



THE JOURNEY AND THE GIFT:

The Ceramic Art of
BROTHER THOMAS



BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE • MOUNT SAINT BENEDICT MONASTERY



ENSO, 'Kairagi' Glaze
15 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 5 1/2"



ADAM'S SECRET

– Brother Thomas Bezanson

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

I would like to speak this word of gratitude to my Benedictine Sisters, to Bernie and Sue Pucker, to the staff of Pucker Gallery and to many friends in many places, all of whom are the bridges that have turned a possibility into a reality.

This is an exhibition of the Sisters' collection of my work, examples from the past 20 years that I have been in Erie.

It is a significant collection in that it is the only continuous example of my work that covers such a long period of time. This is the first time that it has been shown in its entirety – even to me.

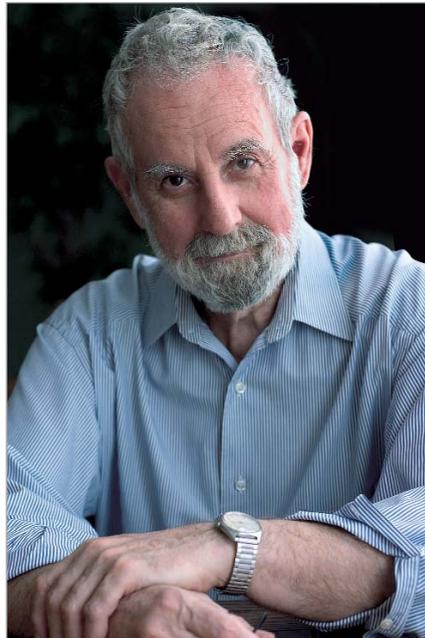
It is significant for another reason: the awareness that no one does anything alone. I am very conscious of this life-principle, for without others there would not be all of this, there would be only silence.

I offer the following brief stories from scripture that have touched me, made me deeply aware that giving-and-receiving and receiving-and-giving are of one piece. There are no heroes, there are no stars, there are no loners, there are no lords of all – save One.

MOSES, AARON AND JOSHUA

There are images in scripture that never seem to fade from illuminating the daily, although the chapter and verse very well might. Some of them come around frequently for me, enfolding the same principle: no one does anything alone.

There is the story in Exodus of Moses standing on a hill, his arms raised in purposeful prayer. On the plain below him, the Israelites are battling with the Amelikes.



As long as Moses' arms are raised in prayer, the Israelites are winning the battle but as Moses' arms tire and begin to fall, the Amelikes begin winning. With the ups and downs of those arms, the tide of winning changes from one side to the other.

It is obvious that Moses needs help. Aaron arrives to support one arm; Joshua comes to support the other. The Israelites are winning again. At this point the voice of God is heard, "...do not say that by the might of your own right arm alone, you have done these things."

Why is it in our day, in our culture that we admire and tend to emulate the "strong right arm" that does it alone, or thinks it does, the hero who goes it alone, victorious

against all adversity? We have welfare help for those that can't "make it." But it is a begrudged assistance, a reluctant help that grows meaner with each new government administration. Justice is defined as giving others what they "deserve," rather than the scriptural justice of giving others what they "need."

Individualism and hyper-specialization have come to be the purpose of our life's goals, e.g., to be masters, unmindful that something closes down when we know it all, or think we do. Abandoning the way of beginner's mind is to wander off the path of openness and become closed both to what is and to what can be. Our beliefs determine our actions.

Individualism has infected the ancient unity of the extended family, once the model of responsibility for others, but now replaced by the isolating nuclear family model. Individualism is a pervasive illusion and a formula for isolation. No one does anything alone, not even Moses.

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

There is another story in scripture that articulates with the life principle that we do not and can not go it alone. It is about Moses again. It is the familiar story of Moses standing before the burning bush on Mt. Horeb. The "voice" of God comes out of the burning bush and orders Moses to go to Pharaoh to demand the release of the Israelites from Egypt. It is an awesome situation in which one hardly expects Moses to question, much less refuse, God's directive! It is not like talking back to an old man with a long white beard, it is more like talking back to an earthquake!

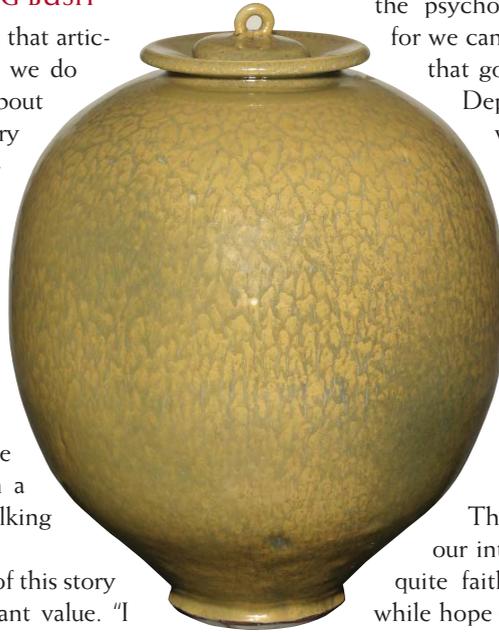
But, long buried in the exegesis of this story is an inner story with an important value. "I cannot go to Pharaoh," Moses replies, "I have a speech defect." (It is speculated that Moses probably stuttered.) "Go," says God. "No," says Moses. The argument is brief, God backs off a bit, rethinks the honesty of Moses and comes up with a surprising solution to the stand-off. "Aaron," He said, "I will send Aaron your brother with you; he will speak for you." In a word, Aaron became the prophet's prophet.

Here we probably resist the possibility that it was not Moses, but Aaron, who declaimed those famous words, "...let my people go." We resist defrocking a hero. But this scenario is no more surprising than the possibility that the solution to Moses' speech defect was simply for God to cure it. But God did not. Why?

Today Aaron would be considered second best. But "second best" does not exist except that we create second best. We create the illusion that a silver medal is a failure to get the gold. We "go for the gold." Yet, there could be no gold without the silver and the bronze – and even the also ran. There can be no best without the better and neither without the good, which unifies them all. No one does anything alone. The reality is relationship and oneness is the basis of all relationships. To think otherwise is an illusion, to act otherwise is folly.

*"Anyone who does not understand that God desires oneness, does not know the living God."
– Abraham Joshua Heschel*

There is a mystery in this experience of existential inter-dependence, or as the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh phrases it – the awareness of inter-being, a term I like better because it is less worn and more spiritual than



LIDDED VASE, Yellow 'Kairagi' Glaze
11 1/4 x 9 1/4 x 9 1/4"

the psychology-coined term interdependence, for we cannot escape the negative connotation that goes with that term, i.e., dependency.

Dependency is the bane of a society whose radio is tuned to independence.

Thich Nhat Hanh's word "inter-being" creates a pragmatic shift in our consciousness, opening our hearts to the radical reality of oneness. "I am sad," he writes:

*"I have lost my smile
But don't worry
The dandelion has it."*

The dandelion belongs to the oneness, our inter-being with all that is. There it is, quite faithfully keeping your smiles for you while hope sustains you, until the sadness passes and you return to claim it.

It is given the human spirit to change from sadness to joy; we are not fixed in our being, we are an open substance. We can open the gates of possibility and creativity within ourselves and transcend the illusions of isolation with its figures of stardom, heroes and genius. I do not know how the alchemy of changing a spirit works, but I do observe it happening and I do experience that it does not happen in isolation – no one does anything alone.

1. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace in Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 7.

ADAM AND EVE

And finally, for now in this limited space, the well-worn story of Adam and Eve where I find something not oft spoken of: "Adam's Secret."

