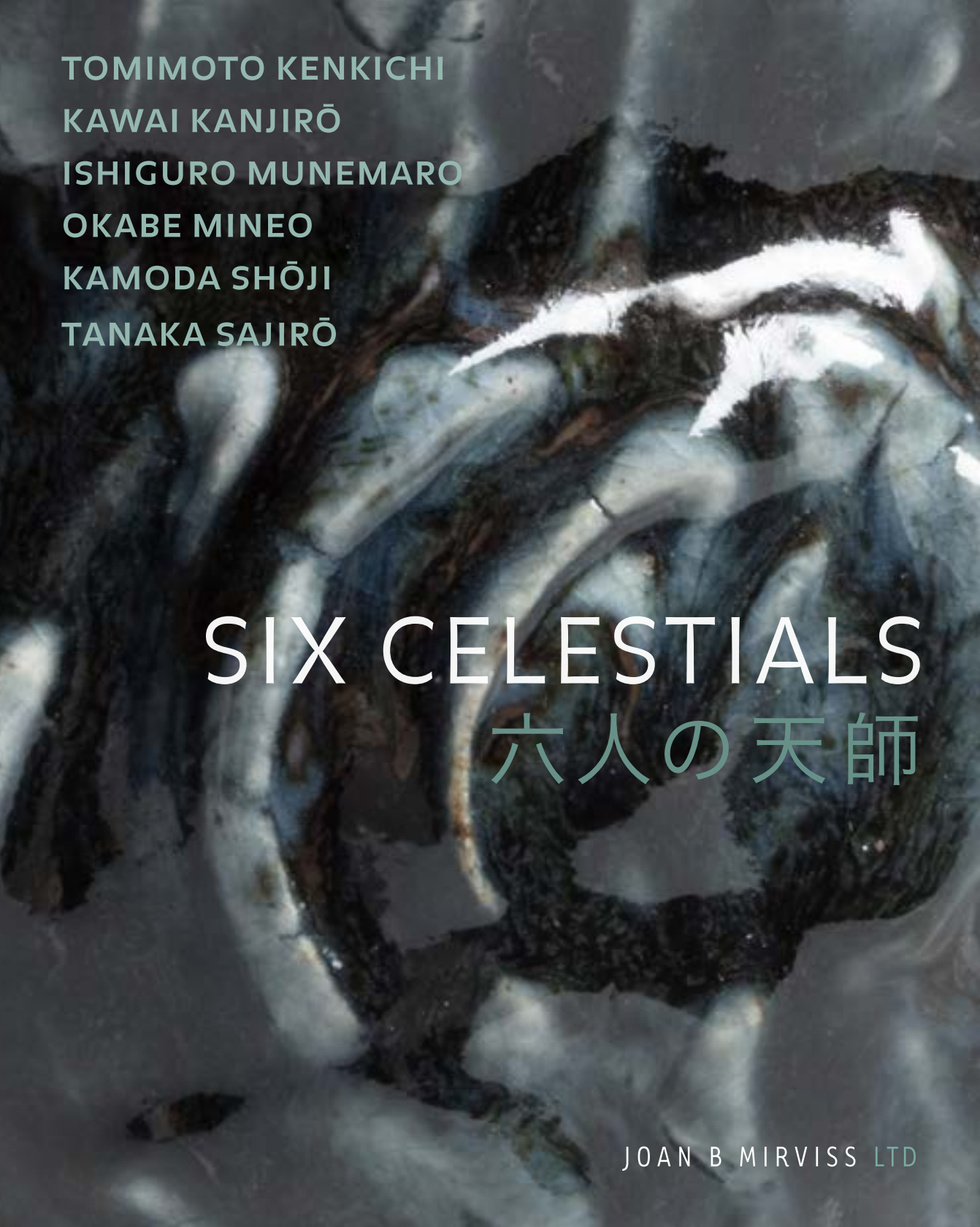




TOMIMOTO KENKICHI
KAWAI KANJIRO
ISHIGURO MUNEMARO
OKABE MINEO
KAMODA SHOJI
TANAKA SAJIRO

SIX CELESTIALS

六人の天師

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD



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Joan B Mirviss LTD

With Shibuya Kurodatoen Co., LTD

Introduction

For Asia Week New York, Joan B Mirviss LTD presents *Six Celestials*, an exhibition featuring selected masterpieces by six artists whose seminal careers established the foundations upon which contemporary Japanese ceramics has been built. Each of these artists combined their unrivaled technical expertise in historical ceramic traditions with a unique and compelling artistic vision. By placing their diverse bodies of work in conversation with one another, the exhibition highlights the ways in which each of these twentieth-century icons helped pave the way for the emergence of Japanese ceramics as it exists today—one of the most dynamic and exciting fields of contemporary art.

TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

It is impossible to overstate the impact of Tomimoto Kenkichi's (1886–1963) legacy on contemporary Japanese ceramics. During his lifetime, he embodied a radically new vision of the ceramist as an artist rather than an artisan or craftsperson. Unlike the majority of his generation's ceramists, he was not born to a family of potters, nor did he ever formally apprentice in the trade. Instead, he received a thoroughly Western education, studying abroad in London before graduating from Tokyo Art School (now Tokyo University of the Arts), where he studied architecture and design. Throughout his career, he proudly proclaimed himself an “amateur” ceramist, an identity that was critical in the freedom it provided. Tomimoto fervently pursued originality in his work and avoided copying the work of past masters at all costs. He spent time sketching in nature to develop the meticulous polychrome enamel overglaze patterns for which he was designated a Living National Treasure (FIG. 1). As the founder of the ceramics



FIG. 1
Tomimoto Kenkichi
Sake flask with fern pattern
after 1952
Porcelain with gold and silver
glazes over red enamel overglaze
6 × 3⁷/₈ × 3¹/₂ in.
Private collection, Japan

department at Kyoto City University of Arts, Tomimoto was also at the center of the university's emergence as the training ground for the next generation of cutting-edge Japanese ceramic artists. As a teacher, he taught his students to pay attention to the relationship between form and decoration and instilled in them the critical value of originality. Indeed, many of his students went on to become leaders of the field who successfully cemented the status of Japanese clay in the world of contemporary art (FIG. 2).

ISHIGURO MUNEMARO

The son of a wealthy family, Ishiguro Munemaro's (1893–1968) decision to pursue ceramics was inspired by an early encounter with one of only three extant Song-dynasty *yōhen tenmoku* teabowls designated as national treasures (Inaba *tenmoku*). Captivated by the radiance of this lost glazing technique, Ishiguro dedicated his life to the pursuit of historical Chinese glazes. Having never formally apprenticed under any specific teacher, Ishiguro taught himself ceramics primarily by creating copies of historical wares. Over the course of his experiments, he perfected a wide range of historical styles, including Raku, Tang *sancai* (three-color), Mishima, and Karatsu. He was particularly lauded for recreating the highly difficult persimmon *tenmoku* glaze (FIG. 3) as well as the *konoha* (leaf print) *tenmoku* technique. His mastery of historical glazes earned him the designation of Living National Treasure in 1955. Despite their solid roots in the foundation of East Asian ceramic tradition, Ishiguro's ceramics even today retain a remarkable air of originality. Ishiguro used his repository of historical techniques in never-before-seen combinations while introducing fresh and contemporary motifs that express his unique vision as an artist.

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

In contrast with these two contemporaries, Kawai Kanjirō (1890–1966) intentionally eschewed formal honors—including the title of Living National Treasure—for his masterful work, remaining true to the spirit of the *Mingei* (folk art) movement that he helped pioneer. He began his career in ceramics in 1910, when he enrolled



FIG. 2

Tomimoto Kenkichi

Large rounded white vessel
1936
Glazed porcelain
8³/₄ × 12¹/₂ in.
Private collection, MA



FIG. 3

Ishiguro Munemaro

Bowl with Fish Motif
1959
Glazed stoneware
2¹³/₁₆ × 12³/₁₆ in.
Nancy F. and Joseph P. Keithley
Collection Gift
The Cleveland Museum of Art,
2020.194.

in the ceramics division of a university in Tokyo. Upon graduation, he took a job at an important research center in Kyoto that specialized in historical East Asian ceramic techniques. There, he was said to have mixed the formulas for more than ten-thousand glazes. While this is likely an exaggeration, Kawai used his time there to develop his remarkable mastery of historical glazes from China, Korea, and Japan that later served as the foundation of his success as a ceramic artist (FIG. 4). Through careful control of the glaze formula and firing conditions, he was able to achieve a wide range of unique and highly coveted effects. A notably prolific artist, Kawai used these to create distinctive designs and motifs on mold-cast ceramic forms, which he then fired in the climbing kiln he had built in the heart of Kyoto's Gojōzaka Kiyomizu ceramic district. Over the course of his career, Kawai transcended the very category of Mingei that he had helped define as his works developed from their roots in historical techniques to incorporate thoroughly modern elements of abstract expression.

OKABE MINEO

Okabe Mineo (1919–1990) was born to a family of ceramists in the historic ceramic center of Seto. As a child, he was mentored in the world of clay by his grandfather, Kanō Kuwajirō, who would take him to clay pits and historic kiln sites. Okabe's father, Katō Tōkurō, was a renowned scholar of Momoyama-period ceramics and a ceramist in his own right, but the two were never close. Indeed, Okabe elected to change his surname from Katō to Okabe, his wife's maiden name, in 1978. By the time he started training at the Aichi Prefecture Seto Ceramics School, Okabe's skills already surpassed those of many of his instructors. It was not until 1947, however, that he began his ceramic career in earnest. Though he struggled with fragile health and family challenges until his death in 1990, Okabe created a diverse oeuvre of natural glazes and ceramic forms over the course of his career. At the core of his work is the relationship between clay forms and the classical glazes that adorn them. The creviced and textured surfaces of vessel bodies that he carved, incised, and impressed with a variety of tools draw attention to the



FIG. 4

Kawai Kanjirō

Tri-color Jar with Appliquéd Lions,
1920/1924

Stoneware with copper, straw,
and iron glazes

12 ⁵/₈ × 10 ³/₈ in.

Museum Purchase, Asian Art
Acquisition Funds

Portland Museum of Art, 2015.37.1.



FIG. 5

Okabe Mineo

Funseiji celadon Jōmon vessel
1968

Stoneware with celadon glaze
9 × 10 ⁷/₈ × 10 ¹/₄ in.

Private collection, USA

seductive way in which the colors of his Oribe and ash glazes shift as pool and drip over the vessel forms. In contrast, Okabe tended to apply his Shino and celadon glazes over simpler clay forms, allowing the texture of the glaze itself—from the softly dimpled surface of Shino glaze to the deep craquelure that runs through his celadon—to take center stage. The exception to this rule—his celebrated celadon Jōmon series (FIG. 5)—proved to be the acme of his career. Okabe's brilliant work earned numerous awards and remains highly coveted even today.

