

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Inquiries:

Marilyn White Public Relations
Marilyn White: (973) 783-3649
MWhitePR@aol.com

Eve McGrath: (203) 377-1203
gmcgrathpr@charter.net

UNRIVALLED CUTTING-EDGE CONTEMPORARY DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

**11TH ANNUAL SCULPTURE OBJECTS & FUNCTIONAL ART FAIR:
SOFA NEW YORK
MAY 29 – JUNE 1, 2008
PARK AVENUE ARMORY, 67th and Park Avenue**

When **SOFA NEW YORK** opens its doors on May 29 to June 1, at the Park Avenue Armory between 66th and 67th Streets, an unrivalled international assemblage of one-of-a-kind contemporary decorative arts, design and jewelry will be on view. Here are some of the outstanding highlights from the fair:



Hervé Wahlen
Bis, 2006
Barry Friedman Ltd., New York, NY

HERVÉ WAHLEN AT BARRY FRIEDMAN LTD., NEW YORK

Billionaire Bill Gates is among the noted collectors taking on the distinctive hand-hammered metal sculpture of Hervé Wahlen. “Collectors, especially those with cutting-edge painting and sculpture, are drawn to the enormous tension between surfaces running from a rich copper patina to the textured gold leaf interiors as well as the precarious appearing stance of Wahlen’s work,” says Friedman. But Wahlen’s sculptural objects are also marked by surprisingly masterful conceits. Secret compartments, doors and lids mark each work. Wahlen’s sculpture can be found at the Fond National d’Art Contemporain in Paris as well as numerous collections in both Europe and the U.S. In addition, Friedman represents SOFA artist Wendell Castle whose art/design furniture is sought by collectors here and in Europe as well as Asia.

DALE CHIHULY AT DONNA SCHNEIER, NEW YORK

Rarities by Modern masters are also front and center at SOFA with private dealer **Donna Schneier** featuring **Dale Chihuly’s** huge 1988 *Macchia* in a palette of flaming vermilion and cobalt blue descending in clouds of white. “Dale’s early work when he first fully developed his own groundbreaking techniques, palette and vision rarely comes to market,” says Schneier. She has witnessed prices for his work dating from the early 80s jump more than ten times. “These days, the value of early pieces are bound to increase considerably over time as more collectors with fine arts move into this field,” says Schneier. She is now seeing major contemporary art collectors seeking examples by the founding fathers of studio glass, wood, fiber and metal. While primarily dealing in that classic material, Schneier routinely racks up sales to museums including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and a host of other institutions. Further proof of her renown by the fine arts institution community, Schneier’s contemporary art jewelry collection is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Dale Chihuly
Macchia, 1988
Donna Schneier Fine Arts, Palm Beach, FL

HIROSHI SUZUKI, CLARE BECK AT ADRIAN SASSOON, LONDON

Suzuki claims his preeminent position on the global radar screen as silversmith/goldsmith extraordinaire as more than a dozen museums have acquired his work in a scant three years alone. His museum roster list includes Museum of Fine Arts Houston and the Cambridge University Fitzwilliam Museum, not to mention a slew of prestigious fine art institutions in both France and Australia. Leading collectors include no less than the Duke of Devonshire, whose ancestral home Chatsworth is filled with masterpieces from the 17th century on. "What makes Hiroshi's vessels so extraordinary is that each is hand hammered sometimes requiring dozens and dozens of different sized and shaped implements from a single flat sheet of silver or gold," says dealer Clare Beck who works with London dealer Adrian Sassoon, a former Getty Museum curator. "The delicacy of these art objects is unsurpassed and masks a complexity of skills," says Beck.



