

A PALETTE FOR GENIUS

JAPANESE WATER JARS FOR THE TEA CEREMONY



JOAN B MIRVISS LTD



A PALETTE FOR GENIUS

Japanese Water Jars for the Tea Ceremony

水
指

Presented at Joan B Mirviss LTD, New York
Collaboration with Shibuya Kurodatoen Co., LTD
March 10 - April 15, 2016

Mizusashi: Water Jars for the Japanese Tea Practice of Chanoyu

Andrew L. Maske



MIWA KAZUHIKO (b. 1951)
See page 41

TANAKA SAJIRŌ (b. 1937)
See page 13

The water jar (*mizusashi*) plays a distinctive role among the utensils used in a Japanese tea gathering. Usually made of ceramic, its entry into the tea room marks the beginning of the formal preparation of tea, and it occupies a prominent position throughout the proceedings. Apart from some basic requirements in regard to size and shape, the artist has tremendous freedom in creating a vessel that will be visually compelling yet functional.

This exhibition of water jars features a stunning display of work by Japan's most renowned modern and contemporary ceramic artists. Their techniques span the range of traditional, innovative, and original processes that reflect a wide array of aesthetic approaches, from rough and gestural to refined and exquisite.

The water jar is probably the least-appreciated of the major ceramic utensils used in a Japanese *chanoyu* tea gathering, but it offers perhaps the greatest potential for variety in terms of shape, size, and expressiveness. Along with the iron tea kettle, the *mizusashi* serves as a locational and aesthetic anchor for the other utensils that enter or exit the tea room over the course of a gathering.

Although tea gathering water jars entered major American collections of Japanese ceramics in the late nineteenth century, their numbers were far fewer than other tea vessel types like tea bowls and tea caddies. There are a number of reasons for this. First, water jars were among the larger ceramic pieces, and their bulky shapes made them less easy to pack and transport than more compact and uniform shapes like bowls, plates, and smaller jars.⁽¹⁾ Second, in Japan, water jars were rarely treated with the same respect as tea caddies and tea bowls, and relatively few historical examples by known artists survive. Third, the water jar had

no attractive functional equivalent in the American drawing room or kitchen, and therefore was likely less appealing to Western collectors, even those who had no intention to actually use the Japanese ceramics they acquired.⁽²⁾ Moreover, in the Muromachi period (1338-1573), water jars were often utilitarian vessels adopted into use for tea, and the rough and sometimes ordinary appearance of such vessels may have made them less attractive to foreign collectors of Japanese ceramics.

While their use for containing "mere" water may have made them seem rather pedestrian vessels to non-Japanese, *mizusashi* and their flower vase cousins known as *hanaire* play not only essential physical roles in the tea room, but philosophical ones as well. Water is the only one of the five traditional elements (fire, water, earth, metal and wood) that can be imbibed; as such, it is supremely life-giving, both to animals and plants. Thus, the water jar represents a connection to nature and to Purity, one of the four key aspects of *chanoyu*.⁽³⁾ The flower vase and the blossoms in it exemplify water's role in supporting life in the natural world, while the contents of the water jar represent the source of nature's bounty for the participants of a tea gathering. In fact, traditionally, great care was used when selecting water for serving powdered tea, with the host sourcing it from a famous spring, well, or stream. Today, superior spring water is typically used in formal *chanoyu* gatherings.

Among works by both historical and contemporary Japanese ceramists, there are several contrasting approaches to the creation of *mizusashi*. In order to make it easier to grasp the differences in these approaches, I have created four basic categories. Although these categories have been named arbitrarily, they help to define and distinguish the most fundamental approaches to creating water jars for use in *chanoyu*.

The first approach utilizes what I call the Elemental aesthetic. This approach is based in the original concept of the water jar as a natural receptacle of life's essential liquid. Vessels made with this aesthetic often resemble cliffs, rocks, or unadorned earth. They may be of uniform shape, but often display rough or irregular surfaces. The traditional unglazed stoneware types of Shigaraki and Bizen, first used in tea in the fifteenth century, are typical of this approach, and are vaguely reminiscent of the stone *tsukubai* hand-rinsing basin found just outside the tea room. Examples in this mode by some of the most famous modern Japanese ceramists, including Kitaōji Rosanjin and Yagi Kazuo, are featured in the current exhibition.

