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Press Release

August 5, 2025

A Vibrant Opening Reception Marks the Start

Yuya Saito, Shinji Murakami, and Hiroshi Masuda Pose the Question from New York: *“An Open Future”*

Group Exhibition *Stand clear of the closing doors, Please* at GOCA by Garde

Exhibition Period: Thursday, July 10 – Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Garde Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Minato-ku, Tokyo; President & CEO: Kenji Muro), a global provider of comprehensive services in interior design, consulting, and coordination, is currently presenting the group exhibition *Stand clear of the closing doors, Please* at its art gallery, GOCA by Garde, from Thursday, July 10 to Wednesday, August 27, 2025.



Yuya Saito

Shinji Murakami

Hiroshi Masuda

GOCA by Garde is Garde’s first overseas art gallery, serving as a hub for introducing Japanese and Asian artists to the world. The gallery showcases a diverse range of works, including paintings, sculptures, and ceramics, with the aim of becoming a new cultural platform for sharing contemporary art from Japan and Asia on a global scale.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by the familiar announcement heard daily on the New York City subway: *“Stand clear of the closing doors, Please.”* In a world where various boundaries—national, cultural, and ideological—are increasingly closing, three Japanese artists based in New York with active international careers—Yuya Saito, Shinji Murakami, and Hiroshi Masuda—present perspectives on “reopening the doors” through the backdrop of this city. In a society marked by growing global division, cultural exclusivity, and restrictions on the movement of people, goods, and information, invisible “doors” separate us in countless ways. This exhibition seeks to question these boundaries through art and to explore the possibilities of diversity and dialogue in a world that is closing in on itself.

■ Exhibition Highlights

• Yuya Saito

Yuya Saito focuses on the non-hierarchical and democratic structure of skateboard “ramps,” reimagining them from an urban-critical perspective to create sculptural works.

His exploration of the “relationship between people and cities” began in response to his personal

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experience of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Using traditional bentwood techniques, he fuses “flow” and “structure” to visualize the fluid spirituality inherent in urban environments.

This work suggests the potential for accessing free, open spaces—embodied through playful physical engagement—within the rigid systems in which we live. With the influx of street culture, such as graffiti, into art history, the boundaries between “high art” and “popular culture” have blurred.

Saito’s contemporary practice, which he calls *flow-chitecture*—a concept of non-hierarchical, non-authoritative spaces—seeks to bring transformative change to art history through physical and temporal “repetition.”

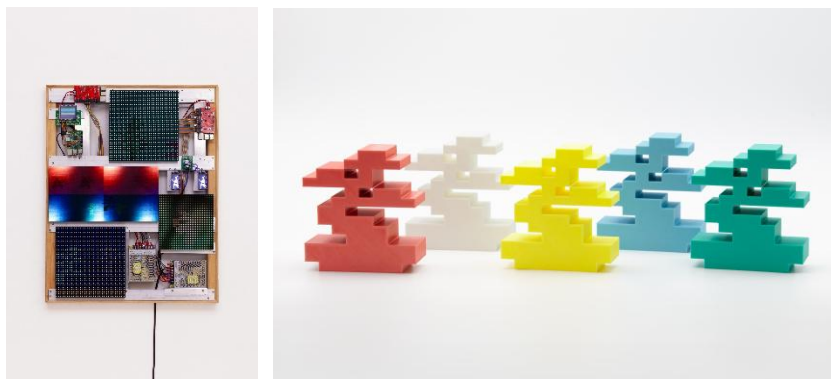


• Shinji Murakami

Shinji Murakami is a pioneer of a new form of landscape painting grounded in 8-bit video game culture. Using a universally accessible visual language and the Atari 2600, he constructs a unique world where nostalgia and cutting-edge sensibilities intersect.

By blending viewing and participation, his work invites audiences to engage across generations and borders, using shared “nostalgia” and “playfulness” as entry points to reexamine the idea of “universality” in the post-pop era.

