



Pursuing the Eye of Heaven:

Ceramics by
HIDEAKI MIYAMURA

Pucker Gallery | Boston

TALL BOTTLE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
25 x 5 x 5" HM151

ALL PIECES ARE PORCELAIN.

COVER: TEARDROP VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
20 x 8½ x 8½" HM166



Pursuing the Eye of Heaven:

Ceramics by **HIDEAKI MIYAMURA**
by Andrew L. Maske

If you travel to Zhejiang province in eastern China, you will find a mountain that has indirectly influenced ceramic art around the world. It is called Tianmu-shan, “Mount Heaven-Eye.” Legend has it that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Japanese in search of the keys to enlightenment made the long and treacherous journey to Mount Tianmu (or “Tenmoku,” as they pronounced it) to learn the discipline of Chan (Zen) Buddhism. In monasteries there they were trained in the regular practice of deep meditation, intended to create a spiritual environment in which personal enlightenment could be achieved. The visiting Japanese were introduced by their masters to a thick liquid which was to be drunk, they were told, to prevent drowsiness during meditation. The drink was tea – blanching, dried leaves ground into a powder and then infused with hot water.

The tea was served in bowls unlike any the Japanese had ever seen before, sturdy, dark stoneware covered with various types of fascinating iridescent glazes. The bowls were not made on Mount Tianmu, but were shipped from kilns many miles away; (1) nonetheless the visiting monks called them “Tenmoku bowls,” and arranged for hundreds of them to be transported to Japan. In Japan, the bowls

became treasured heirlooms, and for centuries a tenmoku teabowl was essential for the serving of tea in the most formal manner. In time, Japanese potters discovered ways to create tenmoku teabowls in their own land, and eventually the brownish-black glaze found on the bowls became world-famous as the “tenmoku glaze.”

In China, times changed. With the beginning of the Ming dynasty in 1368, infused tea served in bowls lost favor and was replaced by steeped tea served in cups. The dark, brown-glazed bowls used on Mount Tianmu were discarded in favor of bright porcelain vessels decorated in blue and red underglaze. Restrictions on foreign trade were enacted, and the number of monks from Japan declined.

In Japan, however, the spirit of Mount Tianmu lived on. Zen Buddhism, powdered tea, and the tenmoku teabowls continued to flourish for the next eight hundred years. The tenmoku glaze came to be used by potters the world over, and most recently, electronic media such as the Internet have made it possible for millions to see masterpiece tenmoku bowls that were preserved for hundreds of years in the collections of Japanese tea masters.(2)

Meanwhile, exploration of the processes Chinese potters used in the Song dynasty still continues. Hideaki

VASE
Shinogite with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
17 x 8 x 8" HM119

COVERED JAR
Peacock Glaze
13 x 7½ x 7½" HM114

VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
12 x 10¾ x 10¾" HM103



Miyamura spent five years making over ten thousand test pieces to discover the secrets of the tenmoku glaze, especially the elusive *yohen* (“radiant-change”) tenmoku. More recently, he has conducted two thousand additional firing tests. He has studied countless variations of glaze composition and firing method, and has attained a thorough knowledge of the delicate balance needed to produce beautiful surfaces that embellish his sleek and elegant shapes. Even so, the volatility of the glazes he uses means he cannot control exactly how surface effects will manifest themselves in the kiln. As a result, he includes test pieces with every firing.

For Miyamura, the creation of ceramics is the outlet for his search for ideal beauty. This is true of his ceramic shapes as well as his glazes. As an apprentice in Japan, he was required to make rough, wide-bottomed table wares and sturdy vases of types favored by Japanese consumers. When he tried to incorporate vases with small bottoms and narrow mouths into the studio repertoire, his teacher became angry: “Those won’t sell – they’re not functional!” Later, as an independent artist who could create whatever he wanted, Miyamura chose porcelain as his medium and took inspiration from – of all things – the shapes of Italian

glasswork.

