

Press Release

SOKYO ATSUMI (Tokyo) is pleased to present “Medamayaki” by Shuhei Yamada.

Yamada was born in 1974 and lives in Kyoto. He has exhibited in Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam and New York. Thanks to a referral by Eric Shiner, The Andy Warhol Museum’s director, Yamada in 2013 was the only Japanese artist chosen for the Armory Show “Focus”, and his artwork inspired by World War II was very well received.

Yamada's background focus in nihilism has led him to create art that critically examines aspects of our contemporary society.

Yamada’s works in a wide variety of media, including photography, video, installation, and varied two-dimensional art, but all of his works share an underlying sharp, often thought provoking approach, to their themes and subjects.

Sometimes ironic, sometimes nonsensical, his art encapsulates his unique perspective and by causing a subtle “gap” in the viewer’s understanding of everyday objects and images prompts thinking about larger questions.

The centerpiece of the exhibition are the large balloons grouped here together in “EYE,” that represent 2-meter high “eyeballs” inspired by Alfred Hitchcock's film, “The White Terror,” a 1945 psycho-thriller. Salvador Dali, a genius of surrealism, collaborated in the creation of the film's staging and images. Yamada uses eyes and eyeballs (medama), a favorite motif of surrealist artists, to depict today's society.

The eyes are drawn on the balloons based on AI-generated images. The way the balloons seem shaken by wind (from the fan) echoes how we people living in modern society are consumed and tossed about by images and information.

On the wall, lithographs, “Egg,” are also based on a motif often used by Dali and René Magritte. The egg, a symbol of creation and birth, is here depicted by Yamada with burning buildings inside. The combination of the serene outline of an egg with images of destruction and conflagration that are the opposite of the usual meaning of eggs, is thought-provoking.

This will be Yamada’s first solo exhibition at SOKYO ATSUMI, and we hope you will take this opportunity to view his work.

Words from the Artist:

*The eyeball is jealous of the egg.*

*The egg is fragile and unstable, yet within its white liquid sphere lies the source of life.*

*The egg yearns for the eyeball that can see the world and be enraptured, although also frightened.*

*Both have the same elliptical spherical shape (like testicles), but the eyeball can never be an egg, and the egg can never become the eyeball [although in Japanese fried eggs are called medamayaki].*

*Both eggs and eyes take pride in being motifs that were much loved by the surrealists.*

# SOKYO ATSUMI

Shuhei Yamada

Born 1974, currently lives and works in Kyoto.

Major solo exhibitions include Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, London (2019); AISHONANZUKA, Hong Kong (2017, 2016, 2014); The Armory Show, New York (2013). Major group exhibitions include *Positionalities*, Kyoto City University of Arts Gallery @ KCUA, Kyoto (2022); *KUROOBIANACONDA 03 SANMAIOROSHI*, TEZUKAYAMA GALLERY, Osaka (2021); *Taguchi Collection Next World The Power of Dreaming*, Iwaki City Museum of Art, Japan (2021); *Unclear Nuclear*, URANO, Tokyo, Japan (2016); *Resonance*, Sao La Gallery, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2014); 2017 ISCP Residency Program (New York). His works are in the collections of the Taguchi Collection and G foundation.



*EYE.A, 2023*  
Ink on balloon,  $\phi$  200cm/  $\phi$  78.7 in.



*EYE.E, 2023*  
Ink on balloon,  $\phi$  250cm/  $\phi$  98.4 in.



*Egg.5, 2023*  
Silkscreen ink, acrylic paint on canvas,  
H98 x W75cm/ H38.5 x W29.5 in.

## Shuhei Yamada | *Medamayaki*

Dates: Tuesday, September 19 - Thursday, November 16, 2023

Press Preview: Friday, September 15, 16:00 - 18:00

VIP Preview: September 16, 2023 (Sat) 16:00 - 18:00

The artist will be present on both days.

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