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Taka Ishii

Gallery

Tomoo Gokita “Lush Life”

Dates: Jun 27 – Jul 25, 2026

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Roppongi & Kyobashi

Opening Reception: Saturday, Jun 27, 17:00 – 19:00 (Roppongi)

Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to present “Lush Life,” a solo exhibition of the work of Tomoo Gokita, on view from Saturday, June 27 to Saturday, July 25 at the gallery’s Roppongi and Kyobashi venues. Gokita’s first solo show with Taka Ishii Gallery in four years and his seventh with the gallery, the exhibition will feature his latest paintings.

The exhibition title, “Lush Life,” is also the name of a song composed by Billy Strayhorn in 1961. That same year, John Coltrane released an album of the same name, and “Lush Life” has long been performed by musicians as a jazz standard. In jazz slang, the phrase is used not in the sense of a life of abundance, but to mean “a drunkard’s life” or “days steeped in drink.” A lyrical jazz ballad performed over the decades, “Lush Life” is also a poetic expression with the power to evoke various memories, scenes, and emotional states.

Until now, Gokita has employed mainly charcoal and acrylic gouache for his black-and-white works and pastel and acrylic when working in color. “Lush Life” marks the first public showing of his paintings in oil, a medium he returned to last year. Working in dark tones and broad gradations of shadow, he places highly simplified, distorted figures in spaces furnished with familiar everyday objects such as beds and chairs, producing surreal, otherworldly scenes. His practice ranges from figures with ambiguous facial expressions, enigmatic characters and scenes, imaginary creatures, and dreamlike views to abstractions executed with organic brushwork, self-portraits, and works inflected with humor, a measure of his range as a painter. His works speak to something in viewers that belongs to no single era, while at the same time, his imagined worlds seem at times to transcend the perceptions we hold in common. The artist has said that as he worked toward this exhibition, darker tones emerged of their own volition. Many of the works on view share a somber atmosphere that seems to reflect the ominous state of the world today. Painted with subtle mastery and a gaze at once searching and admiring, these works descend into the depths of the human psyche and quietly illuminate the vitality and light that endure there.

Born in 1969 in Tokyo. He is based in Tokyo. In the late 1990s, Gokita received acclaim for drawings made with charcoal and ink on paper. His first book *Lingerie Wrestling* was published in 2000. Starting with a show in New York in 2006, Gokita has exhibited his works in solo exhibitions internationally. In 2012, his work was included in “The Unseen Relationship: Form and Abstraction” at Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art. Followed by “THE GREAT CIRCUS”, a solo show in 2014 at the same museum. Recent solo shows include, “PEEKABOO” (2018) at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, “Get Down” (2021) at Dallas Contemporary, Texas and “Gumbo” (2024) held at ICA Milano. His books and exhibition catalogues include *Shuffle*

Tetsudō Shōka [shuffle railroad songs] (Tokyo: Tennen Bunko, 2010); *777* (Tokyo: 888 Books, 2015); *Holy Cow* (Tokyo: Taka Ishii Gallery, 2017); *PEEKABOO* (Tokyo: Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation, 2018); *MOO* (Tokyo: Taka Ishii Gallery, 2021) and *Diary* (Tokyo: 888 Books, 2022).

For further information, please contact:

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Tomoo Gokita

"Exhibitionist", 2026

Oil on linen, 181.8 x 227.5 cm

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