

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tradition Redefined: Rosanjin and His Rivals

ASIA WEEK NEW YORK

Opening March 11, 2021

Rosanjin has long been hailed as one of the greatest ceramists of the twentieth century. His bold, eclectic ceramics emerged from the highly creative atmosphere of postwar Japan. Rosanjin forged a remarkable career, but it was not without first crossing paths, and even colliding, with many of his contemporaries who were themselves renowned ceramic masters and connoisseurs: Arakawa Toyozō, Fujiwara Kei, Kaneshige Tōyō, Katō Tokurō, Kawakita Handeishi, and Koyama Fujio. For Asia Week New York 2021, Joan B Mirviss LTD re-examines the legend of Rosanjin and his place within this Japanese artistic milieu in *TRADITION REDEFINED: ROSANJIN AND HIS RIVALS*.

In his own words, Kitaōji Rosanjin (1883-1959) came to ceramics as a gourmand; dissatisfied with the tableware options for presenting elegant cuisine, Rosanjin set about creating them himself for his exclusive eating club in Tokyo. Not wanting to imitate past traditional forms and glazes, he instead ‘remixed’ the elements in surprising ways that were defiantly unconventional and characteristically ‘Rosanjin’.

“Of all the postwar reconfigurations of the ‘taste’ of classic prototypes, Rosanjin’s seems most literally based on a desire to treat clay like food. His vessels appear tender, delicious, tempting the viewer to take a bite.”

Louise Cort, Curator Emerita, Freer | Sackler, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC in *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth* (2003), p.130.

Rosanjin’s appetite led him to other artists for support and inspiration, and each left a profound impact on the other’s art. All of these men rediscovered ancient techniques while simultaneously bringing forward a uniquely modern sensibility that paved the way for Japanese ceramics today. Koyama Fujio (1900-1975) was an established expert in ancient ceramics who traveled to Kyoto to work with Rosanjin, who had inspired him to become a potter.



KITAŌJI ROSANJIN (1883-1959)
Camellia bowl
Glazed stoneware, ca. 1940
4 1/2 x 8 3/4 in.



KITAŌJI ROSANJIN (1883-1959)
Large Karatsu madara glazed vase
Glazed stoneware, ca. 1955
17 1/4 x 15 5/8 in.



KITAŌJI ROSANJIN (1883-1959)
Grey Shino teabowl with patterning
Glazed stoneware, ca. 1958
3 3/8 x 4 5/8 in.



KITAŌJI ROSANJIN (1883-1959)
Fan-shaped dish with Oribe glazing
Glazed stoneware, ca. 1940
2 7/8 x 11 1/8 x 9 3/4 in.

Working side by side with Rosanjin, Arakawa Toyozō (1894-1985) through his discoveries of ancient sherds, committed himself to the reinvention of Shino ware, eventually becoming a Living National Treasure (LNT). Kaneshige Tōyō (1896-1967) was in his forties when he turned to the clay of Bizen, the mastery of which led to his LNT designation. He met these other artists in the Karahinekai discussion group formed in 1942 by Kawakita Handeishi (1878-1963), a banker, patron of the arts, and eventual potter. Fujiwara Kei (1899-1983) learned Bizen techniques from Kaneshige and followed his teacher as the second LNT for Bizen ware. Katō Tokurō (1898-1985) was adept in a vast range of styles and most closely rivaled Rosanjin's forceful artistry and experimental approach; he was the first to be designated a LNT for Oribe, ahead of Rosanjin, in 1952. Interestingly, for a multiplicity of reasons, Rosanjin himself resolutely declined the newly conceived LNT honor twice.

TRADITION REDEFINED places Rosanjin's oeuvre in dialogue with works by mid-century ceramic masters, some of whom were indispensable to the advancement of Rosanjin's outsized reputation. All of these featured artists were brilliant technicians whose mastery of the medium positioned Japanese clay art to become the most diversified and inventive in the world today.

Joan B Mirviss LTD is the leading US dealer in the field of Japanese fine ceramics. From her New York gallery on Madison Avenue, Joan Mirviss exclusively represents the top modern Japanese clay artists. This exhibition was organized in collaboration with Shibuya Kurodatoen Co., LTD, the foremost modern ceramic dealer in Japan. The Mirviss gallery is open by appointment only, Monday through Friday from 11 am to 6 pm. For more information, or to request high-resolution images, please contact 212-799-4021 or director@mirviss.com.



ARAKAWA TOYOZŌ (1894-1985)
Shino teabowl
Glazed stoneware, ca. 1940s
3 1/4 x 5 3/4 x 5 1/8 in.



KANESHIGE TOYO (1896-1967)
Bizen mizusashi (waterjar)
Unglazed stoneware, ca. 1960s
7 1/8 x 7 7/8 x 6 3/4 in.



KATŌ TŌKURŌ (1898-1985)
Black Oribe teabowl
Glazed stoneware, 1967
3 1/4 x 5 1/8 in.



KOYAMA FUJIO (1900-1975)
Comb-patterned jar, ca. 1974
Glazed stoneware
8 1/8 x 7 5/8 x 6 1/2 in.