While all of his works can act as containers, Miyamura does not create them with the intention that they be used as such. Each example is complete as it stands; to add a flower would spoil the beauty of both ceramic and blossom. In this sense, Miyamura’s pieces can be considered “sculptural vessels.”

Throughout Miyamura’s work is a palpable tension between his tightly-controlled, graceful forms and the capricious glaze effects caused by the fire. He uses the term *Yohen* to describe several glazes, the most striking of which is perhaps his *Yohen Crystalline glaze* – a deep black glaze that glows with the reflection of innumerable tiny crystals developed and distributed according to the kiln flame’s caprice. *Tall Bottle* (HM151) is a fantastic example of this glaze, with thousands of crystals of exceptional clarity and brightness that cover the form’s surface. A closely related glaze seems to be the “*Starry Night*” glaze, also black, in which crystals form in fewer numbers and appear like stars in the nighttime sky.

Among the tenmoku teabowls most highly prized by the Song dynasty emperor Huizong (1082-1135) were those that displayed a glaze described as “hare’s fur.”

BOTTLE
Yellow Crystalline Glaze
10 × 10 × 10" HM169



BOTTLE
Black and Gold Glaze
14 × 9 × 9" HM167



Miyamura's Hare's Fur tenmoku glaze creates a fine, matte surface of vertical streaks (the "hare's fur") that varies infinitely from example to example. Sometimes uniform in color over a vase's entire exterior, the glaze can also create a rainbow of colors that descend the sides of a piece (HM103). The addition of Shinogite creates a smooth surface for the Hare's Fur effect (HM101, HM119), but also adds to the risk of misfiring. When the Hare's Fur glaze is designed with irregular spots that the streaks flow around, it is referred to as Peacock glaze (HM114), because of its similarity to the appearance of a peacock feather.

Metallic-effect glazes such as Gold and Silver add another dimension to Miyamura's repertoire. Like his other glazes, they vary markedly from piece to piece, sometimes shiny, sometimes matte, and sometimes, amazingly, with a matte effect on top and a shiny surface beneath. Miyamura is amused when people assume that one of his ceramic pieces is made of metal or glass, but he also is proud of the years of perseverance spent in acquiring the skills that make such a *trompe l'oeil* effect possible.

Less likely to be confused with metalwork, are the beautiful colored crystalline glazes in White, Blue, and Yellow varieties. These rich glazes grow crystals that

resemble flowers, shells or even fireworks adorning the smooth and finely crafted shapes. The size and shape of the mysterious crystals are dependent entirely upon the interaction of the glaze components with the heating and cooling processes within the kiln. One especially striking and fascinating example (HM169) displays blue crystals on a yellow background (just how does *that* happen?). The crystals give a mesmerizing sense of three-dimensional depth, as if they were a part of a multi-hued geranium galaxy in a Japanese *anime* epic.

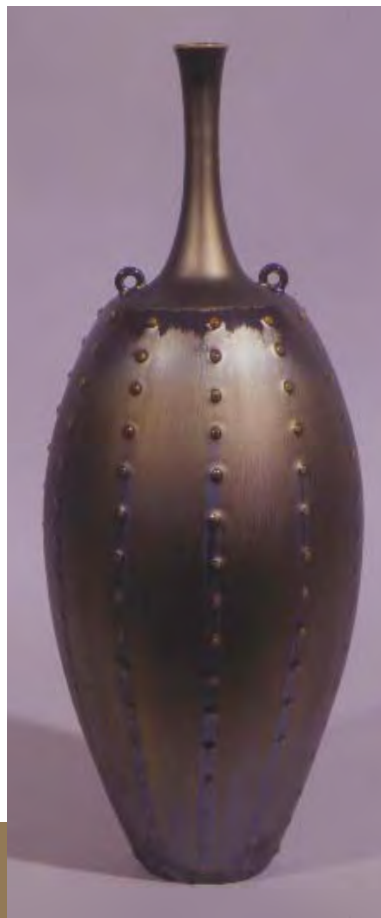
Of all his favorite glazes, Miyamura's most difficult to control is the one referred to simply as Black and Gold (HM167). As the name suggests, two radically contrasting colors are combined in a single piece, in a manner that is both elegant and dynamic. The volatility of the glaze means that there is an even higher chance of failure in firing, and thus those examples that emerge from the kiln with outstanding surface effects are all the more precious.

