

GAGOSIAN

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BEYOND MATTER

TSUYOSHI MAEKAWA WITH ALBERTO BURRI, ENRICO CASTELLANI,
JORGE EIELSON, LUCIO FONTANA, PIERO MANZONI, AND SALVATORE
SCARPITTA

Opening reception:
Thursday, January 12, 6–8PM
January 12–March 18, 2017

657 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Gagosian is pleased to present "Beyond Matter," an exhibition of sewn and painted fabric works by Tsuyoshi Maekawa. The exhibition also includes selected works by Alberto Burri, Enrico Castellani, Jorge Eielson, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, and Salvatore Scarpitta, elaborating a greater global context for Maekawa's work.

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The Gutai Art Association (GAA), formed in 1954 in Osaka, Japan, asserted individual creativity and international outreach following Japan's wartime isolationism. In relation to Art Informel, Abstract Expressionism, the Dutch Nul collective, and more, Gutai reveals late modernism to be both a global and local network. In 1972, following the death of their co-founder Yoshihara Jirō, members of the GAA gathered to discuss disbanding. Maekawa decided to extend his practice beyond Yoshihara's imperative "Do what no one has done before!" He continued sewing burlap into intricate waveforms, but instead of focusing on the performative radicality that typified Gutai, his subsequent work reveals a shift to methodical experimentation, using thinner layers of paint and refined tactile effects, such as impressions left in the burlap from his own fingers.

"Beyond Matter" features eighteen of Maekawa's post-Gutai works, revealing intricate permutations between tautness and slackness in the stretches and folds of material. For an untitled work from 1977, Maekawa pulled and sewed seven thin striations horizontally through the center of a cotton cloth painted the color of a clear blue sky. The lines end in shadowy pleats, and between them, light washes of pink, red, green, and blue appear and disappear like a passing fog. The gradations are as elusive as a sunrise or sunset, yet Maekawa has combined them with the concreteness of his stitching. An earlier untitled work of 1975 features an undulating line painted in an ochre hue that fades into the murky gray of the field. Along the sloping sides of the swelling wave, turquoise and violet undertones emerge. Some works are composed of several burlap panels, tiled or stacked. Cryptographic folds become indecipherable symbols, and the intersection of smooth cotton and rough burlap evokes the variable surfaces of landscape.

Maekawa's artistic output from this period shows that he succeeded in moving beyond Gutai after its dissolution. The works chosen in response to this development bear relation to Maekawa's material manipulations. From Italy, Castellani and Fontana, who exhibited their own work at the Gutai Pinacotheca, reimagined the surface of the canvas through wrapping and slashing. Burri combined burnt, ripped, and scraped textures, while Manzoni and Scarpitta brought sculptural elements to the canvas, stacking kaolin tiles and weaving thick fabric bands across wooden stretchers. Similarly, Peruvian born Jorge Eielson draped and cinched his canvases diagonally across their supports. To consider these works alongside Maekawa's points to the rich complexity of the global artistic network whose aim was to break the boundaries of the painted surface.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay on Maekawa's work by Barbara Bertozzi Castelli will accompany the exhibition.

Tsuyoshi Maekawa was born in 1936 in Osaka, Japan and currently lives and works in Mino, Osaka. His work is included in the collections of Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Hira Art Museum, Shiga; The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama; Hasegawa Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; and Tate Britain.

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Maekawa's first solo exhibition took place in 1963 at the Gutai Pinacotheca in Osaka. Since then, his work has been featured in solo gallery exhibitions throughout Japan, as well as in major group exhibitions including "8th Gutai Art Exhibition," Ohara Kaikan Hall, Tokyo (1959, traveled to Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto); "20th Gutai Art Exhibition," Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka (1968); "Yoshihara Jiro and His Circle," Fujimi Gallery, Osaka (1972); "Nul = 0," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2011); "Gutai: The Spirit of an Era," The National Art Center, Tokyo (2012); "Tapiés, the Eye of the Artist," Palazzo Fortuny, Venice (2013); "Gutai: Splendid Playground (Gutai Card Box)," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2013); and "50 Years of Japanese Painting," Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama (2013).

Image: Tsuyoshi Maekawa, *Untitled*, 1977, sewn Burlap, cotton cloth, and acrylic, 36 × 72 inches (91 × 182 cm) © Maekawa.

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