KAMODA SHŌJI

As a youth during World War II, Kamoda Shōji (1933–1983) discovered a passion for painting when it was not safe to play outside. His talent was quickly recognized, earning him awards at local exhibitions. When it came time to start university, however, he chose to pursue ceramics, a medium in which he had no experience, at the Kyoto City University of Arts ceramics department that had just been founded by Tomimoto Kenkichi two years prior. The time that he spent under Tomimoto's tutelage was transformative. Like his mentor, Kamoda had no family roots in the world of Japanese ceramics, allowing him the freedom to pursue his own exploration of the medium's potential. After graduating, he worked for a mass-market ceramic production company for two years before moving to northeastern Japan, where he came into his own as an independent artist. Embracing Tomimoto's call for origin-ality, Kamoda's oeuvre is characterized by constant experimentation and transformation. At each of the two to three solo shows he held each year, he debuted unique bodies of work that employed new forms, glazes, techniques, and motifs that were highly sophisticated and fully realized as works of fine art (FIG. 6). Each of these bodies of work contained the seeds of what was to come next, and Kamoda's complete oeuvre can be understood as a unified logical progression (FIG. 7). This astonishing feat earned him a devoted audience of passionate collectors. Though his life was cut tragically short by leukemia at the age of 49, the legacy of Kamoda's twenty-year ceramic career continues to shape the current trajectory of contemporary Japanese clay art.



FIG. 6

Kamoda Shōji

Colored pot, 1975
Stoneware with slip decoration
 $7 \times 4 \frac{7}{8} \times 4 \frac{7}{8}$ in.

Gift of Tamara and Michael Root
Minneapolis Institute of Art,
2025.8.6.



FIG. 7

Kamoda Shōji

Large vessel with blue enamel
glazed banding
1976

Glazed stoneware
 $10 \frac{1}{4} \times 10 \frac{1}{2}$ in.
Private collection, IL

TANAKA SAJIRO

The only artist in this exhibition still living, Tanaka Sajirō (b. 1937) is even today energetically creating ceramics at nearly the age of 90. A native of Kyūshū, he was long drawn to the region's historical Karatsu ceramic tradition that is rooted in the aesthetics and techniques developed by potters in Joseon Korea. He has also been involved in archeological excavations of Jōmon and Yayoi kiln sites. As a ceramist, Tanaka specializes in the so-called Korean Karatsu (*chōsen Karatsu*) style, which is characterized by the striking pairing of two or more high-contrast glazes that drip sensuously over one another when fired in the kiln, creating a vivid spectrum of colors where they merge (FIG. 8). He infuses his ceramics with a sense of poetry and spirituality gained from long years of cultivation as an ordained Zen Buddhist priest (FIG. 9).

In many ways, the six celestials featured in this exhibition were pioneers under whose stewardship Japanese ceramic art was carried through the twentieth century. Born at the close of the nineteenth century, Tomimoto, Ishiguro, and Kawai all played critical roles ushering Japanese clay into this new period during a time of great turbulence and transformation in Japanese history. As the apogees of the following generation, Okabe, Kamoda, and Tanaka built their ceramic legacies in the second half of the century, shaping the trajectory of Japanese clay in the post-war world. While their careers took radically divergent paths, all six of these artists embody the ideal unity of technical prowess and independent artistic perspective that has allowed Japanese ceramics to emerge forcefully into the realm of first-rate contemporary art.

—Nicolle Bertozzi



FIG. 8
Tanaka Sajirō
Black Karatsu teabowl
2014
Glazed stoneware
4 ¹/₂ × 5 ¹/₂ × 4 ³/₄ in.
Private collection, USA



FIG. 9
Tanaka Sajirō
Yōhen shinsha (copper red) vase
2024
Glazed stoneware
10 ³/₈ × 5 ³/₄ in.
Private collection, NY

Works in Exhibition

図版



TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

(1886-1963)



v

TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

Iro-e (enamel overglaze) incense burner with geometric polychrome designs and perforated metal lid
1949

Glazed porcelain

3 ¹/₈ × 3 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box and outer box





<
TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

Faceted white porcelain vase
with narrow, upraised, and
slightly flared mouth
1932
Glazed porcelain
 $8\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ in.
Original signed wooden box

v
TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

Iro-e (enamel overglaze) hexagonal covered
box with cover motif of rain on the Yamato
river and crossed linear patterns in red or
blue on the sides
1960
Glazed stoneware
 $4\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Original signed wooden box and outer box







< **TOMIMOTO KENKICHI**

Large round white vessel with raised, wide mouth

1940

Glazed porcelain

10 ¹/₈ × 13 ¹/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box

^ **TOMIMOTO KENKICHI**

Rounded white vessel with slightly slanted shoulders and short, raised mouth

1942

Glazed porcelain

7 ³/₄ × 9 ³/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box



<

TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

Iro-e (enamel overglaze) slightly recessed rounded square platter with foliated rim, sarasatic-patterned four-petaled floral patterning

1936

Glazed porcelain

2 × 11¹/₄ × 11¹/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box



KAWAI KANJIRŌ

(1890-1966)





^

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Red copper-glazed, lobed, covered box with floral motif

ca. 1950

Glazed stoneware

7 ¹/₂ × 8 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box



<

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Rectangular box with
matching cover decorated
with abstract floral design
late 1940s

Glazed stoneware

$5\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$ in.