Over the course of his career, Miyamura has learned to overcome adversity. As a young man in Japan he prevailed against his father's strong wishes that he enter the family construction business. Instead he earned a degree at Western Michigan University and returned home to begin

VASE WITH TWO RINGS
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
18½ × 7½ × 7½" HM117



VASE
Sea Urchin with Gold Glaze
19 × 7½ × 7½" HM100



an apprenticeship with the potter Miura Shurei at age 26. It was during that time that he conducted the ten thousand glaze experiments upon which he was later to base his career.

Anticipating that the U.S. offered the best environment for him to make the types of pieces he yearned to create, Miyamura came to Massachusetts, only to find that he lacked a thorough understanding of the market for fine ceramics. As a result, he ended up spending five years making standard tablewares that were little different from the production pieces he made as an apprentice in Japan. To get by financially, he had to work double shifts in a nursing home on weekends, which allowed him to make his ceramics during the rest of the week. If that weren't enough, he had trouble maintaining a lease on affordable workspace, and the sale of studio buildings and other problems forced him to move six times. Nevertheless, he was not to be dissuaded from pursuing his chosen profession and the desire to bring his ideal ceramics to life.

As an apprentice, Miyamura began performing meditation as a way to focus his mind for making pottery. By doing so, he was, perhaps unwittingly, following in the footsteps of the Japanese Zen monks who journeyed to

Mount Tienmu in China eight hundred years ago. It seems ironic that the tenmoku teabowls and the tea they contained assisted those early Zen monks in their quest for effective meditation, while for Hideaki Miyamura it was meditation that has assisted him in his pursuit of the secret of the tenmoku teabowls. Although the ultimate purpose of meditation is to attain self enlightenment, the act of creating art spreads enlightenment to others. Ceramics lovers can be grateful that as a result of his vision and perseverance, Hideaki Miyamura is able to share a measure of his enlightenment with them.

1. Many tenmoku teabowls were made at the Jian kilns in neighboring Fujian province. For a thorough study of Jian ware and other dark-glazed Chinese ceramics, see Robert Mowry, *Hare's Fur, Tortoiseshell, and Partridge Feathers: Chinese Brown- and Black-Glazed Ceramics, 400–1400* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 1996).

2. See an image of one of the three surviving Chinese *yōhen tenmoku* bowls at: http://global.mitsubishielectric.com/tasteofjapan/imprints/tresures/chadogu/index03_b.html.

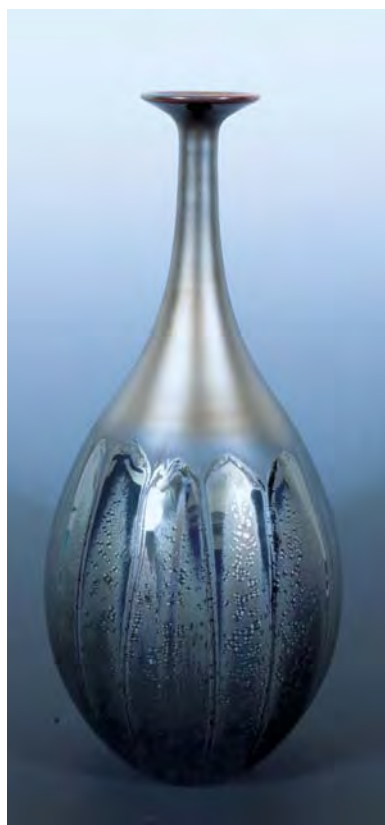
COVERED JAR
Starry Night Glaze
 13 x 9½ x 9½" HM208



