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***KIGEN / A New Beginning***

**NEW WORK BY MIHARA KEN AT SOFA NEW YORK  
and JOAN B MIRVISS LTD**

***Exhibition Marks Artist's First International Solo Show***  
**May 29 – July 3, 2008**



**NEW YORK** – From May 29 through June 1, 2008 at SOFA NEW YORK in the Park Avenue Armory and at her Madison Avenue gallery through July 3, JOAN B MIRVISS LTD will present an exhibition of approximately 35 new works by celebrated Japanese artist Mihara Ken (b. 1958).

Mihara's unique style is the culmination of a thoughtful dialogue between the artist and clay, his chosen medium. Using materials from his native Shimane prefecture, Mihara constructs each work through an organic creative process. The New York debut of his new series, titled *Kigen*, or “A New Beginning,” marks his departure from shapes based on ancient prototypes to forms borne strictly from his own imagination.

According to Mihara, the remote, exquisite landscape of Izumo, where he lives and works, has exerted a powerful influence on his art. His hand-formed vessels, made from clay of this region, possess a strong linear quality while at the same time incorporating soft, delicate curves to create a remarkable balance between subtlety and solidity that was inspired by a several-month-long residency in northern Italy. Previous to this time spent abroad, he would not accept the colors and textures resulting from “failures” in firing. However, Mihara now claims to finally understand their merit: “I have embraced these failures into my consciousness, and have learned to accept such colorful hues that in turn affect how I create new forms that complement them.”



**JAPANESE ART** *By Appointment*

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His surfaces have undergone significant transformation through a new method of firing that reveals a remarkable range of color and texture inherent in the clay itself. With repeated firings at high temperatures, the surfaces of Mihara's vessels radiate subtle and soft tones ranging from charcoal gray to peach and from misty white to deep purple. Works are initially biscuit-fired, and then high-fired

twice for 30 to 40 hours. After the first neutral high-firing, the forms are encased in fire-resistant clay slip and then reduction fired. Afterwards the outer surface is removed and the work is fired for the third time, again in a reduction atmosphere.

While younger than most of his equally prominent colleagues, Mihara is able to convey in his vessels the confident design sense, sophisticated style and brilliant execution of a far more mature artist. His creative brilliance has been widely recognized by Japanese critics as evidenced by the awarding of numerous prestigious prizes and grants, and his work is already represented in the collections of notable museums through the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Victoria & Albert Museum.

### **About JOAN B MIRVISS LTD**

Joan B. Mirviss has been a renowned expert in Japanese art, specializing in prints, paintings, screens and contemporary ceramics for more than thirty 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 many of the top Japanese clay artists. As a distinguished, widely published, and highly respected specialist in her field, Mirviss has advised and built collections for many museums, major private collectors, and corporations.