For this exhibition, his motif is *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* by Utagawa Hiroshige, a work emblematic of Japonisme that greatly influenced Western painters such as Van Gogh and Whistler. Murakami fuses this historic masterpiece with 8-bit gaming, elevating video games as an artistic medium while creating new landscapes and experiences.



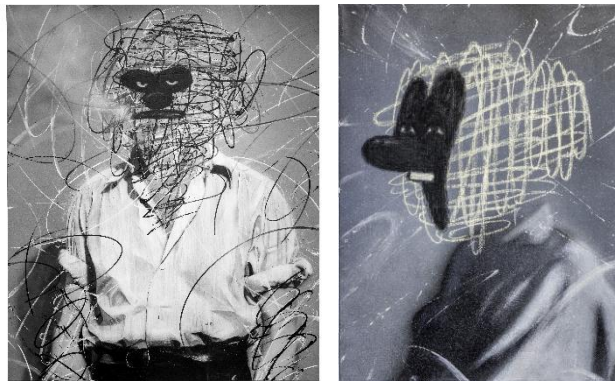
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- **Hiroshi Masuda**

Hiroshi Masuda is a visual artist who fuses Eastern philosophy with pop culture, approaching the fundamental question of “What does it mean to be human?” through charming and endearing forms of expression. Drawing on his experiences traveling to 76 countries, he examines “humanity” from a perspective that transcends cultural, political, and social boundaries.

Rooted in physics and philosophy, his works contemplate life itself, suggesting that our bodies exist through the constant replacement of molecules—an idea that evokes the Buddhist concepts of *anatta* (non-self) and *anicca* (impermanence).

By taking a panoramic view of dichotomies such as comedy and tragedy, justice and injustice, and seeking their integration, his style serves as a visual exploration of the Buddhist spirit of *mubunbetsu* (non-discrimination). The humor born from playful shifts in perspective delivers a sharp critique of society, while at the same time prompting us to question and reconsider our own place within it.



Although each of the three artists works in different mediums and comes from a distinct background, they share a deep resonance with the idea of creating spaces open to all—regardless of age or gender—and with perspectives rooted in the inevitability of movement, flow, and connection. In the face of a society that tends toward closure and intolerance, their works sound a quiet alarm.

Saito’s ramps symbolize open structures within the city; Masuda’s works depict the constant molecular circulation that constitutes life; and Murakami offers new perspectives through technologies and ways of thinking accessible to everyone. Together, these form a gentle mode of resistance, inviting us to imagine “reopening the doors” in our current times.

Stand clear of the closing doors, Please offers a perspective for reclaiming the possibilities of movement, connection, and dialogue in an era of closing doors. Traversing painting, sculpture, and digital media, the exhibition goes beyond a visual experience to challenge the very worldview we have held until now.

■Opening Reception

On Wednesday, July 9 and Thursday, July 10, an opening reception was held for the exhibition. The three participating artists each gave remarks and provided insights into their works, sharing directly with guests the passion behind their creations and the stories that shape their artistic worlds.

The event drew approximately 200 distinguished guests, including art collectors, members of the design industry, and creative professionals based in New York. The sophisticated, luxurious atmosphere of the venue was filled with excitement and anticipation.

Catering was provided by OYAMADA JAPAN, an organization dedicated to promoting Japanese food culture worldwide, featuring a menu centered on inventive onigiri. This created a special moment where New York's art scene met the richness of Japanese culinary tradition.

With its distinctly international and contemporary vibe, GOCA by Garde offered guests a rare opportunity to experience the works up close—an aspirational stage for emerging artists and a key destination for collectors seeking investment-worthy pieces. Through this exhibition, visitors can directly experience the cutting edge of culture and expression emerging in New York, along with the atmosphere that shapes it.

Highlights from the opening reception are available on Garde's official YouTube channel.