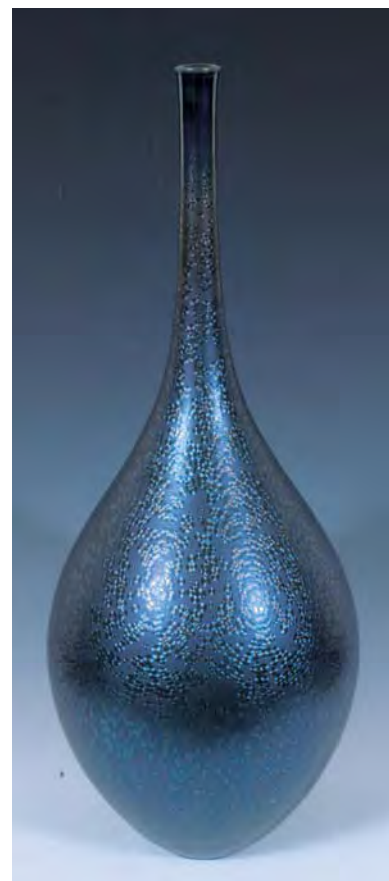
VASE
Starry Night Glaze
 20½ x 7 x 7" HM207



VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
 18 x 7 x 7" HM168



VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
 15¼ x 5½ x 5½" HM199



TEARDROP VASE
Starry Night Glaze
 20½ x 6¾ x 6¾" HM206

VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
13 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " HM202



BOTTLE
Silver Glaze
14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 x 1" HM86



VASE WITH TWO RINGS
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
20 x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " HM142



TEARDROP VASE
Crystalline Glaze
19 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " HM130



TEARDROP VASE
Yellow Crystalline Glaze
19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 x 8" HM217



TEARDROP VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
12 x 5½ x 5½" HM152



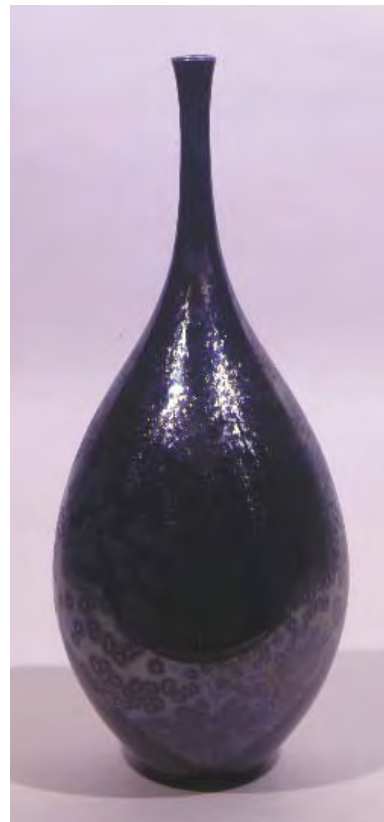
TEARDROP VASE
Peacock Glaze
12½ x 5½ x 5½" HM158



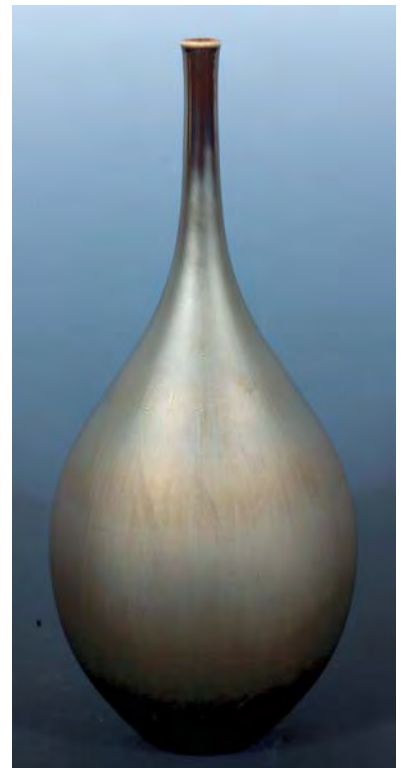
TEARDROP VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
13 x 5½ x 5½" HM200



TEARDROP VASE
White Crystalline Glaze
12½ x 6 x 6" HM171



TEARDROP VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
14 x 5¾ x 5¾" HM113



