

NOBUTAKA AOZAKI
Soda • Chips • Lottery • Cards
February 14 – March 28 2025

Reception: Friday, February 14th, 6 – 8PM



264 Canal Street 5E
New York, NY 10013
Wed - Sat 12-6
& by appointment

Kai Matsumiya

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Nobutaka Aozaki

Soda • Chips • Lottery • Cards

February 14 – March 28

Opening reception: Friday, February 14th, 6 – 8PM

Kai Matsumiya Fine Arts Gallery is delighted to present ***Soda • Chips • Lottery • Cards***, **Nobutaka Aozaki's** first solo exhibition with the gallery. With wit and humor, the exhibited works collectively embody different systems of value by reimagining urban detritus as cultural capital. The exhibition opens with a reception on Friday, February 14th and is on view through March 28th.

Aozaki recontextualizes found ephemera to reveal patterns between people and places. By drawing connections between strangers, he explores how these objects become catalysts for routine and ritual in everyday life.

In the series ***Micro Chip Bags***, Aozaki creates assemblages of discarded chip bags that have been microwaved—shrinking and distorting them—before being treated with formaldehyde. Each bag's design warps and mutates as it fuses with its crumpled, dense substrate, transforming into a hardened sculptural object. The novelty of the miniaturized bags, with their original branding bright and puckered, contributes to the assemblage's sculptural identity, suggesting that what we consume and discard reflects culture. The transformation from trash to art blurs the line between function and absurdity, challenging notions of utility and meaning while elevating the abject.

Additionally, plastic itself plays a role in this transformation. Polymers, the long strands of molecules that constitute plastic, revert to their original behavior when microwaved—reaggregating and clumping up again. This molecular shift parallels the way discarded materials reconstitute their value within Aozaki's practice. Plastics, ubiquitous even in our bodies, serve as a reminder of how material persistence shapes both culture and environment.

In the series ***Street Cans***, Aozaki collects flattened aluminum beverage cans from the street and meticulously unfolds their creases to restore their original forms. While the cans regain their shape, their functional value as consumable goods remains lost. Their battered surfaces tether them to their past, yet their restoration invites a metaphysical reconsideration of worth and dignity. Aozaki marks each can with the date and location it was found, mapping his encounters with strangers. Through this process, the object's value is shaped not only by its function but also by its history and the fleeting interactions it has along the way.

Similarly, in ***Royal Flush***, Aozaki unites the constituents of a royal flush—a poker hand consisting of an ace, king, queen, jack, and ten of the same suit—that have been lost from their respective decks and independently wound up in Aozaki's path. The royal flush boasts the highest valued hand in poker, yet these individual cards, scattered and abandoned, have lost their worth until brought together. The cards also each become a testament to where Aozaki's path has intersected with that of a stranger, the final collection thus constituting a serendipitous encounter between everyday trajectories, loss, observance, and artistic design. By highlighting the journey

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of these disparate items, Aozaki emphasizes the fluidity of value—how it can shift depending on perspective, context, and the narratives we attach to the objects in our lives.

Made from discarded lottery tickets, the centerpiece of the exhibition ***Lottery Ticket Paintings*** highlights the reflexive ritual and fleeting value associated with otherwise trifling everyday items. Aozaki paints over each ticket with black paint to conceal its branding while preserving the scratch marks produced by the original consumer. The tickets are then mounted on plexiglass in a sequence that responds to the direction, color, and shape of the scratches. While arrangement is instinctively determined by these visual cues, it is also linked to the time and place of collection. This composition establishes a loose connection between temporality and the arbitrary nature of value while finding meaning in seemingly insignificant human acts. Aozaki underscores the ritualistic nature of everyday behaviors, where the act of scratching off a lottery ticket embodies both hope and desire—the pursuit of fortune and the illusion of control over chance. He elevates these discarded tickets into objects that reflect the impermanence of consumer culture, where value is both transient and artificially assigned.

Aozaki's exhibition invites viewers to reconsider how value is constructed, both materially and culturally. Through his reimagining of discarded objects, he fortifies the ways everyday items are imbued with personal and collective significance. If we follow George Simmel's understanding that value is more relational than subjective—that its social life is the pursuit of successfully exchanging values but also the exchange itself—then Aozaki similarly disrupts conventional hierarchies of worth. He advocates for a more fluid, relational understanding—one that acknowledges meaning as contingent, shifting, and deeply intertwined with raw human experience.

About Nobutaka Aozaki

Nobutaka Aozaki is a New York-based Japanese artist born in Kagoshima, Japan. He works with the accumulation of ephemera, accounts, routines, and relationships that are formed as a result of traveling throughout his everyday surroundings. He frequently combines performance and found objects, developing from his everyday interactions with people on the street and chance encounters with objects that have traces of strangers. His work has been shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum, Queens Museum, Sculpture Center, Japan Society, Hessel Museum, and ISCP, in New York, and SPIKE, Berlin, and Société d'Electricité in Brussel, and Statements, Tokyo. He has participated in the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program Residency, the LMCC's Workspace Residency program, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Queens Museum Studio Program, and AIM program at The Bronx Museum. He has been awarded the Artist Files Grant from A Blade of Grass and the Artists' Fellowship from New York Foundation for the Arts. His work has been written in publications include New York Times, Huffington Post, Hyperallergic, ArtAsiaPacific, Artforum, and Cabinet Magazine. He completed his MFA at Hunter College in 2012.

