A Luminous Affair

Opening Reception: Thursday, August 20th, 2026, 6 - 8 pm
156 Orchard St, New York, NY, 10002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York, NY — August 1, 2026 — *A Luminous Affair* refers to the illuminating encounter that takes place when distinct artistic voices, cultural traditions, and individual perspectives come together. The title reflects the exhibition's central idea: that art can illuminate something within us and reveal unexpected connections between works, artists, and cultures.

Bringing together a group of mid-career to emerging Japanese artists, *A Luminous Affair* presents practices that move between inherited traditions and contemporary forms of expression. The exhibition is conceived in the spirit and lineage of Van Der Plas Gallery, honoring the diverse artists who have exhibited there while continuing the gallery's longstanding commitment to individuality, experimentation, and unconventional artistic voices.

Located in Manhattan's Lower East Side, Van Der Plas Gallery, founded by Adriaan Van Der Plas, is renowned for its presentation of Outsider Art, Street Art, and Raw Art, with a particular focus on self-taught, underrepresented, and visionary artists from New York and around the world. Known for its eclectic group exhibitions and intimate two-story exhibition space, the gallery has cultivated a distinctive environment in which artists from different backgrounds and practices can be encountered alongside one another.

A Luminous Affair embraces this spirit of openness and discovery. Bringing together Japanese artists working across calligraphy, painting, sculpture, photography, digital media, and mixed media, the exhibition presents artists whose practices are deeply personal while engaging with both cultural inheritance and contemporary experience. Traditional techniques—including calligraphy on hanging scrolls—appear alongside experimental approaches, creating unexpected dialogues across generations, materials, and mediums.

Rather than proposing a single aesthetic or a fixed definition of contemporary Japanese art, the exhibition celebrates the distinct voices of its participating artists. Their works are connected through an openness to material, process, and individual expression, while themes of memory, nature, language, healing, spirituality, and transformation emerge as points of resonance.

In this sense, *A Luminous Affair* is conceived as part of a continuing artistic lineage: a respectful dialogue with the diverse and unconventional artists who have contributed to the identity of Van Der Plas Gallery, while introducing new voices from Japan to its New York audience. The exhibition recognizes that artistic discovery often happens through unexpected encounters—across cultures, disciplines, and ways of seeing.

Presented in collaboration with Kyoko Sato, a New York–based curator, editor, and cultural producer, the exhibition reflects her longstanding work connecting Japanese artists and cultural practices with international audiences. Sato is known for her curatorial and editorial work introducing contemporary Japanese art and culture to New York, as well as for creating exhibitions and cultural programs that foster dialogue between Japan and the United States.

A Luminous Affair ultimately celebrates the moment when different artistic worlds meet—when tradition encounters experimentation, when individual voices find unexpected resonance, and when art becomes a luminous space for discovery. At once intimate and eclectic, the exhibition continues the spirit of Van Der Plas Gallery: creating a space where individual voices can stand on their own, while discovering new meaning through their proximity to one another.

EXHIBITION

A Luminous Affair
Exhibition Dates: August 20th - August 30th, 2026
Opening Reception: Thursday, August 20th, 2026, 6 - 8 PM
Location: 156 Orchard St, New York, NY 10002

COMMUNICATIONS / CONTACT

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ARTISTS

AyaNe 松﨑綾音
A globally active contemporary artist and art/color therapist. She is a recipient of the Japan Art Honorary Grand Prize, has been selected as one of the "Top 100 Artists in the World," and serves as the Japan-Iran Cultural Goodwill Ambassador. Her artwork has been widely exhibited and acclaimed internationally, spanning galleries and exhibitions in France, Spain, Belgium, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

First Snow 梅木由紀子
Born into a family that ran a calligraphy school, FIRST SNOW began studying Japanese calligraphy from an early age. After learning web design through her professional career, she began creating digital calligraphy art as a self-taught artist. She continues to pursue a unique artistic style that combines traditional Japanese calligraphy with contemporary art.

