

Joshua Liner Gallery

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For immediate release and listing:

Tomokazu Matsuyama
Glancing at the Twin Peak
March 6–April 4, 2009
Opening reception, Galleries I & II: Friday, March 6, 6–9 PM

New York, NY February 10, 2009 -- Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *Glancing at the Twin Peak*, an exhibition of new paintings, sculpture and installation by the New York-based Japanese artist Tomokazu Matsuyama. This is the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

Working in acrylic on canvas or paper, Tomokazu Matsuyama creates paintings that embrace his cultural roots with a distinctive contemporary playfulness. Influenced by both the austerity of postwar contemporary art and the unbridled extravagance of Japanese and American popular culture, Matsuyama challenges conventional ideas about cultural homogeneity, contradicting notions of "Japaneseness."

With *Glancing at the Twin Peak*, the artist makes reference to two titans of Japanese and American culture, respectively—Sanraku Kano and Frederic Remington. A master of the influential Kano school of painting in the late sixteenth century, Kano depicted riders on horseback in iconic images of masculinity that typified the era. Likewise, Remington, celebrated for his hypermasculine paintings of "cowboys and Indians," spoke for a young nation coming of age at the end of the nineteenth century.

As the stunning centerpiece of the exhibition, Matsuyama's 7-x-15-foot mixed-media painting *Runnin' Deep* synthesizes these two strains of nationalist identity into a vibrant contemporary amalgam. Riding across a snowy terrain, the artist's "cowboys" are distinctly Japanese in appearance, while their steeds bear the artist's colorful, stylized approach to animal forms. Similarly, Matsuyama transforms Remington's signature bronze, *The Bronco Buster*, into his own stylized likeness. His two-meter-tall fiberglass sculpture, *Wherever I am*, depicts a bucking horse reined in by a Playmobil-style toy figure with Asian features.

Born in Japan and later immigrating to the United States, Matsuyama's bicultural upbringing figures prominently in his style and subject matter. The mythical, shape-shifting Kirin appears often; the creature is updated with a bouncy, kaleidoscopic abstractness, creating a pictorial dimension where ancient tales and contemporary visual design can intermingle. Appropriating from Western modern art history, as well as Japanese art from the Edo and Meiji eras, the artist mixes traditional icons and imagery onto a broader international canvas, including elements of Superflat, digital design, contemporary collage, and other current trends and practices. The intention, says Matsuyama, is "to blend what are considered Eastern and Western aesthetics into one that resists categorization and cultural belonging. My work is equally pending between worlds that are not completely blended but instead still a patchwork of controlled chaos trying to evolve into something close to cosmopolitanism."

Tomokazu Matsuyama was born 1976 in Tokyo, Japan, and currently lives and works in New York City. He received an MFA in Communications Design from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Solo exhibitions include: *Polarize*, FIFTY24SF Gallery, San Francisco (2007); *Between the Polar*, Takuro Someya Contemporary Art, Chiba, Japan (2007); among others. Selected group exhibitions include: *What's so Funny About Peace, Love and Understanding?*, Esso Gallery, New York (2008); *Piece of Peace*, Parco Gallery, Tokyo (2008); *Living Lines*, J Flynn Gallery, Costa Mesa, CA (2007). Matsuyama's first monograph, *Found Modern Library*, was published in 2007 by Gingko Press. His second monograph published by Panorama in Japan will release later this year.

Joshua Liner established Joshua Liner Gallery in New York City's Chelsea district in 2008. Building on the success of his former, Philadelphia-based Lineage Gallery, Joshua Liner's Chelsea space introduces an exciting roster of young and emerging artists from the West and East coasts, Asia, and Europe.

For more information, please visit www.joshualinergallery.com, or contact Tim Strazza at 212.244.7415 or tim@joshualinergallery.com.



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1. *Runnin' Deep* Mixed media on canvas 84 x 180 in. 2008
2. *Kirin* Acrylic on canvas 24 x 30 in. 2008
3. *Speaking a Life's Journey* Acrylic on canvas 60 x 60 in. 2008