

BREAKING THE MOLD

NOVEMBER 14 – NOVEMBER 18, 2013

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD. 39 EAST 78TH STREET NYC

In conjunction with the Koike Shōko exhibition, Joan B Mirviss LTD will present *Breaking the Mold* that will be shown only at Salon: Art + Design (November 14-18) and focuses on ten female artists whose work spans a broad range of contemporary ceramics. Uniting all of these women is their ascension to a position of great prominence in the Japanese ceramic world that until quite recently, was unavailable to them.

"We are very honored to introduce this body of work from Japanese women ceramists to the American public" said Joan Mirviss, who has been the leader in this field since 1984. "Now for the first time, many of these groundbreaking ceramists stand on the world stage, with their work entering major museum collections across the globe." Despite Japan's long history in clay, women have traditionally played only a minor role in its development—relegated primarily to production ware or as administrators in large family workshops. It is only with the current generation that they have been able to surmount the various social barriers that hampered their efforts to emerge as independent artists, often surpassing the achievements of their male counterparts.

The youngest of the featured ceramists is the brilliant artist FUJIKASA SATOKO (b. 1980) who in many ways possesses the most independent vision, one of ethereal and elegant feminine beauty. Trained as a sculptor, her remarkable talent was recognized early: she has had a solo exhibition at a prominent museum in Japan (at age 31) and a major work currently on view was acquired last year by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another youthful but internationally recognized talent is FUKUMOTO FUKU (b. 1973), a true master of the difficult medium of thrown porcelain. Using the sea and clouds as inspiration, Fukumoto binds multiple white forms together in precariously stacked configurations, held together by glazes of multi-hued blues, greens, and greys. The results are large works that also appear delicate and distinctly feminine. Another specialist in the medium of porcelain is SAKURAI YASUKO (b.1969), who creates sculptural vessels of great delicacy with technical savvy. Using mold-cast porcelain tubing around which to form her clay bodies, she then distorts the perforated apertures. These dramatic *objets* engage the viewer, affecting their perception of light and shadow, as well as interior and exterior spaces.

KATSUMATA CHIEKO (b. 1950), a highly established artist with works in museum collections around the world, creates biomorphic sculptures that exhibit a bold vitality, grounded in nature but also with a striking sense of surrealism. Her stoneware sculptures are brushed in brilliant hues, and often then covered with a delicate, pre-fired, crushed porcelain (*chamotte*) surface. MISHIMA KIMIYO (b. 1932) is one of the most prominent and widely exhibited woman ceramists whose work has been shown at museums throughout the world for the past forty years. Like several of the other artists in this exhibition, she began as a painter, using clay as her canvas for implementing silk-screen renderings of newspapers and posters. Since then she has honed her techniques and aesthetic to create monuments to popular culture, continuing to focus on the theme of printed information in a comical, political, and often didactic fashion.

Of the ten ceramists selected to participate in this show, each has emerged from a distinct background, traveling diverse roads through their training



FUJIKASA Satoko



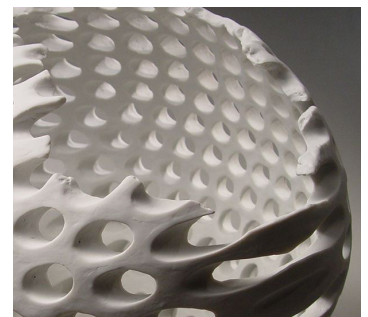
FUKUMOTO Fuku



KATSUMATA Chieko



OGAWA Machiko



SAKURAI Yasuko

and artistic development that has often circumvented the more traditional routes open to their male counterparts. Other exceptional artists like FUTAMURA YOSHIMI (b. 1959), MIWA HANAKO (b. 1958) and HOSHINO KAYOKO (b. 1949) have derived much of their aesthetic from ancient traditions. KITAMURA JUNKO (b. 1956) looks to traditional Japanese arts such as textiles and the Nô theatre. The powerful sculptural forms of OGAWA MACHIKO (b. 1946) simultaneously embody many of these themes while resisting any clear associations and Ogawa has been the focus of several retrospective exhibitions in modern art museums in Japan.

All these women are masters of their medium, exploiting its flexibility and suppleness in arresting ways. Perhaps because they are women artists in the overtly masculine world of Japanese clay, they have been 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.



MISHIMA Kimiyo



KITAMURA Junko