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Three Giants: Kamoda Shoji, Matsui Kosei, and Wada Morihiro

March 12 – April 20, 2018

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD 39 EAST 78th STREET NYC

NEW YORK – JOAN B. MIRVISS, LTD. is thrilled to present, after many years of planning, the important exhibition of 20th century ceramic superstars—**Three Giants of the North: Kamoda Shoji, Matsui Kosei and Wada Morihiro**. The exhibition focuses on three of Japan's most significant clay artists each of whom contributed to altering the style and aesthetic of ceramic history. This will be the first opportunity to see outside of Japan, a significant body of work by any of these three titans. **Three Giants** will open to the public on March 12th marking the start of Asia Week in New York City.

Long considered by many Japanese connoisseurs to be the greatest Japanese ceramic artist of the 20th century, **Kamoda Shōji** (1933-1983) was able to accomplish in half a life-time what other artists struggle to partially attain in double the time. In an unrivalled period of productivity from 1967-78, Kamoda transformed the aesthetic appreciation of modern ceramics in Japan, awakening the entire conservative Japanese traditional ceramic world to a new vision of the concept of “function.” Always nominally functional, his stoneware “vessels” are ever imaginative in form, line, balance, glazing and decorative adornment. Surface and form are created as a single thought, one complimenting the other. Nothing is overlooked from the delicacy of the mouth to the resolution of the base, both in perfect harmony, flaunting his sculptural approach to both form and surface decoration.

Born in Kishiwada Osaka, Kamoda studied under the hugely influential Tomimoto Kenkichi at Kyoto City University of Arts from which he graduated in 1952. By 1959, with substantial economic support, due in equal parts to his humble and generous spirit and to his monumental talent, he was able to establish his own kiln in Mashiko, far north of Tokyo. Ten years later he left his family to work further north in near isolation in Tono, Iwate.

“Walking into the North Wind’ was a favorite phrase of Kamoda, who lived his short life of forty-nine years with such energy and has left the contemporary Japanese ceramic scene reverberating with the impact of his innovative works.”

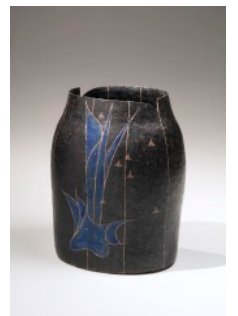
“The Ceramic Works of Kamoda Shoji” by Nakanodo Kazunobu in Kamoda Shoji: A Prominent Figure in Contemporary Ceramics, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 1987.

To this day, long after Kamoda's premature death from leukemia at age forty-nine, ceramists continue to imitate and reinterpret his endlessly inventive forms and surface designs. His master works can be found in the collections of prominent museums including the National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo; Palace Museum, Beijing; and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Matsui Kōsei (1927-2003), was the seminal figure in the revival of *neriage* (marbleized colored clay) in the late twentieth century and his influence continues after his death. As a priest at the Gesso-ji Temple in Kasama, Ibaraki Prefecture, Matsui studied ancient Chinese ceramics, allowing him to perfect and invent his own *neriage* techniques, consistently focusing on the manipulation of colored clays in the formulation of a ceramic vessel. Far surpassing these Chinese Tang and Cizhou historic predecessors, Matsui created highly original abstract, linear, floral and geometric surface patterns, often with a rough-hewn texture, using a variety of techniques perfected over the decades.



Kamoda Shoji (1933-1983)
Vessel with Enamel Inlay
1977
Glazed stoneware



Kamoda Shoji (1933-1983)
Vessel with Blue Enamel
1977
Glazed Stoneware



Matsui Kosei (1927-2003)
Himilaya
1985
Marbleized stoneware
vessel



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"Vibrantly colored layered clays are used to such an extent...that the conventional, narrow view of neriage has been shattered." (Hasebe Mitsuhiro, former curator of National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo)

"(Matsui's) works are imbued with an essentially human quality that interacts with the spiritual life, in a realm beyond that of everyday ceramics." (Kawakita Michiaki [quotes from *The Works of Kosei Matsui 1985-1990*])

His worldwide recognition for his success and creativity in this difficult but tradition-steeped process, culminated in his designation as a Living National Treasure in 1993. His work is now owned by many important museums including the Art Institute of Chicago; Brooklyn Museum of Art; Ibaragi Ceramic Art Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; National Museums of Modern Art, Tokyo Kyoto; Victoria & Albert Museum.

Wada Morihiro (1944-2008), born in Mishinomiya, Kansai, graduated from Kyoto City University of Arts where he studied under Tomimoto Kenkichi and others. Like Kamoda before him, Wada decided to relocate from Kyoto to north of Tokyo into the ceramic town of Kasama. This dramatic move enabled him to break free of the more classical aesthetics of Kyoto and develop his own highly distinctive repertoire of motifs and techniques that were more closely aligned to the work of Kamoda.

Wada wrote, "the various vessels that I create depart from me as dramas with their own characters and roles." To accomplish this, he created numerous surface patterns, some abstract and geometric, others more curvilinear and organic, using a highly unique repertoire of techniques that include wax resist and engraving. For all his sculptural forms, Wada painstakingly worked the exteriors through the application of colored-clay slips, after which he scrapped, incised, burnished, and textured the surface until he achieved his desired outcome.

For several decades, Wada was the most respected Japanese artist working with polychrome decorated surfaces and his sudden death in 2008 left an enormous hole in the world of contemporary Japanese ceramics. Like Matsui and Kamoda, Wada's works have been widely exhibited outside of Japan and are found in museum collections including Faenza International Museum of Ceramics, Italy; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Musée National de céramique, Sèvres, France; and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

About JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

Joan B. Mirviss has been a distinguished expert in Japanese art specializing in prints, paintings, screens and ceramics for forty 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 most of today's 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.

For further information or images, please call 212-799-4021 or email admin@mirviss.com.



Matsui Kosei (1927-2003)
Samarkand
1985
Marbleized stoneware



Wada Morihiro (1944-2008)
Kanmonki
1990-92
Slip-glazed stoneware



Wada Morihiro (1944-2008)
Kimono Inspired Vessel
Ca. 2000
Slip-glazed stoneware



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