

# SOFA

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## **SOFA CHICAGO 2008: DEALER HIGHLIGHTS** Cutting Edge Contemporary Decorative Arts and Design and Prized Historic Examples

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### **LUCIO BUBACCO AT LITVAK GALLERY, TEL AVIV, ISRAEL**

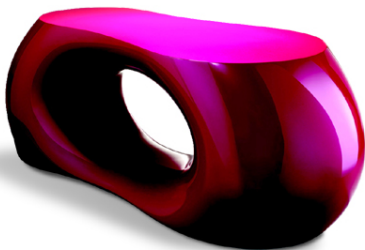
Denoting the rich sophistication of primo Venetian glass artist Lucio Bubacco, Litvak Gallery dealer is devoting a staggering \$100,000 to staging that glass master's work at SOFA CHICAGO. "We've seen contemporary art dealers and 18th century French furniture specialists dedicate that kind of flair to their stands in Paris and Basel but Litvak personally raises the bar for the SOFA Fairs and at same time matches the extraordinary Surreal artistry of Bubacco," says Mark Lyman, SOFA Fairs founder and director. At only age 15, Bubacco was awarded an artisan's license and a scant few years later he was making history with his new interpretations of the "lume" glass technique by hand forming figures and incorporating them in blown and cast vessels. While mastering that historic "lume" glass technique, Bubacco draws imagery and forms from Greek, Roman and Byzantine art as well as medieval and renaissance theater and La Commedia dell'Arte in treating classic themes of love and destruction, birth and death, and heaven and hell. His work has been lauded by museum curators and collectors internationally. Lately, slews of interior designers have been ordering up unique chandeliers while collectors have been snatching up maquettes and drawings as well.



Lucio Bubacco  
Litvak Gallery

### **WENDELL CASTLE AT BARRY FRIEDMAN LTD. NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

Dynamo designer Wendell Castle's newest work, which bridges sculpture, art and functionality, won a slew of rave reviews as well as chalked up a bevy of museum sales in just days. "The fact that major museums like the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City and the Brooklyn Museum already snapped up Castle's newest masterpieces in fiberglass, stack laminated wood and metal, some of which are at SOFA CHICAGO, demonstrates the powerful allure of Wendell's work as well as the entire field of design, which SOFA has played a pivotal role in pioneering," says Mark Lyman, founder and director of the SOFA Fairs. "Going back over a decade, Wendell and his extraordinary creations have been a mainstay of our SOFA CHICAGO; but today collectors and enthusiasts for his work are part of a



Wendell Castle,  
*Osbourne Coffee Table*, 2008  
Barry Friedman Ltd, New York, NY

far larger, far finer art world," he says.



Jun Kaneko  
*Untitled Dango (08-01-02)*, 2008  
 Sherry Leedy Contemporary  
 Art

**JUN KANEKO AT SHERRY LEEDY CONTEMPORARY ART,  
 KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Just like the contemporary art world's superstars, SOFA artist Jun Kaneko claims pivotal attention internationally on a number of different fronts. Right now his massive ceramic works are installed along Park Avenue in Manhattan as part of the New York City public art program. "That kind of exposure puts Kaneko in the same leagues as Jean Dubuffet, Keith Haring and Tom Otterness, each of whom has achieved placement for their sculptures in that same spot," says Kaneko dealer Sherry Leedy. Another sign of Kaneko's prowess in the arts world: a production of his just designed *Madame Butterfly* is touring the US and Canada while the Philadelphia Opera Company just debuted his refreshingly designed production of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*. Plus, Kaneko has completed more than 30 public art commissions in this country as well as Japan. No wonder, Kaneko has been awarded honorary Doctorates from the Royal College of Art in London, University of Nebraska, and the Massachusetts College of Art & Design. Even though Kaneko constantly challenges restrictions of size in ceramics, his domestically scaled work is front and center at SOFA CHICAGO. With top tier collectors like textile legend Jack Lenor Larsen owning more than one Kaneko, a slew of new collectors are bound to pounce on the artist's newest work.

**LUCIE RIE AND HANS COPER AT GALERIE BESSON,  
 LONDON**

Considered the Picasso and Rothko of the contemporary decorative arts world, British ceramics artists Dame Lucie Rie (1902-1995) and Hans Coper (1920-1981) pioneered remarkably new interpretations of classic forms, complex experimental glazes and inventive kiln processes while attracting generations of new collectors to this day. In paying tribute to those masters of artistry, the London Galerie Besson is featuring rarities by both Rie and Coper while marking their London gallery's 20th anniversary. "Collectors primarily interested in contemporary paintings and sculpture are now keen to add works by these two great ceramic artists to their collections. I have always believed that Lucie and Hans belong to the Fine Arts and I am happy that this is now taken for granted," says dealer Anita Besson. She reports these new clients are fascinated by Coper's Cycladic forms and Rie's spare vessels with ground breaking golden manganese glazes. An added bonus is that Rie was just feted with her first retrospective in France at the prestigious Musée de Céramique de Sèvres and both artists can be found in dozens museums beginning with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in this country.



