

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KAZUNORI HAMANA, YUJI UEDA, AND OTANI WORKSHOP

Curated by Takashi Murakami

Los Angeles, September 11 – October 24, 2015

Opening reception: Friday, September 11, 6 – 8pm



Los Angeles, August 25, 2015 – Blum & Poe is pleased to present an exhibition of Japanese ceramics featuring the work of Kazunori Hamana, Yuji Ueda, and Otani Workshop — organized and curated by Takashi Murakami.

Presenting a wide range of forms, designs, and materials, the works in the exhibition draw upon the ancient sources of ceramic tradition in Japan, while also revealing inventive techniques of shaping, glazing, coloring, and firing.

Richly informed by the Japanese art form of the tea ceremony, ceramics have been widely appreciated and revered in Japan. Historically, the tools, teacups, and utensils used in the tea ceremony, as well as the ceremonial aspect itself, have always symbolized levels of hierarchy and respect within society. Amidst the constant cultural and economic shifts in Japan, ceramics have remained unique relics of heritage as well as embodiments of the Japanese sense of beauty.

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For this exhibition, Takashi Murakami brings together a new generation of Japanese ceramicists whose unique pottery methods merge a respect for lineage with improvisation, experimentation, and refinement. The work of all three artists — Hamana, Ueda, and Otani — is informed by lifestyle, the love of nature, working in remote surroundings, and sometimes farming their own land. Although these artists are young in age, they are quite accomplished and have been forming, firing, and exhibiting their earthenware in Japan for several years. Many of the works in the exhibition have never been seen before in the United States, as this display of ceramics is an illumination of age-old traditions being expanded into the 21st century.

Kazunori Hamana makes ceramics on the pacific coast, in Chiba, Japan. The work is both stark and full of personality, oftentimes the surfaces are striped or imbued with designs or language. Urns, bowls, vessels, cups, and plates — each irregularly shaped by not only the vast history of the ceramic arts, but also by the characteristics found in the coastal environment where he works.

Yuji Ueda comes from a family of award-winning tea farmers in the Shiga Prefecture town of Shigaraki. His experimental approach to glazing and firing leads to a variety of distinct forms and vessels. Working both in intimate sizes and larger scales, Ueda's alien surfaces and fragile textures are both tolerant and unyielding.

Otani Workshop is also a ceramicist from Shigaraki — one of the great centers of Japanese ceramics for the last 800 years. In addition to clay, Otani works with wood, iron, and other materials. His small jars, vases, and other sculptural forms depicting figures and faces are characteristic of the many styles and motifs found throughout Japanese culture.

Image credit: Kazunori Hamana. Photo: Toru Kometani

About Blum & Poe

Timothy Blum and Jeffrey Poe founded Blum & Poe in September 1994 with the intent to show international contemporary art in all media. Blum brought over five years of experience in the Japanese art world, and Poe provided a strong awareness of emerging artists in Los Angeles. Together they have represented an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists, most since the start of their careers, including Sam Durant, Anya Gallaccio, Mark Grotjahn, Friedrich Kunath, Florian Maier-Aichen, Dave Muller, Takashi Murakami, and Yoshitomo Nara. In 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated their current 22,000 square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard, where they have held museum-caliber surveys, examining the work of the Japanese Mono-ha artists (2012), the Korean Tansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014), and the European postwar movement Cobra (2015). In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects, both cutting edge and historical, in tandem with an expansive program of exhibitions, lectures, performances, book-signings, and concerts at its base in Los Angeles.

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Concurrently on view:

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, September 11 – October 24:

Kazumi Nakamura

Blum & Poe, New York, September 9 – October 17:

The Avant-Garde Won't Give Up: Cobra and Its Legacy

Hours:

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New York, June 8 – September 8, Monday – Friday, 10am – 6pm

Tokyo, Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 7pm

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