

For immediate release

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Ippodo Gallery New York

Ryoji Koie and Two Apprentices
—The Ceramics of Ryoji Koie, Ryusuke Asai, Akira Yonebayashi—
August 23 (Thu)– September 6 (Thu), 2012



Ceramics assortment by Ryoji Koie, Ryusuke Asai, Akira Yonebayashi

New York, NY, July 25, 2012 — The Ippodo Gallery New York is proud to announce that it will be holding an exhibition entitled, ‘Ryoji Koie and Two Apprentices—The Ceramics of Ryoji Koie, Ryusuke Asai, Akira Yonebayashi’, from August 23 (Thu) to September 6 (Thu), 2012. This will be a special event as it marks the first joint exhibition by the master potter, Ryoji Koie, and his two erstwhile students, Ryusuke Asai and Akira Yonebayashi. Ryoji Koie was delighted to have this opportunity to tie up with his two erstwhile students and has produced some outstanding work for the occasion. For their part, both Asai and Yonebayashi were inspired to excel, out of respect for their teacher. The master potter, Ryoji Koie and these two young potters who will carry on his style of pottery, have created works that echo each other, the energy of each artist crystallized within their work in this exhibition. It will consist of a total of forty works, including vases and teabowls.

Ryoji Koie (b. 1938) is often referred to as a rustic. He lives a simple life, deep in the mountains where he digs his own clay; his workplace acting as a gathering place for both friends and local children. The clay

is Koie's voice, his vocabulary, and it has enabled him to establish a unique, unrestrained 'Koie style' that is neither classical nor contemporary. Sometimes he produces sensational works that offer a cutting critique of society, environmental problems or war. At the same time he also creates works that combine the traditional techniques of *Shino*, *Oribe*, *Bizen* and *Yakishime* in a unique way, producing pots or vases without feet, applying glazes in a wild fashion and making teabowls that are allowed to warp freely, boldly surpassing the boundaries of art crafts. He says, 'I want to create large numbers of works, like pollen scattered on the wind.' By this, he means that he would like to travel the world on the wind, pausing on the way to fire the local clay and produce as many works as possible to capture the hearts of people everywhere. This challenging yet mystic attitude is probably typical of the unfathomable nature of the man, Ryoji Koie.

Ryusuke Asai (b. 1966) is the son of Shinpei Asai, who was the official photographer for the Beatles in Japan. Asai formed his own band and still likes to sing John Lennon's 'Imagine', but his grandfather and uncle were both potters and so he had contact with the field from an early age. He first worked with clay while he was a student at Dartington Hall School, a British public school situated in the county of Devon where the famous British potter, Bernard Leach once built a kiln and also worked as a teacher. After graduating from Waseda University, he attended the Department of Art at Goldsmith's College of London University, where he studied pottery while devoting himself to contemporary art. During a trip back to Japan in 1991 he studied for a period under Ryoji Koie, allowing him to learn from Koie's artistic spirit, which surpasses the boundaries of Japanese tradition and art crafts as he works with the clay. Later, after he returned permanently from England in 1994, he worked at the office of Shigeru Uchida, who was a leader of interior design at that time. Since then, he has continued to produce chic works, combining East and West, classic and contemporary. Possessing an elegance and subtle sensitivity, his teabowls in the classical *Oribe* and *Kuroraku* styles have captured the hearts of Japan's young tea aficionados.

Akira Yonebayashi (b. 1982) was born in Kanagawa Prefecture. After attending the Department of Science at Waseda University, majoring in Earth Science, specializing in the study of mineral crystals and ore deposits, he became fascinated by clay and began to work as a potter. In 2005 he helped build the Chiakigama kiln in Kamiizumimura in Saitama Prefecture, which he has fired every year since then. In 2007 he visited Ryoji Koie, the two got along and Yonebayashi became one of his most favored apprentices. Being a naturally easygoing, modest man, he was able to throw himself into Koie's unrestrained, dramatic world of ceramics without hesitation and was soon producing carefree, lively works of his own. He specializes in works that use unconventional colors and forms, producing teabowls with small feet that are interesting and exquisitely balanced. In particular, his wonderful teabowls that use *sogetsuyu* glaze, similar to *shino* but a pale mauve in color, are most beautiful. He does not break the rules laid down for tea ceremony utensils, but his works possess a sense of presence that is unmatched, and he is definitely a young potter who will receive increased attention in the future.

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For further information, please contact the gallery.

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Ryoji Koie, *'Oribe' teabowl*, ceramic, 2012,
φ5 1/8 x H3 5/8 inch (φ12.9x H9.2cm)



Ryusuke Asai, *'Hikidashiguro' teabowl*, ceramic,
2012, φ4 3/8 x H3 5/8 inch (φ11x H9.2cm)



Akira Yonebayashi, *'Sougetsuyu' glaze teabowl*,
ceramic, 2012, φ4 3/4 x H3 1/2 inch (φ12.2x
H8.8cm)