

Artist Biography: The Life of Makoto Hatori

<https://www2r.biglobe.ne.jp/~makoto-h/>

Born in Japan in 1947, Makoto Hatori has cultivated a distinguished career in ceramics over more than five decades, quietly resonating across cultures and continents.

In 1970, while still a student, Hatori undertook his first apprenticeship in Bizen during an extended university recess. This formative encounter with a traditional ceramic master marked the beginning of his lifelong engagement with unglazed ceramics, laying the foundation for the discipline and sensibility that would shape his lifelong practice. It was also the starting point of his direct dialogue with material.

In 1972, he graduated from the Department of Fine Arts and Sculpture at Nihon University College of Art. Between 1972 and 1974, he pursued fundamental research on raw materials such as clay and glazes at the Gifu Prefectural Ceramic Research Institute (now the Institute of Ceramics).

In 1974, following this period of research, Hatori returned for a second time to Bizen. This renewed apprenticeship, approached with greater maturity and contemplative focus, enabled him to consolidate and significantly deepen the foundations of his practice in the heartland of traditional unglazed ceramics.

In 1975, he established his own pottery studio in Ibaraki, complete with a traditional kiln designed and built by himself. While continuing to create traditional unglazed ceramics, he exhibited extensively across Japan. From 1978 onward, his practice extended internationally, participating in exhibitions in over twenty countries, receiving consistent acclaim for its subtle integration of tradition and contemporary expression.

In addition to exhibiting, Hatori has contributed essays to international ceramics journals. His writings candidly articulate the perspectives of Japanese ceramic tradition while exploring the interrelation of tradition, aesthetics, and culture, thereby enriching global understanding of contemporary ceramics.

His career has been recognized with major international awards, including the Salzbrand Keramik '96 (Germany, 1996), the UNICUM Prize at the 2nd International Ceramic Triennial in Slovenia (2012), and the 5th International Triennial of Silicate Art in Hungary (2014). His works are held in the permanent collections of leading institutions, including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum in the UK.

Alongside his artistic practice, Hatori actively engages in education and residencies, sharing his expertise with students and fellow artists. He has served as a guest tutor at Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University) and contributed to numerous international symposia and conferences, affirming his standing as a respected and influential voice within the global ceramic community.

Today, Hatori's oeuvre continues to embody a quiet yet profound dialogue between tradition and innovation, inspiring new generations and contributing to the international appreciation of the ceramic arts.