

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘Kamoda Shōji: The Art of Change,’ The Artist’s First Museum Retrospective Outside of Japan, to Open at Minneapolis Institute of Art in December 2021

Minneapolis Institute of Art
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artsmia.org



Kamoda Shōji, Japanese, 1933-1983, Jar (detail), 1971, stoneware with red and green painted glazes, 4 ½ x 6 1/2 in., Collection of Joan B. Mirviss and Robert J. Levine

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—November 8, 2021—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) today announced an exhibition of works by the Japanese ceramist Kamoda Shōji, who despite his fame in Japan for significant contributions to contemporary ceramics, has not received the attention he deserves outside of his native country, in part because of his untimely death at the age of 49 in 1983. The exhibition, Kamoda’s first museum retrospective outside of Japan, will celebrate the artist’s meticulous craftsmanship and the beauty of his vessels while examining how his experimentation with material, form, and texture led to a transformation in modern Japanese ceramics. Featuring 49 works from across his oeuvre, “Kamoda Shōji: The Art of Change” will demonstrate the potter’s tireless innovation and experimentation with technique and form throughout his career. The exhibition, curated by Matthew Welch, Mia’s deputy director and chief curator, will be on view in the Cargill Gallery from December 11, 2021, through April 17, 2022.

“We are very excited to be sharing Kamoda Shōji’s ceramics with American audiences,” Welch said. “Contemporary Japanese ceramics are widely admired and voraciously collected around the world. This exhibition focuses on a seminal figure who helped change the course of ceramic production in Japan through his innovative approach to form and surface decoration. Given his monolithic reputation in Japan, it is high time that our audiences have the opportunity to enjoy his work and learn about his breathtaking creativity. We are especially grateful to the private collectors from across the nation who have lent prized works from their collections for this exhibition.”

Mia

Kamoda Shōji (1933-1983) is one of Japan's most lauded ceramists, despite a brief career that only lasted around twenty years. "Kamoda Shōji: The Art of Change" will begin with examples of the artist's early works, produced after he graduated from the Kyoto City University of Arts in 1956. While Kamoda established his first studio in Mashiko, a town with a rich history of producing pottery, he was immediately eager to challenge tradition through innovation and draw inspiration from ancient techniques rather than the prevailing taste for folk ceramics. The early works on view demonstrate Kamoda's fascination with ash glazes as well as the natural quality of the unglazed clay.

The exhibition will also include several works from Kamoda's signature "wave" pattern from the early 1970s. Among his most prized and sought after works, some of these are engraved, while others sport inlaid colored slip glazes. Kamoda continued to explore wave patterns and ripple effects even as he began trying out new forms and techniques. In the second half of his career, he became especially interested colored enamels, which he sometimes contrasted with the roughness of the clay from Tōno, some 250 miles north of Tokyo, where he established a studio in 1969. In tandem with this, Kamoda began experimenting almost exclusively with hand-built forms, abandoning the wheel in favor of coil techniques which he believed strengthened the relationship between the potter and his material.

Both the exhibition and accompanying catalogue will explore how Kamoda's work contributed to a redefinition of decorative arts in Japan and ushered in a new era in particular for ceramics, as artists—following Kamoda's example—shook off the yoke of tradition and experimented with innovative approaches to clay, form, and surface decoration. Highlights of the catalogue include an introductory text by Dr. Yokobori Satoshi of the Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art, who has been responsible for multiple publications and exhibitions of Kamoda's work, and an essay by curator Dr. Aaron Rio, who began work on this exhibition while a curator at Mia and continued to provide guidance as a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours

Thursday-Sunday

10am–5pm

Monday-Wednesday

Closed

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