

For Immediate Release

Ippodo Gallery New York

**Earth From Sky :
Stoneware Works By Mitsukuni Misaki**

Ippodo New York : September 7 – 29, 2017

*Opening Reception : September 7, 6 – 8 p.m.

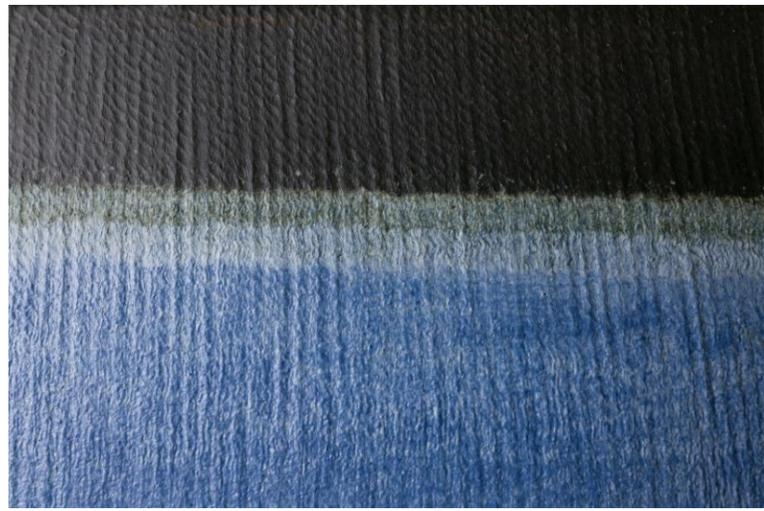
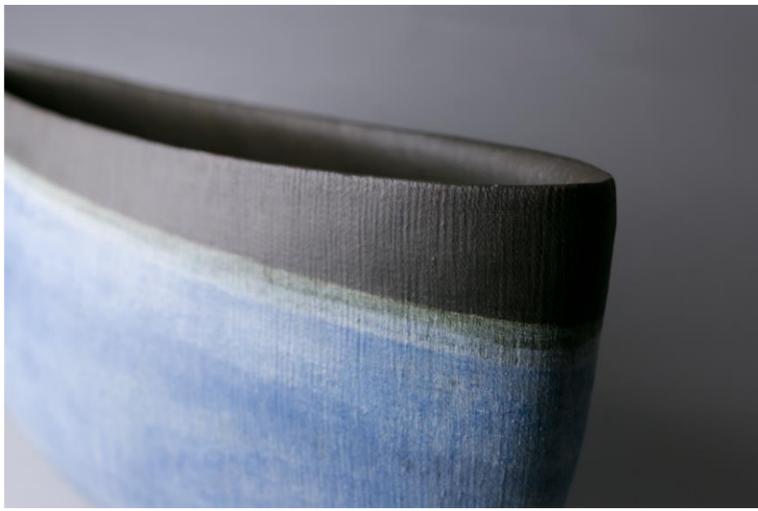


Saiyuudeiki (Colored stoneware vessel)
Left: H20 2/4 W22 2/4 D13 2/4 in (H52 W57 D34cm) Right: H23 W15 D10 3/4 in (H58 W38 D27cm)

*Times continue to change
But only when the rhythm and pace of my body adapt
I am drawn by the look and touch of a maturing artwork
Slow against time's movement
Is it light or air that moves me?
I create to keep feeling the connection
With the sense of familiar emanating
That I cannot quite describe*

- Mitsukuni Misaki

NEW YORK, NY, July 12th, 2017 — Ippodo Gallery is pleased to present the first solo showcase of ceramic artist Mitsukuni Misaki (b.1951) outside Japan. The poetry of form is paired with the artist's urge to create powerful, lifelike works, encapsulating the dual strength and subtlety of beauty in nature. 15 works on view project this unnameable sensation, with asymmetrical works conveying the desire for serenity.



The essence Misaki aims to express comes from a restlessness in his soul. Curiosity is pervasive throughout his work, and endures as a part of the artist's nomadic experience. From his earliest years of travel in the 1970s, Misaki eschewed what may have amounted to a successful career in law during a period of revolt in academia. Instead, inspired by world-famous potter and scholar Fujio Koyama (1900–1975), Misaki decided to devote himself to an artistic career. He thus traveled to many studios, drawing inspiration from the sky, the ocean, and the boundlessness he continues to seek today.

As he wrote in one of his letters, the quest for meaning is very significant. "Wandering allowed me to indulge myself in the pain and sweetness of walking in the wind and rain," he writes, rhythmic and pensive.

The works are referred to as Saiyuudeiki, noted by the Japan Ceramic Society Director Koichi Mori for a well-balanced, ample form. Saiyuudeiki loosely translates to 'colored stoneware vessels,' with Sai 彩 as color, Yuu 釉 as glaze, Dei 泥 as clay and Ki 器 as vessel. The style stands in marked contrast to Bian-hu, a sleeker, flatter part of his cannon.

