







SHOZO MICHIKAWA

HOSTLER | BURROWS

Hostler Burrows is honored to present  
an exhibition of fifteen new works by Shozo Michikawa  
in our Los Angeles gallery. A special thank you to Hollis Goodall,  
Curator of Japanese Art at LACMA, for contributing the essay  
*Radiating Beauty | Sculpture by Shozo Michikawa.*

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**To retain the 'natural intentions' of the clay**

A cold winter morning,  
wedging clay in the workshop.

More painful than cold,  
the feel of a handful of clay-steam rises from one's hands  
and just for an instant it itches.

Various shapes are born from my hands.

This morning's little satisfaction.

*Shozo Michikawa*





## RADIATING BEAUTY | SCULPTURE BY SHOZO MICHIKAWA

Hollis Goodall, *Curator, Japanese Art, LACMA*

Entering a gallery of sculpted clay by Shozo Michikawa (Japanese name order: Michikawa Shōzō 道川省三, b. 1953), one encounters complex choreography. Some works spiral upward like a butterfly escaping a cocoon, others split under the pressure of intense centrifugal force, and a few appear to crawl along the pedestals like armadillos. Those that dance lightly appear to wear kimono, the even width of fabric panels twirling as the figure turns. The force driving these works, whether they propel into helical chaos or take a sinuous curve to a level top, comes from within.

Michikawa approaches clay using a unique method. Slamming a block of clay onto a table repeatedly to shape it into a triangular or rectangular form, he manipulates the skin of the clay by squaring it with a potter's wire, possibly raking it, then using a sculpting tool to carve vertical lines and the wire again to slice horizontal trenches that encircle the clay at multiple points. Michikawa then entrusts the clay's exterior surface to his throwing actions and the whirling forces which take place on an electric wheel.

Using his finger, he opens a hole in the top of the clay form, then uses either a kanno-type sculpting tool to excavate the center and push out the walls, or a long dowel to push the clay down and outward, forcing the clay, which continues to spin on the wheel, to split apart in helical sections whose distances widen as he continues pressing away from the center.

Chance plays a part in how these vessels form, though Michikawa's 30 years of experience with this type of throwing, and 10 years before that of mastering the use of the wheel and glazes, mean that his greatest concentration is keyed upon the physics of the spinning clay. Hours of experimentation lead Michikawa to an ever more complex array of forms, adding to his ability to predict outcomes.

Chance also weighs heavily during the firing phase. Michikawa works with clay from Shigaraki, drawn from the ancient lakebed of Lake Biwa prior to its northward shift. This clay, heavy with iron and feldspar stones has for 800 years been a favorite of potters seeking a rough but functional non-porous body, and the expression of unobtrusive harmony (*wabi sabi*), an aesthetic to which Michikawa aspires. Michikawa selects Shigaraki clay specifically for use in his *anagama* (cave kiln) in which pine wood ash builds up over the hours and days of firing to coat and drip in translucent green along the edges of the forms. The location of the piece within the kiln changes the exposure to the fire and thus the coloration of the sculpture, so that when the kiln is opened, the potter's discovery of the fire's effects brings the greatest joy. Michikawa's work with the *anagama* combines chance with fire, wood, and wind as well as his challenging of the physics of clay.

For glazed works, Michikawa employs black clay, some of which he will overglaze later with silver in his *tanka* pieces, and some of which he frosts with white slip in *kohiki* works. More recently he has employed feldspathic Shino glaze—a local product of his home kiln area in Seto—which is whiter or pinker depending upon whether he reduces or adds oxygen to the kiln. To fire all of these he turns to his gas kiln. For the black clay itself, Michikawa excavates it from areas in Seto, blends his own proprietary mixture of clay with minerals, or purchases it from clay suppliers. When traveling, Michikawa enjoys experimenting with local clays.

