

Press Release 2024.09.19

## Takesada Matsutani



1. Two Forms 2022 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Benoît Fougeirol

**A major retrospective of Takesada Matsutani, presents his journey from Gutai to Paris, and from Paris to the world through over 200 exhibits.**

**Matsutani has been based in Paris for over half a century and his international reputation is on the rise. Including current works, this is a most comprehensive exhibition in Japan.**

Throughout a career spanning more than sixty years, Takesada Matsutani (b.1937) has created outstanding works in which the expression, texture, and presence of material objects are interwoven with the surge and flux of life. In the first half of the 1960s, Matsutani became renowned as a leading light of the second-generation Gutai\* artists for his relief works with organic forms created using vinyl adhesive, which was then a novel material. Matsutani moved to France in 1966. Based in Paris, he embarked on a new path in the field of printmaking, which was at the forefront of contemporary art at the time. From his exploration of space and time in two-dimensional media, he gradually shifted to hard-edged expression characterised by geometric and organic forms in vivid colours. In the late 1970s he returned to his creative roots, using familiar materials such as pencil and paper, establishing a form of expression that fills the paper with black pencilled strokes, engendering a representation of biological time. He also revisited organic forms made from vinyl adhesive, breaking new ground in his layered graphite stroke works. His output increasingly took the form of installations incorporating architecture, and at the same time, his performance elements embodied greater individuality. Even today, Matsutani continues to work vigorously in Paris, and he is enjoying international acclaim, exhibiting at the Venice Biennale in 2017 and a survey of his work at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2019. In recent years, instead of adhering to one technique or style, his work has become increasingly free and expansive, combining boldness with subtle delicacy. Takesada Matsutani's works come alive when his own body and all his senses meet his materials. The sheer diversity of his works never ceases speaking to those who view them.

Assembled are more than 200 pieces based on recent and extensive research for the exhibition to present Takesada Matsutani's entire oeuvre from his earliest to his latest works including documents, and video footage.

\*Gutai (the Gutai Art Association): A group of artists that led the postwar Japanese avant-garde art movement in the 1950s-1970s. Its forward-thinking spirit still attracts worldwide acclaim and attention today.

## Highlights

### 1. An unparalleled Takesada Matsutani exhibition

This long-awaited exhibition of Takesada Matsutani is the largest retrospective of his works to date in Japan, encompassing masterpieces from every stage of his career. This is the definitive Matsutani exhibition.

### 2. Unique and rare works

The exhibition includes rare works that have never been presented in public. They provide a fresh view of the artist that cannot be imagined from only his iconic pieces.

### 3. Matsutani today, seen through recent and latest works

This exhibition also gives a picture of Matsutani of today, his creativity that is increasingly free and expansive, combining boldness with subtle delicacy.

### 4. Unpublished sketchbooks reveal what lies behind his work

Through sketchbooks, production journals, drawings, the exhibition delves into the background behind Matsutani's work, shedding light on his interests at each stage of his career, as well as the consistent involvement that underpin his diverse practice.



Takasada Matsutani in his studio Paris, 27 January 2019  
2019 Photo: Michel Lunardelli

## Exhibition

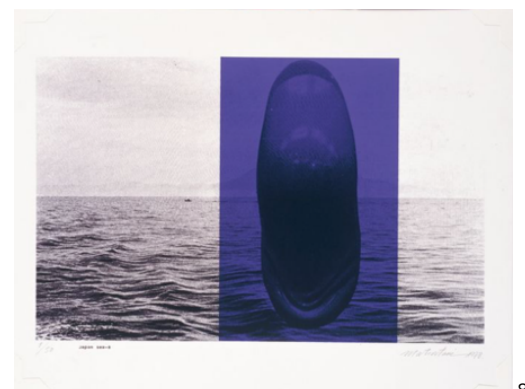
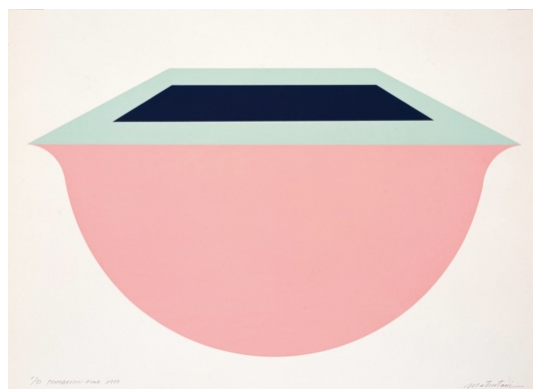
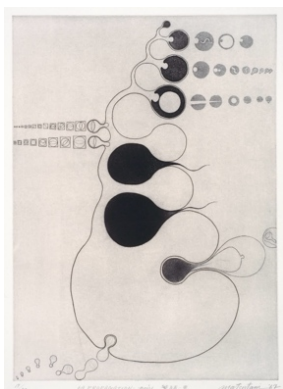
### 1. Beginnings to Gutai: New forms of expression using a novel material

Within the Gutai Art Association championed abstract art, such as was Matsutani's however, he did make sensual allusions and associations—that stood out as unique. He sought to create a form of expression derived from both form and material that speaks of sensuality, vitality, time, movement, and invisible forces. This was Matsutani's starting point, and it was a theme that he would continue to explore throughout his life, changing its shape little by little.