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Installation Photographs





BOLD







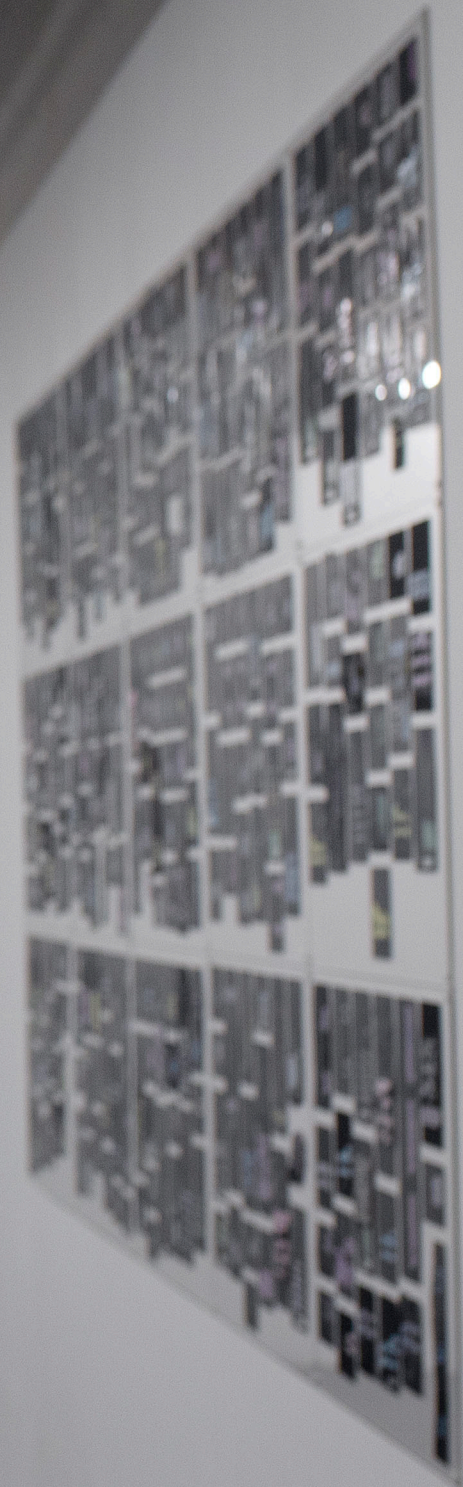
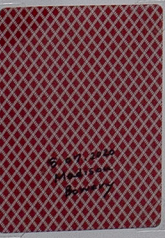
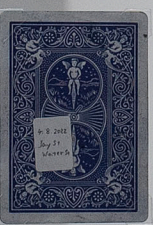
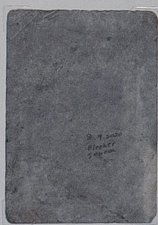
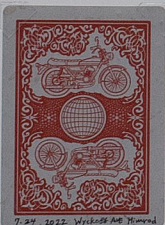
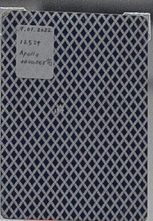
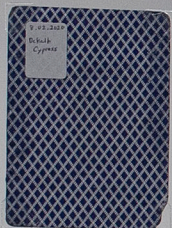
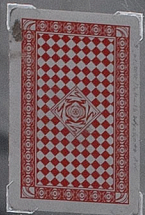
















LOTTERY TICKETS

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Scratched Lottery Tickets

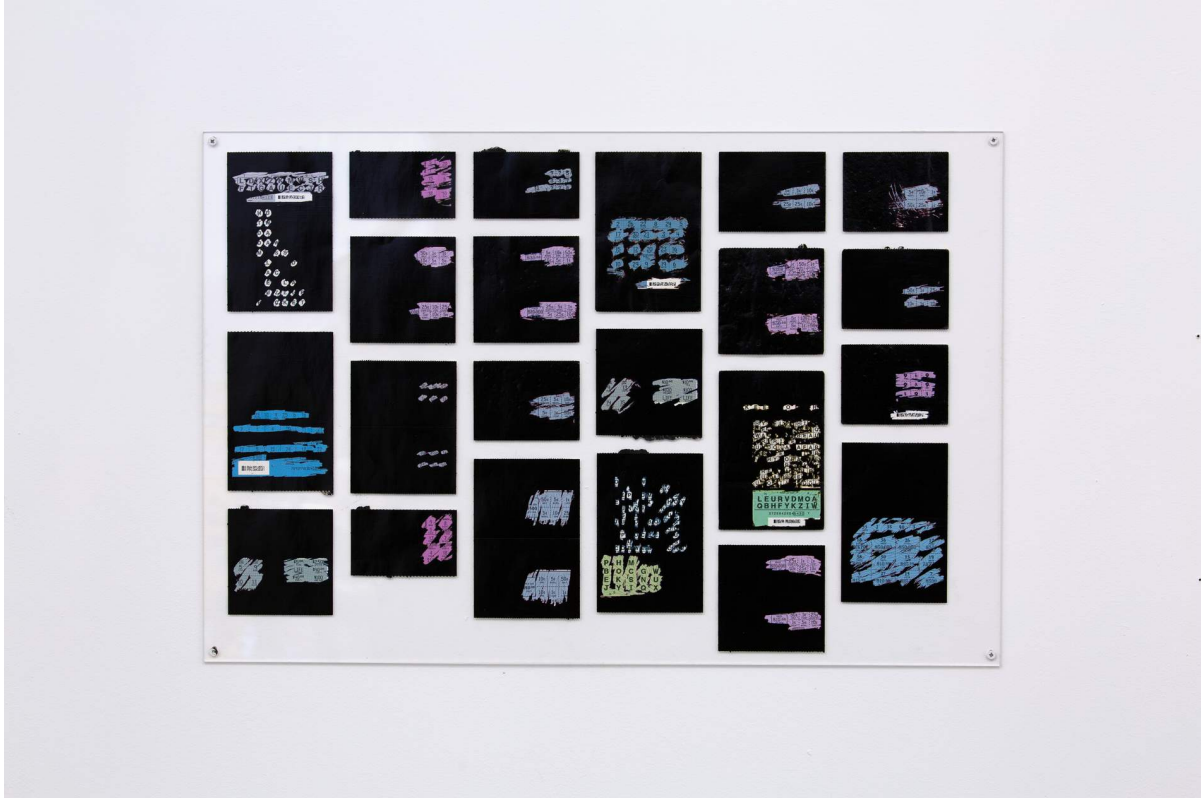
2025

Acrylic, found used scratched lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0041

