

**Ryuji Moriyama**

**Portfolio**

**A Declaration of Post-  
Post modernism**

## A Declaration of Post-Postmodernism

Modernism sought the autonomy of painting, but closed itself within.

Postmodernism searched for justification outside the work, and in doing so, forgot emotion.

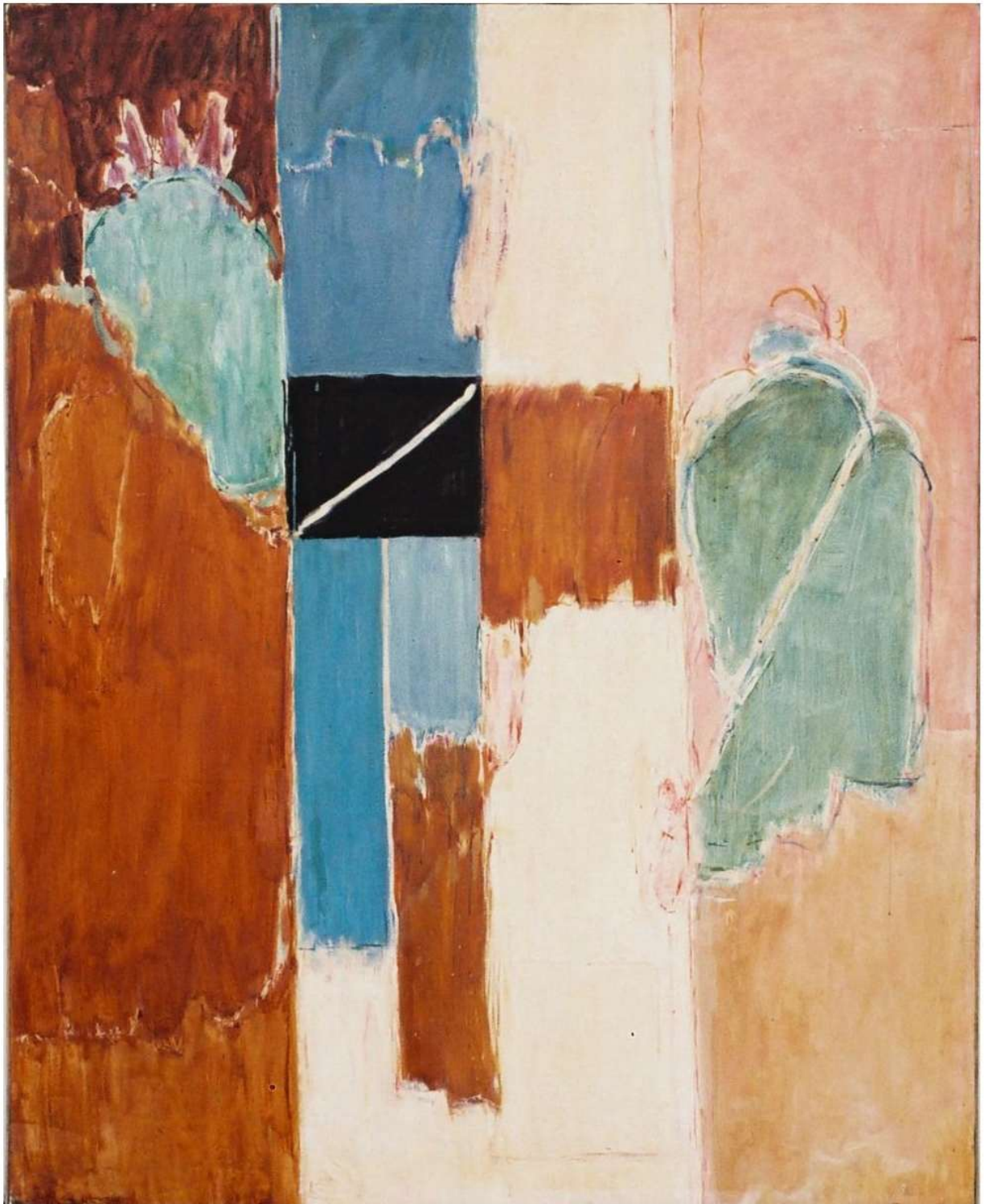
I aim to preserve the autonomy of painting while fusing it with intention.

Through the device of the center, I bind the structure of the work with my will,

connecting the inside and the outside.

This is my Declaration of Post-Postmodernism.

