

Naofumi Maruyama *Lascaux and Weather*

Sat., July 7 - Fri., Aug. 10, 2018



Naofumi MARUYAMA, *Waterfront Scenery* (201809), 2018, acrylic on cotton, 90x145.7cm

Do the landscapes that I see actually exist in the way that I see them?

The things that I am looking are conveyed by way of the humidity that exists between me and the subject, the smell of the place, and the sounds that I hear there. This situation is unstable and reminiscent of translucent jelly.

I am not talking about the state of my own perceptions. I am talking about every type of phenomenon in life. The question is, when we perceive a given subject, how much of what lies between us and the subject is related to our perception? This has nothing to do with arriving at a deeper understanding of the subject, nor is it related to any change in our mental state that occurs in the process of comprehending the subject. Rather, there is some kind of autonomous entity that dwells between us and the subject but is not reliant on either one.

This entity's constant fluctuations create a sense of anxiety while also containing a small amount of freedom and humor.

—Naofumi Maruyama

From Sat., July 7 to Fri., Aug. 10, it is with great pleasure that ShugoArts presents *Lascaux and Weather*, a solo exhibition of new works by Naofumi Maruyama.

Maruyama was born in Niigata Prefecture in 1964. In 1986, he moved his base of operations to Tokyo, and since the 1990s, he has remained at the forefront of the Japanese art world as one of the country's most important painters

Rather than approaching the “demise of painting” as a style, Maruyama says he is struck with a sense of urgency regarding the purported end of this art form in contemporary society. The title of this exhibition, *Lascaux and Weather*, also indicates the artist's awareness of issues related to the act of depiction as a whole. The exact purpose and motivation behind the Paleolithic wall paintings in the caves at Lascaux remain unclear. For the monochromatic works in this exhibition, Maruyama chose pigments made by the Lascaux corporation. His use of these readymade art materials bearing the emblematic name “Lascaux” unexpectedly creates a link between the Paleolithic era and the present day, and calls to mind the fundamental question of why people paint.

In an interview conducted with the artist prior to the exhibition, Maruyama gave the following answer to the question, “What does it mean to be a painter in an age when painting as an art form seems to be on the way out?”: “It is necessary to create a way of reading or interpreting painting. When times change, the way that we read painting must also change, and since we still don't really understand why people paint, I have the sense that there are still a multitude of options available.”



Naofumi MARUYAMA, *Waterfront Scenery* (201804), 2018, acrylic on cotton, 89.8 x 145.6 cm

Without preparing the surface of the canvas, Maruyama makes his works by permeating the well-wetted cotton with paint. The layer of water allows the pigments to spread out freely, bleeding, overcoming boundaries, and eventually becoming fixed to the canvas. To Maruyama, water is not a means of imbuing the work with chance, but rather a way of avoiding decisions – an ambiguous entity that is both freeing and limiting. Like the weather, water is something that constantly dwells between the subject and the object, and the artist and the canvas. Or like a given era or information, it is an important element that intermittently creates an environment or atmosphere. Thus, the technique of using water as a medium to make bleeding and blurring is closely linked to Maruyama's viewpoint and character as a painter.

This exhibition focuses primarily on *Waterfront Scenery* series, made with Lascaux's grey paint. We hope that you will take an interest in this highly ambitious exhibition of new work by Naofumi Maruyama, who has sustained an earnest approach to painting since his debut some 30 years ago. Also, in early July, please keep an eye out for a video interview with the artist that will be uploaded on the gallery's website.

Naofumi Maruyama was born in Niigata, Japan, in 1957. Lives and works in Tokyo. Started teaching at Musashino Art University since 2000, as a professor of department of painting.

Awards: The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists, 2008

Selected solo exhibitions: *FLOWING*, Wooson Gallery, Daegu, South Korea, 2017, *Is it possible to construct a dream to see at night?*, ShugoArts, Tokyo, 2013, *Transparent Footsteps*, ShugoArts, Tokyo, 2010, *the front in the back*, Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo, 2008

Selected group exhibitions: *Monet's Legacy*, Nagoya City Art Museum, Aichi / Yokohama Museum of Art, Kanagawa, 2018, *Ground α Collaborative Drawings*, NADiff Gallery, Tokyo, 2017, *GROUND2: Talking About Paintings, Talking About Seeing*, Musashino Art University Museum & Library Tokyo, 2016, *TAKAHASHI COLLECTION: Mirror Neuron*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, 2015, *Modern: Blossoming Garden - Oita World Museum*, Oita Prefectural Art Museum, Oita, 2015, *GROUND*, Satellite Gallery of Aichi University of the Arts, Aichi, 2014, *NEW PHASES in CONTEMPORARY PAINTING A Curator's Message 2012*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Hyogo, 2012, *To Wander a Garden*, Vangi Sculpture Garden Museum, Shizuoka, 2012, *Floating Boat*, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota, 2011, *Portrait Session*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, 2007, *Painting as Forest: Artist as Thinker*, Okazaki City Museum, Okazaki, 2007, *Berlin – Tokyo*, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, 2006, *The Elegance of Silence : Contemporary Art from East Asia*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2005, *HAPPINESS: A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR ART + LIFE*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2003, *Taipei Biennial: Great Theatre of the World*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, 2002

Selected public collections: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art (Kanazawa) , Museum of Contemporary Art (Tokyo) , Takamatsu City Museum of Art (Kagawa) , The National Museum of Art, Osaka, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum (Niigata) , Tokyo Station Gallery (Tokyo) , Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (Aichi)

Exhibition overview

Title: Lascaux and Weather

Artists: Naofumi Maruyama

Dates: Sat., July 7 - Fri., Aug. 10, 2018

Venue: ShugoArts | complex665 2F, 6-5-24, Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032

Opening hours: Tue-Sat 11am-7pm, closed on Sun, Mon and Public Holidays

Opening Party: Sat., July 7 , from 5pm

ShugoArts

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