In her fifties, a major turning point in her life inspired her to pursue art professionally. Having experienced the power of words to encourage and support her through difficult times, she established the concept “Turning Words into Art.” Through her work, she hopes to bring encouragement, hope, and a sense of comfort to others.

Today, she exhibits and sells her work at exhibitions and art markets in Japan and abroad while also expanding her artistic activities through social media and her online art shop.

Fudeshi Shontaro 富永章子
FUDESHI Shontaro is an artist working in calligraphy, exploring visual expression through ink techniques such as gradation, dry brush, and ink bleeding. His work approaches calligraphy as a form of visual art, focusing on expressive possibilities within brush and ink. His background includes both artistic practice and professional experience related to craft and education.

Izumi Sonobe 園部泉子
Izumi Sonobe is a Japanese contemporary artist whose creative practice extends from visual art into writing, research, and education. She received a Master's degree in Language Education from Waseda University and completed doctoral coursework in the same field. Her work is centered on The Language of the Heart, a concept she has developed through both art and research to describe the inner language born from human sensitivity before it becomes words. Using an original technique of layering traditional Japanese chiyogami, she creates works that awaken each viewer's own Language of the Heart, while drawing upon the refined aesthetic traditions of Japanese culture. In 2026, she received the First Runner-Up Award at the New York Public Art Exhibition, and her award-winning work was exhibited at Gallery Max New York (USA). Her selected exhibitions include Montreux Art Gallery (Switzerland), Junge Japanische Künstler (Switzerland), Charlottenburg Palace Exhibition (Germany), and ART BRANDENBURG (Germany). She was also featured as a Japanese artist in the Swiss art magazine riVierart.In literature, she received the Fukushima Literary Award and was selected as a Top 8 Finalist for the Shinchō New Writers Award. In language education, she introduced the concept of The Language of the Heart, presented her research at academic conferences, authored the lead feature article for the Journal of the Japan Society for the Study of Japanese Language Education, and contributed to educational publications and newspaper essays. In 2026, she published『感性を言葉にする一「自分の言葉」で生きるための教科書 (Putting Kansei into Words: A Guide to Living Through Your Own Words 〉(Nikkei BP). Based in Japan, she continues to exhibit internationally, creating works that explore the possibilities of human creativity and sensitivity through Japanese aesthetics and The Language of the Heart.

Kawazu Miki 河津美希
Miki Kawazu is a Japan-based Spiritual Healing Artist and flower essence counselor with 19+ years supporting over 10,000 clients. Each painting carries a unique message (song) she creates, infused with vibrational energy from flower essences she personally crafts—used even by the British royal family. Works transform with viewing position and light: colors hidden in morning emerge at night—symbolizing our multi-layered reality and the contrast between outer self and inner heart. Roses embody love’s frequency, guiding souls back to reconnection.

A near-death experience inspired her vow to “live with joy, love, and gratitude,” sealing photons into quantum portals that heal spaces and viewers, leading them to happiness.

Motohiko Ishino 石野智彦
Born in Yaizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, a coastal town blessed with the richness of the sea, simple landscapes, and beautiful star-filled skies, Ishino grew up surrounded by the powerful energy of nature.During high school, he studied art and design in an environment immersed in painting and sculpture. Although family circumstances led him to begin his career at a local trading company, five years later he returned to his pursuit of art and moved to Tokyo, where he continued to study and develop his artistic practice.Later, while helping with his family's acupuncture clinic and continuing to create art, he obtained a national license as an acupuncturist.As society's interest in Eastern medicine grew and acupuncture gained wider recognition, Ishino continued his clinical practice alongside his artistic activities, participating in open-call exhibitions, solo exhibitions, and group shows.Through treating patients, he became increasingly aware of the profound connection between emotional well-being and physical health.With the hope that his work may bring even a small sense of healing to the human spirit, he continues to create each day, placing this intention at the heart of his artistic practice.

