

Transfiguration

Aya Mori, Fuku Fukumoto, Joe Isanako, Miki Komatsu

Exhibition Dates: December 10th – January 29th, 2022



Aya Mori
Kisame, 2020
Ceramic
H63 x W72 x D75 cm
(moriay0032)

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Fukumoto Fuku
Tsuki-no-Shimo, 2019
Ceramic
H32 x W34 x D33 cm
(fukufk0018)

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Joe Isanako
Happy end "drug-4, 2017
Ceramic
H23 x W14 x D14.3 cm
(isanjo0004)

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Miki Komatsu
one III, 2020
Glass
H25 x W20.5 x D20.5 cm
(komatsu0004)

The metamorphic qualities of clay and glass converge in this exhibition through the work of four artists. Transfiguration, the act of changing from one state into another, from soft to hard, matte to glistening, transparency to opaqueness places these permutations into evidence and are a reflection of the creative spirits behind each work.

For Aya Mori, there is a constant pursuit of form and defiance of gravity. Her practice is an expression of her state of mind: “In my own work, as I build up the clay little by little, day by day, the emotions and intentions of the moment are transmitted from my fingertips to the clay”. Aya trusts her senses in this relationship and her abstract gestures that assist the transition from wet clay to hard body. What shapes come out of the kiln, those are accentuated by her use of *ruri* glaze, lending it a glossy surface and taking it back to an illusive soft state.

Although my works have a flower-like form, they are not beautiful to me, but rather have a mysterious and eerie presence that deceives us. This is probably the image I have of clay as a material that brings out the essence of the creator, and at the same time, it is what I am attracted to.
Aya Mori, November 2021

The question of surface is even more pertinent in Joe Isanako’s intense application of glazes. Her colourful clay works radiate mystery, whether due to their scale or the uncanny shapes she constructs. Joe removes materials she finds in the natural world and conceals them in clay. Stones, sticks, shells and even sea water contribute to the array of crystalized forms and diversity of glazes. They reveal Joe’s considerations over composition – these embedded objects once fired they disappear but something else comes out of the process.

Compared to artificially made brushes and spatulas, natural materials have an unrestrained and uncontrollable power, as if they have a life of their own. Each material has its own unevenness and suppleness, and each time I touch them, I feel as if they pull out a new me inside of me, which greatly influences the colors, shapes, and textures of my works.
Joe Isanako, November 2021

And if Joe’s work has significant potency in its materiality, Fuku Fukumoto explores the lightness of the material and the ability of clay becoming something so ethereal that seems to levitate like a cloud or the moon - a hint borrowed from her titles.

My yearning for the things happening on its own accord made me choose titles that have strong associations with Nature. Having said that, it was never my intention to name my works as a direct embodiment of natural objects, such as moonlight or clouds.
Fuku Fukumoto, September 2021

Fuku pays homage to her heritage through careful composition of the vessel form but it’s the subversion of this canon, by rendering each piece functionless, that unsettles the viewer. Each object demands further attention to discern each curve and interception point.

Miki Komatsu works through the idea of transfiguration in glass. It is her desire to reconceptualize the material and bring to the fore its most poetic qualities. For her, these are also the qualities that intertwine with human nature. The molten sand as our body and the harden glass as our mind. In her series *One*, she challenges the familiarity of the material. The playfulness of the composition is matched by the complete uncovering of the process, uninhibited from its focal point.

Handling glass gave me inspiration one after another, and somehow glass and myself came to overlap, becoming an inseparable part of my own work. My current works and concepts were born from glass, and glass is a very important part of my life.
Miki Komatsu, November 2021

Between them they conceive objects that are materialized through their exquisite control of technique, harnessing and extracting from the medium its most formidable and gentle features.

About the artists

Aya Mori was born in 1989 in Aichi, Japan, where she lives and works. She completed her BA in 2014 at Aichi University of Education under her mentor, Harumi Nakashima.

