

ミズテツオ | Tetsuo Mizu (1944–2025)

Artist Statement

Tetsuo Mizu (1944–2025) developed a distinctive abstract language through his celebrated *Flag Series*, inspired by the international maritime signal flags used for communication between ships.

Emerging to prominence in the 1980s, Mizu transformed these functional visual codes into geometric compositions of color, rhythm, and form. Rather than treating the flags simply as symbols, he reconfigured them into an autonomous pictorial language, exploring the possibilities of communication beyond words.

His paintings are characterized by exceptionally fine delineating lines and matte, richly layered surfaces that give the works a subtle sense of volume and physical presence. While firmly rooted in geometric abstraction, his works also reveal a lyrical quality and have often been noted for their affinities with traditional Japanese visual culture, including ukiyo-e.

Mizu lived and worked for extended periods in Italy, France, and Spain, developing his practice in close dialogue with European art and culture. In 1987, he was invited to participate in an international art exhibition in Anzio, near Rome, where he received a Special Award and was commissioned to create stained-glass windows for the Church of Santa Anna.

His reputation in Europe continued to grow through major exhibitions including *Picasso, Dalí, Chagall, Mizù* in Barcelona in 1989 and *Dalí–Mizù* in Beaune, France, in 1990. He also participated extensively in major international art fairs, including Art Basel, FIAC in Paris, and Art Rio.

Mizu's practice extended beyond painting into large-scale public and architectural projects. In 1998, he created a monumental ceramic mural measuring approximately 32 × 6 meters for the entrance hall of White Ring, the figure skating venue of the Nagano Winter Olympics.

Throughout his career, Mizu developed a singular visual language connecting symbolic communication, geometric abstraction, and poetic sensibility. His work continues to be exhibited and reassessed following his death in 2025.

Biography

2025	Passed away
2011	Created a series of ten murals for Ootaki Herb Garden Hall, Chiba
2010	<i>Tetsuo Mizu Exhibition</i> / Den-en Museum of Art, Isumi, Chiba
2000	Lived and worked in Istanbul, Turkey
1999	Created the monumental work <i>Man and Woman</i> for the VIP Hall of Toda Boat Race Circuit, Saitama
1998	Created a monumental ceramic mural measuring approximately 32 × 6 meters for the entrance hall of White Ring, the figure skating venue of the Nagano Winter Olympics
1997	Solo Exhibition / National Maritime Museum, Rotterdam, the Netherlands <i>Tetsuo Mizu: Works</i> / Nihombashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo
1995	<i>The World of Tetsuo Mizu</i> / Nihombashi Mitsukoshi, Tokyo Created cover illustrations for the literary magazine <i>Shosetsu Subaru</i>
1994	Solo exhibition presenting approximately 120 works / Musée de la Marine, Palais de Chaillot, Paris
1993	Created a large-scale work for a church in Saint-Jean-d'Angély, France
1991	Solo Exhibition / Christian Dior Salon, Paris Solo Exhibition / J. Bastian Art, Brussels
1990	<i>Dalí–Mizù</i> / Beaune, France
1989	<i>Picasso, Dalí, Chagall, Mizù</i> / Barcelona, Spain
1987	Received a Special Award at an international art exhibition in Anzio, Italy Commissioned to create stained-glass windows for the Church of Santa Anna, Italy
1983	Lived and worked in Italy for approximately two and a half years
1975	Exhibited with the Jiyu Bijutsu Association and became a member
1971	Studied at Musashino Art School to pursue painting
1967	Encountered the work of Amedeo Modigliani, whom he regarded as a lifelong artistic influence
1944	Born in Tokyo, Japan

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2025 *The Legacy of Tetsuo Mizù* / SHIKISAISHA, Tokyo
 MJD+1 / SHIKISAISHA, Tokyo
- 2024 *Hymn to Water: Mizù* / Whitestone Gallery, Taipei
- 2022 *Tetsuo Mizù: Mizù* / Whitestone Gallery, Karuizawa, Nagano
- 2020 *Ridi, Pagliaccio!* / Whitestone Gallery, Tokyo
- 2019 *MIZÙ IN TAIPEI* / Whitestone Gallery, Taipei
- 2018 *MIZÙ IN HONG KONG* / Whitestone Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2017 *Harmonics* / Whitestone Gallery, Taipei
- 2016 *Tetsuo Mizu* / H. ARTS COLLECTIVE, Singapore
 Tetsuo Mizu / Whitestone Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2015 *Tetsuo Mizu – The Boys and Girls in 1983* / Taro Gallery
- 1997 Solo Exhibition / National Maritime Museum, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
- 1994 Solo Exhibition / Musée de la Marine, Palais de Chaillot, Paris
- 1990 *Dalí–Mizù* / Beaune, France
- 1989 *Picasso, Dalí, Chagall, Mizù* / Barcelona, Spain

Selected Art Fairs

- 2015 Art Rio / Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2014 LA Art Show / Los Angeles, USA
- 2013 Art Miami Context / Miami, USA
- 1995–2001
Art Basel / Basel, Switzerland
- 1992–2001
FIAC / Paris, France
- 1985–1988
Art Basel / Basel, Switzerland

Selected Collections / Public Works

- White Ring, Nagano Winter Olympics figure skating venue, Nagano
- Church of Santa Anna, Italy
- Toda Boat Race Circuit, Saitama
- Karuizawa New Art Museum, Nagano