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1980 kuroisikaku (Black Square) 164cm x 130cm Oil on Canvas

This is the origin of my artistic exploration and the work in which the theme of "center" first appeared.



**1981 Door** 164cm x 130cm Oil on Canvas

This work, an extremely early piece, was inspired by two mended wooden boards from a broken apartment door in the 1980s. It established the crucial motif of 'two squares' in my painting, marking the starting point of my exploration.





**1987 Broken Book** 75cm x 135.7cm acrylic and paper

"Around 1982, influenced by Matisse, I began creating works by coloring paper with acrylics and then pasting it. This was an attempt to relate the screen with vivid colors. Coloring and pasting paper was helpful for the precise verification of colors. This work was created about five years after I started working with paper. Here too, the central square, while being eroded, remains the key element



1991 Teien (Garden) 63cm×48cm acrylic colored on paper, paper cutting

The red square, which is the center, attracts the eye with color and is attached to the lower ultramarine square in a step-like manner. It is a part of the element that creates imbalance while being the center. It involves and influences the surroundings and demands recovery. The center of this work has multiple roles: it is a chromatic focus, constructs the color relationship with the surroundings, and harmonizes balance and imbalance. Through these interactions, it contributes to the resolution of the entire screen. In short, this red square plays the role of both raising a question and giving an answer.



1992 Ishi no ue (on the rock) 63cm×46cm paper cut out

This work, an early exploration of 'the center,' is composed of variations of squares with 'two centers' as its theme. It attempts to achieve an expression where accidentally created color tones and brushwork coexist with sharp edges cut by scissors or cutters. I focused on a frontality that powerfully confronts the viewer with its weighty colors and forms. Here, the two centers influence each other, guiding the viewer's gaze and creating a complex composition and stability on the canvas. This piece represents a multi-faceted inquiry into the universal 'center.'





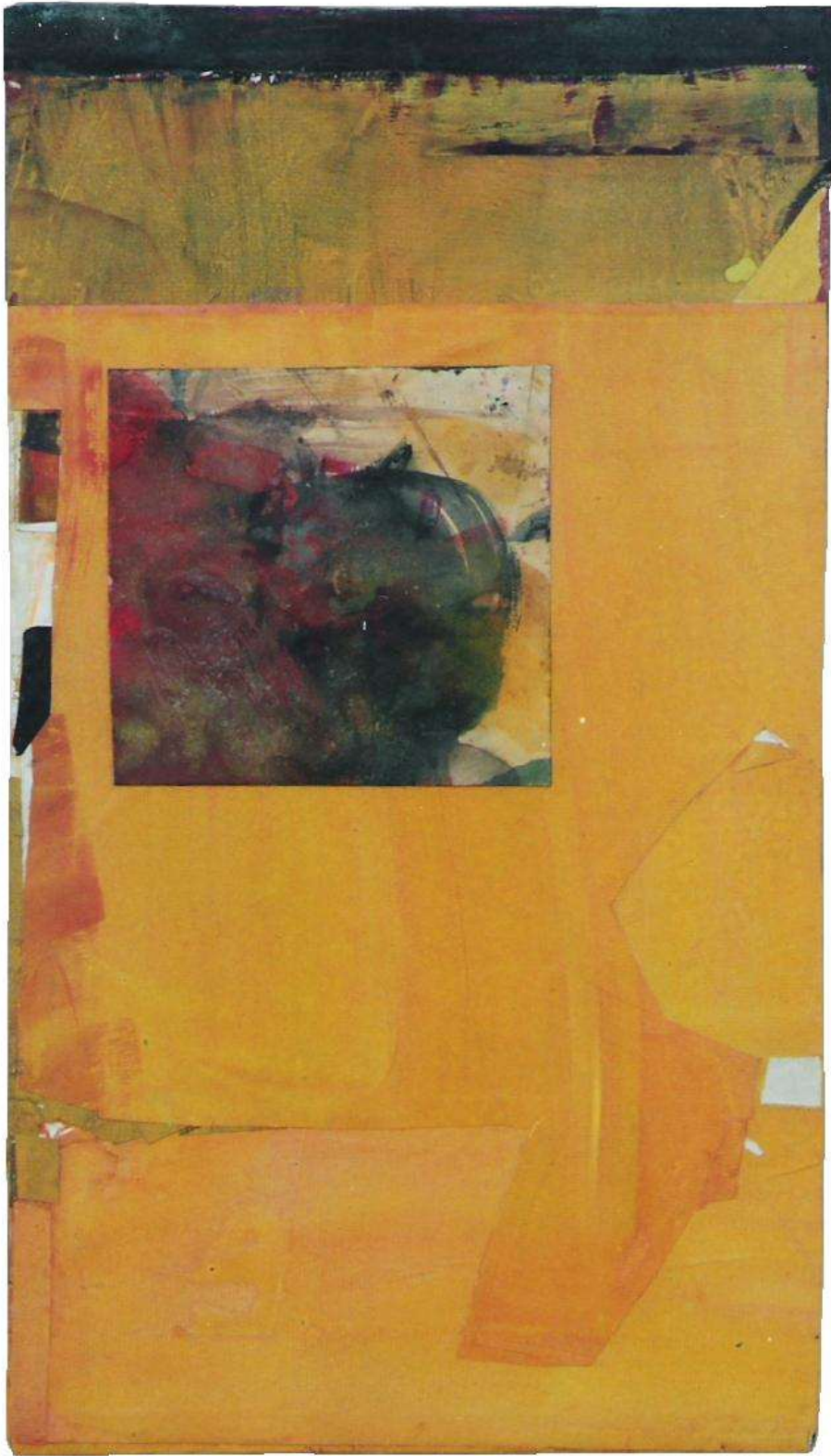
1993 Suimen (Water surface) 75cm×56.8cm acrylic on paper cutout , board

