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Surface and Signal

BLUM Tokyo

June 28–August 2, 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 28, 5–7pm

June 17, 2025, Tokyo—BLUM is pleased to present *Surface and Signal*, a group exhibition of work by Kazunori Hamana, Akane Saijo, Peter Shear, and Yuji Ueda.

Surface and Signal brings together four artists whose practices engage with formal clarity, material honesty, and sensitivity to the boundaries between intention and chance. The exhibition foregrounds how each artist operates within the inherent structure of their chosen medium—painting and ceramics, respectively—while maintaining a looseness that allows for vulnerability, gesture, and quiet radicalism.

Reiterating the poetic tendencies of his practice, Shear’s paintings in *Surface and Signal* are pithy bursts of evocative gestures rooted in wide-reaching, visual reference to moments in culture and art history. With brushstrokes that both emphasize the artist’s hand and physical qualities of his paint, the expressive gestures in Shear’s works, such as *Current* (2025), call out to the materiality and intricate glazing of ceramics by Kazunori Hamana, Akane Saijo, and Yuji Ueda.

Hamana’s vessels, hand-built by coiling extruded strands of ash gray clay, carry the imprint of the artist’s palms and fingers throughout their physicality and brushed glazing. Robust and sizable, these rotund basins team with the minute details imparted upon them by human entropy and the circumstances of their making. Similarly examining the sublime implications of cultivated chance, Ueda aligns himself with the Shigaraki ceramic tradition of beautiful imperfections. Using a layer of plaster atop clay, the shells of Ueda’s vessels are built to crack and peel away revealing oozing, vivid glaze and cast forms that have been used in Japan since the Edo period.

Saijo creates ceramic forms that correspond to and create space for the human body. Often staging activations wherein performers breathe into or interface with her work, she calls attention to the unknowable and disjointed space of communication and perception that divides us all. Skillfully glazing her impeccably built forms, Saijo, like the other artists in *Surface and Signal*, plays with the evocative tension of achieving modes of perfection in our inherently disordered human experience.

Kazunori Hamana (b. 1969, Osaka, Japan) lives and works in Chiba, Japan. His work has been exhibited at public art institutions including the Okura Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan (2023); The Warehouse, Dallas, TX (2023); the Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA (2021); Towada Art Center, Towada, Japan (2017); and Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan (2016). His work is held in the public collections of BY ART MATTERS, Hangzhou, China; and The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas, TX.

Akane Saijo (b. 1989, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan) lives and works in Kyoto, Japan. She completed her BA in Fine Art and MA in Ceramics at Kyoto City University of Arts, Kyoto, Japan, and received the grand prize at the first edition of MIMOCA EYE at Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Kagawa, Japan in 2022. Her first museum solo exhibition, *Akane Saijo—Double Touch*, was held at the Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art (MIMOCA) in early 2025. Her work is

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represented in the collections of the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan; and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan, among others. In fall 2025, Saijo's work will be featured in the Aichi Triennale: *A Time Between Ashes and Roses*, followed by a solo exhibition at BLUM, Los Angeles in November.

Peter Shear (b. 1980, Beverly Farms, MA) lives and works in Bloomington, IN. His work was the subject of the solo exhibition *Time Stamp* at Herron School of Art + Design, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN (2019). Group exhibitions include *The Feminine In Abstract Painting*, The Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, New York, NY (2023); *A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art*, New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, MA (2021); *Locus Focus: Peter Shear and Arvind Sundararajan*, 840 Gallery, University of Cincinnati, OH (2018); and *Basic Instinct*, *Peter Shear and Ellen Siebers*, FJORD, Philadelphia, PA (2016). In 2025, he received the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY.

Yuji Ueda (b. 1975, Shigaraki, Shiga Prefecture, Japan) comes from a family of award-winning tea farmers in the Shiga Prefecture town of Shigaraki, where he lives and works. His work has been included in prominent group exhibitions including *Unearthed*, Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), Costa Mesa, CA; and *Earth, Wind, and Fire: Visions of the Future from Asia*, Okura Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan (2024).

About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from twenty countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing international artists of postwar and contemporary movements, such as CoBrA, Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale exhibitions focusing on the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023); among others.

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. BLUM is committed to

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fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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