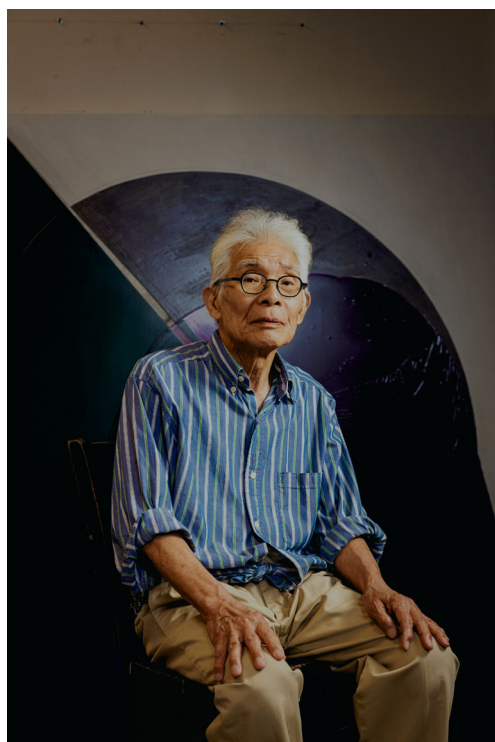


Press Release

MATSUTANI

Hauser & Wirth Paris
6 April – 18 May 2024



Takesada Matsutani, the Ōsaka-born artist who has lived and worked in Paris for the past 60 years, has developed a unique visual language of form and material over five decades, and at the age of 87 still maintains an energetic daily studio practice. This exhibition, organized with Olivier Renaud-Clement, features a selection of new works in direct response to the space, a highlight of which includes a major site-specific window installation, alongside rare historic pieces by the artist from his time in the Gutai group, showcasing the breadth of his career and development of his masterful artistic practice. This show follows on from the artist's first major retrospective in France at the Centre Pompidou in 2019 and is in anticipation of Matsutani's solo exhibition at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery from 3 October – 17 December 2024.

About the Exhibition

From the early 1960s until the 1970s, Matsutani was a key member of the influential post-war Japanese art collective, the Gutai Art Association. As part of the group, Matsutani experimented with vinyl glue by manipulating the substance to create bulbous and sensuous forms reminiscent of human curves and features. By applying glue to the canvas, letting it partially dry to form a skin and then inflating it with his own breath using a straw or hairdryers and fans, Matsutani brings the material to life. In some works, he leaves the swollen convex shapes, while in others he allows the glue to rupture and wrinkle, exploring the wide range of possible forms and tactile qualities of the substance. Exploring new pictorial possibilities at the intersection with sculpture, the artist explains, 'The idea was something three dimensional, on the canvas. An organic kind of shape.'

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After the Gutai group disbanded in 1972, Matsutani eased into a radical yet consistent new body of work, informed by his experience at Stanley William Hayter's renowned printmaking studio, Atelier 17. Faithful to his Gutai roots, he strove to identify and convey the essential character of vinyl glue with graphite, which were to become his signature materials. The artist began creating works composed of vast expanses of metallic black graphite on mural-size sheets of paper built up with painstaking individual strokes, the ritualized manner presenting a time-based record of his gestures. On display is a work from the artist's Wave series from the late 1990s, in which the artist's application of layers of graphite enabled him to experiment with the material's the essential character and expressive possibilities. Matsutani continues to use this technique in his daily studio practice, exemplified in new works on show including 'Knoll' (2023) and 'Purple 8-4-2023' (2023), employing deep and dark greens and purples in a departure from his monochromatic color palette.

Matsutani has created a site-specific installation in direct dialogue with the windows of the ground floor gallery space, in which the large-scale constructed canvas creates a delicate interplay with the light coming in. Through his ongoing series of installations, Matsutani has remained faithful to his past, while also revisiting his country's traditions and finding a radical way to break with artistic conventions.

