KOIE Ryoji was born in Tokoname City, Aichi Prefecture, an area renowned since ancient times as a center for the production of various types of pottery. Today, it is also famous for the mass-production of tiles and clay pipes. Born in 1938, KOIE Ryoji started work at a local tile factory immediately after graduating from high school and began producing his own pottery from the age of twenty. One of the most innovative and dramatic artists active today, his work has made him a world leader in the ceramics field, but he continues to live close to nature in the mountains where he excavates his own clay.

‘Each work represents a message and its clay incorporates the time and place in which it was created.’ His works, such as the one in which he expressed his anger against war and atomic weapons, inscribing it with the message, ‘No more Hiroshima, Nagasaki’, ‘No more Chernobyl’, created a sensation. His activities coincided with those of ‘Sodeisha’, a group of avant-garde, ceramic artists founded in 1948 by YAGI Kazuo, SUZUKI Osamu, etc., during the aftermath of the Second World War, but he has never belonged to any group himself, his unrestrained ideas smashing all boundaries and allowing him to establish a unique ‘KOIE style’ that combines past and future. Never having had a teacher or putting on airs as an artist, he has developed his work in his own individual way. Despite this, his studio acts as a congregation spot for friends and local children who like to stop by to play. The happiness, sadness, pleasure and pain that stems from interpersonal relationships serves to invigorate his clay on a daily basis.
He says, ‘I want my work to spread like pollen from a flower’ and like pollen he travels widely to demonstrate his work, having fired pots in America, the Britain, Italy, Mexico, South Korea and many other places, never ceasing to amaze the people who see them. When he talks to the clay, it laughs and answers him. The clay delights in his freedom and warmth and replies with a laugh. His work is wild yet intellectual, aggressive yet gentle, it is formed from damp clay that is then enveloped in flames to become KOIE himself. The current New York exhibition will feature forty of his works: a huge jar resembling Jupiter, pulled down from space, a vase that appears to have been plucked from nature, and tea bowls and sake cups that are ‘gentle to the hand and lip’, works that dance and laugh as they await their turn.

Awards:
- 3rd Prize, Contemporary Japanese Ceramics Exhibition (1962)
- Point and Line accepted, Asahi Ceramic Art Exhibition (1963-69)
- Japanese Contemporary Craft Art Exhibition (1963-64)
- Grand Prix, 3rd Biannual International Ceramics Exhibition, Vallauris, France (1971)
- The 3rd Oribe Award (2001)
- The Chunichi Cultural Award (2005)
- Gold Prize, The Japan Ceramic Society Award (2008)

Public Collections:
- Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo
- The Museum of Fine Art, Gifu
- National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
- National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- Tokoname Municipal Hall, Aichi
- The Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art
- Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, Yamaguchi
- Seoul Museum of Art, Korea
- Metropolitan Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
- Kyungsung University Museum, Busan, Korea
- Museo de Ar Art Moderno, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- National Gallery of Victoria, Australia

Asia Week Business Hours (March 15th – 26th): Monday – Saturday 10am – 6pm