

Japan in
BLACK & WHITE
Ink and Clay

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JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

39 EAST 78TH STREET NY NY

This spring, JOAN B. MIRVISS, LTD. is proud to present a new and dramatic exhibition, ***Japan in Black and White—Ink and Clay***, organized in collaboration with the leading modern ceramic dealer in Japan, SHIBUYA KUROTAKEN CO., LTD. Our accompanying, fully illustrated catalogue includes an insightful essay on by Joe Earle, former head of Far Eastern Art at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and past Gallery Director at Japan Society, New York, who writes:

For all these potters, just as for eighteenth-century painters, rejection of color was a conscious choice. It was also, perhaps, an expression of a desire to overstep the recent past, both aesthetically and politically... The ancient association of black with water and white with metal remind(s) us of the elemental nature of the raw materials used to make even the most avant-garde ceramics.

This exhibition focuses on modern masters and contemporary leaders of the clay medium— all creative virtuosi as well as brilliant technicians. Spanning a period of more than sixty years, these artists were and remain at the vanguard of Japanese clay art, as it remains the most diversified and inventive in the world. These men and, more recently, women, transformed and surpassed the classical standards for functional ceramic excellence and have brought to their oeuvres a new and highly influential sensibility.

This show features the work of past Japanese masters of clay who are all enormously celebrated in Japan but are only recently collected in the West: ISHIGURO Munemaro, KAMODA Shôji, KONDÔ Yutaka, MIWA Kyûsetsu XI, TOMIMOTO Kenkichi, YAGI Kazuo and YAMADA Hikaru. Each brought new light and creativity to specific aspects of the ceramics field. Some focused on new interpretations of classic functional ware while others sought to leave tradition behind them with highly personal interpretations and sculptural works. Individually, they paved the way for the succeeding post-war generation of clay artists, such as AKIYAMA Yô, FUJIKASA Satoko, FUJINO Sachiko, KATSUMATA Chieko, KAWASE Shinobu, KITAMURA Junko, KONDÔ Takahiro and NAKAIGAWA Yuki.

In conjunction with the new exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art “The Flowering of Edo Period Painting: Japanese Masterworks from the Feinberg Collection,” the work of these ceramists will be framed by major paintings by illustrious Japanese artists of that era: CHÔBUNSAI Eishi, HAKUIN Ekaku, ITO Jakuchû, and MARUYAMA Ôkyo.

SELECTION OF CERAMIC ARTISTS:



KATSUMATA Chieko (b. 1950), originally a painter, focuses on the application of color directly on her biomorphic forms that she covers with a thin piece of cloth through which she repeatedly applies color, leaving no trace of her brushwork. After repeated firings, followed by new applications of color, the surfaces take on a penetrating vivid coloration and soft textural appearance. Her work has entered the permanent collections of numerous US museums.



KONDÔ Yutaka (1923-83) began his career creating blue-and-white ware but soon chose his own direction creating black ware with white slip inlays in the tradition of Korean *punch'ong*. Affected by the modernist Sôdeisha movement, Yutaka strove to create work that captured the simple beauty of Korean ceramics while simultaneously expressing a uniquely contemporary, poetic, and abstract sensibility.



KONDÔ Takahiro (b. 1954), the nephew of Yutaka, while initially working in the family specialty of blue-and-white glazing, developed his patented *gintekisai* (silver- mist representing “water born from fire”) glaze comprised of an amalgam of platinum, gold, silver and glass that appears as metallic droplets of condensation glistening on his porcelain surfaces. His works are in the collections of countless museums throughout the world.



TOMIMOTO Kenkichi (1886-1963) was Japan's most important teacher and decorator of polychrome-glazed porcelain functional works. However it was his exclusively white-glazed vessels, created from the 1920s onwards, that perfectly illustrated his concept of balancing and integrating technique with originality— harmonizing design and form all of which artists ever since have tried to emulate. In 1955 he was one of the very first ceramists to be designated a Living National Treasure.



YAGI KAZUO (1918-79) was the central figure for the Sôdeisha group that was founded in 1948 and revolutionized the idea of ceramics Japan. While focused on “objets” that were neither purely sculptural nor functional, he respected utility and incorporated the western aesthetics of artists such as Paul Klee and Joan Miró into his distinctly Japanese forms. Yagi became the standard bearer of this field and revolutionized the perception of ceramics in postwar Japan.



YAMADA Hikaru (1923-2001) initially worked on functional vessels like Yagi. By the late 1950s, a search for the meaning of line and the perception of flat visual planes became a recurrent theme in his hand-built “wall” sculptures. His focus on perforated flat screen-like forms allowed the viewer to see through his work, creating a “borrowed landscape,” which despite its inherent two-dimensional presence, incorporates the light and color of the surrounding space.

SELECTION OF PAINTERS:



HAKUIN Ekaku (1685-1768) was a dedicated Zen Buddhist priest as well as a gifted and voluminous writer, penning numerous books, humor and parody that were often the inner focus of his paintings which had immediate appeal to his followers. He devoted much of his life to spreading the knowledge of Zen among ordinary people through both his writing and his art. His Zen paintings are among the most respected and sought-after by Japanese and western cognoscenti. His work was recently the subject of a major 2010-11 retrospective exhibition at Japan Society, New York.



MARUYAMA Ōkyo's (1733-1795) virtuoso approach to the naturalistic depiction of plants, animals and landscape with an ever-attentive and sensitive eye towards beauty, had a tremendous impact on the entire course of late 18th and 19th century painting in Kyoto and throughout Japan. It was an aesthetic that had immediate appeal and was widely patronized by the wealthy aristocracy of the period. Illustrated here with a nearly abstract depiction of the icy rugged terrain beneath the hazy full moon that is low on the horizon, barely visible on the natural silk background. While seemingly an abstract composition at first glance, this remarkable scene remains true to nature, evoking a tangibly cold, frozen scene and clearly illustrates Ōkyo's ability to convey not only a naturalistic view but also the emotional, somewhat mysterious side of nature.

THE ORGANIZERS

Joan B. Mirviss is the leading western dealer in the field of modern and contemporary Japanese ceramics, and from her NY gallery on Madison Ave., **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, Mirviss has advised and built collections for many museums, major private collectors, and corporations.

Founded in 1969, **SHIBUYA KURODATÔEN** has been the leading gallery for prominent exhibitions of master ceramists as well as a platform for launching new talents. Its major solo shows have ranged from the works of Rosanjin, Okabe, and Kamoda, to group exhibitions of the masters of the Showa era. Originally located in central Ginza in Tokyo, Kurodatôen moved to the fashionable Minami Aoyama area in 1969 before opening its current gallery in 1980, in Shibuya, Tokyo.

Joan B. Mirviss LTD is located at 39 East 78th Street in New York and is open Monday through Friday 11am-6pm and by appointment.

For further information and to request high-resolution images, please contact:
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