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

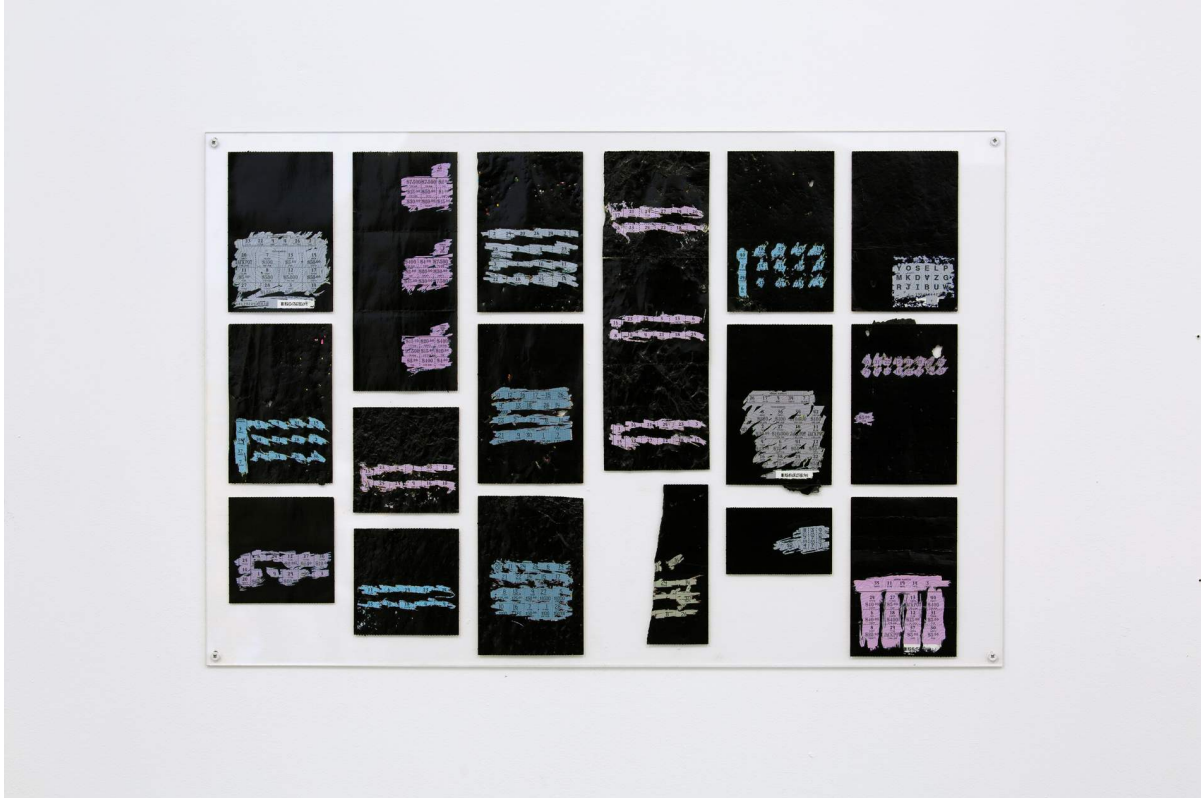
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0028

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0027

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

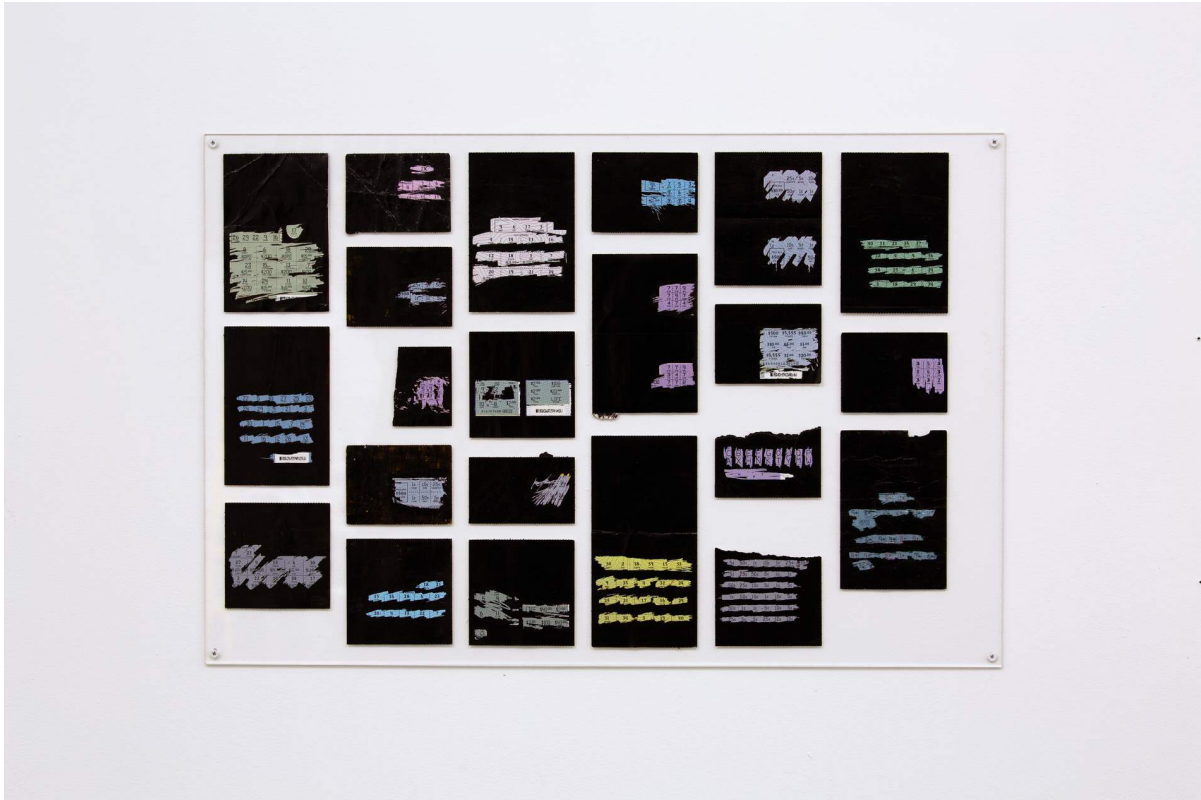
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0026