Her body of work is recognizable through her organic forms and expert use of Namako glazing as well as the interweaving of metal such as silver. Mori's pieces are hand-built and filled with pleats which render the artwork a dynamic and organic energy. During the creation process, Mori looks for the various expressions within the clay: the wet surface, the air trapped within, the subtle lines that unexpectedly appear, the warping that results from gravity and the natural vitality of the clay.

Mori has expanded her activities globally and received praise both at home and abroad. Her work is included in the permanent collections of Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN, U.S.A. Recent exhibitions include New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum, New Taipei-city, Taiwan; Duane Reed Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.; Minneapolis, MN, U.S.A.; Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A. Awards include Special Judges' Award (Selected by Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere) at The 11th International Ceramics Competition MINO in 2014; Hagi Grand Prize Exhibition in 2017; The 11th International Ceramics Competition MINO in 2017.

Fukumoto Fuku was born in 1973 in Kyoto, Japan. In 1997, she graduated from the Kyoto City University of Arts, followed by a master's degree in the same University two years later. Growing up in Kyoto, Fukumoto's work presents itself in a clear balance between the utilitarian shapes of traditional Japanese ceramic and modern currents.

Working mainly with porcelain and exploring its less common properties, by joining different fragments to a main vessel and glazing them with a green or blue coloured oxide paint, Fukumoto's works gain unique shapes, playing with balance and tension, creating the illusion of function while remaining an aesthetic object.

Despite being young, Fukumoto has been receiving awards since 2001, when she won the Grand Prize for the Asahi Modern Craft Exhibition in Osaka, Japan. Since then, her work has been exhibited all around the world, and her permanent collection can be found in The Museum of Kyoto; INAX Tile Museum, Aichi, Japan; Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Kansas, USA; The Harn Museum of Art, Florida, USA; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.

Joe Isanako was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1994 and graduated from the prestigious Tama Art University in 2018 having been commended for her talent on several occasions.

Her work derives from experimentation and observation of interaction between materials. Isanako often uses clay together with glass, metal, stones as well as

other elements from the natural world such as sea shells, sea water and leaves and nuts.

“There is change, constancy, and universality every day in temperature, humidity and conditions of people and clay. I breath, touch, feel, and react to the difference between today and yesterday.” It is this considerate integration between clay, nature and time as well as the artist’s agency that offers a variety of expressions and landscapes in Isanako’s sculpture.

Miki Komatsu graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts in 2021. At the heart of her practice is the investigation of glass in its multiple expressions and its relation to human influence.

She states that the existence of human beings can be felt when dealing with glass. The glass that melts at high temperature overlaps the human body’s internal organs and blood, while the fragility and tension of the cold hardened glass overlaps the human mind. For Komatsu, the production of a work can be described as a process of confirming her existence and colouring the contour of a human being.

Her work is often characterised by levels of translucency where the sophistication of her technique is put to evidence. Skin-like texture and colour attributes gain a significance in the delicate forms the artist creates out of smelted glass.

About Sokyo Lisbon

Sokyo Lisbon is a contemporary art and ceramics gallery based in Portugal in partnership with Sokyo Gallery in Kyoto, Japan. Sokyo Lisbon’s aim is to present the highest quality of Japanese contemporary ceramics and works of art to an European audience including works by artists such as Machiko Hashimoto, Mishima Kimiyo, Osamu Kojima, Moriyasu Kimura, Toshio Matsui, Eiko Kishi, Toru Ishii, Heechang Yoon, Satoru Hoshino and Kazuhito Kawai, among others.

Atsumi Fujita is Sokyo Lisbon and Sokyo Gallery’s Director. Founded in 2013, Sokyo Gallery represents over sixty artists working in ceramics, lacquer, textiles, glass and metal. The gallery participates regularly in international art fairs such as Artissima, ART021, Collect London, Dangdai, Design Basel, TEFAF Maastricht. Sokyo Gallery works closely with prestigious museums and institutions worldwide.

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