TEARDROP VASE
Gold Glaze
12 x 4½ x 4½" HM186



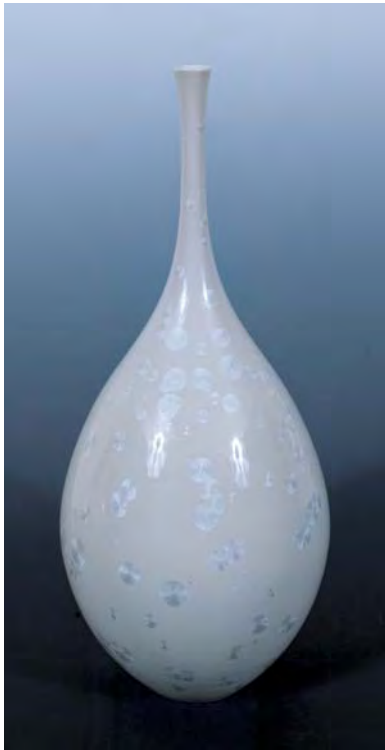
TEARDROP VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
7½ x 6¾ x 6¾" HM132



TEARDROP VASE
Blue and Green Crystalline Glaze
12 x 5 x 5" HM223



SMALL TEARDROP VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
8 x 3 x 3" HM145



TEARDROP VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
7½ x 6¾ x 6¾" HM214



TEARDROP VASE
Starry Night Glaze
11½ x 4½ x 4½" HM211



SMALL TEARDROP BOTTLE
Black and Gold Glaze
8 x 3½ x 3½" HM197



TEARDROP VASE
Yellow Crystalline Glaze
14½ x 5½ x 5½" HM218



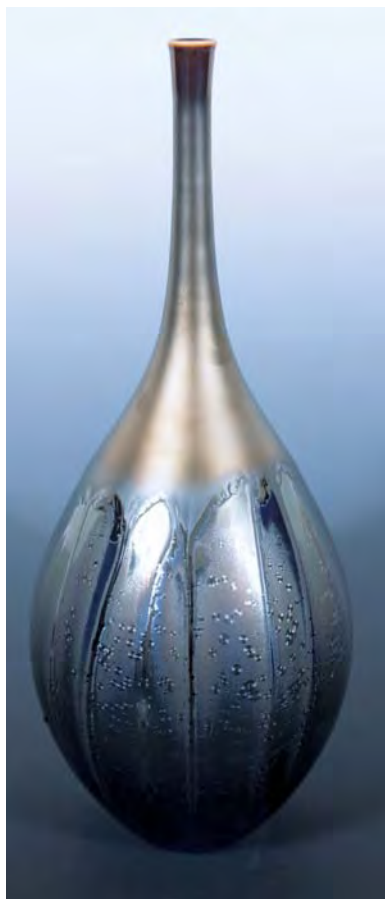
TEARDROP VASE
Blue Crystalline Glaze
12 x 5 x 5" HM216



TEARDROP VASE
Cobalt Blue Crystalline Glaze
15 x 6 x 6" HM160



TEARDROP VASE
Blue Crystalline Glaze
13 x 5¼ x 5¼" HM221



TEARDROP VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
17 x 6 x 6" HM204



TEARDROP VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
16 x 6 x 6" HM143



CARVED VASE
Gold Glaze
15 1/4 x 4 x 4" HM187



COVERED JAR
Blue Cloud with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
17 x 9 x 9" HM120



INDENTED VASE
Gold Glaze
15 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2" HM149



VASE
Shinogite with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
16 3/4 x 8 3/4 x 8 3/4" HM101