Two-square series of paper cutting. The upper and lower squares are equal in terms of frontality as squares, but they have different properties: the upper one is darker and stronger than the surroundings, and the lower one is brighter and floating. Here, the center is not simply placed in the center of the screen, but determines the composition of the screen, relates the elements within the screen, and gives depth and diversity to the screen. It plays the leading role as a "dynamic center" that leads the meaning and structure of the entire painting, from a "static center" in painting.



1994 Green Window 75cm×56cm acrylic paper cutting

The slight difference in brightness and saturation of the green color that divides the screen into left and right creates a sense of depth in the space. The square of bluish black placed in the center contributes to the stability of the entire screen by summarizing this spatial deviation, and at the same time, adjusts the balance of the screen by being placed on the left, and also creates a confrontation of the viewer's gaze.



1994 Mirror 75cmx56cm acrylic paper board **Sold**



1994 Mirror

This work is made up of the encounter between the uniformly painted yellow screen and the square paper that shows accidentalness. The color surface changes from black to reddish brown and yellow, leaving a bright margin, so it feels like it has depth. The pasted square paper creates movement in contrast to the flat screen and brings depth and change to the screen. Therefore, this square paper is not only a piece of paper pasted on the yellow screen but also plays the role of a window with depth. In this way, the central square is an important place where various elements of painting meet, such as intention and chance, flatness and depth, uniformity and diversity.



1996 **Green and Blue** 204cm×116cm acrylic on canvase

1996 Green and Blue 204cm×116cm acrylic on canvas

This is a work that challenged the question of whether what was possible with paper in the two-square series could be done with paint and canvas. There is a floating square that maintains frontality and an upper band that is placed so that the screen is nailed to the canvas. The central square is not just a form but plays an important role in symbolizing the spatiality and visual exploration of the screen.



2003 yb 156cm×91cm acrylic on canvas panel



yb

This is a variation of the two squares. The black at the bottom is devised to avoid being simple but monotonous. I tried to prevent the relationship with the surroundings from becoming monotonous and rigid, with the orange square as the center among the few and limited elements. In the process, the black convex shape at the bottom was born. In this way, the orange square is a center with multiple roles: visual center (most eye-catching), compositional center (determining the composition of the entire screen and creating relationships with the surroundings), and center of change (element that gives change and movement to the screen).



2007-8 215 cm×150cm acrylic on canvas

This is from the time when I gradually expanded from my previous works and challenged large works. I tried to unify the blurring and overlapping of paint with the upper band. The corners are rounded and the horizontal brushstrokes help to unify the screen in order to avoid dividing the band and the lower elements. Here too, the center plays multiple roles. It is the focus and the main player in achieving integration, the conflict between the accidental shape of color and the consciousness of unity.



