

SHOZO MICHIKAWA

b.1953, Hokkaido, Japan

Shozo Michikawa is a ceramic artist based in Seto, Japan, where he has maintained a studio since 1975. Michikawa creates expressionist gestural sculptures inspired by nature and his native landscape. His hand-thrown ceramics twist in dynamic spirals along a central axis. The works' materials and complex silhouettes exist in a harmonic balance between destructive force and stability: distortion, scored surfaces, and fault lines appear across their rough-hewn faces, which glint and shimmer upon close inspection like igneous stones encasing mineral deposits.

Working from Seto, the ancient center of Japanese pottery production, Michikawa employs techniques from the region's thousand-year-old traditions. He often fires his ceramics in an *anagama*, an outdoor, wood-stoked kiln which requires constant tending over three or more days of firing. The chance textures of wood ash, pine sap, charcoal, and mineral glazes combine to produce subtle, earth-toned variegations on the ceramics' surfaces. Often, dark clay bodies combine with satiny, feldspar-rich Shino and white Kohiki glazes to produce stark contrasts in the sculptures' twisting forms. Elsewhere, Michikawa creates sculptures using rough, unglazed stoneware formed from volcanic Usu earth. The resulting ceramics' forms and textures recall the seismic forces and volcanic eruptions that have defined much of the Pacific Rim's geology.

Shozo Michikawa has exhibited widely in Japan as well as internationally. His work is included in many important public and private collections including the Shimada City Museum, Japan; International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; and Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA. He is the recipient of a gold medal at the Internationale Handwerksmesse Munich and was a finalist for the Loewe Craft Prize in 2019.