

MUSEU NACIONAL  
D'ART DE CATALUNYA

HAMADA

ENG

4 JUNE / 3 OCTOBER 2021

ARTIGAS  
THE COLOURS  
OF FIRE

PASSION FOR CERAMICS:  
A HISTORY OF FRIENDSHIP  
BETWEEN CATALONIA  
AND JAPAN

Organize

MUSEU  
NACIONAL  
D'ART DE  
CATALUNYA

Parc de Montjuïc  
Barcelona  
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Fundació J. Llorens Artigas

Collaborate

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This exhibition details, for the first time, the history of friendship and mutual fascination between two great artists of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century: Hamada Shōji and Josep Llorens Artigas. It offers a unique opportunity to admire more than a hundred pieces, from both public and private





collections, and to discover two ways of working in search of pure beauty.

You will discover the strength, beauty and simplicity of pieces marked by the colours of fire, ceramics that fascinated artists such as Joan Miró and Eudald Serra.





## THE ARTISTIC VALUE OF CERAMICS

Both Hamada and Artigas were concerned about the loss of the practice of anonymous craft built on the aesthetic values of tradition.

This exhibition reclaims ceramics as an artistic discipline of great richness with an incomparable poetic force, based on the combination of elements as essential as earth, water and fire.

### **Hamada Shōji**

*Large bowl*, 1968. Successió Serra

*Plate*, c. 1960. Private collection

*Vase*, 1962. Fundació J. Llorens Artigas

### **Josep Llorens Artigas**

*Vase*, 1943. Private collection

*Vase*, 1949-50. Private collection

*Vase*, 1949. Private collection

*Cup*, 1935. Fundació J. Llorens Artigas





## TO LEARN MORE

From June 12th, every Saturday, **free guided visits** to the exhibition.  
11 am (Spanish) and 12.30 pm (Catalan).

In August only for groups on request.

**The exhibition catalogue** available for purchase in the Museum shop. It is a publication that explores in depth the relationships between Hamada and Artigas, as well as the links between Catalan artists and Japanese folk crafts.





## A REMARKABLE DUO

Hamada was one of the most prominent Japanese ceramicists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, declared a National Living Treasure by the government of Japan.

Likewise, Artigas, considered one of the great masters of modern European ceramics, was one of the first Catalan ceramicists to explore East Asian models.

It is from this tradition that the artist incorporates the harmonic, simple and refined balance so characteristic of his ceramics.

## TWO ARTISTS, TWO WAYS OF WORKING

“The important thing is not the name, but that the ceramic is good,” said Hamada. The Japanese artist worked on the pieces with a manual lathe and used a small number of enamels extracted from the nearby natural environment. He never signed his work, because for him there could be no better signature than the work itself.

In the beginning, Artigas christened the ceramics with poetic and suggestive names. He produced thousands of formulations of ceramic glazes so he would never repeat the same piece or colour. He aspired to make unique and inimitable works of art.



## MASHIKO A GALLIFA

In 1963, Artigas and his son Joan Gardy Artigas built the *Mashiko* kiln in the Gallifa workshop in Vallès Occidental. It was a tribute to Hamada and was based on Artigas' study of Hamada's kiln in the Japanese town of Mashiko. Inside this kiln many of Artigas' pieces, and some of the great works made together with Joan Miró, were fired.



## MINGEI

The *mingei* movement originated in Japan in the 1920s to preserve and highlight the importance of folk crafts. It demonstrated the aesthetic, honest and functional beauty of everyday objects, as well as representing the defence of anonymous craft tradition and its people. From 1950 onwards it spread widely throughout Catalonia, and Josep Llorens Artigas, together with the sculptor Eudald Serra, approached the movement with the AR-SE project. This was a project which centred on creating utilitarian and low-cost ceramics which offered beauty a place in everyday life, without being ostentatious.

Thanks to this exhibition, several works by Hamada and Artigas have been restored in the Museum, as well as other pieces, such as a *bingata*, an old traditional Okinawan costume, and a screen by textile artist Serizawa Keisuke, both acquired by Eudald Serra in Japan.



Josep Llorens Artigas and Hamada Shōji at the wedding of Joan Gardy Artigas and Ishikawa Mako. Detail, 1962. Fundació J. Llorens Artigas

Josep Llorens Artigas, *Clair de lune vase*, 1927. Museu del Disseny de Barcelona

*Bingata*. Detail, 19th century. Museu Etnològic i de Cultures del Món

Serizawa Keisuke. *Folding screen*, c. 1955-1957. Família Gomis Bertrand

Front cover: Hamada Shōji. *Plate*. Detail, c. 1968. Successió Serra.

Photo: Josep Casanova

Front cover: Josep Llorens Artigas. *Vase*. Detail, 1949. Josep Maria Ferrer Collection. Photo: Josep Casanova



■ ■ Similar to the Chinese, and later the Japanese, I try to make my vases possess a value of expression comparable to that of painting, although one which is more concrete and hermetic. [...] Nature is my source of inspiration ■ ■  
Josep Llorens Artigas

*Josep Llorens Artigas in the workshop of Charenton-le-Pont, c. 1932. Fundació J. Llorens Artigas*

#HamadaArtigas



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