



Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII

*CERAMIC SIGHT*

July 22 - September 16, 2023

Opening Reception  
July 22, 2023 6-8 PM

## Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII: *CERAMIC SIGHT*

July 22 -  
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720 N. Highland Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90038

Nonaka-Hill is pleased to present *CERAMIC SIGHT*, the first overseas exhibition of sculptures by Kyoto, Japan based, Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII.

Born as Masahiro Kiyomizu in 1954, the artist is the eighth-generation head of the Kiyomizu Rokubey family ceramics kiln, founded in Kyoto in 1771. The legendary kiln has been central to the development of Kyō-ware and to centuries of Japan's ceramic history. As the eldest son of his predecessor, renowned sculptor Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII, the artist assumed the family name in the year 2000 and maintains stewardship of the legacy. Following in his father's footsteps, Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII also deviates from the family ceramic traditions by producing predominantly non-functional ceramic sculpture of contemporary artistic merit.

A graduate of Waseda University's School of Architecture, Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII applies engineering theory to clay slab-building, creating polyhedral sculptures that concretize features of minimalist, cubist, and futurist aesthetics. Composed of single or multiple modular units, Kiyomizu's crisp, planar transitions might resemble origami or complex compound forms redolent of industrial factories, ancient kivas, totems or Sci-Fi structures. Kiyomizu works with and against clay's fugitive nature, pushing the limits of structural integrity to achieve a formal tension. In certain works, the artist engineers sagging, splitting, and curving into his geometric forms, synthesizing his architectural interest and biomorphic leanings.

Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII's sculptures on view span from 1993 to 2023, revealing an impressive morphology, from floor-bound works to tabletop-sized sculptures that invite intimate and contemplative viewing. Glazed with matte blacks or pearly whites, each sculpture exploits a wide range of tonal shifts in light and shadow. This is further augmented by Kiyomizu's invariable use of negative space that co-structures each work through soft contours cut into their angular chassis, revealing a tense interplay between curves and right angles.

With titles such as "Structure of Memory," or "Tower of Memory," Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII alludes to the "memory" of clay as a recorder of human manipulation and chemical conversion, but also to the sculpture itself as a metaphorical container of human memories or consciousness. In a pyramidal work, "Memories of the Future 22", it alludes to memories of a future that have already occurred—hinting at a science-fictional dimension.

Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII's works thus have a world-building undercurrent to them, whose physical voids get filled with our imaginative fumes of fancy. They are mysterious and sensuous objects whose subtle narratives slowly unfurl over repeated viewing.

## Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII

### Biography

- 1954 Born in Kyoto
- 1979 Graduated from the department of architecture, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
- 2000 Promoted to 8th Rokubey Kiyomizu

### Eighth generation Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII

Established in the mid-Edo period, the Kiyomizu Rokubey family has continued their legacy for 248 years and over eight generations since 1771.

Eighth generation Rokubey was born in Kyoto in 1954 as the eldest son of the seventh generation. His given name at birth was Masahiro. After graduating from Waseda University, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Department of Architecture in 1979 (Showa 54), he studied pottery at Kyoto Prefectural Ceramists' Technical Institute and went on to study glaze at Kyoto Municipal Institute of Industrial Research before becoming full-fledged in ceramic art.

Rokubey VIII received the Grand Prix at the Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition in 1983 (Showa 58) which became the year of his actual debut, and continued on to win the Kazuo Yagi Award at the Contemporary Ceramic Art Exhibition in 1988 and 1989, the Kyoto Prefecture Cultural Award in 1993 and the Ceramic Society of Japan Prize in 2005. He has always gained attention in the era where ceramic art expression took off from the 1980s to the 90s.

Structured works using the tatara technique consistently pursues spatiality, and the soil used for firing has direct effect on the glaze, giving a unique texture to each piece and the surrounding environment. Clay slabs are cut exactly according to plans and bonded together, but by creating slits in the body the strength of a piece can be manipulated. In addition, distortion due to firing can be intentionally incorporated in a piece using the force of gravity.

After succeeding his father as eighth generation in 2000 (Heisei 12), his creative work has largely been focused on structured ceramic ware. He later became a professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design in 2003 (Heisei 15) and has been dedicated in nurturing the next generation while working energetically in his creations. After receiving the Ceramic Society of Japan Prize in 2005 (Heisei 17), he has become one of the faces that represents the ceramic art world today

## Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII

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|---------------------------|---|
| Selected Solo Exhibition  | <p>2023 <i>CERAMIC SIGHT</i>, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles, USA</p> <p>2022 Gallery Utsuwakan, Kyoto, Japan</p> <p>2021 <i>8th Kiyomizu Rokubey Exhibition</i>, The Museum of Ceramic Art, Hyogo, Hyogo, Japan<br/>Takashimaya Art Gallery, Kyoto, Kyoto, Japan (2018, 2015, 2013, 2009, 2001)<br/>Takashimaya Art Gallery, Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Japan (2018, 2015, 2011, 2001)</p> <p>2018 Takashimaya Art Gallery, Osaka, Osaka, Japan, (2015, 2011, 2005)</p> <p>2018 Gallery Haku, Osaka, Japan, (2014, 2012, 2010, 2008, 2005, 2004, 2003, 1991, 1987)</p> <p>2015 Gallery Utsuwakan, Kyoto, Japan</p> <p>2013 Takashimaya Art Gallery, Yokohama, Yokohama, Japan<br/>Takashimaya Art Gallery, Nagoya, Nagoya, Japan</p> <p>2009 Takashimaya Art Gallery, Nagoya, Nagoya, Japan</p> <p>2005 Takashimaya Art Gallery, Yokohama, Yokohama, Japan</p> <p>2002 Gion Konishi, Kyoto, Japan</p> <p>1999 Gallery Nakamura, Kyoto, Japan (1996, 1993, 1991, 1989)</p> <p>1998 Contemporary Art NIKI, Tokyo, Japan</p> <p>1996 Masuda Studio, Tokyo, Japan (1992, 1988, 1985)</p> <p>1994 Memories Gallery, Nagoya, Japan</p> <p>1993 Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo, Japan</p> <p>1989 INAX Gallery, Tokyo, Japan</p> |
| Selected Group Exhibition | <p>2019 <i>SODEISHA CONNECTED to AUSTRALIA</i>, Newcastle Art Gallery, AUSTRALIA</p> <p>2016 <i>Craft Arts: Innovation of "Tradition and Avant-Garde" and the Present Day</i>, The National Museum of Modern art Tokyo, Tokyo, JAPAN</p>  |
| Public collection         | <p>2013 <i>The KIYOMIZU Rokubey Family</i>, Aichi Ceramic Art Museum, Seto, Japan</p> <p>2007 22nd International Open Sculpture Competition, Ube Open-Air Museum, Ube, Japan</p> <p>2005 <i>Contemporary Clay – Japanese Ceramics for the New Century</i>, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, USA</p> <p>2004 <i>The Retrospective Exhibition of KIYOMIZU Rokubey I~VIII</i>, Chiba City Art Museum, Chiba, Japan</p> <p>2003 <i>Korea – Japan Contemporary Ceramic Art Exhibition</i>, Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea</p> <p>2002 <i>The New Way of Tea</i>, Japan Society, Asia Society, New York, USA<br/><i>International Asia-Pacific Contemporary Ceramics Invitational Exhibition</i>, Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taipei, Taiwan</p> <p>2001 <i>Leaders of Contemporary Japanese Ceramics</i>, Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Ibaraki, Japan<br/><i>Crafts in Kyoto</i>, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Kyoto, Japan</p> <p>1994 <i>The Taipei International Exhibition of Ceramics 1994</i>, Taipei, Taiwan<br/><i>Clay Work</i>, The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Osaka, Japan</p>   |

## Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII

- Selected Group Exhibition
- 1993 *Contemporary Ceramics 1950–1990*, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan  
*The 48th International Ceramic Art Competition*, Faenza, Italy  
*Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collection*, Japan Society Gallery, New York, USA
  - 1992 *Continuity and Transformation : Contemporary Japanese Ceramics*, Everson Museum of Art, New York, USA
  - 1990 *Japanese Clay Work Today*, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Utsunomiya, Japan  
*Contemporary Ceramics*, Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Wakayama Japan
  - 1989 *Europalia--Japan Exhibition '89 [ Ceramics of the Showa Era : Tradition and Innovation ]*, Mons Art Museum, Mins, Belgium
  - 1986 *1st International Ceramics Competition '86*, Mino, Japan

### Museum and Public Collection

Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, Japan  
 The International Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan  
 The Japan Foundation, Japan  
 Kyoto Prefecture, Japan  
 Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Japan  
 Wakayama Prefectural Modern Art Museum, Japan  
 The Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan  
 Takamatsu City Museum, Japan  
 Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu, Japan  
 Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Japan  
 Everson Museum of Art, USA  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA  
 British Museum, England  
 Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan  
 Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan  
 The Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, Czech Republic  
 Royal Ontario Museum, Canada  
 Shepparton Art Gallery, Australia  
 Newcastle Art Gallery, Australia  
 Sevres National Museum of Ceramic, France  
 Keramion Museum, Germany  
 Benaki Museum, Greece  
 China Museum, China  
 Museu del Cantir d'Argentona, Spain

Kyoto State Guest House, Japan  
 Chubu International Airport, Japan

## Rokubey Kiyomizu VIII

### Awards

- 1983 Won the Grand Prix in the Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition '83
- 1986 14th Chunichi International Exhibition of Ceramic Arts ; received the Foreign Minister's Prize  
Won the Grand Prix in the Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition '86
- 1988 Received Kyoto Art Award for New Artists
- 1989 Yomiuri Prize in the Competition of Contemporary Ceramics -- Yagi Kazuo Prize '89
- 1993 Received Kyoto Cultural Award Incentive Award
- 1997 Sidney Myer Fund International Ceramics Award, Shepparton Art Museum, AUSTRALIA
- 1999 Received Takashimaya Art Award
- 2005 Received The 2004 Japan Ceramic Society Prize
- 2009 Received Kyoto Cultural Award Achievement Award
- 2013 Received Kyoto Art Culture Award
- 2022 Received a person of Kyoto City Cultural Merit