

BEYOND TENMOKU:  
New Work by Hideaki Miyamura

Pucker Gallery · Boston





Vase with Colt Coral Glaze  
7 1/2 x 7 x 7"  
HM297



Vase with Black and Blue Hare's Fur Glaze  
6 1/2 x 5 3/4 x 5 3/4"  
HM333



Vase with Green Crystalline Glaze  
6 3/4 x 6 x 6"  
HM308

## BEYOND TENMOKU: New Work by Hideaki Miyamura

A clump of wool, a fallen tree, a lump of clay, some crushed minerals. They have little immediate use and only limited intrinsic worth. Theirs is a value of anticipation, requiring the confluence of materials, a skilled hand, and imagination, to be realized as compositions of shape and color. Certainly this is one of the most remarkable features of great art—the conversion of simple substance to objects that transcend their materials, stand of them and yet, beyond them. This transformation captivates us today as much as it did many thousands of years ago when it was all new. The wool, spun, dyed, and woven, reappears as a magnificent carpet. The greatest of these combine excellent technique—even knots, balanced tension of warp and weft—with creative drawing and great richness of color. In the hands of the recently departed master, Sam Maloof, the downed lumber becomes an elegant table and chair, displaying innovative joinery, fresh design, and wonderful sensitivity for hue and grain. The clay and minerals—alumina silicates, iron oxides—the most abundant components of the earth, undergo the most dramatic metamorphosis, emerging as a brilliant, dazzling, bottle or jar, by our own master of form and glaze, Hideaki Miyamura.

The story of Hideaki's development as an artist and craftsman is well known. His collegiate experience in the US, and his five-year apprenticeship in Japan with master potter Shurei Miura, a specialist in the glazes called tenmoku, has been recounted many times. He was drawn to these glazes, known as "hare's fur", with their streaks of black over a brown or reddish base. They have had a special attraction for potters and connoisseurs for centuries. They came to prominence in China during the Song Dynasty (960-1269). In the 13<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist monks brought tenmoku teabowls to Japan from Mt. Tianmu (Tenmoku in Japanese), where they became highly prized. The spread of the tea ceremony in 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century Japan led to the production of a great many tenmoku teabowls, which are treasured today.

The old glazes were originally made largely, if not completely, from clay, which provided silicates, the glass of the glaze, as well as alumina, which increases viscosity and helps prevent running during firing. The color was from iron oxides. Daniel Rhodes gives the composition of a simple version in his famous manual, *Clay and Glazes for the Potter*: Albany slip (a suspension of clay in water), iron oxide, burnt sienna, and feldspar (another source of silicates). The firing can be in oxidation or reduction and at high temperature—cone 10-12 (2300-2400 °F). When you try this at home you will be rewarded with a pot

that is muted, dark, subtle. Potters have always loved these glazes for their warmth, their restraint, and connection to the earth. However, as you will discover, these glazes are not brilliant, and they do not dazzle.

There are many variations on the basic tenmoku, some with greater sparkle, such as the "oil spot" glaze. Volatile components boil out of the glaze during firing. Given a carefully controlled firing and a long slow cooling the blisters can be healed, producing spots, which may have an iridescent quality. An even more striking effect is seen in the famous Yohen Tenmoku teabowls, from the Song Dynasty. There are only four surviving examples, all in Japanese museums. These have a starry night appearance with iridescent iron crystals on a black background. Precisely how the Song potters achieved this effect has been long since lost, and only a few contemporary potters have succeeded in producing credible reproductions of the glaze.

Hideaki has written about the inspiration of these pieces that led him, during his apprenticeship, to attempt to create an iridescent crystal glaze. The effort required his oft quoted 10,000 glaze tests, followed by an additional 2,000 after he set out on his own. The challenge was considerable. Crystals do not usually form in liquids (glazes are glasses, which are super cooled liquids) but can be encouraged to do so by adjustment of the glaze composition (zinc oxide promotes, alumina prevents), and careful slowing of the cooling. The kiln is held for hours at precisely the right temperature, to enable crystal formation. Of course, reducing the alumina results in a very fluid glaze, which can run off the pot. Solve one problem, create another. There are solutions of course, but, without exception, crystal glazes are difficult. They require focused attention to detail and complete control over the firing. Development of a successful glaze demands great determination and psychological stamina in the face of frequent failure.

