

HIROTSUNE TASHIMA

Pop Allegories in Clay

Julie Sasse

The colourful ceramic sculptures by Hirotsune Tashima are delightful narratives about popular culture and the interface between Japanese and American life. But equally compelling are Tashima's subtexts that address a fast-paced world increasingly faced with environmental challenges. His individual sculptures and installations are imbued with an uncanny verisimilitude, wry sense of humour and technical cleverness. Yet they resonate with thought-provoking messages about real-world issues. His sculptures are in effect pop allegories that tell a story, provide an insight into human behaviour, and ultimately impart a poignant lesson about identity and responsibility to the world around us.

Tashima was born in Hiroshima, Japan, in 1969, and attended Osaka University of Arts where he learned traditional ceramic techniques. In 1993, he moved to the United States to study at New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. His early work examined the cultural and religious differences between East and West using a tongue-in-cheek approach. Signifying stereotypes of America, Tashima fashioned such objects as cowboy boots and cattle skulls. Such icons represented not only his fantasy of a new, exciting culture, but are a reminder that such images are more cultural constructs than reality. Tashima's Western works became prophetic talismans. In 1998, he accepted a teaching position at Pima Community College

Black Chocolate Rain Banana, multiple-fired stoneware, handbuilt, 26 x 13 x 10 cm
firing temp: cone 5, 2011

