has received a large number of influences—ancient to modern. It makes sense to think of the abstraction of his works in terms of ideas both old and new, of both history and tradition. Fukami is not merely an artist of design. He is also a highly developed technician working within the physical bounds of his medium—and seeking to expand these from within. He is in fact taking the object as far away from the accepted technical range of the medium as possible, bringing his art into entirely new directions.

Looking at the works themselves, there is something in them that transcends both the past and the present, and takes the viewer, no matter what his associations, to another level of experience. This, I would argue, is the transcending experience of great art—and this is what brings out the individual urges in viewers to understand and compare the works to memories of other experiences. Through the sublime poetry of form and color, the objects seem to detach themselves from their contexts and present us with the pure poetry of artistic expression. The questions of the material and the artist's culture and biography are still present, but only as footnotes to the soaring vision of Fukami's works in pale blue porcelain.¹²

Hans Bjarne Thomsen
University of Zurich

¹² The author gratefully acknowledges the help of his father-in-law, Takehisa Fukami, Sueharu Fukami, and other members of the Fukami family. The views expressed in this essay are entirely his own.

1

遙カノ景 | *Haruka no kei I*

Distant View I, 1995

H 74" × W 17 ¾" × D 15 ¾"

(188 cm × 45 cm × 40 cm)



2

遙カノ景 II *Haruka no kei II*

Distant View II, 1992

H 69 ¾" × W 19" × D 17"

(177 cm × 48 cm × 43 cm)



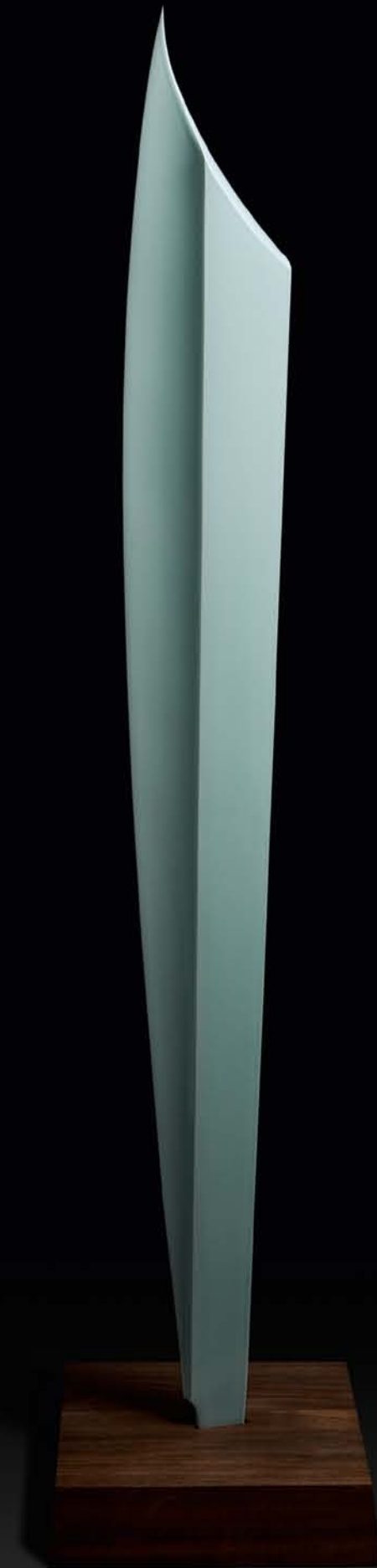
3

毅ノ時 *Ki no toki*

Resolute Spirit, 2007

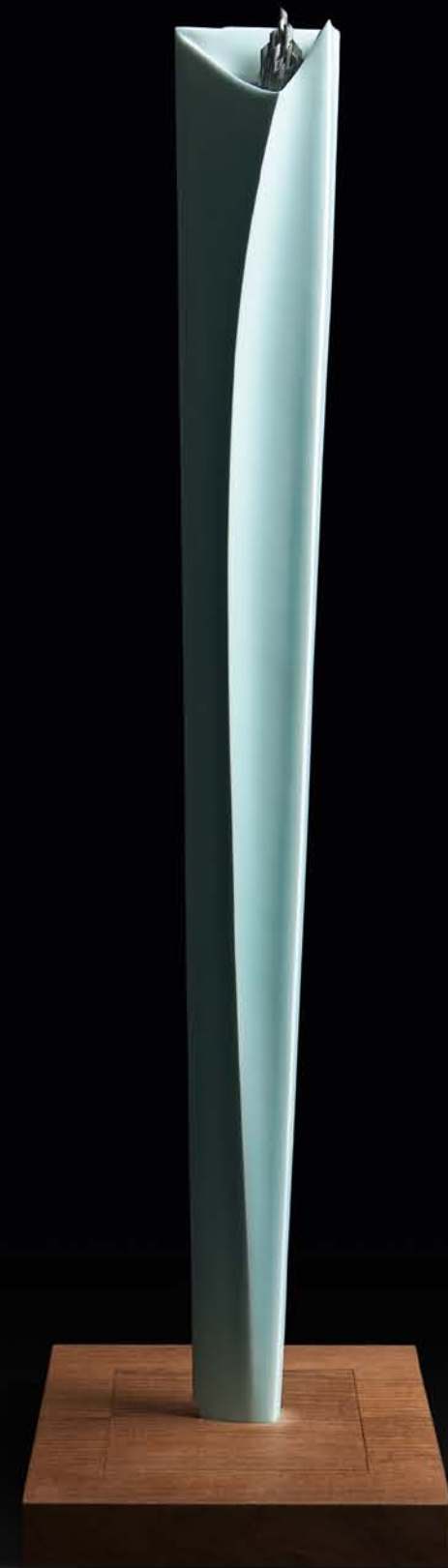
H 68" × W 15" × D 13 ¾"

