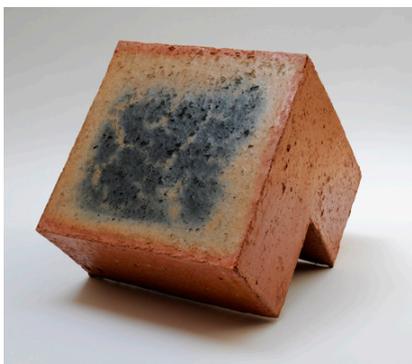




KATSUMATA Chieko
Glazed stoneware
11 3/4" x 11" x 10 3/4"



SAKURAI Yasuko
Unglazed porcelain
15" x 15 3/8"



NAGASAWA Setsuko
Smoke-infused orange and terra cotta
clay, 15 3/8" x 24" x 8 1/4"

THE FRENCH CONNECTION:
FIVE JAPANESE WOMEN CERAMISTS AND THEIR PASSION FOR FRANCE

JUNE 7 – AUGUST 3, 2012

JOAN B. MIRVISS LTD 39 EAST 78TH STREET NYC

This exhibition titled **THE FRENCH CONNECTION: FIVE JAPANESE WOMEN CERAMISTS AND THEIR PASSION FOR FRANCE**, explores the dramatically increasing importance of Japanese women artists in the current ascendancy of contemporary Japanese ceramics on a global stage and focuses on how their relationships to France have influenced, and indeed enabled, the five show-cased artists to find their unique voices. Stifled at one time or another by Japan's restrictive view in the role of women and the lack of freedom with regard to their career choices, especially in the arena of ceramics, these committed female artists have successfully overturned such limitations by choosing to train/study/work/live abroad, particularly in Paris. Maintaining professional and personal contacts with both countries, they have managed to succeed in ways unavailable to their male colleagues. These women have come to this life-style via varied routes, some working exclusively in France while others have studios in both countries and still another works exclusively in Kyoto after years in Limoges. Spanning two generations, these five women reflect the changes occurring both in Japan and in the field internationally. But all are clearly pioneers especially when in viewed from an historical perspective.

Women have traditionally played only a minor role in Japan's long history in clay. Many male ceramists, particularly eldest sons, begin their ceramic education at a young age at the knee of their father as the next in a long line of potters working in a particular tradition. Until quite recently, this line of succession was unavailable to women. In part this has been due to the view that ceramics are the embodiment of the quasi-religious Asian belief in the five fundamental elements of life: water, earth, metal, wood and fire. Since women were long considered to be impure, they were not permitted to even touch a kiln. Hence over the past few centuries, their role fell to that of organizer and administrator of her husbands' or fathers' studios— very distant from the art of creation.

Only with the post-war generation did women begin to challenge these circumscribed roles and social barriers to emerge as independent artists. In fact, nowhere in the field of Japanese art has there been as dramatic a change as the recent shift actually in favor of Japanese women ceramists in this historically male-dominated field. Emerging from centuries of obscurity and isolation, the female masters of clay are challenging the supremacy of their male contemporaries as luminaries and independent creative talents.

Given the formality within the ceramic tradition in Japan, the relative openness pervasive in the French art world and its lack of gender bias held the allure of freedom for many Japanese women artists. Of the five Japanese women participating in this show, each has emerged from a distinct background and they have traveled diverse roads through their training and artistic development, often eschewing by choice or necessity the more traditional routes open to their male counterparts. Each sought to make France a major central component in her artistic evolution and life, where she sought fair and open training that has ultimately led to international recognition.



FUTAMURA Yoshimi
Stoneware and porcelain
13 3/4" x 18" x 17"

These five women are masters of their medium. Perhaps because they are women artists in the overtly masculine world of Japanese clay, they are able to shed the particularly heavy mantle of tradition and explore the art of clay in startling new and independent ways, with a special eloquence and strength, dramatically and uniquely their own. These women are not merely confronting tradition but are rather seeking to expose the very nature of clay, exploiting its flexibility and suppleness in arresting ways. Some flaunt the limitations of their medium and see it as a challenge while others defy it altogether. As a result, they are at the vanguard of the development of Japanese ceramics in what is certainly one of the richest and most diverse periods in its long history.

