

Akio Niisato *Curves/Planes*

November 25 – December 26, 2023

12:00-19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon and National Holidays

Yutaka Kikutake Gallery is pleased to present Akio Niisato's third solo exhibition at our gallery from November 25 (Saturday) to December 26 (Tuesday). Characterized by refined technique and material control, Niisato's work has gained international acclaim through exhibitions in countries such as the United States, Italy, and Romania. This latest exhibition, entitled *Curves/Planes*, engages the entire gallery space by expressing the interplay between light, color, and form through the arrangement of a body of new work developed as an extension of Niisato's well-known *Luminescent Vessels* series.

The work in this latest exhibition is striking in the way it has freed itself from the formal conceptions surrounding vessels. Visitors can see several flat, circular pieces suspended from the ceiling which have holes drilled into the white ceramic material. Light enters through these holes to give both the pieces and the overall gallery space a sense of levitation. There is a platform at the center of the gallery where several white porcelain pieces and spherical objects in a variety of colors sit. These pieces are the main focus of this exhibition, providing color accents while contributing to the overall composition.

Niisato spoke about consciously trying to free himself from foot structures as he created the work for this exhibition. Traditionally, the foot, which supports the base of the vessel, is an essential element for both artistic presentation and practical use, such as when the vessel placed on a table. For this exhibition, the artist chose to flip these vessels over and fire them upside down. These fired forms do not have foot structures, and instead capture the gravitational forces which act upon the material. In this way, viewers of the exhibition can see the artist's attempt to move away from the preconceived notion that the work is a container into which something should be placed. His awareness of this issue is also reflected in his decision to use the English word "luminescence" rather than "vessel" to describe each of the pieces that make up this exhibition.

In the course of his investigations surrounding the relationship between porcelain and light, as well as between symbolic vessels and practical ones, Niisato has moved back and forth between traditional craftwork and the exploration of freer forms. These explorations and investigations have contributed to the depth of technical knowledge and skill in his work. One example of this is his experimentation with incorporating the cracks, marks, and other imperfections that inherently occur when firing such delicate materials. Along with the sense of delicacy that the rows of tiny hand-made holes provide, the dynamic motion created by chips and cracks in the porcelain contribute to the unique allure of his work. For this exhibition, the balance between refinement and incompleteness expressed in his Luminescent Vessels series departs from the detailed focus typical of traditional craftwork, and instead develops into a spatial composition that imparts on the viewer a sense of expansiveness. Niisato's innovative compositions are the result of the polarity of two viewpoints: one that is rooted in the world of traditional ceramics, and another that pursues the expressive possibilities in freer, more unconventional approaches. Through this continued exploration of materials and techniques, as well as practical application, Akio Niisato has discovered a new frontier that we invite you to explore.

Akio Niisato was born in 1977 in the Chiba prefecture. After withdrawing from his studies at the Philosophy Department, School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Waseda University, he went on to study at the Tajimi City Ceramic and Design Center where he received his Diploma 2001. His selected awards include, the Award for New Artist, Premio Faenza 54th Edition (2005, Italy); Grand Prize, Paramita Museum Ceramic Competition (2008); Jury's Special Award, International Ceramics Festival MINO; Incentive Award, Kikuchi Biennale (Tokyo, 2009); and Award for New Artist, MOA Mokichi Okada Award (Tokyo, 2014). He continues to receive high acclaim for his works, with participation in numerous exhibitions both in Japan and overseas including the US, Italy, and Romania. His representative work "Luminescent" consists of vessels created by making perforations in translucent white porcelain, and filling each of the holes with clear glaze before firing. The works which give the impression of emitting light in themselves are conceived through independently developing the Chinese technique of 'hotarude,' which enable translucent patterns to emerge when it carries the light, with their luminescent appearance likened to a firefly. In addition to this technique that attempts to explore ways of vessels that transcend contexts of the everyday, in recent years he has engaged in producing works that while rooted in tradition, give form to the natural traces that are born out of the dialogue between the materials and his own body. .