(173 cm × 38 cm × 34.8 cm)



4

飾 香炉 〈冴〉 *Kazari kōro* 〈sae〉
Display Incense Burner 〈Clear〉, 1992
H 31 ¼" × W 8 ¾" × D 8 ¾" (79.5 cm × 22 cm × 22 cm)



5

清キノ想イ III *Kiyoki no omoi III*

Clear Memory III, 1998

H 25" × W 17" × D 8 ½" (63.3 cm × 43 cm × 21.4 cm)



青白磁 陶筒 〈澄〉 *Seihakuji tōzutsu 〈chō〉*
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Cylinder 〈Ascend〉, 2000
H 16 ¼" × W 7 ¾" × D 7" (41.5 cm × 19.45 cm × 18 cm)



青白磁 陶筒 〈風〉 *Seihakuji tōzutsu 〈kaze〉*
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Cylinder 〈Wind〉, 2007
H 17 ¼" × W 7 ¾" × D 7 ½" (44 cm × 20 cm × 19.3 cm)



青白磁 陶筒 〈清〉 *Seihakuji tōzutsu 〈sei〉*
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Cylinder 〈Pure〉, 2007
H 6 ½" × Dia 3 ½" (16.5 cm × 8.9 cm)



青白磁 流線花瓶 *Seihakuji ryūsen kabin*
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Streamlined Vase, 1979
H 10 ¼" × W 5 ½" × D 5" (26.3 cm × 14 cm × 13 cm)



青白磁 花瓶〈尖〉 *Seihakuji kabin〈sen〉*
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Vase〈Point〉, 1976
H 8 ¼" × Dia 8 ½" (21.2 cm × 21.5 cm)



11

白磁 水滴 *Hakuji suiteki*

White Glaze Porcelain Water Dropper, 1977

H 2" × Dia 2 ½" (4.9 cm × 6.3 cm)



青白磁 ぐい呑 *Seihakuji guinomi*
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Sake Cup, 2006
H 1 ¾" × W 3 ¼" × D 3" (4.2 cm × 8 cm × 7.5 cm)



13

海景 II *Kaikei II*
Seascape II, 2007
H 4 ½" × Dia 10"
(11.5 cm × 25.5 cm)

