



Taka Ishii  
Gallery

Kyoto

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## Martin Margiela

Dates: Apr 17 – May 16, 2026

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Kyoto

Taka Ishii Gallery Kyoto is pleased to present a solo exhibition of artworks by Martin Margiela from Friday, April 17 to Saturday, May 16, 2026. This marks one of his first presentations in Japan, together with his show at kudan house which will be held concurrently in Tokyo. Since 2009, Margiela has been particularly active in expanding the scope of his visual expression outside of fashion. This exhibition presents approximately 14 recent works made between 2018 and 2025.

Margiela's practice is fundamentally grounded in a sustained inquiry into the human body, positioning it as a historically charged site where competing visual and tactile regimes converge. His work reactivates tensions between revelation and concealment, exposure and protection; dynamics that have shaped representations of the body from classical sculpture to contemporary art. In the series of works titled "Tops & Bottoms," based on marble sculptures from the collection of the Louvre Museum, the canonical nude figures are carved out in the contours of contemporary underwear. By reversing the original function of underwear and exposing what lies within, the sculptures create tension between attraction and alienation. The distinctive textures of each piece in the exhibition, produced from materials Margiela skillfully employs such as carpet and silicone, further activate the sense of touch. Within this framework, fetishism functions as a conceptual strategy, where bodily fragments and material traces become a place of desire and memory, displacing attention from the living body onto material remnants.

A pronounced interest in everyday objects, which resonates with historic art movements such as Surrealism and Pop Art, attests to Margiela's acute observational engagement with the materials of daily life. The "Barrier Sculpture" adopts the shape of protective barriers commonly found in urban environment, but it is uncannily covered with faux fur. Through processes of recontextualization, these objects are elevated beyond their ordinary functions, becoming poetic and enigmatic artifacts. This approach treats found objects as ready-mades that reveal hidden potential. Margiela's interventions are minimal yet profound, making the ordinary extraordinary while preserving traces of its humble origins, fostering an exercise in attentive looking and cyclical renewal. The works suggest that the life of an object is neither linear nor finite, but subject to continual mutation and reactivation within new contexts.

Fragmentation recurs throughout Margiela's oeuvre, yet they are accompanied by a sense of incompleteness that gives rise to narratives imbued with ambiguity and enigma. "Black Nail Polish," placed on a stone table near the entrance of the exhibition space, consists of five Nymphenburg porcelain kilns shaped like fingernails; however, the objects that would result from these kilns remain conspicuously absent. Similarly,

“Kit (Black)” takes the form of an unassembled plastic model, prompting the imagination to project the completed form that remains unrealized. Through Margiela’s sustained engagement with the unseen and the withheld, the viewer is confronted with incompleteness, silence, and the elusive boundary between presence and emptiness. In this context, concealment and absence are not negations but generative forces, opening the work to unforeseen resonances and moments of unexpected revelation.

**【Concurrent exhibition】**

MARTIN MARGIELA AT KUDAN HOUSE

Dates: Apr 11 – 29, 2026

Location: kudan house, Tokyo

Admission: JPY 2,500. (tax included)

Martin Margiela was born in 1957 in Leuven, Belgium. After attending the Sint-Lukas Kunsthumaniora art school in Hasselt, he entered the fashion department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp in 1977. He is currently based in France and Belgium. His recent solo exhibitions include Bernier/Eliades, Athens & Brussels (2024); Lotte Museum of Art, Seoul (2022); MWOODS, Beijing (2022); and Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2021). He has also participated in group exhibitions such as “Fashion & Interiors. A Gendered Affair.”, MoMu, Antwerp (2025); “The City Collection Antwerp: In/Sight”, M HKA, Antwerp (2024); “Echo. Wrapped in Memory”, MoMu, Antwerp (2023); and “L’homme qui marche / Verkörperung des sperrigen”, Kunsthalle Bielefeld (2019).

For further information, please contact:

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Thu – Sat 10:00 – 17:30 Closed Sun – Wed and National Holidays



Front: Martin Margiela, "BARRIER Sculpture (white)",  
2024 polypropylene, synthetic fur, 100 x 150 x 150 cm  
Back: Martin Margiela, "BARRIER Mural (white)", 2024,  
polypropylene, synthetic fur, 100 x 150 x 30 cm

© Martin Margiela. Courtesy of Bernier/Eliades  
Photo: "We Document Art"



Martin Margiela, "TOPS & BOTTOMS (Faun / top)",  
2023, composite plaster, 117 x 39 x 39 cm

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