桂窯

Raku tea bowls | Katsura-gama | Kyoto

tea bowl exhibition | Kissabō, Berlin | from 15 November 2026

—

Tea bowls from Katsura-gama, *at Kissabō*

Raku ware was born in Kyoto in the sixteenth century, for the Way of Tea.

From 15 November 2026, ten tea bowls from Katsura-gama, a Raku kiln in Kyoto, are at Kissabō in Berlin. They were made in the kiln's own workshop under the direction of Rumi Higaki, whose family runs Katsura-gama. Each carries the Katsura-gama seal and comes in its own paulownia box, which she has inscribed.

The bowls stand on the shelf, where they can be picked up and held, and each is for sale. There is one of each design.



The gate on the lane, Nishikyō-ku.

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Ten tea bowls



The curtain at the door: 桂窯, *Katsura-gama, and* 崇楽, *Sōraku.*





窯

01 | the kiln | how it began

—

A kiln that began with braziers

Founded by a maker of the clay braziers a tea kettle sits on.

The Higaki family runs Katsura-gama, a Raku kiln in Nishikyō-ku, on the western edge of Kyoto. Its founder came to Kyoto from Awaji Island and made decorative roof tiles for shrines. He was the first Sōhaku Yorigami, a man of wide interests: tea, flower arrangement, calligraphy and poetry.

With the technique he had developed for the tiles, he began to make *dofuro*, clay braziers that hold the charcoal beneath the kettle in a tea room. That was the beginning of Katsura-gama.



LEFT *The kiln's name, carved:* 桂窯. RIGHT *The garden, from the house.*



家

02 | the family | Yorigami and Higaki

From the first Sōhaku to the third

Sōhaku and Sōraku are names handed down in the family.

The first Sōhaku Yorigami was followed by his eldest son, the second Sōhaku, who had no direct successor. The first Sōhaku's eldest daughter and her husband took the name Sōraku: he as Sōraku Higaki I, she as Sōraku Higaki II. They are the parents of Seishi Higaki (檜垣青子), the third generation, who still makes ceramics for the Way of Tea.

Seishi's son, Ryōta Higaki (檜垣良多), was chosen to carry on the family tradition. He later took the name Sōhaku Yorigami (寄神崇白), and is the third to bear it. As Sōhaku he makes bowls of his own. Their own work is a separate group from the workshop bowls in this catalogue.



LEFT *In the workshop at Katsura-gama.* RIGHT *The workshop shelves.*



手

03 | the workshop | from clay to fire

—

Made by hand, one at a time

Each bowl begins as a ball of clay.

The bowls are shaped entirely by hand, with no potter's wheel and no mould. The clay is pressed open and raised on a small turning table and left to stiffen. The wall is pared thin with a steel blade, and the foot is cut. The bowl is dried and given a first firing, then painted where it carries a design, and glazed.

It is fired in the Raku way, on its own or with a few others.



LEFT *Clay in blocks, kept under plastic, before it is worked.* RIGHT *A ball of clay on the turning table.*





LEFT *Raised by hand.* RIGHT *Brushes, and a toothbrush.*





LEFT *Glazes and pigments, kept as powder in numbered jars.* RIGHT *Maple leaves, painted by hand one at a time. This bowl is not among the ten.*





LEFT *A glazed bowl before the firing, its foot and seal left bare.* RIGHT *Glaze, laid on with a bamboo tool.*









LEFT *Bowls drying.* RIGHT *The kiln at 1215 ºC.*


DT-15
TTM-004
1215
PV
SV
OUT1
OUT2
AL1
AL2
COM
RDY
DI
MODE
FUNC
TOHO



THE FIRING

—

Drawn from the kiln with tongs, while it still glows.

On a steel post at the front of the kiln shed, a paper charm from Atago Shrine: 火迺要慎, take care with fire.



茶



04 | tea | Rumi Higaki

—

Rumi Higaki

Of the family that runs Katsura-gama.

Rumi Higaki practises tea in the Urasenke tradition and directs the Katsura-gama workshop. She studied at the Urasenke Gakuen Professional College of Chadō, where she received her tea name. Her husband, Ryōta Higaki, carries the name Sōhaku Yorigami.

She gives tea gatherings and workshops in Japan and abroad, and asks guests to notice the warmth, texture and weight of the bowl in their hands.

Each of the ten bowls in this catalogue was made under her direction and comes in a paulownia box that she has inscribed.



LEFT *The alcove of the tea room at Katsura-gama. The scroll reads* 日々是好日: *every day is a good day.* RIGHT *Rumi Higaki in the tea room.*



房



05 | the room | Kissabō, Berlin

—

Kissabō, *Berlin*

A tea bar with sixteen seats, in Prenzlauer Berg.

The name starts from *kissaten* (喫茶店), the Japanese word for a café, and swaps its 店, shop, for 房, room. It serves Japanese teas, with sweets shaped by hand.

Kissabō's own bowls are in daily use: Raku, Hagi, and work from Japan and Europe. A guest picks the bowl the tea comes in. From 15 November the shelf also holds the bowls of Katsura-gama; those are for sale, and we never serve tea in them.



