



KAORI TATEBAYASHI

We are thrilled to introduce our latest Marfa Muse, ceramicist Kaori Tatebayashi.

Born in Arita, Japan, the home of Imari porcelain, Kaori has been immersed in a ceramic-rich environment from a young age, and is the last in a long line of pottery traders keeping her family tradition alive.

It was British ceramics that would capture her interest and artistic pursuits though, inspiring a move from Kyoto to London for an exchange program at the Royal College of Arts, and thus influencing a ceramic career spanning 30 years. Working in hand formed white stoneware, Kaori is informed by nature and the essence of ceramics, often working with home grown plants to capture their form with clay with incredible precision.

Kaori has exhibited internationally, and her current solo exhibition 'Still Life' runs until 15th December at Tristan Hoare Gallery (where we shot our beautiful images of Kaori). She's received awards from the Crafts Council and carried out a commission for the British Museum's Grenville Room in 2009.

Kaori wears the Parachute Parka in Bronze and Dark Olive / Black in size XXS-XS with the Knitted Hood in Olive and the Quilted Collar in Burnt Orange, plus the Wool Quilt in Black and Olive / Stone in size XS with the Aviator Collar in Blush.

#marfamuse

Tell us about your background

I was born in Arita, Japan. My family were traders of 'Arita Ware', known in Europe as Old Imari. The town of Arita is renowned for its production of porcelain tableware, immersing me in a ceramic-rich environment from a young age.

When I turned five, my family relocated to Kyoto. There, I pursued my BA and MA in ceramics at Kyoto City University of Art. In search of new and different ways to use this familiar medium, I was captivated by contemporary British ceramics during an exhibition titled, 'The Raw and The Cooked'. It toured from the Barbican Centre in London, to Shigaraki Cultural Park in Japan. It was a sensational experience for me. I was intrigued by the British sculptural ceramics and attracted to their use of lighter surfaces. As Japanese ceramics are often heavily glazed and harshly fired with wood or gas, giving them an earthy finish that I found unappealing. This led me to apply for an exchange program at the Royal College of Arts in 1995, marking the beginning of my journey in the UK which led to shaping my artistic future.

Talk us through your career journey so far

I've dedicated myself to ceramics, working with it since completing university. I have been devoted to ceramics as my sole material for 30 years. I remain fascinated with its unique character, perfectly navigating the delicate balance between fragility and permanence.





WHAT INSPIRES YOUR WORK?

Nature and the medium of ceramic itself inspire my work. My current obsession is gardening and solo camping; the interaction with nature influences and motivates my work.

TALK US THROUGH THE PROCESS FROM CONCEPTION TO INSTALLATION?

Firstly, I make a brief plan of the piece in my head. I then select suitable plants to model my work off. I grow most of the plants in my garden or allotment, and sometimes I source them from local parks or forests, as long as I can find them in common land. From there, I bring them into my studio to observe before I get a piece of clay and start modelling; there is no other process in between. My eyes scan the object, and my hands recreate it in clay, using whatever technique it requires. These techniques must be utilised in the right order because there is a great deal of construction going on to create the piece.

The works are made on the kiln shelf which goes directly into the kiln to be fired. No bisque is required since I don't use glazes. My large-scale sculptures are made in sections and then assembled on the wall. I make spontaneous compositions on the floor once all segments are fired and ready. I find making a composition to be like drawing, calligraphy, or doing Ikebana. There is an element of spontaneity versus control, which is a process I very much enjoy. Once I have decided upon a composition, I trace it onto a piece of paper in order to create a map. This map then works as a guide for when I am undertaking the final install.



WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Being born in Arita to a family of pottery traders, I am the last person in the family who is still working with ceramics. So I feel very proud that I am keeping my family tradition alive.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I am set to install a site-specific work for a private client's house in Italy.

HOW DO YOU STYLE YOUR MARFA STANCE PIECES, AND WHY DO YOU LIKE THE BRAND?

I like to style them by shifting between smart and casual. The way they have been made is so clever, as by simply changing my collar, shoes, or accessories, I can style the pieces in various ways, depending on my mood. There is an overall elegance to the garments due to the high-quality material and exquisite tailoring, which gives them this diversity of style. I also love the colour palette of the brand; it reminds me of a Modigliani painting!

Photographer: Amelia Allen
Exhibition Images by Damian Griffiths, courtesy of Tristan Hoare Gallery.



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