### 2. Early Paris period: Printmaking. Shift from exploration of space and time to hard-edged expression

In 1966, Matsutani moved to Paris there he joined Stanley William Hayter's printmaking studio, Atelier 17, where artists from all over the world gathered. Eventually he became Hayter's assistant. He explored how to grasp the important motifs of the images that fundamentally guided his work to express them on the flat surface of prints, encompassing space and time. Gradually he shifted to a hard-edged expression characterised by geometric and organic, forms and vivid colours.



**3. A fresh challenge in pencil and paper: Breaking new ground in the world of black**

In the late 1970s Matsutani began a return to his creative roots, using familiar materials such as pencil and paper. Eventually, he established a form of expression that fills the paper with black strokes, engendering a representation of biological time. He also revisited organic forms made from vinyl adhesive, breaking new ground in his black pencil stroke works. With a trajectory potentially stretching to infinity, the theme of “stream” became increasingly important. From this point onwards, Matsutani has continued to produce a wide variety of works, coming and going between various series and motifs.



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**4. Matsutani now: Free and unfettered, expanding his range of expression**

In recent years, Matsutani has not adhered to any single technique or form of expression, and his work has become increasingly free and expansive, combining boldness with subtle delicacy. Inspired by the things and sensations he encounters every day, his works become a diary. He continues to use his own body and all his senses to create works full of fresh discoveries and surprises.



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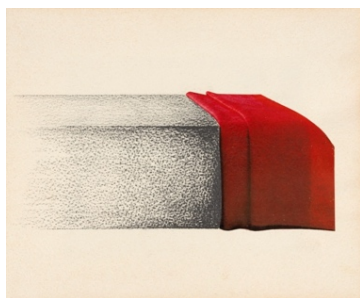
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**5. Sketchbooks, production journals, drawings: Initial ideas provide a look behind Matsutani's work**

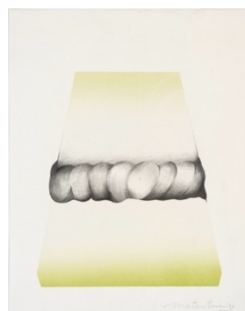
Matsutani's unpublished sketchbooks, production journals, drawings, and more will be on display. The exhibition delves into the background behind Matsutani's work, shedding light on his interests at each stage of his career, as well as the consistent interests that underpin his diverse practice.



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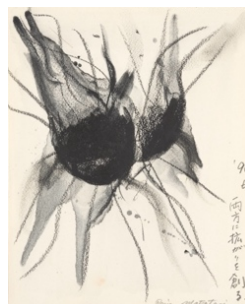
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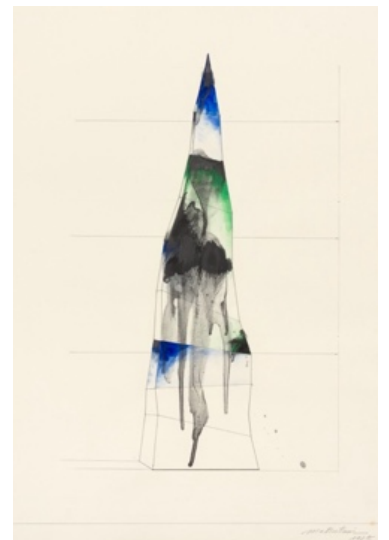
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## Profile

Takesada Matsutani was born in Osaka in 1937. He contracted tuberculosis when he was fourteen and he fought the disease for eight years until he was twenty-two. For a period of time he was able to study classic Nihonga painting. In 1963, he joined Gutai (the Gutai Art Association), a group of artists who led the post war Japanese avant-garde art, and he began producing relief works using vinyl adhesive. In 1966 he moved to France, based in Paris, he began printmaking. In due course, he broke new ground with works formed from vinyl adhesive and covered with graphite pencil strokes. Even at the age of 87, Matsutani continues to work vigorously in Paris, demonstrating his vitality through his installations and performances.

1937 Born in Abeno-ku, Osaka.

1951 Contracts tuberculosis and fights the disease for eight years. During this time, he studies classical nihonga painting at Osaka Municipal Kogei High School but drops out after two years due to illness.

1959 Completely recovers from tuberculosis. Meets Sadamasa Motonaga, a member of Gutai Art Association, at around this time.

1963 Invited to be a member of Gutai Art Association he mounts a solo exhibition at Gutai Pinacotheca. Becomes renowned as a leading light of the second-generation Gutai artists, following in the footsteps of Kazuo Shiraga and Sadamasa Motonaga.