VASE
White Crystalline Glaze
11 x 7½ x 7½" HM213



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
14 x 8 x 8" HM155



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
11½ x 8 x 8" HM192



VASE
Starry Night Glaze
11½ x 7½ x 7½" HM210



VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
10½ × 7½ × 7½" HM201



VASE
Green Crystalline Glaze
10 × 8 × 8" HM209



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
12 × 7½ × 7½" HM144



INDENTED VASE
Gold Glaze
10½ × 7½ × 7½" HM148



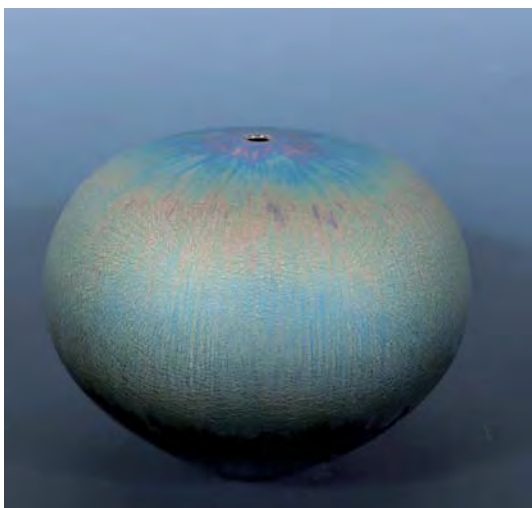
INDENTED VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
8½ × 6 × 6" HM193



SMALL VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
6¾ × 4½ × 4½" HM147



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
7½ × 7½ × 7½" HM134



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
5½ × 6¾ × 6¾" HM189



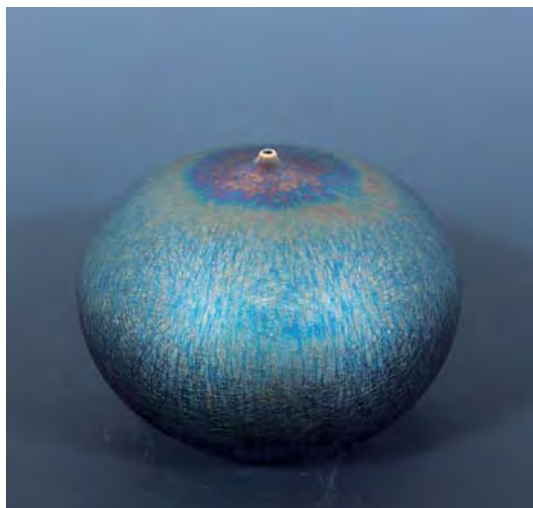
VASE
Peacock Glaze
7 × 7 × 7" HM156



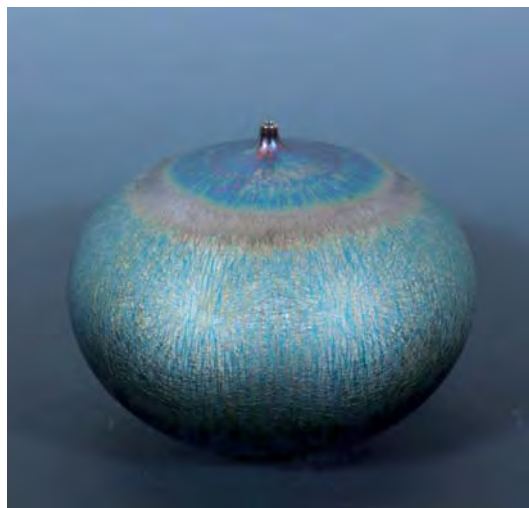
VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " HM188



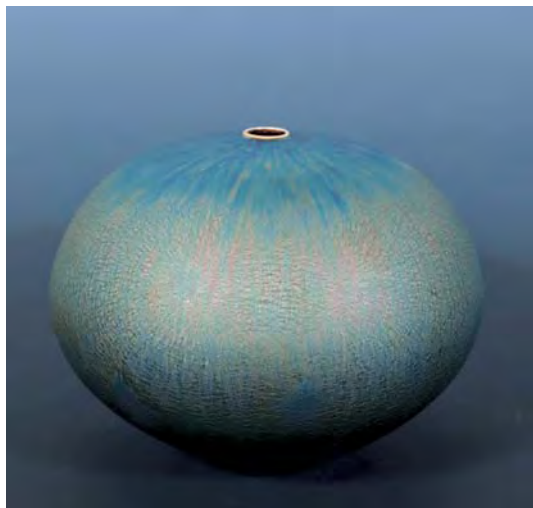
VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 x 6" HM194



