

KISHI EIKO
A Delicate Balance

KONDO TAKAHIRO
Silver Mist

March 3 – April 16 2005

Artist's reception: Tuesday, March 29, 5:30-7:30

Barry Friedman Ltd., a leading gallery in twentieth-century arts, and Joan B. Mirviss Ltd., a specialist in Japanese works of art, are pleased to present solo exhibitions by two major ceramic artists from Kyoto, **Kishi Eiko**, and **Kondo Takahiro**. These internationally known ceramists offer the American public a rare look into the world of contemporary Japanese ceramics derived from the aesthetics of the ancient capital of Kyoto. Each artist approaches his and her work with extremely different techniques and aesthetics ranging from the centuries-old tradition of using colored clay inlays in stoneware forms to porcelain constructions that require four separate firings, using glazes of silver, platinum and gold. A reception for the artists will be held on Tuesday, March 29 during

While Japanese potters of the mid-20th century such as Hamada Shoji and Kitaoji Rosanjin are well-known in the United States, the range, depth and brilliance of contemporary Japanese ceramics far exceed the traditional techniques and aesthetics from which they were inspired. The emergence of the ceramist as a studio artist after the war inspired countless Western potters and led hundreds to Japan where they studied and worked as apprentices. While unimaginable for a Western potter, a prominent Japanese ceramic artist can attain celebrity status.

The works of these masters clearly illustrate the dynamism, creativity, and technical genius of contemporary Japanese ceramists.

Kondo Takahiro (b.1958), grandson of the renowned National Living Treasure Kondo Yuasa (1902-1985), who was celebrated for his blue-and-white porcelain, has established his own distinct artistic identity. In just a few years, he has gathered a major international following, with shows in Scotland, the inaugural exhibition of the new Paramita Museum in Japan, and at the Palace Museum, Beijing where he was the first Japanese contemporary ceramist to be so honored. For over ten years, Kondo has explored the theme of water. During this time, he developed a unique silver, gold and platinum drop glaze representing 'water born out of fire'. Applied on porcelain boxes, vases and large soaring sculptural forms, the artist's "silver mist" glazes create jewel-like surfaces that appear both celestial and aquatic at the same time.

The artist recently spent a year in Scotland studying at the Edinburgh College of Art where he developed techniques working with cast glass and *pate de verre*. Sculptures combining white glazed porcelain and glass from Kondo's resulting "Snow and Ice" series, for which he received the prestigious Inglis Allen Master of Design Award, will be on view along with new works from his "Silver Mist" series.

Kondo's works are represented in numerous private and public collections including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota; National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh; Paramita Museum, Japan; Sao Paulo Museum, Brazil.

Born in Kyoto, Kondo still resides and works there in his grandfather's exquisite compound in the hills of Yamashina.

The ceramic art of **Kishi Eiko** (b. 1948) is based upon the artist's ability to freely imagine and create unique sculptural forms that are only bounded by the limitations dictated by the medium and her technique. Starting with a clear sense of the intended shape based on a series of preparatory drawings, Kishi initially forms her geometric sculptures as maquettes. Once the exact balance and shape emerges, she then sculpts the full-scale form. Only when completed does she consider the surface—what design, coloration, and pattern would best complement the sculpture—harmonizing form, balance, color and texture.

With this new series, Kishi strives to effectuate a unique balance between angularity and delicacy. Each form seems to be breathing, simultaneously expanding and contracting. After delicately carving her minute geometrically- patterned surface, Kishi then meticulously inlays these designs with colored clay. For this she adds up to nine different color variations to her grog in a time-consuming mosaic-like fashion (*saiseki zogan*). At least three months of painstaking work are required for the completion of single large-scale sculpture.

Following studies at Kyoto Arts University, Kishi has exhibited her work internationally and has consistently won awards since 1984, both in Japan and Europe. In 2001, while teaching at the Northern Clay Center, she had the rare honor of having a solo exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Kishi's works are represented in many private and public collections including the International Ceramic Museum, Faenza, Italy; Northern Clay Center, Minnesota; Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Musée Nationale de Ceramiques, Sèvres France; Istituto Statale d'Arte per la Ceramica F.A. Grue, Castelli Italy

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