

THREE EXHIBITIONS SPOTLIGHT JAPANESE ARTIST KAZUO SHIRAGA

Text by Hannah Martin | January 20, 2015



Daiitokuson, 1973.

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In 1957, suspended from the ceiling of an Osaka gallery and dressed in a red Pinocchio suit, Japanese artist Kazuo Shiraga kicked, splattered, and splashed paint onto a piece of paper on the floor, creating a striking, gestural composition. Such “action paintings,” as Shiraga termed them, became hallmarks of the Gutai, a group of postwar Japanese artists who went on to influence the performance-driven work of Allan

Kaprow and Yves Klein, among others. Now the subject of several gallery and museum shows across the U.S., Shiraga's paintings return to the spotlight.

On February 10, Mnuchin Gallery will open an eponymous show of 20 of the artist's works, beginning in 1959 and spanning four decades. "Between Action and the Unknown," opening February 8 at the Dallas Museum of Art, will examine the work of Shiraga alongside that of his contemporary, Sadamasa Motonaga, displaying paintings, drawings, photographs, films, sculpture, and re-creations of outdoor installations, many of which have never been shown in the U.S. And "Body and Matter," opening January 29 at Dominique Lévy, will place 23 important abstract paintings by Shiraga in conversation with more than a dozen 1990s works by Satoru Hoshino, an avant-garde postwar Japanese ceramicist. In a collaboration with Belgian interior designer, curator, and collector Axel Vervoordt, who has long championed Shiraga's work, the gallery will also release the definitive monograph of the artist, which provides a glimpse into his personal life with never-before-seen material, including his scrapbook.