So much has been written about the original sin of Adam and Eve, largely hung on Eve. But, it should be noticed that while they may have "messed-up" royally, they did not split-up. Adam did not seek a divorce or go his separate way. They remained as one. Who could think of Adam without Eve, or Eve without Adam? They rode out of the Garden on the current of one heart. The same sap of existence flowed between them, that God-given gift to humanity was not withdrawn, not then and, save for forgetfulness, not now.

So, they left the Garden together, banished. It is not written, but I offer for your heart-felt consideration, that this was Adam's Secret: Where there is Eve, there is Eden.



LARGE FLASK FORM VASE, Honan Tenmoku Glaze
21 x 16⁷/₈ x 5¹/₈"





THE JOURNEY AND THE GIFT

– Bernard H. Pucker

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Brother Thomas, his art, his writings, his wise presence, his humanity before the act of creation – all have informed, guided, uplifted and nourished so many.

His journey from Halifax, to Europe, to Weston, Vermont to Erie has been a constant search within himself and through his art for that which is True, that which is Beautiful, that which is Holy.

He has helped others discover within themselves the critical importance of remaining open to all experiences and opportunities. You must be willing to look, to see, to explore, to expand, to grow, and to learn from all you do and from all whom you meet.

He has been blessed with an inner glow and keen mind which is shared through his art and through his writings and through his very being.

As he was called to his art, to Weston Priory and to the Benedictine Community of Erie, he has always been open and present. He has given and continues to give fully of his entire self to his art.

All of us have gained immeasurably from his insight into the search for meaning in our lives. We have each been expanded and enriched by the Journey hand in hand with Thomas.

His generous gifts to the community are now being shared with others in this extraordinary exhibition and catalogue.

The rabbis teach that one good deed causes another good deed. The Sisters welcomed Thomas; he created the gift of art for all; he gifted works to the Community; now the Community shares these gifts with others.

These good deeds will, I believe, be a positive force for the tikkun olam – the repair of the universe. The spirit of gratitude, generosity and kindness will serve to enable us to grasp the True, the Beautiful and the Holy.

We add our thanks to Brother Thomas, to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, and to all of Thomas' friends and family, who have been there for him, as he and his Art are there for us.

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SAMURAI VASE, Honan Tenmoku Glaze, 13 x 30 1/4 x 3 3/8"



A JUBILEE CELEBRATION

– Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

PRIORRESS, BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE

Benedictine history is dynamic and vast as is human culture. Its manifestations in every age give witness to the creative Spirit of God at play in the world. As the Benedictines of Erie celebrate our 150th anniversary of the founding of this monastic community, we hold up and celebrate the relationships that have brought us to this day. We are the daughters of strong women who crossed an ocean, learned a new language and engaged a culture different than their own. We brought from Eichstatt, Bavaria to Erie a heritage of Benedictine tradition. Today, we celebrate and leave a legacy of 150 years of living faithfully our charism, our gift to the Church and world.

Benedict's Rule, Chapter 57 is about the artisans in the monastery. Across the years, in all lands, monasticism has fostered the arts, whether in music, painting, writing, pottery or architecture. The love of art comes from a life that is intent on the search for God. Artistic expression in whatever medium gives us a glimpse of the journey of the monastic soul. Ultimately, the peace of creating something beautiful will take one to God. God alone satisfies the monastic heart.

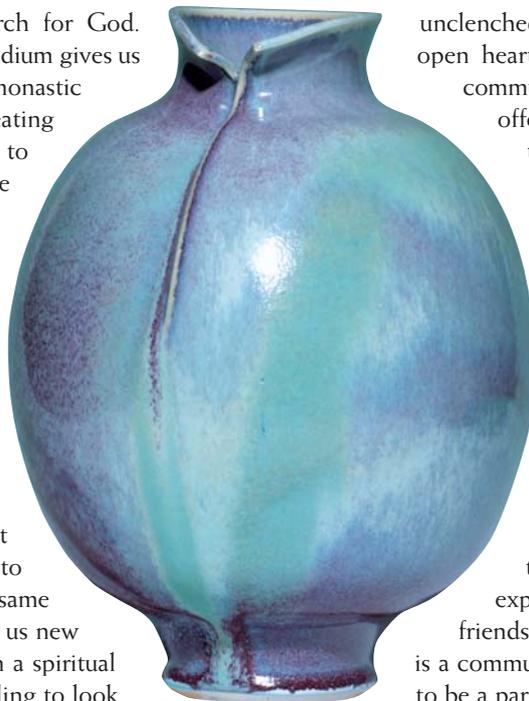
Cyd Madsen, a photographer, and film writer said: "Artists are those who have instinctively known the concept of Plato's shadow on the cave wall, and they're trying to look past the shadows to find the object standing between it and the light." Monastic life, if lived faithfully over a lifetime, clears out the shadows. We want to be able to stand in the light. With that same intensity we cherish art that gives us new insight into what is real. Being on a spiritual journey basically means being willing to look

into the nature of life, to raise the questions that events evoke and to wonder and listen deeply to all creation. It enables us see art everywhere.

This community is proud to have the beauty of art in our monastery. We delight in the relationship over the years with our brother, Thomas, who has gifted us with his creations in ceramic. Each piece, unique in shape and color, makes available to us, through all the senses, communion with God, the primordial, archetypical first and last Artist. Whether the piece is in the sanctuary of our chapel for our prayer or in our dining room as we gather as family, or in our hallways to greet our guests, Thomas' pots have the capacity to move our spirit beyond ourselves to a realm where all life is seen as a gift.

In a medieval essay, *Upon Diverse Arts* Theophilus in 1122 instructs the monastic artist about his talent: "not to hide it in the closet of a grasping heart." It is with unclenched hands, extended arms and an open heart that Thomas has showered this community with beauty. We share and offer you, our friends, an opportunity to experience the joy we experience in having these works of art.

It is with great pride and humility that this Benedictine community makes available for your viewing the gifts of 20 years of Thomas' work. This exhibit is an important part of our jubilee celebration. Jubilee is about the liberation of gratitude and that is what we wish to express in this event. The display, the gathering of friends and the celebration of the exhibit is our expression of gratitude to Thomas for friendship, constant and profound. Jubilee is a communal tradition and so we invite you to be a part of this celebration with us.



VASE WITH CUT RIM,
Fumed Copper Glaze, 12 1/4 x 9 x 9"



THE MONASTIC SPIRIT AND THE PURSUIT OF EVERLASTING BEAUTY

by Joan Chittister, OSB

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE

The visitor said, "Tell me about Brother Thomas. Is he an artist or a monk? He's both," I said. "But how can that be?" the visitor said. "He's artist-in-residence at your monastery. Do you take men in your community, too?" "No," I said, "we don't take them.

But some of them, like Thomas, simply come like moths to the flame of monasticism and never really leave it."

There is, in fact, history enough to prove the point. Monasticism and art have been forever conjoined, always a marriage of equals. Monasticism without high art has either lost its mission or has not yet become what it sets out to be. Art, without the underlying values upon which monasticism rests, stands to die still-born, not mature enough to be impacting, not perceptive enough to be called 'art.'

No wonder, then, that the bond between monasticism and art goes down so deep and back so far. Medieval monasteries were centers of the arts and patrons of the arts. Art, as a reflection of beauty, itself an attribute of God, became to be understood, in fact, as simply another expression of incarnation. The presence of God in imaginal forms, Western theologians argued in response to the commonly recurring question, was not heresy. On the contrary. Sacred images, they said, transcended nature. They overcame the distractions of matter. They superseded the merely human. Instead, art gave both linkage and expression to the presence of God in time.

Art, as a result, became an arm of the-

ology and artists the theologians who gave us new ways to see the unseeable. Soaring spires, awesome cloisters and grand chapter houses became the hallmarks of monastic life. Beauty, monastics reasoned, was of the essence of the life. If anything, they had a responsibility to nurture it.

