

“Nakamura Kazumi.” *Art Limited*, March 2014.

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Nakamura Kazumi started his full-fledged career as a painter in the early 1980s, and has been one of the most active among his generation of contemporary artists. What is painting? For what purpose does it exist? Nakamura started out to answer these questions by studying the Abstract Expressionist paintings of artists such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman, whose works were considered to represent the culmination of modernist painting in the West, while pursuing a new type of painting and theory to supersede them.



'A Bird in its Existence 107 (Phasianus colchicus), 2006
Acrylic on cotton. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

References in the spatial expression and symbolism of traditional Eastern painting such as Japanese ancient and medieval painting, Chinese Song Dynasty landscape painting, and Korean folk painting, were of particular interest to Nakamura. In the 1980s, he had already put forth his “differential painting” idea, based on his perception that the meaning of a painting exists only in reference to its differences with other paintings. He produced paintings in series, developing a number of works displaying differences on a single motif.

In his *A Bird in its Existence* series that is representative of his recent work, Nakamura creates a new type of painting, difficult to categorize as either abstract or figurative, by basing a variety of painting and brushstroke techniques on a matrix that recalls the structure of pictograph characters.

Along with introducing a comprehensive overview of Nakamura Kazumi’s paintings through around 150 paintings spanning from his student works to his most recent *Hijiri (Hermit)* series, the exhibition also introduces his diagonal grid Wall Painting, conceived in 2010 and shown now for the first time. The exhibition will provide an excellent opportunity to consider an aspect of the development of Japanese contemporary painting and art.

Nakamura Kazumi

Nakamura Kazumi was born in Chiba in 1956. He received the Masters of Fine Arts degree in oil painting from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music (current Tokyo University of the Arts).

When he began exhibiting at the beginning of the 1980s, he gained attention with his expressionist style “Y” shape motif paintings. Following that, he produced in succession his *Diagonal Grid*, *C Opened*, *Ranging Difference – Broken Shelter*, *Broken Hermitage*, *Saisoro*, *Shokusocho (Phoenix)*, and other series. He has been tirelessly and dynamically exploring the meaning of pictorial space, producing more than 1200 paintings to date.

Nakamura has had many group and solo exhibitions as a leading Japanese contemporary painter and his works are in the collections of major Japanese museums. He has also had solo museum shows at the Sezon Museum of Modern Art (1999) and at the Iwaki City Art Museum (2002). In overseas exhibitions, he has participated in group shows such as the Europaria Japan '89 (1989) and Japan Art Today (1990-91) exhibition that toured northern Europe.

In recent years, he has been exhibiting in East Asia, particularly in Korea and China. He has also published a book of theoretical essays on painting, *Toka suru hikari Nakamura Kazumi chosaku senshu (Filtered light: a Nakamura Kazumi anthology)* (Reifu Shobo, 2007).