

NATURAL INSPIRATION WITH SCULPTRESS HITOMI HOSONO

Touching memory in the clay



Photographs courtesy of Adrian Sassoon, London

The porcelain clay guides Hitomo Honso into unexpected discoveries



Growing up with never-ending natural inspirations in her hometown in the Gifu Prefecture, surrounded by rice fields and green mountains, Hosono's hands magically unleash the spirit within the porcelain, a ballet of texture and light.

On the inspired use of Sprig Moulds to create pottery...
My technique was initially inspired by Wedgwood's Jasperware, pioneered by Josiah Wedgwood over 200 years ago, in which thin ceramic reliefs or 'sprigs' are applied as surface decoration to a piece.

My earliest experience speaking to clay...

It was probably when I was a student at the Tajimi Technical High School when I started to engage with clay more creatively. I learnt the importance of understanding the characteristics of clay to create new shapes and forms.

Spirituality influences my work...

In touching porcelain clay, I find that my memories of particular aspects of nature become realised through my hands; what was abstract and uncertain in my mind becomes tangible through making — Kneading, brushing, patting, I complete many processes until the final shape emerges from the porcelain clay, which embodies my tactile perception of nature.

Opposite, Detail of A Very Large Tenjiku Botan and Nazuna Bowl, 2018 Moulded, carved and hand-built porcelain with an interior of dancing sprigs

Creating the *Large Feather Leaves Bowl*...

With more than 1,000 individually carved porcelain leaves, this piece was inspired by nature from my home town in the Gifu Prefecture. My house is surrounded by rice fields and green mountains, which create gentle rustling sounds that have become part of the environment. I was surprised by the quantity of porcelain leaves this piece required to embody the beauty of nature that I wished to express.

My experiences and their effects on the pottery creation process...

From the time I was a small child I helped on my family's rice farm and assisted with our vegetable gardening. These early experiences helped me understand that growing food takes time as well as patience and care. This in turn has had a significant impact on how I manage such time-consuming processes in making my finely detailed work.

Porcelain by any other name...

It has never occurred to me to use any other type of clay other than porcelain. I really fell in love with this material and in the future I would like to try working with porcelains from different countries.

My favourite place to visit, to relax and receive inspiration...

My home town, Gifu, is always my favourite place to visit. There are endless discoveries to be absorbed.

My current inspirations...

I am fascinated by botanical forms; the veins of a leaf, the shape of its edges and the layering of a flower's petals. The greenery in London is an unending source of inspiration where I have found interesting plants – studying the microscopic details, touching to discover the texture and closely examining the structure. I place some of my work near the window in my bedroom. The gentle light shining through the window shows the fine detail of my work beautifully.

The wondrous world of porcelain...

While working with porcelain, I examine my memories of nature and find new ideas emerge. The porcelain clay appears to guide me into unexpected discoveries that are developed from my initial ideas. This magical material and all its endless possibilities are so enjoyable to work with. It enables me to go much further than just imitating nature, allowing me to weave new features into my work.

Detail of A Tall Nazuna and English Daisy Vase, 2018 Moulded, carved and hand-built porcelain with an interior of dancing sprigs