Lucie Rie,  
*Large White Bottle*, 1989  
 Galerie Besson



Jin-Sook So  
*Steel Mesh, Untitled*, 2007 (detail)  
 browngrotta arts

**JIN-SOOK SO AT BROWNGROTTA ARTS,  
 WILTON, CONN.**

Mega modern and contemporary art collectors, the very ones that make Art Basel a mandatory stop on their shopping circuits, have been snaring the alluring work of Korean born artist Jin-Sook So. "They're not textile specific but clients with major holdings of modern sculpture and I have yet to sell her work of stitched wire mesh which she electroplates with silver and 28 karat gold to a minor collector," says dealer Tom Grotta. So far, clients have included museum board members, hedge funders, architects and designers. When Grotta produced a catalogue devoted to her complex work, he sold more examples and received more commissions from that slender volume than any catalogue he has ever produced. "With Jin-Sook, it's not about the material; it's about the art," says Grotta, who

sponsored the artist for her stay in this country. Another artist to spot with Grotta is Chang Yeonsoon, who was just named Korea's Artist of the Year.

**DALE CHIHULY, HOLSTEN GALLERIES,  
STOCKBRIDGE, MASS.**

Can't make it to San Francisco to catch the "Chihuly at the de Young" museum exhibition where the lines are around the block? Then head to Holsten Galleries for museum class examples by that maestro of color, line and form. Among the Chihuly creations on view are his highly complex chandeliers comprised of hundreds of intricately twisting, blown glass components. The artist is revered for establishing blown glass as the basis for both installation and environmental art and his co-founding the Pilchuck School in Washington State, which has trained generations of his glass artists. The work of Chihuly is in the permanent collections of over 200 museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney as well as museums abroad such as the Louvre. What's new is that despite a rumbling recession, the market for Chihuly chandeliers like the Cranberry and Ice chandelier, which is seven feet tall and featured at SOFA CHICAGO is booming. "The clientele for Chihuly has grown exponentially and internationally," says Jim Schantz, Holsten Galleries art director, who recently sold a Chihuly chandelier to the New Britain Museum. Founded 30 years ago, Holsten is at the forefront of studio glass and also represents Lino Tagliapietra.



Dale Chihuly  
*Sapphire and Goldleaf Chandelier (detail)*, 2008  
Holsten Galleries



Joseph Walsh  
National Craft Gallery of Ireland

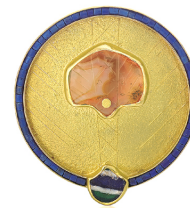
**JOSEPH WALSH AT NATIONAL CRAFT GALLERY  
IRELAND**

Millenium Park chairman John Bryan's cultural achievements include building his own formidable private museum of prize 19th, 20th and 21st century decorative arts and design along with heading up the Art Institute of Chicago trustees. In his off hours, Bryan shops SOFA CHICAGO religiously and especially zeroes in on the artistry of Joseph Walsh represented by the National Craft Gallery Ireland. Walsh is hardly a routine furniture designer and his newest work Prism illustrates his highly complex approach to design. Elements of engineering like weight displacement and compression of joints are integral to his work. Of bleached ash with walnut legs, the desk is highlighted by red dye in the seams. "Overall the proportion, shape, form and negative space of Prism all combine to create a piece of aesthetic intrigue and significant structural strength," says Walsh, whose clientele includes the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin Embassy of Japan and a host of global corporations. With that kind of attention to structure and detail, Walsh gives an entire new

definition to bespoke furniture.

**EUROPEAN GOLDSMITHS AT DAVID COLLECTION AND AARON FABER,  
NEW YORK**

Art world celebs like Pritzker Award winning architect Zaha Hadid sport artist made jewelry, and hipster contemporary art dealers like Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn also cherish such baubles created by SOFA CHICAGO artists. But to the general public and even fashionistas, prized studio jewelry has always been an insider secret. An entire realm of that artistry internationally is showcased at SOFA CHICAGO this November and many of the artist/jewelers on display are represented in major museums. Consider the work of Mari Ishikawa whose work is headlined in museums in Tokyo, Munich and Houston and France, too. She casts actual foliage and weaves intricate gold net herself to create dazzling brooches. Another jeweler to watch is German Isolde Baumhackl-Oswald with the Santa Fe Patina Gallery. She works in oxidized silver and 22K gold fused to silver while sparking her brooches with coral. The more audacious European Union Members of Parliament, the Prince of Lichtenstein and flocks of socialites and art collectors have snapped up Baumhackl-Oswald's jewelry. Another jeweler to hit is Michael Zobel at Aaron Faber gallery, which is spotlighting the European artist with a special exhibition, which will be featured in the limited edition book *From A to Z, Atelier Zobel*. That European goldsmith mixes Roman glass and Egyptian amulets for his distinctive artistry. With the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Arts and Design adding jewelry curators to their staffs, studio jewelry is about to have its day. Insiders are bound to make SOFA private dealer Donna Schneier a must visit. She just gifted her collection to the prestigious Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Michael Zobel,  
Aaron Faber Gallery



