Yu Nishimura
Clearing Unfolds

April 24–June 27, 2025
34 East 69th Street, New York

Yu Nishimura, *Along the Skyline*, 2025 © Yu Nishimura. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Japanese artist Yu Nishimura. This will be his first solo show in the United States, following several international presentations of his work in recent years.

Combining traditional oil and tempera techniques with visual impulses borrowed from avant-garde postwar Japanese photographers, Nishimura's multilayered paintings are steeped in everyday sources such as street photography, anime, and the diverse landscapes and built environments of the artist's home country. Built up from dreamlike arrangements of simplified, semiblurred forms, his portraits and urban scenes achieve a stark sense of contemporaneity through their evocative palettes and spare and graphic compositional approach—yet at the same instant, they appear to exist in a nebulous realm of melancholic reminiscence that documents the passage of time.

The body of work on view was inspired by Nishimura's recent trip to his hometown of Yokodai—a suburb situated near the Port of Yokohama in Kanagawa Prefecture—where he spent his formative childhood and early teenage years in the 1990s. Marked by a unique arrangement of towering housing complexes built next to grassy fields, forests, and vacant lots, Yokodai has contributed greatly to the development of the artist's subject matter and unique visual language. As he remarks, "I often discover that my understanding of my hometown's topography deepens with the passage of time. For instance, the road to the station that I recall from my childhood now seems remarkably shorter, and I occasionally experience a sense of objective detachment when revisiting a place after a prolonged absence.… This exhibition explores the creation of another place—expressed as pictorial existence—derived from landscapes with which I have connected. These places, built of memory, are also distillations of my ever-flowing self through time."[1]

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[1] Conversation with the artist, February 2025.

The artist approaches painting as an act of continuous discovery, in which any given shape or hue only fully reveals itself once it is applied to the canvas and adopts its own texture and dimensionality. In one group of paintings on view, Nishimura portrays solitary figures in strange and fragmented naturescapes. Exploring concepts of restraint and recollection, the artist allows colors to mutate and fade away in these works as a visual analogue to the workings of human memory. Nishimura takes a similar approach when painting his portrait busts, which make up another central aspect of his oeuvre; in these compositions, rather than aiming to depict a specific individual, he instead builds up his canvas with numerous layers of diaphanous oils until the figure before him seems to arrive at a distinct personality. On view alongside these intimate paintings is a suite of pastel-on-paper portraits that originate from a single sketchbook and possess an unprecedented material immediacy.

Yu Nishimura (b. 1982) was born in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, and he continues to live and work there today. In 2004, he graduated from the Department of Fine Arts at Tama Art University, Tokyo, where he studied oil painting.

Recent solo and two-person exhibitions of Nishimura's work include *Subject Seconds: Magnus Frederik Clausen & Yu Nishimura*, Castle, Los Angeles (2024); *Synopsis*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2024); *Sleep Walk*, ARCH, Athens (2024); *Takezaki Kazuyuki + Nishimura Yu. The Sequel: Twin Boat Songs – Verdigris Vessel*, Echigo-Tsumari Satoyama Museum of Contemporary Art (MonET), Niigata, Japan (2023); *December Light*, La Società delle Api, Monaco (2023); *State of Stillness*, Crèvecœur, Paris (2022); *Ebb Tide*, Dawid Radziszewski Gallery, Warsaw (2021); *Eli Bornowsky & Yu Nishimura*, King's Leap, New York (2021); *Scene of beholder*, Crèvecœur, Paris (2020); *Around October*, KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo (2020); *Aperto 09: Nishimura Yu*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2018); *portrait*, KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo (2017); *projection*, KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo (2016); *project N 61*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2015); *TWS-Emerging 202. Yu Nishimura: The Scenery Carried*, Tokyo Wonder Site Hongo (2013); and *Haruhi Painting Triennale: Artist Series Vol. 65 Yu Nishimura*, Kiyosu City Haruhi Art Museum, Aichi, Japan (2010).

The artist's work is held in institutional collections worldwide, including the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Artistic Museum of Contemporary Art, Cardiff, Wales; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fukuda Art Museum, Kyoto; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Kiyosu City Haruhi Art Museum, Aichi, Japan; Lafayette Anticipations - Collection Fonds de dotation Famille Moulin, Paris; Long Museum, Shanghai; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; M Woods Museum, Beijing; MACAM - Museu de Arte Contemporânea Armando Martins, Lisbon; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Rubell Museum, Miami; and Taguchi Art Collection, Japan.