

PRESS RELEASE 2020/ 9 / 25

# UEDA Kaoru

November 14th (Saturday), 2020 –  
January 11th (Monday, Public Holiday), 2021

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

Kaoru Ueda (1928-) uses photography to create elaborate depictions of his subjects. Many have probably seen his realistic depiction of a raw egg trickling out of its shell in art textbooks.

After studying oil painting at the Tokyo University of the Arts, Ueda, who mainly worked on abstract paintings, entered the world of graphic design in 1956 when he won the international grand prize in an international film poster competition. After that, he took a break from painting for a while, but in 1970, he discovered an expression that depicts only the subject itself in a realistic way—“damn realism,” as he calls it, to empty his mind when he has a creative block.

Since then, Ueda created a series of works that appear more real than reality, at times using what he learned from the world of design. Many of the motifs in his works, such as a raw egg at the moment its shell breaks, jam that is about to drop from a spoon, flowing water, and the sky, change their appearance in an instant. His vivid depictions of time and space are highly acclaimed and hold a unique place in realist painting.

This exhibition introduces Kaoru Ueda’s career, which has rarely been presented in a coherent manner, along with about 80 works from post-graduation to the present. We hope visitors will enjoy the flow of time and the vastness of space, and the world of Ueda's “damn realism” that transforms the ordinary day-to-day into a wonder.

## Exhibition Structure

### Part 1: Predating the Realism

We look back on Ueda Kaoru's early years, from his graduation work Self-Portrait (1954), which he produced at the Tokyo University of the Arts, to the abstract paintings presented in his first solo exhibition, to the poster competition winning piece, and to his works from the end of the 1960s, when he was searching for his own expression.

### Part 2: Establishment of his Style

Ueda determined to “single-mindedly and realistically portray” what is seen visually. This exhibition introduces his works up to the first half of the 1970s, the starting point of Ueda's style of realism, in which the subject is enlarged to fill the entire picture.

### Part 3: Portraying “Time”

Ueda, who broke new ground in realism paintings, went on to paint a variety of motifs one after another. In the 1970s, his interest shifted to depicting melting ice cream and jam dripping from a spoon and other moving objects or in other words, phenomena. His attempt to capture the fleeting appearance of things in transition gave birth to his signature series of “Raw Eggs”.

### Part 4: Portraying “Light”

Having succeeded in incorporating the element of “time” into his work, Ueda chose soap bubbles as his next motif, in which he painstakingly paints his own reflection and the surrounding scene in detail. His interest in the nature of light—its transmission, reflection and distortion—led him to new motifs such as cups and bottles, and the flow of liquids and rivers.

### Part 5: Sketches and Prints

Ueda has also done many watercolor, pastel, and print pieces. While examining its relationship with oil painting, Ueda's attitude to expression will be explored.

### Part 6: To the Present

In his work since the 2000s, his all-over compositions depicting the flow of rivers have evolved into new spatial expressions, such as the “Sky” piece in the “Sky” series and eggshells lined up like still-life paintings. The latest work in

this exhibition is a series of four oil paintings. Although they are small in scale, they are intriguing self-portraits of the artist's own hands and appearance from behind.

### **Exhibition Outline**

#### 1. Period

November 14th (Saturday, Prefectural citizen's day), 2020 to January 11th (Monday, Public holiday), 2021

Closed: Mondays (except November 23rd, January 11th) and December 28th (Monday) to January 5th (Tuesday)

#### 2. Hours

10:00am to 5:30pm (Exhibition Room entry until 5:00pm)

#### 3. Admission

Adult: 1,100 yen (880 yen)

University and High school students: 880 yen (710 yen)

\*Prices in brackets are for groups of 20 or more.

\*Admission of junior high school students and younger, and those with a disability certificate (including one attendant) are free of charge.

\*You can also visit the MOMAS Collection (Exhibition Room on the first floor).

#### 4. Organizers

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan Association of Art Museums

#### 5. Corporate sponsors

Lion Corporation, Dai Nippon Printing, Sompo Japan Insurance, Nippon Television Network Corporation

#### 6. Support

Kaoru Ueda

#### 7. Production Support

Nagoya Gallery

#### 8. Public Relations Support

JR East Omiya Branch, FM NACK5

#### 9. Number of Presented Works

Approximately 80

#### 10. Venue/Access:

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

9-30-1, Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi, Saitama 330-0061, Japan

Tel: 048-824-0111 Fax: 048-824-0119

<https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/>

The museum is located inside Kita-Urawa Park, a 3-minute walk from the West Exit of Kita-Urawa Station on the JR Keihin-Tohoku Line.

JR Kita-Urawa Station is approximately 35 minutes by train from JR Tokyo or JR Shinjuku Station.

Parking is not available at the museum. Please use the coin-operated parking lot named "Mitsui Repark, the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama East," which can be used at a reduced price (300 yen off for special exhibitions and 100 yen off for the MOMAS Collection). Please contact us prior to your visit if you are planning on coming by chartered bus. Persons with disabilities can use our business-use parking space. However, space is limited.

### **Current Exhibitions**

Please see the museum's website for more information.

[https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/ueda\\_kaoru](https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/ueda_kaoru)

### **Slide Talks**

A slide presentation of the highlights of the exhibition will be presented to interested groups (reservation is required). For more information or to make a reservation, please contact the Education/Public Relations staff (contact: 048-824-0110).

### **Measures to Prevent Novel Coronavirus Infection**

- We ask for your understanding and cooperation in taking measures to prevent novel coronavirus infection.
- Depending on circumstances, the museum may close, or the exhibition periods may be subject to change.
- Please check the museum's website for the latest information before your visit (contact: 048-824-0111). <https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/>

## **Contact Information**

Exhibition managers: Ms. Okoshi, Ms. Kita, Ms. Sahara/Contact for inquiries  
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## Provision of Images for Publicity

- Please contact the museum about requesting an image. The museum will provide the images in data format. To request an image, please send an email to [kouhou@aria.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:kouhou@aria.ocn.ne.jp) (Manaka, Public Relations).
- Please include the captions shown below for images (1) to (5). Please do not make alterations such as cropping or adding text to the artwork.
- Application for copyright permission is not required to publish images (1) to (5). If you would like to use other images, please contact us.

## Images for Publicity

- ① Kaoru Ueda, Spoon and Jam A, 1974, Oil and acrylic on canvas, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
- ② Kaoru Ueda, Raw Egg A, 1975, Oil and acrylic on canvas, The Museum of Modern Art, Gunma
- ③ Kaoru Ueda, Soapsuds D, 1979, Oil and acrylic on canvas
- ④ Kaoru Ueda, Jelly and Spoon C, 1990, Oil on canvas, The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama
- ⑤ Kaoru Ueda, Salad E, 2014, oil on canvas

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