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Exhibition: Breaking the Mold: Contemporary Japanese and Chinese Ceramic Sculpture
Dates: February 5 through April 23, 2010
Opening: Opening reception – Friday, February 5, 5-8 PM
Hours: Tuesdays through Thursdays: 10 AM-6 PM, and Fridays: 10 AM-7 PM
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WSU’s Elaine L. Jacob Gallery presents
Breaking the Mold: Contemporary Japanese and Chinese Ceramic Sculpture

Wayne State University is proud to present the exhibition Breaking the Mold: Contemporary Japanese and Chinese Ceramic Sculpture at its Elaine L. Jacob Gallery from February 5 through April 23, 2010.

Organized by the Dennos Museum Center in collaboration with Dai Ichi Gallery in New York City, this exhibition features the work of contemporary ceramicists from China and Japan, juxtaposing the themes of the Chinese response to Western influences, social issues and human relationships with the Japanese attention to aesthetics of form, texture, color and materials. In each country there is recognition of tradition while breaking with that tradition in technique and subject matter brought on by experimentation and/or changes in society.

In all, the exhibition features 9 artists from Japan and 7 artists from China. The Japanese artists included in the exhibition feature contemporary versions of traditional Japanese pottery styles such as the oribe techniques represented in a beautiful oribe landscape platter by HIGASHIDA Shigemasa. Also included is the non-traditional expression of HINODA Takashi. Hinoda is among the youngest generation of Japanese professional ceramic artists and is influenced by comic books, cartoons, animated films and pop art.

The Chinese artists in this exhibition are of the post cultural revolution generation emerging on to the international art scene and creating work in response to a greater interaction with the West and social issues in China. This is expressed in the work of LI Lihong who combines the traditional artistic motif of dragons on a ceramic version of the McDonalds arch, or XU Hongbo’s stacked porcelain baby figurines a reference to social concerns over the cloning of humans, the devaluing of the individual and population concerns in China.
In both sections of the exhibition two artists are recognized for leadership roles in influencing the direction of ceramic art in their respective countries. In Japan the first sculptural statements were lead by Hayashi Yasuo, a kamikaze pilot who never received the order for which he had been trained. Hayashi’s efforts lead to the founding of a Japanese avant-garde ceramics group that broke away from the vessel form and utilitarian role of ceramic work, creating objects of art. In China, Yao Yongkang, from Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute was among those who early on explored a sculptural direction in his work. His porcelain sculpture has made him a highly respected artist both in China and internationally, and influential among the new generation of Chinese ceramic artists.

WAN Liya (Chinese, b. 1963)
Untitled
2006
Stoneware

HINODA Takashi (Japanese, b. 1968)
It’s Uneasy Even Being in the World
2005
Ceramic

This exhibition was made possible with the cooperation of Dai Ichi Gallery, New York City and with support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Oleson Foundation, the Komesu Memorial Fund, the Robert T and Ruth Haidt Hughes Memorial Endowment Fund with exhibition tour support from the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum at Saginaw Valley State University and the Elaine L. Jacob Gallery of Wayne State University.

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