Not surprisingly, then, artistry emerged from the monastic commitment to seek God and artists flocked to the monastery to make visible the infinite dimensions of the invisible God. The artist and the monastic were seeking the same thing. They were embarked on the same journey. They were devoted to the same end. They both believed that spirit was greater than matter, but that matter was its borning place.

So, artists lived in the monastery, worked there, produced there all their lives. They did chapel murals and great statuary; they did monastic buildings and Olympian mosaics, they did oil paintings and illuminations and brilliant ceramics and textiles. Monasteries and monastic churches drew artists like magnets attracted steel.

Artists both 'belonged' to the monastery and did not belong, at least in the institutional sense. Some were vowed monastics whose lives were given to the illumination of manuscripts and the creation of sacred objects, the sculpting of liturgical ornaments, and the design of grand tapestries and holy vestments. Others were artists or lay monks who spent their lives drawing plans and doing the stonework and glass that became over time the great monasteries and monastic churches of Europe to which



LIDDED VASE, Opalescent Copper
Blue Glaze, 9 7/8 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"

they had attached themselves.

Whatever their canonical definitions, lay or ordained, professed monastics or lay oblates, they embodied the symbiotic relationship that existed between the two – between the essence of monasticism and the essence of art – and which the two took for granted but seldom bothered to articulate.

At the same time, the culture knew that somehow monasteries spawned artists and that monastics themselves were the most pointed expression of the human dimension of sacred art.

Brother Thomas is a living example of both realities.

Brother Thomas Bezanson moved out of one monastery, he said, so he could dedicate his life to pottery and then moved into another one for the same reason.

One way or another, Thomas has been in a monastery for over 50 years, most of his adult life, all of his professional life. Strange, some would think now, in this day and age. After all, isn't an artist an artist, a monastic a monastic? What can possibly be the linkage between the two? But, Thomas likes to say that for a number of those years he was a monastic who was also a potter. Then he discovered that he was a potter who was also a monastic.

The distinction bears thinking about. It tells us something about both monasticism and art. Monasticism exists in pursuit of the beauty of the invisible God. Art makes shining slivers of that beauty visible. To develop the soul, then, is to develop the essence of an artist.

Monasticism, in a special way, does not simply value the link between spirit and art, it creates it. "Beauty," Michelangelo wrote, "is the purgation of superfluities." Monasticism is the one path of life that declares itself to be the single-minded search for God in life, before which all other pursuits pale. It sets out to excise whatever exists to obscure the awareness of what the contemplative calls the 'one thing necessary.'

Monasticism is the most piercing expression of the search for truth, the conscious investigation of the marrow of what it means to be fully human. The monastic gives life over to the search for the spirit in life that makes matter holy and the spiritual attainable. Monasticism is about more than living every day well. It is an exercise in living every day on a plane above itself, of seeing in the obvious more than the obvious, in finding even in the mundane the creative energy that drives creation to heights beyond itself. If, indeed, truth is beauty and beauty truth, then the monastic and the artist are one.

Monasticism, in fact, cultivates the artistic spirit. Basic to monasticism are the very qualities art demands of the artist: silence, contemplation, discernment of spirits, community and humility. Basic to art are the very qualities demanded of the monastic: single-mindedness, beauty, immersion, praise and creativity.

The merger of one with the other makes for great art,

the meaning of one for the other makes for great soul.

It is in silence that the artist hears the call to raise to the heights of human consciousness those qualities no definitions can ever capture. Ecstasy, pain, fluid truth pass us by so quickly or surround us so constantly that the eyes fail to see and the heart ceases to respond. It is in the awful grip of ineffable form or radiant color that we see into a world that is infinitely beyond our natural grasp, yet only just beyond our artist's soul.

It is contemplation that leads an artist to preserve for us forever the essence of a thing that takes us far beyond its accidents. Only by seeing the unseen within can the artist dredge it out of nothingness so that we can touch it, too.

It is a capacity for the discernment of spirits that enables an artist to recognize real beauty from plastic pretensions to it, from cheap copies of even cheaper attempts at it. The artist distills for the world to see the one idea, the fresh form, the stunning grandeur of moments which the world has begun to take for granted or has failed even to notice, or, worse, has now reduced to the mundane.

It is a love for human community that puts the eye of the artist in the service of truth. Knowing the spiritual squalor to which the pursuit of less than beauty can lead us, the artist lives to stretch our senses beyond the tendency to settle for lesser things – sleazy stories instead of great literature, superficial caricatures of bland characters rather than great portraits of great souls, flowerpots instead of pottery.

Finally, it is humility that enables an artist to risk rejection and failure, disdain and derogation to bring to the heart of the world what the world too easily, too randomly – too callously – overlooks.

Charles Peguy wrote, "We must always tell what we see. Above all, and this is more difficult, we must always see what we see." Brother Thomas is a truth-teller in the great tradition of all those artists who spend their lives straining to see the Truth and then trying to help the rest of us see it, as well.

Brother Thomas is an artist formed in the monastic art of the pursuit of Beauty. He is single-minded, in awe of the beauty that makes life, life, immersed in the center of it, in praise of the power of it, in search of the creativity that captures it for us now, again, forever, always.

Amen. Alleluia for such a one as this.

Thomas has been brother, standard-bearer of beauty, pursuer of the spiritual and holder of the heart of holiness of which monasticism speaks and which it pursues in time and out of time, in the sacred – and in the profane.

Clearly, great art is a very spiritual thing. More, a great spiritual life is itself a piece of great art. It is the ultimate creativity. To Thomas God said, "Let there be art" and, behold, it came to be.

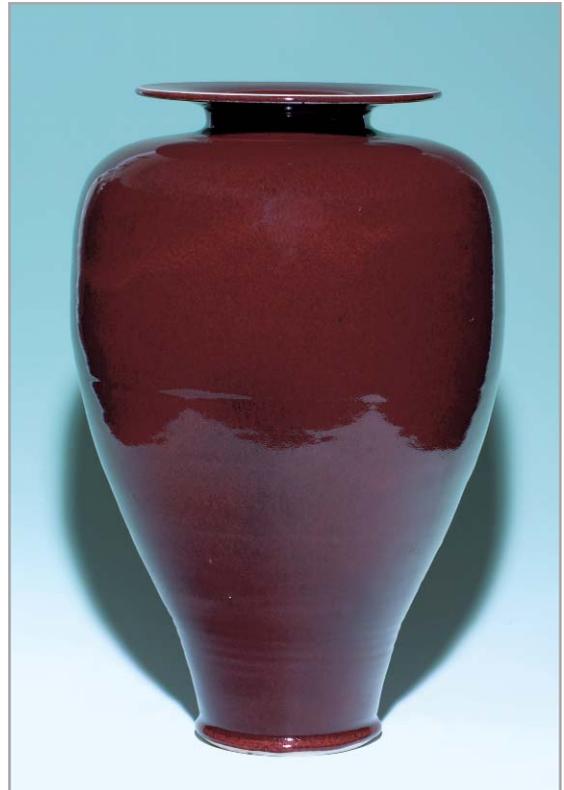


LARGE LIDDED VASE, Tender Green Celadon Glaze
16¹/₄ × 12 × 12"

8



VASE, 'Kairagi' Glaze
16⁷/₈ × 8³/₄ × 8³/₄"



LARGE VASE, Copper Red Glaze
18¹/₄ × 11³/₄ × 11³/₄"



OVOID VASE, Ice Crackle with Iron Yellow Glaze
11 1/2 x 16 7/8 x 3 7/8"



FLASK FORM VASE, 'Kairagi' Glaze
18 1/2 x 15 3/4 x 5"



LIDDED JAR (TABERNACLE), $17\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ " PATEN, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$ "
 BASE, $16\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ ", Oil Spot Glaze

10



FLASK FORM VASE, Copper Red on Opal White Glaze
 $18\frac{1}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{8} \times 3$ "