A very different approach is the Classic Chinese aesthetic, which hearkens back to the earliest tea ceramics brought to Japan in the Southern Song dynasty. Typically of clean, elegant shapes, these pieces are frequently covered in a celadon glaze or decorated in a traditional Chinese format, such as the crisp black-and-cream designs of Cizhou ware. In this exhibition, works by Kawase Shinobu and Suzuki Osamu are outstanding examples of the former, while the *mizusashi* by Ishiguro Munemaro represents the latter.

During the Edo period (1615-1868), what I refer to as the Pictorial aesthetic approach became popular in *chanoyu* utensils. Emerging around the time of Nonomura Ninsei (act. 1640s-1690s) in the mid-to-late-seventeenth century, the Pictorial approach developed further under Ogata Kenzan (1663-1743). Ceramists working in this mode used the wide surface of the *mizusashi* as a canvas on which representations of nature (typically floral motifs) were depicted. Use of water jars of this type could help to brighten the atmosphere of the tea room and balance the austere appearance of the other utensils. Painting styles ranged from restrained literati landscape depictions to colorful Rinpa-style illustrations that might have come directly from a pair of folding screens. After the expansion of women's participation in *chanoyu* in the nineteenth



Burst-bag-type freshwater jar, late 16th - early 17th century. Stoneware with natural ash glaze; lacquer cover (Iga ware), 8 1/4 x 8 11/16 inches. The Minneapolis Institute of Art, Mary Griggs Burke Collection, gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation, 2015 (L2015.33.303a,b).



Freshwater jar, late 17th-18th century. Stoneware with iron oxide and underglaze cobalt-blue decoration (Ko-Kiyomizu ware), 7 1/4 x 7 1/2 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mary Griggs Burke Collection, gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation, 2015 (2015.300.268a,b).



century, production and use of Pictorial format tea utensils grew even greater. With the development and perfection of new technical processes in the twentieth century, new Pictorial styles emerged, such as Kiyomizu Rokubei VI's *kokiwai* decoration, and surface applications such as Ono Hakuko's gold leaf decoration.

Some *mizusashi* water jars combine various aspects of the types listed above and are therefore belong to a type I designate as Integrated. Some of them feature distorted shapes, dynamic glaze application, or abbreviated brushwork, modes that were first popular in tea ceramics during the Momoyama period (1573-1615). They may be rather rough and craggy, like some Elemental pieces, but are more expressive and idiosyncratic. Others may mimic some of the basic shapes of the Classic Chinese approach, but present them with unusual glazes and other alterations. *Mizusashi* of the Integrated genre may have simple decoration that is painted, stamped, or incised, but, unlike Pictorial works, it is not the primary focus. Overall, Integrated works form the largest body of water jars for *chanoyu* in contemporary Japan. Works in the current exhibition by Katō Tōkurō, Miwa Kyūwa, Suzuki Gorō, and others can be classified in this category.

Today, only most committed practitioners of *chanoyu* use *mizusashi* for their original purpose. Even so, the beauty of these vessels is easily appreciated even outside the tea room. The selection featured in this exhibition demonstrates the wide range of aesthetic possibilities found in this compelling genre. As examples of modern Japanese ceramics, these *mizusashi* reflect the melding of tradition and innovation in tea ceramics that began in the middle part of the 20th century and has continued to the present.

Joan Mirviss and Kuroda Kōji would like to extend their gratitude for this insightful essay to Dr. Andrew Maske, Associate Professor of Art History, School of Art and Visual Studies at the University of Kentucky and noted authority on Japanese ceramics.

NOTES

1. Edward S. Morse included relatively few water jars in his collection, probably because they took up more space than he would have liked. He sought to acquire representative types of the broadest possible range of Japanese stoneware producers, and smaller pieces would have been the most economical way to achieve that goal. Andrew L. Maske. "The Impact of Asian Ceramics on the United States." Kookmin University Occasional Papers for Academic Year 2008, Seoul: Kookmin University, 2009, p. 11.
2. The quandary of how to use *mizusashi* outside the tea room is faced even by modern Japanese, as illustrated by the unsatisfying use of a four hundred year-old Shino water jar as a flower vase in Kawabata Yasunari's 1952 novel *A Thousand Cranes* [Senbazuru]. Transl. Edward Seidensticker. New York: Knopf, 1959, p. 81.
3. Sen Rikyū (1522-1591), codifier of the Way of Tea, is believed to have designated the aspects of Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility as key elements of the *chanoyu* discipline.