Matsutani's early experimentation is exemplified in two rare works made by the artist in 1965, 'Work 65-W' and 'Work 65-D,' where tactile forms on the painterly surface evoke deflated balloons as well as bodily associations. 'Plexiglas Box' (1966) builds on this technique, not on canvas as we have come to expect, but in three dimensions, a unique example of his experimentations with object-based sculpture. In this work, the artist attached a bulbous form to five interior sides of the clear cube, letting the delicate swollen glue compress and combine in the center. Contained within Plexiglas, Matsutani's skin-like round bulges brings together a play of opposites—hard and soft, transparent and opaque, organic and geometric.

Matsutani has continued to be inspired by the tactility of vinyl glue; though, today, his method places more emphasis on the meditative and methodical. Feeling a profound affinity with Zen philosophy, Matsutani attempts to stop time, to materialize a suspended moment and to acknowledge the repetition and fluidity of everyday life through his multifaceted practice. These ideas are personified in the new work 'Suspend' (2023), which sees one of the artist's distinctive amorphous vinyl bubble forms hanging from a cord on the canvas, held up by a wooden mechanism. In combining this continuous introspection with a fearless experimentation, Matsutani transgresses the very idea of painting.

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A commissioned performance in response to Matsutani's exhibition by dancer and choreographer, Kenta Kojiri, will be staged at the gallery twice on 20 April 2024. For further details and RSVP please contact paris@hauserwirth.com

Prix Matsutani

The Prix Matsutani, an initiative from the SHŌEN endowment fund, was founded in 2016 by artists Takesada Matsutani and Kate Van Houten with a goal of supporting artists and their work. The winner of the Matsutani Prize 2023 is Samta Benyahia, who was awarded 15,000€, alongside Claudie Titty Dimbeng who was awarded the Prix d'Achat, a further acquisition prize of 5,000€. Their work will be displayed at L'Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA) alongside other nominated artists including Abed Al Kadiri, Amie Barouh, Louisa Marajo and Gabriel Moraes Aquino, chosen by Alicia Knock, chief curator in the Contemporary Creation and Prospective Department at Centre Pompidou, from 7 March – 18 May 2024. Previous curators of the prize include Christine Macel, Chief Curator at Centre Pompidou and Caroline Bourgeois, Curator and Conservator, Pinault Collection and previous winners include Ser Serpans and Nathanaëlle Herbelin.

Press contacts:

Alice Haguenauer
Hauser & Wirth
alicehaguenauer@hauserwirth.com
+44 7880 421823

Adèle Godet
IC Insight Communications
adele@insightcommunications.cc
+33 7 82 26 21 61

Hauser & Wirth Paris

26 bis rue François 1er
75008 Paris

Opening hours:
Tuesday to Saturday
10 am – 6 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy:

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Takesada Matsutani
Knoll
2023
Graphite pencil, vinyl adhesive, acrylic on canvas
162 x 130 x 6 cm / 63 3/4 x 51 1/8 x 2 3/8 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Takesada Matsutani in his studio in Paris,
photographed on 5 July 2023 by Laura
Stevens for Ursula Magazine

Takesada Matsutani
Suspend
2023
Vinyl adhesive, graphite pencil, acrylic, wood,
cord on canvas
146 x 114 x 11 cm / 57 1/2 x 44 7/8 x 4 3/8 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Takesada Matsutani
Purple 8-4-2023
2023
Vinyl adhesive, graphite pencil, acrylic on
canvas
145 x 102.5 cm / 57 1/8 x 40 3/8 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Takesada Matsutani
Object-Box / Plexiglas Box
1966
Vinyl adhesive and plexiglas
85 x 85 x 85 cm / 33 1/2 x 33 1/2 x 33 1/2 in
Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography
Zürich

Takesada Matsutani
Circle.1
2024
Vinyl adhesive, graphite pencil, acrylic on canvas
Diameter: 184.5 cm / 72 5/8 in
Photo: Nicolas Brasseur