Mari Ishikawa,  
The David Collection

**ASIAN FUSION: YOICHI OHIRA, LORETTA YANG AND MORE**

With the spotlight on the Olympics in Beijing and the growing interest in contemporary Chinese art, more attention than ever is devoted to Asian contemporary ceramics, glass and textiles, say dealers, curators and collectors. Their work runs the gamut in both technique and artistry. At the Manhattan Barry Friedman, Ltd. gallery, the Japanese born, Venice based glass Yoichi Ohira constantly pioneers new techniques based on centuries old glass traditions. His Finestre series are hand blown objects with miniscule granular inserts and later carved and hand polished. Each object has a crystal like window giving a kaleidoscopic view on to an interior space chock full of brilliant Murano glass canes. Then the Cristallo vases are really vessels within vessels of hand blown glass canes with the surface exquisitely carved, incised and beaten. With the Chicago Marx-Saunders Gallery, Taiwanese film star Loretta Yang has tackled glass for over two decades and mastered casting pate de verre in crystal while inspired by Chinese and Buddhist culture. Today her work is represented in the permanent collections world wide from London's V&A Museum to Beijing's Palace Museum. These artists are attracting new collectors. "I am seeing more traditional and medium specific collectors branch out and take on artists like Higashida Shigemasa whose ceramic vessels are richly laden with cobalt blue glazes," says Beatrice Chang who heads up the Manhattan based Dai Ichi Arts, Ltd.



Yoichi Ohira  
Barry Friedman Ltd



Tom Patti  
*Solarized Blue with Red Echo*, 1989-90  
Wexler Gallery

**ICONIC GLASS BY MASTERS OF ARTISTRY AT WEXLER GALLERY, PHILADELPHIA**

Scads of modern and contemporary paintings come to market regularly but period glass and ceramics masterworks are real rarities, say dealers, curators and collectors alike. To tempt collectors, Philadelphia dealer Lewis Wexler is bringing two important private collections to SOFA. Examples by Howard Ben Tre, Jose Chardiet and Dan Dailey abound. "Generally as the great works get gifted to museums and others are locked up in private collections, there's very little exceptional material from the 1980s on the market," says dealer Lewis Wexler. What's most in demand is highly architectonic and sculptural glass as increasing numbers of collectors are veering towards acquiring contemporary design and with many living in Modernist and contemporary homes. Wexler cites Tom Patti's

*Solarized Blue with Red Echo*, dating from 1989-90 as emblematic of what's highly sought.

SOFA CHICAGO is sponsored in part by **Chubb Personal Insurance**, one of the world's preeminent insurers of fine homes, art and antiques and other possessions. In addition **Collectify**, a leader in industry-standard collections management and cataloguing software returns as a sponsor. [More information on Chubb and Collectify is available in our archives.](#)

The first SOFA CHICAGO Fair debuted at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers in 1994, with 58 exhibitors and 14,000 people attending. In 1995, SOFA CHICAGO moved to Festival Hall at Chicago's historic Navy Pier. Since then, this pioneering fair has grown considerably with now close to 100 galleries and attendance has jumped over 100 percent. A record 35,000 people attended SOFA CHICAGO in 2007 and the fair was marked by brisk sales by museums, art advisors, interior designers and architects as well as both seasoned and new collectors.

SOFA CHICAGO 2008 will be presented in Navy Pier's Festival Hall, 600 E. Grand Ave., Nov. 7-9. Tickets for the Opening Night Gala Preview on Thursday, Nov. 6 from 7 to 9 pm are \$50. Fair hours are as follows: Friday, Nov. 7 and Saturday, Nov. 8 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 9 from noon to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for a single day of general admission and \$25 for a three-day pass. Student, senior and group tickets are available for discounted prices. Catalogs are \$15. For general information, visit [sofaexpo.com](http://sofaexpo.com); call 800-563-SOFA (7632) or 773-506-8860; or email [info@sofaexpo.com](mailto:info@sofaexpo.com). Group discounts are available by telephoning GroupTix at 877-4-GRP-TIX (877-447-7849). Additional information as well as images from the fair last year and art works to be featured at the upcoming fair can be viewed at [sofaexpo.com](http://sofaexpo.com).



Guests at the Opening Night Preview