Besides *wabi sabi*, another of Michikawa's favorite aesthetic principles is contrast, its appreciation having a long and complex history in Japanese art. Looking to his products of the gas kiln, dramatic contrasts of light and shade appear when slip-based *kohiki* glaze lays against black clay, especially when the clay is ripped open so that the inner shadows of the vessel form draw one to the dark. The smooth lightness of *kohiki* enhances by contrast the fine grittiness of the black clay. With the flowing surface of glaze, areas where forces tore the clay excite the eyes. The reflective quality of silver makes an especially strong juxtaposition to black clay, whose unglazed color and texture seemingly absorb all ambient light.

Beyond light and shade, Michikawa's forms generate areas of openness, as shapes split from the core billow outward adjacent to closed pockets that maintain their darkness within. On occasion, when emphasizing a low center of gravity, Michikawa will pierce the surface with deep, cave-like openings that abut heavy, solid zones. Clay sections produced by cutting and centrifugal force may part gently like envelope layers or cling to each other as to a precipitous cliffside.

The sculptures, which contain all the energy (*ki* 氣) that Michikawa has poured into them, remind some of architectonic forms, but for Michikawa, inspiration comes entirely from nature. Michikawa grew up in Hokkaido, the northernmost large island of Japan, which differs in weather and geography from the other three main islands (Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu). Michikawa's most striking memories come from time spent at Lake Tōya, a volcanic caldera with deep crystal blue waters, whose lava rock surroundings are dusted with snow in winter. The accidental nature of spewed lava evokes for me the chance qualities of Michikawa's forms.

In addition to the lake paradise of his youth, one's imagination turns to effects of time and weather on trees, rocks, and sand when studying these sculptures. Michikawa, himself, mentions an attachment also to ancient archeological remains found in Honshu, the main island at the center of which his home in Seto is located. It was potters of the Jōmon era, living around 12000-300 BCE, who created the first "art for art's sake" pottery on earth. In the centuries around 3000-2000 BCE, vessels were covered with spiraling, roiling forms that in some cases appear to jump as waves or "flames" above the rim of the pot. These vessels were used for cooking, unlike the ritual wares for which artistic endeavor was reserved in other areas of the world during the stone age. The fragments of clay flying away from the surfaces of Michikawa's works may find their ancestors in these ancient vessels.

Michikawa imagines his sculptures, into which he often pierces a top hole, used to hold or to encompass an arrangement of flowers. Avant-garde ikebana masters of the mid-20th century — the most outstanding being Teshigahara Sōfō (Japan, 1900-1979) —

created both vessels and sculpture, some from found objects of ceramic or metal, to inspire their own fleeting works of floral art. Michikawa holds this ideal of having the sculpture take on a utilitarian function in an ikebana arrangement, or stand alone as an object, but in both cases, he would like for the work to harmonize with its surroundings following the aesthetic of wabi sabi. Michikawa is a rare Japanese potter who feels that the work of art is complete with or without its owner adding to it through flowers or other use. He prefers that the object be viewed first for its sculptural qualities.

Often functionality is prime in Japan, among both potters and their clients, whose ideals of living with beauty translate as employing the procured object in their day-to-day activities. Michikawa's flexibility of approach may come from his history of exhibiting as much in galleries overseas as in Japan. In 1995 he held his first solo exhibition in Japan, the second in 1996 was in Paris, the next major show was in 1999 in London, and so on to the present, including a rare exhibition at the Forbidden City in Beijing in 2005. Objects that he produces such as tea bowls and cold-water jars for tea practice are ultimately suited to the Japanese market, whereas sculpture to a greater extent finds a natural fit with foreign buyers.

An underlying current in much Japanese art is the Buddhist idea of transience. The related idea of "one moment, one meeting" is found in tea practice, and means that in each fleeting moment is found a relationship, a mental state, and a combination of elements and atmosphere, that differentiate this one from the next. Michikawa feels the greatest experience of "one moment, one meeting" on the days when he opens a kiln to see what his energy, the clay, the fire, the season, and the situation of the world have produced. Facing his sculpture in the changing light of day, one reflects upon this wonder.

