

Craft Technique Documentary

Iron Glaze Pottery

The Art of HARA Kiyoshi



HARA Kiyoshi is a ceramic artist who, earlier in his career, studied with two great masters, ISHIGURO Munemaro and SHIMIZU Uichi, to glean extensive knowledge of various styles of pottery.

Making use of the special characteristics of iron glaze, HARA developed a unique method of double-glazing blacks and browns to create works featuring plant and animal motifs.

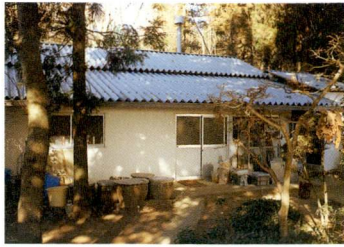
This video follows HARA Kiyoshi's creative process as he makes a Large Bowl with Iron Glaze and Flower Bird Design. It depicts his techniques and his passion for his art.

FY2010 35mm/Color 39'

Presented by The Agency for Cultural Affairs Produced by Sakura Motion Picture Co., Ltd.

Iron Glaze Pottery

The Art of HARA Kiyoshi



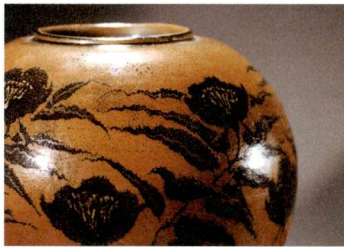
HARA's studio

Hara lives and works in Yorii, in northwest Saitama.



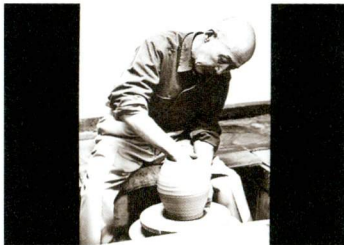
Characteristics of iron glazed pottery

When iron oxides are fired they produce a range of distinctive colors, from black and brown to subtle hues of blackish brown and yellowish red. Developed and widely used in China, this pottery style came to Japan in the late 12th century. Iron glazed ware was first produced in Seto, in central Japan, and developed thereafter.



Hara's style of iron glazed pottery

In 2005, HARA's achievements in developing a unique style of iron glazed pottery were acknowledged when he was recognized as a holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of iron glaze pottery.



Background and encounter with his two mentors

Fascinated with pottery from an early age, Hara left home to work in Kyoto. There, he met ceramic artist ISHIGURO Munemaro who took him on as a live-in apprentice at his studio in Yase, near Mt. Hiei. Later, he studied for about a decade with SHIMIZU Uichi, ISHIGURO's top disciple.



Inspiration

HARA says: 'Every piece of pottery has a shape. It can be appreciated for its shape alone. If shape is a form of reality, the pattern must reflect the artist's dream.'



Preparing the clay

HARA uses *Shinohara* clay from Shiga prefecture. It's difficult to shape and chips easily, but it brings out the essence of earthenware.



Kneading the clay

The clay is kneaded carefully to remove air bubbles. This process is called *Nejimomi*.



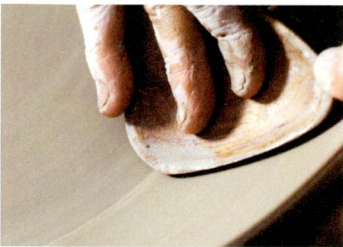
Shaping the large bowl

Let's see how HARA makes a large bowl.
On a large circular plate, he pounds a slab of clay to form the base.



Forming the wall of the bowl

Once the base is finished, he starts forming the wall with a thick coil of clay.



Using trowels and spatulas

Using trowels and spatulas, he shapes the walls and rim.



Forming the foot

When the bowl is semi dry, he places it upside down and forms the foot with a thin coil of clay.



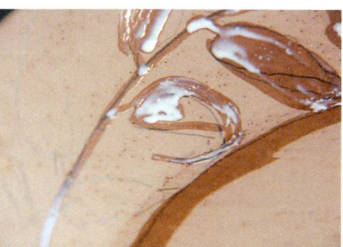
Glazing

He starts with the black glaze.
Holding the huge bisque fired bowl in both hands, he dips it into the black glaze.



Painting the design

As soon as the glaze is applied, he proceeds to paint the design. He quickly sketches the design in crayon.



Applying liquid rubber

After sketching, he paints the design in liquid rubber. The rubber sections will form a black silhouette when fired.

Iron Glaze Pottery

The Art of HARA Kiyoshi



Double glazing

He then brushes the second, reddish brown glaze over the entire design.



Removing the rubber sections

He removes the rubber sections before they dry to reveal a design with a dynamic quality that cannot be achieved with a paintbrush.



Creating the ceramic wall 'Hope'

In 1994, HARA created a ceramic wall titled 'Hope' for the entrance hall of the new town hall.



Packing and firing the kiln

To produce an iron glazed piece through oxidation firing takes about 22 hours. The temperature inside the kiln reaches 1,230 degrees.



Opening the kiln

Several days after the firing, the kiln is now cool enough to open.



Completed 'Large Bowl with Iron Glaze and Flower Bird Design'

Black flowers and birds silhouetted against a brownish red background. The sparse use of colors enhances the intensity and deepness of the iron glaze.



HARA Kiyoshi

HARA was born in 1936 in Shimane Prefecture. In 1954, he went to Kyoto and was accepted as a live-in apprentice to ISHIGURO Munemaro. Later, he began to study seriously with SHIMIZU Uichi. In 1965, he set up his own kiln in Setagaya, Tokyo where he experimented with various techniques and means of expression, especially with iron glazes, becoming a highly skilled ceramic artist of traditional iron glaze pottery. Based on his profound knowledge of ceramics in general, HARA made use of the special characteristics of iron glaze to develop a unique style that is both dynamic and refined. He has won acclaim for his innovative techniques, taking the tradition of iron glaze pottery to new heights.

In 2005, he was recognized a Living National Treasure, holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of iron glaze pottery. As a director of Nihon Kogeikai since 1996, he has been involved with the training and nurturing of future artists. He was made deputy board director of Kogeikai in 2010.

Special Thanks

Tokyo National Museum

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

Setagaya Art Museum

Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum

Imizu City Shinminato Museum

Yorii-machi, Osato-gun, Saitama

Video courtesy of NHK

Producer YAMAMOTO Takayuki

Writer and Director MURAYAMA Masami

Assistant Director INOUE Minoru

Camera Operator YAMAYA Keiji

Assistant Camera Operators
MORI Hideo, OTSUKA Takao

Lighting SATO Yamato

Lighting Assistant NOMOTO Toshiro

Editing ISHII Kanae

Sound Recording ARAI Tomiyasu

Sound Effects HOKARI Yukio

Recording Studio Aoi Studio Co., Ltd.

Film Editor Sanyo Henshushitu

Music Selection TOKUNAGA Yukiko

Titles Seieisha

Film Processing IMAGICA

Narrator Rachel WALZER