GARDE Official YouTube: <https://youtu.be/d8RbyNfq2yM?feature=shared>



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Exhibition Overview

Title: Group Exhibition *Stand clear of the closing doors, Please*

Dates: Thursday, July 10 – Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Venue: GOCA by Garde, 515 W 23rd St, New York, NY 10011

Admission: Free

Official Website: <https://www.goca.gallery/>

■ Artist Profile

• Yuya Saito

An artist from Japan, currently based in New York.

At the age of 14, he discovered skateboarding and became immersed in street culture and urban life, including music, design, and fashion. His work is characterized by curved forms inspired by skateboard ramps, expressing the chaos and impermanence of the city and the street through abstract shapes.

By combining traditional bentwood furniture techniques with architectural structures, he seeks to create a new visual language of urban expression—one that goes beyond the frameworks of art history and street culture.

Official Website: <https://www.yuyas.net/>

• Shinji Murakami

An artist from Japan, currently based in New York.

Drawing inspiration from the philosophy of Gunpei Yokoi—the creator of Nintendo’s *Game & Watch* and *Game Boy*—known as “lateral thinking with withered technology,” Murakami creates works rooted in the pixel-based expressions of 8-bit video games.

In 2021, he developed an original game for the Atari 2600, using it as a starting point to produce sculptures, paintings, and LED light works. Employing AR technology, he opens portals on his artworks, drawing viewers directly into the world of his creations.

Murakami has presented public installations engaging directly with audiences in more than 20 countries, collaborating with organizations such as Salesforce and The Standard Hotel. Through a minimalist yet post-pop approach, he reinterprets universal motifs and elements responding to cultural contexts, reconsidering the role of the artist in contemporary art.

Official Website: <https://murakamishinji.com/>

• Hiroshi Masuda

An artist from Japan, currently based in New York.

After a career shift from the advertising industry to the water sports industry, Masuda embarked on a round-the-world journey in 2017, driven by a deep interest in humanity. On his very first stop, he was

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robbed of one million yen in a sleeping-pill theft—an incident that led him to begin drawing street portraits, marking the start of his artistic career.

In 2018, he traveled through 76 countries creating drawings, and upon returning to Japan, he produced a large-scale visual for MAGNET by SHIBUYA109 and held his solo exhibition *Water* in Harajuku. His work has been collected by singer-songwriter Sia, and in 2021 he received international recognition through collaborations with adidas Originals and an award in the UNIQLO × MoMA UTGP 2020 competition.

Masuda continues to explore the fundamental question, “What does it mean to be human?” through his art, now based in New York.

Official Website: <https://hiroshimasuda.com/>

GOCA by Garde

GOCA by Garde, an art gallery produced by Garde, is located in New York’s Chelsea district and specializes in contemporary art from Japan and Asia. Through exhibitions of paintings, sculptures, and ceramics, the gallery introduces both emerging and established artists, aiming to serve as a space that fosters cultural exchange and dialogue.

Chelsea is known as one of the world’s foremost centers of art and culture, currently home to around 200 galleries showcasing a wide spectrum of works—from exhibitions by renowned artists to experimental pieces by emerging talents. In this vibrant setting, Garde leverages its extensive expertise in spatial design and its strong network of artists to create a gathering place for art lovers. GOCA by Garde aspires to inspire and open new possibilities, bringing a positive impact to society through art.

About Garde

As a branding and design firm, Garde creates spaces across a wide range of sectors, including luxury-focused retail, offices, residences, hotels, dining establishments, and mixed-use facilities. Drawing on its global network, Garde delivers on clients’ visions across three core pillars—consulting, design, and coordination—producing spaces that unite exceptional design with functionality.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Garde also has offices in Milan, Paris, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Dubai, New York, and Los Angeles.

Official Website: <https://www.garde-intl.com/>

DESIGN MAGAZINE: <https://gardedesignmagazine.com/>

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