

ARTIST · TOKYO

Saya

Artist Profile



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Red, black and gold, with Wa (Japanese sensibility) and Rock as the two axes.

01 BIOGRAPHY

Biography

経 歴

Saya is a Japanese artist based in Tokyo. Born in Yokohama, she studied textile design at Musashino Art University and worked as a designer in sports apparel before turning to painting. She has also practiced European porcelain painting for more than twenty years. In 2021 she encountered alcohol ink, and has since worked across ink, sumi, acrylic, oil, resin and metal leaf — red, black and gold on canvas, with Wa (Japanese sensibility) and rock as her two axes.

Her work centers on 空 Kū, the inner sanctuary that appears when the mind is freed from thought and the past, and, since 2026, on the Trace of Time — ancient trees, driftwood and stone that outlast us. She has exhibited in Milan, Rome, Turin, Crete, Luxembourg, Monaco, Madrid, Dubai, Shanghai, New York, Hollywood, Seoul and Melbourne. In 2025 her work was shown at the Oscars VIP Gift Lounge in Hollywood, and at New York Fashion Week she painted live on a kimono with a sword-performance troupe. Her paintings are often described as powerful and full of life.

AFFILIATIONS

Japan Alcohol Ink Art Association (diploma) · Japan Porcelain Painters Association

PATH · 歩み

Yokohama	Born and raised in Yokohama, Japan, Saya has always been influenced by the natural landscape around her. She loved capturing the scenery of local forests in her paintings. Having given her heart to the beauty of the four seasons in Japan and the authentic voices of people, she was always determined to spend her life working with colors.

Musashino Art University	She graduated from Musashino Art University, where she studied textile design in the Department of Crafts and Industrial Design — absorbed in yarn dyeing and tapestry.
Sports apparel	Upon graduating, she embarked on a career as a sports apparel designer — bold ski wear — where her work prominently featured an interplay of colors and a mastery of mediums like ink and acrylic.
Porcelain painting	Alongside, she has been devoted to European china painting for more than twenty years. Member of the Japan Porcelain Painters Association.
2021	She encountered alcohol ink art and started to create transparent works by combining ink and painting techniques. That September, her work was shown at M.A.D.S. Art Gallery in Milan.
2022	Chania in Crete, Rome, Turin, Luxembourg, Monaco and Madrid — exhibitions and art fairs across Europe. Selected for the 72nd Modern Art Exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.
2023	World Art Dubai; the group exhibition “Dance of Colors” at JCAT Gallery, New York; a solo exhibition at UMIDORI Gallery, Kamakura; and the Shanghai International Art Fair.
2024	Second Prize at the open call “STEPPING INTO A WORLD III”, Tenri Cultural Institute, New York. A group exhibition at Gallery SIACCA, New York, and a two-person exhibition at Onden Gallery, Omotesando.
2025	Shown at the OSCARS 2025 VIP Gift Lounge in Hollywood. At New York Fashion Week she painted live on a kimono with the sword-performance troupe Buryu. In November, the solo exhibition “Saya — From Kū, Into the Present” at DEN Gallery, Higashi-Nakano.
2026	A new series in oil and acrylic, Trace of Time. BANK ART FAIR in Seoul, Matcha Gallery in Melbourne, Independent Tokyo 2026, JAPONICA-JAPONICA “Rewrite” at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, and ART AMOY 2026 in Xiamen. > *This time I wanted no catchy colors and no new techniques — simply to paint, in acrylic and oil.*

02 CONCEPT

空

Kū, and the Trace of Time

空 · 時の痕跡

Kū (空) is the inner sanctuary that appears when the mind is freed from thought and from the past. Since 2021, Saya has painted from that place — in alcohol ink, sumi, acrylic and gold — seeking to convey, through overwhelming strength and delicacy, true freedom and the power to live in the present.

