

Oscar Oiwa: Journey to the Light

2019.4.27 (Sat) -
8.25 (Sun)

Exhibition Title	Oscar Oiwa: Journey to the Light
Period	Saturday, April 27 - Sunday, August 25, 2019
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays) *Ticket sales end 30 minutes before closing time
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Galleries 7-12, 14, others
Closed	Mondays (Open on April 29, May 6, July 15, August 12), May 7, July 16
No. of works	65 (41 paintings, 2 sculptures, 22 drawings) + wall drawing
Admission	General: ¥1,200(¥1,000) College students: ¥800(¥600) Elem/JH/HS: ¥400(¥300) 65 and older: ¥1,000 Combi tickets: "AWAZU Kiyoshi: What Can Design Do?" (5.18 - 8.25) General: ¥2,000(¥1,600) College students: ¥1,400(¥1,100) Elem/JH/HS: ¥700(¥600) 65 and older: ¥1,600 *Prices in brackets are for groups of 20 or more and advance tickets
Advance Tickets	Ticket PIA (Tel 0570-02-9999) P code: [this exhibition] 769-551 [Combi ticket] 769-548 Lawson Ticket (Tel 0570-000-777) L code: [this exhibition] 55333 [Combi ticket] 55342 EVENTIFY (Family Mart Group) *available at the Fami Port counter at Family Mart stores
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
Supported by	Embassy of Brazil in Japan
Cooperation	Japan Airlines, Kuretake Co., Ltd.
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**About
the Exhibition**

With brilliant, light-filled colors and dynamic spatial structures, Oscar OIWA creates vivid depictions of contemporary society that are infused with critical and humorous qualities. Born in São Paulo, Brazil to Japanese parents in 1965, Oiwa splits his time between Tokyo and New York, making works that share both the perspective of an ordinary urban dweller and an objective bird's eye view. Addressing themes such as the cities and societies he inhabits and environmental problems, Oiwa freely integrates photographs, printed matter, and images from the Internet to realize a unique worldview that wavers between reality and fantasy, artifice and nature, and light and shadow. This exhibition explores Oiwa's vision through a collection of approximately 60 works, with an emphasis on recent efforts, and a 27-meter-long drawing executed on a wall in the museum. In addition, the composer Chad CANNON was invited to take part in a collaborative project, in which Oiwa's work served as the inspiration for a magnificent symphony that coalesces with the paintings. With any luck, the light that Oiwa pursues in his work while traveling all over the world will reawaken a sense of hope, helping us deal with the difficulty of living in the current era.

**Artist
Statement**

The painter's job has nothing to do with how well you can paint or your technique. It's an inner struggle to express an idea on the picture plane. The tools you use are pretty simple – paints, brushes, and canvases that anyone could buy. Over many years of painting, I have continually faced the difficult challenge of how I could use these simple materials to make something great.

Oscar Oiwa

About the artist**Oscar Oiwa**

Born in 1965 in São Paulo, Brazil. Graduated in 1989 from the University of São Paulo, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Oiwa moved his base to Tokyo in 1991. He lived and worked in London in 1995 as artist in residence awarded by the Delfina Studio Trust, and was recipient of a grant from Asian Cultural Council and a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in 2001. In 2002 he relocated to New York, where he remains based today. Major exhibitions include the 21st International Biennial of São Paulo in 1991, "Oscar Oiwa: The Garden of Eden" (Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo) in 1998, "Oscar Oiwa: The Dreams of a Sleeping World" (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo) in 2008, and "Oscar Oiwa" (Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro) in 2011, and "Beyond the End: Ruins in Art History" (Shoto Museum of Art, Tokyo) in 2018 among many others.



Photo: Luna

Exhibition
Features**Oiwa's first large-scale solo exhibition in Japan in a decade
Presents, in six chapters, an artistic practice that dynamically
depicts society today**

The exhibition will feature some 60 pieces, centering on paintings and large-scale works ranging from the early 2000s to the artist's latest. It will be structured in six chapters: Chapter 1. Waves in New York City, Chapter 2. (Dis)United States of America, Chapter 3. Life as an Eternal Journey, Chapter 4. A Very Imperfect World, Chapter 5. Aiming for Light, and Chapter 6. After All, We Remain Hopeful. The exhibition aims to illuminate Oscar Oiwa's artistic practice since 2000, by focusing on the work he has created since his large-scale solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo in 2008.

**Woods, a new drawing rendered on a 27-meter-long wall at the 21st
Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa**

Oscar Oiwa's works have a special appeal that instantly draws the viewer in with their bold spatial composition and sense of scale. Prior to the opening of this exhibition, Oiwa will reside in Kanazawa while he executes a new drawing, *Woods*, on a massive 27-meter-long wall at the museum.