Original signed wooden box

>

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Brownish-black barrel-
shaped vessel with splashed
patterning in red and green
ca. 1960

Glazed stoneware

$7\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ in.

Original signed wooden box





^
KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Flattened wide rectangular vessel with raised mouth
decorated with *sançai* glazing

ca. 1960

Glazed stoneware

8 ¹/₄ × 10 ¹/₂ × 5 ¹/₄ in.

Wooden box signed by Kawai Toshitaka, Director of Kawai
Kanjirō's House Museum and artist's grandson





< ^

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Cobalt-glazed (*gosu*) flattened
circular vessel with raised rectangular
mouth and carved decoration

ca. 1955

Glazed stoneware

10 ¹/₈ × 7 ⁷/₈ × 5 ¹/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box



<

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Iron-glazed covered box with
stylized floral motif on lid
ca. 1930

Glazed stoneware

2 ³/₄ × 3 ³/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box

>

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Flattened round vessel
with raised mouth and
circular floral motif

1934

Glazed stoneware

9 ⁷/₈ × 8 × 7 ¹/₂ in.

Original signed wooden
box, wooden plaque, and
handwritten documents
by Kawai Toshitaka,
director of the Kawai
Kanjirō's House Museum
and artist's grandson,
dated to June 25, 1972.





^
KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Black teabowl with raised foot and
masked phoenix and dragon motifs
ca. 1938

Glazed stoneware

3 ³/₈ × 5 ³/₄ in.

Period wooden box signed by artist,
Munakata Shikō (1903–1975)





<< <

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Flattened rectangular vessel with raised mouth decorated with *sançai* glazing

ca. 1960

Glazed stoneware

$8\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4} \times 4$ in.

Original signed wooden box

∨

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

Square lidded container with green glaze and raised flower motif

ca. 1962

Glazed stoneware

$3\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{8} \times 2$ in.

Original signed wooden box



ISHIGURO MUNEMARO

(1893–1968)





^

ISHIGURO MUNEMARO

Teabowl with yellow brushstroke (*hakeme*) patterning

ca. 1955

Glazed stoneware

2 ⁵/₈ × 5 ¹/₂ in.

Original signed wooden box and outer box



陽也陰陽一太極也
四時行正焉五行一陰
不金土五氣順布
五行之生也各一其
性無極之真二五
之精妙合而凝
道成男坤道成女
二氣交感化生萬物
萬物生生而不息
此其理也



<
**ISHIGURO
 MUNEMARO**

Large persimmon
 tenmoku-glazed bowl
 ca. 1942-1947
 Glazed stoneware
 $2\frac{3}{8} \times 12$ in.
 Original signed wooden box

<
**ISHIGURO
 MUNEMARO**

Ovoid vessel incised with
 Chinese poem
 1936
 Glazed stoneware
 $8\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{5}{8}$ in.
 Original signed wooden
 box and outer box
 Exhibited and
 published, 1998

>
**ISHIGURO
 MUNEMARO**

Teabowl with sharkskin
 texture, titled
Abundant Rice Fields
(Hyakumangoku)
 1957
 Glazed stoneware
 $3\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
 Original signed wooden
 box and outer box







<
ISHIGURO MUNEMARO
Conical vessel patterned in
iron-oxide brushed design over
green craquelure celadon glaze
ca. 1967
Glazed stoneware
 $6\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$ in.
Original signed wooden box

<
ISHIGURO MUNEMARO
Small cylindrical vessel with black rope
patterning on a white ground
Late 1940s-50
Glazed stoneware
 $4\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Original signed wooden box

>
ISHIGURO MUNEMARO
Teabowl with partridge-feather glaze
ca. 1956-1961
Glazed stoneware
 $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5 \times 4\frac{3}{8}$ in.
Original signed wooden box





^
ISHIGURO MUNEMARO

Circular platter with motif of three dancing women

ca. 1948-1950

Glazed stoneware

3 × 13³/₄ in.

Plain wooden box

Exhibited and published, 1998 and 2015

v

ISHIGURO MUNEMARO

Platter with motif of cricket and grasses in iron underglaze
ca. 1964-1966

Glazed stoneware

2¹/₂ × 12 in.

Original signed wooden box and outer box

Exhibited and published, 1986



OKABE MINEO

(1919–1990)



✓

OKABE MINEO

Ko-Seto ash-glazed shouldered vessel with
incised abstract curvilinear motifs

1971

Glazed stoneware

16 × 9 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box

Published, 1971





^
OKABE MINEO

E-Shino-glazed round teabowl with
iron-oxide underglaze patterning

1962

Glazed stoneware

3 ⁵/₈ × 5 ¹/₂ × 5 ¹/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box

>

OKABE MINEO

Rounded E-Shino-glazed vessel
with lattice motif in iron-oxide
underglaze

ca. 1960

Glazed stoneware

6 × 9 in.

Original signed wooden box



v

OKABE MINEO

Shino and Oribe-glazed
rectangular platter

1965

Glazed stoneware

2 ⁵/₈ × 11 ³/₄ × 9 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box





>

OKABE MINEO

Funseiji fulling block (*kinuta*)-shaped vessel
with pale blue craquelure celadon glaze

ca. 1969

Glazed stoneware

9 ⁷/₈ × 6 ¹/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box

^

OKABE MINEO

Oribe-glazed round waterjar with
carved banding and matching
circular cover

ca. 1964

Glazed stoneware

6 × 6 ¹/₄ × 6 in.

