

# Nieuwsbrief – augustus 2011

Galerie Iroha celebrates her first anniversary with specially invited guest Jassu Kaneko in September 2011. In this newsletter, we introduce the invited artist and his exposition in a little more detail.

Jassu Kaneko studied besides ceramics in Ibaragi, also interior design in Tokyo, Japan. Before he came to Amsterdam, he did expositions in Tokyo, Japan and lived temporary in an art residence in New York and London. The reason why he choose for Amsterdam was that he wanted to make new works combining glass and ceramics at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, and Amsterdam has a more human pace of living than any other city. After his graduation in glass at the Rietveld Academy he continued living in Amsterdam for 23 years now, presenting his fine art pieces combining ceramics with glass.

In June I visited Kaneko's studio in Amsterdam for this interview. He has a large studio on a very ideal location, only 15 minutes by tram from Amsterdam Central Station. In his atelier a large variety of tools could be observed, very well ordered and put in place. You can see immediately how precisely Kaneko works. My arrival was perfectly timed as I could witness the results of a first firing process. The new pieces were taken layer by layer from the kiln, a tense and silent moment. One starts admiring the pieces more and more realizing that only a few candidates will make it to the following stage.

Kaneko explains that only a few pieces will be prepared with glass parts for the following firing process. Once prepared they are put into the kiln again in the hope that a good balance between intended and natural effects is found. Kaneko's explanations are colorfully accompanied with his views on everyday's life putting things in perspective and making the interview very enjoyable as well.



Photo1: Work just came out the kiln



Photo 2: Fired works in a kiln



Photo 3: Checking the finish of the work

Mamiko: "This is the first stage of a process, I find the shapes (see photo 1,2,3 above) very interesting. I feel this work's beauty goes with its pure and simple shapes?"

Kaneko: "Yes, because this is going to hang from a normal tree like a kind of leaf. Although I am consciousness about this, it is important for me that I put my mind to the act of creation rather than to determine its shape .

I work 100% on the process of creation, and of course, in my awareness of facilitating this process I have to account for some uncertainty in process interaction. After preparation, clay, glaze and glass will react in the kiln, so nature has still its final say to some extend on shape and color detail. It's like I work together with nature on these pieces. "

Mamiko: "Besides your studies on ceramics you have studied interior design at Tama Art University in Tokyo. Then you frequently exhibited your work on ceramics and glass in Tokyo , can you tell us more about your works in Japan. "

Kaneko: "I certainly had already studied ceramics in Japan and worked with glass. I experimented with the melting of glass and painting it with chemical coatings to achieve local mirror effects. I experienced that some effects or shapes could disappear or change during the process, anyway, this play of things you can and can't control fascinated me. I gradually tried to incorporate these aspects into my work. I also tried to use various other materials, for example woodcarving or woodworking. Woodworking is the world of skill I think. It is interesting but I would not use that skill. I prefer putting my work in the kiln then let nature take its course and accept the work as is. That is alright with me, I'll think afterward about what happened and then I use it intentionally for the next time, and I'm repeating it.

Mamiko: "As you explained, nature is an important aspect in your way of working. Is there also a strong relationship between nature and the type of work you make?"

Galerie Iroha

Uitgave No. 3  
Augustus 2011

Colofon

Mamiko Nagatomo  
Hans Langen

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Kaneko: "Yeah, in Japan people have a profound connection/understanding to nature during their entire life (Iroha: for Japanese people most natural elements might have their own hidden beauty or godlike/divine aspects enforcing respect in a natural way.) There is some kind of tacit understanding on aspects related to nature or the inspiration it might have on the individual, so, nobody really asks you about it profoundly. In Europe, however, people might ask you 'Why are you so?' also 'Who are you?' and then I have to explain even about private matters as my childhood, etc. but then, while I was explaining I started thinking this is not really accurate. Since I came to the Netherlands, I began wonder what aspect in the Japanese culture was supporting me. 'What was this Japanese culture anyway?' I took considerable time catching the profound of Japanese culture and climate. Comparatively distant and analyzing from different sides, and I picked up some hints for myself. I discovered things such as 'I just like this part of Japanese culture?' and started finding the characteristics or particularities of it. Realizing that in the Dutch or European culture these things are different, I could find proper use for it.

Mamiko: "This awareness and consciousness as a Japanese has become clearer in the course of living in the Netherlands. So, did it add to your work?"

