

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

November 11 – December 4, 2009

Group Exhibition

Eastern Departures: Ceramic Artists of Eastern Japan

Joan B. Mirviss Ltd will present the work of several seminal modern and contemporary Japanese potters working from the Eastern regions of Japan. Through history, attention on traditional Japanese clay has been dominated by the ceramics of Western Japan, as represented by works from potters' studios throughout the Kyoto, Hagi, Bizen, Kanazawa, Tamba, Gifu, and Arita regions. It is only in the 20th century that ceramics have taken hold in Eastern Japan; this has given these ceramists far greater independence and artistic freedom than their counterparts in the tradition-bound West.

Our exhibition focuses on artists who best represent this new direction and will include pioneering works by **deceased masters**:

HAMADA SHÔJI (1894-1977) attained unsurpassed recognition at home and abroad for his folk art style ceramics. Inspired by Okinawan and Korean ceramics in particular, Hamada became an important figure in the Japanese folk arts movement in the 1960s. He was a founding member of the Japan Folk Art Association with Bernard Leach, Kawai Kanjirô (1890-1966) and Yanagi Soetsu (1889-1961). Throughout his life, Hamada demonstrated an excellent glazing technique, using such trademark glazes as *temmoku* iron glaze, rice-husk ash glaze, and *kaki* persimmon glaze. Through his frequent visits and demonstrations abroad, Hamada influenced many European and American potters in later generations as well as those of his own.

Kamoda Shôji (1933-1983), long considered by many experts to be the greatest Japanese ceramic artist of the 20th century, was able to accomplish in half of a lifetime what other master artists struggle to ever even partially attain. In an unrivalled period of productivity from 1966-78, Kamoda transformed the aesthetic appreciation of modern ceramics. Always nominally functional, his stoneware "vessels" are ever imaginative in form, line, balance, glazing and decorative adornment. Today, after his premature death at age forty-nine, artists continue to copy and reinterpret his numerous inventive forms and designs.

Matsui Kôsei (1927-2003), designated a National Living Treasure in 1993, nearly single-handedly brought the refined art of colored-clay ware (*neriage*) back into use from classical Tang China ceramic ware. *Neriage* is a technique for creating patterns with various colored clays, which are marbled to create abstract designs. He is best known for his unique rough-hewn surface texture developed in the late 1970s and 80s and later for wide ranges of colors and subtle tonalities with a smooth, marble-like surface.

Wada Morihiro (1944-2008) used a wide variety of decorative styles, such as black and white inlays, wax-resist, carving, under glaze, blue-and-white (*sometsuke*), and blown-on glaze. Moving from Kansai to Ibaraki Prefecture and into the ceramic town of Kasama enabled him to break free of more traditional aesthetics and develop his own repertoire of motifs and techniques more closely aligned to the work of Kamoda Shôji. For many decades he had been the most widely sought-after Japanese artist working with polychrome decorated surfaces. His sudden death last year has left an enormous hole in the world of contemporary Japanese ceramics,

JAPANESE ART *By Appointment*

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and contemporary artists:

Ito Motohiko (b. 1939), while born in Fukuoka, Kyushu, established his career in the new ceramic center of Kasama in Ibaraki after graduating from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. For decades, he has been one of the leading artists of that region, specializing in cloth-impressed traditional stoneware vessels decorated with abstract polychrome floral designs.

Kawase Shinobu (b. 1950) Born in Oiso in Kanagawa Prefecture, Kawase Shinobu is regarded as Japan's most outstanding celadon artist working within the traditions of the Song dynasty. With his exquisite technique and immaculate glazing, he has developed a highly personal style that is simultaneously traditional and very modern. His works grace museum collections throughout the world. At this time several of Kawase's works are on view at both the Brooklyn Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Koike Shoko (b. 1943) Koike takes nature as her point of departure, creating floral and shell-inspired forms in stoneware with irregular, undulating edges that protrude from her hand-built bodies. Made from Shigaraki clay, her wheel-thrown bodies are later shaped by hand and adorned with ruffled edges and projections and a creamy white, opaque glaze. Already a celebrated artist in the West with works in important museum collections throughout the U.S. and Europe, Koike reveals her passionate and intimate understanding of nature in her evocative sculptural forms.

Maeda Masahiro (b. 1948) specializes in *Iroe kin-gin sai* (painted gold and silver color decoration) technique, which was originally developed in Song China (10-12th century AD), and then imported into Japan in the seventeenth century. He uses subdued colors and abstract motifs to decorate his wares. They are wildly popular in Japan as table ware and are collected both in the US and Europe.

Ogawa Machiko (b. 1946) Ogawa Machiko has been a vital force on the dialogue of contemporary clay since her arrival on the scene in 1985. After years of study at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts & Music, she drew inspiration from her travels which included living and studying in Paris at the École d'Arts et Métiers and then in Burkina Faso in West Africa. She won the Japan Ceramic Society Award as well as had solo exhibitions at major galleries and museums throughout Japan. Some of her work resembles cracked ice, while other vessels have a volcanic, scorched earth appearance. While Japanese in origin, Ogawa's work transcends national characterization, resonating with universal sensibility.

Ogata Kamio (b. 1949) a native of the remote island of Hokkaidô. Ogata is a self-taught artist who has chosen to specialize in the extremely difficult art of *neriage*, or marbled clay. Despite his lack of professional connections, Ogata is rapidly becoming recognized throughout Japan for his unrivaled mastery, creating work with layerings of more than one hundred tonalities of subtly colored clay. One such vessel is currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Ônô Kotarô (b. 1953) was born in Brazil and graduated from Gakushin University with a degree Law before turning to ceramics. Studying first in Gifu and then in Madrid, Ônô settled an established his studio on the northern island of Hokkaido, where he has specialized in wheel-thrown porcelain vessels that are then carved with concentric, thick, undulating bands and covered in variety of celadon glazes ranging from green to blue to yellow.

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Sakiyama Takayuki (b. 1958) creates irresistible vessels that are carved with rippling surface patterns that reinforce their surging, spiraling nature yielding objects that are sensuous, bold and seamless. Some works appear as if made from sand on the beach, the surface simply decorated by the current of the receding water. Others appear to undulate and twist in space as if in perpetual motion. His work has been selected for the exhibition posters at both the Metropolitan Museum of Art (where there is also a work by him currently on exhibit) and the Musée National de Céramiques, Sèvres.

Sugiura Yasuyoshi (b. 1949), like several other artists in this exhibition, graduated from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. As a ceramist focusing on sculpture rather than vessel forms, he takes inspiration from botanical specimens, creating larger-than-life stylized, but accurate, versions of these flowers in tones of white, gold and brown. He is also celebrated for his large-scale installations both indoors and outdoors. Currently there is a work by him on view at the Yale University Art Gallery.

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