

— For Immediate Release —

Masaaki Miyasako: Living Dreams

October 26 – November 22, 2023

Opening Reception: October 26, 5 – 8 pm

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Masaaki Miyasako, *Firework 'Aqua' (Shimane Prefecture)*, Four-Panel Byoubu Screen, 2023

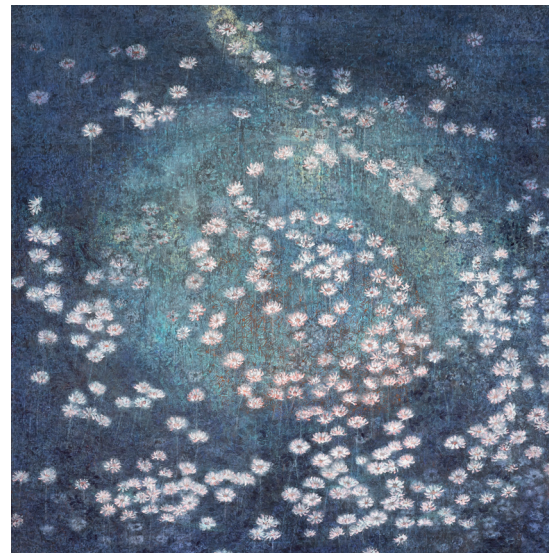
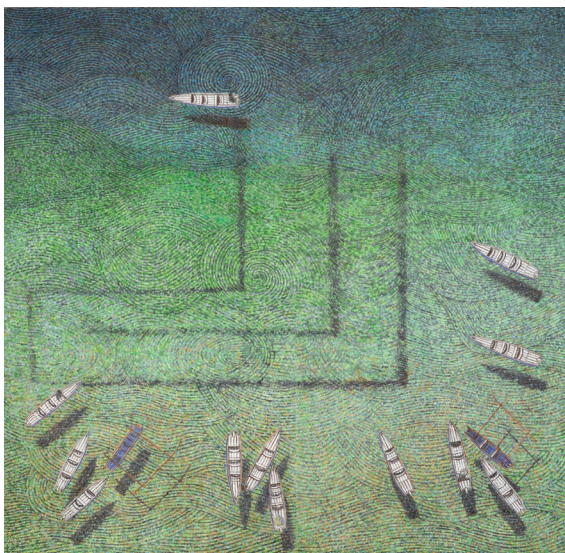
New York – Ippodo Gallery is honored to present **Masaaki Miyasako: Living Dreams** the legendary painter’s premier solo exhibition in the United States. Miyasako’s work is praised for evolving the historical Nihonga painting technique *urazaishiki*, a traditional back-painting method invented between the Heian and Kamakura periods (794–1333). Miyasako’s pictures represent romantic visions of life, nature, and the change of seasons in East and Southeast Asia. After leading the Institute of Knowledge and Inspiration collaboration between Tokyo University of the Arts and the Japanese government for a half-decade [i], Miyasako reclaims his mantle as the greatest and most accomplished Nihonga painter of the present.

Eight large paintings, one four-panel folding screen, and ten calligraphy and sculptures display Masaaki Miyasako’s (b.1951) transcendent sense of the invisible and unspoken dimension. Miyasako’s paintings invite you to enter the sublime and ephemeral world of tender imagination. Where dots, lines, and colors become intertwined, Miyasako embeds a certain poetic sentiment between the brush strokes. Raised in the Izumo region (present-day Shimane prefecture)—known for Japanese original mythologies and tales—Miyasako’s roots in history and culture nurtured his fascination with timelessness.

The centerpiece of the exhibition and Miyasako's signature, "Firework 'Aqua'/Eternal Moment" is a vivid memory of the Go-no River in his hometown in Shimane prefecture. The cast net—which fans out in perpetuity—is an auspicious symbol of luck, fortune, and prosperity.