These groundbreaking ceramists whose works are featured in this exhibition stand on the world stage, with their work entering major museum collections across the globe.

EXHIBITION

June 7 – August 3, 2012
Monday – Friday 11 – 6 pm
and by appointment

About JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

Joan B. Mirviss has been a distinguished expert in Japanese art, specializing in prints, paintings, screens and ceramics for more than thirty-five years. She is the leading Western dealer in the field of modern and contemporary Japanese ceramics, and from her New York gallery on Madison Avenue, JOAN B MIRVISS LTD exclusively represents the top Japanese clay artists. As a widely published, and highly respected specialist in her field, Mirviss has advised and built collections for many museums, major private collectors, and corporations.



OGAWA Machiko
Porcelainous stoneware with glass
glaze, 13 3/8" x 22 1/2" x 12 1/4"

Further information on the five featured artists follows:

FUTAMURA YOSHIMI (b. 1959 in Nagoya)
KATSUMATA CHIEKO (b. 1950 in Shizuoka)
NAGASAWA SETSUKO (b. 1941 in Kyoto)
OGAWA MACHIKO (b. 1946 in Sapporo)
SAKURAI YASUKO (b. 1969 in Kyoto)

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FUTAMURA YOSHIMI (b. 1959 in Nagoya)

Currently residing in northern Paris, **FUTAMURA** invariably draws her inspiration from nature. She has created several series over the past decade, with titles such as "Racines (roots)," "Rhizomes," and "Vagues de Terre (Earthen Waves)." Her sculptural forms are intended to be reflections of nature and are infused with a vibrant living essence. She uses a blend of stoneware and a mixture of fired and raw granulated porcelain to create her collapsed rounded forms that appear both vegetal and geological in origin. These forms are encrusted with feldspar, and enhanced with cobalt and iron oxide glazes that are sometimes iridescent.

A native of Nagoya, Futamura completed her degree at the Seto School of Ceramics in 1979 but seven years later, moved to Paris where she completed another degree at Centre artisanal de céramique de l'Ecole Duperré and has resided there ever since. She has been invited to lecture and enter competitions on three continents for which she has been awarded numerous honors. Her work has been the focus of solo shows and included in important exhibitions throughout Europe, most recently in a solo exhibit at the Musée Ariana in Geneva. Museums with works by Futamura in their permanent collections include Musée Ariana, Geneva; Brooklyn Museum; Lowe Art Museum, St. Petersburg, FL ; Musée de céramique d'Andenne, Belgium; Musée Français de céramique de Fuping, China; Musée national de céramique, Sèvres; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; New Orleans Museum of Art; Smith College Museum of Art; World Ceramic Exposition Foundation, Korea; and Yale University Art Gallery.



FUTAMURA Yoshimi
Stoneware and porcelain
ca. 6 1/2" x 7" x 4" each



FUTAMURA Yoshimi
Stoneware and porcelain
13" x 18 1/2" x 13 1/2"

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KATSUMATA CHIEKO (b. 1950 in Shizuoka)

After receiving her degree from Nihon Women's University, **KATSUMATA** broke free from the male establishment and studied ceramics at the École national supérieur des arts appliqués et métiers d'art, in Paris and worked under the well-known woman American ceramist Fance Franck (1931-2008). Upon returning to Kyoto, through the mentorship of Yanagihara Mutsuo (b. 1934), a professor at Osaka Art University, and her love for painting, she began to focus on the application of color to clay. Since 1979, when she won a prize at the Kyoto Design Exhibition, she has been showing her works in both solo and group exhibitions both in and outside of Japan, including France, Holland and the U.S. Major works by her may be found in the collections of the Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI; Japan Foundation; Musée national de céramique, Sèvres; Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Worcester Art Museum, MA; and World Ceramic Exposition Foundation, Korea.