PHOTOGRAPHS *Clemens Poloczek*







茶

—

Tea bowls from the workshop

One bowl of each design.

Every bowl has a Katsura-gama seal pressed into the clay at its foot, inside the foot ring or just above it; on five of the ten the glaze has run over it. Each bowl comes in its own paulownia box, the *tomobako*, with Rumi Higaki's brush inscription and the kiln's seal in ink.

The lines in italics are the kiln's own. The season given with each bowl is our suggestion: in Japanese tea, a host chooses a bowl for the time of year and the occasion, often by its picture or its shape. Where it says any season, nothing on the bowl ties it to one.

They are €330 each, including German VAT, and can be bought at the counter or by writing to info@kissabo.com.



LEFT *The box, tied as it came from the kiln. In Rumi Higaki's hand:* 茶盌*, tea bowl, and* 桂窯造*, made at Katsura-gama.* RIGHT *Inside, each bowl is wrapped in cloth.*



01

NO. 1

Mt. Fuji Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

Amber glaze, carved in the form of Mt. Fuji.

In Japan the luckiest thing to see in your first dream of the year is Mt. Fuji; a hawk comes second, an aubergine third. So the bowl suits New Year.

SEASON	New Year · any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330







02

NO. 2

Six Gourds Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

An auspicious motif: "six gourds" (mubyō) echoes the Japanese word for good health.

Early in November, tea rooms change over to the hearth set into the floor for the cold months, and a gourd is one of the customary things at the first gathering around it.

SEASON	November · any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330





03

NO. 3

Red Longevity Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

The character for longevity is painted in the centre of the bowl.

The character inside also means congratulations. It is a bowl for the first tea of the year, and for celebrations at any time.

SEASON	New Year · celebrations
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330




壽



04

NO. 4

Amber-glazed Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

In tea, deep bowls tend to be kept for winter, because they hold the warmth, and shallow ones for summer. This one is in between.

SEASON	Any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330







05

NO. 5

Old Pine Black Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

An ancient pine that has endured through the years symbolizing longevity and prosperity.

Pine stays green all year, and at New Year Japanese homes set pine by the front gate.

SEASON	New Year · any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330







06

NO. 6

Vermilion-glazed Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

SEASON	Any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330





07

NO. 7

Plum Blossom Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

In Japan plum is called the first of all flowers, because it opens in the cold before the others. In tea, plum designs are used from New Year until about March.

SEASON	January–March
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330





08

NO. 8

Bamboo Leaf Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

SEASON	Any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330



09

NO. 9

Masu Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

Masu is also the name of a black Raku bowl by Dōnyū (1599–1656), the third head of the Raku family, named for its rounded-square shape, like the box used to measure rice. Low on one side it has a yellow patch shaped like a mountain.

SEASON	Any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330







10

NO. 10

Bamboo Forest Tea Bowl

Katsura-gama workshop,
under the direction of Rumi Higaki

Tea hosts use bamboo in summer, for the sound of the wind in it, and in winter, drawn under snow.

SEASON	Any season
MADE	Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
BOX	Paulownia, inscribed by Rumi Higaki
PRICE	€330







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Each bowl comes in its paulownia box with the kiln's card, Care Instructions for Raku Tea Bowls. *It reads:*

1. PLEASE AVOID ACIDIC FOODS

Raku glaze is delicate and can be affected by acid.

Do not leave acidic foods such as pickled plums or vinegar-based dishes in the bowl for an extended period.

Raku tea bowls are not for storage. Avoid leaving food or water in the bowl for long periods, and wash it as soon as possible after use.

2. WHEN USING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Raku ware is made from natural clay with a unique texture. When new, the clay may absorb moisture, but with continued use, it will gradually settle and soften.

3. GENTLE HANDLING

Raku ware is delicate and handcrafted. When washing or drying, avoid strong force or sudden temperature changes. Also, be careful of impacts or hitting against hard surfaces, which may cause chips or cracks.

4. AFTER USE

After each use, gently wash with lukewarm water and wipe off any moisture. Do not use detergent. Dry thoroughly before storing to ensure that the bowl remains in good condition.

No Dishwasher · No Detergent · No Juice / Acidic Drinks

Raku ware is not just a finished piece, but a vessel that grows with use. Handle it with care when preparing and enjoying tea, and over time, its unique beauty will develop. We hope your bowl brings you many moments of joy in your daily tea time for years to come.

COLOPHON

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Katsura-gama
Nishikyō-ku, Kyoto
Instagram @katuragama

Photographs of the kiln: Katsura-gama
Photographs of the works: Kissabō
Photographs of Kissabō:
Clemens Poloczek

Catalogue: Kissabō, Berlin, 2026

The exhibition: at Kissabō from
15 November 2026. The bowls can be bought at the
counter, or by writing to info@kissabo.com.

Kissabō
Kopenhagener Straße 16, 10437 Berlin
Wednesday to Sunday, 14:00 – 18:00
kissabo.com

喫茶房

kissabō

a tea bar | sixteen seats | no rush

Kopenhagener Straße 16 | 10437 Berlin

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