*Ikebana, Yuki Tsuji – Photo, Yamato Ikehara*









*Shozo Michikawa, Natural Ash Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 30" h x 10.5" w*



Shozo Michikawa, Natural Ash Sculptural Form, 2021 Stoneware, 27.5" H x 9" W



Shozo Michikawa, Natural Ash Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 20.5" h x 8" w





Shozo Michikawa, Kohiki Sculptural Form, 2019 Stoneware, 23.25" h x 8.25" w



*Shozo Michikawa, Kohiki Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 19.25" H x 10" W x 8" D*



Shozo Michikawa, Kohiki Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 19.5" H x 7.25" W





*Shozo Michikawa, Natural Ash Sculptural Form, 2021 Stoneware, 21" H x 6" W*

> *Shozo Michikawa, Kohiki Sculptural Form, 2021 Stoneware, 5.5" H x 33" W x 6.25" D*





Shozo Michikawa, Tanka with Silver Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 17.5" H x 7.25" H





*Shozo Michikawa, Volcano Usu, 2021 Stoneware 17.25" H x 7.5" W*



*Shozo Michikawa, Volcano Usu, 2021 Stoneware 17.25" H x 7.5" W*



*Shozo Michikawa, Volcano Usu, 2021 Stoneware, 13.75" H x 7" W x 3.75" D*



*Shozo Michikawa, Tanka with Silver Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 12" H x 6" W*





*Shozo Michikawa, Kohiki Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 12.5" H x 6" W*



*Shozo Michikawa, Kohiki Sculptural Form, 2020 Stoneware, 11" H x 6.25" W*



*Shozo Michikawa, Volcano Usu, 2020 Stoneware, 9.5" H x 5.25" W*







**SHOZO MICHIKAWA** b. 1953, Hokkaido, Japan

EDUCATION

1971-1975

Aoyama Gakuin University

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021

New Works, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, uk

Shozo Michikawa, Japan Art - Galerie Friedrich Müller, Frankfurt, Germany

2020

*Sasama*, Erskine Hall & Coe, London

2019

*Power of Passion*, GALERIE hu, Nagoya, Aichi, Japan

40th Anniversary Exhibition, Shozo Michikawa, Sokyō Gallery, Kyoto, Japan

2018

*40 Ans* Shozo Michikawa, Mizen Fine Art International, Paris, France

40th Anniversary Exhibition, Japan Art - Galerie Friedrich Müller, Frankfurt, Germany

40th Anniversary Exhibition, Officine Saffi, Milan, Italy

2017

*Forty Years, Forty Pots*, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, uk

Shozo Michikawa, Lacoste Gallery, Concord, usa

*Nature into Art*, Silverlens Gallery, Manila, Philippines

2016

Shozo Michikawa, Centro Cultural Las Condes, Santiago, Chile

Shozo Michikawa, Japan Art - Galerie Friedrich Müller, Frankfurt, Germany

*Nature into Art*, Di Legno Gallery, Singapore

*Nature into Art*, Seto Ceramics and Glass Art Center, Seto, Japan

Shozo Michikawa, Museo Carlo Zauli, Faenza, Italy

2015

*The Forbidden City*, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, Uk

*Ballades en Terres*, Mizen Fine Art, Paris, France

Shozo Michikawa, Puls Contemporary Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

2014

Shozo Michikawa, Japan Art - Galerie Friedrich Müller, Frankfurt, Germany

Shozo Michikawa, Helene Aziza, Paris, France

*Nature into Art*, GALERIE hu, Nagoya, Japan

2013

Shozo Michikawa, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, uk

Shozo Michikawa, Peter Kummermann, Geneva, Switzerland

Shozo Michikawa, Nihombashi Mitsukoshi Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2012