TALL VASE, Honan Tenmoku Glaze
 $29 \times 9 \times 9$ "



SQUARE VASE,
Copper Red on Opal White Glaze
11 ⁵/₈ x 4 ¹/₄ x 4 ¹/₂"



WHEEL FORM VASE, 'Kairagi' Glaze
15 ¹/₂ x 15 ³/₄ x 6 ¹/₈"



WHEEL FORM VASE, Honan Tenmoku Glaze
15 ³/₄ x 15 ³/₄ x 7 ³/₄"



CANTEEN, Celadon Glaze with
Iron Yellow Angel Decoration, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ "



SQUARE CANTEEN, Celadon Glaze
 $10 \times 8\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$ "

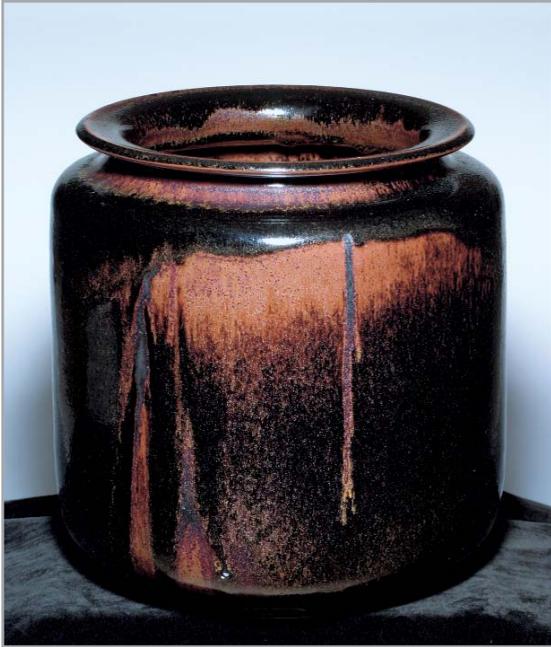
12



CANTEEN, Tenmoku Glaze
 $10 \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ "



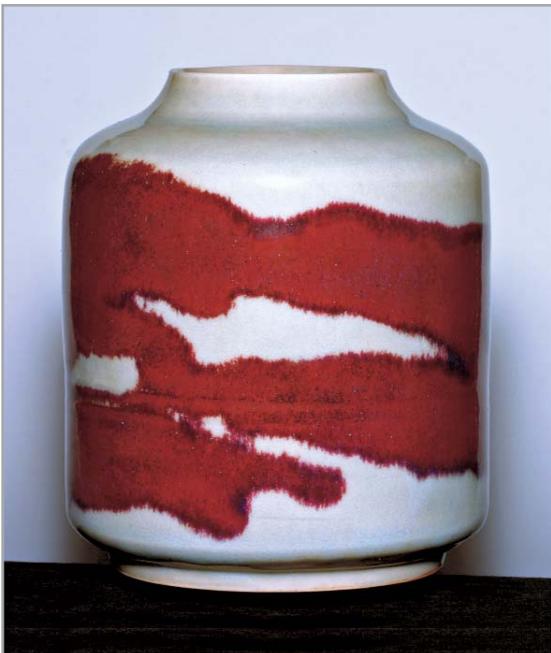
VASE, Copper Red Glaze
 $8\frac{3}{4} \times 6 \times 6$ "



VASE, Tenmoku Glaze
9 1/8 x 8 7/8 x 8 7/8 "



LIDDED VASE, Ice Crackle Glaze
6 1/8 x 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 "



VASE, 'Jun' Glaze
6 1/2 x 5 3/8 x 5 3/8 "



DRUM FORM VASE, Celadon Glaze with Textured Surface
6 3/8 x 8 x 8 "

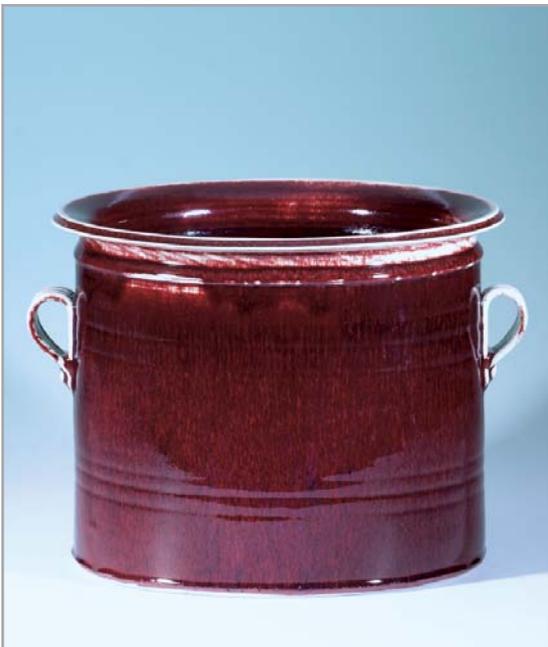


VASE WITH LUGS, Celadon Glaze
8 ³/₄ x 6 ¹/₂ x 5 ¹/₂"

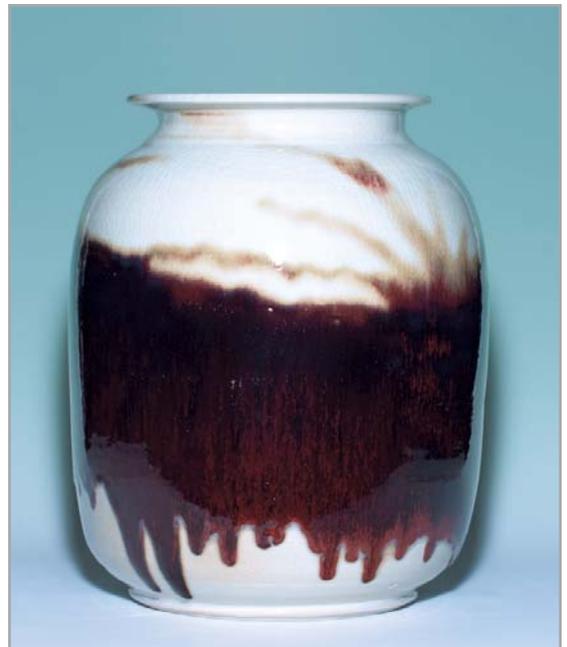


VASE WITH LUGS, Opalescent Glaze
7 ¹/₄ x 9 x 9"

14



OVAL VASE WITH LUGS, Copper Red Glaze
9 ¹/₈ x 11 ¹/₄ x 9 ³/₄"



LARGE VASE, Copper Red on Opal White Glaze
14 ³/₄ x 12 x 12"



VASE, 'Kairagi' Glaze
8³/₄ x 6³/₄ x 6³/₄"



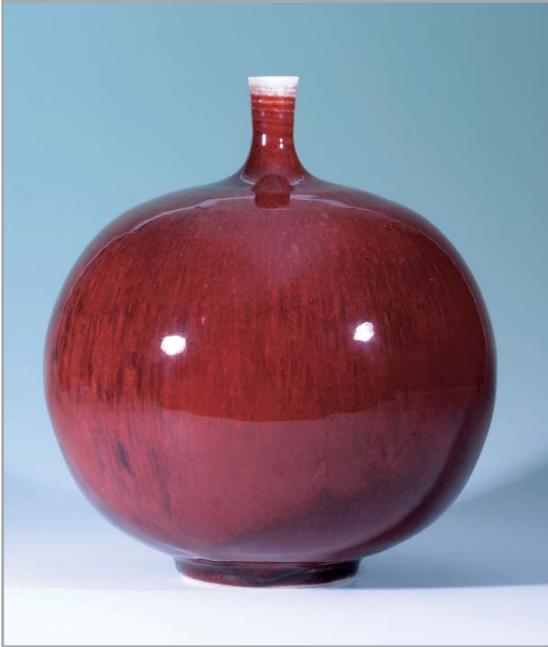
LIDDED VASE, Iron Yellow Glaze
9³/₄ x 6³/₄ x 6³/₄"



