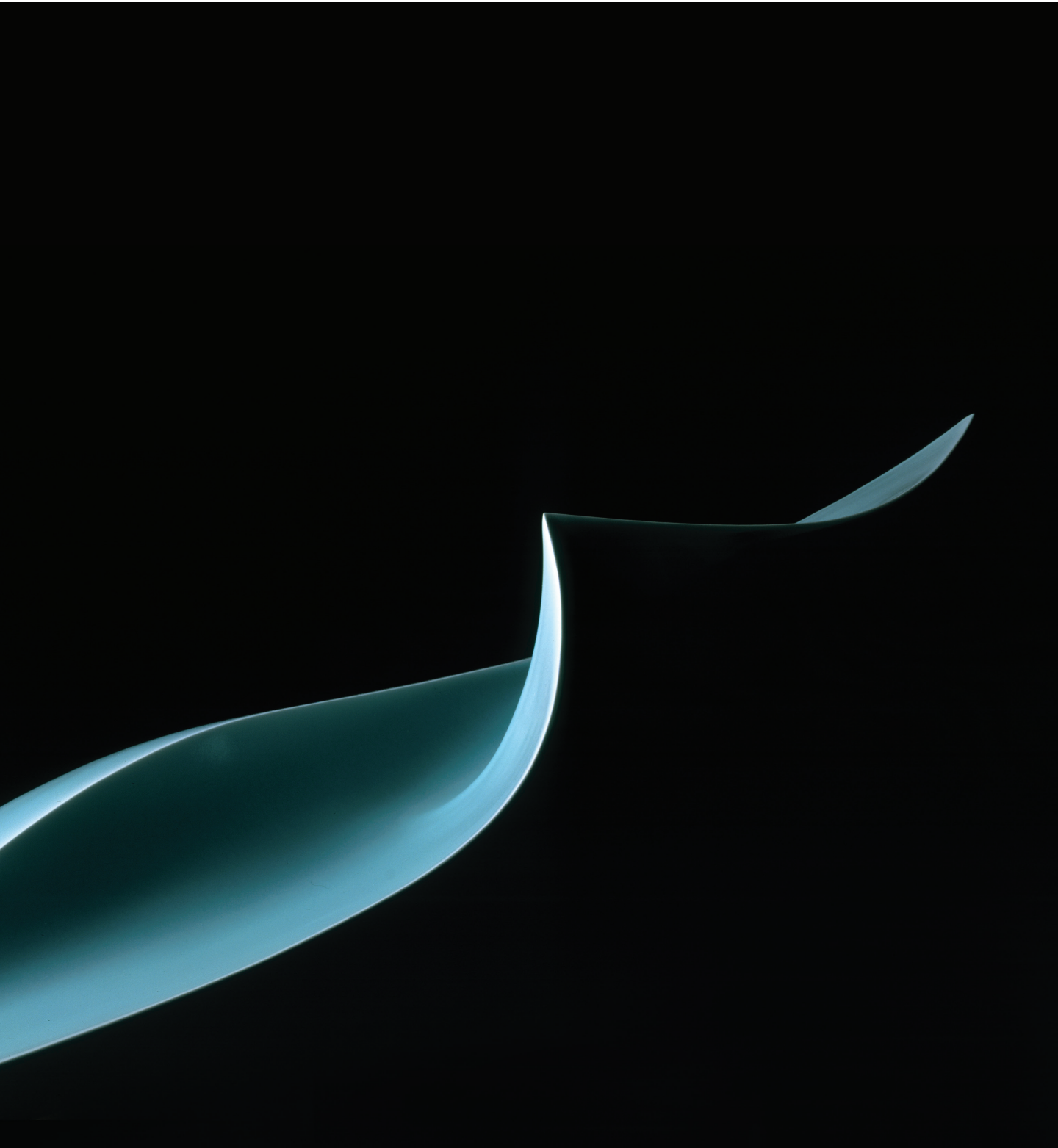


Art in the Garden

Fukami: A Distant View
The Porcelain Sculpture of Sueharu Fukami
with Photographs by Jean Vollum

Fall 2013



A Distant View: The Porcelain Sculpture of Sueharu Fukami

The works of Sueharu Fukami are inspired by the natural world. The delicate pale-blue forms of Fukami's elegant porcelain sculpture appear to exist, in the words of the artist, "in the place where the sky and the sea meet, the 'something' that is heading out into the ocean's horizon."