Hideaki's account gives us a sense of the enormous effort required to transform the dark, understated, tenmoku glaze into the stunning surfaces that we see in this collection: the iridescent crystal black, the blue, and the gold, hare's fur. But this is a description of the technical effort. The deeper question is: how did he see that it might be possible? This is the insight that speaks to artistic brilliance; that separates the legions of skilled potters who worked within the boundaries of conventional tenmoku, from an individual who took the essentials of the tradition and broke through, creating something remarkable and unique, beyond tradition. Not a reproduction, not a recreation, but something truly novel, uniquely his own.



Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze  
5 ¾ x 5 ½ x 5 ½"  
HM329



Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze  
7 x 3 ¼ x 3 ¼"  
HM327



Vase with Gold Glaze  
7 ½ x 6 ¼ x 6 ¼"  
HM336

The glazes are displayed on classical forms — bottles and jars with largely vertical surfaces that take full advantage of the downward movement of the glaze during firing, and accentuate the “hare’s fur” streaking effect of the blue and gold glazes. The modern potter who chooses canonical shapes takes on a special challenge. These forms have been developed and refined over thousands of years. We know what they look like, and we see contemporary versions with a critical eye, sharpened by centuries of experience. In Hideaki’s hands these pots are superbly rendered, the lines clean and smooth. All are in porcelain, the most unforgiving of clay bodies. Note the shoulders, a weak place in a pot, and, if not skillfully worked, inclined to sag during the firing. Here the shoulders maintain their slope, a mark of skill and control. Excellent examples are HM292, HM336, and HM339. Constructed in two pieces, they have come through the fire without decline.

A perfectly executed form with an unbroken line is the blue hare’s fur bottle HM299. This piece also presents the variety obtained within a single glaze, reflecting the application and the location on the pot. The descent of the glaze during firing results in a dark glassy region at the very top, before making way for the hare’s fur effect that gives the glaze its name. At the bottom the glaze has the appearance of an iridescent metal foil, the result of exposure to the heat trapped between the kiln shelf and the swell of the bottle. There is an impressive range of color in some of the “blue” pieces. In several we see blues breaking into reds above the crinkled foil effect at the bottom, with yellow peeking out behind the blue (HM325, HM327, HM329, HM330 and HM331). The complexity of coloration is reminiscent of the variability of shade and hue in oriental carpets due to the placement of complementary and analogous colors, combined with the natural tonal vagaries of vegetal dyed wool.

A mark of Hideaki’s work is the high heat he employs, and his combination of both oxidation and reduction phases during firings that may last as long as 24 hours. Firing is risky, and pots are lost during the process. Many potters work with a relatively large kiln, so as to maximize production. It is not possible to maintain even conditions of temperature and atmosphere in a large kiln, and so each firing yields successes and failures, with some pieces under, and others over, fired. In contrast, Hideaki works with a relatively small kiln. The gain is the greater control of conditions in the chamber, at the cost of far fewer pieces per firing. This control is essential for his most demanding pieces, pots that are refired after overglazing. Not many potters attempt this; it is too costly and too

unpredictable. But the effect can be stunning: gold (HM338) or blue (HM333) cascading down over black crystals.

Occasionally Hideaki departs from the vertical and gives us a bowl (HM340). This in classic simplicity, it recalls the teabowls of the old Chinese and Japanese potters, so often in tenmoku. Early in their training potters learn to make bowls like this, that ask to be cupped in the hands. Here in burnished gold, with black breaking through, to remind you of the old days.

A few years ago Hideaki expanded his range to glazes based, not on Chinese and Japanese models, but on the crystal glazes developed in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The effect of these pieces is so different than those based on tenmoku that it is almost surprising to see them from the same hand. And yet the same mastery of form and fire and invention is fully evident. Note the striking blue crystals on warm Chinese yellow (HM304), the light green on green (HM308), the yellow on white (HM311, HM312) and white on white (HM297), on a series of beautiful bottles.

To complete the collection Hideaki has returned to the inspiration of the Chinese and Japanese potters who, many centuries ago, produced crackle glazed pots. These glazes are the result of deliberate adjustment of the formulation so that during the cooling phase of the firing the glaze will contract a little more than the clay body. This results in cracking of the glaze. The pattern of the crazing can be accentuated by rubbing on a colorant that is taken into the lines but not the rest of the surface. Crackle glazing is shown to wonderful effect in HM319, HM341 and HM342.