KATÔ TÔKURÔ (1898-1985)
Shino mizusashi; Shino-glazed Water Jar
1973
Glazed stoneware
8 3/8 x 8 x 7 5/8 inches



OKABE MINEO (1919-1990)
Oribe mizusashi; Oribe-glazed Water Jar
ca. 1960
Glazed stoneware
6 5/8 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/8 inches



MIWA KYŪWA (KYŪSETSU X)
(1885-1981)
Hagiyaki mizusashi, mei iwashimizu;
Hagi-glazed Water Jar
"Fresh Water Flows Over Stones"
1963
Glazed stoneware
6 5/8 x 6 inches



KOYAMA FUJIO (1900-1975)
Kohiki mizusashi;
Water Jar with Kohiki Glaze
ca. 1970
Glazed stoneware
6 1/8 x 7 x 6 3/4 inches



MIWA KYŪWA (KYŪSETSU X) (1885-1981)
Hagi kaku mizusashi; Hagi-glazed Square Water Jar
ca. 1975
Glazed stoneware with lacquer cover
5 7/8 x 7 3/4 x 6 1/4 inches

HORI ICHIRŌ (b. 1952)
Shino mizusashi;
Shino-glazed Water Jar
2013
7 x 7 1/4 inches
Glazed stoneware



KANETA MASANAO (b. 1953)
Hagi haikaburi kurnuki mizusashi;
Hagi and Ash-glazed Scooped-out Water Jar
2012
Glazed stoneware
8 1/4 x 8 1/4 x 8 1/2 inches



KISHIMOTO KENNIN (b. 1934)
Iga tomobuta mizusashi;
Iga Water Jar with Cover
2012
Glazed stoneware
6 7/8 x 7 1/8 inches



TANAKA SAJIRŌ (b. 1937)
Karatsu ameyū mizusashi;
Karatsu Iron-glazed Water Jar
1998
Glazed stoneware
7 1/2 x 10 3/4 x 10 1/8 inches



TSUJI SEIMEI (1927-2008)
Shigaraki mizusashi;
Shigaraki water jar
1970s
Glazed stoneware
7 x 6 1/2 inches



HARADA SHŪROKU (b. 1941)
Bizen mizusashi; Bizen Water Jar
1998
Glazed stoneware
8 1/2 x 9 x 7 1/2 inches



KANESHIGE MICHIAKI (1934-1995)
Inbe mimitsuki yahazukuchi mizusashi;
Inbe-style Eared Water Jar with Recessed Mouth
ca. 1980
Glazed stoneware
8 1/4 x 9 x 8 inches

KITAŌJI ROSANJIN (1883-1959)

Shigaraki sorobantsubu mizusashi;
Shigaraki Abacus Bead-shaped Water Jar
1929
Glazed stoneware
5 7/8 x 7 5/8 inches



YAGI KAZUO (1918-1979)

Shigaraki mizusashi; Shigaraki Water Jar
ca. 1970
Glazed stoneware
4 1/2 x 6 7/8 inches



ISHIGURO MUNEMARO (1893-1968)
Kairagi mizusashi; Water Jar with Crawling Glaze
ca. 1950
Glazed stoneware
6 3/4 x 6 1/4 x 5 3/4 inches



ISHIGURO MUNEMARO (1893-1968)
Kakiotoshide mizusashi; Water Jar with Sgraffito Design
ca. 1950
Glazed stoneware
7 1/4 x 7 inches



SUZUKI GORŌ (b. 1941)
Oribe mizusashi; Oribe-glazed Water Jar
ca. 1996
Glazed stoneware
 $6\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$ inches



KATŌ YASUKAGE (1964-2012)
Nezumi shino mizusashi;
Nezumi shino-glazed Water Jar
2006
Glazed stoneware
 $7\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{8} \times 7$ inches