*Nature into Art*, Centre MATERIA, Quebec, Canada

Shozo Michikawa, Galerie Hélène Porée, Paris, France

2011

Shozo Michikawa, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, uk

*The Nature of Clay*, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, usa

Shozo Michikawa, Puls Contemporary Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

Shozo Michikawa, Terra Rossa, Leipzig, Germany

*Nature into Art*, GALERIE hu, Nagoya, Japan

2009

*Nature into Art*, Galerie Besson, London, uk

Shozo Michikawa, Art Gallery Oyama, Osaka, Japan

2008

Shozo Michikawa, Clara Scremini Gallery, Paris, France

Shozo Michikawa, GALERIE hu, Nagoya, Japan

2007

*Thirty Years, Thirty Pots*, Galerie Besson, London, uk

*Thirty Years, Thirty Pots*, Izukan Gallery, Manila, Philippines

Shozo Michikawa, Gallery Tokyo Eizo, Tokyo, Japan

2006

Shozo Michikawa, Puls Contemporary Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

2005

Shozo Michikawa, Blue Spiral Gallery, Asheville, usa

*Returning to Nature's Simplicity and Truth*, Shandong Museum, Shandong, China

*Returning to Nature's Simplicity and Truth*, Forbidden City, Beijing, China

Shozo Michikawa, Wa-noi, Shizuoka, Japan

Shozo Michikawa, Izukan Gallery, Manila, Philippines

2004

Shozo Michikawa, Galerie Besson, London, uk

2003

Shozo Michikawa, Izukan Gallery, Manila, Philippines

Shozo Michikawa, Matsuzakaya Department Store Gallery, Shizuoka, Japan

Shozo Michikawa, Tobu Department Store Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2001

Shozo Michikawa, UlaanBaatar Art Gallery, UlaanBaatar, Mongolia

Shozo Michikawa, Tobu Department Store Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2000

Shozo Michikawa, Tobu Department Store Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

Shozo Michikawa, Nihombashi Mitsukoshi Department Store Gallery, Kurashiki, Japan

1997

Shozo Michikawa, Hiraya Gallery, Manila, Philippines

Shozo Michikawa, Tokyo Department Store Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

1996

Shozo Michikawa, Hiraya Gallery, Manila, Philippines

1995

Shozo Michikawa, Hankyu Department Store Gallery, Osaka, Japan

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021

*Small Works, Great Artist*, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, UK

Art Basel, Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong

ARCOlisboa, Sokyo Gallery, Lisbon, Portugal

Design Miami/, Pierre Marie Giraud, Basel, Switzerland

*Tougei no Shiza*, Mosaic Tile Museum, Tazimi, Japan

2020

Nomad, Officine Saffi, St. Moritz, Switzerland

BICMA2020 Marratxí, Spain

2019

*Manpower*, Shozo Michikawa and Hans Vangso, A. Petersen Collection & Craft, Copenhagen, Denmark

