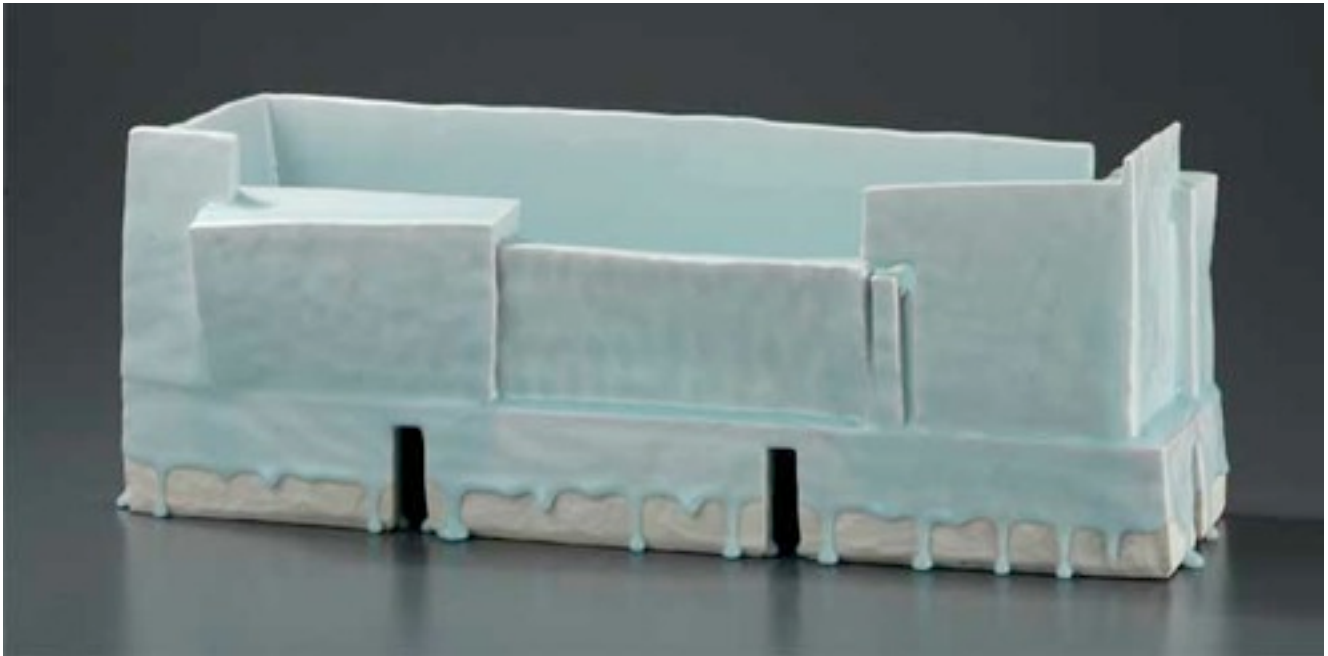


Beautiful Effigy, 2009
Yoshikawa Masamichi, Japanese, born 1946
L2010.99.4



Artist Background

- Yoshikawa is a contemporary Japanese ceramist who has gained international recognition.
- He wanted to be interior designer until he visited the pottery center of Tokoname in the 1960s. He is now based there.
- Tokoname has a pottery-making history that dates back 900 years. It is famed for its shudei (red clay) and yakishime (high-fired unglazed stoneware).
- Yoshikawa does not use the red clay or create unglazed stoneware. Rather, he uses hakuji (white) and seihakuji (bluish white) porcelain in his works, explaining, "I couldn't wrestle in the same ring with people making pottery here for generations."
- He established his own studio in 1975, after working with Junpei Sugie and others.
- His work has been acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum, Kessner Craft Museum, Brooklyn Museum of Art and many others

Artist Style and Comments

- He is inspired by the "yo-no-bi" (beauty within functionality) aesthetic
- Yoshikawa draws inspiration from ancient Chinese ceramic forms and glazes, creating a modern interpretation of their structure and covers them in dripping seihakuji (blue-white) glaze.
- While traditionally celadon-glazed porcelains are celebrated for their thin and sharp form (in part due to the fine-grained nature of the porcelain clay), Yoshikawa creates

forms that are thick, bold and unique. His ceramics are made of assembled slabs and gain their distinctive texture through a special way of applying the glaze.

- His work plays with surface texture, pattern and scale, varying from large installations to small objects.
- He is inspired by Northern Sung hakuji and seihakuji, which are considered the pinnacle of Chinese ceramics. He says, "Some people find hakuji too cold, yet there is a quality to Korean Yi-dynasty hakuji that can move me to tears, and I find seihakuji so expressive."
- Yoshikawa explores complex relations of space and form in his work.
- His dripping glazes appeal to both touch and sight.
- "Throughout history, in literature, music and philosophy, humanity has sought new ways to deepen the joy of living. Through my art I strive to portray this eternal welling up of life in clear, transparent forms." (flowgallery website)

Reaction to His Work

- "His forms accent the phantom-like blue that dwells within the subtle puddling of the seihakuji glaze. His vessels convey what might be best described as a quiet sense of heat." (from Kateigaho website)
- "Incised lines, carved planes and glaze create gradations of seihakuji's characteristic bluish tone and modulate its expression." (from Kateigaho site)
- One considers a permanent presence of beauty and spirituality in his work. As he says, "Although ceramics necessitates technical, scientific method, the act of creating is for me an act of prayer." (Carvalho)
- His rectangular plates allude to ancient buildings and can be seen as references to Chinese architecture of the Tang dynasty, where a constructive geometry was deeply rooted in natural forms. (Carvalho)
- "...the art of Yoshikawa concerns a spiritual and yet human search for the meaning of existence through the necessity of beauty." (Carvalho)

Prizes he has won include but are not limited to:

- Grand Prize at the Asahi Modern Craft Exhibition (1981 and 1983)
- Gold Medal at the Munich International Art and Craft Exhibition (1998)
- Grand Prize at the Izushi Porcelain Triennale Competition (2000)
- Gold Medal at the Vallauris International Ceramic Art Exhibition (2002)
- Grand Prix at the First Taiwan Ceramics Biennale International Competition (2004)

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Other style of ceramics:



Cubic porcelain vessel from 1991-2



Cup in the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1994
porcelain with incised decoration filled with
underglaze blue