
New exhibit merges tradition and modernity by Japanese artists and friends Ken Rock and Ken Red

Opening reception: November 16th 6-9pm
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Ken Hamazaki, IFP#138 UA443 SFO→EWR NY↓, 2016



Ken Hiratsuka, Misty Island, 2021,

Brooklyn, NY, October 20th, 2024 – The Bishop Gallery is thrilled to announce its upcoming exhibition “Red Rock”, featuring two iconic Japanese artists: Ken Hiratsuka (Ken Rock) and Ken Hamazaki (Ken Red). Opening November 16, 2024, and running through January 23, 2025, “Red Rock” is curated by Carlo McCormick and offers a unique exploration of contemporary Japanese art, blending tradition and modernity through the distinct practices of these two long-time collaborators.

Ken Hiratsuka, known as Ken Rock, will showcase his renowned life-sized stone sculptures alongside intricate drawings and photography. Internationally acclaimed for his mastery of stone carving, Hiratsuka’s work is defined by a single continuous line, which he uses to etch mesmerizing patterns into stone. His art bridges the ancient and modern, creating a deep connection to nature that reflects both the timelessness and fragility of the natural world. Rooted in the graffiti and street art movement of 1980s New York, Hiratsuka was a pivotal figure in the East Village art scene and exhibited alongside legends like Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring,

and Richard Hambleton. His public sculptures still remain on the streets of New York City, a testament to his lasting impact on urban art. Over time, his practice has evolved to include large, often monumental size works more integrated with nature, often carved in situ with the collaboration of the local culture, reflecting his desire that his art crosses the boundaries of language and nations.

Ken Hamazaki, known as Ken Red, is a conceptual artist celebrated for his avant-garde performances and his iconic “Red Tea Ceremony” installations. This signature piece includes traditional Japanese elements, such as a Tatami mat and a vivid red umbrella, blended with bold, modern aesthetics. Hamazaki’s performances have been held globally, from New York to Paris to Israel, and he has been a featured artist at Burning Man, the world’s largest outdoor curated art festival. His *Red Tea Ceremony* reimagines the centuries-old practice, inviting participants to engage with the work and reflect on the tension between tradition and modernity, East and West, and individual versus collective experience. Ken Red’s work blends playfulness and experimentation with thought-provoking depth, challenging viewers to see tradition through a new, innovative lens.

“Red Rock” not only highlights the artistic heritage of Japan but also exemplifies how two artists have merged their cultural roots with contemporary practices. The exhibition will mark the first time Ken Rock and Ken Red, friends and collaborators for decades, will exhibit together. Their shared background and mutual respect as artists underscore a unique cultural dialogue that resonates through their work.

The Bishop Gallery is proud to present *Red Rock*, which reflects the gallery's ongoing commitment to showcasing diverse, global voices in contemporary art. By fostering cultural exchange and bridging artistic communities from Brooklyn to Osaka, the exhibition encapsulates the gallery's mission of promoting cross-cultural dialogue and presenting thought-provoking art that engages both locally and internationally.

Ken Hiratsuka

Ken Hiratsuka, born in 1959 in Shimodate City, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, is a renowned sculptor and painter celebrated for his unique stone carving technique. After graduating from Musashino University of Art in 1982, he moved to New York City, where he became part of the Street Art Movement, carving into the city’s slate and granite sidewalks. Driven by a desire to create "art for everybody," his work merges seamlessly with urban environments and can be found in public spaces across 24 countries. His sculptures are included in museum collections in Finland, Japan, and Miami’s Wynwood Walls Museum and his commissions span a range of prominent works, including city sidewalks, building facades, water sculptures, and gardens. Notable monuments include the 12-boulder “Peace Monument” in Australia, the 40-ton “One Line Tower” in Guilin, China, and a 100-foot-long carved sidewalk titled “River” at 25 Bond Street in New York City.

Ken Hamazaki

Ken Hamazaki, often called "The Red Man" in Osaka's Minami Senba district, is a contemporary artist celebrated for his bold use of color and innovative style. After a formative trip to England at 20, Hamazaki returned to Japan and opened his first gallery in 1992 in Osaka. In 1997, he relocated it to Minami Senba, transforming the space into a vibrant red and renaming it the Ken Hamazaki Museum of Contemporary Art, a name that humorously elevates its status. Best known for his *Red Tea Ceremony* performances, which reimagine the traditional Japanese tea ceremony using his signature color, Hamazaki's works include *Maze Paintings*, where labyrinths outline the shadows of celebrities, and *Puzzle Paintings*, featuring iconic images like the Mona Lisa. In these pieces, Hamazaki paints each puzzle piece before assembling them, creating thought-provoking and accessible art that invites viewers to see familiar images from fresh perspectives. He also supports young artists and merges art with everyday life by selling decorative items and accessories through his gallery.

The Bishop Gallery

Founded in 2012, The Bishop Gallery has organized pivotal exhibitions that reimagine our role in creating art historical narratives around underrepresented communities. Our mission is to honor the legacies of exceptional historical artists while championing emerging talents. Anchored in the stewardship of art history, we have exhibited the works of historically acclaimed artists. From the iconic brushstrokes of Jean-Michel Basquiat to the profound expressions of Yenovk der Hagopian, our solo and traveling exhibitions have captivated audiences far and wide, igniting conversations and inspiring thousands.