Akira Satake

“Please enjoy the ritual of tea making; it will enhance your tea drinking experience.”
“Tea is actually a form of medicine in ancient China. In certain parts of China, tea is still used as medicine, especially for flu. A few slices of ginger is added and the tea is boiled together with the ginger and drank as a form of soup while it is still hot. Snuggle into thick blanket and a short while later after the sweat breaks, the flu disappears. Always works for me.”
“Growing up, tea didn’t have a lot of relevance in my life. We always had a pitcher of sweetened iced tea in the refrigerator, but it wasn’t something that I took much notice of. Later in life, during grad school, I became good friends with a fellow grad from Korea, whose studio was beside mine. He would regularly offer me tea, and we would chat and take a break from the studio. Often, this was late into the night and became a great way to re-energize. It always struck me how tiny his traditional teacups were. After awhile though, I noticed how active it made the tea sharing experience. In a single sitting, we would consume multiple cups. The tiny teacups really only held about a drink or 2, and the host was actively making and serving tea for anyone there.

“The one thing I took from this was how intimate the tiny cups were. Mine are larger, scaled with the teapot sizes I often make, but still small in nature. I enjoy the petite nature of drinking vessels and how it keeps you engaged with the pots. There’s something special about tiny cups and the nature of tending to their contents over and over. The liquid they hold becomes more precious and focused, as does the cup. As a potter, I think it's a beautiful sentiment that something so mundane and small can become so important.”
Elaine Olafson Henry

"As a non-coffee drinker, tea is my go-to comfort drink. Living in Wyoming, where the weather can be cold and snowy in the winter, tea is the best cold-weather drink there is."
Elmer Lucille Allen

“I keep making teapots because I have not made the perfect teapot.”

The teapots on display were first impressed with a crochet doily before a template was placed on the slab prior to cutting. The various parts of the teapot – body, lid, flange, handle, spout and the base were all made from slabs. Elmer loves creating hand-built porcelain teapots. Not only does she make teapots but she collects teapots, with teapots by Thomas Marsh, Byron Temple, Laura Ross, Fong Choo, Todd Burns, et al.
Eric Serritella

“I have had many sacred moments with tea as I brew it often, Gong-fu style, in tiny Yixing teapots. I learned this method of brewing while an artist-in-residence in Taiwan in 2004. Back in the states it became part of my morning ritual, used as a transition from morning “kid time” with my three-year-old daughter to my day in the studio. I would sit under a pear tree looking out over the rolling farmland hills of central New York and methodically brew high mountain Oolong tea in solitude. Quickly enough, my daughter began joining me, equipped with her own tiny teapot and self-made mint chive concoction from the garden. The event quickly evolved from solitude to our shared ritual. For like the teapots I made for this exhibition, no matter who we are, or how we appear, we can find resemblances of ourselves in others. Like looking into a bowl of tea and seeing the reflection, we are all similar in countless ways. And she, like I, learned to enjoy the magic and bonding of brewing tea together.”
Jenny Mendes

“This teapot resembles a creature like a turtle, and two egg like little cups... slow, steady, and reliable in his natural rhythms. The neck cranes upward as a spout, his little tail a rather impractical handle. It was playfully made to commemorate the pleasures of slowing down, pausing, and taking in the world sip by sip.

“When I think about my personal relationship to tea it begins as a child and it was all about being sick, only given when I was a prisoner in bed to a cold or flu.

