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Yurichiro Komatsu

Growing up in a contrasting environment of Japan and the abroad has nurtured Yuichiro Komatsu's sense of critical awareness about his surrounding environment. Cultural differences in approach, process and value have always fueled my curiosity towards understanding his work and his placement in a larger context of the world.

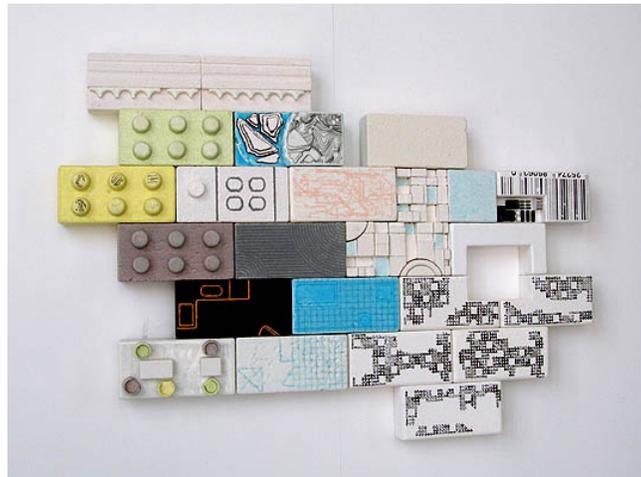
In Komatsu's recent work, he attempts to create an environment where the parameters of familiar and unfamiliar are negotiated. Through manipulation and transformation of material and architectural structure, he creates situations where model-like structures occupy actual architectural space. In such a space, perception oscillates between the "real" and the "fabricated", and one is invited to encounter and adapt to incongruity.

Past memories that are uncertain, illusions that are ephemeral and familiar objects that assert conviction all exist in the present. He is interested in how and where these different notions of time and space meet and converge.

Spaces that are private, public, real and represented all dissolve into this seemingly unfamiliar territory where complex layers of meaning and associations contest and blur.

Amy Gogerty, of the Alberta College of Art and Design wrote the following. spatial juncture presents itself as both contemporary installation and ceramic art. Recent criticism claims that by aspiring towards acceptance into the "big league" of contemporary fine arts, ceramics installation necessarily incorporates "disdain for its own tradition . . . beliefs and practices that have given ceramics its sense of identity in the first place" However, Komatsu's work comfortably embraces both conceptual aspects of installation and concerns with material, aesthetics and technology characteristic of contemporary ceramics practice. As are most young ceramists today, Komatsu trained with communities of makers who work across and between disciplines. He regards recent Modern and Postmodern histories as potential reservoirs for interrogation and exploration rather than as implacable foes. Such thinking does not dismiss rigour or fail naively to reconcile divergent approaches; nor does it trade in bad faith or irony by satirizing artistic gambits from the 1960s and 70s. Instead, by adopting an open-ended and playful approach to recent art, Komatsu mines the legacy of these significant theoretical databases in a spirit of reduce, re-use and re-cycle to generate new ways of representing contemporary experience.

From an historical perspective, strands from the various technologies--drawing, photography and ceramics--come together to suggest connections between art forms that are rarely considered within traditional art historical narratives. While freely absorbing and responding to work traditionally framed in terms of fine art, Komatsu embraces ceramics in terms of its materiality and aesthetic concerns. Having developed the requisite skill and know-how to create redolent ceramic surfaces and having selected materials specific to ceramics practice--kiln bricks and peeps--Komatsu exhibits an intense interest in ceramic processes, surfaces, composition and beauty. Though not exclusive to ceramics, attraction to beauty and work that speaks directly to haptic impulses remains central to ceramics despite being disparaged in much fine art theory and practice. spatial juncture engages the body of the viewer directly, requiring viewers to walk through and around the installation, to interact with structures placed carefully on the floor, at table height or on the walls of the room. The pointed and sensuous contrasts between rough brick and pellucid glaze; intricate, photographic images and degraded or illegible patterns and between domestic tropes and urban abstraction require one to slow down and acknowledge psychological and phenomenological forces at work. Rather than seeing ceramic art installations as rejections of those aspects integral to craft, it is more productive to view them as expanding our range of aesthetic experience by introducing into the mix sensibilities unique to ceramics and craft. It is in this spirit of integrating rather than hierarchically ranking disciplines that spatial juncture succeeds in engaging its audience and staking its claim.



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