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Fuji Television Network, Inc., Azabudai Hills Gallery, KOTARO NUKAGA

Press Release

A Bold Expression in Color!

An Exhibition of Tomokazu Matsuyama, the Contemporary Artist Captivating the World from New York
Azabudai Hills to Come Alive in Vibrant Color This Spring 2025



"Tomokazu Matsuyama: FIRST LAST"

March 8 (Sat) – May 11 (Sun), 2025 | Open Daily

Azabudai Hills Gallery (Garden Plaza A, MB Level, Azabudai Hills)

This spring 2025, the *Tomokazu Matsuyama Exhibition: FIRST LAST* will be held at Tokyo's new contemporary art destination, Azabudai Hills Gallery. This exhibition marks the artist's first large-scale solo show in Tokyo, showcasing Matsuyama's impressive works as he continues his global career from his New York base. Over the past quarter-century, Matsuyama has established himself as one of the next-generation artists gaining international attention in New York's contemporary art scene. The exhibition will feature around 40 of his works including 15 major pieces. A new large-scale series *First Last* is going to be presented to the public for the first time. Through vivid color and monumental scale, visitors to this exhibition will experience the global realities of contemporary society as seen through the lens of Matsuyama's unique identity.

New Series "First Last" (The Last Shall Be First, and the First Last)

As the title "First and Last" reads in English, this series reflects Tomokazu Matsuyama's long yet swift journey toward presenting his first major solo exhibition in Tokyo. At the same time, it conveys a thought-provoking message from Matsuyama, addressing the paradoxical nature of contemporary society, where balance is maintained through perpetual challenges—a society in which "the last shall be first, and the first last."

Born to Christian parents in the mountain town of Hida Takayama in Gifu, Matsuyama spent part of his youth in the United States before returning to Japan in his adolescence. Throughout his life, and even as he established his career as an artist in New York, he has consistently navigated the experience of being in the minority. Through his work, he continues to question the polarized, complex issues of today: political divides, economic inequality, social conflicts, the paradox of gender equality, media manipulation, and the proliferation of misinformation. Matsuyama asks, "What ultimately brings us fulfillment?" In this series, he reexamines the world through his distinctive background and perspective, informed by the challenges within American society, and seeks to foster new connections and empathy through art.

Exhibition Highlights

■ From the Work That Defined His Career to His Latest Creations – Follow Matsuyama's Journey Through 15 Works Making Their Japan Debut

Among the pieces on display is *《We Met Thru Match.com》*, a monumental painting spanning over six meters in width. Painted over months tirelessly before Matsuyama gained global attention, this work marked a turning point in his career. Additionally, this exhibition will feature 15 new and previously unseen works in Japan, including those first exhibited in Shanghai, Venice, and London, which were only accessible overseas until now. Altogether, approximately 40 of Matsuyama's masterpieces will be showcased, including grand-scale paintings and expansive three-dimensional installations, all brought together at Tokyo's Azabudai Hills Gallery.

■ Experience a Crossroads of Cultures within a Vivid Spectrum of Colors

One of the defining elements of Matsuyama's art is the brilliant color radiating from his paintings. Drawing from thousands of shades he has created himself, these colors harmonize on the canvas through a variety of techniques. Matsuyama's work brings together an array of cultural influences, traditions, religions, historical and modern elements, and even everyday objects and high culture. Each aspect is captured in rich hues, creating a vivid tapestry that reflects the rapidly shifting nature of contemporary society. Visitors are immersed in a world of color, where these diverse elements converge into a singular, compelling visual experience

■ Collaborations with Contemporary Creatives

For Matsuyama, who began his career in New York, connection with the creative community has always been a part of his everyday life. Through his interactions with creators across various fields, he has continually expanded his artistic expression. Always exploring how to capture and express both the everyday and the social within an artistic context, Matsuyama believes that these spontaneous dialogues with his contemporaries resonate with the spirit of the times. In the B1 level space of this exhibition, visitors will see a selection of collaborative works with like-minded creators.



Tomokazu Matsuyama 《We Met Thru Match.com》 2016 H254 x W610cm Acrylic and mixed media on canvas



Tomokazu Matsuyama 《Keep Fishin' For Twilight》 2017

H213.5 x W457.5 cm Acrylic and mixed media on canvas



Tomokazu Matsuyama 《Dancer》 2022

H339 x W360 x D359 cm Stainless Steel

About This Exhibition: A Message from the Artist

Having worked for over 20 years in the cultural crossroads of New York and shaped by my roots in both Japan and the United States, this exhibition in Tokyo holds deep personal significance for me. I believe there are unique insights we can share across countries, languages, cultures, and generations as we navigate this era together.

I hope visitors step into my world of artworks not only as observers but as participants and conversational partners, engaging directly with the pieces and finding their own connections.

Tomokazu Matsuyama



Photo : Lisa Kato

Contemporary Artist. Born in 1976 in Gifu, Japan, Matsuyama is currently based in Brooklyn, New York. His work spans painting, sculpture, and installation, organically blending and reimagining diverse elements—such as Asia and Europe, ancient and modern, figurative and abstract. His art reflects both his cross-cultural experiences and the evolving nature of contemporary society in our information-driven world. Major public art projects include the Bowery Mural (New York, USA, 2019), *Hanao* (JR Shinjuku Station East Square, Tokyo, 2020), and *Wheels of Fortune* (Meiji Shrine, Tokyo, 2020, part of the *Jingu Gaen Art Festival*).

Recent notable exhibitions include *Mythologiques* (Venice Biennale, 2024), *MATSUYAMA Tomokazu: Fictional Landscape* (Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art, 2023), and *MATSUYAMA Tomokazu: Fictional Landscape* (Shanghai Powerlong Museum, 2023). Matsuyama's work is also on view at Foundation Louis Vuitton in Paris through February 2025.

[Exhibition Overview]

Exhibition Title: Tomokazu Matsuyama FIRST LAST

Dates: March 8 (Sat) – May 11 (Sun), 2025 | Open Daily (as of today)

Venue: Azabudai Hills Gallery (Garden Plaza A, MB Level, Azabudai Hills)

Hours: Monday–Thursday, Sunday: 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Last Entry: 5:30 PM)

Friday, Saturday, and Days Before Holidays: 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM (Last Entry: 6:30 PM)

Ticket Information: To be announced on Exhibition's official website

Organizers: Fuji Television Network, Azabudai Hills Gallery, KOTARO NUKAGA

In Collaboration With: MATSUYAMA STUDIO

Special Sponsors: UNIMAT GROUP

Sponsors: Investment Property Consultants Inc., JINS HOLDINGS Inc, Nanzando Holdings, and Moonshot Inc.

Official Website: www.tomokazu-matsuyama-firstlast.jp



Social Media: Instagram: matsuyama_firstlast
X (formerly Twitter): @FIRSTLAST2025

Inquiries: Email: azabudaihillsgallery@mori.co.jp

Access: Directly connected to Exit 5 of Kamiyacho Station (Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line)

10-minute walk from Exit 2 of Roppongi-itchome Station (Tokyo Metro Namboku Line)

Press Inquiries for This Exhibition

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