

*Branching Out*

**KANESHIGE FAMILY AND THE BIZEN TRADITION  
MIWA FAMILY AND THE HAGI TRADITION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The widespread popularity and distinguished reputations that Japan's ancient ceramic traditions enjoy today are largely indebted to a core group of mid-twentieth century artistic visionaries: among them, **Kaneshige Tōyō** (1896-1967) for Bizen ware and **Miwa Kyūwa** (1895-1981) for Hagi ware. Both men were inheritors to their highly esteemed, long-established, multi-generational family names that had been associated with excellence in their respective ceramic traditions for centuries. Together with scholar-potter Kawakita Handeishi (1878-1963), they co-founded the artistic discussion group Karahinekai in 1942, formed of artists who were dedicated to the recovery of lost techniques from the golden age of ceramics during the 16th century.

With a focus on teaware and vessels, they were wildly successful in their endeavors. Adapting their production, greatly expanding their styles, and influencing their brothers, sons, and grandchildren, they definitively transformed their family's legacy from that of dutiful craftsmen to boldly modern artists. Joan B Mirviss LTD's latest exhibition celebrates the past, present, and future of these two prominent families synonymous with excellence in BRANCHING OUT: KANESHIGE FAMILY AND THE BIZEN TRADITION | MIWA FAMILY AND THE HAGI TRADITION.

Named after the main city of Yamaguchi Prefecture, "Hagi" refers to a ceramic tradition that emphasizes the exquisitely lovely natural qualities arising from a very special interaction between unique clay and a soft, transparent yet creamy glaze. The Miwa family's association with Hagi ware dates to its origins in 1600s Japan, when the very first Miwa Kyūsetsu served as potter under the patronage of the local daimyo. Even older is the thousand-year-old "Bizen" tradition, one of the six ancient kilns of Japan centered around Imbe village (or Bizen) in Okayama Prefecture. The Kaneshige family has long been tied to the place of Bizen and to producing this distinctive wood-fired ware.

Though they appear different, both Hagi and Bizen styles' merits lie in the alchemy of subtleties: of precise clay blends, unexpected textures, and marvelous color transformations. Hagi ware's warm, orange clay body peeks through a ladled transparent glaze that incompletely covers the surface in a white or pink-ish white veil, with no additional underpainting or decoration.



Kaneshige Sozan (1909-1995)  
Bizen eared vessel, ca. 1980  
Unglazed stoneware  
10 1/4 x 5 3/4 x 5 1/2 in.



Miwa Kyūwa (Kyūsetsu X) (1895-1981)  
Thickly lobed waterjar with cover  
ca. 1970  
Glazed stoneware  
7 3/8 x 7 1/2 in.



Kaneshige Tōyō (1896-1967)  
Bizen clog-shaped teabowl  
Unglazed stoneware  
3 x 5 1/4 x 4 3/4 in.



Miwa Jusetsu (Kyūsetsu XI) (1910-2012)  
Teabowl with *warikōdai* (split-cross foot),  
1980s  
Glazed stoneware  
4 1/2 x 7 3/8 x 7 1/8 in.

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Characterized by a reddish-brown body that can at times turn a slate or bluish-gray, Bizen ware utilizes no applied glaze at all. Fired just once over a very long time, ranging from one week to one month, Bizen ware's enchanting surface patterning and texture result entirely from natural effects occurring within the kiln.

This exhibition traces that time-honored legacy, of earth plus fire, down to the most recent generations of the Kaneshige and Miwa families: **Kaneshige Tōyō**, the savior of Bizen ware in the modern era; **Miwa Kyūwa (Kyūsetsu X)**, his fellow Living National Treasure and modernizer of Hagi ware; and their brothers, **Kaneshige Sozan** (1909-1995) and **Miwa Jusetsu (Kyūsetsu XI)** (1910-2012), whose contributions advanced their fields and who each developed an identity apart from their famous brothers.

Their children have in turn blossomed on this crowded, complicated family tree: the three sons of Miwa Kyūsetsu XI—**Ryūkishō (Kyūsetsu XII/Ryōsaku)** (b. 1940), **Eizō** (1946-1999), and **Kyūsetsu XIII (Kazuhiko)** (b. 1951)—each discovered thought-provoking and experimental new approaches to their patrimony, ranging from playful and erotic to architectural or figurative. Kyūsetsu XII's daughter, **Miwa Hanako** (b. 1972), brings her unique sensibility to the family tradition. Kaneshige Tōyō's first and third sons, **Michiaki** (1934-1995) and **Kōsuke** (b. 1943), have continued to push Bizen's boundaries, through greater abstraction and provocative sculptures. Kaneshige Sozan's first and third sons, **Makoto** (b. 1945) and **Yūhō** (b. 1950), have further elaborated the Bizen tradition in teaware, creating extraordinary vessels with *hidasuki* (fire-cording) effects that were ingeniously recovered by their father.

Each artist featured here has taken foundational aspects of their family's style and made his individual imprint on centuries-old tradition, thereby pushing its boundaries both outward and forward. Our exhibition covers the range of interpretations that have moved these ancient traditions into contemporary clay art.

## About Joan B. Mirviss LTD

With more than forty-five years of experience, Joan B. Mirviss remains 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 clay 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. This exhibition was organized in collaboration with SHIBUYA KURODATOEN CO., LTD, the foremost modern ceramic dealer in Japan. 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](mailto:director@mirviss.com).



Miwa Kyūsetsu XIII (Kazuhiko) (b. 1951)  
Covered vessel with floral forms, ca. 1991  
Glazed stoneware  
13 3/8 x 12 x 11 3/8 in.



Kaneshige Kōsuke (b. 1943)  
Bundled robes sculptural vessel, 2005  
Unglazed stoneware  
14 3/8 x 15 3/8 x 15 1/4 in.



Miwa Kyūsetsu XIII (Kazuhiko) (b. 1951)  
Teabowl titled, *El Capitan*, 2021  
Glazed stoneware  
5 x 6 3/8 x 6 1/4 in.



Kaneshige Michiaki (1934-1995)  
Kinuta-shaped vase with slumped neck,  
late 1970s  
Unglazed stoneware  
30 3/8 x 9 x 7 7/8 in.

JAPANESE ART *Antique – Contemporary*

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