



Contemporary Japanese artists such as Takashi Murakami and Yoshitomo Nara are taking the world by storm. One of Murakami's works recently made headlines when it fetched 1.6 billion yen at auction. Modern art galleries launched in Japan in the 1990s, including Tomio Koyama Gallery, Gallery Koyanagi and Taka Ishii Gallery, played a key role in sparking international acclaim for Jap-



photos: SHINICHI SATO • Misako Rosen (pictured with artworks by Ruth Laskey and Shimon Minamikawa.)

Japanese artists.

Now a second generation of galleries — dubbed the “New Tokyo Contemporaries” — is following on from those pioneers to set the Japanese art scene jumping. MISAKO & ROSEN, Take Ninagawa, Zenshi and the others in the group are all operated by people in their 30s who served their apprenticeships in first-generation galleries. “If the first-generation galleries had not raised the profile of contemporary art and built up a solid foundation for us, our generation of galleries would never have come about,” admits Misako Rosen of MISAKO & ROSEN.

The New Tokyo galleries chiefly exhibit works by young artists who, like the gallery owners, were born in the 1970s. This trend has attracted the attention of international museums, collectors and other overseas art aficionados. “Art should be preserved as part of history,” says Rosen. “It shouldn’t just be about fads. I want to keep showcasing art that will delight people who really like it, just as the common people enjoyed *ukiyo*e woodblock prints in Japan’s Edo period (1603–1867).”



ABOVE: Misako Rosen gained experience at Tomio Koyama Gallery before setting up MISAKO & ROSEN.

RIGHT: The Take Ninagawa gallery is currently staging an exhibition by popular artist Shinro Ohtake.