

BLUM & POE

Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo

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Kazunori Hamana
in collaboration with Yukiko Kuroda

September 10–October 23, 2021
Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

September 3, 2021, Los Angeles, CA—Blum & Poe is pleased to present an exhibition of ceramic sculptures by Chiba, Japan-based artist Kazunori Hamana alongside works made in collaboration with fellow artist Yukiko Kuroda. This exhibition follows the announcement of Hamana's representation this summer.

The surfaces of Hamana's sculptures are variously rough, finger-textured, cracked, and fissured. His large and delicate vessels are made from natural clay sourced from Shiga Prefecture in Japan, each finished with Hamana's own mineral glazes. Inspired by traditional Japanese *tsubo*, functional clay jars dating back to prehistoric times, he creates each sculpture by hand, making use of improvisation and experimentation and cultivating new, inventive techniques in shaping, glazing, coloring, and firing.

After the vessels are fired, he places them outside of his studio for the natural elements to mark and transform, determining their final form. Irregular and imperfect in shape, and sometimes imbued with geometric shapes and abstract symbols, his pots resemble ancient terra-cotta objects that were hidden in the soil for ages.

Hamana collaborates with Yukiko Kuroda on vessels that undergo the process of *kintsugi* (the art of repairing broken pottery). Both based in a rural village in Japan's Chiba Prefecture, Hamana and Kuroda pursue the principles of *kintsugi*—refusing waste and celebrating the act of recycling—in both their art practices and in the daily routines of their personal lives and philosophies. Their collaboration began with one of Hamana's vessel that was damaged by accident—alongside traditional Japanese mending methods, Kuroda used large metal staples to hold the fractures together following the ancient Chinese technique of riveting—the idiosyncratic beauty that resulted spawned a new series of works made in partnership.

Kuroda's interventions follow the traditional practice of treating the ceramic surfaces with the combination of colored *urushi* (Japanese lacquer) and gold, silver, and pewter, but also include adjoining flaking or cast-off layers of ceramics from other vessels which are created organically during the pottery process. Additionally, she integrates unconventional found materials, often sourced from her neighborhood. Kuroda's home was previously a local farmer's and still hosts a variety of abandoned farming materials, many of which find their way into her *kintsugi* practice, such as traces of bamboo baskets or antique paper. She also marks Hamana's pots with remnants of rice grain harvested from his organic rice fields, leaving strong lines and adding new visual landscapes. Each pot is treated as an individual entity with specific needs. Accepting that repair might not be the solution in some cases, Hamana and Kuroda's collaborations embrace each unique narrative, and the natural flow of the life cycle which is transient and impermanent.

Kazunori Hamana (b. 1969, Osaka, Japan) lives and works in Chiba, Japan. His work has been exhibited in public art institutions including the Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA

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(2021); Towada Art Center, Towada, Japan (2017); and Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan (2016). His work was showcased in a two-artist exhibition at Blum & Poe, Tokyo, Japan (2020) and a group exhibition at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA, curated by Takashi Murakami, which later traveled to Blum & Poe, New York, NY (2015).

Yukiko Kuroda (b. 1968, Shizuoka, Japan) lives and works in Chiba, Japan. She is an artist who embraces cracks, chips, and fissures in ceramic works, salvaging and generating new forms from pieces that are otherwise considered broken. She began collaborating with Kazunori Hamana in 2017. Her works have been included in group shows including most recently at Amelie, Maison d'art, Paris, France in 2021.

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices, and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents forty-eight artists and eight estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000 square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and

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engaging with contemporary art.

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