

Three Key Styles: Earthy Yellow Kizeto Ware (Late 16th Century)

Kizeto (Seto yellow) ware refers to ceramics with a particular type of yellow ash glaze. First produced around the same time as Seto-guro (Seto black) ware, Kizeto ware was more commonly used for tableware and decorative containers, such as incense holders and vases, rather than tea ceremony implements. The large bowl on display below is a typical example of Kizeto ware.

To achieve this yellowish color, potters unevenly applied both brown iron and green chalcantite glazes over a yellow underglaze. During firing, the oxygen in the air caused these minerals to combine with silica and other elements in the naturally occurring ash glaze to produce a pale yellow. Kizeto ware with a particularly strong yellow color and a rough texture from devitrification (crystallization of the glaze) was called “iris technique” (*ayame-de*) or “fried-tofu-skin technique” (*aburaage-de*).

Sansai, or “three-color,” ceramics imported from the south of China during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) likely had a strong influence on the development of Kizeto ware in Mino. *Sansai* pieces from that time are distinguished by a deep-green base glaze decorated with carvings glazed in yellow, purple, and other colors. Particular elements originating in *sansai*, such as high decorative rims and engraved ornamentation using natural motifs, are also typical of later Kizeto ware, while the green glaze used in *sansai* became a common element in Oribe ware, another variety of Mino pottery.