

# JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

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*Vessel Explored / Vessel Transformed:  
Tomimoto Kenkichi and his Enduring Legacy*

MARCH 13 - APRIL 20, 2018

39 EAST 78<sup>TH</sup> STREET NYC

NY, NY December 2018 JOAN B MIRVISS LTD with the invaluable assistance of Japan's leading modern ceramic dealer, Shibuya Kurodatoen Co., LTD is honored to present *Vessel Explored / Vessel Transformed: Tomimoto Kenkichi and his Enduring Legacy*. This groundbreaking exhibition and its accompanying publication, the first of its type outside Japan, focuses on the remarkable artist and teacher, Tomimoto Kenkichi. While, a relative unknown in the west, Tomimoto is revered as the father of his field. He was the most significant figure in the world of twentieth-century Japanese ceramics and his impact continues through his gifted and inspired former pupils and their talented students, many of whom are now professors of ceramics. Together they have transformed and surpassed the classical standard for functional ceramic excellence—devotion to the ancient Chinese traditions or allegiance to the late 16<sup>th</sup>-century Momoyama tea wares—and brought to their oeuvres a new, contemporary, and highly influential sensibility. Furthermore, this caused the ancient system of familial kilns and stylistic heritages to give way to university relationships that spawned artistic families of their own. Without Tomimoto himself and his legacy of pupils, Japan would not be in the preeminent position as champion of contemporary clay that it is today.

*"The legacy Tomimoto left his students, through his many texts and instructions at university, is of utmost importance to the history of Japanese art and deserves a separate study. The discourse of modern Japanese ceramics was profoundly affected by Tomimoto's teachings." (Meghen Jones, Dissertation, 2014, p. 287)*

As a technical innovator and genius with surface decoration, Tomimoto Kenkichi was the founder of the ceramics department at Kyoto City University of Arts, which profoundly changed the direction for the next generation of clay artists. Tomimoto believed that patterns should never be reused, and took inspiration from nature in order to keep his work fresh and new often instructing his students:

*"For pattern, look to nature and its beauty— form, line, and color. Study and understand how they are structured."*

Not born into a traditional pottery family but educated in things western, having traveled in the West and befriended the major English ceramic artist, Bernard Leach; Tomimoto had a much broader view of Japanese ceramics than many of his contemporaries. As



Large white vessel  
1936  
Glazed porcelain  
8 3/4 x 12 1/2 in.



Gourd-shaped vase with  
4-petal fern pattern  
After 1952  
Glazed porcelain with gold  
and silver overglaze  
6 x 3 7/8 x 3 1/2 in.

**JAPANESE ART** *Antique – Contemporary*

39 East 78th Street, 4th floor | New York NY 10075

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a teacher, he expounded on the importance of individuality, originality, and the confluence of forms and patterns. Throughout his life, he remained steadfast in his own beliefs and attempted to instill these ethical values in his pupils.

*Vessel Explored / Vessel Transformed: Tomimoto Kenkichi and his Enduring Legacy* will showcase works by the teacher himself along with ceramics by his former pupils, artists and teachers in their own right and their pupils. In all, some of the greatest stars of Japanese modern and contemporary ceramics will be on show. Below is a selection from the artists being included.

## Deceased Students and Artists

FUJIMOTO Yoshimichi Nōdō  
KAMODA Shōji  
KONDŌ Yūzō  
KURIKI Tatsusuke  
MATSUDA Yuriko  
TAMURA Kōichi  
TSUBOI Atsuka  
WADA Morihiko  
YANAGIHARA Mutsuo

## Living Students and Artists

FUTAMURA Yoshimi  
HAYASHI Kaku  
KATSUMATA Chieko  
KOIKE Shōko  
KONDŌ Takahiro  
MAEDA Masahiro  
MATSUI Kōsei  
OGAWA Machiko  
TASHIMA Etsuko

In putting together the seminal publication to accompany our legacy exhibition, we are honored to have enlisted the services of esteemed experts in this area: Kida Takuya, Professor at Musashino Art University and author of numerous articles on this topic, Meghan Jones, Assistant Professor of Art History at Alfred University who wrote her dissertation on Tomimoto; and emerging scholar Trevor Menders. Their essays are complemented by recollections from several of Tomimoto's former pupils and pioneers in their own right.

## About Joan B. Mirviss LTD

**JOAN B. MIRVISS** has been a distinguished expert in Japanese art, specializing in fine art and ceramics for more than 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 the top Japanese clay artists. As a widely published and highly respected specialist in her field, Mirviss has advised and built collections for many museums, major private collectors, and corporations.

For Show information and high-resolution images, please contact the gallery at 212-799-4021 or via email at [director@mirviss.com](mailto:director@mirviss.com).



*Yellow Oribe Leaning Backwards Vase*  
1994-early 1996  
Glazed stoneware  
38 3/4 x 15 x 8 1/4 in.



Third Generation Students  
(counterclockwise) Ogawa Machiko, Hayashi Kaku, Maeda Masahiro and Matsui Kōsei

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