VASE, Black Olive Glaze
9³/₄ x 4⁷/₈ x 4⁷/₈"



VASE, Kaki Glaze
9⁷/₈ x 6¹/₄ x 6¹/₄"

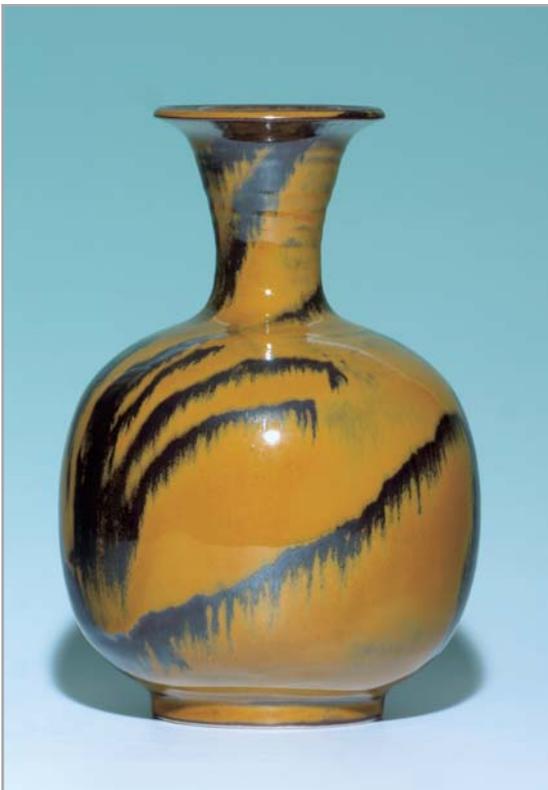


VASE, Copper Red Glaze
10³/₄ x 9 x 9"

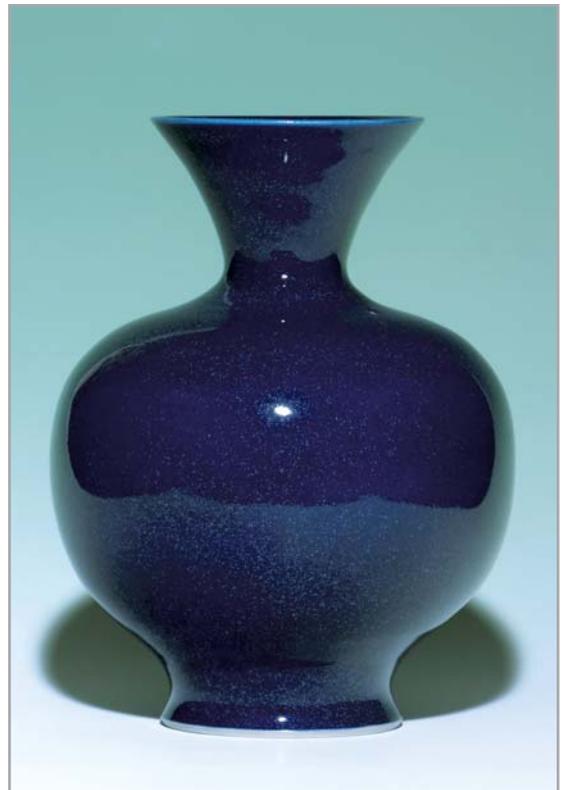


VASE, Copper Red Glaze
10¹/₈ x 8⁷/₈ x 8⁷/₈"

16



SMALL VASE, Black and Yellow Iron Glaze
9¹/₈ x 6 x 6"



SMALL VASE, 'Nightsky Blue' Glaze
9⁵/₈ x 7 x 7"



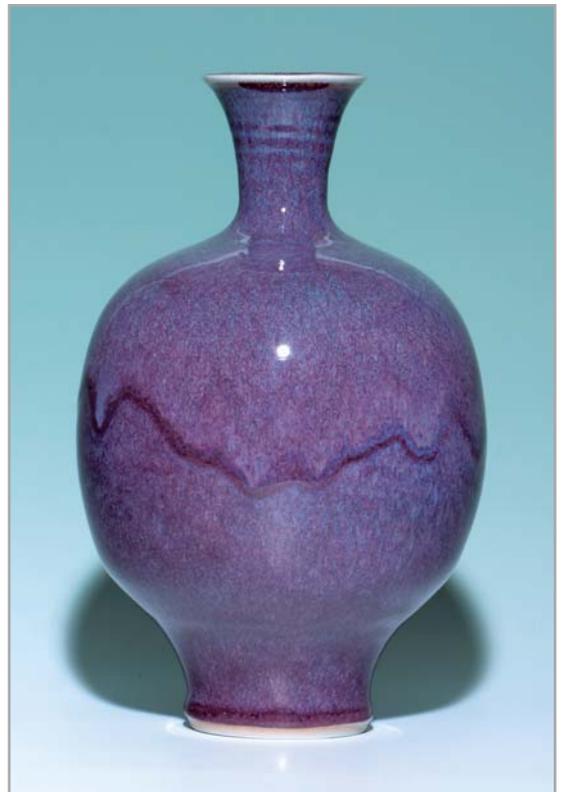
SMALL VASE, Rose Red Copper Glaze
12 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"



VASE WITH LONG NECK, Chrysanthemum Glaze
14 3/4 x 9 x 9"



SMALL VASE, Iron Glaze
10 1/4 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"



SMALL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
11 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"



TEA BOWL, Tessha with Kaki Glaze
3 x 5 1/4 x 5 1/4"



TEA BOWL, Celadon with Kaki Glaze
2 7/8 x 3 3/8 x 3 3/8"



TEA BOWL, Copper Red on Opal
White Glaze, 3 x 4 1/4 x 4 1/4"

18



SMALL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
10 1/8 x 7 x 7"



SMALL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
7 3/4 x 5 x 5"



SMALL VASE, Mottled Copper Red Glaze
7 1/2 x 5 x 5"



SMALL VASE, Opal Copper Red Glaze
9 3/8 x 6 3/4 x 6 3/4"



TEA BOWL, Copper Red on
Opal White Glaze, 3 1/8 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2"



TEA BOWL, 'Kairagi' Glaze
3 1/4 x 5 7/8 x 5 7/8"



TEA BOWL, Iron Yellow Glaze
3 3/4 x 5 1/2 x 5 1/2"



SMALL ELLIPTICAL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
5 3/4 x 10 1/4 x 3 1/2"



FREE FORM VASE, Tenmoku Glaze, 14 1/4 x 16 3/4 x 2 3/8"



OVAL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
10 1/2 x 11 1/4 x 8 5/8"

20



SLAB FORM VASE, Celadon Glaze with Textured Surface
9 1/2 x 12 3/4 x 3 1/4"



SMALL VASE, Fumed Copper Glaze
5 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"



VASE, Copper Red Glaze
8 1/8 x 9 x 9"



VASE, Opal Blue and Copper Red Glaze
8 5/8 x 9 x 9"



SMALL VASE, Opal Copper Blue Glaze
6 1/2 x 7 1/4 x 7 1/4"



GLOBULAR VASE, Crackle Celadon Glaze
9 5/8 x 12 x 12"



VASE, Opal Blue Glaze with Copper Red Window
9 7/8 x 8 7/8 x 8 7/8"



VASE, Copper Red Glaze
9 1/2 x 9 5/8 x 9 5/8"



GLOBULAR VASE, 'Kairagi' Glaze
10 3/4 x 11 3/4 x 11 3/4"



VASE, Copper Red Glaze
12 3/4 x 11 3/4 x 11 3/4"



TALL VASE, Rutilé Blue Glaze
11 3/4 x 3 3/4 x 3 3/4"



