

## TOMOKAZU MATSUYAMA

*The Standard Rendez-Vous*  
October 4th - November 9th, 2013

Drawing upon his own bicultural experience of living in both Japan and the United States, Tomokazu Matsuyama explores issues of shifting identity and brings to his canvases a unique bicultural vision that plays out in always exciting ways, appropriated imagery from Japanese folklore and art history seamlessly intertwine with western painterly influences such as Abstract Expressionism and, more contemporaneously, street art.

Tomokazu Matsuyama has taken his inspiration from the important paintings of Japan's past, from *ukiyo-e* (or "images of the floating world"), and from a wide variety of Western sources. He has blended all of them into a most contemporary amalgamation that very actively erases the boundaries between nations, mindsets, art histories and aesthetic tropes.

It is a global vocabulary that successfully references the past without bowing down to it. It is a fresh way of seeing our own contemporary conditions through the lens of history, and even through the skein of Abstract Expressionism. It is a style of painting that conflates figuration and abstraction into one; a technique that masks and mirrors the so-called book-ends of 20th-century art. Simply stated, Tomokazu Matsuyama has created a world of whimsy and energy that very smartly mimics his own talents, interests and global outlook, as well as the whole of art history lingering beyond.

The exhibition presents two different series of works in acrylic on canvas.

The curved canvas- *Barbershop Affair*, *Pulpy Pin-up*, *Standard Rendez-vous*- with various figures, which look like a narrative painting. The composition of these pieces combine various elements of different Japanese wood block prints, transforming them into a surreal imagery.

The abstract paintings - *Sun Is Rising*, *U R who U R*, *Full Contact* - initiated from a homage to Post-War abstract expressionist artists such as Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, William De Kooning ... but by integrating Japanese aesthetic elements they create a new type of abstract painting.

Tomokazu Matsuyama was born in Tokyo in 1976 and received his MFA in Communications Design from the Pratt Institute (NY). He has had solo exhibitions in New York, San Francisco, Tokyo and Osaka, including his most recent at the Katzen Arts Center in Washington D.C. His work can be seen in the public collections of the Cosmopolitan Hotel Group (NY) and the Royal Family (Dubai, UAE), The Standard Hotel (Andre Balazs Group) as well as commissioned projects with Burton Snowboards, LeSportSac, Nike, and Levi Strauss brand collections. He is also currently one of three finalists for the Japanese National Culture and Arts Affairs award, the most generous grant given to a Japanese artist living abroad. He lives and works in New York City (NY).