

KNOWLEDGE  
PURPOSE  
SKILL

NEW WORK BY  
Miraku Kamei XV  
and Hisaaki Kamei  
PUCKER GALLERY • BOSTON





**MIRAKU KAMEI XV**  
**Water Container**  
 White and kakewake  
 glazes  
 6 x 6.5 x 6"  
 XV210

Once I told a potter that his work was like a good friend who comes over to visit and walks through the back door, who knows your gate, garden, and dog well enough to walk around back and forego the formality of the front entrance. A friend who is always welcome and sometimes even arrives unexpectedly. The back door as a metaphor speaks of entering a subject through a comfortable familiarity that touches on a relatable and desirable experience. I like to think of this quality as the divine every day, a transcendent quality that comes with, I believe, every common experience.

The work of Miraku Kamei XV and his son, Hisaaki Kamei, is by no means common or ordinary. Their work is uncommon and extraordinary in the most 'up front' way. Viewing it is like entering the world of pottery as an honored guest through a grand front door.

Theirs is a straightforward statement that shows an intentional putting of their "best foot forward." That is how the style known as Takatori ware (Takatori-yaki) enters into the rich world of pottery. It is the cream of the crop you knew was growing. It is both expected and formalized, but this expectation and formality does not mean it is dull. To the contrary, it feels like a distinguished guest at a special event.

Indeed, the Kamei's works are mostly made for the renowned and respected Japanese tea ceremony. The grandeur of the work is inextricably tied to the richness of the tea ceremony and the deep lineage of the Kamei family. The Kamei family's roots can be traced back over 400 years to when their ancestors were invited from Korea to Japan to

work as potters under the Japanese daimyo, Lord Kuroda. Over time, their work was established as Takatori-yaki, named for the location of the first known kiln site at the base of Mount Takatori, located in Fukuoka, Japan. The Kamei family still lives and works in this prefecture.

Takatori-yaki has such a rich heritage that it is rarely formally discussed outside the context of history, but the work dazzles and amazes even for those who do not know a single drop of this story. Each piece is best appreciated up-close and in-hand. Each piece exudes knowledge, purpose, and skill in the level of its execution. It is not subtle; it is obvious in both singular works and the body of work as a whole, undeniable whether one is a pottery expert or a novice viewer.

There is a sense of pricelessness to each piece—like it is a relic in a shrine—which causes many, including myself, to shy away from interacting with the Kamei's beautiful work. I immediately recognized the work to be exquisite and skilled in the utmost, but that initial feeling grew once I held it. What I found was that each work, besides being stunning and entirely suited to its function, has a spirit of play and a level of structural and visual detail that I fell into and wanted to explore in depth. Many works have secret patterns, such as blooming chrysanthemum flowers in concentric rings on the base or in the interior. There are hand-carved compositions of lace-like openwork, often located where water would be in a pot (the pot holds water in a hidden inner chamber). The result is a double walled vessel that has a sense of air and lightness yet is bold and weighted. There are water containers (*mizusashi* in Japanese)



**HISAAKI KAMEI**  
**Striped Water**  
**Container**  
 White glaze  
 5.25 x 7.5 x 7.5"  
 HK57

whose running glazes come together perfectly like waves or waterfalls, emanating with an elemental flow and life. The tea bowls are playful in their diversity of design and often have wonderful butterfly and flower motifs rendered in glaze inside the bowls, that are revealed only after the tea has been consumed.

The sheer assortment of the pieces, their dynamic glazes, myriad forms, and many techniques so seamlessly executed, conveys an understanding and discipline that is not the work of a single person but the passing down of expertise throughout generations. For Miraku Kamei XV and Hisaaki Kamei, each piece is an embodiment of an active, living, continuous distillation of capability and knowledge going back sixteen generations.

Some features (such as the petite cylindrical handles whose soft, yet persistent ribbing catches glaze, or the glaze that flows on the outside of a tea bowl like riverways over exposed clay, or the hand carved openwork in various patterns) can be

found in examples from hundreds of years ago. Still, each new work has a renewed sense of flare and interest that reflects the personality of the individual potter. These things are not done out of a sense of expected or forced repetition. This is because Takatori-yaki also embodies innate freedom and each Miraku, once he has mastered the traditional ways, is encouraged to add something new. He enhances the tradition yet maintains the integrity of what came before. This gives Takatori-yaki its distinct feel, yet allows each Kamei to incorporate his own personality and spirit into his work. Each piece is clearly the work of a talented hand that strives for perfection without being tight, fussy, or overworked. This limitless allowance, built on top of the foundation of tradition, gives the opening into the divine conversation.

Through the Kamei family, Takatori-yaki is alive and active, grounded in how each Miraku has added to the conversation and opened the grand front door of the world of pottery.