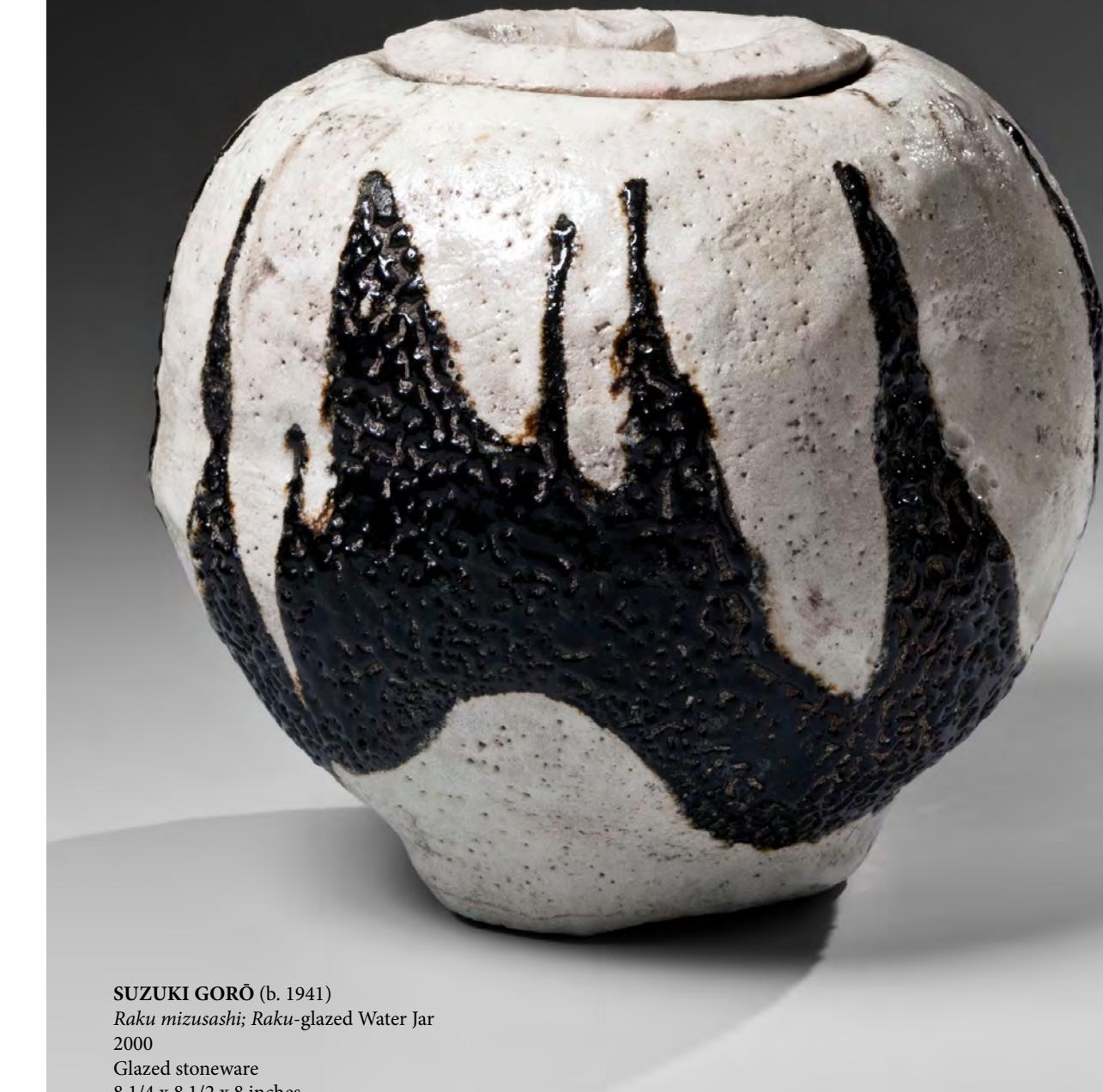




KOIE RYŌJI (b. 1938)
Kohiki mizusashi;
Kohiki-glazed Water Jar
ca. 2008
Glazed stoneware
7 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 6 1/2 inches



NISHIHATA TADASHI (b. 1948)
Kaiyū mizusashi;
Ash-glazed Water Jar
2015
Glazed stoneware
5 1/2 x 10 3/8 x 7 3/4 inches



