

ceramic
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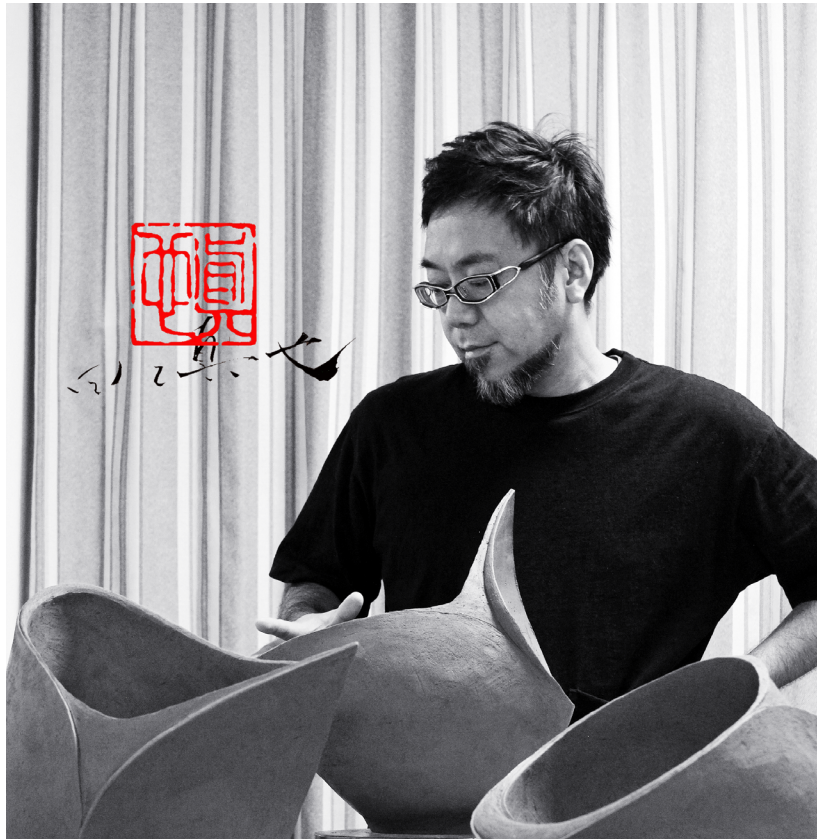
Origin, Eclosion

by Shinya Tanoue

21 ~ 25 jan. 2026

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Shinya Tanoue is a Kyoto based ceramic artist whose work is shaped by a culture attentive to origin, cycle, and quiet transformation. His sculptures carry a sensibility where form, time, and inner movement all point towards the essential understanding of life and its cycle.

Shell-like volumes recur across Tanoue's work, evoking states of protection, incubation and becoming. They recall natural enclosures, wombs, cocoons, seeds; spaces where life gathers before emergence.

"I am interested in the cycle of nature."

Tanoue's work does not seek to represent life, but to hold its moment of becoming. Each form exists at the threshold, between inside and outside, concealment and revelation. Rather than fixed objects, the sculptures function as states of being, where birth and rebirth remain incomplete, fragile, and ongoing.

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Born in 1976 in Kyoto, Shinya Tanoue's artistic journey took an unexpected turn when he discovered the fascinating world of clay within a ceramic club. This unforeseen encounter propelled him onto the path of ceramics, shaping his artistic destiny. After delving into the study of theology, Shinya pursued his formal education at Doshisha University in Kyoto. In 2003, he further honed his skills and artistic vision at the Kyoto Saga University of Arts.



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Drawing inspiration from the ground-breaking Sodeisha movement, which emerged in Kyoto in 1948, Shinya's approach to art embodies the spirit of creative liberation and rebellion against traditional ceramic norms.

Portrait of the Japanese contemporary artist Shinya Tanoue

This movement, which boldly diverged from the prevailing Mingei or folk-art movement, left an indelible mark on the ceramic landscape for over half a century until the late 1990s.