Original signed wooden box and
outer box

>

OKABE MINEO

Ash-glazed columnar vessel with
irregular carved banding

1963

Glazed stoneware

10 ³/₈ × 4 ¹/₂ in.

Original signed wooden box and
outer box







< >

OKABE MINEO

Tall Oribe-glazed
columnar vessel with
irregular carved bands
1967

Glazed stoneware with
original *kintsugi* repair
by artist

18 ¹/₂ × 7 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box
Exhibited and published,
2007, 2014, and 2015



KAMODA SHŌJI

(1933-1983)



v

KAMODA SHŌJI

Ash-glazed flattened round vase with upraised mouth
1968

Glazed stoneware

10 ¹/₄ × 8 ³/₄ × 6 ⁵/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box



▼

KAMODA SHŌJI

Hexagonal platter with inlaid
linear patterning

1968

Stoneware

1 ³/₈ × 16 in.

Wooden box signed by Kamoda

Masako, wife of artist

>

KAMODA SHŌJI

Softly formed vessel with broad
undulating red and green wave-like linear
banding and ovoid raised mouth

1971

Glazed stoneware

11 ⁷/₈ × 6 ¹/₈ × 6 in.

Original signed wooden box









<

KAMODA SHŌJI

Gray flattened vessel with
white clay inlays in curvilinear
calligraphic patterning

1974

Glazed stoneware

$8 \times 8 \frac{7}{8} \times 5 \frac{1}{8}$ in.

Original signed wooden box

Published, 2005

<

KAMODA SHŌJI

Rounded rectangular vessel with
colored, curvaceous bands in
light brown, ochre yellow, cream
and blue overglaze enamel

1975

Glazed stoneware

$7 \frac{3}{4} \times 8 \frac{1}{2} \times 5 \frac{1}{2}$ in.

Original signed wooden box

>

KAMODA SHŌJI

Large round teabowl with
abstract undulating patterning
ca. 1973

Glazed stoneware

$3 \times 5 \times 4 \frac{7}{8}$ in.

Original signed wooden box
and outer box



>

KAMODA SHŌJI

Flattened rectangular vessel decorated
with colored, enamel-glazed radiating
linear patterns

1978

Glazed stoneware

11 ³/₄ × 7 ⁷/₈ × 4 ¹/₂ in.

Original signed wooden box

>

KAMODA SHŌJI

1974 Vessel

Cinched torso-like vessel with incised linear and
dot motifs accentuated with slip and glaze

1974

Glazed stoneware

9 ¹/₈ × 8 ¹/₂ × 4 ¹/₂ in.

Original signed wooden box









<

KAMODA SHŌJI

Elongated vase with curvilinear calligraphic patterning in white clay inlays

1974

Glazed stoneware

15 ¹/₂ × 7 ³/₈ × 6 in.

Original signed wooden box

Published, 2005

^

KAMODA SHŌJI

Bulbous gray vessel with vertical striped bands of enamel inlay in blue, white, and purple

1979

Slip-glazed stoneware with overglaze enamels

13 × 9 ¹/₈ × 7 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box

Published, 2005

TANAKA SAJIRŌ

(B. 1937)



<

TANAKA SAJIRO

Shinsha (copper red) glazed handled vase
with raised, flared mouth

2025

Glazed stoneware

10 ¹/₈ × 8 × 6 in.

Original signed wooden box

v

TANAKA SAJIRO

Korean Karatsu vase with paired lugs
and tall columnar neck

1985

Glazed stoneware

9 ¹/₄ × 5 ⁷/₈ × 4 ³/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box





<

TANAKA SAJIRO

Shinsha (copper red) gourd-shaped
vase with handles and flaring mouth
2025

Glazed stoneware

9 ¹/₈ × 6 ¹/₄ in.

Original signed wooden box

>

TANAKA SAJIRO

Low-sided slightly faceted teabowl,
titled, *Crimson Sunset* (*Akane iriai*)
2025

Glazed stoneware

3 ³/₄ × 6 ³/₈ × 6 in.

Original signed wooden box



>

TANAKA SAJIRO

Karatsu waterjar with two lugs
and recessed, knobbed lid

2025

Glazed stoneware

8 ³/₈ × 9 × 8 in.

Original signed wooden box



<

TANAKA SAJIRO

Faceted creamy white teabowl
with dripping burgundy glaze,
titled, *Vermillion Cloud (Shu'un)*

2025

Glazed stoneware

4 ³/₈ × 5 ³/₈ in.

Original signed wooden box



Biographies

陶歷



TOMIMOTO KENKICHI

(1886–1963)

- 1886 Born in Nara, Japan
- 1904–09 Studied interior design and architecture Tokyo Art School (now Tokyo University of the Arts), during which time he studied abroad in London
- 1910 Returned to Ando village, Nara; first met Bernard Leach
- 1911 Started producing Raku ware
- 1913 While visiting Bernard Leach in Hakone, he developed his celebrated dictum, “Do not make patterns from patterns”
- 1915 Built a kiln in Ando village and had his first firing
- 1916 Created his bamboo-grove-and-moonlight pattern in collaboration with Bernard Leach
- 1919 Began his work on white porcelain vessels
- 1931 *Exhibition of stoneware pottery and porcelain by Kenkichi Tomimoto and Bernard Leach*, Beaux Arts Gallery, London, UK
- 1935 Taught craft as a professor at Imperial Art School (predecessor of Musashino Art University)
- 1936 Researched *iro-e* at Kitade Tōjiro's kiln in Kutani
- 1944 Became professor at Tokyo School of Fine Arts (now Tokyo University of the Arts) and the director of their Craft Technical Training Center
- 1949 Moved home to Kyoto; became a visiting professor at Kyoto City Specialty School of Arts (now Kyoto City University of Arts)
- 1950 Appointed professor of ceramics department at Kyoto City University of Arts
- 1954 *Bernard Leach, Tomimoto Kenkichi, Kawai Kanjirō, Hamada Shōji yoninten*, (Four Person Exhibition), Takashimaya Art Gallery, Tokyo
- 1955 Designated as a Living National Treasure
- 1961 Received the Order of Cultural Merit
- 1963 Received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star; retired from teaching at Kyoto City University of Arts but was elected as president of the university; died in June of lung cancer



