

Landscapes in Clay:

New Works by Kaneta Masanao

November 12 - December 18, 2015

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD



Mizusashi (Water jar) 2015
7 3/4 x 8 1/4 x 7 7/8 in.
Stoneware with Hagi and ash glazes



Scoop-out Vessel 2015
14 x 15 1/2 x 11 1/4 in.
Stoneware with Hagi white glaze



Scoop-out Vessel 2015
11 3/4 x 14 1/4 x 7 3/4 in.
Stoneware with Hagi and ash glazes

An eighth-generation Hagi potter, Kaneta Masanao (b. 1953) has reached beyond his extended patrimony to create a truly sculptural oeuvre grounded in functionality. Due to his training as a sculptor, Kaneta's forms have a strong and dramatic presence that sets them apart from the work of other artists from the ancient ceramic center of Hagi. Using centuries-old glazes, he creates unique, readily identifiable functional and non-functional forms. *Kuri-nuki*, his signature technique in which Kaneta scoops out a sculpted mound of clay instead of shaping it on a wheel, enables him to boldly depart from the long-established Hagi traditions. He further believes that the final form is the result of a dialogue, or even a confrontation, between his consciousness and the natural spirit of the clay itself.

Having unconditionally accepted the physical and chemical restrictions of his media, Kaneta actually chooses to engage these limitations. Both complying and struggling with them, he approaches his material with a tenacious, wild energy that is unlike anything found in conventional formation processes. This is the energy of his struggle with "the natural spirit of the lump of clay" to produce a form.

- Kaneko Kenji, director, Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum

A master of the *noborigama*, or multi-chambered climbing kiln, Kaneta is able to control and effectuate a remarkable range of coloration and kiln effects in his work. Utilizing the unctuous, creamy white-pink glazes that have been the hallmark of Hagi ware for centuries, Kaneta achieves a balanced conflict between form and surface, in which the classical glaze defines and accentuates the rugged, mountainous features of his ceramic sculptures. The resulting aesthetic is highly evocative of the dramatic landscape found in his native home, Hagi. As the artist explains of his inspiration,

Mountainous ridge lines, whether created inevitably or by chance, are not just the outline of a simple form but are also an invitation to imagine what lies beyond, to transcend the realm of human vision. The strength of these ridge lines is characteristic of the spirit of modeling clay; it is my medium that guides me through this unexplored world.

Among the prominent US museums featuring Kaneta's work in their permanent collections are the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Brooklyn Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art; as well as the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo in Japan. Kaneta Masanao currently serves as professor of ceramics at Tsukuba University, outside of Tokyo. He has been lauded both as a ceramist and a contemporary artist, awarded several important prizes and featured in numerous solo exhibitions around the world.

It is an honor to announce that Joan B. Mirviss LTD will open its second major exhibition featuring the art of Kaneta Masanao at the upcoming fair, SALON Art + Design. This show includes more than thirty-five new works that have been carefully selected over a period of more than two years. Joan B. Mirviss is the leading western dealer in the field of modern and contemporary Japanese ceramics, and from her NY 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 for over thirty-five years, Ms. Mirviss has advised and built collections for museums, private collectors, and corporations.

Landscapes in Clay will first be shown at SALON: ART + DESIGN (November 1 - 16) and thereafter at JOAN B MIRVISS LTD (November 23 - December 18).

For more information or to request high-resolution images, please contact Wendy Fuglestad at 212-799-4021 or by email director@mirviss.com

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