



Building Your Own Kiln: Three Japanese Potters Give Advice and Instructions

Hiromi Itabashi, Roppo Tamura, Naoki Kawabuchi

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Many potters undoubtedly dream of the day when they will build a kiln of their own. Others may wish simply to make better use of the kiln they now have, or one they have recourse to. Again, some connoisseurs may want to know more about the kilns that produce the ceramics they love. For all these people, *Building Your Own Kiln* presents the knowledge and experience that three veteran Japanese potters have gained from constructing their own kilns.

Hiromi Itabashi, who is known for his abstract ceramic sculpture, provides step-by-step instructions on how to build a small gas kiln that fires some twenty pieces at a time. Because of its size and ease of use, this kiln is ideal for experimenting with different types of firing and various kinds of glazes. It can be built in a day and operated by one potter working alone.

Roppo Tamura, who works in both artificial and natural glazes, describes the building of an anagama kiln, with its centuries-old history in Korea and Japan. He stresses the importance of the chimney and the "empty chamber" in regulating the temperature and offers many tips on construction and firing. Altogether he has built over twenty kilns in his lifetime.

Naoki Kawabuchi, who is known particularly for his Nanban ware, describes the building of a "snake kiln," a type that has a history of over 600 years. He chose this type of kiln for its ability to produce a slow, even temperature, which suits his style of Nanban ware.

The kilns of these three potters are profusely illustrated with diagrams and photographs, providing a concrete image of the building process and a virtual introduction to the role of the kiln in the ceramic arts. For all potters thinking of making a kiln of their own, as well as for ceramic lovers who want to know more about how pottery is made, *Building Your Own Kiln* offers a wealth of information and shared know-how, provided by three Japanese potters with years of experience in kiln construction.

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