

Wade Guyton

Drawings for Tokyo

Curated by Nicolas Trembley for Shibunkaku (Ginza Curators Room)

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<https://www.shibunkaku.co.jp/english/>

In the fall of 2024, during his first trip to Japan, Wade Guyton Was introduced to Shibunkaku's collection of rare books and explored the bookstore district of Jinbōchō in Tokyo.

Illustrated books hold a significant place in the artistic practice of this artist, who is also a collector and publisher. They serve both as sources of inspiration and as mediums for creating his works.

Printing is central to Wade Guyton's production. His works are made from digital files using inkjet printers. Errors, drips, and printing defects are integral to his compositional approach, producing the uniqueness of each piece. Unlike his paintings, which are made on blank canvases, his drawings are done on pre-printed pages taken from catalogs. He repeatedly overprints computer-generated signs and shapes, such as his well-known "X" motifs or images of flames, in various formats.

For his exhibition "Drawings for Tokyo," Wade Guyton created a series of drawings on and around reproductions of ceramics from catalogs of the Japanese artist Kitaōji Rosanjin (1883-1959). Rosanjin, a calligrapher, potter, writer, gallerist, publisher, and chef, produced an unclassifiable body of work inspired by traditional Japanese aesthetics, which he propelled into 20th-century modernity.

Here, two languages blend and interact: the more artisanal and vernacular but innovative language of Rosanjin's ceramics and that of Wade Guyton, who challenges traditional painting conventions by adopting contemporary tools. As one of the most important artists from his generation, he explores the limits of digital processes and questions the relationship between the artwork, its creation, and its representation.

The interactions and overlays between text, signs, and images, the traditional and the contemporary, produce a unique body of work that transports the viewer between two artistic periods, two distinct cultures, and a representation of art confronted with its inevitable transformation into image.

For the installation in the classical Japanese architecture of the Ginza gallery, Guyton also created four paintings based on his drawings placed on the floor of his New York studio, which he chose to hang in the traditional Tokonoma spaces.

The artist has chosen to present some of his paintings in their transport boxes.

Recently, he cast these crates in aluminum and uses them as frames for his works.

But for this exhibition at Shibunkaku, it is a reference to the Tomobako, the traditional Japanese wooden box used to store ceramics, which serves as proof of their authenticity, origin, and the value of the object it contains. Some Tomobako are displayed alongside Rosanjin's ceramics.

Nicolas Trembley