2010 Haruka 33cmx21.5cm acrylic on canvas

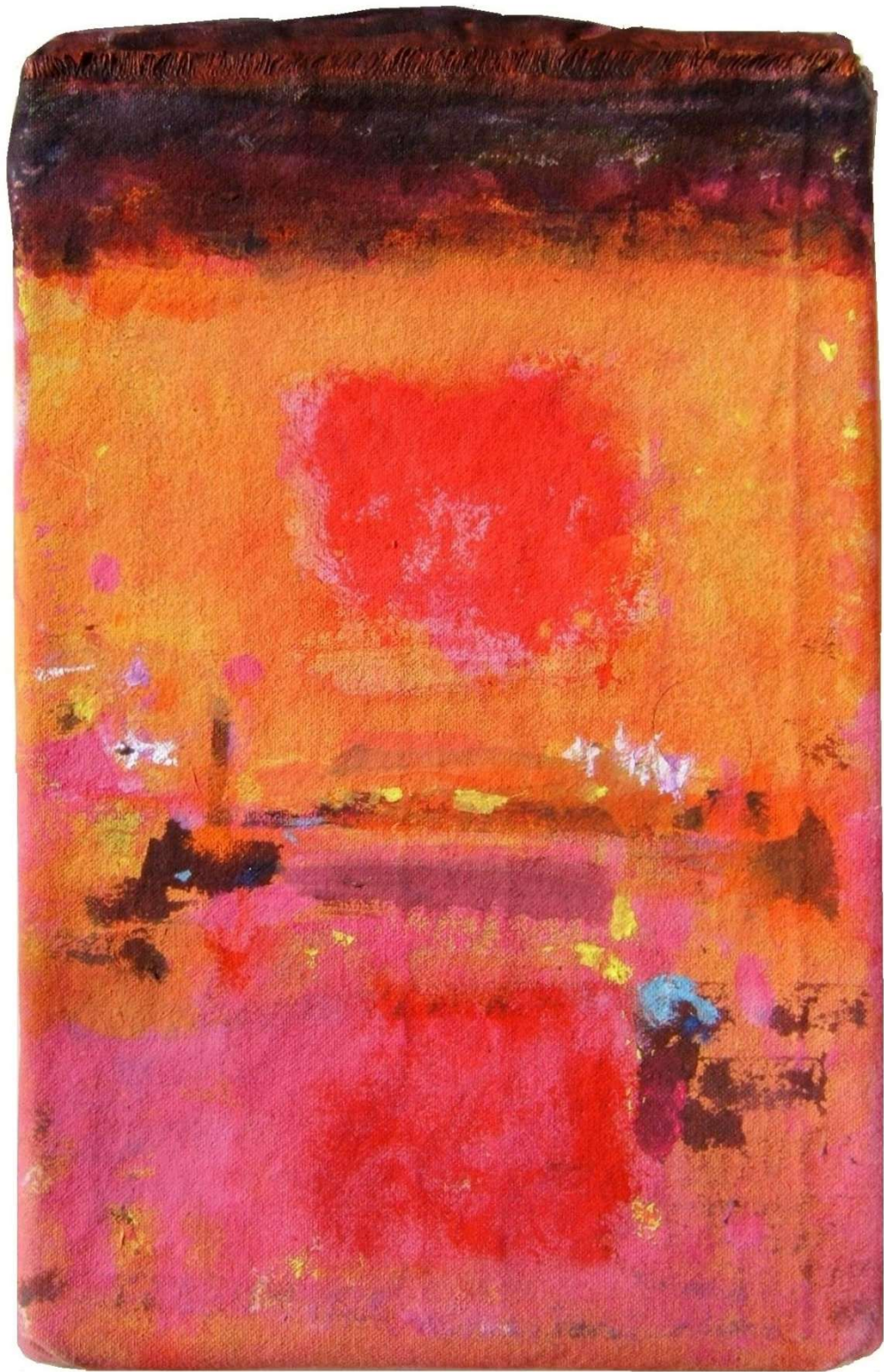
In this work, the central square serves as a clue, subtly drawing the eye within the elusive space created by color.



2011    Tori no yume (Bird's dream)    18cmx14cm    acrylic on paper,  
Sold (private collection)

This is a work from the time when I was exploring a slightly more lively expression. The band that divides the screen prompts attention to the events in the painting and the screen itself, and the pure chroma red is an attempt to acquire chromatic richness in contrast to the slightly cloudy color at the bottom. Here, the center gives tension to the surroundings with the opposite color of the entire screen and at the same time stabilizes the automatic writing-like shapes and color direction of the surroundings, embodying both stability and tension.