TALL VASE, Iron Glaze
12 1/8 x 3 3/4 x 3 3/4"



TALL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
12 3/8 x 4 x 4"



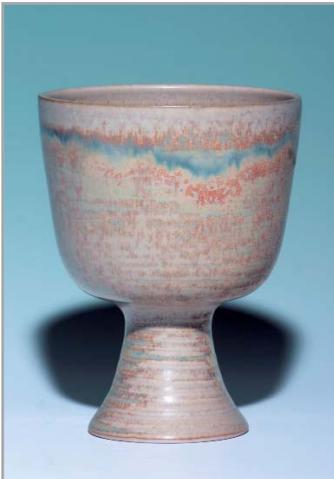
TALL VASE, 'Teadust' with
Kaki Glaze, 16 3/8 x 4 3/4 x 4 3/4"



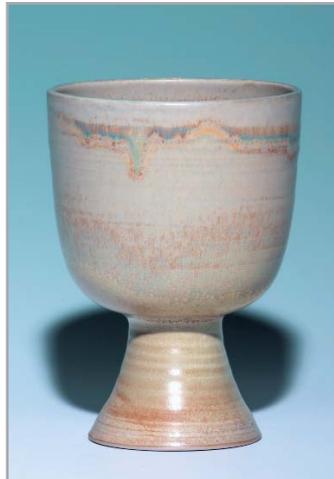
TALL VASE, Chrysanthemum Glaze
17 3/8 x 4 7/8 x 4 7/8"



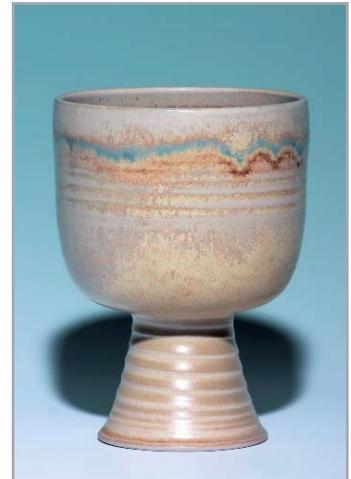
CHALICE SET, Ivory Rutile Glaze



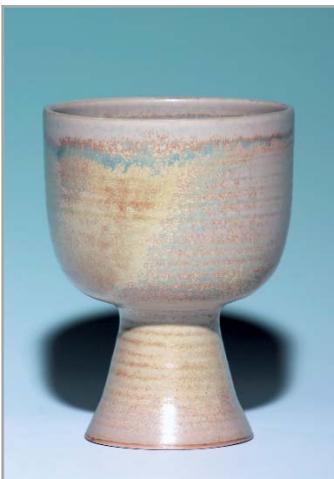
CHALICE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
 $6\frac{3}{16} \times 4\frac{7}{16} \times 4\frac{7}{16}$ "



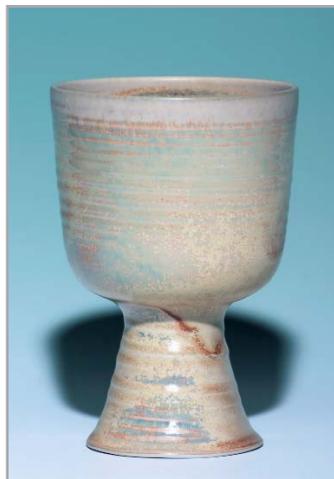
CHALICE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
 $6\frac{5}{16} \times 4\frac{5}{16} \times 4\frac{5}{16}$ "



CHALICE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
 $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ "



CHALICE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
 $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ "



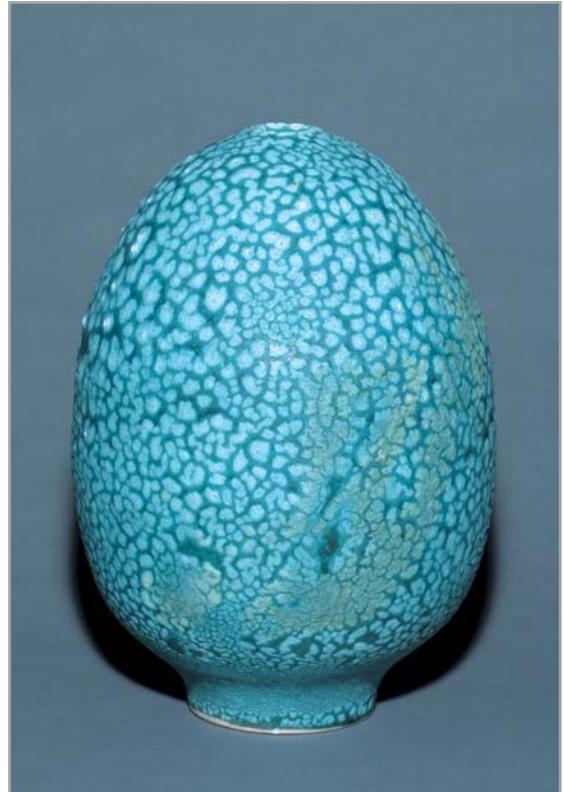
CHALICE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
 $6\frac{1}{16} \times 4\frac{7}{16} \times 4\frac{7}{16}$ "



COVERED CHALICE,
 Copper Red Glaze, $4\frac{5}{8} \times 4 \times 4$ "



SMALL VASE, Copper Red Glaze
9 1/8 x 8 5/8 x 2 7/8"

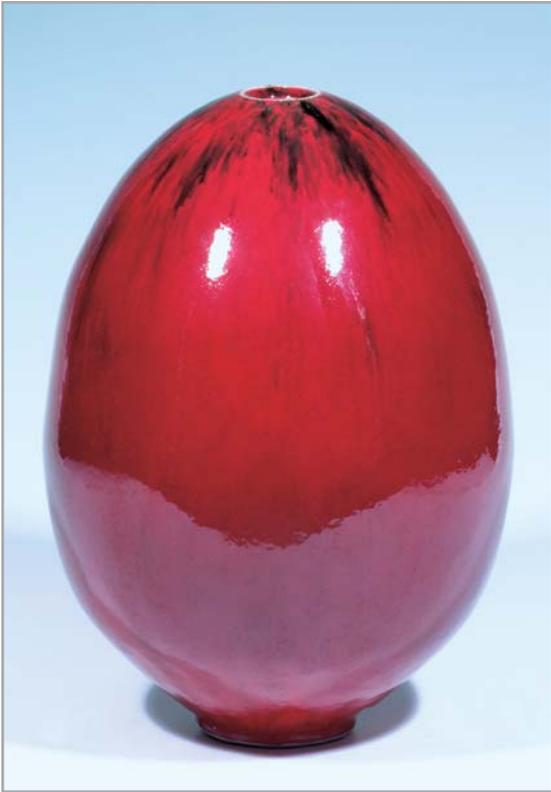


SMALL EGG FORM VASE, 'Kairagi' Glaze
9 1/8 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2"

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LARGE VASE, Copper Red Glaze
17 x 15 1/2 x 5"



EGG FORM VASE, Cadmium Red Glaze
12⁷/₈ × 9 × 9"



EGG FORM VASE, Tender Green Celadon Glaze
with Copper Red Window, 14¹/₈ × 8³/₈ × 8³/₈"



EGG FORM VASE, Wood-Fired Ash Glaze
13 × 8³/₄ × 8³/₄"



EGG FORM VASE, Copper Red Glaze
14¹/₈ × 9¹/₄ × 9¹/₄"



SMALL PLATE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
8 ⁷/₈ x 1 ¹/₄ x 1 ¹/₄"



SMALL PLATE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
9 ¹/₄ x ³/₄ x ³/₄"



SMALL PLATE, Ivory Rutile Glaze
10 ¹/₄ x 1 x 1"