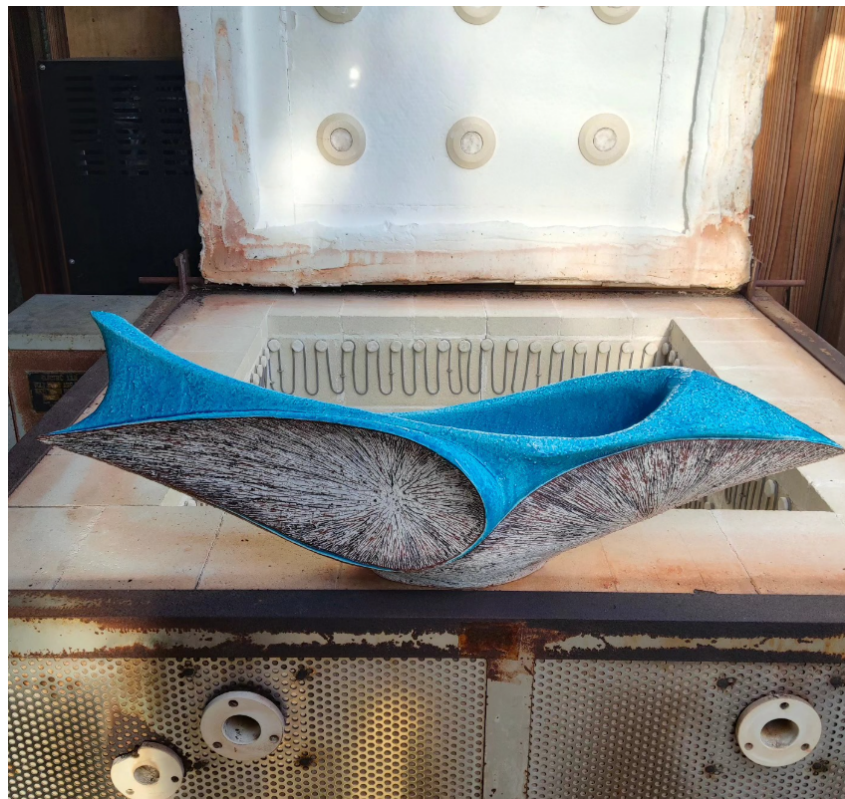
Within the realm of his experimental ceramics, Shinya fearlessly explores the capabilities of his chosen medium, infusing it with emotional depth and a sense of wonder. Exhibiting remarkable simplicity and elegant aesthetics, his creations inject a fresh perspective into the rich Japan's ceramic heritage. For Shinya, clay pulsates with life, becoming a conduit for expressing the very essence of existence. Employing a coil technique and working with three types of clay, he meticulously sculpts his ceramics, employing two slips to achieve the desired effect. Intricate surface carving bestows upon his works a distinctive texture and relief. To further enhance their allure, he adorns the interiors with a lustrous blue-glazed finish.

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The recurring motif of the shell shape has been a central element in Shinya's ceramics since 2007. Symbolically, this form represents both the protective cocoon that nurtures life and the membranous support that sustains our existence. It evokes the eternal cycle of life and death, drawing inspiration from the intricate web of existence.

Shinya frequently employs a cobalt-blue glazed interior, reminiscent of the vast ocean and serving as a metaphor for the wellspring of life. The subtle rough patches within the azure depths evoke oxygen, akin to the rhythm of breathing underwater. The carved lines embedded within his creations not only serve as decorative motifs but also signify the vital energy coursing through the human form.



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The recent use of Urushi:

For centuries, Japanese artisans have used Urushi lacquer, a sap-based finish, to seal and strengthen pottery. Traditionally applied to prevent porous clay from absorbing water, the use of Urushi was historically functional rather than decorative. Yet in Shinya Tanoue's hands, this ancestral technique is reborn with a contemporary, poetic sensitivity.

Rather than working with glaze, Shinya applies and polishes up to twenty layers of Urushi lacquer in various tones. Drawing from the Tsugaru-nuri tradition of northern Japan, known for its elaborate layered finishes and resilience, he carefully polishes the surface until complex, organic patterns emerge from within. The result is a surface that is not reflective or cold, but soft, warm, and intimate, almost reminiscent of living flesh.

In these works, the vessel achieves a new kind of presence. Freed from the decorative expectations of colour and sheen, the surface becomes a space of quiet resonance. The lacquer coexists with the clay rather than coating it, allowing each piece to serve as a cradle — a cocoon that invites stillness, introspection, and emotional presence.