Every age produces outstanding artists, masters of technique, combined with extraordinary creativity. Some are anonymous to us like the Song potters and the weavers of the great 16<sup>th</sup>-century carpets. Others, like Sam Maloof, receive richly deserved acclaim. We are fortunate that Hideaki is of our time, and we have the opportunity to know him and be his patrons. His unique talent has drawn the attention of museum curators and cognoscenti, and he has an international reputation. His work resides in the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Sackler at Harvard, the Carnegie in Pittsburgh, and other museums in the US, in Israel, and New Zealand. Of course he is represented in the homes of numerous private collectors in this country, and notably, in Japan. One of his magnificent tall bottles, gold over black crystals, stands splendidly on a walnut table by Sam Maloof, surrounded by carpets and textiles from one of the finest collections in the United States. Perfect company.

—Michael M. Seidman, 2009



*Vase with Starry Night Glaze*  
 12 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"  
 HM339



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Black and Gold Glaze*  
 7 3/4 x 6 x 6"  
 HM338



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 7 x 5 1/4 x 5 1/4"  
 HM325





*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 5 1/2 x 4 1/4 x 4 1/4"  
 HM331



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 5 3/4 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2"  
 HM330



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Black and Gold Glaze*  
 14 x 5 3/4 x 5 3/4"  
 HM300



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 15 1/4 x 6 3/4 x 6 3/4"  
 HM299



*Vase with White and Gold Crystalline Glaze*  
 7 x 6 3/4 x 6 3/4"  
 HM312



*Vase with White and Gold Crystalline Glaze*  
 11 1/2 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
 HM311



*Vase with White and Gold Crystalline Glaze*  
 12 3/4 x 4 1/4 x 4 1/4"  
 HM296



*Covered Jar with White Crackle Glaze*  
 7 ½ x 9 ¼ x 9 ¼"  
 HM319



*Vase with White Crackle Glaze*  
 8 x 7 x 7"  
 HM341



*Tear Drop Form Vase with White Crackle Glaze*  
 12 x 8 ¼ x 8 ¼"  
 HM342

*Vase with Yellow and Blue Crystalline Glaze*  
 10 ½ x 8 ½ x 8 ½"  
 HM306



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Yellow and Blue Crystalline Glaze*  
 14 ¾ x 5 ¾ x 5 ¾"  
 HM305



*Vase with Yellow and Blue Crystalline Glaze*  
 11 x 9 ½ x 9 ½"  
 HM304





Vase with Yellow and Blue Crystalline Glaze  
7 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 6 3/4"  
HM307



Vase with Yellow and Blue Crystalline Glaze  
9 x 7 x 7"  
HM302



Tear Drop Form Vase with Yellow and Blue Crystalline Glaze  
11 x 5 x 5"  
HM298



*Vase with White Crystalline Glaze*  
 7 1/2 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
 HM316



*Vase with White Crystalline Glaze*  
 7 1/2 x 7 1/4 x 7 1/4"  
 HM309



*Vase with White Crystalline Glaze*  
 14 x 8 1/4 x 8 1/4"  
 HM351



Vase with White Crystalline Glaze  
8 x 7 1/4 x 7 1/4"  
HM310



Vase with White Crystalline Glaze  
7 1/4 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
HM353



Vase with White Crystalline Glaze  
14 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 6 3/4"  
HM350



Vase with White Crystalline Glaze  
14 1/2 x 6 x 6"  
HM352



*Vase with White Crystalline Glaze*  
7 x 6 ½ x 6 ½"  
HM354



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Green Crystalline and Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
15 ¾ x 11 ¼ x 11 ¼"  
HM295





*Vase with Iron Crystalline Glaze*  
12 x 6 x 6"  
HM347



*Vase with Iron Crystalline Glaze*  
14 1/4 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
HM348



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ "  
 HM322



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 8  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 3  $\frac{1}{2}$ "  
 HM323



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
 9 x 4  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 4  $\frac{1}{4}$ "  
 HM324



Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze  
9 x 4 x 4"  
HM326



Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze  
8 1/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2"  
HM328



Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze  
10 3/4 x 7 1/2 x 7 1/2"  
HM314



*Vase with Iron Crystalline Glaze*  
7 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"  
HM321



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
10 1/4 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
HM318





*Vase with Gold Glaze*  
8 ½ x 4 ½ x 4 ½"  
HM334



*Vase with Black and Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
9 ¼ x 3 ½ x 3 ½"  
HM332



*Vase with Gold Glaze*  
9 x 4 x 4"  
HM335



*Vase with Iron Crystalline Glaze*  
7 1/2 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
HM337



*Vase with Green Crystalline Glaze*  
10 x 9 1/4 x 9 1/4"  
HM315



*Vase with Iron Crystalline Glaze*  
7 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"  
HM346



