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—The EARTH—

An Exhibition of Five Young Japanese Ceramic Artists

UCHIDA Koichi, TSUJIMURA Yui, TSUJIMURA Kai, IZUMITA Yukiya and ISHIYAMA Tetsuya

November 3 (Thu) - December 30 (Fri), 2011

Opening Reception November 3 (Thu), 6 – 8 pm



Large Jar by UCHIDA Koichi



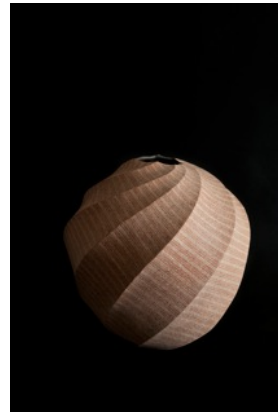
Large Jar by TSUJIMURA Yui



Flower Vase by TSUJIMURA Kai



Vase by IZUMITA Yukiya



Large Jar by ISHIYAMA Tetsuya

New York, NY, September 29, 2011—Ippodo Gallery New York is delighted to announce that from November 3, 2011 it will be presenting ‘The EARTH –An Exhibition of Five Young Japanese Ceramic Artists-,’ introducing five dynamic up-and-coming Japanese contemporary ceramic artists, aged from 30 to 40 who have recently come to people’s attention: UCHIDA Koichi, TSUJIMURA Yui, TSUJIMURA Kai, IZUMITA Yukiya and ISHIYAMA Tetsuya. This group exhibition entitled ‘The Earth’ will look at the future of the ceramic field, with each artist presenting about works, ranging from large pots or vases to containers and *objets d’art*. In total there will be in excess of one fifty works.

Since prehistoric times, mankind has kneaded clay to create pots for a variety of uses. Ceramic culture has remained a major industry and continues to develop to this day, the combination of the elements of earth, fire and water having been sublimated to art. This is especially true in Japan where particular significance is placed on the art crafts within daily life, in addition, the tea ceremony allowed a rich ceramic culture to blossom, resulting in there being more potters per head of population than in any other nation in the world. The five artists who take part in this exhibition all come from separate backgrounds and have quite different personalities, but they share a high degree of skill and the power of expression to explore the possibilities of expression through clay.

UCHIDA Koichi was born in Aichi Prefecture in 1969, his parents ran an ironworks and he grew up making things from pieces of scrap metal. After graduating from Ceramics High School he traveled around South-East Asia, India, West Africa and Europe, where he worked with potters in a variety of countries. That was when he realized the innate desire felt by humans to 'fire clay' and cultural significance this possesses. In between his trips overseas, he worked at a pottery in the town of Yokkaichi, throwing several hundred flowerpots everyday and becoming sympathetic towards the skills of the potter's wheel. 'The Earth is turning. A car moves by turning its wheels, everything moves through turning, even religion, with the cycle of reincarnation...' In 1992, at the age of 23, he built his own kiln in Yokkaichi. 'Turning' the clay, applying pressure from the within to create the shape on a wheel, he has produced works like the large pot in this exhibition which contain dynamic forms and cosmic energy, harmonizing the two extremes of the power of nature and the power of human civilization to give birth to works that combine both primitive and contemporary worlds.

TSUJIMURA Yui was born in Nara Prefecture in 1975, the eldest son of the world-famous potter, TSUJIMURA Shiro. He began to study under his father at the age of eighteen, developing a style that comprises of works in completely original shapes that are finished in a blue that catches the heart of the viewer. Using finest quality clay from the Shigaraki and Iga areas, the forms he produces are strongly influenced by those of *sue* ware, a kind of unglazed pottery that was introduced from the continent in the seventh century and continued to be produced in Japan until the twelfth century. Fired at high temperatures using a reducing flame in an *anagama* (cellar kiln), he creates a vibrant, blue-green natural ash glaze that is unique to his work. His footless vases, fantastically high pots, etc. embody the freedom of ancient times and the large, cocoon-shaped pot in this exhibition is unable to stand on its own. One of his large pots was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2010 for its permanent collection.

TSUJIMURA Kai is the second son of TSUJIMURA Shiro and was born in 1976. He produces pots in a wide range of styles, including Iga, Karatsu, Bizen, Shino, Kohiki and Shigaraki, mastering traditional traditions in a way that is quite remarkable for somebody so young. Living in the mountains of Nara Prefecture, he devotes himself everyday to his creativity. His painstakingly made tea bowls and vases, small pots and containers all epitomize the concept of 'functional beauty', exploring the subdued, simple refinement that defines Japanese aesthetics. He also produces large pots embodying the power of his youth and one of these was acquired in the permanent collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in 2010. This exhibition will present many of these large pots that can be said to be representative of his work.

IZUMITA Yukiya was born in 1966 in Iwate Prefecture, and from the age of twenty-six, he studied the local *kokuji-ware* style of pottery under the *kokuji-ware* master Gakuho Shimodake. *Kokuji-ware* is produced in Kuji City, using local clay with *tohakuyu* (white glaze) and *ameyu* (caramel glaze) to produce works characterized by their simplicity. The majority of works are everyday items for use in the home and won acclaim from YANAGI Soetsu (1889-1961), who founded the *mingei undo* (folk crafts movement) in the 1920s. IZUMITA opened his own kiln in Noda Village in 1992 and ever since he has produced creative *objets d'art* as well as new forms of

vase. 'When I try to express the nature of the Earth, I look for the answer in its roughness, fragility and transience, its tension and lightness.' The various of vases he is showing in this exhibition present a texture in which the gentle and coarse aspects of the clay have been interwoven to produce works that display multifaceted angles, reminiscent of the expression of the mountains, valleys and seas on Earth.

ISHIYAMA Tetsuya was born in Saitama Prefecture in 1973. In 1991 he became a potter in order to recreate works discovered at an archeological dig and perhaps as a result of this experience, his work always deals with expressions of the passage of 'time'. 'Innumerable "nows" make up the strata of the Earth, as symbolized by the dazzling statues of Buddha that gradually lost their gold and silver over the passage of time to return to their original form. This is the time that I try to capture through form.' In this exhibition he presents earth-colored pots and water containers with uniformly fine inlay work, 'crystal' *objets d'art* that take the appearance of minerals and tea bowls with matte gold or silver glaze applied on a shaved surface, all of them completely original, new works.

Today, when we see natural disasters happening around the globe, the time has come for mankind to question anew our relationship with the Earth.

This exhibition presents the works of five young, contemporary potters, from a variety of backgrounds, who imbue their work with a rich individualistic creativity, but coexist in complete harmony with each other to produce a 'ceramic concerto', enabling us to rediscover the energy and beauty to be discovered in the earth.

About Ippodo Gallery

Opening in Tokyo in 1996, the Ippodo Gallery has three exhibition venues in Tokyo where it has established a reputation as the leading gallery specializing in contemporary art crafts. In 2008, Ippodo Gallery opened its first U.S. branch in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York, where it holds diverse exhibitions and events, presenting the work of contemporary Japanese craft artists in an effort to introduce current Japanese culture to the world. In order to promote and champion Japanese art crafts, Ippodo Gallery collects exquisite works embodying the highest degree of craftsmanship in a wide range of fields, including fine ceramics, urushi lacquer, bamboo, textiles, cabinetmaking, paper, metal, glass, sculpture and teaware. The gallery was designed by the renowned Japanese interior designer, Shigeru Uchida, and includes a modern tea space, providing a venue for traditional Japanese tea ceremonies.

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ippodo gallery
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UCHIDA Koichi



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