Hiroshi Suzuki
Aqua-Poesy XI Kin, 2008
Clare Beck at Adrian Sassoon,
London, UK



Fernando Casasempere
Joanna Bird Pottery,
London, UK

FERNANDO CASASEMPERE AT JOANNA BIRD POTTERY, LONDON

This Chilean sculptor epitomizes the tremendous global artistic achievement at SOFA. He has a major installation at the Economist Plaza in tony St. James, London, a huge eight-piece sculpture at Jerwood Sculpture Park as well as a flock of his creations held by museums and major corporate art collections like Coca-Cola and Shell. "Some collectors have my work right alongside paintings and sculpture as important as Degas, Warhol, and Louise Bourgeois," says Casasempere, whose sculptures can be found in homes from here to Paris, Dubai and Singapore, to name but a few. Driving those collectors is Casasempere's commitment to the environment. He recycles otherwise totally thrown away materials into his clay. "I find collectors feel more inclined to invest in a work because of the philosophy behind it," says Casasempere, who resides in England.

DAN JOCZ AT ORNAMENTUM GALLERY, HUDSON, NEW YORK

Edgy, conceptual jewelry by top flight artists is front and center at SOFA NEW YORK and **Dan Jocz**, with **Ornamentum Gallery** of Hudson, New York is considered the leading figure in that genre. Jocz work uses metal motorcycle parts to create necklaces of enormous scale inspired by Elizabethan collars. His work can be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Renwick Gallery and the National Gallery of Scotland. Prices run from \$25,000-\$30,000.



Dan Jocz *Fire Water Necklace*, 2007
Ornamentum Gallery, Hudson, NY



William Hunter
Reflections Over Point Vicente, 2007
del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

WILLIAM HUNTER AT DEL MANO GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

Wooden vessels in haute museums? You bet. Hands down. California artist **William Hunter's** intricately fluted vessels almost akin in virtuosity to 16th and 17th century ivory objects turned out by European nobility, win that distinction as his work is in major museums such as the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Now a 35-year retrospective of Hunter's work is touring the museum circuit. Plus, his vessels, some of precious macassar ebony, which can take months to complete a single one, are sought by entire new realms of collectors. "We joke about transplants meaning collectors from other fields but they are a very real and a very important group, especially those coming from contemporary art to take on wood and that's totally new," says Ray Leier, director of the Los Angeles **del Mano Gallery**. In addition, that gallery is witnessing more clients who are under 40 captivated by Hunter's techniques and mathematical exactitude. "They're realizing that the nothing takes the place of the purity of wood." With investment bankers, film producers and Tinsel Town stars like Whoopi Goldberg collecting wood, more are certain to follow.

MIHARA KEN AT JOAN B MIRVISS LTD, NEW YORK

New technologies and new twists of artistry to the most ancient of art forms, Japanese ceramics, which originated 16,000 years ago, prevail at SOFA. The latest sea change in Japanese ceramics marks the work of artist **Mihara Ken** with Manhattan dealer **Joan Mirviss**. "Mihara pioneered an entire new method of firing that reveals a remarkable range of subtle tones from muted grays to luminescent lavender and deep purple as well as textures," says Mirviss, who has sold to more than 40 museums internationally including the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mihara high fires his pots, which he encases in fire resistant liquid clay, to 1200 Celsius for as long as 40 hours multiple times. "No other artist working today utilizes his method," says Mirviss. Further testament to Mihara's distinctive creativity, he has received countless national awards in Japan and his prices have shot up more than 50 percent over a mere two years. This New York dealer will have a special in booth exhibition at SOFA NEW YORK of more than 20 of the artist's latest works priced from \$3,500-\$12,000. "Because of his relatively young age, Mihara's stoneware is still remarkably affordable," says Mirviss. With those price points and his spare aesthetic in tune with today's minimalist aesthetic, Mihara has got to be among the best buys in the entire New York art world.