“Later, it took on a new meaning, becoming a ritual introduced to me through travel and the intimate experiences I had with friends from different cultures who wove the practice of drinking tea into their lives as a naturally as breathing. More than a beverage, it was taking pause during the day, the practice of slowing down, alone or in company, in contemplation, conversation or mutual silence. In the early morning in Nepal, I remember sweet milk tea, a highly anticipated gently spiced steaming perfumed beverage that warmed my body. In Morocco, I can still visualize the ritual of the server pouring a long stream of amber bubbling hot tea into glasses. Many years ago in Russia I fondly remembered a trip on the overnight train, cups of delicious tea delivered to our cabin in etched glasses enclosed in metal holders. In the Netherlands I participated in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony and learned details of this ritual from a Japanese friend. In England and Wales, there always seemed to be a reason to stop everything and have a cup of tea! And most recently in Greece, I sat on a tiny porch in a little chair overlooking a bay in the Mediterranean. In conversation or private meditation, we drank herbal mountain tea in small glasses in the sunlit warm air, and it felt like there was no greater pleasure in the world.”
John Neely

“I went to Japan as a student when I was 19 and spent most of the next 11 or 12 years there. Tea drinking is everywhere in Japan, served automatically in homes and restaurants. It is casual and decidedly un-ceremonial. This experience has certainly colored the way that I drink tea. At home, I find myself drinking tea alone or with my wife. In the studio, I am usually making tea for myself, or occasionally receiving a visitor or two. In both situations I have a variety of teapots and cups to choose from, but they are never matching. I have never thought of teapots and cups as parts of sets. Rather, each comes with references and associations that make that make their juxtaposition like a conversation between unique individuals.”
Laura Peery

“I did not grow up within a culture of tea, nor did I develop a contemporary one. I confess that I am a died-in-the-wool coffee drinker, a habit handed down from my father. I did become interested in tea and others’ tea stories, but I came to this by making teapots, many, many teapots, not by using them. I like to think the teapots I make “tell” stories to both the viewer and the maker, but I do not have a tea story from my own family.

“Teapots are humble domestic objects, which conjure up feelings of comfort, repose, rejuvenation, and vitality. A proper teapot requires a handle, lid, spout, and a generous body, but otherwise, anything goes. When I assemble these components, I look for the quirky, unexpected outcome, one that makes me smile.

“I love the way clay takes on qualities of other materials and its ability to mimic fabric pulled me in right away. I’m influenced by dressmaking, which has roots in my grandmother’s family business. I create teapots as if cutting from a dressmaker’s pattern. Over each simple shape, I build layers of thin textured clay strips, smoothing and ruffling the clay as I go. How the clay is handled during the process is important, as is the timing of each part of making.

“Sewing often involves repairing or piecing together something worn or ill-fitting, creating something entirely new through the joining of many small, unrelated parts. I like to think of making teapots as something similar. The making, as with pulling a needle through cloth, can be a meditative process. Drinking tea can also be a meditation. All of these are part of the domestic realm, of what we call “women’s work”, but really, we are all called to join in.”
Gertrude Graham Smith

“I make teacups and saucers to celebrate the ritual of teatime with family and friends. Drinking tea with my grandmother was always elegant. And, as when living in Scotland where I learned to make teapots, teatime is a break, time for refreshment, conviviality, and conversation. This teapot sits atop a teapot warmer. This is why tealight candles are called tealights; in Europe teapots often sit atop a warmer. I enjoy these forms, how they work together to raise the teapot’s stature. Although whimsical, and contemporary, I hope my grandmother and friends would be pleased enough with the elegance of this set to use them. They’re meant to bring pleasure with their use.”
Sam Scott

“As an American, I have no cultural tradition of the tea ceremony, although I am aware of the English and Asian traditions. In these cultures, tea consumption is an integral part of daily activities. Although, I have always enjoyed the social connection derived from sharing time over a cup of tea, consumed in a handmade cup from well-crafted teapot. As a potter my main perspective is the object itself. I feel it does enhance the experience using a teapot that functions well while still expressing the artistic perspective of the artist who created it. From a technical aspect I have always felt it is one the most complex objects a potter can make. It must function while maintaining the artistic identity of the artist. Throwing the form, spout, lid and making the handle, then combining these disparate parts into a fluid whole that pours well, does not drip, with a balanced weight and secure lid, demonstrates a high level of skill and forethought. It is this awareness of the inherent complexities of teapot construction that I view the process of its use. No matter the social or cultural setting, it begins with this awareness of the object itself. A unique, well-functioning teapot.”