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0025

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

NA0024

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

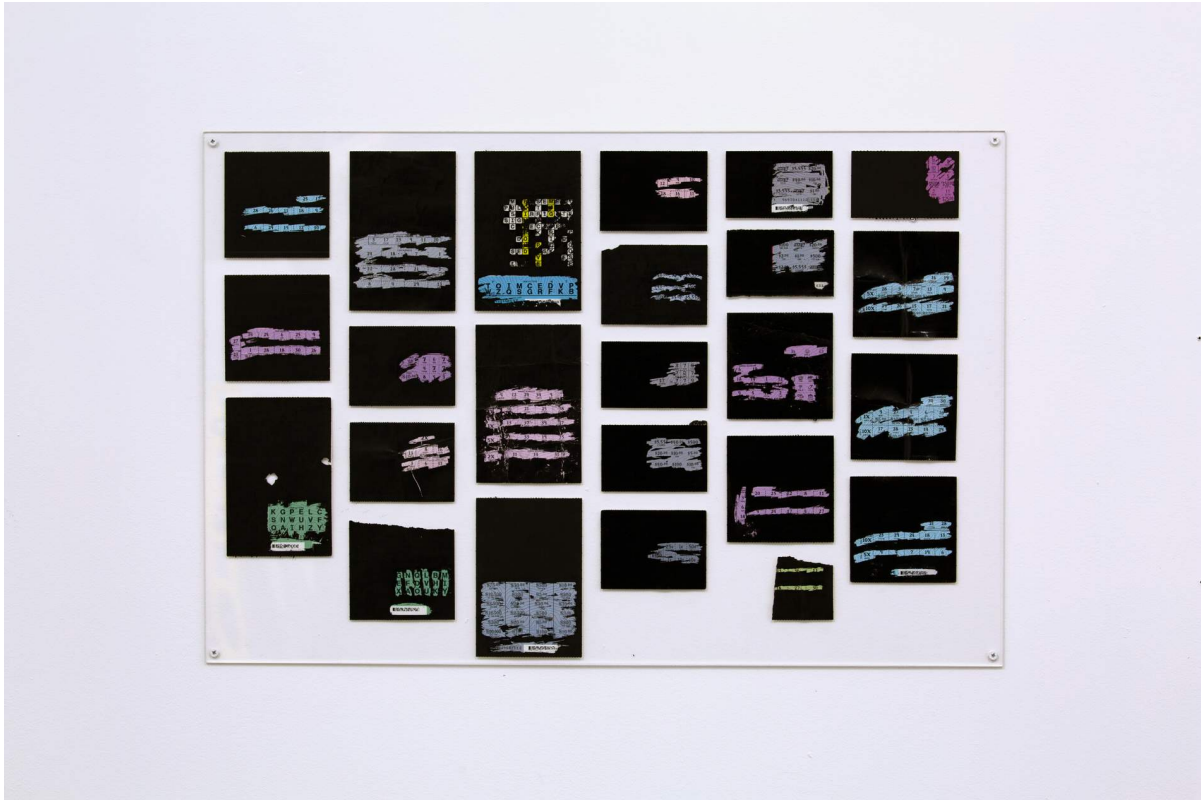
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0023