SMALL VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
3 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " HM196



SMALL VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " HM195



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " HM191



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " HM190



VASE
Yellow Crystalline Glaze
7 x 6 x 6" HM170



VASE
Yellow Crystalline Glaze
6 x 5 1/4 x 5 1/4" HM219



VASE
Cobalt Blue Crystalline Glaze
7 1/2 x 7 x 7" HM159



SMALL VASE
Cobalt Blue Crystalline Glaze
6 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 5 1/2" HM215



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
7 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4" HM98



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
7 x 6 x 6" HM97



VASE
White Crystalline Glaze
9½ x 8½ x 8½" HM131



VASE
White Crystalline Glaze
11½ x 10 x 10" HM133



VASE
Pearl Crystalline Glaze
6 x 7½ x 7½" HM164



VASE
White Crystalline Glaze
7½ x 6½ x 6½" HM161



VASE
Pearl Crystalline Glaze
7½ x 7½ x 7½" HM165



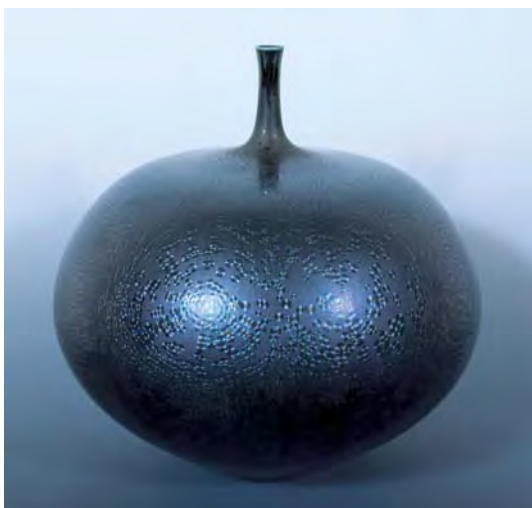
VASE
Sky Blue Crystalline Glaze
6 x 6 x 6" HM172



VASE
Starry Night Glaze
10½ × 8 × 8" HM176



VASE
Comets Glaze
11 × 12 × 12" HM140



VASE
Starry Night Glaze
10 × 7½ × 7½" HM177



VASE
Starry Night Glaze
7½ × 7 × 7" HM175



VASE
Starry Night Glaze
7½ × 7 × 7" HM174



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
6¾ × 7 × 7" HM153



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
5 3/4 x 6 x 6" HM126



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
7 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4" HM125



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
7 1/4 x 6 x 6" HM124



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
7 x 5 3/4 x 5 3/4" HM123



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
6 3/4 x 6 x 6" HM128



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
5 1/2 x 6 x 6" HM127



VASE
Yohen Crystalline Glaze
11½ x 9 x 9" HM104



COVERED JAR
White Crystalline Glaze
11⅞ x 10 x 10" HM81



VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
8¾ x 7 x 7" HM203



VASE
Gold Glaze
9½ x 8 x 8" HM180



VASE
Gold Glaze
6¾ x 6¼ x 6¼" HM184



VASE
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
8 x 7 x 6¾" HM109



VASE
Gold Glaze
 $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ " HM179



VASE
Gold Glaze
 $9 \times 6\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ " HM182



VASE
Gold Glaze
 $8\frac{1}{4} \times 7 \times 7$ " HM183



VASE
Gold Glaze
 $9 \times 6\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ " HM181



SMALL VASE
Gold Glaze
 $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5 \times 5$ " HM150



SMALL VASE
Gold Glaze
 $6\frac{1}{4} \times 5 \times 5$ " HM185



VASE
Blue Crystalline Glaze
12½ × 6½ × 6½" HM173



VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
16 × 9 × 9" HM198

HIDEAKI MIYAMURA

Biography

Personal

- Born on December 15, 1955
- Completed apprenticeship with Shurei Miura, Master Potter, Yamanashi, Japan, 1987
- Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 1981