Kaneko: "Yes. For example, in Japan I didn't care when producing art in a square form. See what happens here, so I thought. But if you show a square piece to Dutch or American artists, they would ask 'Why did you choose a square shape?', 'Why not another form?'; 'If you insist that you are free, then another form than square could do, right?' I could say: 'No, it's good in a square shape, isn't it? It is a matter of mind, rather than a matter of form', and then they would likely answer 'You're just stuck in the detail. You don't think about what presents this rectangle either'. So I started thinking and I tried to break the form completely."

Mamiko: "So, through such a process, a unique form can be born. Indeed, it looks like a leave but it is not always formed as a leave. It feels like it is an excellent balance between human intension and natural forces. Do you feel that living in Amsterdam was a great stimulus in that sense?"



Jassu Kaneko at his studio

Kaneko continues: "Yes. This breaking of form was a big inspiration and change for me. I felt at that time one more thing. Amsterdam is not such a big town, and people from over 120 countries have lived here, but there exists nothing like the American dream of becoming rich like in New York. Many foreigners try to do something special contributing to the Dutch society that is flexible towards them anyway, but somehow Dutch people don't notice their actions at all. What should you do? You don't explain 100% what you want to explain but you do it 120%! If you are observing, everyone knows that 'if you act for 120% your explanation comes across'. I learned this from daily life. When I graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy one of my professors asked me 'What did you learn here?' then I replied with 'Expression requires 120%'. (Kaneko laughs.) For me it was a really good learning experience. So, I still try to express at a 120% level."

Mamiko: (laughs) "Certain. Maybe this is not only true in the world of art I think. But what about the danger of too much over-expression?"

Kaneko: "Yeah, and if you exaggerate expressions, they will lack subtlety. Exaggerated expression can be comical, and might become shoddy. Anyway to retain subtlety is a matter of sense, in making art one can experiment and verify whether it is acceptable or not."

Mamiko: "The story goes back some time, but what was the particular reason to come to the Netherlands?"

Kaneko: "I wanted to combine glass and ceramics, making art pieces where glass and ceramic parts stick together directly from the start of the study program. This was not possible at an art university in Japan. I also visited glass departments at universities of arts in England, France, Italy and Sweden but I couldn't find a suitable program. Then I heard from my Dutch friend about the glass department of at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in the Netherlands, where I could combine these different fields right from the start, that is why I

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Kaneko continues: "In pottery, the choice of colors is very limited. Color becomes absolutely a color of ceramics. I wanted to discover something different somehow. Color of the glass has a very vivid sense of transparency. The first time I experienced I thought "This is it!". I would say that color of the glass became my color. "

Mamiko: "Looking at your work the color of the glass rests on top of the ceramic it loses its transparency a little. That is very different when comparing with colors of glass pieces alone, even the very highly saturated colors. They also give a different appearance to the ceramic body, so there is a mutual effect. Is it difficult to estimate the right effect of a certain combination? Does it deviate much from the original intended effect? "

Kaneko: "This depends on the reactions of the material in the kiln, the sharpness of the color and the shape become somewhat arbitrary. Some effects cannot be calculated for and the outcome is a balance of natural forces and intended effect. This is where it's really getting interesting. As I mentioned earlier, I make a number of pieces to compensate for the uncertainty in the outcome. This reassures me that I don't make these art pieces only by myself."

Mamiko: "Title of the exhibition is 'nature-future-REstructure' and the keyword is 'Hide and Seek', right? Can you explain? "

Kaneko: "I merely want to express my opinion on the society in the long run. Japanese people easily personify natural elements as soil and trees giving them a soul. The Japanese always feel that God dwells in all things. Here, the Dutch and Japanese people are looking at things from a different perspective and I want to let feel both perspectives. Furthermore, I have a feeling a new balance between human and nature and things has to be found.

The keyword 'Hide and Seek' is because I hope that you are looking for an ideological origin of ideas that are hidden inside. Art pieces will be put in place in a rather unconventional way such that people have to "find" them during the exhibition.

Mamiko: "Thank you for your time on this interview. I am very eager to know how your work will be felt by the Dutch and Japanese community. I particularly like the challenge on the 'hide and seek' play, arranging your works in a way which is new to me."



2011 (37x55cmx5cm/ porcelain+colorglass), Jassu Kaneko

**Galerie Iroha celebrates her first anniversary and presents exhibition of  
Jassu Kaneko  
"nature-future-REstructure"**

**Saturday 3 September - Sunday 30 October 2011**

**Opening and introduction Jassu Kaneko : Saturday 3 September 2011 /12:00 - 17:00**

For interested people the invitation card and newsletter can be downloaded from the website. Or, if you would like to receive future invitations or newsletters automatically, please send an e-mail to [info@galerie-iroha.nl](mailto:info@galerie-iroha.nl) mentioning "invitation card", or "newsletter" your name and address.

Galerie Iroha