Fans of the Fendi baguette will remember a series of one-off pieces created by various artists. One such bag by New York based Japanese artist Hiroshi Senju depicts a waterfall on the back, and is also the carrier of an environmental message:
Known for his realistic – read: very, very big – portrayals of waterfalls, the 57-year-old artist had also been commissioned to produce works for several organisations, including the Toyama Museum of Modern Art in Japan and OUB Centre in Singapore.

His latest collection titled **Day Falls/Night Falls** is currently being shown at Sundaram Tagore Gallery until 8 March.

Stylexstyle caught up with him:

**Why did you decide to use fluorescent pigments?**

I bought fluorescent powder, which is not meant for painting, then I mixed in glue. And finally I have fluorescent pigment, my original discovery.

Fluorescent pigment is unique. In daytime, it is a very beautiful white colour, and gentle and calm. After dark, it dramatically changes, there’s a mysterious, spiritual feeling.

I think this is a lot like contemporary human beings: Daytime, very gentle, but at night we have more emotional feelings from deep inside our hearts.

**You had a series called Falling Colour that featured red and green waterfalls. Why the use of these unconventional colours?**

I want to show feelings of diversity, and the many possibilities of harmony with colours.

Each colour has its original characteristic – like the different characteristics of humans. Many colours reflect the diversity of humans. Many colours make more good harmony than one colour. Many colours are more beautiful than one colour – like an orchestra, a jazz trio, piano and ballet.

I think this is the essence of peacemaking, where many diversities can collaborate – like a kind of friendship.
Will you ever consider painting other natural phenomenon?

Actually, there’s a lot a lot of charming natural phenomenon surrounding us. Now I paint waterfalls and cliffs. Before, I painted forests and seascapes. My subject matter changes as I progress. Maybe in the future I paint Mars, the moon, the space, the deep sea.

Does the waterfall have any personal significance for you?

I’m interested in the passing of time. The waterfall is about being in the now – and the universe is all about eternal movements – that appeals very much to me.

I know Chinese people associate water with wealth, and beauty is well living. Good life means beauty. Beauty itself is wealth, for example, flowers, beautiful birds, nice food, landscapes – make us feel we are surrounded by wealth. Our instinct is to live a life surrounded by beauty.

*The bag, originally commissioned for the opening of a Fendi boutique in Berlin, is now part of a museum collection – in other words, public property – but we couldn’t resist asking the artist: How should one carry the bag, with the buckle or waterfall facing out?*
Sundaram Tagore Gallery is at 5 Lock Road, #01-05.