Tanoue's lacquer pieces are both technically demanding and conceptually rich, bridging ancient material knowledge with a contemporary sculptural vision. They extend his ongoing exploration of form, breath, and transformation, adding a new layer to his evolving ceramic language.

Shinya's artistic achievements have garnered widespread recognition, including prestigious awards such as the MINO International Ceramics Competition. His works grace exhibitions both in Japan and abroad, standing as powerful exemplars of Japanese contemporary ceramic art. The esteemed collections of The Museum of Kyoto, The Museum of Ceramic Art in Hyogo, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art proudly display his captivating creations, attesting to his enduring legacy.

1976 Born in Kyoto, Japan.
Lives in Kyoto, Japan.

Education

- 2010 - 2017 Lecturer at Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Japan
- 2006 - 2009 Assistant Professor, Ceramic Laboratory, Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Japan
- 2003 Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Ceramic courses, B.F.A
- 1999 Doshisha University, Faculty of Theology, Kyoto, Japan.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2021 Poly Time Museum, Beijing, China
Shinya Tanoue Contemporary Ceramics, Blue, Shells, Urushi
- 2019 Atelier Hiro, Osaka, Japan
Shinya Tanoue
- 2018 Tohgoro Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Shinya Tanoue Solo Exhibition
- Hankyu Umeda department store, Osaka, Japan
Shinya Tanoue Ceramics Exhibition
- 2017 Gallery Hana, Kyoto, Japan
Shinya Tanoue
- 2016 Mizen Fine Art, Paris, France
Coquille - Eclosion, Shinya Tanoue
- Keihan Art Gallery, Osaka, Japan
Vessels and Shells, Shinya Tanoue
- 2014 Okayama Tenmaya Gallery, Okayama, Japan
Vessels and Shells, Shinya Tanoue
- Hiroshima Hatchobori Tenmaya Gallery, Hiroshima, Japan
Vessels and Shells, Shinya Tanoue
- 2013 Reijinsha Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Shinya Tanoue Ceramic Exhibition
- Mitsukoshi Isetan Gallery, Osaka, Japan
Vessels and Shells, Shinya Tanoue
- 2012 Kyoto Ceramic Center, Kyoto Japan
Shinya Tanoue exhibition
- Reijinsha Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Shinya Tanoue Ceramic Exhibition

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2011 Mitsukoshi Isetan Gallery, Osaka, Japan
Ceramics exhibition, Shinya Tanoue

Ginza Mitsukoshi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Ceramics exhibition, Shinya Tanoue

2010 Daimaru Kyoto Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Ceramics exhibition, Shinya Tanoue

2008 Inax Gallery Ceramics, Tokyo, Japan
Spherical with a blue edge, Shinya Tanoue

Gallery Kotetsu, Gifu, Japan
Inner Power, Outer Power, Shinya Tanoue

2006 Daimaru Kyoto Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Shinya Tanoue Ceramic Exhibition

Selected Group Exhibitions

2024 Shanghai Shengjia Art Space, Shanghai
«A dialogue between pottery and lacquer»

2023 Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art, Japan
“Visionaries: Making Another Perspective”

2020 Hart hall H Queens, Central, Hong Kong
Japonisme 2020 by Kamono Art - Contemporary interpretation of Japonisme

Sommerset House, London, UK
Collect 2020 ESH Gallery booth

2019 Tohgoro Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Setsu Junji and Shinya Tanoue two artists ceramic exhibition

2018 Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art, Japan
The 3rd Japan Ceramic Society Encouragement Award Kansai Exhibition

EHS Gallery, Milan, Italy Arts, Tokyo, Japan
Blue: Signs from the sea, Group Show

Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
Collect 2018 ESG Gallery booth

Kadoya Gallery, Colorado, USA
The Grove, Contemporary Clay

Conrad Hotel Hong Kong, HK
Asia Contemporary Art Show, Wamano Art booth

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2017

Kumu Kanazawa, Kanazawa, Japan
Kogei Art Fair Kanazawa

Basel, Switzerland
Tresor Contemporary Craft, represented by ESH Gallery and Mizen Fine Art

Conrad Hotel Hong Kong, HK
Asia Contemporary Art Show, Wamano Art booth

Daimaru Kyoto, 6th floor Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Appearance of 1717

