



Postmodern Ceramics

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Thames & Hudson

Two other artists have radicalized this self-referential 'vessel as image' approach—Quebecois artist **Paul Mathieu** and Japanese-born **Akio Takamori** (pp. 140, 141). They do two things at once—treat the vessel as a drawing, but use it as the canvas for images of figures and other subjects as well. Mathieu uses layered vessels, one on top of the other. At the bottom of each work he has painted the full image. As the dishes are piled one on top of the other, the drawing becomes more and more sculptural and three-dimensional. For instance, if one removes the actual cup in *My Cup of Tea* (1986) one finds that the same cup is drawn on the plate underneath, and the one beneath that. This is a clever game in which the essential 'drawing' remains the same, becoming more or less three dimensional, depending upon whether pieces are added or removed. Drawing and form are one interlocking concept in Mathieu's work.

Takamori's 'envelope' pots had the same impact on American ceramics as Fritsch's coil-built pots had in Britain. He used a similar device to that of Fritsch, making a wide, flat vessel, raising the back of the pot's mouth higher than the front to suggest depth. But in his case the entire pot becomes a drawn figurative silhouette. The idea came to him from looking at Japanese erotic prints and realizing that the couples in these woodblock images, one lying in front and the other lying behind, together enclosed space, and so became a kind of conceptual vessel. These pots, with their unique vision, innovative approach to drawing and erotic content are now amongst the most sought-after works of the 1980s.



Paul Mathieu
The Arrows of Time, 1990
Porcelain
h 13 in., w 14 in., d 14 in.
h 33 cm, w 35.5 cm, d 35.5 cm



Paul Mathieu
My Cup of Tea, 1986
Porcelain
h 6 in., w 11½ in.
h 15.3 cm, w 29.2 cm