Nobuko 福留信子
Nobuko Fukudome was born in 1971 in Yonago, Tottori Prefecture, Japan. After graduating from the Osaka Travel Journal College in 1992, she developed an artistic practice that has gained increasing recognition in recent years through exhibitions, awards, and community engagement.

Since 2024, Fukudome has presented a series of solo exhibitions in her native Tottori Prefecture, including exhibitions at Kinyuzan Taikyuji Temple in Daisen (2024), Takahashi Community Center in Daisen (2025), and Café Loco in Yonago (2026).

Her work has been recognized by the New York Open Call Exhibition organized by the Art Incubation Association, receiving an Award of Excellence (Winter 2023), the Second Prize (Spring/Summer 2025), and the Award of Excellence (Spring 2026).

Fukudome's growing public profile has attracted extensive media attention. Her exhibitions have been featured by Kyodo News, NHK's Ohayo Nippon, numerous newspapers, and television news programs throughout Japan between 2024 and 2026.

Since 2025, she has also led her signature "Nadedegaki" (Caressing Drawing) Workshops, offering participants a meditative and tactile approach to artistic expression. The workshops have been held at temples across Japan, including Taikyuji Temple and Seigen-in in Tottori Prefecture, Jishoji Temple in Kagawa Prefecture, Saimyoji Temple in Tokushima Prefecture, and Honryuji Temple in Tokyo, reflecting her commitment to fostering creativity, mindfulness, and community through art.

Odagiri Keikou 小田桐恵子
Born in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo in 1957. Resides in Yokohama. Graduated from the Piano Department of Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, having received a consistent education from kindergarten through university. Provided piano accompaniment for Hiroyuki Odagiri's solo album. Has served as an accompanist for recitals across Japan and appeared on programs such as NHK-FM's Meikyoku Recital. Has released eight CDs to date. From the eighth album onwards, drummer Kazuhiro Odagiri joined, and they continue to hold family trio concerts. Performed the piano solo for the ballet "Maigo no Aomushi-san" (The Lost Caterpillar), composed by Koichi Sugiyama and choreographed by Minoru Suzuki for the Star Dancers Ballet, an official program of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Recipient of numerous awards, including the Mainichi Award at the Mainichi Shodo Exhibition (won consecutively in the 58th and 59th exhibitions). Also active as a calligrapher and seal engraver. Held a solo exhibition at Ginza Souei Gallery in November 2022. Has run a piano school for 50 years, a calligraphy school (Keikokai) for 30 years, and leads the local "Happy Smile" aotake-fumi (bamboo treading) choir. Currently planning and facilitating the "Classical to Jazz Participatory Concerts for All Ages" series at Bosch Hall. Holds a Level 4/C-level instructor license from the Japan Aerobic Federation. Instructor at the Teshigawara Wafu-kai. Hobbies include hip-hop jazz dance, pottery, and handicrafts. Former judging member of the Sogen Calligraphy Association, former member of the Mainichi Calligraphy Association, instructor at the Sogen Calligraphy Association, and member of the All Japan Calligraphy Federation. Guest exhibitor at the "Bokubokai Calligraphy Exhibition," held every New Year at the Ginza Pola Museum. Great-aunt was Sakae Tsuboi.

Rayco Kondo 近藤麗子
Rayco Kondo is a Japanese contemporary artist whose work explores movement, memory, encounter, and the living presence of place.

After graduating from Musashino Art University, she worked in design before establishing herself as an independent artist. Her creative process begins by traveling to places to which she feels intuitively “called,” where she draws directly on site without preliminary sketches. Using pen drawing, watercolor, and gold leaf, she combines a Japanese animistic sensibility with a

contemporary visual language.

In her long-term project CALLING, Kondo depicts the Chestnut Tiger butterfly, a migratory species, as both a reflection of herself as a traveler and a mediator connecting movement, memory, and encounter across time and space.

Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. In 2026, she participated in WHATZ International Contemporary Art Fair in Taiwan and the 78th Sanki Art Exhibition at the National Art Center, Tokyo.