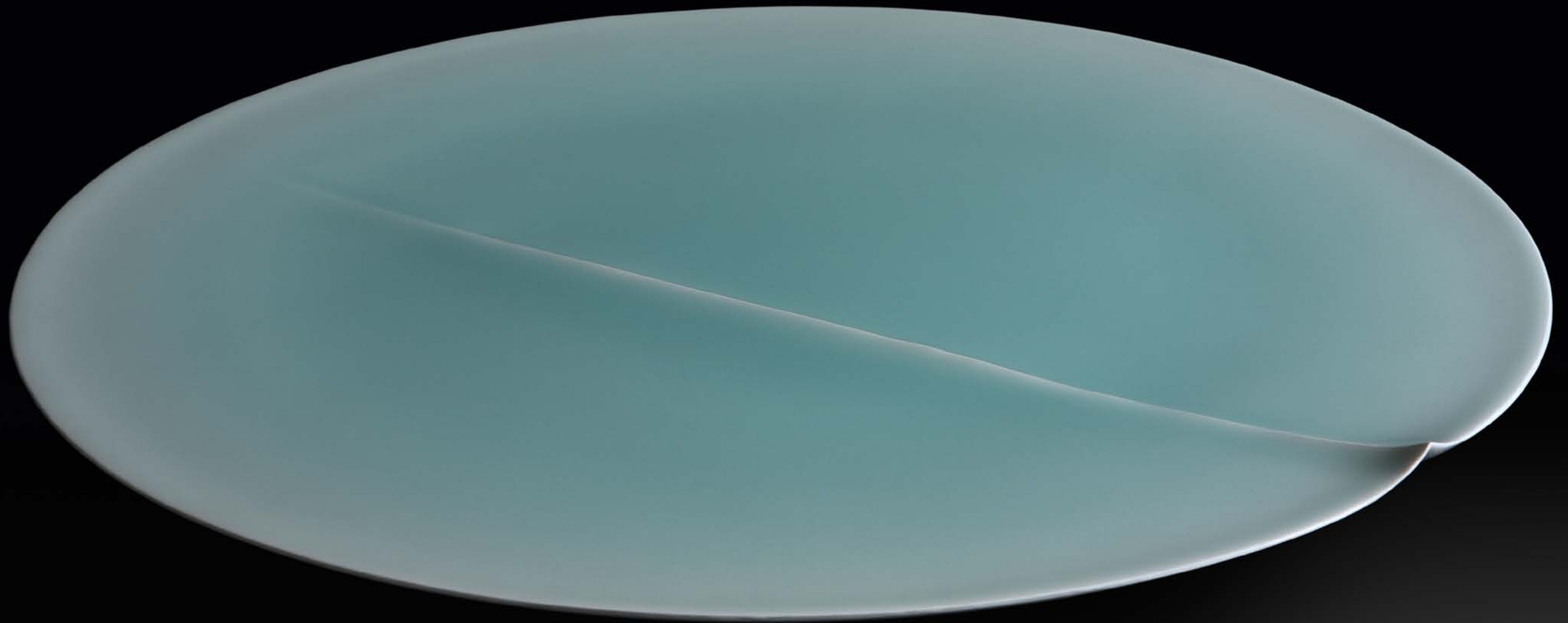


14

盤〈海景〉 *Ban* 〈kaikai〉

Tray 〈Seascape〉, 2008

H 2 ¾" × Dia 23 ½" (7.1 cm × 60 cm)



15

清清 *Seisei*

Refresh, 2003

H 12 ¼" × W 26 ¼" × D 25 ¾"

(31 cm × 66.5 cm × 65.3 cm)



16

清清 *Seisei*

Refresh, 2007

H 15 ¾" × W 22 ¾" × D 22 ¼"

(39.8 cm × 58 cm × 56.5 cm)



青白磁 香爐 〈遙〉 *Seihakuji kōro* 〈haruka〉
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Incense Burner 〈Distant〉, 1999
H 5" × Dia 3 ¾" (12.8 cm × 9.7 cm)



青白磁 香爐 〈遙〉 *Seihakuji kōro* 〈haruka〉
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Incense Burner 〈Distant〉, 1999
H 3 ¾" × W 3" × D 2 ¾" (9.5 cm × 7.7 cm × 6.7 cm)



青白磁 香爐 〈翔〉 *Seihakuji kōro* 〈shō〉
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Incense Burner 〈Soar〉, 1999
H 8 ½" × W 9" × D 3 ½" (21.7 cm × 22.6 cm × 8.8 cm)



青白磁 飾 香爐 〈清〉 *Seihakuji kazari kōro* 〈sei〉
Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Display Incense Burner 〈Clear〉, 2000
H 7 ¼" × W 6" × D 5" (18.2 cm × 15.4 cm × 12.5 cm)



香合 〈清々〉 Kōgō 〈seisei〉

Incense Box 〈Refresh〉, 2007

H 1 ½" × W 2 ¼" × D 2 ¼" (4 cm × 6 cm × 6 cm)



香合 〈清々〉 Kōgō 〈seisei〉

Incense Box 〈Refresh〉, 2008

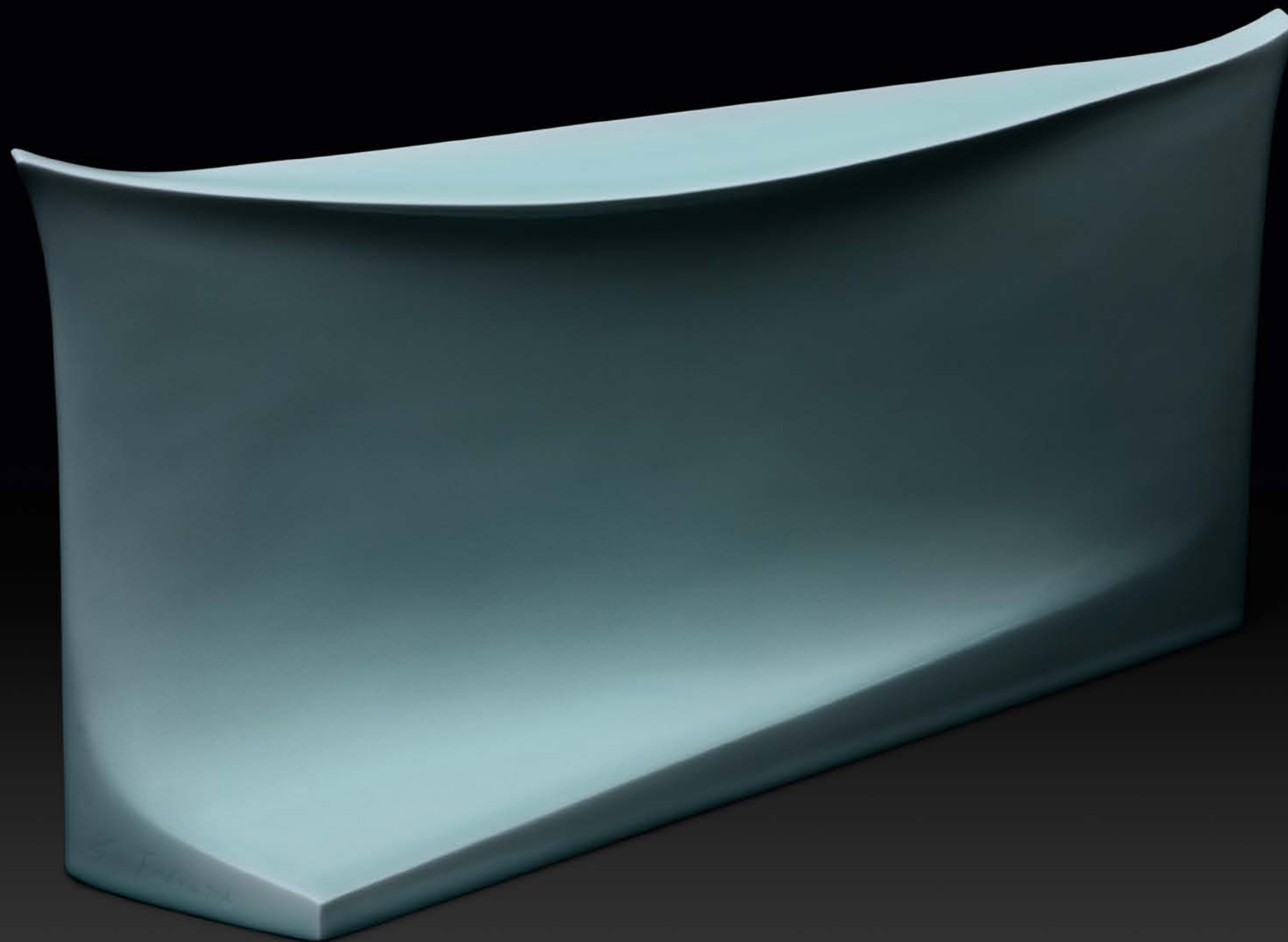
H 2" × W 3 ¼" × D 2 ¾" (5.3 cm × 8 cm × 6.7 cm)



