



Hot Water

PREVIEW – The humble *chawan* and its noble roots are celebrated in a major international exhibition in Belgium. **CERAMIC REVIEW** takes a sip.

The connection between ceramics and tea-drinking has a rich, evolved culture. The qualities of handmade ceramic vessels have much in common with the virtues revered by the Japanese tea ceremony, or *chanoyu*, which developed into an art form after the ninth century when tea was introduced to Japan from China. Much like the ceramics it used, the simple act of tea drinking became symbolic in Japan of an appreciation of nature, simplicity and imperfection, and later a high art advocating harmony and balance.

The sweeping influence of this culture is celebrated in *Joy of the Noble Teacup*, a major project organised in Belgium by Lou Smedts and Kaori Goyen-Chiba, to explore the ceramic heritage of the *chawan*, or oriental tea bowl, and to trace its roots. *Chawan* makers from Asia, Europe and the Americas participating in the exhibition reveal a great diversity of vision relating to this simple vessel loaded with tradition. However simple, the *chawan* performs the essential role in the tea ceremony as the direct connec-

tion between host and guest, and is therefore capable of transcending its humble function to assume a powerful cultural significance.

Among the sixty-seven participants from sixteen countries are Jack Doherty (UK) and Teena Gold (UK), Roland Summer (Austria), Vladimir Shapovalov (Ukraine) and Akiko Ozutsumi (Japan). This evocative collection fascinates, tantalises and resonates with the spirituality of the culture it celebrates. **CR**

Joy of the Noble Teacup is showing at Gallerie La Fabrik, Herstal, Belgium

from March 12 – April 2, and tours to Paris later in the spring. For further information, image gallery and future exhibition dates see: Website www.jnt.info

TOP: *Chawans* by Jon Lorenzo Pettyjohn (front) and Hadrian Mendoza (back), of the Philippines (Photo: Walter Goyen) | BOTTOM LEFT: Hilda Merom (Israel) – *Chawan*, H7cm | BOTTOM RIGHT: Akiko Ozutsumi (Japan) – *Chawan*, H10cm.

