Koike Shōko, *Shiro no Shell (White Shell)*, 2013, on loan from the collection of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz.

Front: Hoshino Kayoko, *Yakishime ginsai bachi* (Unglazed bowl with silver glaze), 2009, on loan from the collection of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz.

Back: Yagi Kazuo, *Kakiotoshi hoko* (Square vessel with etched patterning), 1966, on loan from the collection of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz.

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Photos by Randy Batista.

About the Author

Tomoko Nagakura is a curator and professor of Japanese art. She is currently a Research Fellow for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and has worked on the Jeffrey and Carol Horvitz Collection of contemporary Japanese ceramics since 2012. Previously, she has been a curator at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, as well as other art institutions in Japan.
Historical Background

When Japan opened its doors to the rest of the world in 1854, following nearly three hundred years of seclusion, a new era began to slowly unfold for many of the country’s disciplines. The field of art and industrialization. The founding members of the Mingei movement included the philosopher Yanagi Soetsu (1889 – 1961) and ceramic artist Hamada Shōji, both of whom were inspired by Western concepts of art and design. Tomimoto came to define ceramic making as an “engendering process of a three-dimensional object into space” and to prefigure that conception of “beauty of engendering process of form.” This allowed him to explore the complex relationships between the form, glaze, and motifs that composed a ceramic work in its totality. With his knowledge of Western concepts of art and design, Tomimoto came to define ceramic making as an “engendering process of a three-dimensional object into space” and to prefigure that conception of “beauty of engendering process of form.” Instead they explored new approaches to ceramic art, challenging widely accepted ideas of the functionality and formalities of ceramics. Today, the gender ratio of enrolled students in art schools favors a greater number of women students across ceramics and other media. As a result, more women artists are now engaged not only in ceramic art creation but also as faculty members, teaching the next generation of artists.

Mingei

The Mingei (Shinbun) art movement was founded officially in 1949 by Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886 – 1963) and followed modernist views of art as an important social necessity or “beauty of usage,” as epitomized by their expression of this aesthetic in their modern craft movement. As members-only restaurant. Although such efforts were introduced during the Meiji period (1868 – 1912), belief in the importance of preserving traditional art and traditions was reinvigorated after the war and linked to the postwar designation of “Living National Treasures.” In less than a decade following World War II, “Living National Treasures” certification was formalized. Established between 1950 and 1952 as a part of newly created laws for the protection of cultural properties by the Japanese government, the system was the institutionalization of protecting tradition by a nation that was experiencing rapid changes in society caused by modernization and industrialization. The founding members of the Mingei movement included the philosopher Yanagi Soetsu (1889 – 1961) and ceramic artist Hamada Shōji, both of whom were inspired by Western concepts of art and design. Tomimoto came to define ceramic making as an “engendering process of a three-dimensional object into space” and to prefigure that conception of “beauty of engendering process of form.” Instead they explored new approaches to ceramic art, challenging widely accepted ideas of the functionality and formalities of ceramics. Today, the gender ratio of enrolled students in art schools favors a greater number of women students across ceramics and other media. As a result, more women artists are now engaged not only in ceramic art creation but also as faculty members, teaching the next generation of artists.

Sodeisha

Sodeisha is the most recognized postwar avant-garde ceramic art movement, which was formed right after World War II (1945) inKyoto, the center of traditional culture. Along with similar associations such as the Shodōsha (founded in 1949 by Maruyama Koson [1870 – 1945]), Sodeisha’s founding members, such as Yagi Kazuo (1910 – 1970) and Yamanaka Kenji (1923 – 2003), challenged widely accepted ideas of the functionality and formalities of ceramics. Instead they explored new possibilities afforded by clay as a medium to pursue artistic expression. Calling their works object-glaze (object ceramic), these artists sought to bring ceramics into a wider field of fine art. From the early 1960s, Sodeisha’s artists, including those with Yagi Kazuo at Kyoto City University of Arts, Sodeisha artists were radical and innovative in their approach. With the involvement of women artists, Sodeisha artists have made important contributions through new approaches to the development of ceramic art. The increased influence of women artists is another important dimension in the development of ceramic art in postwar Japan. After World War II, the art scene was opened to a wider population. Many women started to attend universities to learn a trade and rather than going through an apprenticeship system, the common practice for pursuit of a career as a ceramicist in prewar Japan. This meant that ceramic art also became open to women, who were not accepted into the male-dominated apprenticeship system and who found changing times and new opportunities to create an audience for their work. As a result, many of the women ceramic artists who began their careers in the 1960s, has become well known for their large-scale installation art. Contemporary women artists have made a contribution to a larger, more developed network of ceramic art, and have developed a more approach to ceramic art. Todate Kazuko describes in her book “Earth-Worn Basket” how the system of developing new artists was developed and how the role of Sodeisha was to find its way into an unprecedented approach in ceramic art tradition. Todate Kazuko describes in her book “Earth-Worn Basket” how the system of developing new artists was developed and how the role of Sodeisha was to find its way into an unprecedented approach in ceramic art tradition. Todate Kazuko describes in her book “Earth-Worn Basket” how the system of developing new artists was developed and how the role of Sodeisha was to find its way into an unprecedented approach in ceramic art tradition. Todate Kazuko describes in her book “Earth-Worn Basket” how the system of developing new artists was developed and how the role of Sodeisha was to find its way into an unprecedented approach in ceramic art tradition. 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