

ANDREA FESTA

Kazuhito Kawai approaches ceramics not as a traditional craft, but as a liberating, expressive language—one that allows for emotional intensity, material chaos, and radical improvisation. After initially training in contemporary art, his encounter with clay marked a pivotal transformation: an escape from formal constraint and a breakthrough into raw, intuitive making.

Kawai's process is driven by dialogue—between himself and the material, between emotion and form. Each sculpture begins without a fixed plan. He allows the clay to dictate its own logic, working impulsively and often violently, using tools not typically associated with ceramics—needles, food net lids, tea strainers—to disrupt surface and structure. The result is a highly tactile, eruptive body of work that resists symmetry and perfection.

Growing up during Japan's "lost generation," a time of economic collapse and cultural disorientation, Kawai channels the psychological atmosphere of instability into his forms. His works appear as twisted, fragile, almost volcanic landscapes—glazed in high-saturation colours drawn from memories of youth: turquoise, pink, acid yellow, purple. Beneath their bright, glossy surfaces lies an emotional undercurrent of vulnerability, awkwardness, and unresolved tension. He often likens the works to portraits of adolescence—loud, insecure, grotesque, yet trying to dazzle.

For Kawai, ceramics is not a quiet or meditative practice—it's confrontational, cathartic, even humorous. By amplifying irregularity, exaggeration, and theatrical colour, he offers an alternative vision of what clay can be: not refined or utilitarian, but emotionally volatile and deeply human. His sculptures do not ask to be understood—they demand to be felt.