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KAWASE SHINOBU

Flowering Waves of Celadon / Kaseiha

MARCH 14 - APRIL 17, 2009



NEW YORK – Joan B. Mirviss Ltd, one of the world's leading dealers in modern and contemporary Japanese ceramics, is pleased to present the second solo show outside of Japan of the celebrated ceramic artist, Kawase Shinobu (b. 1950). Titled, *Flowering Waves of Celadon / Kaseiha*, the show will feature nearly fifty works created specifically for this exhibition.

In these works, Kawase has created a literal sea of graceful flower and wave-inspired vessels that seem to undulate in space and change form when viewed from various vantage points. The liquidity and refined elegance of each individual shape, belies the difficult nature of their creation and easily enables one to fully appreciate the artist's complete mastery

of his medium.

Selected by the artist, the title is drawn from the classical Chinese poetry by Bai Juyi of the Tang Dynasty. The phrase refers to 'gorgeous or flowering blue waves' of the special hot springs given by the Emperor to his celebrated consort, the beauty Yang Guifei. The theme reflects the artist's close connection with nature together with his mastery of ancient art of Chinese celadon. In Japan, his prominence in the rarified world of artists working in this difficult medium is reflected in his nickname—"Seiji Shinobu"—*seiji* being the Japanese word for celadon. In 1981, he was the youngest ceramist to ever be awarded the prestigious Japan Ceramic Society Prize.

Inspired by the classical ceramics of Song Dynasty China (960-1270), Kawase first discovered celadon glaze when, by chance, he noticed the green tonality produced in the pooling of glaze at the base of a piece of *sometsuke*, or blue-and-white ware. Subsequently his grandfather, Kawase Chikushun, and father, Chikushun II, both potters of blue-and-white and polychrome ware, introduced the young Shinobu to these traditional forms and glazes. Potting by age eighteen, he was soon lured by the Chinese





aesthetic to the Palace Museum in Taipei to study firsthand the Song Dynasty masterpieces. There he reveled in the dignified elegance and cool appearance of the Northern Song celadon vessels. Several years later, a trip to London brought him to the renowned Percival David Foundation, where he spent four influential days immersed in the beauty of the collection. The interplay between the softness of the clay body and the suppleness of the glaze, together with the clarity of the silhouettes of the vessels,

spoke directly to his aesthetic appreciation of the medium.

As celadon is difficult to produce and involves a high percentage of firing losses, very few artists in Japan dare to work exclusively with the glaze. Over the past thirty years, Kawase has refined his own formulas for the ideal blue-green color through extensive and meticulous testing, blending in iron oxide, yellow sand, and sometimes even magnetic powder. His works are created from both red porcelaineous stoneware and white porcelain.

Potted to perfection, covered in refined blue glazes, and complemented by the modernity of his interpretations of classical Song pieces, Kawase Shinobu's ceramics have earned him the admiration of collectors, connoisseurs and artists everywhere. His work is included in important Japanese collections and museums, as well as major Western institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Victoria & Albert Museum.

EXHIBITION DATES:

March 14 – April 17, 2009

Tuesday – Friday 12 – 5 pm

Saturday 1 – 4 pm

and by appointment

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 her New York gallery, Joan B. Mirviss, Ltd., exclusively represents the top Japanese clay artists. As a distinguished, widely published, and respected specialist in her field, Mirviss has advised and built collections for many museums and major private collectors.