Selected Public Collections

Brooklyn Museum, NY; Embassy of Japan, London, UK; Kyoto City University of Arts, Japan; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Musée Tomo, Tokyo; National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C.; National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

Selected Publications

National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Asahi Shimbun, eds. *Tomimoto Kenkichi ten*, with English title, *Tomimoto Kenkichi: A Retrospective*. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 2006.

National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Mitsuhiro Hasebe, and Kazunobu Nakanodō, eds. *Tomimoto Kenkichi ten* (Tomimoto Kenkichi). Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 1991.

Vessel Explored, Vessel Transformed: Tomimoto Kenkichi and his Enduring Legacy. New York: Joan B Mirviss LTD with Shibuya Kurodatoen Co., Ltd, 2019.

KAWAI KANJIRŌ

(1890–1966)

- 1911 Impressed by an exhibition of Bernard Leach, introduced himself to Leach
- 1914 Graduated from Tokyo Higher Polytechnical School (now Institute of Science Tokyo); started to work for Kyoto Municipal Institute of Ceramics
- 1915 Exhibited at the 3rd *Nōten Exhibition* (again in '17, where his work won awards)
- 1917 Resigned from the Institute and began glaze research with Kiyomizu Rokubei VI
- 1920 Built his own kiln and established a workshop at Gojōzaka, Kyoto
- 1921 *First Original Ceramics Exhibition of Kanjirō Kawai*, Takashimaya Art Gallery, Tokyo
- 1922 *Second Original Ceramics Exhibition of Kanjirō Kawai*, Takashimaya Art Gallery, Tokyo
- 1924 Lectures at the Kyoto National Museum (later published by Yanagi)
- 1926 Became founding member of Japan Folk Art Association with Hamada, Yanagi, and Tomimoto
- 1936-37 Traveled with Hamada and Yanagi throughout Korea
- 1937 Became Director of Japan Craft Museum, Tokyo
- Grand Prize, World Exposition, Paris
- 1942-45 During the war, stopped potting to concentrate on writing
- After 1945 Began creating non-functional plaques and sculptural work
- 1950-60s Developed new decorative styles focusing on splashes of red, green, and black with an abstract-expressionist flavor
- 1956 Grand Prize, Milan Triennale
- 1966 Died at age 76
- 1984 *KAWAI KANJIRO – Master of Modern Japanese Ceramics*, Crafts Gallery, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- 1999 *Kawai Kanjirō Retrospective*, Japan Folk Art Museum, Tokyo
- 2010 *Kawai Kanjirō – seitan hyakunijūnen kinen ten* (Kawai Kanjirō Exhibition— Commemorating 120 Years Since His Birth), Japan Folk Art Museum, Tokyo
- 2026 *Kawai Kanjirō: House to House*, Japan Society, New York

Selected Public Collections:

Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, CA; Brooklyn Museum, NY; Folk Crafts Museum, Tokyo; Honolulu Museum of Art, HI; Kawai Kanjirō House Museum, Kyoto; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; Musée Tōmō, Tokyo; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

Selected Publications:

Botsugō Kawai Kanjirō: Kako ga saiteiru ima, mirai no tsubomi de ippai na ima (Kawai Kanjirō 50 Years after his Death: The Present in which the Past Blooms and the Future Buds). Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2016.

Kawai Kanjirō: The Kawakatsu Collection in The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto. Kyoto: The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Mitsumura Suiko Shoin, 2019.



ISHIGURO MUNEMARO

(1893–1968)

- 1893 Born in Niihama, Toyama Prefecture
- 1918–25 Built several kilns across Japan to produce Raku ware
- 1925 Moved back to Toyama and started making ceramics in the Iga, Mishima, and Hakeme styles
- 1927 Opened a kiln in Imakumano, Higashiyama, Kyoto. Studied Jun ware, Tang *sançai* (three-color) glazing, and Korean ceramics
- 1936 Moved his kiln to Yase, Kyoto; developed rich, dark iron *tenmoku* glazes from his own research on Southern Song iron-glazed work
- 1937 Won the Silver Prize at the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life, Paris
- 1939 Perfected Japan's first persimmon *tenmoku* glaze. Exhibited at the Golden Gate World Exposition, San Francisco, and the New York World's Fair
- 1946–47 Founded Nihon Nōson Kōgyō Shinkōkai and Nihon Tōji Shinkōkai with Arakawa Toyozō (1894–1985) and Koyama Fujio
- 1950 *Contemporary Japanese Ceramics Exhibition*, Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France
- 1955 Named a Living National Treasure. Founded the Japan Crafts Association (Nihon Kōgeikai) and became director
- 1963 Awarded the Purple Ribbon Medal from the Emperor
- 1968 Awarded the Third Order Medal. Died at the age of 75
- 1970 *Ishiguro Munemaro kaiko ten* (Ishiguro Munemaro Retrospective), National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
- 1981 *Ishiguro Munemaro ten: Tōgei no kokoro to waza* (Ishiguro Munemaro Exhibition: The Creative Spirit of his Ceramic Art), National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- 1996 *Ningen kokuhō Ishiguro Munemaro tōgei no esupuri ten* (Exhibition of the Spirit of the Ceramics of Living National Treasure, Ishiguro Munemaro), toured seven Japanese museums
- 2015–16 *Ishiguro Munemaro no subete* (All About Ishiguro Munemaro), traveled to several Japanese museums