1966 Wins first prize in the first-ever Mainichi Art Competition for exchange students selected by the French government and travels to France. In the following year he joins Atelier 17, a printmaking studio run by Stanley William Hayter.

1970 Leaves Atelier 17 and moves to a silkscreen printmaking studio in Montparnasse. From this time through the 1980s, he wins numerous awards at international print exhibitions.

Late 1970s Returns to his creative roots, using familiar materials such as pencil and paper, establishing a form of expression that fills the paper with black graphite strokes, engendering a representation of biological time. He also revisits organic forms made from vinyl adhesive, breaking new ground in his layered graphite stroke works. With a trajectory potentially stretching to infinity, the theme of "stream" becomes increasingly important. Matsutani continues to produce a wide variety of works, coming and going between various series and motifs.

2017 Exhibits Venice Stream, a large-scale installation at the Viva Arte Viva arsenal exhibition of the 57th Venice Biennale.

2019 Survey from the late 1950s to 2019 at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.



20. Jiro Yoshihara(right) and Takesada Matsutani, at Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, Japan 1963  
©Takesada Matsutani archives



21. Matsutani and Stanley William Hayter at Atelier 17, Paris 1967  
©Takesada Matsutani archives



22. Matsutani inflating vinyl glue with a straw in his studio, Paris 1981  
©Takesada Matsutani archives



23. Performance with Stream-7 (Bannam Place Exhibition Space, Soker-Kaseman Gallery) in San Francisco 1982  
©Takesada Matsutani archives



24. Stream - Konishi House 2001  
Performance with sumi ink, water, paper, and stone 2001  
©Takesada Matsutani archives Photo: Yasushi Kanbe



25. Takesada Matsutani in Paris, 2019  
Photo: Michel Lunardelli

## Takesada Matsutani

Period Thursday, 3 October - Tuesday, 17 December, 2024  
Venue Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (Gallery 1,2,3)  
Open Hours 11:00 - 19:00 (Last admission at 18:30)  
Closing day Mondays (Tuesday if the Monday is a public holiday)

Organiser Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation  
Sponsor Nippon Life Insurance Company  
Cooperation Sogo Development Co., Ltd., Hauser & Wirth  
Special cooperation Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

Admission adults 1600 [1400] yen, university and high school students 1000 [800] yen,  
free for junior high and under

\*Rates include admission to The Path of Abstraction | From the Terada Collection 081 and project N 96 Nakabayashi Arisa.

\*Rates in brackets indicate discount. Free for person with a disability certificate along with an attendant.

\*Only one concession or discount can be applied at a time.

\*Nonrefundable.

### ■Inquiries

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### Images

1. *Two Forms* 2022 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Benoît Fougeirol
2. Takesada Matsutani in his studio Paris, 27 January 2019 2019 Photo: Michel Lunardelli
3. *Pressure* 1958 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Kaoru Minamino
4. *Work 63-A-36* 1963 Himeji City Museum of Art
5. *Work 66-2* 1966 The Miyagi Museum of Art
6. *Propagation-Black* 1967 Ashiya City Museum of Art & History
7. *Propagation-Pink* 1970 Ashiya City Museum of Art & History
8. Japan sea-8 1978 Ashiya City Museum of Art & History
9. *Installation view of Stream-6* 1982 at Gallery S65, Belgium, 1983 Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo ©Takesada Matsutani archives
10. *Drop* 1985 Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery Photo: Arata Saito
11. *Point of contact 2009* 2009 The Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama
12. *Soft and Hard 9-11-2010* 2010 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Marc Damage
13. *Knoll* 2023 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Nicolas Brasseur
14. *Untitled* 1973 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Nicolas Brasseur
15. *from "Sketchbook, Paris 1980-"* c.1984 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Nicolas Brasseur
16. *Untitled* 1976 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Nicolas Brasseur
17. *Untitled (drawing for a monument)* 1985 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Nicolas Brasseur
18. *Object-C* 1975 The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama
19. *from "Sketchbook, Paris 1989-1993"* 1990 Collection of the artist Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth ©Takesada Matsutani Photo: Nicolas Brasseur
20. Jiro Yoshihara(right) and Takesada Matsutani, at Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, Japan 1963 ©Takesada Matsutani archives
21. Matsutani and Stanley William Hayter at Atelier 17, Paris 1967 ©Takesada Matsutani archives
22. Matsutani inflating vinyl glue with a straw in his studio, Paris 1981 ©Takesada Matsutani archives
23. Performance with Stream-7 (Bannam Place Exhibition Space, Soker-Kaseman Gallery,) in San Francisco 1982 ©Takesada Matsutani archives
24. Stream - Konishi House 2001 Performance with sumi ink, water, paper, and stone 2001 ©Takesada Matsutani archives Photo: Yasushi Kanbe
25. Takesada Matsutani in Paris, 2019 Photo: Michel Lunardelli