Permanent Collections

- Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC
- Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Auckland Institute and Museum, New Zealand
- Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA
- Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan, UT
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN
- Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ
- Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA
- Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
- Sackler Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- Springfield, Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA
- Tikotin Museum, Haifa, Israel

Awards

- Individual Artist Fellowship, State of New Hampshire, 2001
- American Craft Council Show, Honorable Mention, Baltimore, MD, 2000
- Washington Craft Show, First Prize, juried by Kenneth Trapp, Curator of the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 2000
- 67th League of New Hampshire Craftsman Show, Best in Show, Sunapee, NH, 2001
- Danforth Museum Craft Show, Best in Show, Framingham, MA, 1997 and 1999
- Westchester Craft Show, Collector's Choice Award, Westchester, NY, 1998
- 63rd League of New Hampshire Craftsmen Show, Sunapee, NH, Best in Show, 1997
- "Feats of Clay", juried by Daniel Rhodes, Lincoln, CA, 1989
- Fletcher Challenge Ceramic Award, Auckland, New Zealand, 1989



BOWL
Black Crystalline Glaze
3½ × 12¼ × 12¼" HM212



BOWL
Blue Hare's Fur Glaze
2¾ × 11 × 11" HM141

HIDEAKI MIYAMURA

Artist Statement

23

Exhibitions

- "Pursuing the Eye of Heaven", Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, 2006
- "Risk and Discovery", Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, 2004
- Smithsonian Craft Show, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC, 2002
- River Gallery, Ipswich, MA, 2000
- Washington Craft Show, Washington, DC, 1996-2000
- Ayumi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan, 1998-99
- League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, solo traveling exhibition, 1997
- West End Gallery, Gloucester, MA, 1996-98
- Smithsonian Craft Show, Washington, DC, 1995
- "A Touch of Orient Gallery", Yorklyn, DE, 1994-96
- Kunst Gallerie, Vienna, Austria, 1993
- Ten Arrow Gallery, Cambridge, MA, 1992-93
- "The Bay State Clay", Fitchburg Museum of Art, Fitchburg, MA, 1993
- American Craft Council, since 1991

Seeing Tenmoku glazes that were developed in China during the Sung Dynasty so inspired me that I knew I wanted to become a potter. I chose as my teacher a master potter specializing in Tenmoku. During my five year apprenticeship in Japan I developed new iridescent Yohen Tenmoku glazes. Yohen literally means "stars glistening in a night sky" and Tenmoku, known widely here as a type of high fire black glaze, also signifies a certain shape of ceremonial tea bowls. These glazes have a deep and mysterious history in both the art and philosophy of Japan and China. During my apprenticeship, I developed over 10,000 test pieces. The fifth year, I discovered the iridescent glaze on a black background. Since coming to the States, I have developed over 2,000 additional test pieces exploring Yohen Tenmoku glaze in harmony with new clay bodies to further develop its unique potential as a form of cultural and spiritual communication.

CREDITS:

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Editor: *Destiny McDonald Barletta*

Photography: *Leslie Anne Feagley and Max Coniglio*

Pursuing the Eye of Heaven:

Ceramics by HIDEAKI MIYAMURA

DATES: 11 February 2006 to 12 March 2006

OPENING RECEPTION: 11 February 2006, 3:00 to 6:00 pm

The artist will be present.

The public is invited to attend.



VASE
Black and Gold Glaze
7 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 6 3/4" HM205



VASE
Blue Crystalline Glaze
7 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2" HM222



VASE
Yellow Crystalline Glaze
7 1/4 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4" HM220

PUCKER GALLERY

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This catalogue and other catalogues featuring Gallery artists can be viewed at www.puckergallery.com.

Gallery Hours: Monday through Saturday

10:00 am to 5:30 pm; Sundays 1:00 to 5:00 pm.

Member of the Boston Art Dealers Association.

One hour free validated parking is available in the lot on the corner of Newbury and Dartmouth Streets.

This exhibition is presented under the honorary patronage of Consul General Won-Sun Choi of the Republic of Korea in Boston.

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