SUZUKI GORŌ (b. 1941)
Raku mizusashi; Raku-glazed Water Jar
2000
Glazed stoneware
8 1/4 x 8 1/2 x 8 inches



SUZUKI OSAMU (1926-2001)
Mizusashi seihakuji; Bluish-white-glazed Water Jar
ca. 1982
Glazed porcelain
6 x 5 inches

YAGI AKIRA (b. 1955)
Seihakuji mizusashi;
Bluish-white-glazed Water Jar
2015
Glazed porcelain
4 5/8 x 8 inches



FUKUMOTO FUKU (b. 1973)
Tsuki; Moon
2015
Unglazed porcelain with
blue-glaze decoration
7 3/4 x 6 3/4 inches



KAMADA KŌJI (b. 1948)

Yōhen ginshō tenmoku kakewake mizusashi;
Two-toned Tenmoku Water Jar with Kiln Effects
2015
Glazed stoneware
8 1/2 x 7 1/4 inches

KAWASE SHINOBU (b. 1950)

Seiji mizusashi; Celadon Water Jar
2015
Celadon-glazed porcelaineous stoneware
with lacquer cover
7 x 8 inches

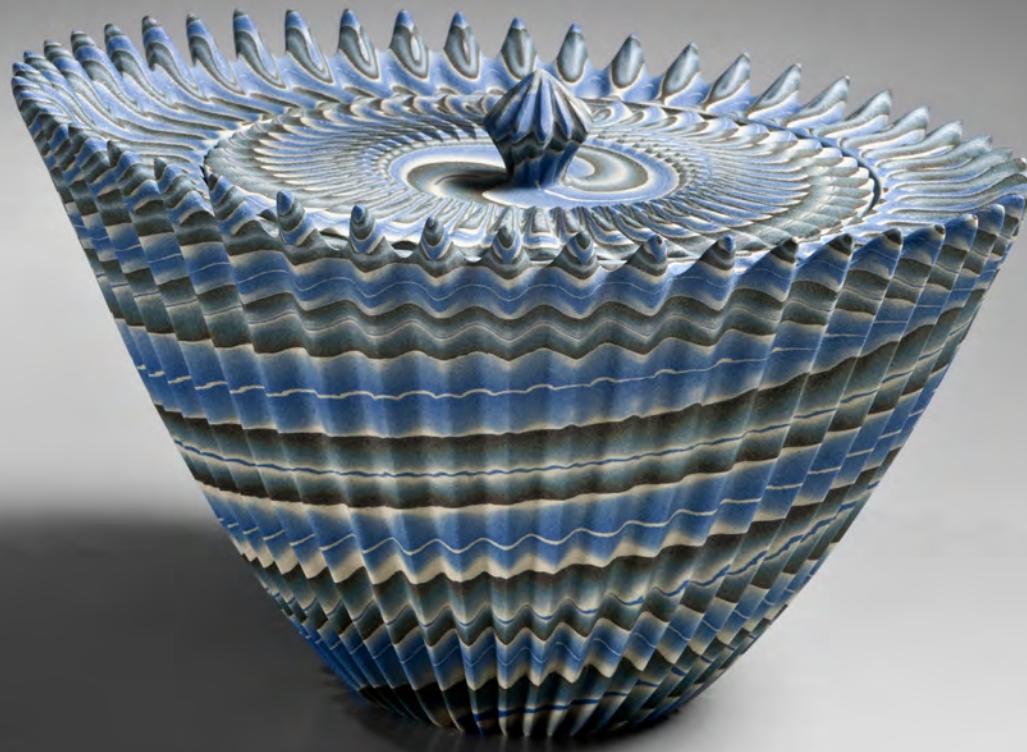




FUJIMOTO YOSHIMICHI (NŌDŌ) (1919-1992)
Akae kinsai uzurazu mizusashi;
Red and Gold-glazed Water Jar with Quail Design
ca. 1965
Glazed stoneware
7 1/2 x 7 inches



KIYOMIZU ROKUBEI VI (1901-1980)
Kokisai ebinegusa mizusashi;
Water Jar with Artist's Glaze, Decorated with Calanthe Orchids
ca. 1978
Glazed stoneware with gold and silver, with lacquer cover
6 3/8 x 8 1/2 inches



OGATA KAMIO (b. 1949)