Ceramic Park Mino, Gifu, Japan
11th International Ceramic Exhibition Mino

Sangre De Cristo Art Center, Pueblo Colorado, USA
Japan Style, Hoag Gallery

Geneva, Switzerland
Art Geneve, ESH Gallery Booth

2016

Milan, Italy
Step Art Fair - Milano Sculptura, ESH gallery booth

Paris, France
Festival Arethe 07, Mizen Fine Art

Grand Palais, Paris, France
Revelations Art Fair, Mizen Fine Art booth

Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona, USA
A Resonance of Clay, Contemporary Japanese Ceramics, from the collection
of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz

2015

ESH Gallery, Milan, Italy
Nippon! Contemporary Arts & Crafts from Japan

Anadolu University, Eskişehir, Turkey
Dialogue with Materials, Contemporary Japanese Arts & Crafts

The International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy
59° Premio Faenza

Daimaru Tokyo, Daimaru Shinsaibashi and Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Japan
The 23rd Japan Ceramic Exhibition

- 2014 Ahmed Adnan Saygun Sanat Merkezi Art Center, Izmir, Turkey
Dialogue with Materials, Contemporary Japanese Arts and Crafts
New York, USA
New York Art, Antique & Jewelry Show, Dai Ichi Arts booth
Tenri Japanisch-Deutsch Kultur Werkstatt, Köln, Germany
New Generation, New Breath.
Gallery Rin, Tokyo, Japan
Thoughts volume 2, Techniques beyond Techniques
- 2013 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
Elements in Harmony, Contemporary Japanese Ceramics, Collection of
Richard B. McMahon
Pavlikeni History Museum, Bulgaria
Tradition and present
Espace Culturel Bertin Poiree, Paris, France
Franco-Japonaise de Tenri
Calvin-Morris Gallery, NY, USA
Restless II! A mix
Takashimaya Gallery, Osaka, Japan
Space
- 2012 Galatea Gallery, Bucharest, Romania
Ceramic Now Exhibition, 3rd edition
Mingei International Museum, San Diego, California, USA
Contemporary Japanese Ceramics from the Collection of Gordon
Brodfuehrer
Robert F. Agrella Art Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA, USA
Japanese Ceramics from the William Bayer Collection, Curated by Hiroshi
Fuchigami
- 2011 Takashimaya 6th floor Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Synchronicity with Pottery
Gallery Tosei, Osaka, Japan
The Cool Ceramics of 4
iPreciation Gallery, Singapore
UN•Earth' 土•非土
Philosophy of Gaze, 40 years of Kyoto Saga University of Arts
Collect 2020 ESH Gallery booth.
Tenri Japanisch-Deutsch Kultur Werkstatt, Köln, Germany

Hyogo Museum of Ceramic Art
Opening up the horizon of Contemporary Ceramics

2010 Keiko Gallery, USA
It's all about cups' 10

iPreciation Gallery, Hong Kong
UN•Earth' 土•非土

Espace Culturel Bertin Poiree, Paris, France
Japanese Contemporary Ceramic Art

Petit Luxe, Tokyo, Japan
Heisei Ceramic Art

Gallery Voice, Gifu, Japan
Shape with Lid

Kyoto Culture Museum, Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto Crafts Biennial

2009 Kyoto Prefectural Building, Kyoto, Japan
New Wave, Kyoto prefectural Arts and Crafts new selection.

Kobe Meriden Park, Kobe, Japan
2nd Kobe Biennale Contemporary Ceramic Art Exhibition

Drouot Richelieu, France
Camar & Associe: Creation Japonaise Contemporaine

ArtFair Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
Robert Yellin Yakimono Gallery Booth exhibition

2008 Gallery Maroni, Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Ceramic Art Alumni Exhibition

Gallery Suyori 数寄, Aichi, Japan
Kansai 3 Ceramics

Torindo 桃林堂 Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Sonawa Exhibition

Museum of Ceramic Art, Hyogo, Japan
Techniques and Materials of Pottery.

Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Kyoto, Japan
Teacher's exhibition - Crafted Forms

2007 Kobe Meriden Park, Kobe, Japan
1st Kobe Biennale Contemporary Ceramic Art Exhibition

Aichi Prefectural Museum, Aichi, Japan
28th Chosan Award Contemporary Ceramic Art Exhibition.

