



"UNTITLED" 2021 | Chinese ink on paper | H680 x W175 mm

© Nobuya Hoki    Courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery

## Nobuya Hoki Solo Exhibition

2022.11.04 (fri.) — 11.27 (sun.)

open on fri., sat., and sun. 12:00-18:00

appointments are available on weekdays

free admission

eN arts is pleased to present “Nobuya Hoki solo exhibition” by Nobuya Hoki. We are excited that he is returning to eN arts after the seven years since he first exhibited his works at our gallery.

At his first show with us at eN arts, “Nobuya Hoki Exhibition” in 2015, Hoki advanced his unique technique of painting with two brushes simultaneously to generate double lines comprising color separations of black (blue and brown). By combining new conceptual aspects (verbalization of “WHITE” and smudges), he succeeded in creating entirely new works. Please refer to <http://en-arts.com/en2/portfolios/nobuya-hoki-exhibition/> for details.

With this Hoki exhibition, visitors should anticipate the further evolution in his works. The highlights of the exhibition are the works, painted with Chinese ink on Washi (Japanese traditional) paper, never shown before. Hoki has been thinking about “painting by impregnating paper” Asian style rather than Western style, which he describes as “laying paints on canvas”. With these works, he finally realized this thought.

Hoki also challenges us by showing some vertical works grouped together so that viewers recognize them as one horizontal work. The idea came from the fact that most of his oil paintings are vertical due to his physical movements during his act of painting and from the desire to create new horizontal paintings.

I would like to express special thanks to Taka Ishii Gallery for their cooperation in making this show possible.

Naomi Rowe | eN arts

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Until 2012, most of my solo exhibitions featured both oil on canvas works, so-called tableaux, and works on paper at the same time. However, since I began exhibiting only oil paintings, I realized that I had missed the chance to show the drawings I had made during those 10 years.

So, I have decided to make my works on paper the focus of this exhibition: the comparatively, intensely drawn works produced in 2017 and the works produced in the winter of 2021 on calligraphy paper with sumi ink. However, despite using paper as the ground for the works from 2017, many of them were produced with viscous mediums like oil or egg tempera on top of resized paper, not the usual paint to be expected with paper, like acrylic or watercolor.

The groups of works from 2017 were chosen from several series each dedicated to testing different ideas, so there is no consistent overarching theme. However, there is the common approach of reexamining how to best use my brush, considering the idea: “if you apply the right amount of paint on the brush to the ground, you will be able to realize your idea as a work of art.”

On the other hand, the works from 2021 were for the purpose of rethinking the creation of my own shapes and forms, cultivated in the tradition of a ground that stains and cannot be erased. In the East Asian tradition of ink painting and calligraphy, where the painting medium thoroughly soaks into the painting ground, any cancellation of error or addition of missing parts is clearly recorded on the surface as a site of failure. Furthermore, East Asian grounds are almost always raw materials without any primer on them, so even if mistakes are painted over with white, the ground itself is not painted white and such re-painting will be "exposed." For these two reasons, a sense of beauty defined by training and refinement wherein works are completed without altering the figures (and painting materials) on the painting ground became dominant in East Asia. Conversely, in regions that have a tradition of oil painting, the painting material does not stain the ground so it's easy to wipe away any mistakes. The ground itself is not a bare material such as a board or linen to begin with but is already coated with the same type of paint as what will then cover it, so that even if a failed area dries and cannot be wiped off, it is possible to reapply paint over it, resulting in a two layered failsafe against mistakes. I conceived of this exhibition considering the stark contrast between artistic processes and aesthetic values nurtured by the characteristic differences in painting materials.

In 2021, I wanted to proceed further with this idea by using Indian ink as a material for creating paper works. Furthermore, the concept of not being able to erase my errors has been on my mind since 2001, when I resumed oil painting after several years of working with color pencil on paper, and from then until 2010, about 10 years later, I decided to take the stance that even though I could fix my mistakes without getting caught because of the nature of oil paint, I never would. Since then, I allowed my mistakes, which I call dirt, on the surface and began to think about the nature of the ground, and to read shapes in terms of ground, dirt, and figure (line), a tripartite construction (rock, scissors, paper). The idea of “an aesthetic nurtured from materials which stain and those which do not” is one that repeatedly comes to mind, and thus I have been following the relationship between figure, ground, and dirt with oil paintings for a while. However, for the Indian ink on Xuan paper series from 2021, I wanted to think about this relationship by going back to using painting materials, on which revisions are intrinsically evident.

Moreover, the 2021 series was a new and important experiment for me, apart from these considerations of the nature of the ground. The series is also a reflection on the horizontal works, which I have been meaning to try for several years now, after having painted only vertically in oil for decades. I hold the belief that a horizontal picture is formed by the development and juxtaposition of a vertical picture as a single unit. This represents my endeavor to think about the formation of a horizontal picture by first making that idea into a literal procedure.

Nobuya Hoki  
October, 2022