> *My work originates from the philosophy of 空 Kū while exploring the traces left by time. Ancient trees, driftwood, fossils, stones, weathered metals, and aged wood embody the overwhelming presence of time. Encountering them often leads us into a state of Kū — a profound stillness beyond thought. By bringing together forms that exist across different timescales on a single canvas, I explore how time, memory, and existence intersect, leaving space for each viewer to find their own meaning.*

MEDIA

Alcohol ink, sumi, acrylic, oil, resin, crystal powder, metal leaf — and even fragments of meteorites — on canvas, panel and paper. Every work is made by hand, without AI.

PHILOSOPHY · 思想

2023–24 Dance of Colors

Every color that comes into view is alive and appealing to her. She believes that the colors often left unnoticed, including the color of the asphalt or the muddy water in the puddle, exist with dignity, humbly waiting for their turn. All the colors express their presence, asking her to give them a stage.

They rush onto the white canvas, moving like music, dancing rhythmically as if the audience is visually experiencing an improvisational jazz performance.

2024 Beyond the Visible

Her creative spirit is deeply influenced by Japan's rich palette of over 1,100 traditional colors — each uniquely named and woven into the fabric of Japanese life through the changing seasons. Her art is infused with the ephemeral beauty of falling cherry blossoms, the serene flow of clear streams, and the dramatic crash of waves upon the shore. At night, her canvas comes alive with the luminescent glow of noctiluca and the tranquil brilliance of the moonlit sky.

She captures the fleeting transience of these moments, expressing a deep reverence for the ancient spirits and tales entrenched within Japanese culture. Her work celebrates not only the visible spectrum but also the invisible narratives that color our perceptions of beauty and existence.

When people touch the essential beauty beyond what is visible, they can empty their minds, interrupting their thoughts and calming their hearts. What emerges from this silence is love and self-acceptance, awakening individuals to their true potential. Her art is intended to create a peaceful, clear sanctuary for the viewer, and to encourage them to embrace a life filled with endless opportunities.

2026 Weathered Things

Peeling paint, worn-out materials, driftwood, weathered things — I feel an irresistible love for them. People often tell me that my paintings are powerful, that they are full of life.

Translated from the artist's Japanese.



DETAIL *Trace of Time — Alive, 2026*

03 EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions

展示歴

From Milan in 2021 to Seoul and Melbourne in 2026 — a selection of exhibitions and fairs.

2026	“FREEDOM” soshare gallery, Park Hotel Tokyo 29F, Shiodome, Tokyo	GROUP
	ART AMOY 2026 Xiamen International Convention & Exhibition Center, Hall A1, Xiamen, China	FAIR
	JAPONICA-JAPONICA “Rewrite” Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, Gallery 2, Ikebukuro, Tokyo	GROUP
	Independent Tokyo 2026 Tokyo Port City Takeshiba, Tokyo	FAIR
	Permanent display EXO Auto showroom, Osaka	PERMANENT
	BANK ART FAIR 2026 Gallery Bella booth, Seoul	FAIR
	Works on view Matcha Gallery, Melbourne	PERMANENT
	Art in Interior Project in MASTERWAL GINZA Masterwal Ginza, Tokyo	GROUP
	“Sense 2026” GALLERY ANDLINKS 81, Ginza, Tokyo	GROUP
	Two-person exhibition “Meguru Monogatari” (with Kumiko Miyoshi) Naraya Café, Hakone	TWO-PERSON

2025	Sensō-ji Toshi-no-Ichi — Hagoita Art Booth (MIKAZUKI ART) Sensō-ji, Tokyo	GROUP
	Solo exhibition “Saya — From Kū, Into the Present” DEN Gallery, Higashi-Nakano, Tokyo	SOLO
	WaArt Runway — Art & Fashion Tokyo	GROUP
	Aoyama Selection Aoyama, Tokyo	GROUP
	GREENROOM × RIVIERA Art Fair Riviera Zushi Marina, Kanagawa	FAIR
	New York Fashion Week 2025 — live painting on a kimono with the sword-performance troupe Buryu New York	LIVE PAINTING
	Independent Tokyo 2025 Tokyo	FAIR
	“Seimei no Kagayaki” (The Radiance of Life) Yokohama Minato Mirai	GROUP
	Art Runway 2025 Tokyo	GROUP
	OSCARS 2025 VIP Gift Lounge Hollywood	FAIR
2024	Two-person exhibition Onden Gallery, Omotesando, Tokyo	TWO-PERSON
	Exhibition Ristorante AO, Zushi Marina, Kanagawa	GROUP
	In-store exhibition Tokyu Square, Minato Mirai, Yokohama	GROUP