Nagoya, Japan
45th Anniversary Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition

Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Kyoto, Japan
Teacher's exhibition - Dialogue with Materials

Daimaru Museum Tokyo, Osaka Tour, Japan
19th Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition

2006 Seto City Century Crafts Center, Aichi, Japan
Ceramic Vessel Exhibition

Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art, Tochigi, Japan
6th Mashiko Ceramic Art Exhibition

Hankyu Department Store, Osaka, Japan
24th Asahi Contemporary Craft Exhibition

Kyoto Museum of Culture
Kyoto Prefectural Arts & Crafts, New Selection Exhibition

2005 Craft Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Ceramic Exhibition

Ceramic Park, Mino, Gifu
7th International Ceramic Exhibition

Gallery Nagai, Shinsaibashi, Tokyo, Japan
Golden Egg Exhibition

2004 Craft Gallery Gen, Kyoto, Japan
Tobako Exhibition

Kyoto, Japan
3rd Tachikichi Sponsored Craft Competition, New Buds of Kyoto Ceramics

Craft Gallery Gen, Kyoto, Japan
Long Plate 長皿 Exhibition

2003 Nagoya, Japan
41st Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition Tour

Kyoto City Museum of Art, Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto Exhibition

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Kyoto City Museum of Arts, Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto Saga University Graduation Work

2002

Kyoto, Japan
1st Tachikichi Sponsored Craft Competition, New Buds of Kyoto Ceramics

Public Collections

Museum of Kyoto, Kyoto Japan

Museum of Ceramic Art, Hyogo, Japan

World Tile Museum, Aichi, Japan

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN, USA

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, USA

Phoenix Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH, USA

Crocker Museum, Sacramento, CA, USA

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殼' 23 一胎

Shell'23 - Womb n°18

Ceramic
53 x 28 x 28.5cm
2023

€ 2'900



殻' 25 一 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°19

Ceramic
29 x 27 x 31 cm
2025

€ 2'200



殻' 25 一 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°20

Ceramic
16 x 16 x 27 cm
2025

€ 2'200



殻' 25 - 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°1

Ceramic
43 x 39 x 49 cm
2025

€ 4'000



殻' 25 一 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°2

Ceramic
25 x 25 x 59 cm
2025

€ 3'800



殻' 25 一 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°3

Ceramic

22 x 21 x 41 cm

2025

€ 1'900



殻' 25 一 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°4

Ceramic
33 x 25 x 27 cm
2025

€ 1'750



殻'25一孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°5

Ceramic

21 x 21 x 31 cm

2025

€ 1'250



殻' 25 一孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°6

Ceramic

23 x 19 x 60 cm

2025

€ 2'050



殻' 25 一 孵

Shell'25 - Hatching n°7

Ceramic
19 x 17 x 34 cm
2025

€ 950



殻' 24 - 卵

Shell'24 - Hatching n°8

Ceramic

81 x 22 x 24 cm

2025

€ 3'700



殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°9

Ceramic
50 x 46 x 50 cm
2025

€ 4'000



殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°10

Ceramic
75 x 22 x 18 cm
2025

€ 3'100



殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°1 I

Ceramic
18 x 18 x 24 cm
2025

€ 950

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殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°12

Ceramic
32 x 26 x 33 cm
2025

€ 1'700



殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°13

Ceramic
20 x 19 x 44 cm
2025

€ 1'700



殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°14

Ceramic
21 x 18 x 63 cm
2025

€ 2'300



殻' 25 一羽

Shell'25 - Eclosion n°15

Ceramic
14 x 14 x 35 cm
2025

€ 900



殻' 23 一胎

Shell'23 - Womb n°16

Ceramic, Lacquer

52 x 21 x 19 cm

2023

€ 1'750



殻' 23 一胎

Shell'23 - Womb n°17

Ceramic

31 x 25 x 24 cm

2023

€ 1'750

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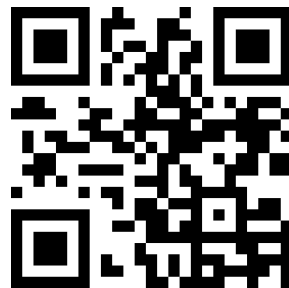


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