**Receiving inspiration from Oscar Oiwa's works
Sharing a gallery with a symphonic work by American composer
Chad Cannon**

The works introduced in "Chapter 4: A Very Imperfect World" (Gallery 11) have as their motifs environmental destruction, marine pollution and the Fukushima nuclear accident. Inspired by these works, Chad Cannon, an American composer active on the world stage, created a sublime symphonic work. At this exhibition, we attempt to marry the music with Oiwa's paintings by playing inside the gallery the pieces inspired by the artworks on view.

**Chad Cannon**

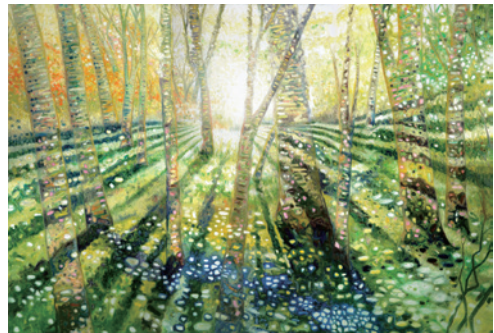
Los Angeles-based composer, interested in the intersection of cultures, history, and human stories. Cannon's music has been described by the *New York Times* as "subtle, agile" with "vividness of emotion." In 2013, he founded the Asia/America New Music Institute (AANMI), thereafter staging performances throughout Asia and the United States. He has worked as an arranger for composer Hisashi Joe, orchestrated Hollywood films including *The Hobbit* (2012) and *Godzilla* (2014), and composed scores for the documentary films *Cairo Declaration* (2015, co-composed with Ye Xiaogang) and *Paper Lanterns* (2016). In January 2019, he presented *The Dreams of a Sleeping World*, a symphonic work based on 10 paintings by Oscar Oiwa.



Invisible Sea 2010
227 × 333 cm
Oil on canvas
Collection of the artist

Oscar Oiwa's life as a traveler and the meaning of "journey to the light"

Born in São Paulo, Oiwa has continually made art while traveling the world, using the cities in which he has lived, including to Tokyo and New York, as the stage for his art practice. Throughout this time he has built up various experiences, relying on his own instincts to navigate a complex world as he keeps on traveling in a bright direction. Light is inside of us, something we cultivate ourselves. The final chapter, "Chapter 6: After All, We Remain Hopeful," features a series of light-filled pieces that give concrete expression to these thoughts of Oiwa's. Among them is a new work produced for this exhibition, *Journey to the Light*.



Journey to the Light 2018
Oil on canvas
227 × 333 cm
Collection of the artist

Exhibition Composition

Gallery 7

Chapter 1. Waves in New York City

A resident of New York since 2002, Oiwa follows a daily routine like that of a regular office worker, taking the subway to his studio every morning, returning home in the evening and staying up late working on his computer. He paints the city he lives in, New York, and the "World Wide Web Wave" series depicts the invisible electromagnetic waves that flow through the streets. In *Ghost Ship*, which has as its motif the ruins along the Hudson River, a massive ship floats on waves against a backdrop of New York at night.



Ghost Ship 2014
Oil on canvas
227 × 666 cm
Collection of the artist



World Wide Web Wave 2 (Wall Street) 2017
Oil on canvas
227 × 333 cm
Collection of the artist

Gallery 8

Chapter 2. (Dis)United States of America

Oiwa moved to New York in 2002, the year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when, in contrast to his peaceful everyday life, America began fighting in Iran and Afghanistan. This was followed by the 2008 financial crisis, and while there was a glimmer of “hope” when Obama was elected president, it was short-lived, with the turmoil in America worsening under the Trump administration. Having observed this state of affairs, it is as if Oiwa is trying to bring the political and social chaos into the open by dealing with such familiar subjects as barbecues, circuses and dreams.



Big Circus 2011
Oil on canvas
227 × 333 cm
Collection of the artist



Meat Market (Eating) 2005
Oil on canvas
227 × 333 cm
Collection of the artist

Gallery 9,10

Chapter 3. Life as an Eternal Journey

Oiwa has constantly been on the move, from São Paulo, where he was born and raised, to Tokyo where he lived for eleven years from 1991, and then to New York. In this sense one could say his life itself is a journey. And the scenes and motifs he has observed in each location have been incorporated into his artworks. Various places—from the Kita-Senju district of Tokyo that retains the atmosphere of a *shitamachi* (old town), and the Setouchi island of Ogijima, to other Asian countries—are depicted in a way that creates a somehow nostalgic atmosphere. His many charming drawings also lend color to individual moments in his life of travel.



Kita-Senju 2010
Oil on canvas
227 × 444 cm
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa



Giant Octopus 2016
Oil and composition gold leaf on canvas
27 × 333 cm
Collection of the artist



Cupronickel 2008
Cupronickel
37 × 60 × 29 cm
Collection of Gallery Caption



Shadow Cat 2008
Bronze
39 × 50 × 35 cm
Collection of Gallery Caption

Gallery 11

Chapter 4. A Very Imperfect World

Having observed since his childhood in São Paulo how things go wrong in the world, Oiwa has used as themes in his works environmental problems such as air and sea pollution as well as the absurdities surrounding natural disasters. His canvases, which are brightly colored and filled with light despite the weightiness of these themes, appear to contain a glimmer of hope. In this chapter, we attempt to marry a magnificent symphony created by composer Chad Cannon in response to Oiwa's work with the paintings that inspired it.



