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Sold to a US collector for \$1.5m in the first hour: Takashi Murakami's 727-727 (detail). With Tim Blum (H8)

Murakami to Gagosian?

BASEL. Takashi Murakami, the hyper-entrepreneurial Japanese artist and curator, is in talks to join forces with Larry Gagosian and leave Marianne Boesky gallery in New York.

Gagosian Gallery declined to comment and the artist was not available for interview. While several sources close to Murakami's market said the move was already a done deal, Ms Boesky says she and Murakami remain in discussions: "We've worked together nearly 10 years and I don't feel betrayed. Takashi has been very generous and I never want to get in the way of an artist's dreams, even if that means losing him. There's no question Larry can offer Takashi things that I can't."

Namely, the possibility of producing a feature-length film—one of Murakami's prime artistic goals, yet something Boesky says she could not underwrite. Because of his enormous staff working in studios around the world, "Takashi has enormous financial pressures, so for him Larry could be the knight in shining armour, even if for me he is the Grim Reaper", says Boesky. "The money Larry can offer is important, but the historic context that his gallery provides is also irresistible—it can mean overnight canonisation." **Marc Spiegler**