Design Miami/, Pierre Marie Giraud, Miami, USA

Design Miami/, Pierre Marie Giraud, Basel, Switzerland

TEFAF, Pierre Marie Giraud, Maastricht, The Netherlands

Art Fair Tokyo, Sokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2018

60th Edition of the Faenza Prize, Faenza, Italy

*About a Vase*, Museo Montelupo, Montelupo, Italy

*Nihon Now*, Galerie Du Don, Le Fel, France

Modern Masters, Munich, Germany

Masterpieces - 400 Years of Japanese Ceramics, Hoganas, Sweden

2017

Design Miami/, Pierre Marie Giraud, Basel, Switzerland

Art Fair Philippines, Silverlens Gallery, Manila, Philippines

*Love and Violence*, Mizen Fine Arts, Padova, Italy

2016

*Contemporary Japanese Ceramics*, Officine Saffi, Milan, Italy

Singapore Contemporary Art show, Di Legno, Singapore

2015

International Ceramics, Shimada City Museum, Shimada, Japan

International Ceramics, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, UK

2014

Art Ceram, Sèvres, France

*Japanese Ceramics*, Erskine Hall & Coe, London, UK

The Tea Bowl Show, The Oxford Ceramics Gallery, Oxford, UK

icc Delhi 2014, Delhi, India

2012

International Trade Fair, Modern Masters, Munich, Germany

*The World in a Cup*, NCECA, Seattle, USA

sofa, New York, USA

Collect, London, UK

Han Hyang Lim Onggi Museum, Korea

2011

*Pots from Seven Countries*, Galerie Besson, London, UK

Art of Pacific Asia show, New York, USA

2010

sofa, New York, USA

Collect, London, UK

*Pots & Paper*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany

Summer Exhibition, Galerie Besson, London, UK

*Keramicos Collection*, Haarlem, The Netherlands

2009

The Art of Japanese Craft: 1870 to the Present, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, USA

*Soft Beauty of Traditional Shinos*, Concord University, West Virginia, USA

sofa Chicago, USA

2008

*A Japanese Dialogue*, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh, UK

Tutor Exhibition, Sussex Barn Gallery, Chichester, UK  
The Great North Art Show, Ripon, UK  
*Twenty Years, Twenty Pots*, Galerie Besson, London, UK  
*International Ceramics*, Giroussens, France  
soFA New York, USA

2006

Japanese Crafts, Galerie Besson, London, UK

2005

*Ceramica Mosaico*, Ravenna, Italy

Summer Exhibition, Galerie Besson, London, UK

The Signature Shop & Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

2004

Maiden Bridge Exhibition, Maiden Bridge Farm, Lancaster, UK

Japanese Ceramics, Galerie Besson, London, UK

soFA, Chicago, USA

2003

Summer Exhibition, Galerie Besson, London, UK

2002

*Accompaniments of Tea*, Daiichi Gallery, New York, USA

1999

*Gallery Pots*, Galerie Besson, London, UK

1996

*101 Pitcher Exhibition*, Terres de Provence, Paris, France

#### COLLECTIONS

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

Tagum City Historical & Cultural Center, Tagum, Philippines

Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France

International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, USA

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, USA

Ashmolean Museum of Art, Oxford, UK

Museo Carlo Zauli, Faenza, Italy

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, UK

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

Shimada City Museum, Shimada, Japan

European Museum of Modern Glass, Coburg, Germany

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, UK

University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA

China-Japan Exchange Center, Beijing, China

Qinglingsi Temple, Xi'an, China

#### AWARDS

2019 LOEWE Craft Prize 2019, Finalist, Loewe Foundation, Madrid, Spain

2018 International Craft Fair, Gold medal, Munich, Germany

2005 *Ceramica Mosaico*, Grand Prix, Ravenna, Italy

1991 Shinpei Asai Prize, Design Forum in Seto, Japan

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2017 Henry Verreet: "Terr Art", Spain

2016 Matteo Zauli: "La Ceramica", Italy

Ruth Krauskopf: "Esteka", Chile

Sophie Cavaliero: "Ceramiques Japonaises Contemporaines", France

2015 Flaminio Gualdoni: "La Ceramica", Italy

2014 Tony Birks: "Ceramics: Art and Perception", Issue 96, USA

2013 Pascale Nobecourt: "Ceramique et du Verre", Jan/Feb, France

2012 Dr. IChi Hsu: "Dao Clayform", #2, China

Michael C. Stewart: "Ceramics: Art and Perception", Mar/Apr, UK

2011 Sally Schone: "New Ceramics", Mar/Apr, Germany

2010 Keramikos: "Keramiek", #3, the Netherlands

2009 Simon Martin: "Ceramic Review", July/Aug, UK

Robert Piepenburg: "The Spirit of Ceramic Design", USA

2008 Angélique Escandell: "Ceramique et du Verre", May/June, France

Felice Fischer: "The Art of Japanese Craft", Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA

Michael C. Stewart: "Ceramics: Art and Perception", Issue 71, USA



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