—Caroline Staller

All works in this exhibition are stoneware and are made in the Takatori style. Takatori ware was founded around 1600 by potters brought to Japan from Korea by the Kuroda family lords Josui and Naganasa. The first kiln was located at the foot of Mt. Takatori near present-day Nōgata City. Early Takatori ware was influenced by Furuta Oribe (1544-1615), a feudal lord and great tea master. Oribe style Takatori teawares included radically distorted tea bowls (*kutsu chawan*) and water containers (*mizusashi*). Later in the seventeenth century, the tea master Kobori Enshu (1579-1647) inspired a new style known as "Enshu Takatori," which was more elegant than before. In 1716 a new Takatori workshop was built west of the Kuroda castle in Fukuoka. The workshop of Miraku and Hisaaki Kamei, known as "Miraku-gama," has its roots in this Takatori kiln.

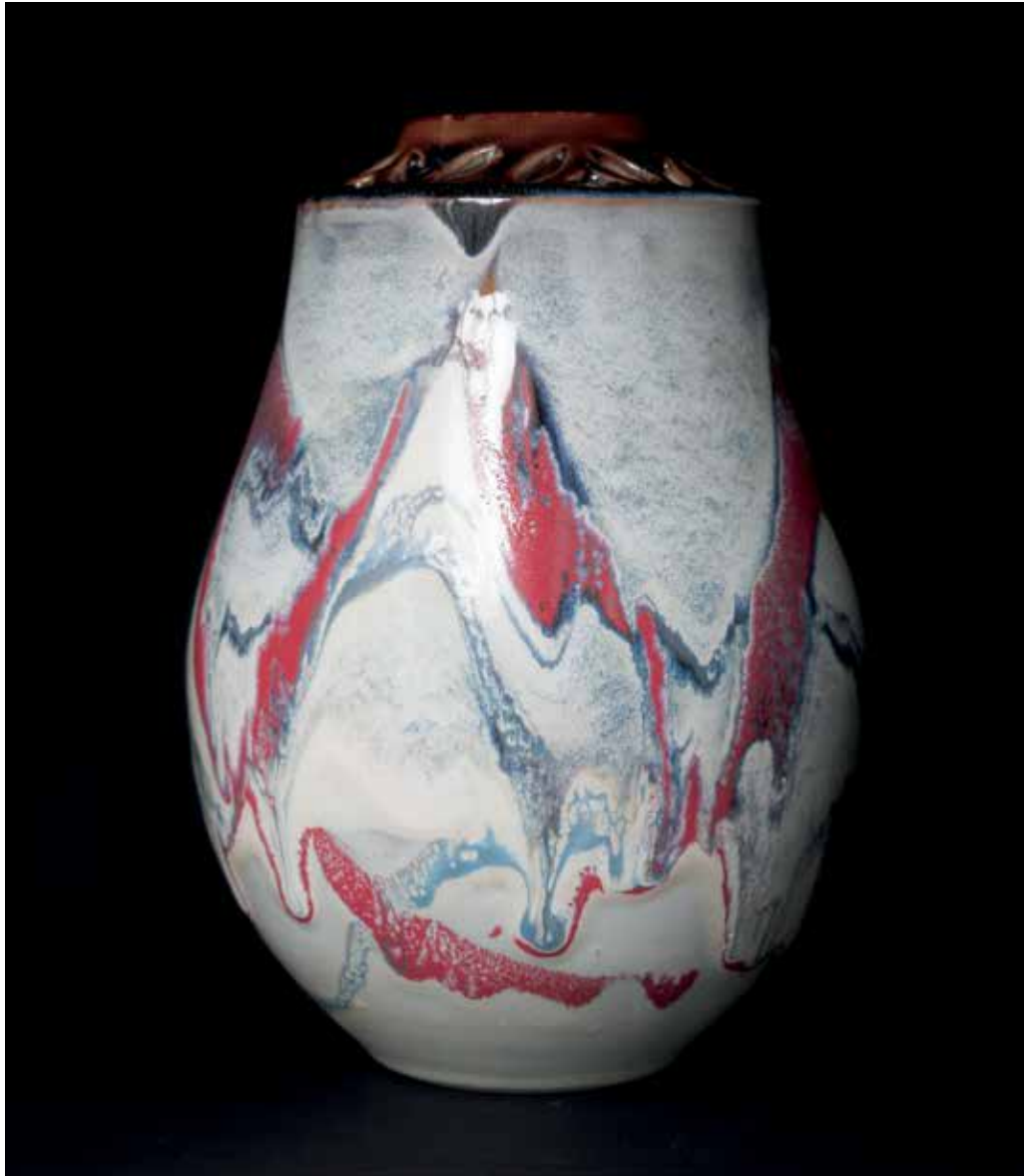


## MIRAKU KAMEI XV (Born 1960)

Miraku Kamei XV, the eldest son of Miraku Kamei XIV, completed his university degree in Ceramics at Kyoto Saga University of Arts and earned a doctorate in Fine Art at American Century University. He took the title of the fifteenth generation in 2001 and has carried on the tradition of Takatori ware for more than thirty years. In addition to exhibiting and promoting Takatori ware around Japan, he is an active teacher, training students in ceramics at many institutions around his home city of Fukuoka. He is also president of the Fukuoka/Hakata branch of the Japan Ceramics Association and a member of numerous arts organizations. In 2016, Kamei received the award of Contemporary Master Craftsman, designated to a craftsman with excellent skills from Fukuoka, Japan.



