ALMINE RECH

Tomokazu Matsuyama
Liberation Back Home

Aug 1, 2025 — Jan 4, 2026 | SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA, US

Displaying works both within and on the façade of the SCAD Museum of Art, Tomokazu Matsuyama presents large-scale paintings and sculpture that blur distinctions between interiority and exteriority, Eastern and Western, and past and present. A first-generation Japanese American, the artist was born in Japan, moved to Southern California with his family at age of eight, and has spent more than two decades in New York channeling these experiences of cultural change and learning into his work. Matsuyama depicts figures within intricate domestic spaces, drawing from a broad visual vocabulary ranging from the refined tradition of Nihonga painting to contemporary Japanese aesthetics, and blending references to American editorial photography, the bold, graphic sensibilities found in West Coast subcultures, and icons of Eastern and Western art histories.

These works are meticulously constructed through a mix of hand-drawn and digital techniques, combining patterns and symbols to reflect shifting notions of identity and meaning in a globalized world. Inspired by daily life in cities, each painting synthesizes a barrage of visual information, treating what is traditionally considered high or low culture with equal attention and care. The exhibition includes works from First Last, a series influenced by the artist's religious upbringing that incorporates elements from Western art historical depictions of Biblical scenes. Collectively, these works explore how stories and the images they conjure have multiplied over centuries and across communities, revealing the myriad ways context shapes perspectives of one's self and society.

Quote from Artist, Tomokazu Matsuyama

It is an honor to have my work shown at the SCAD Museum of Art. My work is an ongoing exploration of what it means to be a global citizen today, and I am excited for my first solo exhibition in the southern United States to be at SCAD. During my lifetime, the world has become increasingly globally conscious, gaining ever-greater access to a broad, diverse range of cultural references, and I strive to reflect this evolution in the landscapes within which my figures exist. Hopefully my work will resonate with visitors from all backgrounds and spark conversations about identity, culture, belonging, and what it means to be a citizen of the world in the 21st century.

Quote from SCAD Museum of Art, associate curator Brittany Richmond and curator Ben Tollefson

We are thrilled to present Tomokazu Matsuyama's exhibition at the SCAD Museum of Art, which includes grand-scale paintings and sculpture that exemplify his meticulous, fantastical vision, and boundlessly remixes time periods and cultural touchpoints. Tomokazu Matsuyama's works demonstrate the importance of dialogue and invite personal connection through a richly layered visual language, making this timely exhibition at SCAD MOA a vital space for sharing ideas. We look forward to SCAD students, the Savannah community, and visitors from around the world engaging deeply with the work.