

Nature, Tradition and Innovation: Woodson Art Museum to feature Japanese ceramics

Laura Schulte, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin 6:26 a.m. CT June 2, 2017



(Photo: Courtesy of Tim Siegert)

WAUSAU - Nature, tradition and innovation will be at the center of the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum starting this weekend.

Intricate patterns, soothing colors and nature-based platters, vases, cups and more will be making their way to the museum starting on June 3 as a part of the "Contemporary Japanese Ceramics" collection, on loan from the Mingei International Museum in San Diego, California.

Amy Beck, the marketing and communications manager for the Woodson Art Museum, said the exhibit will highlight the importance of ceramics in Japanese culture, dating back for centuries.

"There's strong tradition in Japanese society for ceramists," Beck said. "Part of what this exhibition examines is the contemporary artists who have re-imagined the tradition."

The pieces on display are modeled to look like themes that naturally occur in nature, such as the rush of a waterfall or the look of moss on stone. Each cup, vase or platter is unique, and made by a different artist.

"It's beautiful artwork, created to be used in everyday rituals," Beck said.

The new exhibition will be on display in the west gallery starting on Saturday, as the main galleries will be under construction during the summer months. Because the west gallery is smaller, the exhibition will have a slightly more intimate layout for the nature-based display.

The display will also feature nature photography to highlight aspects of nature that the artists may have drawn inspiration from, Beck said, though the photos don't have a direct correlation to the ceramics.

"It's more that the collector of the ceramic art saw connections," she said. "You get the gist of the inspiration the artists may have been going for."

The "Contemporary Japanese Ceramics" exhibition will also include several events relating to ceramics throughout its tenure at the museum. A highlight, Beck said, will be a three-part Raku class, in which teens and adults will be able to use fire and smoke to create their own ceramics. Starting on June 24, participants will be able to create their own vessel out of clay, which will then be fired. On July 8 and 9, participants will be able to return to the Woodson Art Museum to finish their creation with glaze. Programs will also be available throughout the summer for children and babies.

Beck is excited for the newest exhibition, and all that it can teach those in Wausau and beyond when they visit.

"It's a way to explore not only an art form," she said. "But culture and history and how contemporary artists explore."

"Contemporary Japanese Ceramics" will be on display starting Saturday through Aug. 27. Museum hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

For more information on programs or to register for programs, visit www.lywam.org (<https://www.lywam.org/learn-do/>).

Contact Going Out reporter Laura Schulte at 715-297-7532 or leschulte@gannett.com; on Twitter [@schultelaura](https://twitter.com/SchulteLaura) (<https://twitter.com/SchulteLaura>).

Read or Share this story: <http://wdhne.ws/2sluS1b>

**Contemporary Japanese Ceramics
at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art
Museum**