



Taka Ishii  
Gallery

Maebashi

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## Group Exhibition “Draw Lines & Shapes in My Maps”

Dates: Nov 19 – Dec 28, 2023

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Maebashi

Participating artists: Ayaka Endo, GORILLA PARK, Hal Matsuda, Iori Nagashima, Sawako Nasu, Kohei Yamada

Taka Ishii Gallery Maebashi is pleased to announce the group exhibition “Draw Lines & Shapes in My Maps,” taking place from November 19 to December 28, 2023. The exhibition showcases the artworks of six young artists born in the 1990s: Ayaka Endo, GORILLA PARK, Hal Matsuda, Iori Nagashima, Sawako Nasu, and Kohei Yamada.

*In today’s world, maps are an everyday tool for most people, myself included. They come into play in a variety of scenarios, from navigating unfamiliar areas and switching trains, to searching for places to eat, drink, or shop. The digitization of maps has advanced to the point where we can do all this and more, using only the smartphone in our hand.*

*How these universally accessed maps are designed, however, is subject to their creators’ discretion. Although we tend to mentally project these maps onto our perception of the physical world, they are reformulations of reality: we cannot, for example, physically perceive the prefectural borders that we see on maps. Moreover, since maps are created based on precise measurement data collected by expert entities, they have a certain sense of authority that leaves little room for individual will or subjectivity. As such, for all their accuracy of scale and distance, conventional geographical maps fall short in conveying certain facets. This is where there is a need for more customized maps, such as tourist and food maps, which typically focus on smaller areas and exhibit more variety and freedom in their designs—bold lettering for establishments recommended by the map’s creators, accompanying photographs, and so on.*

*The title of this exhibition is borrowed from a Google Maps help page explaining its “My Maps” feature, more specifically its function that enables users to “[d]raw lines & shapes.” These two terms—lines and shapes—are concepts that are deeply integral to art forms such as painting, photography, and sculpture. While the traditional map is a medium that represents reality to share it with others (i.e., it is subservient to reality), “My Maps” is predicated entirely on how the individual utilizes it. The lines and shapes can be deployed to knowingly emphasize, exaggerate, distort, or even obscure a certain piece of reality. (They can also add temporal and emotional dimensions to the maps.)*

*Incorporating this concept of “My Maps,” this exhibition has assembled a selection of six artists, including myself. In this increasingly complex modern society, what we encounter and observe will no doubt be guided by what kind of maps we can call our own. We should aim, then, to draw lines that connect rather than divide, and shapes that summon up visions of our past and future. Aspiring to such “My Maps” will, I hope, give rise to new questions for us all to explore.*

Kohei Yamada, November 2023

Ayaka Endo (b. 1994) is a photographer who engages with subjects such as plants, animals, and natural landscapes, regarding each as “an independent other.” She is known for her works that capture the inherent sacredness within these subjects, as interpreted through her animistic imagination. Her images are marked by a distinctive soft-hued palette, achieved through the combination of strobe lighting and digital processing. The hallucinatory images thus created illustrate how human intervention has blurred the boundaries between nature and artifice, inviting viewers to reconsider how we as individuals are each connected to the cosmos. Endo holds an MFA in design (2021) from Tokyo University of the Arts.

GORILLA PARK (b. 1998, Saitama) is an artist who reconstructs specific earthly images into tangible objects made of ubiquitous materials. First crafting a wooden pictorial relief with carving techniques, he then draws lines over its sculpted face in spray paint or Japanese mineral pigment. This process thus establishes a three-dimensional form, only for these lines—lines that the artist “sees inside the wood” before all the carving—to return it to its frontal and two-dimensional nature. GORILLA PARK holds a BFA (2021) and an MFA (2023) in sculpture, from Musashino Art University and Tokyo University of the Arts respectively.

Hal Matsuda (b. 1998, Iwate) creates real-world reproductions of virtual images by taking 3D scans—of human bodies, fake greenery, and other items—manipulating them in VR, then converting them to silkscreen prints or drawings on sculptures. His artworks thus combine the real and the virtual (i.e., printing and VR), interrogating what it truly means for something to be “virtual” in this age of advanced reproduction technologies. Matsuda holds a BFA in printmaking (2021) from the University of Tsukuba, and an MFA (2023) from the Global Seminar program at Kyoto University of the Arts.

Iori Nagashima (b. 1997, Osaka) imagines the stories behind still images and creates figurative paintings based on those narratives. The source images span a wide range, from Nagashima’s own photographs capturing everyday lives and the traces they leave, to images gleaned from movies, literature, and the internet. Such concrete images are reimagined through the artist’s own sensibility into a collection of nebulous

narratives, resulting in paintings imbued with a sense of the abstract. Nagashima holds a bachelor's degree in oil painting (2020) from Musashino Art University.

Sawako Nasu (b. 1996, Tokyo), an artist who grew up in a theatrical family, combines her primary pursuit of painting with occasional ventures into stage design. Her creative process involves assiduously applying layer upon layer of paint with repeated strokes of the flat brush, a gesture suggestive of washing something away. From abstract expressions that seek to invoke and embody "the handwork of bygone painters," to landscape pieces where multiple vistas overlap and coexist within single frames, her art is an exploration of where painting stands in today's art. Nasu holds a BFA and an MFA in oil painting from Tokyo University of the Arts (2021 and 2023 respectively).

Kohei Yamada (b. 1997, Osaka) begins his painting process by generously saturating his canvas or paper with oil. Then, drawing black lines that serve as starting points or as contours, and placing in the upper left corner a spot of yellow representing light, Yamada proceeds to cover the whole surface with dynamic sweeps of vibrant colors. Successive applications of the brush create a smoother texture, enhance the hues between adjacent planes, and form a multilayered structure that lends Yamada's paintings their characteristic sense of depth. Yamada holds a bachelor's degree (2020) and a master's degree (2022) in oil painting, from Musashino Art University and Kyoto University of the Arts respectively.

For further information, please contact:

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Wed – Sun 11:00 – 19:00 Closed on Mon, Tue and National Holidays



Kohei Yamada

"Untitled", 2023

Oil on canvas

100 x 80.3 cm

© Kohei Yamada

Photo : Kenji Takahashi



GORILLA PARK

“Relief—sour sugar”, 2023

Wood and mineral pigment

150.5 x 67 x 7.5 cm

© GORILLA PARK

Photo: Kenji Takahashi