

## A Solo Exhibition of Japanese Painter Ken Matsubara

### — *Distillation* —

Ippodo New York : May 12 – June 10, 2016

\*Opening Reception : May 12, 6 – 9p.m.



景 *Scenery* (2016)  
H36 1/4 x 51 1/4 in / H92 x W130 cm

*“When the ability to express emotion was acquired, that is when man became human.*

*I would like to get back to this starting point.*

*If my paintings strike a sympathetic chord with, and awaken nostalgia in the back of a viewer’s mind, it will be my pleasure as an artist.” - Ken Matsubara*

NEW YORK, NY, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 — Ippodo gallery is pleased to announce - *Distillation* - Japanese painter Ken Matsubara’s solo exhibition which opens on May 12. Ken Matsubara (b. 1948) is a Japanese painter. He was born in Kamiimachi, Toyama Prefecture, Japan. The Toyama is close to the Japanese Alps, so he has been surrounded by mountains since he was born. Now he spends his time using earth from the outdoors to recreate nature indoors, living and working in Nasu, Tochigi prefecture.

“When memory and reality combine, the seeds overflow and scenery is born,” says Matsubara. Deeply treasuring his relationship with the natural world, Matsubara travels through the mountains and plains of the Nasu district to collect materials infused in his work. The artist grinds his own pigments from the earth, sourcing different colors of soil to mix with charcoal and bengala, a red iron oxide. The technique is systematic but the result is serene, and his valley and mountain paintings blend pleasantly in a variety of settings.

With a playful smirk on his face and a skullcap on his head, Matsubara methodically sources materials outdoors, grinds pigments by hand, and prepares his washed canvasses. Although he uses brushes to gesso and glue the canvasses, the subject matter only evolves with spritzes of water, allowing the grit of the dirt-based pigments to stick to the glue in a natural formation.

When Matsubara had a chance to fly over Mount Fuji and view the mountain from above, he felt profoundly that the mountains were sculpted by water, so he paints them using only careful direction of fluid. The result mimics nature itself, like lines in the soil from a river, or rings and bark breaks on a tree. He almost always paints outside during the daytime, to bask in the light of the sun and view the paintings in their purest form.

In the summer, Japan's climate is hot and humid. Matsubara's works with bright sun, thriving on his own energized spirit as well. When snow falls on white-capped mountains, the landscape is quiet, with just the sound of ice melting. Air is brisk, and while the climate is harder when working with water, Matsubara's spirit is purified. His work changes depending on the season.

The simplicity of the line nevertheless has a contemporary feel, evoking the minimalistic calligraphic work often seen in other artistic movements. On the one hand, the work is incredibly unique in subject and media, yet the universality of the line on the other compels viewers previously unfamiliar with Matsubara's innovative style.

Matsubara has shown extensively in Japan, but rarely outside his home country. This is first exhibition in the United States, and the first abroad since his 2006 *Exhibition of Ken Matsubara*, which toured Paris and Cologne.

Ippodo Gallery has been actively seeking artists who depict nature through unusual methods, making powerful statements about the awe-inspiring beauty and sometimes danger that nature can bring humanity. This aesthetic appreciation for the natural world manifests with inspired living artists, and proves to be an exciting development for the direction of contemporary Japanese art overall.

Ippodo Gallery is based in both Tokyo and New York, working to foster and promote the innovation of traditional Japanese arts and crafts. Open by appointment 7 days a week.



富嶽 Mt. Fuji (2016)  
H31 2/4 x W39 2/4 in / H80 x W100 cm



景 Scenery (2015)  
H63 2/4 x W17 3/4 in / H161 x W45 cm

## Ken Matsubara

1948 Born in Toyama Prefecture

1973 Dokuritsu Bijyutsu exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

### Record of Awards

1977 Dai-ichi Bijyutsu Award at the Dai-ichi Bijyutsu Exhibition,  
Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in Tokyo

1979 Prefectural Assembly Chairman Award at Kanagawa Prefectural Art  
Exhibition, Kanagawa Prefectural Gallery in Kanagawa

1987 Special Honorable Prize at Ueno Royal Museum Grand Prize Exhibition,  
Ueno Royal Museum in Tokyo

Silver Award at INF International Art Exhibition in Kobe, Japan and China

1988 Ceramic Art Award at the Contemporary Ceramic Art Maquette Exhibition,  
Toki City Bunka Plaza in Gifu

Excellence Award at the Contemporary Ceramic Art Exhibition,  
Toki City Bunka Plaza in Gifu

### Exhibitions / Events

1979 Japan-France Contemporary Art Exhibition, Grand Palais in Paris,  
Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, and Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art  
Kanagawa Prefectural Art Exhibition, Kanagawa Prefectural Gallery  
in Kanagawa

1987 Ueno Royal Museum Grand Prize Exhibition,  
Ueno Royal Museum in Tokyo

Tokyo Exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in Tokyo

1989 Japanese Today's Visual Art Exhibition in Barcelona, Spain

1990 Exhibition for Leading Artists of the Next Generation,  
Hakone Open-Air Museum in Kanagawa

2001 Tochigi Prefecture 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art, Tochigi Museum of Fine Arts

2006 Ken Matsubara Exhibition around Paris to Cologne (France, Germany)

2008 *Shoujyou-ruten* solo exhibition, Museum of Modern Art, Toyama

2015 Ken Matsubara *KEI*, Ginza Ippodo Gallery

and others.

### Public Collections and Institutions

1987 Ueno Royal Museum in Tokyo

1990 Choanji Temple in Kanagawa

1991 The Museum of Modern Art, Toyama

1995 Kasama Inari Shrine in Ibaraki

1996 Toyama City Theater for Performing Arts (Aubade Hall) in Toyama

1999 Rakuhouji Temple (Amabiki-kannon) in Ibaraki

Hotel Okura (Tokyo / Fukuoka)

2006 Shogakuji Temple in Ibaraki

2012 Nasu Red Cross Hospital in Tochigi

and others.

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