遠望〈景〉 *Enbō* 〈*kei*〉

Distant Hope 〈*View*〉, 2007

H 8 ¼" × L 17" × D 3 ¾" (20.8 cm × 43.2 cm × 9.7 cm)



遙カノ海景 *Haruka no kaikei*

Distant Seascape, 1987

H 5 ½" × L 20 ½" × D 2 ¼" (14 cm × 51.9 cm × 5.4 cm)



遠望ノ景〈想〉 *Enbō no kei* 〈sō〉

View of Distant Hope 〈Thought〉, 1993

H 8 ¾" × L 49" × D 5 ¼" (22.3 cm × 124.3 cm × 13.6 cm)



26

翔 *Shō*

Soar, 2007

H 13" × L43 ½" × D 10"

(33 cm × 110.5 cm × 25.5 cm)



27

空 II *Kū II*

Sky II, 2006

H 11" × L 37 ¾" × D 8 ¾"
(28 cm × 96 cm × 22cm)



天空〈翔〉 *Tenkū* 〈shō〉
Sky Space 〈Soar〉, 2007
H 9" × L 33 ¾" × D 3 ¾"
(23 cm × 86 cm × 9.6 cm)



心象〈空〉 *Shinshō* 〈kū〉

Image of the Mind 〈Sky〉, 2007

H 11" × L 47 ½" × D 10" (28 cm × 121 cm × 25.5 cm)



風ノ海景 *Kaze no kaikei*

Windy Seascape, 2008

H 12 1/2" x L 65 1/4" x D 10 3/4"

(32 cm x 165.5 cm x 27 cm)



Notes

Nr. 1 Distant View I

Signed S. Fukami. Mounted on a granite stand.

Nr. 2 Distant View II

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 1/8. Mounted on a granite stand. This very piece was exhibited in Tokyo in 1992 at the exhibition »The Now in Japanese Ceramics - Message from Artists in Kyoto« and is illustrated in Kyoto Shoin, Toh Series, vol. 81, 1993, p. 28. It is one of the first tall sculptures Fukami made. Its production was so difficult that only two of the edition were made.

Nr. 3 Resolute Spirit

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 6/8. Mounted on a walnut base.

Nr. 4 Display Incense Burner «Clear»

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 2/10. Mounted on a walnut base. The lid made of tin is signed by the metal artist. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 5 Clear Memory III

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 4/5. Stands on a beveled walnut base. Comes with a fitted box.

Nr. 6 Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Cylinder «Ascend»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 7 Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Cylinder «Wind»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 8 Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Cylinder «Pure»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 9 Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Streamlined Vase

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original wood *tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 10 Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Vase «Point»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original wood *tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 11 White Glaze Porcelain Water Dropper

Impressed seal mark Sueharu on the bottom. Comes with the original *sugi-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the round seal mark Fuka.

Nr. 12 Pale-blue Glaze Porcelain Sake Cup

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the small rectangular seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 13 Seascape II

Signed S. Fukami. Mounted on a walnut stand. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 14 Tray «Seascape»

Signed S. Fukami and Sue. Mounted on three walnut feet. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 15 Refresh

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami. Was exhibited in Japan in 2003 at the third annual »21st Century Exhibition of Japanese Art« and is illustrated in the accompanying catalog.

Nr. 16 Refresh

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami. Was exhibited in Tokyo, Japan in 2007 at the 19th biennial »Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition« and is illustrated in the accompanying catalog, p. 46.

Nr. 17 Incense Burner «Distant»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 18 Incense Burner «Distant»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 19 Incense Burner «Soar»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 20 Display Incense Burner «Clear»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box.

