

W H I T E C U B E

Press Release

Inside the White Cube

Yoko Matsumoto

18 January – 9 March 2024

White Cube Mason's Yard

White Cube Mason's Yard is pleased to present the debut UK solo exhibition by Japanese artist Yoko Matsumoto, featuring paintings and works on paper from the mid-1980s to the present day.

Born in 1936 in Tokyo, Matsumoto's expressive and disciplined abstraction is informed by lineages of Japanese art, in particular the monochromatic ink drawing practice of *suiboku-ga*. Throughout her work, Matsumoto addresses colour in a processual and meditative manner with a rigorous use of light, shade and hue.

Intuited in free-form without preparatory drawing, the effort required to create Matsumoto's large-scale paintings becomes embedded within the material itself: 'Since I paint with the work lying on the floor, my sweat is constantly dripping on it. It's manual labour, pure and simple, with no time to question. The work doesn't allow me to think, and with no time to think I become one with the painting.'

The exhibition includes her signature labour-intensive 'pink' works which she began in the 1970s and continued to develop for three decades. 'Unlike black and white, pink bears no concept; instead it exists, unreachable, in the innermost depths of our subconscious', she has said.

Also featured are acrylic paintings made between 1989 to the late 1990s showcasing the influence from her time spent in New York in 1967. It was here she discovered materials unavailable in Japan, namely acrylic paint (Liquitex) and raw cotton canvas, and the work of artists such as Morris Louis and Helen Frankenthaler.

Works of an intimate scale include a series of delicate charcoal and pastel drawings recalling blustery contours of a windswept landscape. This painterly language runs through her oil paintings, which she returned to in the 2000s, including her 'green' works inspired by nature and its historic representation, from Cézanne's *The Great Pine* (1889) to Monet's series of haystacks or Hishida Shunsō's epic *Fallen Leaves* (1909).

In a selection of works produced from 2006 onwards, Matsumoto explores how far oil paint can be taken solely on the potency of the colour green, with compositions underwritten by streaks of Mediterranean blue. For the artist, the use of blue embodies a 'magical force' that 'transcends all boundaries' and is capable of transforming the space and qualities of a painting.

WHITE CUBE

In more recent works, Matsumoto concentrates on tones of white applied with a roller. Evolved from studies of the sky, these bleary abstractions evoke spiritual qualities that the artist likens to an 'afterlife'.

Inside the White Cube: Yoko Matsumoto is on view at White Cube Mason's Yard from 18 January to 9 March 2024. The exhibition is organised in collaboration with Hino Gallery.

For additional press information, interviews or images please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- Yoko Matsumoto (b.1936) lives and works in Tokyo. She studied oil painting at the Tokyo University of the Arts, graduating in 1960. Matsumoto has exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions, including recent shows at Hino Gallery, Tokyo (2023, 2019 and 2017) and Nihonbashi Takashimaya Art Gallery X, Tokyo (2021), as well as group exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (2023); The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan (2023); Phillips Tokyo (2023); The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2022); The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan (2022); Ginza Yokyo Hall, Tokyo; The Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura Annex, Kanagawa, Japan (2020); and Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan (2020). Her work is held in public collections, including The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama, Japan; and Fukuyama Museum of Art, Hiroshima, Japan. Since 2005, Matsumoto has been represented by Hino Gallery, Tokyo.
- 'Inside the White Cube' is a programme of exhibitions profiling work by artists who have not previously shown at the gallery. The series provides a stimulating platform for exploring developments in contemporary practice by artists from across the globe.
- White Cube's exhibition programme extends across locations in London, Hong Kong, Paris, New York, West Palm Beach and online. Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of many of the world's most highly acclaimed contemporary artists. whitecube.com
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