Considered one of the most distinguished ceramic artists of his generation, Fukami came to international attention when he won the Grand Prize in the prestigious International Ceramic Exhibition at Faenza, Italy in 1985. He is also one of the only artists to win the Japan Ceramics Society Gold Medal Award twice. His work is in private collections and museums all over the world: the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; the British Museum; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Brooklyn Museum; the Art Institute of Chicago; and many others including the Portland Art Museum.

I seek to capture the place where the sky and the sea meet, the 'something' that is heading out into the ocean's horizon.

SUEHARU FUKAMI

Fukami is the sixth child in a family of potters who produced functional tableware in the ceramic-producing district around Sennyuji Temple southeast of Kyoto. His contemporary sculpture has a firm base in traditional ceramic training and techniques, bringing the challenging medium of porcelain into the world of abstract art.

According to art historian Shinya Maezaki, Fukami's work "is best known for his luminous pale-blue, or seihakuji, glazed abstract porcelains that are technical and aesthetic feats of clay." The precision, delicacy and sheer scale of the forms for which he is known is possible due to a unique slip-casting process he developed that stretches the limits of possibility in porcelain sculpture.

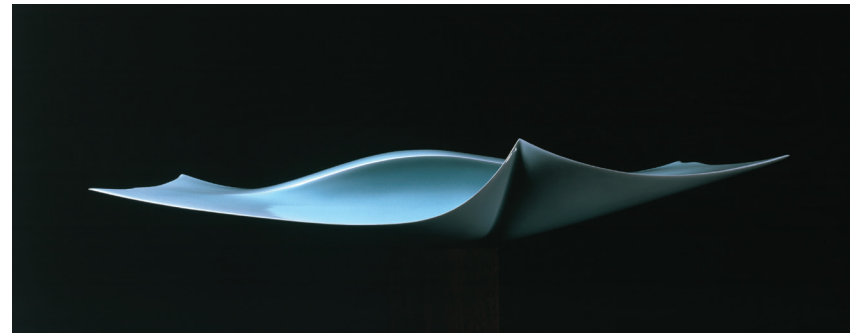


Kiyoki no Omoi V (Pure Imagination V), Sueharu Fukami. Photograph by Takashi Hatakeyama.

Everything that is beautiful is always in balance. With balance, you get a sense of peace.

JEAN VOLLUM

Untitled photograph, Ice Cycles Series by Jean Vollum



Sora ni (In the Sky), Sueharu Fukami. Photograph by Takashi Hatakeyama.

Twenty-four works by Fukami will be on view—twelve from the artist's studio in Fushimi, Kyoto, and twelve on loan from private collectors. The exhibition also features a selection of nine color photographs by Fukami's friend, the late Jean Vollum (1927-2007), one of Portland's greatest philanthropists and patrons of the arts.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEAN VOLLUM

The late Jean Vollum's luminous Ice Cycles series of photographs capture the majestic and yet fragile world of the polar ice floes of Antarctica. Jean Vollum was involved in the arts for most of her life, practicing calligraphy, weaving, and eventually photography. She made a number of expeditions to photograph polar ice, which became her passion. "Vollum's images are taken from a Zodiac boat pulled so close to the frozen cliffs, the resulting blue and white prints look like color field paintings cold enough to touch," wrote art critic D.K. Row in *The Oregonian*. "The cool, tough beauty of their composition offers hints of her spirit."

Jean Vollum was an avid collector of Fukami's work, and several of the pieces from her collection, now in the collections of her five sons, are on view in this exhibition. Introduced by a mutual acquaintance, Fukami and Vollum instantly understood their shared aesthetic. "Everything that is beautiful is always in balance. With balance, you get a sense of peace," Jean once said. "Every time I can bring beauty into the lives around me, I'm building a little peace."

That spirit, shared between two artist-friends across the Pacific, made possible this fitting conclusion to the Art in the Garden exhibition series for Garden's 50th anniversary.

SPONSORED BY:

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