2013 Suimen (Water surface) orange-pink 34cmx22cm acrylic on canvas

As I gazed at the screen for a long time, the four corners became rounded. It is an expression of the visual desire to emphasize the wholeness of the screen with central elements. In the colors and brushstrokes reminiscent of Fauvism, the central red square harmonizes with the surroundings and blurs the outline. Also, giving the lower square a slightly different shape avoids the monotony of the screen. Here, the center plays multiple roles: visual focus, color harmony, screen wholeness, and avoidance of monotony.



2015 Gekkou (Moonlight) 44cmx31.5cm acrylic on canvas

In this work, the black band at the top grounds the composition in reality. The central square emerges as a luminous symbol, a trace of the very act of painting. The three blue dots and delicate vertical lines further distill this trace, echoing the square's presence.

Here, the "center" embodies the process of creation itself, where each brushstroke integrates the essence of its making into the artwork. It is the conceptual core that seeks to encompass both the materiality of painting and the symbolism of light. This central element reflects the artist's inner movements and thoughts, inviting contemplation and questioning within the viewer's mind.





2018 Tani Watari (Valley crossing) acrylic, paper 8.5cmx21.0cm  
Sold private collection

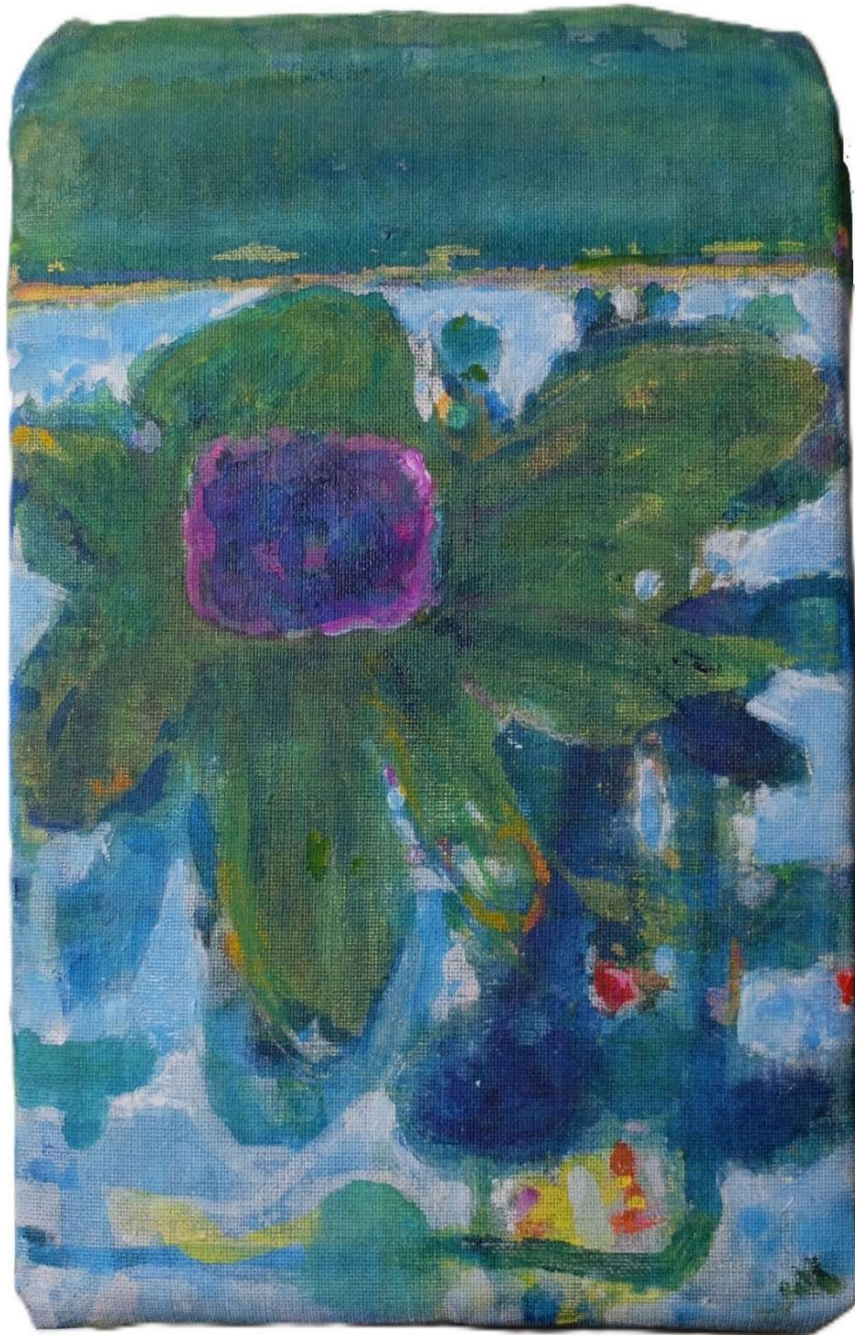
I place the central brown square in the unexpected color overlaps and veils of accidentally created colors. As if to accompany the uncontrollable blurring and spreading of colors. The brown in the center is not only a visual focus but also symbolizes the uncontrollable chance and the intention to control it.