Katsumata's work contains the energy of abstract painting's vigorous brush strokes, resulting in a kinetic effect in her ceramics. Achieving the desired effect requires a painstaking process. Instead of painting her glazes directly on the vessel, she covers the vessel with a piece of cloth while she applies the color in order not to leave traces of brushwork. The process of covering and applying decoration is repeated as required to produce a unique color and texture. Another series of work has a final application of *chamotte*, or finely ground pre-fired porcelain bits, that add texture and especially when combined with her vivid colorful palette. Inspired by vegetation, her forms are consistently biomorphic and often surreal in their appearance.

Maintaining studios in both Paris and Kyoto, Katsumata speaks of her dual residences:

"As I child I always wanted to travel abroad, and both America and France held particular allure due to their dramatic cultural and historic differences from Japan. I chose France because of its vibrant artistic environment; on the other hand, living as a foreigner there afforded me insight into my own country and its culture and when I return to Japan, I am refreshed. France continues to bewitch me while I maintain a foothold in Japan. For this reason, I continue to reside in both countries."



KATSUMATA Chieko
Glazed *chamotte*-encrusted stoneware
7 7/8" x 11 7/8" x 7 7/8"

KATSUMATA Chieko
Glazed stoneware
10 1/4" x 11 1/2" x 11"



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NAGASAWA SETSUKO (b. 1941 IN KYOTO)

A true pioneer, **NAGASAWA Setsuko** began her career in Kyoto, the most traditional of Japanese locations, as the final pupil and only female student of the celebrated Tomimoto Kenkichi (1883-1963). Arguably Japan's finest and most influential porcelain artist, he taught at the ceramics department that he founded at the Kyoto Municipal University of Fine Arts, from which Nagasawa received her two degrees. Within a decade she was invited to California to work with the American ceramist Paul Soldner (b. 1921) at Scripps College, before heading to Geneva followed by Paris to study sculpture and eventually establish her studios. From that point forward, Nagasawa became a truly international artist, with residences in Geneva, Paris and Kyoto. She has been honored through the decades with invitations to teach, lecture, and work throughout Europe, and has long served as a juror and on the board of the International Academy of Ceramics. Her record of solo exhibitions is quite diverse, spanning galleries and museums in England, France, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Japan. A sampling of the institutions owning works by her include the Benaki Museum, Athens; Musée Ariana, Geneva; Musée des arts décoratifs de la ville de Lausanne; Musée national de céramique, Sèvres; Museum Boijmans Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum Frans Hals, Haarlem; and the National Museum of Scotland. The current exhibition is her first in the United States.

Always sculptural, always inventive, the forms of Nagasawa Setsuko reflect her eclectic career spanning three continents and a profound range of influences. She also continues to experiment with firing techniques and materials that in the largely geometric forms featured in this exhibition, with their softened smoke-infused coloration, invite introspective viewing.

In reflecting on her multi-cultural background, Nagasawa states:

"For me, Kyoto was my point of departure, the source of my initiation into the world of aesthetics but my life as an artist commenced and has been nurtured in Geneva, California and Paris... However when I decided to leave teaching, I chose Paris where I established my first workshop, and where I am now working in my third location."



NAGASAWA Setsuko
Smoke-infused porcelain and
terra cotta clay
15 3/8" x 22 7/8" x 5"

NAGASAWA Setsuko
Smoke-infused orange and
terra cotta clay
11" x 18 1/2" x 11"



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OGAWA MACHIKO (b. 1946 in Sapporo)