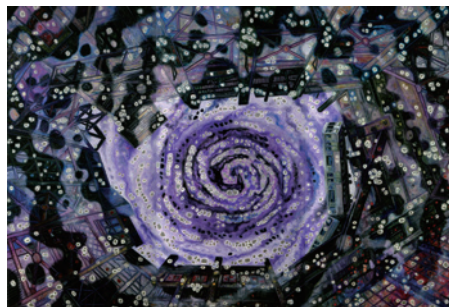
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Mushroom Forest 2016
Oil on canvas
227 × 555 cm
Collection of the artist

Gallery 12

Chapter 5. Aiming for Light

“Light” is the most important theme in Oiwa's works. After learning that the human eye contains two types of cells—cone cells, which make out colors and shapes in strong light, and rod cells, which are more sensitive and allow us to make out shapes in the dark but not colors—Oiwa was inspired to make use of the latter in the presentation of his paintings. Paintings created using a range of media to express light, such as composition gold and silver leaf, can be viewed inside this darkened gallery.



13

Vortex 2018
227 × 333 cm
Oil and composition silver leaf on canvas
Collection of the artist



14

Light Tree (small) 2015
137 × 178 cm
Oil and composition gold leaf on canvas
Collection of the artist

Gallery 14

Chapter 6. After All, We Remain Hopeful

The exhibition concludes with a selection of works filled with light employing such colors as green, blue and yellow. The settings vary and include a tropical rain forest in the Amazon, a river in São Paulo and a forest whose location is unidentifiable, but each work is drenched in a soft light that seems to envelope the viewer. It could be said that the new work created for this exhibition, *Journey to the Light*, exquisitely embodies Oiwa's approach, which the artist himself summed up when he stated, "in order to become happy, it's important to cultivate the light I'm aiming for myself."



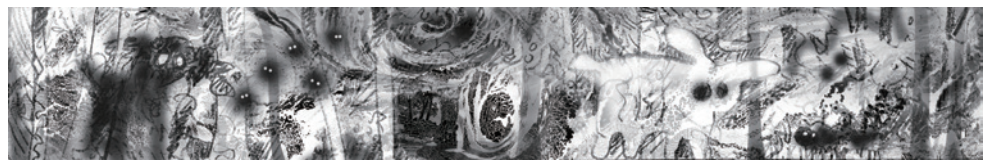
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Five Nests 2012
227 × 555 cm
Oil on canvas
Collection of the artist

Foyer

New drawing Woods on a 27-meter-long wall

To date, Oscar Oiwa has executed large-scale wall drawing at the Setouchi Triennale (2010 Ogijima, 2013 Ibukijima, 2016 Shodoshima), Embassy of Brazil in Japan (2017) and Japan House São Paulo (2018). For this exhibition, he will spend some two weeks at the Museum executing a forest-themed drawing on a massive 4-meter-high by 27-meter-long wall of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. Experience for yourself the overwhelming scale of this work!



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Conceptual drawing

Art-in-
residence

A 27-meter-long drawing rendered on a wall of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Work in progress on Oscar Oiwa's new wall drawing *Woods*

Media viewing: March 27 (Wed) 13:00–17:00

Related Event

A talk by Oscar Oiwa on his solo exhibition at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa**Date/time:** April 18 (Thur) 19:00–20:30**Venue:** Embassy of Brazil in Japan auditorium**Admission:** Free**Bookings:** cultural.toquio@itamaraty.gov.br

(Cultural Section of the Embassy of Brazil in Japan)

Oscar Oiwa: Artist Talks**Date/time:** April 27 (Sat)

14:00–15:30 (doors open 13:30)

Guest: Emile Tsuru-Devaux (Japanese Brazilian Art Researcher)

17:00–19:00 (doors open 16:30)

Guest: Chad Cannon (Composer)

Venue: Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa**Seats:** 80**Admission:** Free, no booking necessary

*content subject to change

**MIYAZAWA Kazufumi on Brazilian culture:
Talk, poetry reading, and solo concert****Date/time:** June 28 (Fri) 19:00 (doors open 18:30)**Venue:** Theater 21, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa**Seats:** 160**Admission:** ¥5,000 on sale from April 27 (Sat)Exhibition
Catalogue**Oscar Oiwa: Journey to the Light****Essays:**

- “An Attachment to this Life,” MIYAZAWA Kazufumi (Singer-songwriter)
- “Oscar Oiwa, or the Aesthetics of Inversion,” Emile Tsuru-Devaux (PhD, Kyoto University Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies / Japanese Brazilian Art Researcher)
- “When the Light Meets the Dark,” YOKOYAMA Yukiko (Assistant Curator, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

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