Kyoku; Thorns

2015

Neriage (marbleized) stoneware

5 x 8 1/4 inches

ITŌ HIDEHITO (b. 1971)

Rensai mizusashi;

Marbleized Colored-clay Water Jar

2015

Neriage (marbleized) porcelain with

craquelure glaze

6 5/8 x 8 1/2 inches



KAMEYAMAGAMA

Neriagede mizusashi;

Marbleized Clay Water Jar

ca. 1954

Marbleized stoneware

7 x 6 inches



NAKAMURA BAIZAN (1907-1999)
Mizusashi; Water Jar
ca. 1960
Glazed stoneware
8 1/8 x 5 3/8 inches



TOKUDA YASOKICHI III
(1933 - 2009)
Hekimei yōsai mizusashi;
Brilliant Clear Blue-glazed Water Jar
ca. 1997
Glazed porcelain
6 1/4 x 8 1/2 inches



MORINO HIROAKI TAIMEI (b. 1934)
Mizusashi deshio; Water Jar "High Tide as the Moon Rises"
2015
Glazed stoneware
6 3/4 x 6 1/2 inches



ONO HAKUKO (1915-1996)

Hakuji kinrande mizusashi;
White-glazed Water Jar with Gold Leaf on Red Overglaze
ca. 1985
Glazed stoneware
5 3/8 x 7 3/8 inches

KATŌ HAJIME (1900-1968)
Moegi kinrande kikumon mizusashi;
Grass Green-glazed Water Jar with
Gold Foil and Chrysanthemum Patterning
ca. 1960
Glazed porcelain with lacquer cover
4 x 8 inches



SUDA SEIKA II (1892-1971)
Water jar with *kutani* polychrome glazing
1950s
Glazed porcelain with lacquer cover
5 x 7 inches





KONDŌ TAKAHIRO (b. 1958)
Garasufuta gintekisaiki;
Blue Mist Vessel with Glass Cover
2015
Glazed porcelain and blue glass cover
6 3/4 x 5 5/8 inches



KONDŌ TAKAHIRO (b. 1958)
Garasufuta gintekisaiki;
Blue Mist Vessel with Glass Cover
2015
Glazed porcelain and green glass cover
6 3/4 x 6 1/4 inches



SAKIYAMA TAKAYUKI (b. 1958)
Chōtō; Listening to Waves
2015
Stoneware with sand and orange glazes
6 5/8 x 8 1/4 inches