2018 Hanakana 165.5cmx125.5cm Acrylic, canvas

The entire screen is covered in pink. The color center is pink. The compositional center is the square brown. Organic red surrounds it. Here, the colors are designed to move towards the center in stages of brightness: pink, red, and brown, and to spread out on the screen in the reverse stages. This organic shape is an attempt to pursue expression based on a form that suggests breathing that was born from a small work.



2019 Soraki 34.0cmx21.5cm acrylic on canvas

Through the filter of placing a center, this work is a homage, reminiscent of the landscape before Paul Gauguin went to Tahiti, which I copied in my student days.





2019 mikana hakana 173.5x130.5cm Acrylic, canvas

From the lines that appeared automatically, the shape fleshed out from it. Against the overall blue, the center has pink and brown playing the role of color while being influenced by the surrounding shapes. The dark blue band at the top is an element that emphasizes the screen itself, matching the previous screen. The yellow-green echoes the violet blue. Here, compared to previous works, the center has a more flexible concept with a strange brown shape blocking the pink window, bringing complexity to the screen and playing an important role in enabling richer expression. It is both the compositional center and the color center. Or is blue the color center?





2019 Madoromi Acrylic on canvas 23.0cmx11.0cm

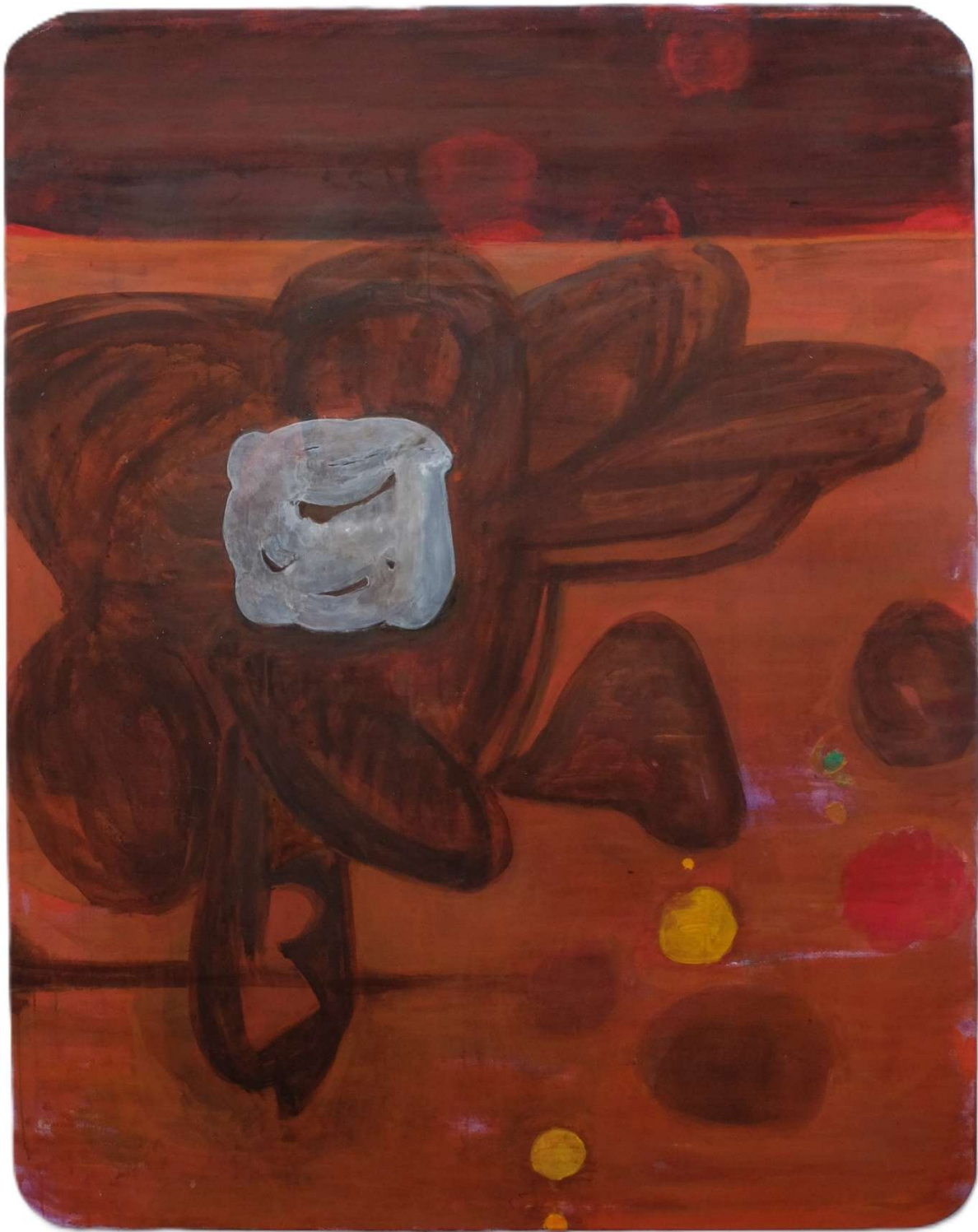
While wondering if I could establish a dialogue with the medium between the light-like effect created by the chance of color soaked into the cotton cloth and the intention to control it. The center creates a relationship of colors and symbolizes the conflict between chance and the will to control it.



