

american
contemporary
art **GALLERY**



Lodge, 2025. Oil on canvas, 40 × 38 in. (101.60 × 96.52 cm)
© Osamu Kobayashi



SF71-1021, 1971. Acrylic on paper, 17 3/4 × 12 in. (45.09 × 30.48 cm)
© Sam Francis

Press Release
August 28, 2025

Munich, Germany

Osamu Kobayashi & Sam Francis Currents

September 25, 2025 – January 31, 2026

Osamu Kobayashi & Sam Francis

Currents

The american contemporary art GALLERY is pleased to present *Currents*, an exhibition bringing together works by contemporary artist **Osamu Kobayashi** (b. 1984) and Abstract Expressionist **Sam Francis** (1923–1994). The exhibition was shaped through conversations with Kobayashi and with Augustus and Margaret Francis, the son and widow of Sam Francis, about philosophy, meditation, and Zen Buddhism—subjects central to both artists across generations.

At its core, *Currents* reflects the flow of inner and outer worlds, a movement of energy that parallels the act of painting itself. A channel for the subconscious and a path toward unification of mind, body, and spirit. Kobayashi, born in the United States to Japanese heritage, and Francis, an American who lived and worked extensively in Tokyo, each embody a connection to both American and Japanese cultural contexts. Their shared engagement with Eastern philosophy and meditation underpins the dialogue in this exhibition.

Kobayashi’s practice balances preparation and release. Meticulous sketches of biomorphic and geometric shapes provide the foundation, yet the final works are created with large-scale brushes moved across the canvas with his whole body. Broad, undulating gestures establish rhythm and direction, allowing each composition to open into the next. The sequence of eight new paintings made for this exhibition unfolds like a visual narrative of transformation. “These paintings were conceived as a sequential representation of two heads colliding and transforming into a larger entity,” Kobayashi notes. “Beyond one’s metaphorical reading of the series, the paintings also explore ideas surrounding sensuality, playfulness, and the ideal.”

In the exhibition, Sam Francis is represented by three moments in his practice. A 1959 all-over work on paper reflects his early investigation of density and gesture, where layers of color nearly saturate the surface and only fragments of white remain. By 1971, his focus shifted to air, light, and space: works from his “Fresh Air” and “Edge” series are structured around expansive white centers that open into contemplative voids. From the late 1950s onward, Francis lived and worked for extended periods in Tokyo, where his engagement with Zen philosophy and Japanese aesthetics deepened. This influence is particularly visible in intimate works on paper with luminous washes of color and mandala-like forms in sumi ink, compositions that balance immediacy with transcendence. Taken together, these works trace a trajectory from intensity to openness, underscoring his lifelong negotiation between painterly action and meditative stillness.

About the Artists

Osamu Kobayashi was born in Columbia, South Carolina in 1984 and received a B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2006. He has exhibited throughout the United States and abroad including solo exhibitions at Hollis Taggart, New York; Mindy Solomon Gallery, Florida; and LA Artcore, Los Angeles. He has participated in group exhibitions at Lissone Contemporary Art Museum, Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery at Stony Brook University, the Bronx River Art Center, and the Columbia Museum of Art. In 2013, Kobayashi was awarded the Hassam, Speicher, Betts, and Symons Purchase Fund from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 2021, he was awarded a NYFA Artist Fellowship. He was also a participant in the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program. He lives and works in Brooklyn.

Sam Francis (1923–1994) was born in San Mateo, California. After serving in World War II, he began painting while recovering from a severe injury, studying at the University of California, Berkeley. By the early 1950s he was living in Paris, where he quickly gained international recognition with his luminous abstractions influenced by Monet, Matisse, and Bonnard. Over the following decades, Francis maintained studios in California, Paris, Tokyo, and Bern, developing a body of work ranging from expansive murals to intimate works on paper that explored color, light, and the void. He participated in landmark exhibitions including *Twelve Americans* (MoMA, 1956) and *The New American Painting* (MoMA, 1958–59), and created major public commissions such as the Chase Manhattan Bank Mural (1959) and the ceiling of the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels (1980s). His work is held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; and countless others worldwide.

Exhibition Information

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Currents

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Currents marks the first time the work of Osamu Kobayashi and Sam Francis is presented in direct dialogue. Seen together, their paintings and works on paper trace a current between control and release, contemplation and immediacy—across generations and across cultures.

The generous support of Hollis Taggart, New York, who represents Osamu Kobayashi, and Augustus and Margaret Francis made this exhibition possible.

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Gallery Information

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Established 1986

Representing

Sam Francis
The Collection of Margaret and Augustus Francis

Adolph Gottlieb
The Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Foundation

Hans Hofmann
The Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust

Charles Pollock
Charles Pollock Archives

Richard Pousette-Dart
The Estate of Richard Pousette-Dart

Other Artists Shown

Norman Bluhm
Willem de Kooning
Grace Hartigan
Franz Kline
Lee Krasner
Joan Mitchell
Jackson Pollock

Augustus Francis
Osamu Kobayashi
Philip Smith

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