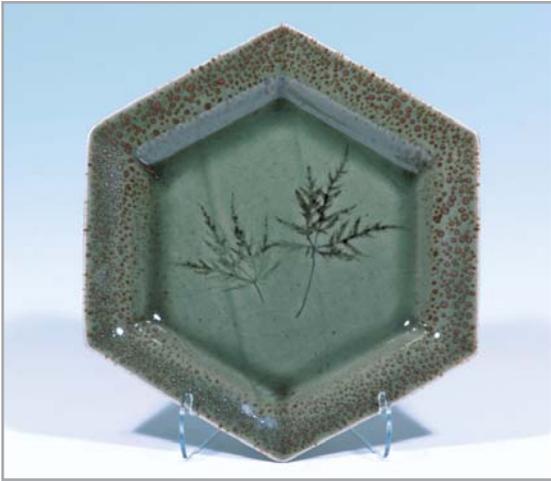
LARGE PLATE, Cadmium Red Glaze with Fish
and Leaves Design, 18 x 3 ³/₄ x 3 ³/₄"



LARGE PLATE, Celadon on Opal Glaze
17 ¹/₂ x 3 x 3"



LARGE PLATE, Copper Red on Opal Glaze
15 ³/₄ x 4 ¹/₄ x 4 ¹/₂"



HEXAGONAL PLATE, Celadon Glaze with Leaves
10 ³/₄ x 1 ³/₈ x 1 ³/₈"



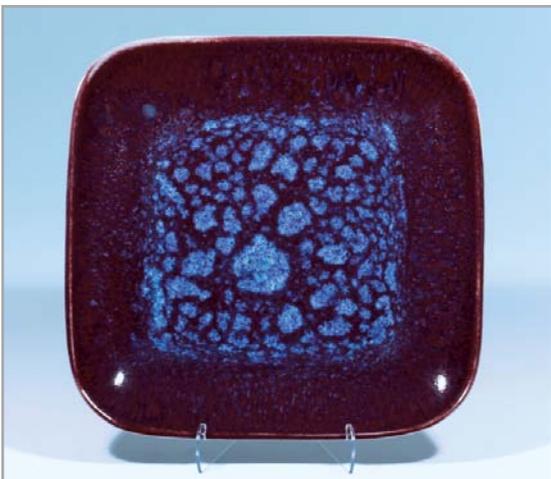
PLATE, 'Nightsky Blue' Glaze
14 ⁷/₈ x 3 ¹/₈ x 3 ¹/₈"



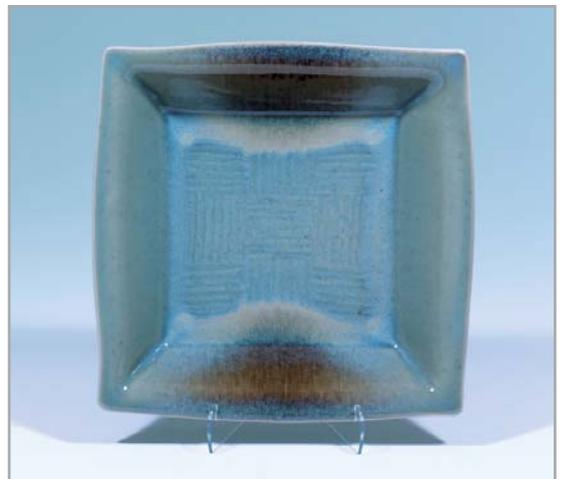
SMALL SQUARE PLATE,
Celadon Glaze with Angel Design, 12 ¹/₄ x 2 ¹/₂ x 2 ¹/₂"



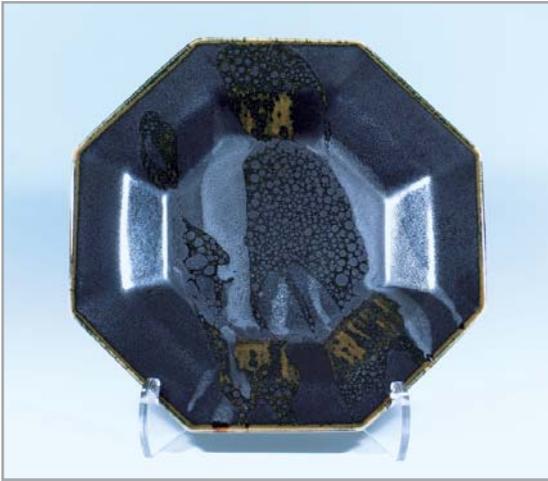
SQUARE PLATE, Opalescent Copper Blue Glaze
13 ¹/₈ x 1 ³/₈ x 1 ³/₈"



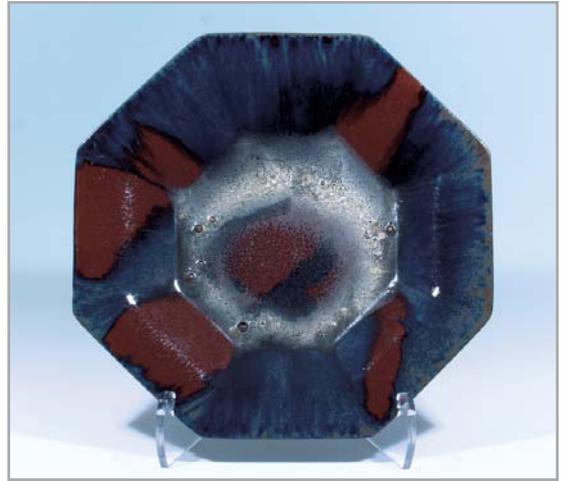
SQUARE PLATE, Copper Red with Blue Glaze
13 ¹/₄ x 1 ¹/₄ x 1 ¹/₄"



SQUARE PLATE, Celadon Glaze
12 x 2 ³/₈ x 2 ³/₈"

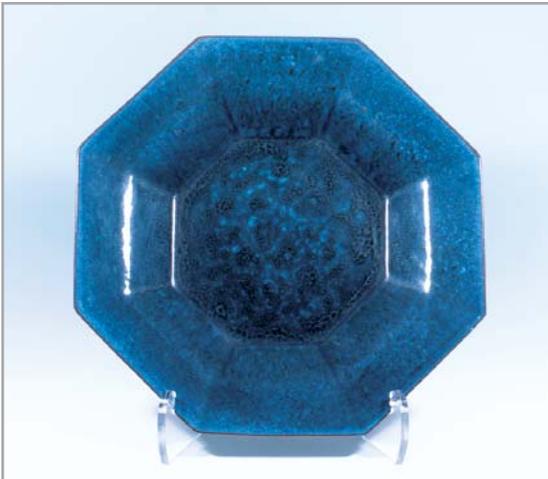


OCTAGONAL PLATE, Oil Spot Glaze
17 1/2 x 1 3/4 x 1 3/4"



OCTAGONAL PLATE, Iron Glaze
18 1/4 x 2 x 2"

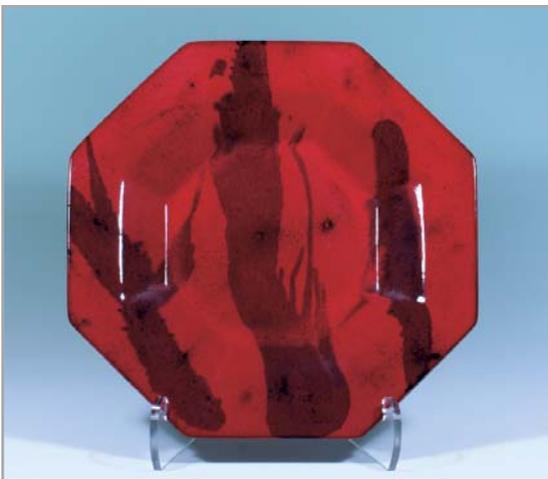
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OCTAGONAL PLATE, Opalescent Copper Blue Glaze
18 1/4 x 2 x 2"



