

JOAN B MIRVISS LTD

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A MOMENT IN TIME: AKIYAMA YŌ AND KITAMURA JUNKO

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JOAN B MIRVISS LTD 39 EAST 78TH STREET NY

NEW YORK - Joan B Mirviss LTD is thrilled to present the first US joint-exhibition of critically acclaimed clay artists Akiyama Yō and Kitamura Junko. Featuring twenty dynamic works ranging from delicately inlaid vessels to large-scale sculptural abstractions, this important exhibition will highlight the decidedly different yet equally compelling styles of the celebrated Kyoto-based artistic couple. This showing will explore each artist's response to the primary and tactile connotations of clay as a medium and examine their mutual considerations on destruction, renewal and metamorphosis.

AKIYAMA YŌ: A dominating force in Japanese contemporary art, Akiyama Yō (b 1953) continues to gain global recognition for his powerful sculptural works manifested through a passionate engagement with the physicality of clay. Few artists have done more in recent years to bring contemporary Japanese ceramic arts to global attention. His signature unglazed, fractured forms have established him at the forefront of international contemporary sculpture through sold-out solo exhibitions and museum acquisitions spanning East to West.

"Akiyama's ceramic creations allude to the transformations that have sculpted the earth" (Robert Mintz, Chief Curator and Curator of Asian Art, Walters Art Museum, 2014)

"Akiyama belongs to the most important group of Japanese present-day sculptors. I would rather call him a magician" (Frank Steyaert, *Ceramics Art and Perception*, 2005)

Returning to Joan B Mirviss for a third time following his sold-out solo exhibitions in 2011 and 2007, Akiyama presents new works of varying scale created specifically for this show. These powerful unglazed stoneware forms, imbedded with iron filings, appear as if extracted from the earth's core. Evoking windswept rock or cooled magma, Akiyama's unique surface treatments seem to capture forms as if in a perpetual state of destruction and regeneration, leading viewers on a visual journey from the beginning of the earth through the end of time.

"(Akiyama's) pieces have a density that seems to convey the compressed vibrations of the earth itself" (Kazuko Todate and Anne Nishimura, *Fired Earth, Woven Bamboo: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics and Bamboo Art*, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2013)

Akiyama Yō's works grace many important collections and museums around the world, including: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia; Faenza International Ceramic Museum, Italy; Musée national de Céramique de Sèvres, France; National Museums of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo; Museum, Honolulu; Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Suntory Museum of Art, Tokyo; and Victoria & Albert Museum, London. He currently serves as the chairman of the prestigious ceramics department at Kyoto City University of Arts.



JAPANESE ART *By Appointment*

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KITAMURA JUNKO: A key figure in an artistic sphere that is increasingly assuming center stage, Kitamura Junko (b 1956), like fellow pioneering female Japanese ceramicists Koike Shōko, Katsumata Chieko, and Ogawa Machiko, creates conceptually daring works far beyond traditional ties to functionality. Part of two groundbreaking US exhibitions on Japanese ceramics, *Contemporary Ceramics for the New Century* in 2005 at the MFA Boston and 2009's Smith College Museum of Fine Art's celebrated, *Touch Fire: Contemporary Ceramics by Women Artists*, Kitamura has solidified her standing among the leaders of contemporary clay art.

Presented in a range of dramatic new profiles, works in this exhibition feature Kitamura's signature, intricate lace-like patterns that appear to arise and break away in rippling, wave-like designs in white slip inlay juxtaposed against a dark, matte, black slip-covered body. These miniscule concentric dots and geometric punchings meld together with adjoining configurations to make intricate designs suggesting textile patterns, snowflakes or celestial constellations.

"(Kitamura's) tiny stamped motifs accumulate to form clusters and as they repeat—perhaps already hinting at a specific design - they eventually lose their regularity and dissolve into a kind of froth, an organic flux from which the overall pattern emerges." (*Soaring Voices, Contemporary Japanese Ceramic Artists*, Shigaraki Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art, 2007)

"(Kitamura's) process results in a dramatic movement of motifs which resemble metempsychosis of nature." (*Generosity in Clay: Modern Japanese Ceramics from Natalie Fitz-Gerald Collection*, Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture, Hanford, CA, 2009)

"Fragile, light and voluptuous" (Joe Earle, *Contemporary Ceramics for the New Century*, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2005)

Kitamura Junko's works have been featured in solo and group exhibitions across the globe and are in the permanent collections of: British Museum, London; Brooklyn Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Kyoto; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Smithsonian, Washington DC, among many others.

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

For further information and to request high-resolution images, please contact: Cris Smith at 212 799-4021 or by email at director@mirviss.com



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