

*Out of the Fire: Sultry Ceramics*

July 8 – August 30, 2013

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD. 39 EAST 78<sup>TH</sup> STREET NYC

JOAN B. MIRVISS LTD is pleased to present the exhibition **OUT OF THE FIRE: SULTRY CERAMICS**, featuring 20 renowned Japanese artists representing the major traditions of Japanese wood-fired ceramics: Bizen, Hagi, Iga, Karatsu, Mino, Shigaraki, Tamba and Tokoname.

In modern times, as electric and gas kilns have largely replaced wood-burning kilns, these artworks, born of the heat generated by wood-fired kilns, are especially seductive and stunning. It is the very nature of a wood-burning kiln to be essentially unpredictable. Maintaining the high temperature required to fire ceramics necessitates consistent feeding of the fire over an extended period of time; and the interior temperature and conditions vary depending on the location inside the kiln. Not only does this make the process of wood firing more time-consuming, but it also requires knowledge of the intricacies of each personally built *anagama* (single-chambered sloped tunnel) or *noborigama* (multi-chambered climbing) kiln. Placement within a kiln has a tremendous impact on its surface.

While a work that has been wood-fired may not exhibit some of the anticipated kiln effects, all of the pieces in the exhibition have been the result of meticulous, long-standing processes. Iga works by FUJIOKA SHUHEI (b. 1947) exhibit brilliant emerald pools in crags and crevices with an occasional, protruding green-glass orb, all the result of accumulating natural ash from within the kiln. The surface colors of KAKUREZAKI RYŪICHI's (b. 1950) Bizen stoneware forms evoke the flames from whence they were born, echoing the flickering colors of fire. The natural wood-fired coloration is used to accentuate the radical forms of his artwork.

Although from the traditional ceramic center of Tokoname, KOIE RYŌJI (b. 1938) is best known as a highly original ceramist who is also admired as one of the most versatile and forward-thinking of Japan's contemporary artists. HORI ICHIRŌ (b. 1952) produces *shino* ware with thick, creamy glazes, the result of longer and lower-heat firings. Hori fires his kilns just twice a year, creating forms that emerge after long periods of contemplation.

All of the artists represented in the show create works of tremendous vitality and range, providing for a view into the long and rich tradition of Japanese wood-fired ceramics.



Fujioka Shuhei



Kakurezaki Ryūichi



Koie Ryōji



Hori Ichiro