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

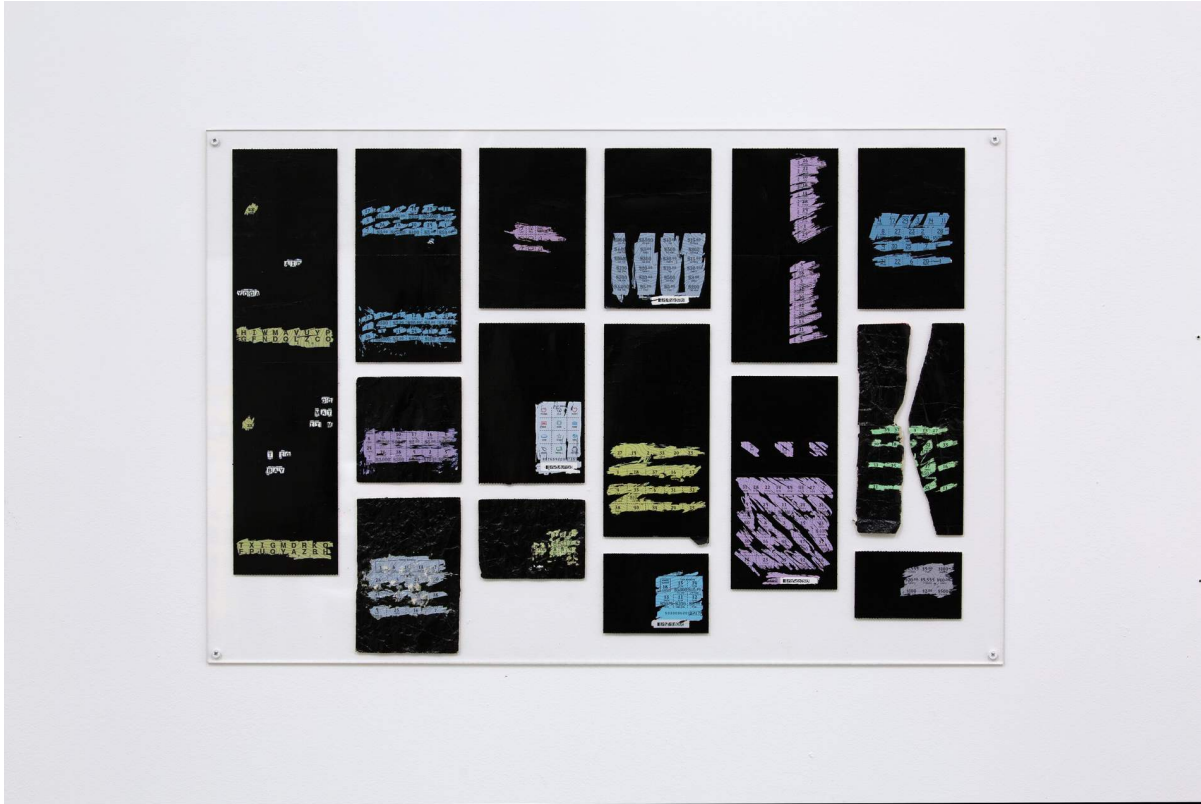
2025

Acrylic, scratched lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0022

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

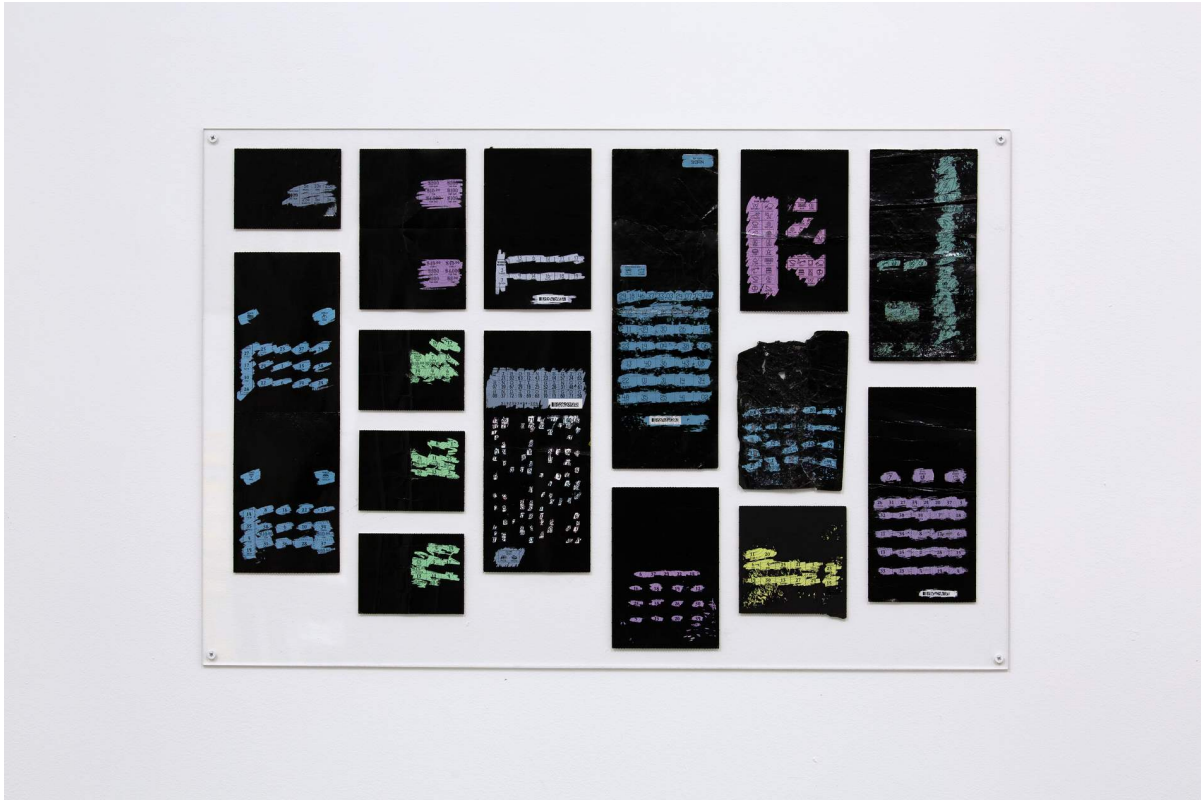
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0021

