



Tomokazu Matsuyama
East Weets Mest

Joshua Liner Gallery

548 W. 28th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001
212.244.7415 joshualinergallery.com

Tomokazu Matsuyama

East Weets Mest

September 8 - October 8, 2011

Opening Reception:

Thursday September 8, 6-9 pm

For inquiries please contact:
info@joshualinergallery.com



East Weets Mest

Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *East Weets Mest*, an exhibition of new paintings, sculpture, and installation by the New York-based Japanese artist Tomokazu Matsuyama. This is the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Matsuyama's wildly colorful art relocates traditional Japanese icons and imagery into a broader international mix of styles, signs, and symbols. The spoonerism of the show's title, *East Weets Mest*, playfully mimics this relocation and subsequent homogenization of cultural material, which Matsuyama identifies as a key force in contemporary life. "Urban centers are becoming increasingly familiar, with their patchwork of intermingling cultural signifiers," says the artist. "This chaotic mix has become the everyday, where traditions and local signifiers dissolve into one another to make a unique new shape of today's culture."

In his dynamic acrylic-on-canvas paintings, Matsuyama blends the aesthetics of East and West, appropriating images from art history—the Edo and Meiji eras of traditional Japanese art, in particular—fused with postwar abstract expressionism and contemporary art movements, American animation, and subculture influences such as street art. *Mr. Alpha and Mrs. Omega*, for example, is an eye-popping tondo diptych featuring a pair of *shishi*, traditional temple "lion dogs." These ancient figures take the form of guardian sculptures at the entrances to shrines, and are found in numerous cultures of the Far East. Signifying the beginning and the end, the eradication of evil, and the ever-expanding cosmos, the temple lion dogs are powerful symbols in Japanese Shintoism, Buddhism, and beyond. Here, Matsuyama's friendly, Pop-style interpretation of the creatures is abstracted through the use of bright colors and patterned facets, and calls to mind the spirit of works by fellow dog lovers, artists George Rodrigue and William Wegman.

In *Toys and Candy*, an epic painting measuring 7-x-15 feet, Matsuyama appropriates a classic image of propaganda from the Meiji period—a woodblock from 1894 that depicts Japan defeating its other Asian neighbors. Here, the artist has transformed this nationalist message into a contest among juveniles, their swords beaten not into ploughshares but toys and candy. Awash in whimsical colors, cartoon faces, baseball caps, and popular slogans ("just do it"), the epic work nonetheless harbors disturbing vestiges of the classic print, including an exact likeness of the original composition.

