

Toshihiro Komatsu Solo Exhibition “Behind the Picture Is Nothing but Wall—CT: PAINTING”

- Period February 1 (Saturday), 2025 - March 1 (Saturday), 2025
- Hours Wednesdays through Saturdays 13:00 - 18:00
(closed on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and National Holidays)
- Venue KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY
4-7-6 Shirakawa, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0021 JAPAN

▼ OPENING RECEPTION

February 1 (Saturday), 2024 | 17:00-18:00



PAINTING (CT008091), CT008091_PAINTING [installation view]
left: 2022, oil on canvas, 455 × 725 mm | right: 2024, archival pigment print, 620 × 880 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY is pleased to present “Behind the Picture Is Nothing but Wall—CT: PAINTING,” a solo exhibition by Toshihiro Komatsu starting February 1, 2025.

Toshihiro Komatsu studied contemporary art at the Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts, then studied visual studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Graduate School of Architecture, and actively worked in Europe and the United States, including solo exhibitions at MoMA PS1 and the Queens Museum of Art. After returning to Japan, he energetically exhibited visual arts that renewed our perception, mainly through international art festivals such as the Setouchi International Art Festival (2013) and Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (2012/2015).

Komatsu’s artworks, in the style of site-specific installations, pavilions (temporary structures), and photographic works, have constantly shaken viewers’ visual experiences but were never presented in the format of paintings. This was for the simple and fundamental reason that he saw “no reason why I should paint in the continuous history of art.” However, in 2023, when Komatsu approached the 30th year of his career, he decided to pick up a paintbrush *CT (Painting)* for the first time.

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■

Thirty years is a time Confucius described as *Jiritsu*, “the age at which academic knowledge and moral values are established and confidence in one’s ability to stand up for oneself in the world is gained.” Thus, it was natural for Komatsu, who had been pursuing visual art that renews perception, to develop a desire to make oil paintings [the most formal medium in the field of art] transparent as he worked on *CT*, the photographic series that cancels out layers of three-dimensional space. It was also inevitable he decided the material should be painted by himself. Komatsu has taught oil painting to numerous students. Still, now in a position to hold a paintbrush for the first time as an artist, he asked his colleagues to teach him about tools and others, purely returning to his starting position as an artist and continuing to pursue his expressions freshly.

While always maintaining a consistent standpoint as an artist, Toshihiro Komatsu has finally found a reason to take up his own brush in light of art history, and has developed an expression that crosses the border between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space.



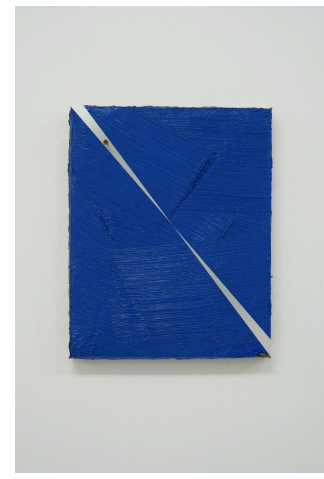
CT008341_PAINTING

2024 | archival pigment print | 620 × 880 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu,
courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



CT008651_PAINTING

2024 | archival pigment print | 620 × 880 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu,
courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



CT008771_PAINTING

2024 | archival pigment print | 340 × 510 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu,
courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



CT009101_PAINTING

2024 | archival pigment print | 340 × 510 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu,
courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



CT015981_PAINTING

2023 | archival pigment print | 340 × 510 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu,
courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



CT016021_PAINTING

2023 | archival pigment print | 340 × 510 mm
© Toshihiro Komatsu,
courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

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Artist Statement

It was once said that “painting is dead,” and when I first began studying art, I found myself unable to pick up a paintbrush. Now, nearly 40 years later, I feel that painting is no longer a taboo.

How many times has painting died? More than once, painting has been declared dead by photography, readymade, conceptual art, and so on. Some painters, such as Lucio Fontana, have slashed their canvases and stabbed their paintings to death.

Picasso said, “behind the picture is nothing but wall.” Fontana’s *Holes* series actually peeks through a hole in the canvas to reveal a wall, summoning the space around the painting to the inner of the painting. However, the back of the canvas in Fontana’s *Slash* series is covered with a black gauze, making it impossible to see the wall through the slashes. While Picasso rejected the trompe l’oeil, Fontana’s *Slash* seems to utilize its principles, creating an illusion of painted black slashes on the canvas.

My first painting, *CT: PAINTING*, is a CT work based on a formal monochrome oil painting on canvas. By using photographs to show the wall and screws behind the painting, I integrate the space around the painting into the painting, allowing the viewer to see not only the visible world, but also the depths beyond it.

It is an act of cutting apart a painting drawn by my own hands through photography. Just as life and death are always side by side.

Toshihiro Komatsu

Artist Profile

Toshihiro Komatsu was born in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan in 1966. He received his M.F.A. at Tokyo University of the Arts, Graduate School in 1993, and his M.S. at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Architecture.

His major solo exhibitions include “Spatial Concept: Clairvoyance Sept. 3, 2022” (2023, KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY, Tokyo), “Mise en Abyme” (2022, KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY, Tokyo), “Aperture—Penetrating a Gaze” (2020, KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY, Tokyo), “Topophilia: Japanese Houses” (2020, KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY, Tokyo), “TOSHIHIRO KOMATSU” (2009, Wimbledon College of Art, London), “Sanatorium” (2006, Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo), “Clairvoyance Sept. 21, 2005” (2006, galerie 16, Kyoto, Japan), “Queens Focus 03: Adjoining Spaces” (2000-2001, Queens Museum, New York), and “Special Projects” (1999, MoMA PS1, New York).

Group exhibitions and art festivals include “Echigo Tsumari Art Triennale 2015” (2015, Niigata, Japan), “On the Exhibition Room” (2015, CAS, Osaka, Japan), “ISLAND VIEW—Why artists focus on islands” (2014, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo), “Setouchi Triennale 2013” (2013, Kagawa, Japan), and “On Happiness: Contemporary Japanese Photography” (2003, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum).

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