Nr. 21 Incense Box «Refresh»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Glazed on the inside and gilt along the rim and on two dots to indicate the correct alignment. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the small rectangular seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 22 Incense Box «Refresh»

Signed Sue on the bottom. Glazed on the inside and gilt along the rim and on two dots to indicate the correct alignment. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the small rectangular seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 23 Distant Hope «View»

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 6/8. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 24 Distant Seascape

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 6/8. Mounted on a walnut stand. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 25 View of Distant Hope «Thought»

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 1/10. Stands on a beveled walnut base. Comes with the original *kiri-wood tomobako* box and the original protective cloth bearing the oval seal mark Fukami.

Nr. 26 Soar

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 3/8. Mounted on a solid walnut base.

Nr. 27 Sky II

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 4/8. Mounted on a solid walnut base. Only 4 were made of this edition.

Nr. 28 Sky Space «Soar»

Signed S. Fukami. Mounted on a solid walnut base.

Nr. 29 Image of the Mind «Sky»

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 7/8. Mounted on a solid walnut base.

Nr. 30 Windy Seascape

Signed S. Fukami and numbered 2/5. Mounted on a solid walnut base. Only two were made from this edition. The other one is in the collection of The Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture in Hanford, California.

The Seals of Sueharu Fukami

Fukami's seal system.

Fukami uses three different groups of seals. The first group are seals he uses for the yellow protective cloths that he places in his *tomobako* wood boxes; these are impressed with a *Fukami* (深見) seal. The second group of seals are the larger square box seals; these are always inscribed with his given name, *Sueharu* (陶冶). The third group are the small seals that he usually also impresses on his boxes to accompany the larger Sueharu seals. These read *Hinoto no i* (丁亥), the zodiac year of his birth. As the artist explains it, the three together give all the vital information of the artist: his first name, his family name, and the year of his birth. In other words, it makes sense to think of the three seals as forming a unit.

His two sets of seals.

All the seals that Fukami uses can further be divided into two large groups, the ones he used before his 50th birthday and the ones he has used since. That year, 1997, he traveled to South Korea and replaced all his old seals with new ones that were carved for him in that country. Seal impressions for objects created after this year are from this new Korean set of seals and from other seals he subsequently had made.

Signatures

Typically Fukami signs his pieces in Chinese characters, in Romanized characters, or in both. The smaller pieces, such as his incense burners, are usually inscribed with just the first character of his given name *Sue* 陶 while the larger ones are signed with both characters *Sueharu* 陶冶. His larger sculptures are typically signed in Romanized script *S. Fukami*.

Three types of seals:

All illustrated seals are one of these three types

A 「深見」 *Fukami*

B 「陶冶」 *Sueharu*

C 「丁亥」 *Hinoto no i*

Regarding type C, in the East Asian zodiac system these two characters denote a year that occurs only once in a sixty-year cycle. Thus, this year can be read or correspond to 1887, 1947, or 2007.

Seals

Reproduced actual size



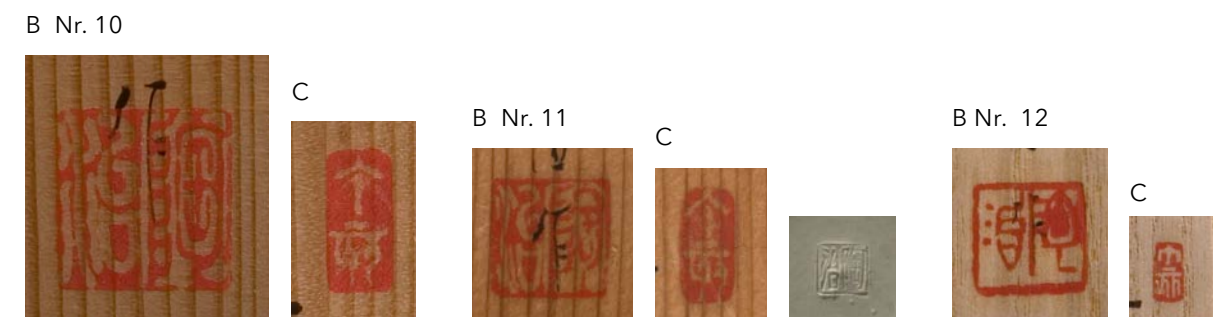
A Pre 1997 A Pre 1997 A Post 1997 A Post 1997