*Vase with Green Crystalline Glaze*  
12 1/4 x 11 1/4 x 11 1/4"  
HM345



*Vase with Gold and Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
9 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2"  
HM349



*Plate with Gold Glaze*  
1 1/4 x 20 x 20"  
HM303





*Tear Drop Form Vase with Peacock Glaze*  
16 x 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7  $\frac{3}{4}$ "  
HM293



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Peacock Glaze*  
16  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 6  $\frac{3}{4}$ "  
HM320



*Bowl with Gold Glaze*  
2 x 5  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ "  
HM340





*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
16 x 7 1/2 x 7 1/2"  
HM357



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
16 3/4 x 7 3/4 x 7 3/4"  
HM294



*Bowl with Gold Glaze*  
5 x 7 x 7"  
HM355



*Bowl with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*  
7 1/2 x 9 x 9"  
HM356

# HIDEAKI MIYAMURA

## Biography

Born in Niigata, Japan on December 15, 1955

Completed apprenticeship with Master Potter Shurei Miura in Yamanashi, Japan, 1987

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 1981

### PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Auckland Institute and Museum, New Zealand

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA

Danforth Museum, Framingham, MA

Georgetown University, Special Collections, Washington DC

Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan, UT

Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel

Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN

Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY

Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA

Renwick gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

Sackler Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Springfield Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA

Tikotin Museum, Haifa, Israel

Wheaton College, Norton, MA

### GRANTS

Individual Artist Fellowship, State of New Hampshire – 2008

Individual Artist Fellowship, State of New Hampshire – 2002

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

“Resplendent Grace”, Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA – 2008

“Pursuing the Eye of Heaven”, Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA – 2006

Gallery Camino Real, Boca Raton, FL – 2005

Katie Gingrass Gallery, Milwaukee, WI – 2005

“Risk of Discovery”, Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA – 2004

“Fusion of Cultures”, Kentucky Museum of Art, Louisville, KY – 2004

SOFA New York, New York, NY – 2003, 2004, 2005

SOFA Chicago, Chicago, IL – 2003, 2004, 2005

Ayumi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan – 1998, 1999

“The Bay State Clay” Fitchburg Museum of Art, Fitchburg, MA – 1993

“Feats of Clay” Lincoln, CA – 1989

Fletcher Challenge Ceramic Award, New Zealand – 1989



*Tear Drop Form Vase with Blue Crystalline Glaze*  
14 ¾ x 6 ½ x 6 ½"  
HM313



### ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I was born in Japan and have been living in the United States for 18 years. While in Japan, I studied and apprenticed with a Japanese master potter for six years. For many years now, I have been experimenting with my own formulas to create glazes that have never been made before. My original interest in glazes came from ancient Chinese tea bowls that had very rare glazes, which no one has been able to reproduce. This set me on my own quest to experiment and create new iridescent glazes that have a three-dimensional quality, and speak an inner feeling of purity and peacefulness. My forms are also very important in this formula. I create my own interpretations of classical forms, while trying to achieve a clarity and simplicity of line. I am very conscious of the ways in which a form interacts with the space around it. I want my pieces to feel in balance with their environment, to feel as though they co-exist naturally with their surroundings. When I create my pieces, I hope to make people feel good when they look at my work. My goal is to try to evoke a feeling of inner peace and tranquility.

PUCKER  
GALLERY

ESTABLISHED 1967 BOSTON

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To view this catalogue and other Gallery publications and to experience an audio tour of the exhibition, please visit [www.puckergallery.com](http://www.puckergallery.com).

GALLERY HOURS:

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Sunday 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Member of the Boston Art Dealers Association.

One hour free validated parking is available in the lot on the corner of Newbury and Dartmouth Streets.

## BEYOND TENMOKU: New Work by Hideaki Miyamura

DATES:

13 March to 12 April 2010

OPENING RECEPTION:

13 March 2010, 3:00 to 6:00 PM

The public is invited to attend. The artist will be present.

CREDITS:

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Editors: Destiny M. Barletta and Justine H. Choi

Photography: Keith McWilliams

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FRONT COVER LEFT:

*Tear Drop Form Vase with Iron Crystalline Glaze*

23 x 8 ½ x 8 ½"

HM344

FRONT COVER RIGHT:

*Tear Drop Form Vase with White Crystalline Glaze*

21 x 9 ½ x 9 ½"

HM343



*Vase with Blue Hare's Fur Glaze*

16 ¾ x 11 x 11"

HM292