OCTAGONAL PLATE, Experimental Glaze
18 3/4 x 2 1/8 x 2 1/8"



OCTAGONAL PLATE, Cadmium Red Glaze
18 3/4 x 2 1/8 x 2 1/8"



LARGE PLATE, Copper Red with Blue Glaze
19 7/8 x 2 7/8 x 2 7/8"



LARGE PLATE, Chrysanthemum Glaze
17 1/4 x 1 3/8 x 1 3/8"



EWER
'Carbon trap' Ice Crackle Glaze
15 5/8 x 3 7/8 x 3 7/8"



LARGE PLATE, Aventurine Glaze with Fish and Loaves Design
17 3/4 x 3 3/4 x 3 3/4"



EWER, Copper Rose Glaze
13 5/8 x 4 3/8 x 4 3/8"



BROTHER THOMAS BEZANSON

Biography

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- 1929 Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- 1950 Graduated from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.
- 1951 Worked in business. Advisor to the Nova Scotia Handcraft Centre.
- 1953 Began pottery, with the encouragement of friends Foster and Sandy Beveridge, potters, and Fritz Weber, ceramic engineer.
- 1959 Traveled and studied in Europe.
- 1959 Entered the Benedictine Monastery, Weston Priory, VT.
- 1968 Graduated from University of Ottawa with a Masters degree in Philosophy..Awarded University Gold Medal.
- 1976 Visiting lecturer, Alfred University School of Ceramics, Alfred, NY.
- 1978 Traveled in Japan. Met with five "National Treasure" potters. Traveled to Taipei, guest of Dr. Paul Chiang, Director, National Palace Museum.
- 1983 Awarded National Endowment for the Arts grant.
- 1985 Became Artist-in-Residence, Mount Saint Benedict, Erie, PA.

MUSEUM AND GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

- 1972 G. W. V. Smith Art Museum, Springfield, MA
- 1974 St. Mary's University Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 1980 G. W. V. Smith Art Museum, Springfield, MA
- 1982 Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1983 Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1984 Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1986 Carlyn Gallery, New York, NY
Galerie Kieff, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 1987 Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
New Acquisitions Gallery, Syracuse, NY
- 1988 Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
Mount Saint Benedict, Erie, PA
Olin Museum, Roanoke College, Salem, VA
Thronja Gallery, Springfield, MA
- 1989 Mead Art Museum, Amherst College,
Amherst, MA.
Seton Memorial Gallery, Saint Peters School,
New Brunswick, NJ
Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
Bennington Museum, Bennington, VT
- 1990 Dee Erlie Gallery, Milwaukee, WI
Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA
Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA
- 1991 Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA, "*The Continuing Search for the Beautiful: Recent Work*"
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia,
"*Brother Thomas, Vessels from 1980 to 1990*"
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, "*Collecting*"

American Decorative Arts and Sculpture, 1971-1991"

- 1992 Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"Recent Gifts"*
Nada/Mason Gallery, Northfield Mt. Hermon
School, Northfield, MA
- 1993 Queensborough Community College Art Gallery,
Bayside, NY
Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA, *"Vessel
and Visions"*
Canton Art Institute, Canton, OH
Benedicta Art Center, College of St. Benedicta,
St. Josephs, MN
Dimock Gallery, George Washington University,
Washington, DC
- 1994 Catharine G. Murphy Galleries, College of St.
Catherine, St. Paul, MN
Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"Of Measures Beyond
the Perfect"*
- 1995 Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"Gifts from the Fire II"*
- 1997 St. Vincent's College, Latrobe, PA, *"Gifts from the
Fire: The Ceramic Art of Brother Thomas"*
Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"Continuity and
Renewal"*
Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University,
Valparaiso, IN, *"Gifts from the Fire: The
Porcelains of Brother Thomas Bezanson"*
- 1998 Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax,
Nova Scotia, Canada
- 1999 Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"A Time for Celebration"*
Green Gallery, Akasaka, Tokyo, Japan
Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA,
"Reflections from the Fire"
- 2001 Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"The Beauty of the Seen"*
- 2003 Southern Vermont Arts Center, Manchester, VT
Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"Creator of Luminaries"*
- 2004 Soufer Gallery, New York, NY, *"From the Earth: The
Ceramic Art of Brother Thomas"*
- 2005 Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA, *"How Great is Our Joy!"*
- 2006 Benedictine Sisters of Erie, PA, *"The Journey and
the Gift"*

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Aidekman Art Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College,
Oberlin, OH
Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA
Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Bellerive Museum, Zurich, Switzerland
Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Erie, PA
The Bennington Museum of Art, Bennington, VT
Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA
Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec, Canada
Canton Art Institute, Canton, OH
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA
Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA
Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH
Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH
The Commonwealth School, Boston, MA
Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian
Institution, New York, NY
Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College,
Wellesley, MA
Dimock Gallery, George Washington University,
Washington, DC
Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA
Everson Museum, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
Fleming Museum, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Framingham State College, Framingham, MA
Gardiner Museum of Ceramics, Toronto, Ontario,
Canada
George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum,
Springfield, MA
Hokkaido University, Hokkaido, Japan
International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy
Kennedy Museum of American Art, Ohio University,
Miami, FL
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN
The Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred, Alfred, NY
Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design,
Providence, RI
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA
Musée Bernard Palissy, France
Neustadt Museum, Landsberg Am Lech, Germany
Newark Museum, Newark, NJ
Osaka Municipal Museum, Osaka, Japan
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ
Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME

Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, DC
Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences,
Binghamton, NY
Rose Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA
Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame,
Notre Dame, IN
St. Edmunds College, Cambridge, England
St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York
Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel
Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art, Haifa, Israel
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
Vatican Collection, Rome, Italy
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA
Windsor Castle, Windsor, England
Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT

ARTICLES, BOOKS, LECTURES, AND FILMS

- 1960-7 Article, "Potters Notebook," published by Nova Scotia Department of Education, Halifax, Canada.
- 1984 Lecture, "Contemplative Values in My Work," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.
- 1986 Lecture, "Color, Light & Harmony," Studio Potter's Magazine.
- 1987 Lecture, "The Artist's Word," Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY.
Article, "The Artist's Word," Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY.
- 1988 Lecture, "The Pathways to Simplicity," Mount Saint Benedict, Erie, PA.
Lecture, "Art and Religious Experience," Roanoke College, Salem, VA.
Monograph, The Path to the Beautiful, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.
- 1989 Lecture, "Alchemy and the Potter's Art," Bennington Museum, Bennington, VT.
- 1990 Lecture, "Ars, Artis," Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA.
- 1991 Film, "Gifts from the Fire," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- 1993 Lecture: "Freedom: First Gift/Last Gift," Mt. St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, PA.
Monograph, Gifts from the Fire, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.
Lecture, "BIG TIGER / little tiger," Walsh College, Canton, OH and Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA.
- 1994 Lecture, "A Reflection on 'Recognition' in Art," Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- 1995 Lecture, "Viewpoints" Forum, Asia Society, New York, NY.
- 1995 Article, "Outer Space/Inner Space," Studio Potter Magazine.
- 1997 Article, "The Millennial Eggs: Beauty and Hope," Pucker Gallery Exhibition Catalogue, Boston, MA.
- 1999 Monograph, Creation out of Clay: The Art and Writings of Brother Thomas, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.
- 2001 Book, Celebrate the Days: The Brother Thomas Book of Days, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.
Article, "Looking and Seeing," in Spirit of Nature: The Berkshire Landscapes of Jim Schantz, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.
- 2003 Book, Offerings of the Spirit: A Tribute to Brother Thomas, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.
- 2004 Article, "Risk and Discovery: New Works by Hideaki Miyamura," Pucker Gallery Exhibition Catalogue, Boston, MA.
- 2005 Book, This is the Day, Work and Words of Brother Thomas, Pucker Art Publications, Boston, MA.



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