

## HAMADA SHŌJI (1894-1978)

Hamada Shōji attained unsurpassed recognition at home and abroad for his folk art style ceramics. Inspired by Okinawan and Korean ceramics in particular, Hamada became an important figure in the Japanese folk arts movement in the 1960s. He was a founding member of the Japan Folk Art Association with Bernard Leach, Kawai Kanjiro, and Yanagi Soetsu.

After 1923, he moved to Mashiko where he rebuilt farmhouses and established his large workshop. Throughout his life, Hamada demonstrated an excellent glazing technique, using such trademark glazes as *temmoku* iron glaze, *nuka* rice-husk ash glaze, and *kaki* persimmon glaze. Through his frequent visits and demonstrations abroad, Hamada influenced many European and American potters in later generations as well as those of his own.

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| 1894    | Born in Tokyo  |
| 1912    | Saw etchings and pottery by Bernard Leach in Ginza, Tokyo  |
| 1913    | Studied at the Tokyo Technical College with Itaya Hazan (1872-1963)<br>Became friends with Kawai Kanjiro (1890-1966) and visits in Kyoto (1915)  |
| 1914    | Became interested in Mashiko pottery after seeing a teapot at Hazan's home   |
| 1916    | Graduated from Tokyo Technical College and enrolled at Kyoto Ceramics Laboratory, visits with Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886-1963)<br>Began 10,000 glaze experiments with Kawai                                   |
| 1917    | Visited Okinawa to study kiln construction   |
| 1919    | Met Bernard Leach (1887-1979) at his Tokyo exhibition, invited to him his studio in Abiko where meets Yanagi Sōetsu (1889-1961)<br>Traveled to Korea and Manchuria, China with Kawai                       |
| 1920    | Visited Mashiko for the first time<br>Traveled to England with Leach, built a climbing kiln at St. Ives  |
| 1923    | Traveled to France, Italy, Crete, and Egypt after his solo exhibition in London  |
| 1924    | Moved to Mashiko. Married. Visited Okinawa with his wife, where he produced his work at Tsuboya workshop   |
| 1929    | Trip to England with Yanagi and Kawai  |
| 1930    | Moved a farmhouse from a nearby village and rebuilt it as his own home in Mashiko  |
| 1931    | Built three-chamber climbing kiln (later enlarged to five chamber)   |
| 1936-43 | Traveled throughout Korea, North China, and Okinawa, and collected old and new folk crafts   |
| 1952    | Traveled as cultural envoy to France, Italy and Spain<br>Travelled with Yanagi and Leach throughout the U.S. giving demonstrations   |
| 1961    | "Shoji Hamada Collected Works" published by Asahi Shimbun  |
| 1962    | Appointed Director of the Japan Folk Art Museum<br>Travels to Paris to his work exhibited at the Louvre  |
| 1963    | Attends Japanese-American Congress in Washington and lecture there, New York and San Francisco. With second son Shinsaku held workshops and exhibitions throughout the U.S. then visited Mexico and Spain  |
| 1964    | Work exhibited at National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo   |
| 1965    | Invited to New Zealand and Australia with his son Atsuya travels to Egypt +Spain   |
| 1974    | Completed museum for his own folk crafts collection in Mashiko and the Mashiko Reference Collection of Hamada's personal library<br>Published his autobiography <i>Mujinso</i> (Inexhaustible Possessions) |

#### Awards:

- 1949 Tochigi Prefecture Culture Award
- 1953 Minister of Education Award for Art
- 1955 The first ceramic artist to be designated as a "Living National Treasure"
- 1967 Invited to the 50th anniversary of Michigan University; received honorary PHD and exhibited work.
- 1968 Okinawa Times Award  
Awarded the Medal of Honor, Purple Ribbon from Emperor
- 1969 Designated Honored Citizen of Mashiko
- 1973 Honorary PHD from King's College, London  
Becomes president of Japan Folk Crafts Museum after death of Yanagi
- 1977 Awarded the Cultural Prize from his birthplace, Kawasaki

#### Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 1923 First solo exhibition, Paterson Gallery, London
- 1925 First solo exhibition in Japan, Kyukyodō (thereafter annually in Tokyo and Osaka)
- 1928 Kyukyodō, Tokyo
- 1929 Paterson Gallery, London and Kyukyodō, Tokyo and Mitsukoshi, Osaka
- 1930 Mitsukoshi, Osaka and Tokyo (again 1940, 1944, 1947,
- 1934 Matsuzakaya, Ueno Tokyo
- 1935 Little Gallery, London and Mitsukoshi, Osaka
- 1951 Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France
- 1961 Retrospective Exhibition Mitsukoshi Tokyo and Osaka  
Bonnier, New York
- 1968 Gallery Den Permanente, Copenhagen
- 1972 Exhibition at National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- 1974 *Hamada Shōji's Eyes and Hands*, exhibition at Tochigi Prefecture Art Museum
- 1977 Solo show of over 200 works at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

#### Noteworthy Group Exhibitions:

- 1928 Tokyo Imperial Exposition
- 1933 Folk Craft exhibition at Yanagi's with Hamada work
- 1952 Joint show with Leach at Beaux-Arts Gallery, London
- 1954 Joint show with Leach in Kobe and Tokyo
- 1955 First Living National Treasure exhibition
- 1966 Shows with Leach in Venezuela and Columbia
- 1970 More than 100 works exhibited International Exposition, Osaka

#### Selected Western Public Collections:

Art Institute of Chicago, IL  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Smithsonian, Washington, DC  
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco CA  
British Museum, London, England  
The Brooklyn Museum, NY  
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge England

Honolulu Art Museum, HI  
Leach Pottery Museum, Cornwall, England  
Los Angeles County Museum  
Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN  
Musée nationale de Céramiques, Sèvres, France  
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA  
Museum of Modern Art, NY  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA  
Seattle Art Museum, WA  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England  
And MANY more throughout the world, especially throughout Japan

Selected References:

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Peterson, S. *Shoji Hamada: A Potter's Way and Work*, (New York: Kodansha International, 1974)

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