



# Breaking the Mold: Contemporary Chinese and Japanese Ceramic Sculpture

April 26 – September 26, 2009

## INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS



Li Lihong, *McDonald's - Blue Dragon in Clouds*, Yellow, 2007  
Porcelain, H14.25" x W17.75" x D4.75"



Takanashi, *SHINOBU*, Blue, 2006, Ceramic, H10.75" x W16.5" x D6.0"



Takanashi, *SHINOBU*, Blue, 2006, Ceramic, H10.75" x W16.5" x D6.0"



Yano, *Mikemono Baby*, 2006, Porcelain, H14.0" x W9.0" x D5.0"

Dear Educator,

The Denmos Museum Center is proud to present *Breaking the Mold: Contemporary Chinese and Japanese Ceramic Sculpture*. A PDF version of this packet with color images can be found online at [www.dennosmuseum.org/education/resources/](http://www.dennosmuseum.org/education/resources/).

Denmos Museum Center K-12 educational programming aligns with Michigan Content Standards for Arts Education and the National Standards for Arts Education. We especially strive to provide experiences that will fit into a curriculum for the new Michigan Merit Curriculum for the Visual Performing and Applied Arts. To this end, experiences at the Denmos Museum Center highlight aspects of the creative process. In order to make sure that your tour addresses what you are doing in the classroom, please inform the docent (volunteer tour guide) when contacted of any special interests or needs. For details on content standards addressed by educational programming, please go to <http://www.dennosmuseum.org/education/resources/>.

Please discuss your field trip goals with your docent prior to arriving at the museum. We are excited to work with you to create a successful and fun visit to the Denmos Museum Center. Thank you for visiting the Museum and we look forward to seeing you soon!

*The Denmos Museum Center Educational Department*

## EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Organized in collaboration with Dai Ichi Gallery in New York City, this exhibit features the work of contemporary ceramicists from China and Japan, juxtaposing the themes of Chinese work relationships, Western influences, social issues and human relationships with the Japanese attention to aesthetics of form, texture, color and materials. In each country there is recognition of tradition while breaking with that tradition in technique and subject matter brought on by experimentation and/or changes in society.

These works are on loan from Dai Ichi Arts, Ltd. of New York City. Beatrice L. Chang, Dai Ichi's curator and director, specializes in contemporary ceramics of Japan and China. In a forward to a 2008 exhibition catalog, she speaks of contemporary works from these countries:

*After 17 years as an active dealer, my love of Japanese ceramics is undiminished. But clay has no boundaries. Frequent trips back to my home town, Shanghai, have opened my eyes to the less familiar world of contemporary Chinese ceramic sculpture. The dominant interest of Chinese work most often explores social issues and human relationships. Japanese work typically is concerned with the aesthetics of form, texture, color, materials, and the effect of time and kiln conditions. Both great artistic achievements are complementary, and together they give us a broader view of the glory of ceramics.*

## SELECT JAPANESE WORKS



Yasuo HAYASHI, House "Events", 2005, Ceramic, H10.75" x W16.75" x D6.50"

**HAYASHI Yasuo** (b. 1928)  
*House "Events"* 2005  
Ceramic

In 1948, Hayashi Yasuo became the first Japanese abstract ceramic artist. For over six decades he has helped to create an entirely new vocabulary for Japan's large ceramic-making population and given new meaning to ceramic sculpture. He has gone on to inspire generations of ceramic artists in Japan who also have found a way to honor the traditions of the past but explore new ways of sculpting clay to great effect. His early works were shown alongside those by stellar international figures such as Wassily Kandinsky and Isamu Noguchi.



Shigemasa HIGASHIDA (b. 1955), *Oribe Platter*, 2008  
Oribe glazed stoneware, H5.5" x W35.5" x D14.5"

**HIGASHIDA Shigemasa** (b. 1955)

*Oribe Platter* 2008

Oribe glazed stoneware

Higashida Shigemasa can be seen, quite simply, as an incomparable landscape artist working in ceramics. Verdant green hills, deep blue waters flowing in dramatic swirling patterns - all are characteristics of his best work. Higashida's irresistible, vibrant art has been enthusiastically collected by museums and connoisseurs worldwide.

Higashida turned to ceramics after a brief but successful career as a stock trader at a major brokerage firm. Ceramic school and an apprenticeship with a master potter followed in the 1980's. Fully committed to ceramic art, Higashida has stored a lifetime supply of the special clay he prefers. Although Higashida works in both the Shino and Oribe styles, his preeminent success has been in his Oribe work.