Japanese in origin, **OGAWA's** work transcends national characterization, resonating with universal sensibility. She continues to be inspired by the creative challenges imposed by the vessel as she maintains her staunch artistic independence lifting the traditional shape from the ordinary to the symbolic, engaging the viewer in new directions. She has pursued spherical forms since her student days as a master of wheel throwing, and rounded vessel-inspired forms have continued to be a recognized component of her artistic vocabulary. Some of her work evokes cracked ice, while other vessels have a volcanic, scorched earth appearance. Ogawa layers roughly torn feldspar-infused clay with porcelain upon which she applies a thick layer of glistening glass glaze to create her signature crystalline surfaces captured within the scorched earthen collapsed vessel forms. The final shape is always the result of transformations that have occurred during the process of creation. Further inspiration has come from several years living in French-speaking Burkina Faso where she worked side by side with local potters, using their simple tools and materials, channeling her experiences, while ever reliant on and effected Africa's often challenging environment. Ogawa Machiko has been a vital force in the dialogue of contemporary clay since her arrival on the scene in 1985. After years of study at the prestigious Tokyo National University of Fine Arts & Music in 1969, she drew inspiration from her travels, which included living and studying in Paris at the École d'arts et métiers and then three years living in Burkina Faso in West Africa. She won the coveted Japan Ceramic Society Award in 2001 and the important Art Encouragement Prize in 2008 from the Japanese Ministry of Education and Culture. With an active career, she has had solo exhibitions at major galleries and museums throughout Japan. She has been honored with two Japanese museum retrospective exhibitions and is recognized as one the world's leading ceramic sculptors, with works in the collections of the Art Gallery of Western Australia; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Musée national de céramique, Sèvres; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu; Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; New Orleans Museum of Art; Sôgetsu Museum, Tokyo; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton MA; Suntory Museum, Tokyo; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art; and Yale University Art Gallery.

Commenting on her arrival in France from Africa Ogawa writes:

"I traveled to Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco before crossing into Spain, finally arriving in Paris on the Bastille Day of 1969. The city of Paris had already calmed down from Paris May 1968 protest and filled with hippies. Everything seemed to glitter in the sunshine. I took my sandals off of my blistered feet and walked barefooted on the cobblestones of Paris. I still remember the feeling."



OGAWA Machiko
Glazed stoneware
8 1/4" x 24" x 12 1/2"



OGAWA Machiko
Porcelainour stoneware
with glass glaze
9 1/4" x 21 5/8" x 23 5/8"

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SAKURAI YASUKO (b. 1969 in Kyoto)

Since the onset of her career, **SAKURAI'S** highly personal technique has focused on perforated porcelain forms, all created with great delicacy and finely honed skill. Sakurai builds her forms by first bundling together slip-cast porcelain tubes then using liquid porcelain clay to fill the spaces between the tubing. She scrapes away the extra clay, revealing her envisioned sculptural contours. After removing the pipes, the form is then hollowed out, exposing the distorted openings that accent the walls of her sculptures. Sakurai's dramatic white porcelain forms engage the viewer by juxtaposing light and shadow, creating a dialogue between positive and negative space and thereby challenging the perception of interior and exterior spaces.

After Sakurai graduated from Kyoto Seika University in 1991, her talent was recognized immediately leading to invitations to work as an artist-in-residence at several prestigious institutions in both Japan and France. Following stints at the Kyoto City Industrial Research Center and the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, she was invited to be an artist-in residence at L'ENAD de Limoges from 1999-2001 and was supported by a grant from the French government. In addition to Limoges and Shigaraki, her work is now in the permanent collections of the following museums: Auckland Museum, New Zealand; Ham Museum of Art, University of Florida; International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy; New Orleans Museum of Art; Paramita Museum, Japan; Rhode Island School of Design Museum; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton MA; Taipei Country Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan; and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

On her seminal experience in France, Sakurai recalls:

While in my early 20s, I travelled to France and was captivated by the French appreciation of the arts and dreamed of one day living and working there. A few years later, through a French governmental grant, I was able to reside in Limoges for two years. It was there where my passion for porcelain was ignited, my technical abilities honed, and a new confidence in my abilities sown through the support of many teachers. France has, in fact, created the artist I am today.

SAKURAI Yasuko
Unglazed porcelain

Left to right:

10 5/8" x 12 1/2"

20 1/8" x 11 7/8"

15 3/8" x 12 3/8"



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