Miyasako's exquisite approach to the scene is imbued with veiled storytelling. The spiral, figuring as a central philosophy, is Miyasako's method of establishing the composition; working from the center outwards, each dot gradually accumulates until the image emerges as an ensemble. Linear perspective and modeling of light with shadow, the hallmarks of classical Western painting, are of no use to Miyasako. Instead, he creates depth and beckons the eye to sink into the expanse of dots by layering three sheets of washi paper—one withered and translucent, another called momigami which is rubbed and feathered for texture, and kozo paper. Then topped with fine silk, Miyasako captures the immense beauty of the earth by applying precious minerals such as malachite and azurite to the surface with a traditional white cat-hair and martin brush.

Moving to Tokyo as a young adult, Miyasako first studied design at Tokyo University of the Arts, and then returned to the university to master Nihonga and conservation. Miyasako developed his skills by examining Japanese masterworks, such as the murals at Horyuji's Golden Temple Wall. Attuned to the deterioration of world arts, he traveled throughout Asia, the Middle East, and South America on research missions, steadily amassing a collection of eclectic relics along the way. When Miyasako became a full professor in the department of painting at Tokyo University of the Arts, his paintings had already earned many prestigious awards and exhibited in museums and institutions across Asia and Europe.[ii]



Masaaki Miyasako, (left) *Concerto 協奏曲 (Bali)* and (right) *Melody of Flowers 円舞曲 (Shimane Prefecture)*, 2023

[i] Japan's government recognized Miyasako's role as a leader in the fine arts and conservation when he was appointed research lead for the Institute for Knowledge and Inspiration (IKI), endowed by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, from 2013 to 2021. Despite conservation efforts around the world, irreplaceable treasures of human creation disappear without a trace. Under Miyasako's supervision, IKI initiated the 'Clone Cultural Properties Project,' which developed new technologies for the restoration of significant artworks with scientific accuracy. Guided by Miyasako's vision and the collective work of world museums, Tokyo University of the Arts and IKI recreated countless masterpieces, including the cave paintings destroyed in Bamiyan in 2001, and a lost version of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers."

[ii] His artworks are included in major collections around the world, including the Tokyo National Museums of Modern Art and Western Art; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Embassy in Tokyo; Adachi Museum of Art; Koganji and Kimpusen-ji Temples; Türkiye Japan Cultural Dialog Society; The State Russian Museum; Museum of the Orient in Lisbon; the Pitti Modern Art Museum in Italy, and many more.