**Flower Vase with Chatter Marks**  
Ame glaze  
11 x 5 x 5"  
XV218



**Pot**  
White dyed glaze  
10 x 7 x 7"  
XV222



**Tea Bowl**  
Yellow glaze  
3 x 4.75 x 4.75"  
XV213



**Tea Bowl**  
Oribe and kakewake glazes  
3 x 5.5 x 5"  
XV211



**Pot**  
Black glaze  
6.5 x 7 x 7"  
XV219



**Sake Cup**  
Verdigris glaze, bamboo design  
2 x 2.75 x 2.75"  
XV223



**Sake Cup**  
Oribe and ame glazes  
2 x 3 x 3"  
XV224



**Sake Cup**  
Ame glaze, crab design  
2 x 3 x 3"  
XV225



**Tea Bowl**  
Yellow glaze  
3.25 x 4.75 x 4.75"  
XV215



**Tea Bowl**  
Oribe and kakewake glazes  
2.75 x 5.5 x 4.75"  
XV214



**Pot**  
Black glaze, shippo design openwork  
6 x 6 x 6"  
XV221



**Incense Container with Crab Design**  
Golden flower glaze  
1.75 x 3.25 x 3.25"  
XV212



**Millstone Incense Container**  
Copperized glaze  
3 x 4.25 x 4.25"  
XV226



**Incense Container**  
Kakewake glaze  
2.75 x 3 x 3"  
XV227



**Pot**  
Black glaze, shippo design openwork  
8.5 x 8 x 8"  
XV220





**Foliage Vase with Ears**  
 Ame glaze  
 11 x 3.75 x 3.75"  
 XV217



**Flower Vase**  
 Yellow glaze  
 9.5 x 3.75 x 3.75"  
 XV216



## HISAAKI KAMEI (Born 1991)

The eldest son of Miraku Kamei XV, Hisaaki Kamei received a bachelor's degree at the School of Business at Hosei University and graduated from the Forming Department at Kyoto Prefecture Pottery School. He is a Board Member of the Japan-France Tea Ceremony Association and teaches pottery at Fukuoka City Fukusho High School and Momochi Palace Culture Center. Additionally, he has lectured in Cameroon and France. He uses new glazes such as *kyokkyu* (aurora glaze) and *saiyu* (multicolor glaze), which he created based on the seven classic glazes of Takatori.



**Flower Vase**  
Aurora glaze  
10 x 5.25 x 5.25"  
HK47



**Tea Bowl**  
 Oribe and ame glazes  
 3 x 5.5 x 5.25"  
 HK70



**Tea Bowl**  
 Kakewake glaze  
 2.75 x 4.75 x 4.75"  
 HK71



**Narrow Pot**  
 Aurora glaze  
 6 x 4 x 4"  
 HK61



**Pot**  
Aurora glaze  
6 x 4 x 4"  
HK60



**Sendan (A Thousand Coils) Tea Bowl**  
Aurora glaze  
3.25 x 4.75 x 4.75"  
HK66



**Tea Bowl**  
Black glaze  
2.75 x 4.5 x 4.5"  
HK65



**Tea Bowl with Seam**  
Aurora glaze  
3 x 5 x 5"  
HK64



**Tea Bowl**  
Oribe and aurora glazes  
3.5 x 5.5 x 5"  
HK67



**Water Container**  
Aurora glaze  
6.75 x 7.5 x 7.5"  
HK22



**Tea Bowl**  
Verdigris glaze, hemp-leaf pattern  
3 x 4.5 x 4.5"  
HK63



**Tea Bowl**  
Aurora glaze, closed hemp-leaf pattern  
3 x 5 x 4.5"  
HK62



**Gourd-Shaped Flower Vase**  
Aurora glaze  
10 x 3.25 x 3.25"  
HK59



**Gourd-Shaped Flower Vase**  
Aurora and oribe glazes  
9.25 x 4.75 x 4.25"  
HK58



**Hexagonal Sake Cup**  
Kakewake glaze  
2 x 2.75 x 2.75"  
HK69



**Sake Cup**  
Oribe and aurora glazes  
2 x 3.25 x 3"  
HK68

PUCKER

ESTABLISHED 1967 BOSTON

GALLERY

PUCKER GALLERY

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exhibition catalogues,  
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of the Week* email list.

# KNOWLEDGE PURPOSE SKILL

NEW WORK BY  
Miraku Kamei XV  
and Hisaaki Kamei

**DATES:** 7 September through 13 October 2024

**PUBLIC OPENING RECEPTION:** Saturday 7 September 2024, 3pm to 6pm  
The artists will be present.

**ONLINE EVENTS:** Please visit [www.puckergallery.com](http://www.puckergallery.com) for a list of virtual  
gatherings and events accompanying *Knowledge, Purpose, Skill*.



**On the cover:**  
MIRAKU KAMEI XV  
Upside-Down Gourd-Shaped  
Water Container  
Ame glaze  
7.5 x 7.75 x 6.75"  
XV209

**HISAAKI KAMEI**  
Water Container  
Aurora glaze  
6.75 x 8 x 6.5"  
HK56