B Nr. 2 B Nr. 4



B Nr. 6 C B Nr. 8 C B Nr. 9 C



B Nr. 10 C B Nr. 11 C B Nr. 12 C

Seals

Reproduced actual size



B Nr. 13



B Nr. 14



B Nr. 15



B Nr. 17 C



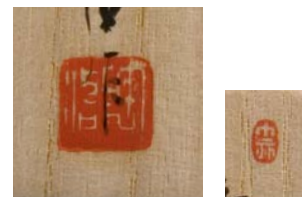
B Nr. 18 C



B Nr. 19 C



B Nr. 20 C



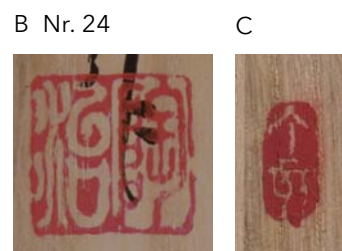
B Nr. 21 C



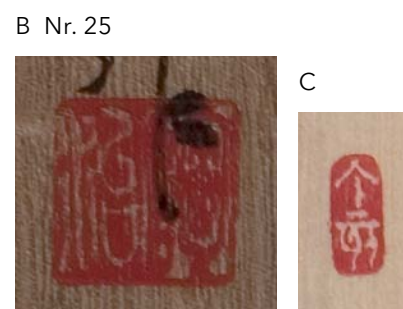
B Nr. 22 C



B Nr. 23



B Nr. 24 C



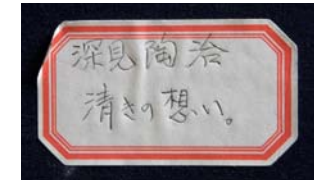
B Nr. 25 C

Box Inscriptions

Reproduced quarter size except as noted



Nr. 2



Nr. 5 1/2 size



Nr. 4



Nr. 6



Nr. 8



Nr. 9

Box Inscriptions

Reproduced quarter size except as noted



Nr. 10



Nr. 11

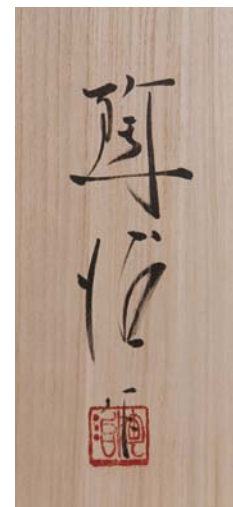


Nr. 12

Nr. 13 1/2 size



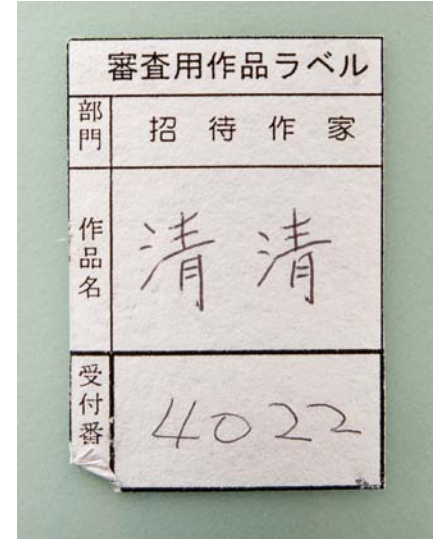
Nr. 14 1/2 size



Nr. 15



Nr. 17 1/2 size



Nr. 16 1/4 size

Nr. 18 1/2 size



Box Inscriptions

Reproduced quarter size



Nr. 19



Nr. 22



Nr. 23



Nr. 20



Nr. 24



Nr. 21



Nr. 25

Biography of the Artist

- 1947 Born in Kyoto, Japan
- 1963 Kyoto Ceramics Training School
- 1965 Kyoto Arts and Crafts Training Center
- 1975 Marries Chieko
- 1981 Invited as Visiting Professor to University of Alberta, Canada
- 1983 Birth of daughter, Tomoko
- 1984 Judge, Kyoto Art Exhibition
- 1990 Judge, Kyoto Art Exhibition
- 1991 Judge, Concorso Internazionale della Ceramica d'Arte (Faenza, Italy)
- 1995 Judge, Triennale de la Porcelaine (Nyon, Switzerland)
- 2002 Judge, 6th International Ceramics Competition (Mino, Japan)
- 2005 Judge, Concorso Internazionale della Ceramica d'Arte (Faenza, Italy)

Currently resides in Kyoto, Japan

Solo Exhibitions

- 1977 Odakyū Department Store, Tokyo
- 1978 Gallery Third Floor, Kyoto
- 1979 Hankyū Department Store, Osaka
- 1980 Asahi Gallery, Kyoto
- 1982 Gallery Nakamura, Kyoto
- 1986 Hetjens Museum, Düsseldorf, Germany
- Competition of International Ceramic Art, Faenza, Italy
- 1987 Aoyama Green Gallery, Tokyo
- Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Lausanne, Switzerland
- Maya Behn Gallery, Switzerland

- Museum Voor Sierkunst en Industrielle, Ghent, Belgium
- Maghi Bettini Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 1988 Seibu Takanawakai, Tokyo
- 1991 Takanawa Art Salon, Tokyo
- Aoyama Green Gallery, Tokyo
- 1992 Gallery Yuri, Fukuoka
- 1993 Kochūkyo, Tokyo
- 1995 Aoyama Green Gallery, Tokyo
- 1996 Tenmaya, Hiroshima
- 1997 Kochūkyo, Tokyo
- 1998 Takanawa Art Salon, Tokyo
- Contemporary Ceramic Art, Kandori, Tokyo
- 2000 Mitsukoshi Department Store, Tokyo
- 2001 Gallery Dōjima, Osaka
- 2002 Garth Clark Gallery, New York
- 2003 Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the Clark Center, Hanford, USA
- 2005 International Museum of Ceramic Art, Faenza, Italy
- 2008 Erik Thomsen Asian Art, New York