Masaaki Miyasako

Selected Background

- 1951 Born in Matsue, Shimane.
- 1979 Received BFA from the Tokyo University of the Arts, Dept. of Design.
- 1981 Received Masters of Conservation in Japanese Painting from the Tokyo University of the Arts under Master Ikuo Hirayama.
- 1993 Received the Japan Art Academy Award, Daikan Award, at the 78th Revival Exhibition for “Tenshaden.”
- 1994 Received the Japan Art Academy Award, Daikan Award, at the 79th Revival Exhibition for “Shiyu Hensou.”
- 1995 Appointed as a judge and *Dojin* member for the Japan Art Academy Award at the 80th Revival Exhibition for “Sanbyoushi.”
- 1999 Received the Minister of Education, Science, Sports and Culture Award at the 84th Revival Exhibition for “Heikinritsu.”
- 2000 Inaugurated as a Professor in Graduate School of Conservation, Tokyo University of the Arts.
- 2002 Received the Prime Minister’s Award (bestowed by the Agency for Cultural Affairs) at the 87th Revival Exhibition for “Mubansou.” Retrospective Exhibition “Onpu” at Nagoya Matsuzakaya Art Museum, Ginza Matsuzakaya, Daimaru Museum in Shinsaibashi.
- 2005 Served as the stage designer for the opera “Orpheus,” translated by Mori Ogai, at the Tokyo University of the Arts Sogakudo Concert Hall.
- 2006 “Nijuusou” painting acquired by the Mercedes-Benz Museum.
- 2007 Served as the stage designer for the opera “Urashima,” by Tsubouchi Shoyo, Tokyo University of the Arts Sougakudo Concert Hall.
- 2010 Lecture at the SPring-8 Symposium in Himeji, Radiation Light Promulgation Large Lecture Room in Himeji.
Obtained patent for expressing texture and for his paintings.
Solo exhibition in St. Petersburg, Russia, artwork acquired by the State Russian Museum.
Lecture at the RIKEN Symposium, the SPring-8 Special Project in Nara.
- 2011 Achieved the Information Culture Society Award, Tokyo University.
Served as the Artistic Director and Stage Designer for the opera “Kentooshi.”
- 2012 Invited exhibitor with INK Painting 2012 at the International Ink Painting Exhibition at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taiwan.
Invited exhibitor at the 5th Beijing Biennale by the China Artists Association.
Patent for the “Manufacturing Materials and the Use of the Material for Architects and Paintings.”
- 2013 Appointed as a committee member for the 1st Asian Cultural Exchange Meeting at the Prime Minister’s Office.
Featured solo exhibition “Tourbillon,” at the National Budapest History Museum, Hungary.
Featured solo exhibition “Tourbillon,” at the National Museum of Oriental Art in Lisbon, Portugal.
- 2014 Featured solo exhibition “Tourbillon,” at the National Pitti Modern Art Museum, Italy.
- 2015 Solo Exhibition “BEPPIN,” CASA Garden Gallery Curated Exhibition, at the Macau Government Guest House.
Curated and supervised the performance project “Shikibusou,” featuring Bando Tamasaburo and the Berlin Philharmonic Ensemble.
- 2016 Participated as a special lecturer in the “Terrorism and Cultural Heritage” special event at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit.
Served as a panelist at the UNESCO International Symposium in Munich.
Panelist, the International Symposium on the “Recovery of Cultural Heritage After Conflict” in the United Arab Emirates.
- 2017 Awarded for Invention, 21st Century Invention Encouragement Prize from Japan Institute of Invention and Innovation.
- 2018 Tokyo University of the Arts Retirement Commemorative Exhibition, “Reading Between the Lines” at Tokyo University of the Arts.
Lectured on “Restoration of Goguryeo Tomb Murals” at the International Symposium in Seoul, South Korea.
Received the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award for Scientific and Technological Achievements.
- 2021 Solo Exhibition [Iji Dōzu] at Ginza Ippodo Gallery.
- 2022 Solo Exhibition [ICHUI] at Ginza Ippodo Gallery.

Public Collections

Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, **Japan**
Tokyo National Museum of Western Art, **Japan**
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Embassy in Tokyo, **Japan**
Tokyo University of the Arts, **Japan**
Shimane Art Museum, **Japan**
Adachi Museum of Art, **Japan**
Yamatane Museum of Art, **Japan**
Menard Art Museum, **Japan**
Toyota Museum, **Japan**

Ueda City Museum of Art, **Japan**
Koganji Temple, **Japan**
Kimpusen-ji Temple, **Japan**
Türkiye Japan Cultural Dialog Society, **Japan**
Mercedes-Benz Museum, **Germany**
The State Russian Museum, **Russia**
Museum of the Orient, Lisbon, **Portugal**
Pitti Modern Art Museum, **Italy**
Residence of the Prime Minister of Japan, and many more.

About the Gallery

Ippodo Gallery is committed to creating shared empathetic, craft-oriented experiences through engagement with Japanese art and culture. We continue to showcase work by living artists that adheres to our mission to cultivate beauty with a consciousness of the fragility of nature and the strength of quiet serenity. Ippodo Gallery has worked directly with over 200 artists and held thousands of exhibitions over three decades. We are grateful to continue to bring contemporary Japanese fine art and sensibility to Western audiences. Keiko Aono founded Ippodo Gallery Tokyo in 1996, with two locations in the heart of Ginza and the residential area of Gotenyama. Daughter Shoko Aono opened Ippodo Gallery in New York in 2008, forging new connections with a global audience. Since then, she continues to witness the timeless cross-cultural impact of Japanese kogeï art that transcends language.



Masaaki Miyasako, *Prayer* いのり, 2023

For more information and images, please contact our team by direct message:

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