Kondo also collaborates across film and music. In 2026, she created the key visual for New York-based jazz pianist Kevin Du's album Somewhere, a Butterfly Sings. She also contributed artwork to Mobile Police Patlabor EZY and created an in-film mural and butterfly imagery for Kinketsu no Hen, scheduled for release in November 2026. In 2023, she contributed to the design of the butterfly-themed character emblem for the film Shin Kamen Rider.

She is a member of the Japan Artists Association.

Ryoichi 高橋綾一
Born in Miyagi, Japan, and based in Yokohama, the artist creates works that originate from photography and are reimagined through a distinctive visual language shaped by a unique perspective and digital manipulation. Moving beyond photography as an objective record, the artist layers color and refines texture to reveal the strata of memory, quiet introspection, and subtle emotional shifts. Guided by a steadfast commitment to a deeply personal aesthetic, the work transforms ordinary moments into dramatic, dreamlike compositions that blur the boundaries between reality and imagination.

Show Sawamura 澤村正一
Show Sawamura (澤村正一) began his career as a child actor in television and theater before performing internationally as a professional magician, inspired by the legendary illusionist Princess Tenko. Over nearly four decades, he expanded his practice to include stage direction, costume design, set design, and visual production, creating immersive artistic experiences around the world.

Today, Sawamura is a jewelry artist and sculptor, bringing together a lifetime of craftsmanship and storytelling. Inspired by mythology, nature, and the cosmos, his works explore themes of harmony, transformation, and hope. Each piece is created with the wish to illuminate its owner's present, inspire their future, and bring new beauty to their past.

His notable works include Phoenix Dance and Phoenix Song, Exquisite Dragon, Ascending Dragon Embracing a Jewel, Face Tiara Jupiter, and Six Realms Flying Dragon.

Shoyo 色摩直美
Born in Hiroshima, Japan. Shoyo first picked up the calligraphy brush at the age of six. Deeply connected to nature and Japanese culture from early childhood, her practice explores invisible emotions and the underlying essence of existence through the medium of calligraphy.Parallel to her artistic journey, she has a background as a professional athlete—achieving a career-high ITF World Ranking of #31 in Beach Tennis—and serves as a certified coach. Her lifestyle and creative philosophy are inspired by her love for tennis, the sun, fermented foods, and Japanese sake.

Takuya Shimosaka 下坂卓也

Born in Miyagi, Japan, and based in Yokohama, the artist has steadily built a distinctive practice that merges photography with digital manipulation to create evocative, painterly images exploring memory, emotion, and the inner landscape. Since beginning a professional exhibition career in 2019, the artist has presented numerous solo exhibitions and participated in major juried exhibitions throughout Japan and internationally.

The artist has received recognition from prestigious competitions, including the Excellence Award at the All Japan Art Salon Painting Competition (2020), the New Artist Award at the Soki Exhibition (2022), the Special Jury Prize at Independent TOKYO (2019), the Heartful Art Festival Excellence Award (2025), and fourth place at the Shibuya Hikarie MONSTER Exhibition (2019). Their work has also been selected for leading open-call exhibitions, including the Genten Exhibition at the National Art Center, Tokyo, the Modern Art Exhibition, the ACT Art Award Exhibition, and the New Art ZERO Exhibition.

Internationally, the artist's work has been exhibited in New York, Paris, and online global exhibitions, including 100 Artists of the World: Art Inside the Art Square presented on the Times Square Big Screen in New York (2024) and the Japan Contemporaries exhibition series. In 2025, the artist was selected to join the international online gallery Singulart, expanding the global reach of the

work, and was shortlisted for the HERALBONY ART PRIZE.