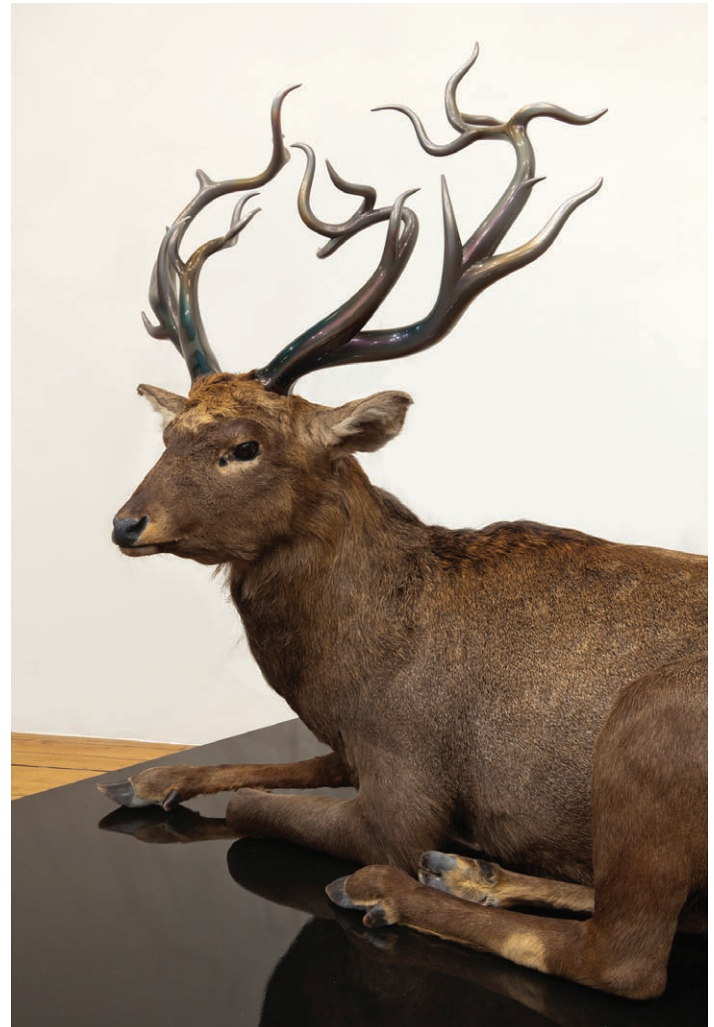
In a further critique of the abuses of power, Matsuyama offers a new sculptural work entitled *Money Talks*. Here, a traditional Japanese sage/saint, or *sennin*, is depicted life-size in FRP (fiber-reinforced plastic). But instead of carrying the traditional scroll, a symbol of the saint's redemption through Buddhist teachings, the artist's appropriated figure carries a Western-style piggy bank and is accompanied by the figure of a resting deer, a Shinto symbol of salvation. In Matsuyama's contemporary interplay of East and West, the artist's relationship to creativity, culture, and commerce is an ongoing question.



Money Talks
FRP, taxidermy deer, wood, metal,
polyurethane plastic, paint, glass eyes,
plastic coins
69 x 60 x 65 in.
2011



Money Talks
FRP, taxidermy deer, wood, metal,
polyurethane plastic, paint, glass eyes,
plastic coins
69 x 60 x 65 in.
2011



Money Talks (detail)
2011



Buddhamaton
Wood, electronic motor, acrylic,
metal, styrofoam, paper
87 x 27 x 42 in.
2011



Toys and Candy
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
84 x 180 in.
2011



Mrs. Omega and Mr. Alpha
Installation view
2011



Mrs. Omega
Acrylic on canvas
72 in. diameter
2011



Mr. Alpha
Acrylic on canvas
72 in. diameter
2011



Cold Mountain and The Foundling
Installation view
2011



Cold Mountain
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 48 in.
2011



The Foundling
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 50 in.
2011



Cold Mountain and The Foundling
(detail)
2011



Purple Reign
Acrylic on canvas
42 in. diameter
2011



Runnin' Deep Study Revisited
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
36 x 56 x 3 in.
2011



The Future is Always Bright (Study #2)
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
36 x 48 x 3 in.
2010



The Future is Always Bright (Study #3)
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
36 x 48 x 3 in.
2010



Just With You
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
42.5 x 42.5 x 3 in.
2011



What Still Remains
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
34 in. diameter
2011



Thousand Regards
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
30 in. diameter
2011



Yellow Sunshine
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
30 in. diameter
2011



Yellow Fever
Acrylic on canvas
30 in. diameter
2011

Works on paper



*Winds of the Night and
Night of the Rays*
Installation view



Winds of the Night
Acrylic on Lanaquarelle paper
20 x 28 in.
24 x 33 in. framed
2009