Group Exhibitions

1967

Kyoto Art Exhibition

Kyoto Prefecture Arts and Crafts Exhibition

1969

Japan Contemporary Arts and Crafts Exhibition

1971

1st Japanese Ceramic Art Exhibition,
avant-garde section

1973

2nd Japanese Ceramic Art Exhibition,
avant-garde section

1979

The Contemporary Arts and Crafts of Japan
2nd Contemporary Ceramicists in Kyoto, 1979
and thereafter

1980

I.A.C. Miniature Exhibition

(Kyoto Prefectural Center for Arts and Culture)

Flower Arrangement and Ceramics Exhibition
(Kintetsu Kyoto)

1981

I.A.C. Miniature Exhibition

(Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris)

1983

Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition, General Section
1st Exhibition of All Japan Traditional Crafts by
Selected Artists (Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya)

1984

Ceramic Plaque 22 (Wako Hall, Tokyo)

1985

Exhibition of Selected Fine Arts
(Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art)

The Beauty of White Porcelain
(The Kyūshū Ceramic Museum)

The 3rd Biennale International Ceramic Chateauroux 1986 (Musée Bertran, France)

1986

Clay - Image and Form

(Seibu, Ōtsu and Yūrakuchō Art Forum, Tokyo)

Sculpture Exhibition (Gallery Haku, Osaka)

Asahi Contemporary Crafts Exhibition

Contemporary Arts and Crafts Exhibition of Japan
(Gallery Kisaragi, Paris)

Contemporary Japanese Ceramics Exhibition
1987

Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition - Ceramic Art on
the Desk (Shibuya Seibu, Tokyo)

Small Sculpture Exhibition (Gallery Haku, Osaka)
Exhibition of Selected Fine Arts (Kyoto Municipal
Museum of Art)

America / Eastern Europe Rotating Exhibit of
Contemporary Japanese Ceramics
(Sponsor: The Japan Foundation)

1988

Japan Traditional Arts and Crafts Exhibition
Eastern Europe Rotating Exhibit of Traditional
Japanese Crafts (Sponsor: The Japan Foundation)
Three Ceramic Artists Exhibition by French Minis-
try of Culture (Limoges, France)

The Contemporary Japanese Ceramics
(Portland Museum of Art, USA)

Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition - Ceramic Art on
the Desk (Shibuya Seibu, Tokyo)

Asahi Selected Ceramic Artists Exhibition
(Nagoya and Tokyo)

1989

Europhilia, Céramiques de L'Ere Showa
(Mons Musée des Beaux Arts, Belgium)

Triennale de la Porcelaine, Invited Guest
(Nyon, Switzerland)

Artist of the Gallery Exhibition (Faenza, Italy)

1992

The Now in Japanese Ceramics - Message from
Artists in Kyoto: A Drama in Clay Enacted by Ten
Clay Artists (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Yokohama)
Contemporary in Ceramics (Kobe and Tokyo)

La Céramique au Japon, Un Art Majeur: 58 Créa-
teurs Contemporains (Paris)

1993

East-West Ceramic Sculpture (Germany)

Exchange Exhibition between the Japanese and
Korean Artists (Osaka Contemporary Art Center)

Contemporary Ceramic Works - Utsuwa

(The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama)

Modern Japanese Ceramics in Japanese Collec-
tions (Japan Society Gallery, New York; New Or-
leans Museum of Art; Honolulu Academy of Art)

1994

In Touch International Craft

(Maihaugen, Lillehammer Olympics, Norway)

Kyoto 1200th Anniversary Celebration Exhibition
(Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art)

Current Trends in Ceramics - Vessels and Objects
(Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum)

Clay Work (The National Museum of Art, Osaka)

IAC Members' Exhibition, International Academy
of Ceramics (Prague, Czech Republic)

1995

Today Arts and Crafts in Kyoto

(The Museum of Kyoto)

Art in Kyoto: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,
Sueharu Fukami and Atsuo Sakazume

(Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art)

Wind from Faenza (Ceratopia Toki, Gifu)

Japanese Studio Craft: Tradition and the Avant-
Garde (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK)

Kanazawa Art and Crafts Exhibition

Contemporary Japanese Arts and Crafts Exhibition
(Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg,
Germany)

IAC Members' Exhibition, International Academy
of Ceramics (Prague, Czech Republic)

1996

New Expression in Porcelain: Developments in
1990s (National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo)

IAC Members' Exhibition, International Academy
of Ceramics (Saga Prefectural Museum of Art)

The Kyoto Art and Culture Awards Exhibition
(The Museum of Kyoto)

Quiet Clarity ›RIN‹: Beauty in Contemporary
Ceramics (Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art,
Shigaraki)

The Suntory Prize Exhibition

(Suntory Museum, Tokyo)

1997

Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition, Invited Artist Status,
The Contemporary Teapot (Museum of Interna-
tional Ceramic Art, Grimmerhus, Denmark)

1998

A Joint Exhibition - the 11th Mokichi Okada
Award: a Decade History of Award Recipients and
Their Works (Museum of Art, Shizuoka)

1999

50 Maîtres: Les Arts Appliqués dans le Japon
Contemporain (Paris, France)

Artisti dal Mondo

(International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy)

Vessels for Sake, The First Tōbi Art Fair
(Tokyo Art Club, Tokyo)