The artist's practice has also gained recognition beyond the gallery setting. In 2025, the work Human was featured on the cover of the PCN journal and later published in the psychiatric journal Human (2026), reflecting an ongoing dialogue between contemporary art and mental health. The artist has participated in exhibitions dedicated to psychiatric and inclusive art, including the PSYCHIATRIC ART Exhibition and the ETHER Exhibition, while also exhibiting at the Yokohama City Hall Atrium and taking part in the World Mental Health Day lighting ceremony at Tokyo Tower.

Through a body of work that transforms photographic imagery into immersive emotional landscapes, the artist continues to develop a visual language that bridges memory, psychology, and contemporary digital expression.

Tamotsu Sakai 酒井保
A Japanese photographer based in Gifu, whose work explores light, human presence, and the relationship between the visible and the invisible. Through conversations with his photography mentor, he developed an approach of “reading light” rather than simply capturing subjects. His practice ranges from rural landscapes shaped by everyday human life to abstract photography inspired by meditation, dreams, and inner sensations. Through light, Sakai seeks to visualize subtle inner landscapes and unseen forms of presence, creating quiet spaces where viewers can encounter their own memories, emotions, and questions about existence.

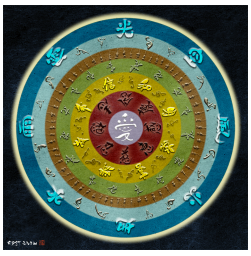
Tomoka Hayashi 林朋香
A Japanese painter who focuses on human figures to depict the "darkness and light" as well as the "cruelty and beauty" of humanity. After graduating at the top of her class from an art university in 1997, she studied abroad in France for three years starting in 2005. Her versatile career includes designing CD jackets and merchandise for famous rock bands, hosting solo exhibitions in Harajuku, and expanding her international footprint with selections and exhibitions at the Salon International Paris and open-call exhibitions in New York.

Yuko Hanada 花田夕子
A self-taught painter who is garnering significant attention in both domestic and international exhibitions, and the founder of the art school "SenArtgallery." Her debut solo exhibition, held locally during the pandemic, drew over 130 visitors in just two days. She was later selected as a featured artist for the prominent contemporary art event "100 Artists 10 (2024/25)," where her sacred tree-themed piece, Prayer, received high acclaim. She currently creates art with the future goal of basing her career between Japan and New York.

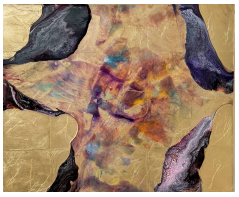
Guest Artists: Alejandro Caiazza, Brian Gormley, Carri Skoczek, Devon Marinac, Dough Groupp, Jason McLean, Konstantin Bokov, Marc Bell, Michael Staats and Susan Day.

SELECTED IMAGES

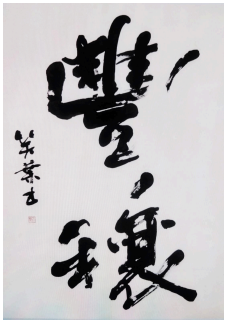
Images are lent for the sole purpose of editorial publicity related to the exhibition. Images must not be cropped, overprinted, or otherwise manipulated.



Mandala of Hope, 2025, First Snow.
Image courtesy of Van Der Plas Gallery.



Universe's Memory/ Happiness, 2026, Motohiko Ishino.
Image courtesy of Van Der Plas Gallery.



Hōjo (Abundance), 2016, Shoyo.
Image courtesy of Van Der Plas Gallery.

GALLERY ABOUT

Originally founded by Adriaan Van Der Plas in Gramercy Park, NYC in the 1980s, Van Der Plas Gallery is an established outsider art gallery now located in the Lower East Side of NYC.

Van Der Plas Gallery brings the lost histories of the Lower East Side and East Village art scene back to life. Fusing Contemporary, Outsider, and Street Art, the gallery is a sanctuary for artists seeking to channel the authentic, unabashed creativity that has blossomed in the neighborhood for generations.

By celebrating its important heritage and building upon its foundations, Van Der Plas fosters a community committed to the artists ingrained in the very fabric of the Lower East Side.