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

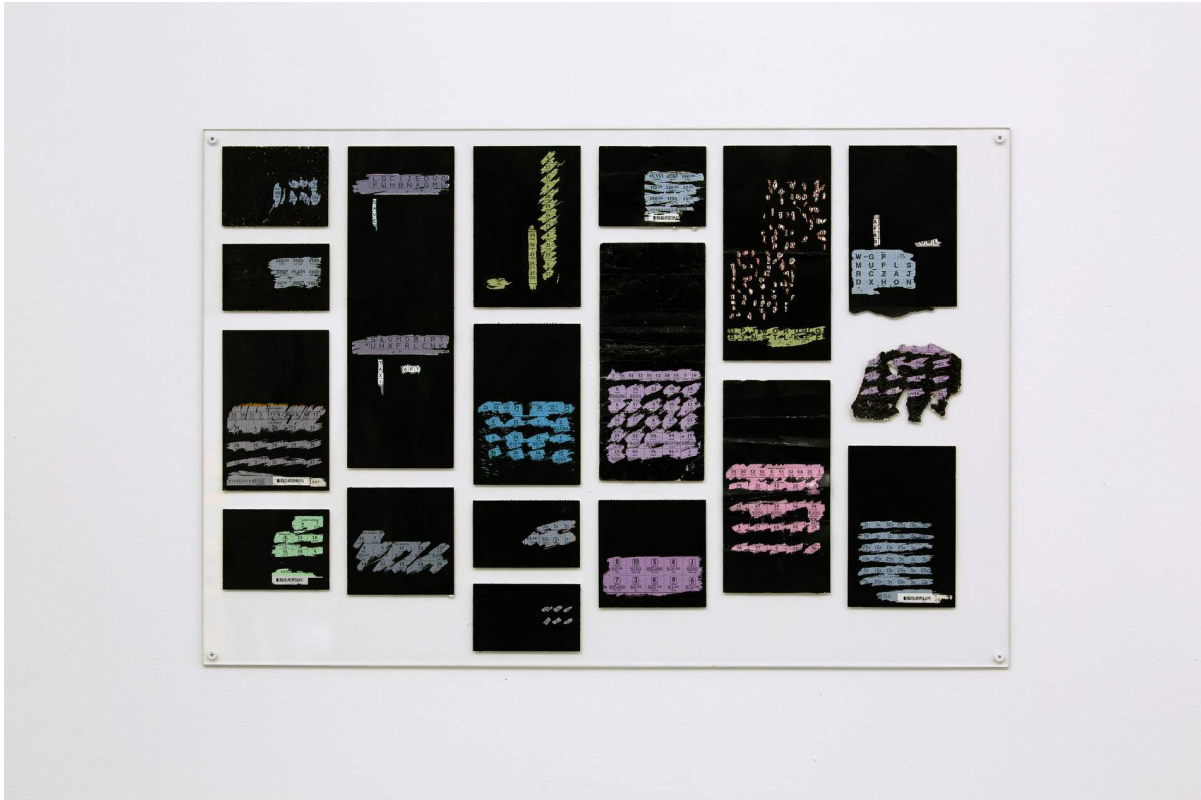
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0020

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

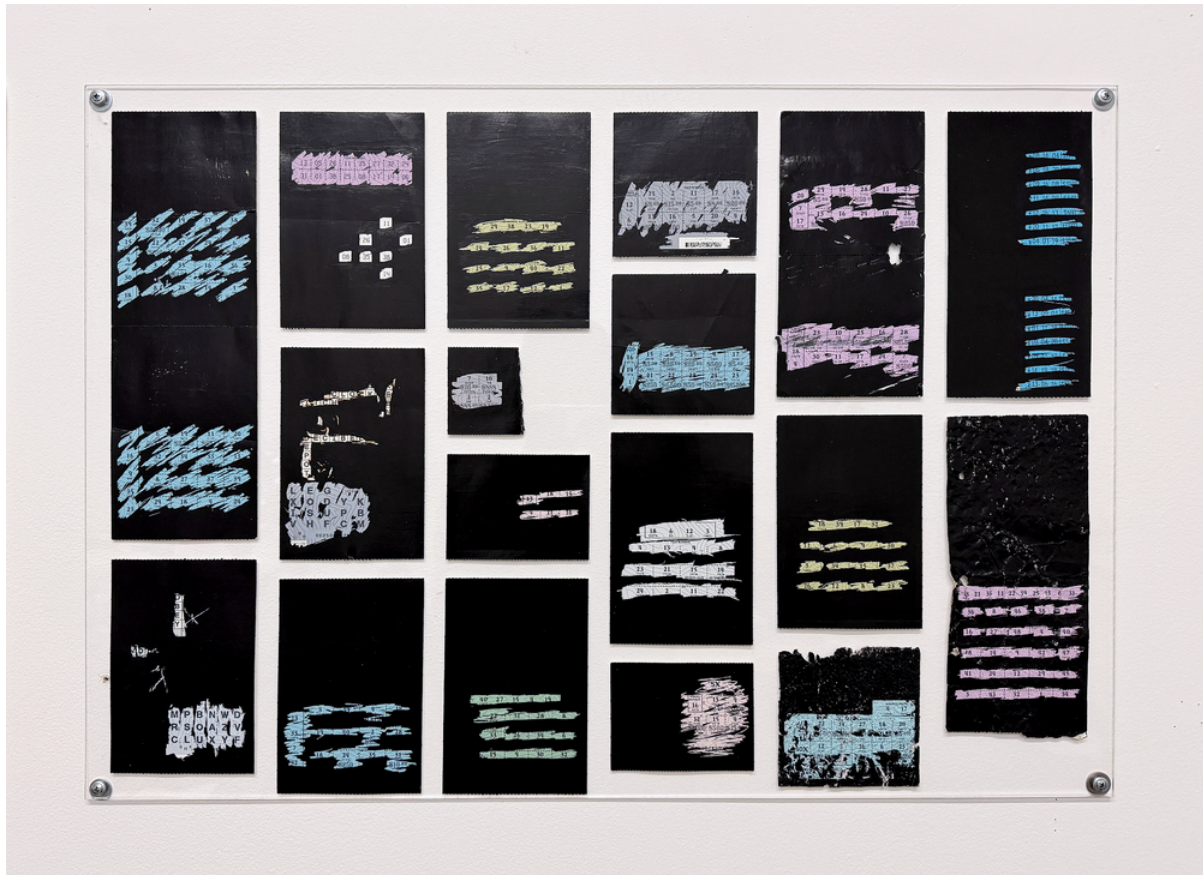
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0019

