

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

Colored by Flame: The Artistry of Katō Ryōtarō

Opening July 7, 2026



Group of works by Mori Tōgaku.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — Joan B Mirviss LTD is delighted to present *Colored by Flame: The Artistry of Katō Ryōtarō*, the artist's first solo show in the United States. Katō Ryōtarō (b. 1974) is an eight-generation descendant of ceramic artists from the Mino region. His grandfather, Katō Takuo (1917–2005), received the prestigious designation of Living National Treasure for his recreation of historical Persian glazes and lusterware techniques, a tradition that Ryōtarō's father, Katō Kōbei VII (b. 1945) has continued. In contrast, Ryōtarō has returned to his family's historical ceramic roots: the sensuous ash-based glazes and wood-fired kiln techniques of Japan's Mino region.

At the heart of Katō's ceramic practice is the *anagama*, or tunnel kiln. After lighting the kiln, he spends five days stoking the flames and praying to the gods of fire. Flames and black smoke spout out from the kiln, the interior of which reaches 1300 degrees Celsius. In these extreme conditions, the glaze turns molten and interacts with minerals present in the clay body. Natural ash coats the works, altering the chemistry of the glaze formula it contacts. It is through this process that the works' unique gradations of color emerge.

Katō likens this process to a collaboration between himself and the kiln, one that requires an act of surrender on his part: "My work extends to the point of loading the kiln. The rest is up to the kiln gods."



Meiping vase with rounded shoulders and yellowish-green Oribe glaze
2026
Glazed stoneware
13 1/4 x 6 5/8 in.



Straight-sided waterjar with unctuous Shino glaze, iron oxide underglaze splash motif, and matching knobbed lid
2026
Glazed stoneware
6 5/8 x 6 5/8 in.



Lapis lazuli-colored vase with hemispherical body tapering into a tall, straight neck
2026
Glazed stoneware
12 5/8 x 8 3/8 x 7 3/4 in.

Yet this is not entirely the case. While the precise result of the firing is in the kiln gods' hands, Katō's years of experience with the *anagama*, or tunnel kiln, has granted him a remarkable prescience that guides him as he loads the kiln and stokes the flames. Blending generations of Mino craftsmanship with a spirit of experimentation, Kato embraces the kiln's unpredictability, allowing natural processes to leave their mark on every surface. His work honors tradition while pushing it in unexpected directions. While it is the flames that catalyze the alchemical transformation of the works' surfaces, it is Katō's hands that orchestrate it. The result is pure magic: sensuous surfaces that shift from blue to green to ochre, each unique expression a trace of the kiln's flames.

Colored by Flame opens July 7, 2026, and runs through August. The exhibition will feature more than twenty new works featuring six of Katō's captivating glazing styles, as well as two works of calligraphy by the artist. The gallery is open to visitors weekdays, 11am to 6pm and by appointment. *Colored by Flame* will also be accessible online at www.mirviss.com.

About Joan B Mirviss LTD

With nearly fifty years of experience, Joan B. Mirviss is a pillar in the field of Japanese art. As a dealer, scholar, curator, and advisor, she has been the driving force championing the top Japanese ceramic artists, who she represents exclusively, and whose works she has placed in major museums around the globe. Widely published as a highly respected expert, Mirviss has built many institutional and private collections of Japanese art. Joan B Mirviss LTD exhibits modern and contemporary Japanese ceramics, ukiyo-e, and Japanese paintings from its exclusive Madison Avenue location in New York City.

For more information, please contact us at 212-799-4021 or director@mirviss.com.