2024	Group exhibition Gallery SIACCA, New York	GROUP
	“STEPPING INTO A WORLD III” Open Call — Second Prize Tenri Cultural Institute, New York	AWARD
	Group exhibition Shibuchika, Shibuya, Tokyo	GROUP
	Group exhibition Gallery Kunitachi, Tokyo	GROUP
2023	Shanghai International Art Fair (booth C-01) Shanghai	FAIR
	Two-person exhibition GINZA YOHAKU Gallery, Tokyo	TWO-PERSON
	Exhibition RECTO VERSO Gallery, Tokyo	GROUP
	Art & Graphic Exhibition Nihonbashi, Tokyo	GROUP
	Solo exhibition UMIDORI Gallery, Kamakura	SOLO
	JCAT Group Exhibition “Dance of Colors” JCAT Gallery, New York	GROUP
	The 73rd Modern Art Exhibition Tokyo	GROUP
	World Art Dubai Dubai	FAIR
2022	“DREAMS” Van Gogh Art Gallery, Madrid	GROUP

2022	“CROSSING PATHS” MONAT Gallery, Madrid	GROUP
	Monaco Art Fair Monaco	FAIR
	Luxembourg Art Fair Luxembourg (MONAT Gallery)	FAIR
	Euro Art Show Accorsi Arte Gallery, Turin	GROUP
	The 72nd Modern Art Exhibition Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo	GROUP
	The Contemporary Art Exhibition “Visionaly” Biblioteca Angelica Gallery, Rome	GROUP
	Select Art ’22 Chania World Crete Art, Chania, Crete	GROUP
2021	DE.MO Life Style Art Exhibition M.A.D.S. Art Gallery, Milan	GROUP

04 PRESS & AWARDS

Press & Awards

掲載 · 受賞

PRESS

2026	makikomi.jp times — interview feature (Mar 2026)
2025	République des Arts No. 4 (France), Jun 2025, pp. 124–125 — “Rendre visible la véritable essence”, critique by Françoise Icart (President, ARTEC)
2022	WE CONTEMPORARY 2022 — International Art Catalog (MUSA International, Italy), p. 138

AWARDS

2024	Second Prize, “STEPPING INTO A WORLD III” Open Call — Tenri Cultural Institute, New York

COLLECTORS

Abroad	A Hollywood actress, the CEO of a cosmetics company, an antiques collector, and a collector in Shanghai
Japan	University professors, company owners, collectors, designers, business people, homemakers, office workers, and restaurants

“

Art is a living thing; the way we see it changes every day. We, too, live anew each day. Now is always the peak — life exists only now.

SAYA

05 COMMISSIONS

Commissions

ご依頼

Paintings for hotels, ryokan, restaurants and homes; folding screens and garments; live painting with musicians and performers. Each commission begins with a conversation.

Commissioned works

Original paintings made for a specific space or person: interiors, hospitality and commercial spaces, and private homes. Size, ground (canvas, panel, paper, silver leaf) and finish (resin, framing) are decided together.

Screens, garments and objects

Folding screens in collaboration with traditional makers, and painting on apparel and hagoita.

Live painting

Performances with Tsugaru-shamisen and sword-performance troupes, for openings, festivals and events.

Exhibitions and venues

Available for gallery, hotel and temple exhibitions in Japan and abroad.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW

Matcha Gallery, Melbourne · EXO Auto, Osaka

Saya

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SAYA WORKS — TOKYO, JAPAN

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