2023 Yume no shikisaihen (Fragments of Dream Colors)

10cmx26.2cm acrylic on canvas (Sold, Private Collection)

The soaked colors and the central brown square give stability to the screen as a weight. The small blue, green, yellow. The small color fragments of red, pink of lingering color, on the other hand, create a complex arc as the center of color. It contributes to the richness and complexity of the color in this work. Challenging the coexistence of movement and stability, rhythm and color. Here, the colors, which are color fragments, can be said to be the center. In other words, an expanded interpretation of the meaning of "center of color" is taking place. The sense of stability may be divided into the left center. Movement, rhythm, and color are assigned to the right center.



2024 kinomi korogaru 182cmx144cm acrylic on canvas

Based on a small work from 2019, shapes surrounding the center appear in classical colors. This is a shape born from automatic writing-like attempts. However, it is due to the control and restraint of the eyes and hands. A new attempt to integrate opposing elements such as chance and necessity, freedom and constraint.





2024 Lines-Brown 37.5cm x 53.6cm Acrylic on Paper

The black shape in the center attracts the viewer's eyes and brings stability amidst the various lines. This will allow the viewer to calmly enter the screen and move around. The shape of the center is neither a perfect circle. Because it does not harmonize with the lines as a square, it became a composite shape of curves and straight lines after trial and error. The lines have a strong factor of chance, and the center of this work becomes a symbol of chance and necessity, freedom and constraint, and is a force that leads the composition and meaning of the entire screen.





2024 Sen no naka (Inside the lines) 26 cm x 38cm

The lines as the skeleton of plant-like shapes that used to be around the center are appearing. The lines are automatic writing-like, but there is control. The act of drawing is incorporated into the work by the drawn lines and scratched lines, and by pursuing their color and shape, it is trying to incorporate the essence of painting. Here, the black square-like shape, which is the center, is placed with the consciousness of placing a weight. By stabilizing and integrating them, viewers can take a tour inside the work. It is a multilayered element that is a focus, a compositional element, and a force of integration.



2024 Session No.4 73.5cmx51.7cm acrylic canvas panel

Here, the center is a fusion of a black circle and a square, and red, orange, and leaf green teardrop shapes gather or concentrate to surround it with a strength that rivals it. They incorporate a paper-cutting-like methodology. It can be said that they together form a composite center. The lines in the blue create variations of the color blue and surround the mass of color fragments as lines against the surface. The composite of the black shape and the colorful color fragments attracts the eye and is an important element that leads the composition and meaning of the entire screen.