Tsubusa KATO  
*Square Bowl*, 2008  
Pale Blue Glazed Porcelain, H8.75" x W18.25" x D16.25"

**KATO Tsubusa** (b.1962 )

*Square Bowl* 2008

Pale blue celadon glazed porcelain

Starting from age 21, Kato has worked exclusively with white porcelain clay. Porcelain is invariably associated with the Chinese porcelain aesthetic: refined, flawlessly balanced form, delicate, serene, and elegant. The work of Kato Tsubusa, with subtle pale blue celadon glazing, is no less beautiful than traditional porcelain, but in much different ways. Kato's porcelain sculpture manifests motion, not tranquility; "flawed"

adventurous forms, not examples of impeccably executed familiar forms; and dramatically sweeping, not refined stillness.



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**NAKASHIMA Harumi** (b. 1950 )

*Work 0403* 2004

Porcelain

Nakashima Harumi was born in a farm area. His experience with the natural growing processes of plants, trees and vegetables made a deep impression, and became a major influence on his work as a ceramicist. The basic component of his sculpture is the sphere covered with dots, both in a variety of sizes. The spheres and dots expand and contract.

There are sinuous cylindrical connections among the spheres. Sometimes, the cylinder turns into a waving ribbon or collar form uniting the spheres and delightful interrelated shapes. His work is unfailingly joyous and playful.



Toshisada WAKAO, *Gray Shino Large Rectangular Plate*  
2008, Stoneware, H3.5" x W25.25" x L11"

**WAKAO Toshisada** (b. 1933)  
*Gray Shino Large Rectangular Plate (Moon & Rabbits)* 2008  
Stoneware

Wakao is one of Japan's foremost potters. His innovative elaboration of traditional Momoyama gray *Shino* has garnered him many awards and sold-out shows. Wakao was born to a family of potters in Tajimi City, Gifu Prefecture, a center for *Shino* ware both in the Momoyama period

and in modern times. Wakao's contribution was the use of a latex resist process that enabled him to add naturalistic floral motifs with greater crispness of line than was possible with traditional methods. His motifs are lyrical and poetic. The same qualities pertain to his *Oribe* work, which is characterized by lush green glazes and confident brushwork.

## SELECT CHINESE WORKS



LI Lihong, *McDonald's - Blue Dragon in Clouds, Yellow*, 2007  
Porcelain, H14.25" x W17.75" x D4.75"

**LI Lihong** (b. 1974)  
*McDonald's - Blue Dragon in Clouds, Yellow* 2007  
Porcelain

With uncanny accuracy and unmistakable clarity, Li Lihong focuses on the mixed blessings of the commercial westernization on thousands of years of Chinese culture. Without sacrificing the beauty of his sculpture, he creates perfect visual metaphors in which the arches of McDonald's and the bottles of Absolut vodka co-exist comfortably or not

comfortably, depending on your point of view, with traditional colorful Chinese artistic motifs. The talent of this young artist has been instantly recognized in China.



LU Bin (b. 1961), *Fossil 2004 III*, 2004  
Stoneware, Dimensions Variable  
(Tree trunk: H10" W5" D4" Bone: H11" W5" D4" Fossil: H10" W5" D4" Marble: H11" W5" D4" Pagoda: H9" W5" D3.5")

**LU Bin** (b. 1961)  
*Fossil 2004 III* 2004  
Stoneware

Lu Bin has been recognized as one of China's modern ceramic masters. He takes objects from daily life in China and makes them into fossils from another time.



**YAO Yongkang** (b. 1942)  
*Millennium Baby* 2006  
Porcelain

Yao Yongkang has the reputation of being technically the finest living Chinese ceramic artist. He is most famous for his sculptural work in porcelain celadon. It reveals the Chinese love of male babies. The accompanying dog symbolizes good fortune, and the large lotus leaf in the background constitutes a blessed wish to have male babies.



**CHENG, Caroline Yi** (b. 1963)  
*Prosperity V* 2007  
Porcelain, fabric

Caroline Yi Cheng has a unique understanding and perspective of China. Born in Cambridge, England, educated in the U.S. raised outside of mainland China, moved to Shanghai in 1998, and has continued to live there to date.

Each dress is composed of countless number of handmade porcelain butterflies, meticulously sewed onto a dress made of linen. Closer examination of the dresses reveals that each butterfly is subtly different just like each and every human being in China is different.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Dai Ichi Gallery: <http://www.daiichiarts.com/>

Pottery Workshop Jingdezhen: <http://potteryworkshop.org/jingdezhen/>

Pottery Workshop Shanghai: <http://potteryworkshop.org/shanghai/>