2000

Small Ceramic Sculpture

(Kunstforum, Kirchberg, Switzerland)

2001

Leaders of Contemporary Japanese Ceramics
(Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Shizuoka)

2002

Handicrafts Today - Six Kyoto Artists; Tradition in
Innovation / Innovation in Tradition
(Mie Prefectural Art Museum)

Contemporary Japanese Crafts
(Indonesia and Malaysia)

Inaugural Exhibition, The Legacy of Modern
Ceramic Art, Part I: From Artisan to Artist, the
Evolution of Japanese Ceramic Art

(Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu)

2003

Now & Now - World Contemporary Ceramics
(Ichon World Ceramic Center, South Korea)

Japan - Ceramics and Photographs
(Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany)

Japanese Ceramics Today (Tomo Museum, Tokyo)

Contemporary Japanese Ceramics (The Tokyo
Metropolitan Teien Art Museum, Tokyo)

Third annual 21st Century Exhibition of Japanese
Art (The Art Clubs of Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto)

2004

Japanese Contemporary Ceramics
(Museum of Modern Art, Gifu)

2005

Contemporary Clay: Japanese Ceramics for the
New Century (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)
The Fascination of Ceramics: Masterpieces
of Modern Japanese Pottery from the Gisela
Freudenberg Collection (Museum for Applied Art,
Frankfurt, Germany)
Transformations: The Language of Craft (National
Gallery of Australia)

2006

The Quintessence of Modern Japanese Ceramics
(Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum)

2007

19th biennial Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition, Invited
Artist Status (Tokyo and Osaka)

Prizes

1969

Prize, Kansai Art Exhibition

1972

Prize, Kansai Art Exhibition

1974

Prize, Kyoto Prefecture Arts and Crafts Exhibition
Prize, Kansai Art Exhibition, 1974
(Thereafter invited artist)

1975

Prize, Kyoto Prefecture Arts and Crafts Exhibition

1976

Prize, Japan Contemporary Arts and Crafts Exhibition

1977

Mayor's Prize, Kyoto Art Exhibition

1978

Grand Prize, Kyoto Prefecture Art and Crafts
Exhibition

Kyoto Newspaper Prize, Kyoto Art Exhibition

1979

Member's Prize, 1st Annual Japan Contemporary

Arts and Crafts Exhibition

Mayor's Prize, Kyoto Art Exhibition, 1979
(Thereafter invited artist)

1980

Newcomer Prize, Kyoto Prefectural Arts and Crafts
Exhibition

1982

Grand Prize at 10th Chūnichi International
Ceramic Exhibition

1983

Governor of Aichi Prefecture Prize, 11th Chūnichi
International Ceramic Arts Exhibition
Purchase Prize, Kyoto Arts and Crafts Exhibition

1984

Special Selection Prize, Nitten
Second Prize, 12th Chūnichi International Ceramic
Arts Exhibition

Prize, Kyoto Artists' Association Exhibition

1985

Grand Prize at 43rd Faenza International Ceramic
Exhibition

Grand Prize at 13th Chūnichi International
Ceramic Exhibition

Prize, Asahi Ceramic Exhibition

Sankei Newspaper Prize, The Contemporary Arts
and Crafts of Japan

1986

Bronze Prize, 1st Mino International Ceramic
Exhibition

1987

Titograd Prize, World Triennale Exhibition of
Small Ceramics, Yugoslavia

1992

Okada Shigekichi Merit Prize, MOA Museum
Prize, Japan Ceramic Association

1995

Prize, Kyoto Art and Culture Awards

1996

Prize, Mainichi Art Award

1997

Kyoto Prefecture Culture Prize

Museum Collections

Auckland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

Ariana Museum, Geneva, Switzerland

Art Institute of Chicago, USA

British Museum, London, UK

Brooklyn Museum of Art, USA

Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture,
Hanford, CA, USA

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY, USA

French Culture Foundation, Paris, France

Heijens Museum, Düsseldorf, Germany

Houston Museum of Art, USA

Indianapolis Museum of Art, USA

International Aichi Prefecture Ceramic Museum,
Japan

Japan Foundation, Tokyo, Japan

Kameoka City Museum, Japan

Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Japan

Kyoto Prefectural Historical Institute, Japan

Manyo'an Collection of Japanese Art,

New Orleans, USA

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan

Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Lausanne, Switzerland

Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France

Musée National de Céramique, Sèvres, France

Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche,
Faenza, Italy

Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Museum of Art and History, Geneva, Switzerland

Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art,

Shiga, Japan

Museum of Decorative Arts,

Prague, Czech Republic

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA

Museum of Modern Art, Belgrade, Serbia

Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu, Japan

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia

National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan

National Museum of History, Taipei, Taiwan

National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan

National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan

New Orleans Museum of Art, LA, USA

Newcastle Regional Gallery, NSW, Australia

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC, USA

Portland Museum of Art, OR, USA

Rhode Island School of Design Museum,

Providence, RI, USA

Spencer Art Museum, Lawrence, KS, USA

St Louis Museum of Art, MO, USA

Suntory Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan

Tokoname City Education Bureau, Japan

Tsurui Museum of Art, Niigata, Japan

The Yale Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, USA

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

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Sueharu Fukami

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