

## Press Release

### Kinuko Emi Exhibition

January 17 (Sat) - February 28 (Sat), 2026

Tokyo Gallery + BTAP | Tokyo

Tokyo Gallery + BTAP is pleased to announce an exhibition by Kinuko Emi opening January 17, 2026. This will be her first solo exhibition at our gallery since 1961.

Kinuko Emi (1923–2015) was born in Akashi City, Hyogo Prefecture. After graduating from high school, she attended the Kobe Municipal Western Painting Institute, and became a member of the Hyogo Prefectural Artists Association in 1948. She was first selected for the 4th Action Art Society Exhibition in 1949 and received an Encouragement Award the following year. In order to focus on activities that were unfolding at the center of the Japanese art world, Emi relocated to Yamate, Yokohama. She rapidly rose to prominence, winning the Action Art Society Award at its 7th Exhibition in 1952, and was elected its first female member the following year. After spending two years in the United States and France starting in late 1953, she returned to Japan and produced a series of abstract paintings. In 1962, she became the first Japanese woman to exhibit at the international art exhibition of the Venice Biennale. Emi also helped to establish the Kanagawa Prefecture Women Artists Association, spearheading various initiatives as one of the most prolific female artists from the early period of Japan's avant-garde art scene.

The works on display at this exhibition are paintings created by Emi in the early 1960s that place a strong emphasis on materiality. Emi literally dismantled her geometric abstract paintings created after 1957, and used these materials to create new works. She would, for example, immerse old paintings in the pond of her home garden for a period of time to cause the paint to peel off, sift it to make the particles align with each other, and use this mixture thinned with turpentine as a base for these works. Occasionally, she would change the orientation of the canvas, build up the ground with tools like a palette knife to create texture, or scrape the surface. This particular series of works conveys a strong sense of the materiality of painting and the traces of the act of painting itself. Emi's approach, which emphasizes the accidental material textures that arise beyond the forms that lie on the surface, also resonates with the practices of her contemporaries, such as Yoshishige Saito.

Emi's works are currently on view at the "Emi Kinuko from the Museum Collection: Focusing on the 1962 Venice Biennale" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama. Additionally, starting December 16th, she will also be featured in the "Anti-Action: Artist-Women's Challenges and Responses in Postwar Japan" exhibition at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo as one of the most remarkable female Japanese artists active during the postwar period. Emi's works are in major institutional collections including the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama, the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, the Yokohama Museum of Art, the Nara Prefectural Museum of Art, the Himeji City Museum of Art, the Miyagi Museum of Art, and the Takamatsu Art Museum.

We look forward to your visit.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Anna Ogino and Masao Momiyama for their invaluable support in making this exhibition possible.

Press inquiries

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Opening Hours | (Tue–Sat) 12:00-18:00

Closed | Sun, Mon, Holidays

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*Reaction No.2* (1960), oil on canvas, 163.3 × 131.8 × 3 cm