Mihara Ken
Kigen, 2007
Joan B. Mirviss Ltd., New York, NY

LINO TAGLIAPIETRA AT HELLER GALLERY, NEW YORK

An entire new series of works by the all time master of studio art glass **Lino Tagliapietra**, who taught no less than Dale Chihuly, can be found with the Tribeca-based **Heller Gallery**. "With the Tacoma, Washington Museum of Glass now featuring a Lino retrospective, we're offering his latest work to art curators, advisors and collectors at SOFA," says Douglas Heller. At 74 years of age, Tagliapietra is at the height of his creative powers and is producing more daring and accomplished works than artists half his age. His prices continue to rise each year and his large installation pieces command six figure prices. His recent commissions include a 20 foot wide, nine boat installation titled *Endeavor* installed in the conference room at #5 World Trade Center where Larry Silverstein meets with the architects designing the new World Trade Center complex, reports Heller. Another major commission comprised of more than 40 elements from the *Masai* series is currently in the works for a private home in California.



Lino Tagliapietra
Niomea, 2008
Heller Gallery, New York, NY

TANIOKA AIKO AT TAI GALLERY, SANTA FE

Artists working in both materials and an aesthetic vocabulary entirely new to this country also fill the SOFA fair floor. Case in point: the exotic world of art basketry from Japan. "Now Japanese female artists like **Tanioka Aiko** are reaching unparalleled levels of accomplishment in a field traditionally dominated by men," says Rob Coffland of the Santa Fe-based **TAI Gallery**. Coffland should know; he pioneered the entire field and has placed baskets in dozens of museums internationally. Plus, his client roster now includes designers and architects with diversely different styles from tradition bound Betty Sherrill, chairman of the legendary Mcmillen Inc. firm, to the innovative Stephen Miller Siegel who just completed the London offices and jet of Stephen Schwarzman, Blackrock Group CEO. To some degree, artists like Aiko whose work is in the permanent collection of the San Francisco Asian Art Museum are similar to the contemporary world's select hipster mid career artists: brilliant mastery of medium, placement in museums but affordable price points. Aiko's 2007 *Wind Rustling A Bamboo Forest* is priced at \$19,500 with eco bonus points, to boot. Unlike a host of other arts, basketry is totally green.



Tanioka Aiko
"Play of Light", 2004
Represented by TAI Gallery



Norma Minkowitz
browngrotta arts, Wilton, CT

NORMA MINKOWITZ AT browngrotta arts, WILTON CT

While Textiles arts are generally perceived as flat, two dimensional forms artist **Norma Minkowitz** elevates her distinctive creations into the fine arts world. Innovative, sculptural, highly tactile yet abstract in appearance is her latest work where she begins by crocheting waxed linen threads, then both gilds and paints her work and sometimes even injects sinuous tree branches. "Major art collectors with have long been drawn to Minkowitz and they recognize her as a sculptor," says Rhonda Brown who heads up the Connecticut **browngrotta arts** gallery with her husband Tom Grotta. That crossover nature of her work explains why she has been heralded in *The New York Times*, *ArtNews* and host of other major art publications. No less than Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Jane Adlin wrote "The psychological complexities of (Minkowitz's) work, the observation of human behavior and the metaphorical containment, fuse into the beautiful forms she creates, making some of the most important sculptures of our time." That accolade explains why Minkowitz is represented in work is in numerous collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, to name but a few.

SOFA NEW YORK 2008 will be presented May 29 - June 1 at the Park Avenue Armory, Park Ave. at 67th. **Opening Night Preview, Wednesday, May 28:** 5:30 - 9 pm, tickets \$100.00 available online or at the door. Exposition hours are Thursday & Friday, May 29 - 30: 11 am - 8 pm; Saturday, May 31: 11 am - 7 pm; Sunday, June 1: Noon - 6 pm. Tickets are \$25 for a single day of general admission and \$40 for a three-day pass; both include catalog, and will be available on-line. Student, senior and group tickets are available for discounted prices.

For general information, visit sofaexpo.com; call 800-563-SOFA (7632) or 773-506-8860; or email info@sofaexpo.com.

Downloadable high-resolution press images are available in the [Press Room](#) at www.sofaexpo.com.

###