Selected Public Collections

Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Japan; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; Musée national de Céramique, Sèvres, France; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo

Selected Publications

Ishiguro Munemaro no subete (All About Ishiguro). Tokyo: Yomiuri shimbun, 2015.

Ishiguro Munemaro ten: Tōgei no kokoro to waza, with English title, *Ishiguro Munemaro Exhibition: The Creative Spirit of His Ceramic Art*. Tokyo: Mainichi Newspaper Publishing, 1981.

Ishiguro Munemaro ten (Ishiguro Munemaro Exhibition), Imizu: Imizu City Shinminato Museum, 1998.

Tōgeikai no kisai: Ishiguro Munemaro ten (The Genius of the Ceramic World: Ishiguro Munemaro). Tokyo: Takashimaya Art Gallery, 1986.

OKABE MINEO

(1919–1990)

- 1919 Born in Seto, Aichi Prefecture as the son of ceramics scholar Katō Tōkurō (1898–1985)
- 1937 Graduated from the Aichi Prefecture Vocational Training Institute
- 1940–45 Served in the military in WWII; was imprisoned in the Philippines
- 1947 Returned home and created a single-chamber kiln in Toyota City, Aichi
- 1950 Was first selected to enter the Nitten exhibition
- 1951 Artist's first solo show held at Gasubiru Gallery, Nagoya
- 1954 Received the Hokuto Prize at Nitten, displayed at Japanese Embassy in Paris
- 1955 Awarded the Organizers' Prize by Japan Ceramics Society
- 1957 Won first entry to the annual Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition
- 1958 Awarded the Grand Prize at the Brussels World Fair
- 1962 Received the Silver Medal at the Prague International Ceramics Exhibition
- 1963 Won the Encouragement Prize from the Japan Crafts Society
Invited to exhibit in a contemporary ceramics exhibition organized by the National Museums of Modern Art, Tokyo and Kyoto (also in '64, '66, '68, '70, '77)
Ceased exhibiting in competitive exhibitions but continued to hold solo shows until 1978
- 1965 Received Blue Ribbon medal from Cabinet Office of Japanese government for artistic achievement
- 1967 Perfected his difficult double-crackle celadon glaze
- 1969 Pair of celadon vases entered the collection of the Imperial Household
- 1978 Suffered a stroke but was able to resume career after extensive rehabilitation and care from his wife; changed his family name from Katō to Okabe, his wife's family name
- 1990 Died at the age of 71
- 2007-08 *Okabe Mineo ten* (Okabe Mineo: A Retrospective) organized by the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and NHK; afterwards traveled to four other Japanese museums

Selected Public Collections

Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Menard Art Musuem, Aichi; Musée Tomo, Tokyo; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C.; National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, KS; Pola Museum of Art, Hakone

Selected Publications

Kaneko, K., ed. et al. *Okabe Mineo ten: Seiji o kiwameru* (Mastering Celadon: Okabe Mineo), with English title, *Mineo Okabe: A Retrospective*. Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and NHK, 2007.

Kitagawa, Y. *Okabe Mineo sakuhinshū* (Works of Okabe Mineo). Tokyo: Mineo Sakuhinshū Publishing Associates, 1971.

Okabe Mineo sakuhinshū tōshū (Collected Works of Okabe Mineo). Tokyo: Shogakkan, 2007.

Okabe Mineo ten: Tensai tōgeika no kiseki (Okabe Mineo Exhibition: The Tracks of a Ceramic Prodigy). Nagoya: NHK Planet Chūbu, 2015.



KAMODA SHŌJI

(1933–1983)

- 1933 Born in Kishiwada, Osaka
- 1952 Entered Kyoto City University of Arts in ceramics under Tomimoto Kenkichi
- 1959 Began an independent ceramist in Mashiko ceramic region
- 1964 Won the Japan Ceramics Society Award
- 1966 Won the Gold Prize at Japan Ceramic Association
- 1966–68 Exhibited annually in Japan Arts Festival at the Union Carbide Building, New York
- 1968 *New Generation in Contemporary Ceramics Exhibition*, The Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- 1969 Moved his new kiln and home in Tōno, Iwate
- 1974 Won the Newcomer Award by the Ministry of Education (first ceramist winner)
- 1975 Traveled to Korea with Yasuda Takeshi to look at ceramics
- 1983 Died in Utsunomiya, Tochigi at age 49
- 1987 *The Beauty of Contemporary Ceramics – Kamoda Shōji Exhibition*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- 1990 *Kamoda Shōji Exhibition*, Ogawa Museum, Tokyo (also in 2003, 2007, 2009)
- 1991 *Contemporary Ceramics – Kamoda Shōji Exhibition*, Sadō Shiryōkan, Kyoto
- 1992 *Kamoda Shōji Exhibition*, Tanabe Museum, Matsue
- 2000–05 *Kamoda Shōji*, The Tōgei Messe Mashiko Gallery, Three solo exhibitions in 1999 (early career); mid-career in 2001; third and later years in 2005)
- 2005–06 *KAMODA Shōji—a Retrospective*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
- 2019 *Yaban to senren: Kamoda Shōji no tōgei* (Primitive and Sophisticated: Kamoda Shōji's Ceramic Art), Musée Tomo, Tokyo
- 2021–22 *Kamoda Shōji: The Art of Change*, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota



