



ALMOST ESSENTIAL
LONDON

Art Consultant, Nico's three shows not to be missed in March

SALON 001 – TSUYOSHI MAEKAWA – SAATCHI GALLERY 29 FEBRUARY –

This month give yourself some time to commune with the spiritual in art. If you are racing around Chelsea, pause for a moment to experience the brand new Salon on the lower ground floor of the Saatchi Gallery, a new project space conceived by the forward looking gallery director Philly Adams. The inaugural show 001 is a solo presentation in collaboration with Levy Gorvy of paintings by the celebrated Japanese Gutai master Tsuyoshi Maekawa (b.1936). 'SALON has been created because there are limited opportunities for international artists to show at major museums in the UK. This platform allows the public access to these works. We are privileged to inaugurate with Levy Gorvy a breathtaking display of historic works by Tsuyoshi Maekawa.' Philly Adams, Senior Gallery Director, Saatchi Gallery



MANNAKA TATE NO BLUE (A18) Oil and barlap on canvas, 1964 24 64 x 51 38 inches (162.5 x 130.5 cm)

Gutai – literally meaning concrete – was the most significant avant-garde collective in the Japanese post-war era, founded in 1959 by Jiro Yoshihara. Rejecting the tradition of representing something else through painting,

Gutai artists focused on the physical materiality (canvas, pigments, glue) and three-dimensional quality of paintings. For Yoshihara “art constitutes the embodied, material manifestation of human spiritual freedom,” and his protegee Maekawa created works sprung with his own creative energy. The series of works in Salon 001 were made out of burlap, which he spliced up and layered or folded onto the canvas to create undulating biomorphic forms. He then painted these by following their internal, compositional logic. For Maekawa the artwork was not about image but matter – a visceral tactile thing that the artist could invest himself in.



MAEKAWA
1967 G 80-2

Oil and cotton on canvas
71 7/8 × 36 inches (182.5 × 91.5 cm)

My encounter with these works was intimate and deeply moving; silent witness to Maekawa's soul laid bare.

Ranging in size from small to monumental, his paintings have an aboriginal even prehistoric aura, one that captures the trace of human endeavour. Great gashes infilled with earthy pigments look like Maekawa wrestled with the work before he resolved it with sky blues and brilliant reds. They captivate the senses, strange things of exceptional beauty which require nothing from you but to sit with them and be still.