I wonder where we are standing

My gaze is sucked into roads and puddles after rain

There I see trees, sky and the cityscape

Not shown are my feet

I wonder where I exist

The two parallel worlds

Kicking the water

Its surface starts to ripple, and the two worlds blend together

We are standing where those two meet

And then a painting comes to life

Naofumi MARUYAMA, August 2022
Like a landscape reflected on the surface of water, Naofumi Maruyama’s paintings keep creating ripples on the canvas. The viewpoint is not fixed, and the paintings spread out into the world outside the canvas as if blotting it out, connecting and disconnecting from the images that each viewer has for his paintings. Mountains blend with rivers, rivers blend with the sky, and they blend with us. There is another world, free from the world full of terminology.

Maruyama paints by spreading water on the canvas, allowing the canvas to absorb the paint through water. He says, "I work in a 'place' like a wetland," which allows the colors, shapes, and the artist’s purpose to change continuously during the process of painting. Through the medium of water, Maruyama has explored his interest while asking such questions as what kind of images can be cultivated in an unstable and fluid environment, and how they appear in an unstable and fluid reality.

While paintings have a material aspect, they are not static entities. As time and place change, so does the meaning. As a receptacle that accepts this freedom, Maruyama’s paintings, with their wobbling and elusive qualities, actually present excellent strength in addition to their flexibility. After exhibiting a group of works created exclusively with gray paint presented in 2018, this exhibition will once again demonstrate the appeal of diverse colors as well as a new group of works, including a large painting over three meters in length.
Naofumi MARUYAMA, *Kicking the Water (precisely for this reason)*, 2022

Drawings for painting at Maruyama's atelier

Top image: Naofumi MARUYAMA, *Kicking the Water (not only replacing)*, 2022.
Naofumi MARUYAMA  Kicking the Water
Dates: Saturday, September 24 - Saturday, November 5, 2022
Venue: ShugoArts
Hours: 12pm – 6pm, Closed on Sun, Mon and Public Holidays
Curated by Minako Ishii
*The opening reception will not be held this time. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have shortened our opening hours.

Naofumi MARUYAMA
Born in Niigata, Japan in 1964. Maruyama currently lives and works in Tokyo. He has become one of the most important painters in Japan since the 1990s. The artist incorporates the stain technique, a painting technique using cotton cloths soaked with water and acrylics, in order to depict his motifs which are so soft that they melt with time and place. His paintings are figurative yet abstract, ushering the viewers to a plateau where there is no boundary between a subject and an object; in other words, the viewers become part of his paintings. Maruyama’s painting practice is bolstered by his diligent, rational and sincere research and practice of “the possibility of the spaces that exist only inside paintings.” He has been a Professor in the Painting Department at the Musashino Art University since 2000. Maruyama received The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists in 2008.