



Mari Minato 《Biwa Lake's Horizons》 (image is part of the work)、2022、Ceramic, pigments, glaze and chamotte

H132 × W715 × D0.5cm (Overall size of the work, image is detail) © Mari Minato・saif 2022 | Photo : Shoko Hara

Mari Minato

Biwa Lake's Horizons, Dialogue with the Earth

Preview: Thursday, September 22, 2022

Exhibition period: Friday, September 23 —Friday, October 28, 2022

SOKYO ATSUMI 3F TERRADA ART COMPLEX II

1-32-8 Higashi-shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0002 JAPAN

Open : 11:00 – 18:00 (Tue・Thu) 11:00 – 19:00 (Fri・Sat) Close : Sun・Mon

Press release

SOKYO ATSUMI is pleased to present Mari MINATO's solo exhibition "Biwa Lake's Horizons, Dialogue with the Earth." The show's central and biggest work is "Biwa Lake's Horizons", the 31-ceramic tile piece created while in residence at the Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park in Shiga Prefecture from 2021 until early this year. Complementing it and providing a rounded view of her artistic direction are other ceramic and fabric pieces, including recent paintings done at her studio in Paris.

Minato is known for her paintings in vibrant colors and brushwork with a strong and improvisational feel. In works for public buildings and theaters mostly abroad she has produced a number of expansive wall paintings that fill the spaces. Based in Paris, she has always incorporated research into various cultures, including Japanese history, in her works. Recently she attracted attention for what was her first solo exhibit in Japan, at Hermes Ginza (2019), and her 2021 solo exhibit at The Triangle, Kyoto City Kyosera Museum of Art. This autumn her works will appear at ASIA NOW during the same time as Paris+ par Art Basel.

Minato uses the landscape and local history when creating art for buildings and specific exhibitions. The Japanese title of this exhibition, "Awaumi" is an ancient word meaning a freshwater lake. The inspiration for the piece created as her final artist-in-residence work at Shigaraki came from the history and old poetry about nearby Lake Biwa. Using the theme of "Nagare" she displayed this April through June a large ceramic sculpture, as well as the "Biwa Lake's Horizon" tile piece.

Words From the Artist:

Until recently, I worked mainly in traditional painting techniques. Then in 2018 for a large work, still using colors on the wall surface, I created "Utsuwa (Vessels)." I had come to a deepening appreciation of the role of ceramics in human civilization. Also, I was intrigued by how ceramic glazes and glass objects over time and changing light endlessly interact with their surrounding environments. I began to think about the use of thicker materials and techniques from ceramics for works that would create deep vibrant colors and supports that are durable and resist climate changes.

In 2021 through this year, 2022, I was invited to work at the Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park as an artist-in-residence. There, at the location of centuries of Shigaraki ware production, I learned about its history and the techniques of ceramic making. Using local clay, I tried making my first pots imitating Yayoi earthenware.

I have always found inspiration for my creative activities in my locale and landscape. The vein of clay used at Shigaraki, I learned, extends as part of a sedimentary strata nearly 50 kilometers from the south in the Ueno Basin of Mie prefecture, north through the Omi Basin (under Lake Biwa) in Shiga prefecture and was formed around the Pleistocene era. Shigaraki ware developed by exploiting the local clay but over generations its ceramic production has changed and to survive continues to develop. For

example, in 2009, Shigaraki Ceramics Technology Research Center developed TOUDO (high silica white clay).

My recent work, “Nagare,” grew out of my experiences in Shigaraki. I used Shigaraki white clay to express my memories of its landscape and flowing water, along with the flow of time, and the larger flow of history. This sculpture gives the impression of curved flowing fabric.

Today at SOKYO ATSUMI my solo exhibition centers on the 31 tile pieces that form the installation “Biwa Lake’s Horizons.” This large work was also created during my residency in Shigaraki. It finds inspiration in ceramic techniques and in the locale of Shigaraki and nearby Lake Biwa. I decided to employ ceramic tiles which are throughout civilizations part of people’s living spaces. Used in our buildings we can think of them as transforming space into a ceramic “vessel” that holds us. In modern times the technology of tiles has developed further. Throughout tile development we find the history of a confrontation between human artifice/civilization and nature.

On exhibit, as well as the large tile “Biwa Lake’s Horizons,” I painted using glazes, foils and pigments, on smaller ceramic pieces in a same titled series, as well as other ceramics. I also display works on paper and fabric. I continuously explore the land and echoes of earlier civilizations by using natural materials of the Earth like clay and mineral glazes or pigments to produce the motifs on my pieces.

Out of the challenges of creating paintings, Minato has come closer to the primordial creative impulses of ceramics. Her experiences at Shigaraki, often called one of the “Six Ancient Kiln Sites,” allowed her to appreciate a locale and history where from ancient times people have had an intimate connection to “Earth/Clay” (Ceramics) and “Water” (Lake Biwa). The viewer will find her art overflows with possibilities, that combine the color and tactile feeling for ceramic materials with a deep understanding of traditional “nihonga” Japanese painting traditions.

Her pieces become installations that fill the surrounding space. “Biwa Lake’s Horizons” 31 tiles stretch to seven meters and are laid onto pulverized once-fired clay or “chamotte” that has been spread on the low display platform to enhance a feeling for the Earth. How people confront space and time changes over the generations, but Minato’s exhibit here pushes the viewer to reimagine connections of people’s lives and history with the Earth. Among her artistic activities based overseas this exhibit focuses on her recent study and experiences in Japan.

Mari MINATO

Born in Kyoto in 1981. Currently based in Paris, France. Majored in Japanese painting at Kyoto City University of Arts and its graduate school. Studied at the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, then enrolled to obtain a diploma.

Her recent solo exhibitions include “Nagare – Awa Umi no Tsuchi to Kioku” (Shiga Prefectural Ceramic Cultural Park, Ceramic Gallery, 2022), “Horizons” (Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art, The Triangle, Kyoto, Japan, 2021), “Vanishing Droplets in a River” (Ginza Hermès Forum, Tokyo, 2019). Major projects

include “Mural for the Outdoor Public Theater, Old Town Hall Park” (Nanterre, France, 2019) and “Permanent Painting Installation” (Paris International University, Paris, France, 2018). This summer she was artist-in-residence at “European Ceramic Work Centre” (Oysterwijk, Netherlands, 2022). This fall, she plans to participate in “ASIA NOW” (Paris, France).



Mari Minato 《Etruscans Series c-IV》
2022, Ceramic, glaze, silver foil, tin foil,
H0.5 ×W34×D69cm



Mari Minato 《Biwa Lake's Horizons VII》 2022,
Ceramic, pigments, glaze and chamotte, H1×W28×D21cm

For further information please contact:

Miyuki Kanada sokyoAtsumi@gallery-sokyo.jp

SOKYO ATSUMI

3F TERRADA ART COMPLEX II

1-32-8 Higashi-shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku

Tokyo 140-0002 JAPAN

Tel:080-7591-5212