

Akio Takamori Australian Ceramics Triennale

Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in the Australian Ceramics Triennial 2012 in Adelaide. I am very honored to be here.

3.

I would like to start with a photograph by Nadar. He is a well-known 19-century French photographer who took many portraits of famous people in his lifetime.

4.

This photograph by Nadar caught my attention. I found it to be very unusual and interesting. Nadar's son in the middle seems to be collaged in by "photo-shop" because simply they seems not belong to each other. At the same time they are very real as the people. I am very impressed with Nadar's vision to capture the moment of the truth without any other tinted mind. I find it so exciting, interesting and very awkward. It is visually strange seeing the two completely different people culturally, racially and age wise co-existing in the same space.

6.

"Ensemble" is a project where I wanted to create visual contrast between Japanese and Westerners. Japanese figures are based on my personal memories of growing up in Japan in the 50's and 60's. On the other hand Europeans are exaggerated and exotic. It was intended to go against Eurocentric vision. I am the norm and the Westerners look so different and created awkwardness in between.

I wanted to create the situation that the awkwardness stimulates people's curiosity and interest towards to the others. It is sort of the beautiful awkwardness.

7.

I became conscious about being the "other" since I moved to Kansas City in 1974. I looked different than most of people living there then.

8.

I married a woman of European descendent and we have two children in the US. Looking at our photos together still make me conscious about our visual differences after so many years.

13.

"Omnipotent" is about women power and sensuality through form and volume that I found in both East and West. They are based upon Tang Dynasty Chinese clay figures and the court ladies of Velazquez's paintings in Spain. The tallest figure is about 140 cm.

22.

I grew up in Japan where the Western civilization was admired and adapted. How does the adaptation of the ideology from the others effect on our visual life? I accepted the fact that our Santa Claus was Japanese visually but really a European. It was not believable when James Bond disguised himself as a Japanese fisherman for his secret mission. It was a stigma to have the Western mind with Japanese body.

25.

Alice represents a woman as a child and Venus represents a young woman as an adult. Western and Eastern culture were put together awkwardly.

41.

I was born 1950, five years after the world war II ended and the year Korean War started.

Passage of time, history, location and memory are the important element of my work.

44.

The uprising in Hungary was my first memory of international political crisis. It was during the cold war and the political intensity in the air was somewhat effected on me as a child.

51.

The "Boat" is about historical awkwardness and the relationship between the US and Japan. For me, the boat became the symbol of the black fleet that was led by Commodore Perry and the battleship Arizona in the bombing of Pearl Harbor and other. The people on the rusty boat were created by researching photographs that were taken during the American occupation of Japan after the War by the American photographers.

60.

I realize that Americans had their own experience and gaze towards to Japanese as I had my own images about them. I became curious what American had seen in Japanese at the time of American occupation right after the war.

61.

My late professor Ken Ferguson was stationed in Japan 1954. He was a young man with his first camera and took many photos of Japanese children at the time. This project is my tribute to Mr. Ferguson. I made smaller clay figures from his photographs. Then I took photos of those clay figures afterwards. I wanted represent the difference between the object/material and images together.

72.

The photographer John Swope who was sent to Japan right after the defeat in 1945 took this photo. I share the sense of vulnerability with those children by the gaze of the American photographer soon after the war ended.

73.

At the same time, I share the gaze of Swope. I like the round big head and the stomach. My emphasis is the face with the simplified form of the body. The other elements such as strings, gloves, shoes and socks contribute to their mystery.

80.

Sleepers are passive and exposing themselves in the most vulnerable position. They are accepting not knowing the viewer's gaze.

73.

I am curious 'how do I look to you' and 'how you look to me as an individual person'. How do we look like to the others and how others are looking at us as a collective image of us? I try to visualize how I see others and us.

87.

I am interested in the collective image of the people.
How do we project ourselves? What are our perceptions of others?

94.

On a street in Xian, I saw a man who looked exactly like one of the Han clay figures I saw in a ceramics book. I am drawn to the paradox that an anonymous person is also a specific person. These humble artifacts in the museums are both very anonymous and personal, and they are moving for that reason.

I apply the same idea to my figurative sculptures. The inspiration of the image comes from an individual, but the figure is also an image of a time and culture values. It is interesting to view people from a collective perspective and also as individuals that we know. I feel that I understand the identity of the individual figure that I create, and I know that in time, it will represent a collection of unnamed people.

96.

I was in Denmark at the Ceramic residency and I wanted to create Europeans with the referencing to the porcelain figurines I. I wondered if I could simulate the gaze that Europeans must of had the first time they arrived to Asia?

104.

The globalization is the trend of our time. How does it effect on the race, culture, and tradition for the people? I prefer finding and celebrating the awkward

difference in between all of us, it should make the world more exciting and a creative place.