## Career

- Born in 1957
- Graduated from Sokei Art School in 1980 with first place (the school provided funds for a solo exhibition)
- Graduated from the Graduate School of Sokei Art School in 1981/held a solo exhibition at Miyuki Gallery.
- 1991 held a solo exhibition at Napis Gallery
- 1996 received the Holbein Scholarship
- 2000 Selected for the 1st Yamamoto Kanae Print Grand Prize Exhibition
- 2000 held a solo exhibition at Shimane Museum of Art Gallery.
- 2009 Selected for the Haruhi Painting Triennale
- 2012 "13 Expressions of Contemporary Abstraction"
- 2013 held a solo exhibition at Gallery Fukuyama.
- 2014 ISE New York Art Search Exhibition
- 2015 held a solo exhibition at Gallery Fukuyama.
- 2016 New York Art Expo
- 2019 Selected for FACE 2019
- 2019 Solo exhibition at Gallery The Earth Kamakura
- 2020 Selected for FACE 2020
- 2024 Solo exhibition at Cloud9 Gallery Participation in Tokyo International Art Fair



### **Artist Statement**

#### **System and Work (A Bridge to the Work)**

##### **The Current State and Its Origins**

Until recently, I didn't understand what Postmodernism was and felt only confusion and anxiety about it. However, I've come to understand that it's about doubting the center and authority, and consequently, it led to the recognition of diversity and the declaration that grand narratives were over. Perhaps it began when Duchamp pointed to a propeller and said painting was dead. Or maybe when Pollock invented all-over painting. Modernist painting became an object, like John McCracken's work, or something even further beyond that. The tendency to create works based on conceptual and contextual frameworks became stronger. I believe this has become a system where doubt is considered correct. The system I'm referring to is the situation surrounding the art world—the leading players, including museums, galleries, curators, and critics. Postmodernism began as a reflection on Modernism and embraced various works with a stance of doubting authority. However, when that becomes a system, it leads to the exclusion of works that do not doubt, labeling them as old-fashioned. Don't systems tend to protect themselves by discarding other possibilities?



## **My Stance**

When I was a student, painting was already considered outdated. It was a time when I was asked, "Are you still painting?" For someone who came from the countryside, longing for Van Gogh, it was a completely confusing situation. However, modernist painting captivated and enchanted me. While I had an inner joy for painting that I could clearly feel, in the outside world, amid the dizzying trends of art, I desperately searched for a way to establish my own expression. I thought that if I piled up one work after another that felt just right, a light might appear. I approached my work with a mind to just focus on the current piece. At that time, I realized that by looking at the relationship between the central object and its surroundings, or the relationship between the central object and different elements, or the relationship with the whole, the work becomes easier to read. This was at a time when all-over painting was already considered classical. However, no matter how much the times dictated or how popular something was, I could not create something that didn't feel right to me. I had no choice but to pursue the center with a clinging desperation.

At first, my engagement with the center was like groping in the fog, or doubting if it was the right path. But as I slowly continued, it gradually turned into a conviction within me. By placing a center, my work might be compositionally restricted, but I thought it would make other areas more free. It's like how a kite can fly higher with a string. And I thought I could incorporate various artistic achievements. This is not a simple citation, but about using the center as a filter to incorporate various achievements. I was clear that this was different from a simple citation. If I only borrowed surface forms, it would be easy to explain, but I believe there would be no depth. My citations incorporate various achievements not to show them off, but to make the work deeper and richer. This is related to a qualitative problem that is difficult to put into words.

## **The System That Discarded the Center**

Currently, Postmodernism has become the system of the art world. In other words, the pursuit of the center has become completely unacceptable. While they claim to embrace everything with diversity, perhaps accepting the center is the one thing they cannot accept. This is likely because they feel a sense of authority centered on the purity and universality that Modernism pursued. But now, Postmodernism itself has become the authority, and it's not allowed to question it. To doubt doubt might be to believe. I believe in the center not for a fixed authority, but because it is visually very convenient for interpreting the creativity that anyone can possess. I think I'm not rejecting Postmodernism, which is uncomfortable for me, but rather incorporating it in a sense of diversity. In other words, I intend to take a stance of neither denying nor affirming it. However, history proves that the same system doesn't last forever.



## Ryuji Moriyama

Resides in Tachikawa, Tokyo TEL: +81-90-6128-8985

Email: [info@ryujimoriyama.art](mailto:info@ryujimoriyama.art)

Website: <https://ryujimoriyama.art/>



Instagram: [<https://www.instagram.com/mori10yama/>]