Deliberate and powerful expression is evidenced in the blue and black horizons of the stoneware, separating earth from sky. The imperfect lines are intentional, derived from sprouting seeds, or the fertile womb of a woman. In pursuit of form and color, discriminating attention to detail takes shape with what Misaki calls Rothko-ing. Undoubtedly, the divisive aesthetic of blue versus grey bears reference to Mark Rothko's iconic abstract expressionist works, not only with the two-tone structure, but also with the richness and gradations of the blue. Yet the artist also finds solace in the meditation of Rothko-ing, stripping down to an inactivity that frees his sense of expression. In the detachment from material meaning, spontaneity is revealed.

Misaki hand-crafts the shapes, embracing the tension of touch instead of the more common wheel. He makes large works, with one work as large as 24 x 16 in (61.5 x 41.2 cm) challenges conceptions of space with largess.

The dichotomy of the colors is also crucial, evoking the sense of tension in the quest for bliss. The blue is rubbed and refired using four layers of slip, infusing the pale blue glaze with a middle layer of white for depth, then coated with earthen tones to give the color an appearance of age.

Despite Misaki's many accomplishments, he remains reclusive on his creative quest. He has exhibited extensively in Japan and received numerous awards, ranging from the Japan Kogei Association Prize in 1989 to the 1993 Grand Prix/Chichibunomiya Trophy at the 12th Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition, all the way to the Grand Prix at the Kikuchi Biennale in 2013. Yet he is atypical of the outward-facing artist, instead seeking solace in his meditative moments alone, apart from time and society. While this creative process has been the result of much fanfare in Japan, time will tell how it manifests in New York.



Left: *Saideiki* (Colored stoneware vessel) H12 W15 3/4 D9 2/4 in (H30 W39.5 D24cm)
 Middle: *Saideiki* (Colored stoneware vessel) H12 W15 3/4 D9 1/4 in (H30 W40 D23cm)
 Right: *Saiyuudeiki* (Colored stoneware vessel) H6 W10 1/4 D6 3/4 in (H15 W25.5 D17cm)



Saiyuudeiki (Colored stoneware vessel)
H19 2/4 W21 3/4 D9 1/4 in (H49 W55 D23cm)

Mitsukuni Misaki

1951 Born in Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture
 1970 Entered the Department of Law, the Faculty of Law, Chuo University
 1972 Determined to become a ceramic artist when visiting Fujio Koyama's Hananoki Kiln
 1975 Graduated from the Department of Law, the Faculty of Law, Chuo University
 Trained himself at a Koishikawa ware pottery
 1979 Became an independent ceramic artist in Owase City, Mie Prefecture

【Major Exhibitions】

1982 Exhibitions of Ceramic Works by Mitsukuni Misaki (Tobu Department Store / Ikebukuro)
 1989 Solo exhibition (Kuroda Touen / Ginza)
 1991 Exhibition of Ceramic Works by Mitsukuni Misaki (Kuroda Touen / Ginza)
 1993 Exhibition of Ceramic Works by Mitsukuni Misaki (Isetan Shinjuku Store)
 1994 Exhibition of Ceramic Works by Mitsukuni Misaki (Takashimaya Yokohama Store)
 2016 Exhibition of Ceramic Works by Mitsukuni Misaki - Boundless like Rothko - (Ippodo Gallery / Ginza)
 2017 MISAKI Mitsukuni 'Being Boundless' (LIXIL Gallery / Kyobashi) and others.

【Major Awards】

1989 Awarded a Japan Kōgei Association Prize for Encouragement at the 36th Japan Traditional Kōgei Exhibition
 1991 Awarded a Special Merit Prize at the Ceramics Biennale
 1993 Awarded the Grand Prix / Chichibunomiya Trophy at the 12th Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition
 2013 Awarded the Grand Prix at the 5th Kikuchi Biennale and others.



Left: *Saiyuudeiki* (Colored stoneware vessel) H19 2/4 W17 D6 3/4 in (H49 W43 D17cm)
 Middle: *Saiyuudeiki* (Colored stoneware vessel) H19 W23 D9 2/4 in (H48 W58 D24cm)
 Right: *Saideiki* (Colored stoneware vessel) H18 W14 1/4 D8 in (H45.5 W36 D20cm)

For more information and images, please contact Yoko Kitajo + 1 212.967. 4899 mail@ippodogallery.com

ippodo gallery

TOKYO - NEW YORK

12 East 86th street, # 507 (between Fifth & Madison Avenues) New York, NY 10028

T. +1.212. 967. 4899 | mail@ippodogallery.com | www.ippodogallery.com

Mon. – Fri. : 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. | Saturdays by Appointment

Please follow us on Twitter ([@ippodogallery](https://twitter.com/ippodogallery)), Facebook ([@ippodogallery](https://facebook.com/ippodogallery)), Instagram ([@ippodogallery](https://instagram.com/ippodogallery)), and Vimeo ([@Shoko Aono](https://vimeo.com/ShokoAono)).