

ALISON BRADLEY PROJECTS

Press Release

Mai Takeshita: Living Landscapes

February 19 – April 4, 2026

Reception: Thursday, Feb. 19, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Alison Bradley Projects is pleased to share *Mai Takeshita: Living Landscapes*. This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery and debut presentation in the United States, on view from February 19th through April 4th, 2026. The exhibition presents a new body of work reflecting Takeshita's ongoing engagement with nihonga, Japanese painting using traditional methods and techniques, and her inquiry into the medium as a contemporary form of painting.

The works on view offer glimpses into Takeshita's daily life as a young mother living in Kyoto. The exhibition title draws on aesthetic theorist Arnold Berleant's concern with the commonplace settings of our daily life, urging a recentering of our understanding of landscapes as not dramatic vistas but the prosaic landscapes of the places we inhabit. Working from observation, first by developing sketches and building compositions through careful layering of pigment, sand, and gold leaf, Takeshita attempts to distend time and conjure scenes from multiple impressions. The quotidian objects and environments depicted—an overflowing bookshelf, a jar of candy, her child's sandbox—are not of a specific moment but of a constellation of many condensed into one temporal sphere. Objects appear suspended between presence and absence, their contours partially described or softened through layers of pigment, evoking a sense of nostalgia and reflection.

Central to Takeshita's practice is a deep regard for the materiality of mineral pigments, which allows the painting process to unfold with a degree of openness. Employing tools such as a damp cloth, sandpaper, and even her fingers, Takeshita obfuscates the surface of each work; unintended bleeds, textures, and irregularities are preserved and incorporated rather than corrected. She is drawn to the pigments' atmospheric qualities and the ways in which a painting can change through the artist's act of surface manipulation. Thus, the surfaces of the paintings offer a slow viewing experience that allows for heuristic interpretations.

Takeshita transforms her tableaus into a painterly ecosphere of hints and traces, embracing a broader view of *shajitsu*—often translated as Realism—by exploring not only the external appearance of her subjects but also their intangible essence. In constant dialogue with the canvas, Takeshita transcends the visual and breaks free from the constraints of representation. Emptiness and pause function as compositional elements, lines that register speed, areas of correction, and layered pigment work together to suggest rhythm and flow. Muted, pastel-like color palettes contribute to an atmospheric mood rather than a descriptive depiction of space. Perspective is flattened, with minimal shading, resulting in compositions that emphasize planes, intervals, and rhythm across the picture surface. While not consciously referencing historical models, this spatial approach recalls aspects of Japanese folding screens, where flatness and lateral movement shape perception.

Living Landscapes forefronts nihonga not as a historical practice, but as a living methodology, one that allows tradition, personal experience, and contemporary sensibility to coexist within a subtle but deliberate painterly language. Takeshita invites viewers into her world, quietly directing us to discover hidden continuities in the mundane.

- Words by Olivia Breibart

Mai Takeshita (b. 1999 in Shimane, Japan) lives and works in Kyoto. After graduating from Kyoto Saga University of Arts in 2022, Takeshita has developed a practice rooted in nihonga, employing natural pigments to focus on the quiet observations of her daily life.

Takeshita has been the subject of solo exhibitions at LADS Gallery in Osaka and has participated in major group exhibitions, including the Idemitsu Art Award Selected Artists Exhibition at the National Art Center, Tokyo, and the New Kyoto Nihonga Exhibition. Her work has been recognized with several awards, including the Grand Prix at the Idemitsu Art Award 2022 and the Grand Prix at the New Kyoto Nihonga Exhibition 2025. Takeshita has shown work internationally at art fairs such as Affordable Art Fair Amsterdam.

For additional information, please contact:

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