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

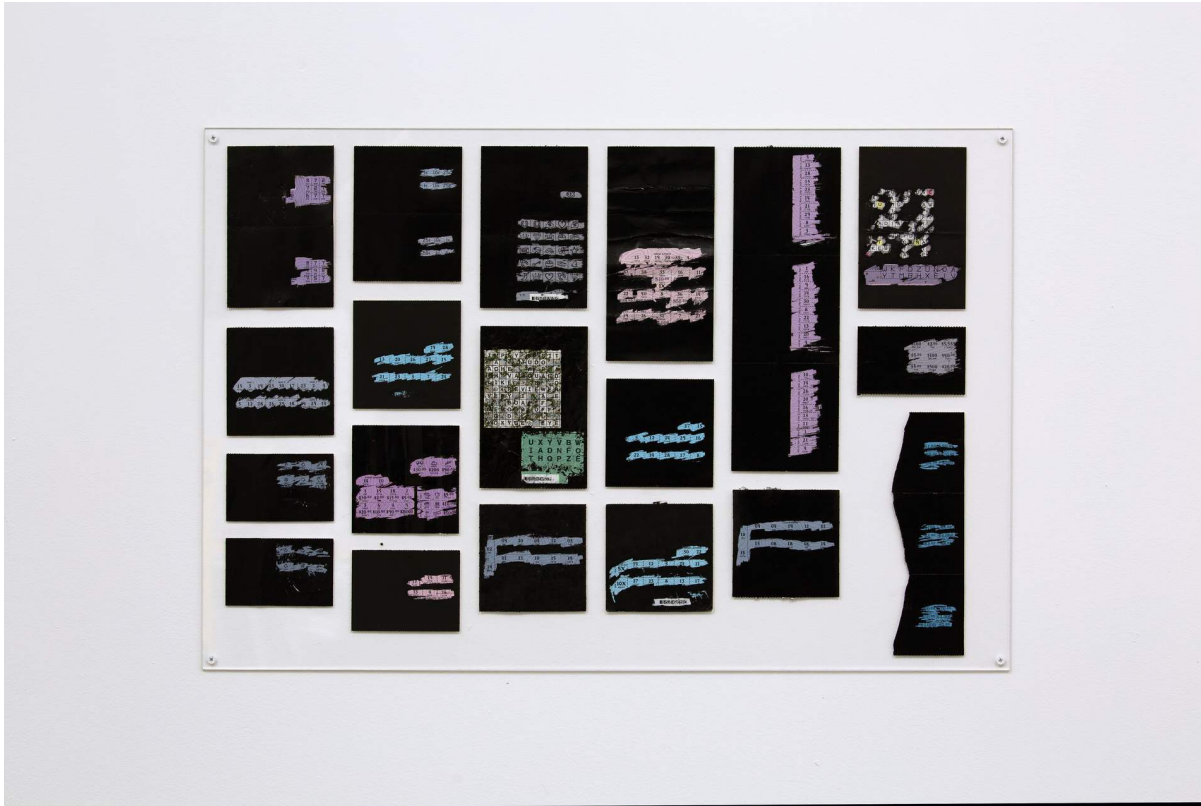
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0003

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Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

2025

Acrylic, found used lottery cards, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0018

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

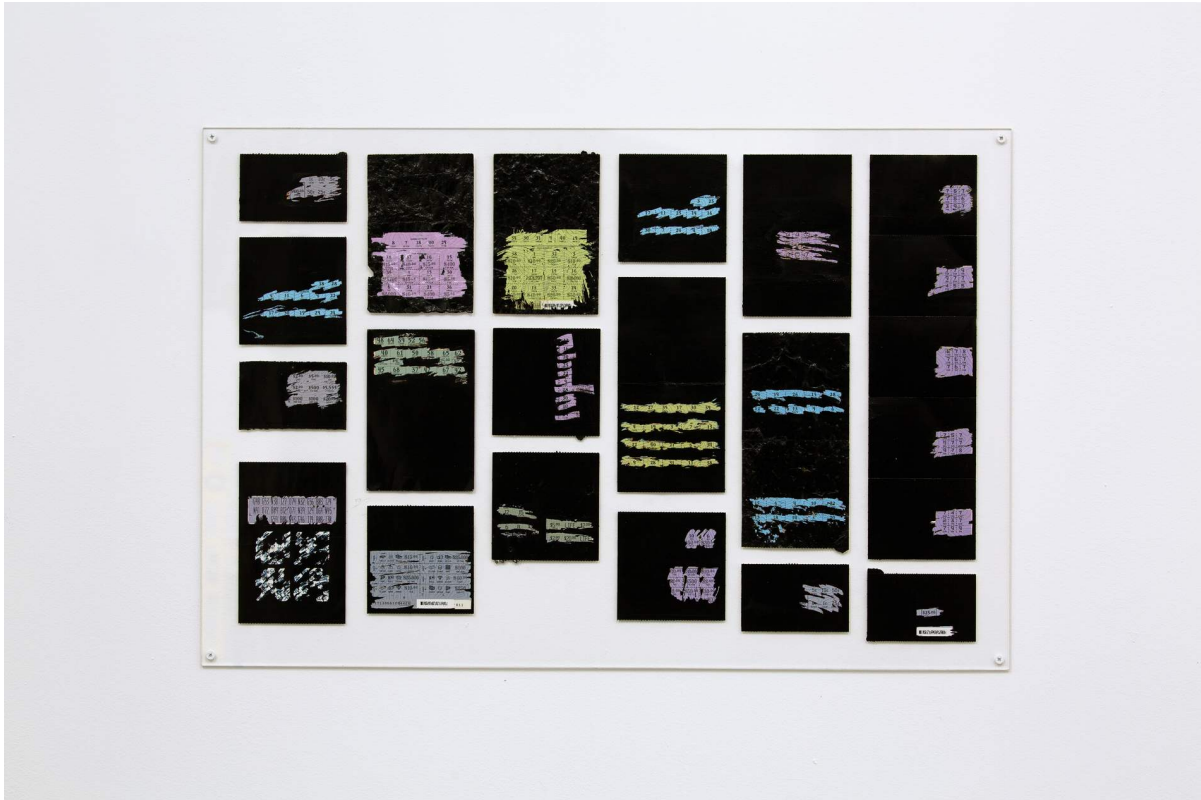
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery cards, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0017