Selected Public Collections

Hiroshima Prefecture Museum; Iwate Museum of Art; Mashiko Tōgei Messe; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; Musée Tomo, Tokyo; National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo; Ogawa Museum, Tokyo; Palace Museum, Beijing Tochigi Prefecture Museum of Fine Art; Tsurui Museum of Art, Niigata; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

Selected Publications

Yoshida, K. ed. *Kamoda Shōji no geijutsu*, Tokyo: Sekaibunkasha, 1994.
Matsubara, R. et. al. *Kamoda Shōji zenshigoto* (Complete Works of Kamoda Shōji), Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005.
Matsubara, R. *Nijiūseiki tōgeikai no kisai Kamoda Shōji* (KAMODA Shoji— a Retrospective). Kyoto: The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Asahi Shimbun, 2005.
Rio, A. and M. Welch. *Kamoda Shōji: The Art of Change*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2021.

TANAKA SAJIRO

(b. 1937)

- 1937 Born in Kita Kyūshū, Fukuoka
- 1965 Became professional ceramic artist using the *tebineri* (hand-pinching) technique
Excavated and researched ancient Jōmon and Yayoi ceramics
- 1971 First went to Eiheiji to study Zen on the recommendation of the superior of Jōrakuji Temple in Karatsu City
Excavated ancient Karatsu pieces in the Hizen area and began making pottery
- 1975 Received Buddhist name “Zenkai Hōgetsu” from Zen master, Yamada Reirin (1889-1979)
Established a *noborigama* (climbing kiln) at Jōrakuji temple in Handa, Karatsu City
- 1979 Studied under the legendary Seto ceramist Katō Tokurō
- 1983 Returned to Eiheiji to study ancient Chinese poetry
- 1985 Solo exhibition at Kurodatōen, Shibuya (again in '98, '00, '04, '08-'10, '12, '14-'16, '20, '21, '23, '25)
- 1987 Built a split-bamboo-type climbing kiln (located 700 meters above sea level) in Kishidate Yamase where he found shards dating to the Momoyama era
- 1996 Excavated Joseon Dynasty ceramics; studied Goryeo teabowls at Daemyung kiln in Sancheon, South Korea
- 2003 Built a rising kiln named Kizangama (Kizan kiln) in Ulsan, South Korea
- 2007 Returned to Eiheiji and studied under a Zen master
- 2011 Mitsukoshi Art Gallery, Nihonbashi, Tokyo (again in '19, and '23)
- 2016 *Poetic Reflections: Masterpieces by Ishiguro Munemaro and Tanaka Sajirō*, in collaboration with Shibuya Kurodatōen Co., Joan B Mirviss LTD, New York
- 2024 *From the Jomon Period to the Future*, Nippon Club, New York

Selected Publications

All of Karatsu. Honoho Geijutsu Separate Volume. Tokyo: Abe Shuppan, 2012, pp. 56-61, 151.
Kuroda, Kusaomi. *Tanaka Sajiro*. Vol. 98 of *Toh: The Best Selections of Contemporary Ceramics in Japan*. Kyoto: Kyoto Shoten, 1993.
Toward a 21st Century Renaissance in Ceramics. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Dōhōsha. 1997, pp. 97-123, 305.



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PHOTOGRAPHY OF ART

Nomura Tomoya for all artworks by Tanaka Sajirō
Richard Goodbody for all other artworks and
group images

ARTIST PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Tomimoto Kenkichi portrait by Janet Darnell Leach, ca.
1954, courtesy of Mingei Film Archive/Marty Gross Film
Productions, Inc.
Kawai Kanjirō portrait by Tamura Shigeru, ca. 1950
Ishiguro Munemaro portrait courtesy of Nasu Mitsuo,
ca. 1960
Okabe Mineo portrait by Sadao Ishi, 1965, courtesy of
Okabe Miki
Kamoda Shōji portrait by and courtesy of Fujimori
Takeshi, 1974
Tanaka Sajirō portrait by Nomura Tomoya, 2025

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Dimensions are listed in order of height, width,
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Names are given in Japanese sequence with family
name first.

COVER

Kawai Kanjirō (1890–1966)

Cobalt-glazed (*gosu*) diamond-shaped vase with
carved decoration, ca. 1965
Glazed stoneware
 $8\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in.

COVER (FRONT INSIDE)

Okabe Mineo (1919–1990)

Tall Oribe-glazed columnar vessel with irregular carved
bands, 1967
Glazed stoneware with original *kintsugi* repair by artist
 $18\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ in.

COVER (BACK INSIDE)

Kawai Kanjirō (1890–1966)

Flattened wide rectangular vessel with raised mouth
decorated with *sançai* glazing
ca. 1960
Glazed stoneware
 $8\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ in.

BACK COVER

Kamoda Shōji (1933–1983)

Ash-glazed flattened round vase with upraised mouth
1968
Glazed stoneware
 $10\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$ in.

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SIX CELESTIALS

六人の天師



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