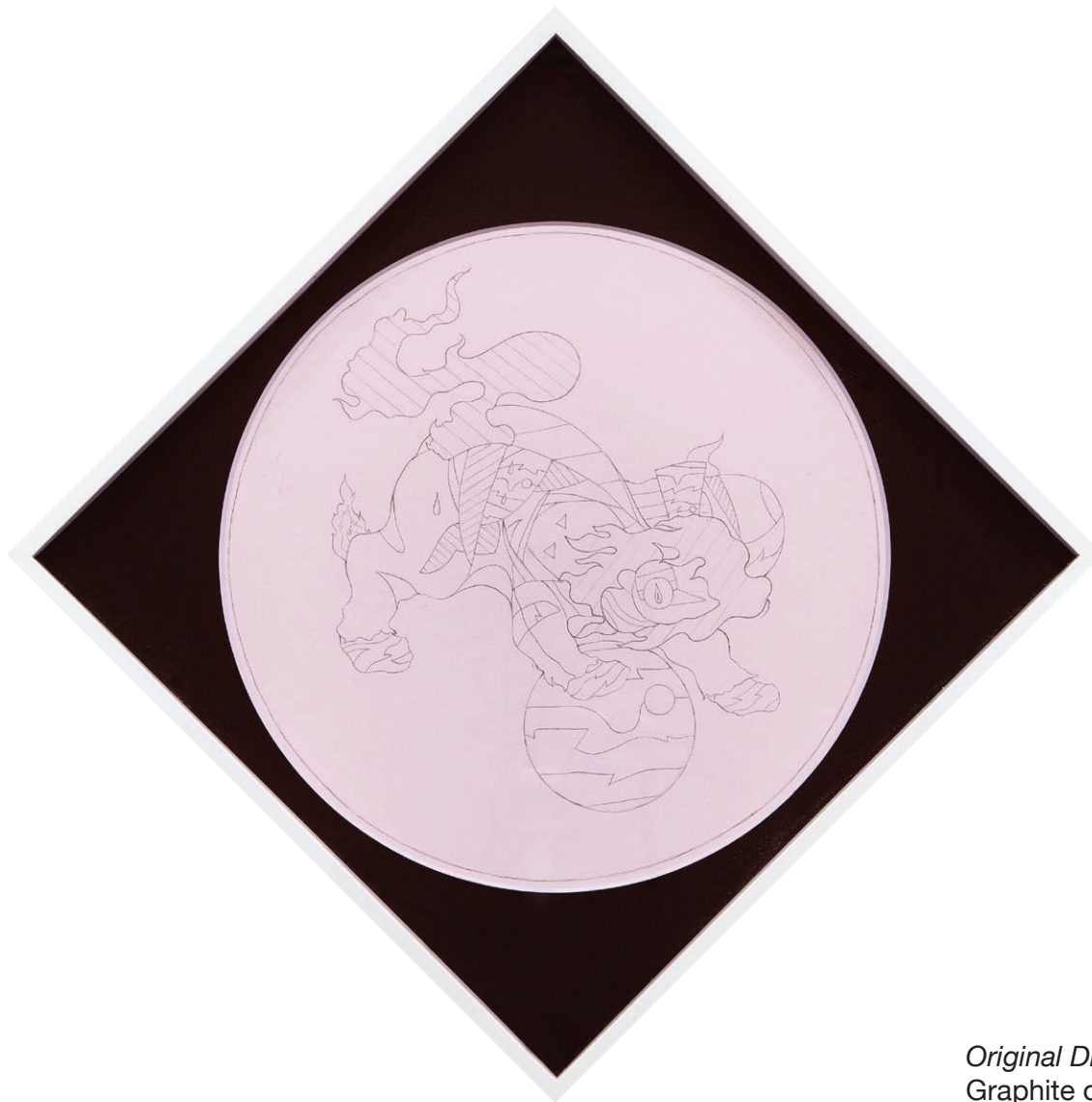
Night of the Rays
Acrylic on Lanaquarelle paper
20 x 28 in.
24 x 33 in. framed
2009



Trio drawing installation view



Original Drawing Purple Reign
Graphite on white paper with
colored UV lens frame
18.5 x 18.5 in.
2011



Original Drawing Mrs.Omega
Graphite on white paper with
colored UV lens frame
18.5 x 18.5 in.
2011



Original Drawing Mr. Alpha
Graphite on white paper with
colored UV lens frame
18.5 x 18.5 in.
2011



Kirin
35 color screen-print on
Arches Cover paper
24 x 30 in.
Edition of 30
2009

Joshua Liner Gallery