

HASAMI, JAPAN
CERAMIC
SHOP

The interior is stripped back to showcase an elevated floor built out of dishware. → Concrete fills each cup and bowl, which enables customers to walk across the platform.



For a ceramics shop in Japan, designer Yusuke Seki finds a radical way to make use of ordinary dishware. By Catherine Osborne
Photography by Takumi Ota

IN THE REMOTE VILLAGE of Hasami, Japan, porcelain has been manufactured for over four centuries, though not the high-end kind. The southern town is practically built out of the everyday crockery it makes: broken bits can even be found in the mortar of its buildings. In April, leading producer Maruhiro renovated its flagship store within a traditional Japanese building, and added to it a sublime installation conceived by rising interior design talent Yusuke Seki.

The shop's visual moment is on the floor, where 25,000 white cups, saucers and bowls are stacked to create a platform that doubles as the central retail space for displaying Maruhiro's latest offerings. Seki collected the rejects from local factories and transformed the geometrically simple items into bricks. Each cup and bowl is filled with concrete, which is also used as grout between the 10 layers that form the structure.

Since Seki established his Tokyo studio in 2008, he has brought his artistic vision to other traditional art forms. For a kimono shop in Kyoto, he added tabletops made from multiple layers of industrial wire-mesh glass, a shimmering, water-like surface that gives sales clerks an easy way to roll out the bolts of ornate fabric to impress customers. More recently, for an exhibition of taima-fu, an indigenous hemp fabric, he placed swaths of the near-translucent material atop hundreds of vertical poles, allowing the textiles to drape loosely as if floating.

The elevated floor at Maruhiro, accessed via a modest stack of bricks, invites customers to walk across the stage for a closer look at the newest products, displayed on wooden shelving units. In doing so, they literally walk over the antiquity of the region. Seki likens it to "standing on the shoulders of Hasami's ceramics history." AZ.yusukeseki.com
Maruhiro is located at Otsu-775-7 Toya, Saga Prefecture, Japan

MARUHIRO