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Lottery Ticket Paintings

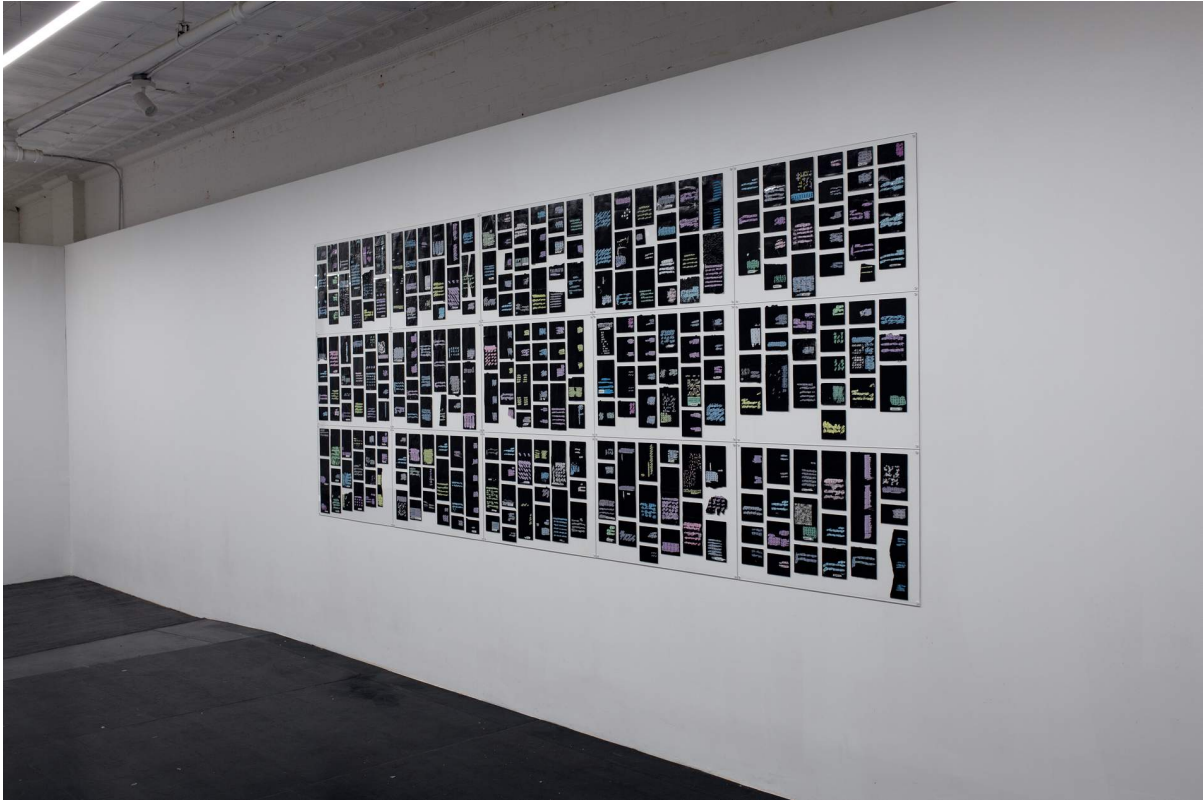
2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

16 x 20 in. 40.64 x 50.80 cm

NA0016

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Scratched Lottery Tickets (full set)

2025

Acrylic, found used lottery tickets, plexiglass

48 x 100 in. 121.92 x 254.00 cm

NA0059

SODA

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Nobutaka Aozaki
Street Cans (full set)
2014 - 2025
Reconstructed street cans
Variable
NA0060

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Kai Matsumiya



Kai Matsumiya



CHIPS

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Nobutaka Aozaki

Micro Chip Bags

2025

Microwaved potato chip bags, glass, formaldehyde

1½ x 4½ x 3 in. 3.81 x 11.43 x 7.62 cm

NA0030

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Nobutaka Aozaki

Micro Chip Bags

2025

Microwaved potato chip bags, formaldehyde

4½ x 5 x 4 in. 11.43 x 12.70 x 10.16 cm

NA0029

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Nobutaka Aozaki

Micro Chip Bags

2025

Microwaved chip bags, formaldehyde

3½ x 4 x 4 in. 8.89 x 10.16 x 10.16 cm

NA0015

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Untitled (microwaved potato chip bags)

2025

Microwaved potato chip bags, glass, formaldehyde

6 x 6 x 3 in. 15.24 x 15.24 x 7.62 cm

NA0006

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Untitled (microwaved potato chip bag)

2025

Microwaved potato chip bags, formaldehyde

3½ x 3 x 3 in. 8.89 x 7.62 x 7.62 cm

NA0005

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Untitled (microwaved potato chip bags)

2025

Microwaved potato chip bags, formaldehyde

2 x 3½ x 2 in. 5.08 x 8.89 x 5.08 cm

NA0004

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Micro Chip Bags

2025

Microwaved chip bags, formaldehyde

3½ x 4½ x 2 in. 8.89 x 11.43 x 5.08 cm

NA0014

CARDS

Kai Matsumiya



Nobutaka Aozaki

Royal Flush

2025

Found scratched lottery tickets, acrylic

31½ x 21½ in. 80.01 x 54.61 cm

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