KAWASE SHINOBU (b. 1950)
Furea; Flare
2015
Unglazed stoneware
7 1/8 x 9 inches



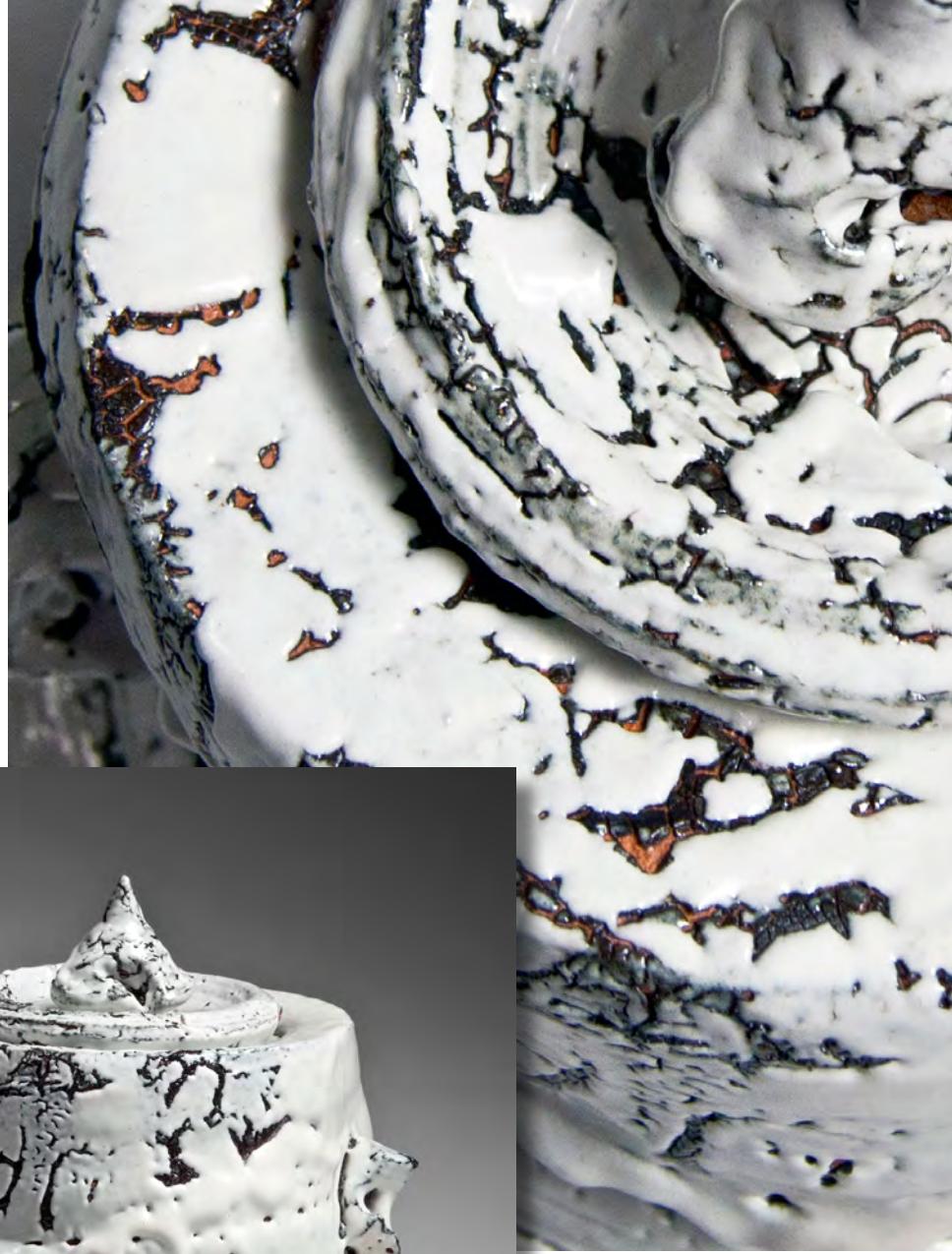
ITŌ SEKISUI V (b. 1941)
Mumyōi mizusashi;
Mumyōi (Sado Red Stoneware) Water Jar
ca. 1995-1998
Unglazed stoneware
7 x 8 inches



KATSUMATA CHIEKO (b. 1950)
Akoda mizusashi; Pumpkin-shaped Water Jar
2015
Matte-glazed stoneware
7 x 9 7/8 x 9 7/8 inches



MIWA KAZUHIKO (b. 1951)
Enza; Deep Meditation
2015
White Hagi-glazed stoneware
8 1/8 x 10 x 9 3/4 inches





KOIKE SHŌKO (b. 1943)

Mizusashi, shiro no katachi; Water Jar "White Form"

2015

Glazed stoneware with glass glaze

7 3/4 x 11 1/4 x 10 1/2 inches



Names are given in Japanese sequence with family name first.

Published in conjunction with the exhibition "*A Palette for Genius: Japanese Water Jars for the Tea Ceremony*," held at Joan B Mirviss LTD, New York from March 10 - April 15, 2016

Front Cover: OKABE MINEO (see p. 9)
SAKIYAMA TAKAYUKI (see p. 38)
KATŌ TŌKURŌ (see p. 8)
Inside Cover: KAMADA KŌJI (see p. 26)
Back Cover: OGATA KAMIO (see p. 30)
SUZUKI OSAMU (see p. 24)
KAMADA KŌJI (see p. 26)
KAWASE SHINOBU (see p. 27)
KONDŌ TAKAHIRO (see p. 37)

Photography: Richard Goodbody

Catalogue Design: Damon Graham

Printer: Phoenix Lithographing Corp.

© 2016 Joan B Mirviss LTD



JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

JAPANESE ART *Antique - Contemporary*

39 East 78th Street, 4th Floor | New York NY 10075

Telephone 212 799 4021 | www.mirviss.com

しぶや 黒田陶苑

〒150-0002

渋谷区渋谷1-16-14 メトロプラザ1F

TEL 03-3499-3225 FAX 03-3499-3235