

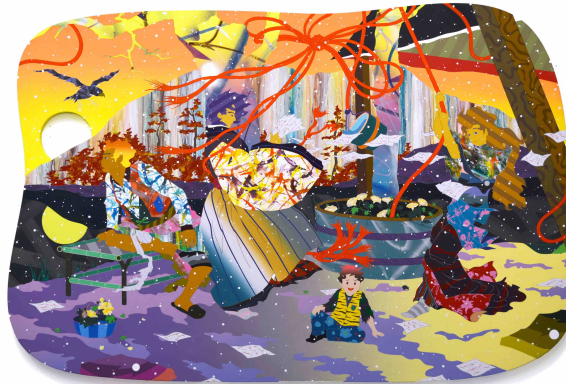
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TOMOKAZU MATSUYAMA: COME WITH ME

March 12–May 2, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, March 12, 6–8PM



Warm Water, 2015

February 26, 2015 – San Francisco, CA – Gallery Wendi Norris is pleased to present *Come With Me*, the gallery’s third solo exhibition with New York-based artist **Tomokazu Matsuyama**. The exhibition, which will be on view from March 12 through May 2, will debut a selection of new paintings and a series of steel sculptures rendered in monochromatic gold and silver. With this collection of works, Matsuyama traces the canon of the history of Western art while filtering it through his idiosyncratic imagery, where the flatness of Eastern painting meets the bold vigor of American pop.

Matsuyama’s work responds to his own bi-cultural experience of growing up between Japan and America by bringing together aspects of both Eastern and Western aesthetic systems. His practice repositions traditional icons within a broader global context in order to create a distinctive style that resists cultural categorization and embodies what the artist refers to as the “struggle of reckoning the familiar local with the familiar global.” By raising questions of national and individual identity through the formal qualities and subject matter of his paintings, Matsuyama examines the “natural chaos” of our social environments and challenges viewers to confront their own conceptions of cultural homogeneity.

Matsuyama is influenced by a variety of subjects, including Japanese art from the Edo and Meiji eras, classical Greek and Roman statuary, French Renaissance painting, post-war contemporary art, and the visual language of global, popular culture as embodied by mass-produced commodities. The new paintings presented in *Come With Me* feature the

expressionless figures, derived from traditional Japanese ink techniques, that are characteristic of the artist's past work, but also incorporate abstract imagery, as they are conceived as an homage to Abstract Expressionist painters of the New York School. In order to create an effect that mimics a gestural approach, the artist utilizes a painstakingly precise technique of layering paint in a very controlled manner. Matsuyama says, "While my work is about integration into a new world order of urban cosmopolitanism, what remains is the underlining of specific iconographies that inform my cultural and historical past as Japanese. The work is placed, somewhat non-sensibly, into another context, in which I am constantly trying to reinterpret what the image means within a shifting global dialogue."

The artist approaches his sculptural works in a painterly fashion, playing with color, shadow, and depth to achieve an effect that is simultaneously three-dimensional and flat, creating an immersive experience where viewers are invited to physically walk around and through the forms. In *Come With Me*, Matsuyama will present a series of three-dimensional works informed by diverse art historical references ranging from Italian Renaissance sculptures like Gian Lorenzo Bernini's bust of Louis XIV at Versailles to a Hadrianic copy of the iconic Greek *Crouching Venus* statue rendered by Doidalsas in the 3rd century BC, and from the French Neoclassical painting *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* by Jacques-Louis David to Edo drawings by the Japanese artist Katshushika Hokusai. Through this series of sculptures, Matsuyama also plays with image distortion; as the viewer approaches each piece from a different angle, the figurative essence of the piece begins to dissolve and morph into something different and less recognizable, presenting a completely new experience of the work.

ABOUT TOMOKAZU MATSUYAMA

Tomokazu Matsuyama lives and works in New York. He has exhibited at Harvard University's Reischauer Institute, the Asian American Arts Centre in New York, the Katzen Arts Center at American University, the Japan Society in New York, the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum in Arizona, the Aidekman Arts Center at Tufts, Marianne Boesky Gallery, and Gallery Wendi Norris, among other galleries and institutions. His work is in the permanent collections of Microsoft, Nike, The Standard Hotel, and The Cosmopolitan Hotel. In 2014, he was awarded the Harbour City Gallery Public Art Commission in Hong Kong.

ABOUT GALLERY WENDI NORRIS

Gallery Wendi Norris presents both a contemporary and Modern program that showcases a variety of artists working over many geographic locations and in a wide array of media. The gallery, located at 161 Jessie Street in downtown San Francisco, often shows two exhibitions simultaneously in order to encourage a re-contextualization of work by Modern artists while providing connections with the contemporary. Gallery Wendi Norris is active locally as well as internationally, working with individual collectors and museums alike in both primary and secondary markets. Founded with an emphasis on scholarship and education, the gallery produces researched exhibition catalogues, sponsors artist talks, hosts visiting academics, and engages in local public art projects, among other initiatives. Learn more at gallerywendinorris.com.