



Left: *The Bride and Her Five Husbands*, 2019. Oil on canvas. 162 x 130 cm | 63 3/4 x 51 3/16 in. ©2019 Aya Takano/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

Right: *No. 30 of Forty-Eight Positions, Back Tower - Dorado*, 2018. Watercolor, pen on paper. 24.5 x 19.5 cm | 9 5/8 x 7 11/16 in ©2018 Aya Takano/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

Aya Takano

UNIO MYSTICA

Opening March 2, 5-8pm
March 2 - April 13, 2019

Perrotin New York is pleased to present "UNIO MYSTICA", Aya Takano's first solo exhibition at the New York gallery. The artist exhibits 8 oil paintings, more than 50 drawings, 1 skateboard deck painting, and 1 paper clay sculpture, all of which explore sexuality as an expression of the union between the soul and the divine.

Aya Takano has enjoyed an illustrious career as a painter, writer, illustrator, and manga artist. She is known for her wide-eyed female figures who seem to float through space, unrestrained by the laws of gravity. Redness in their joints and cheeks convey a sense of heightened sensitivity and continuing growth, suggesting they exist in the liminal state between childhood and adulthood when anything is possible. Takano has been deeply inspired by the culture of mysticism since she was very young, and brings deep insight to her paintings through her quest to find the truth and beauty of all things. She explains, "moments that seemed to allow me that were, for example: seeing sunlight shine through the leaves as I walk down a street; the ecstatic shapes and colors of clouds; the unexpected sound of music; a phrase in a book; a shining moment of shared laughter; or that mysterious intoxicated spiritual dimension which alcohol can invite. In those moments, I touch upon apertures in the universe."

The eight oil paintings presented in "UNIO MYSTICA" illustrate girls and animals freely interacting in spiritual union. The fantastical landscapes in which they are placed—near the ocean, in front of shops, in a restaurant, and in a metropolis—add an aspect of the otherworldly while also showcasing something familiar. Even though Takano depicts the sexual embrace between these girls and many marvelous creatures, it is only a device to convey the ability of living beings to intermingle with various kinds of energy manifest in the universe. "It may be that the heroic takes the form of a lion," notes Aya Takano, "in the mythological world, there are no distinctions between humans and animals." While the life forces that the girls encounter are powerful, the paintings reveal a sense of tenderness; the tigers, for instance, do not scratch, and all beings have harmonious expressions of contentment and ease.



No. 21 of *Forty-Eight Positions, Extended Tea Grinding Mortar - Sagittarius*, 2018. Watercolor, pen on paper. 16.2 x 27.5 cm | 6 3/8 x 10 13/16 in. ©2018 Aya Takano/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

The paintings are also accompanied by over fifty drawings featuring animals from the sexagenary calendrical cycle, the Western zodiac, and other star signs. The images here are modeled after those found in *The Forty-Eight Ways*, a manual passed down in Japan from long ago that details forty-eight erotic positions. Takano presents her drawings on pieces of discarded calligraphy paper, cut-up envelopes, and pages torn out of magazines. She explains that her choice to use scraps harkens back to a time in her childhood when she would use any piece of paper that was lying around her home to draw freely. The medium refers to a time in Takano's life when she was able to draw without inhibition, much like the figures in her images who interact unabashedly and without reserve. The paper on which the drawings were made thus takes on additional meanings that mirror the journey of the artist herself.

The painting on a skateboard deck also suggests that this exhibition is as much about the importance of the medium as it is the content of the images. The girl in this work is illustrated in typical Aya Takano fashion. Red coloring is found on her cheeks, elbows, knees, and feet, and she stands wide-eyed with her ankles crossed in a demure pose. Her clothing contains motifs from *The Forty-Eight Ways*, echoing the drawings on display. This artwork, however, is about more than representation. Takano clarifies that the deck was a gift from a new friend she made after beginning work on this show. The moment she received it, she says, she was inspired to paint the very image that is now depicted. In this way, Aya intertwines her personal experiences with her artistic practices.

"UNIO MYSTICA" allows us to explore a new dimension of human experience, one where the soul freely intermixes with divine energy. The artist devoted herself to creating a mythical paradise separated from the everyday world, resulting in an exhibition that combines elements of transcendence, free expression, abandon, and the fantastic. The show also grants us a view onto Aya's own personal and professional development. She explains, "the focus on sexuality in this show has developed into a curious experience in which my own personal experiences closely echoed the artistic journey;" one that, she goes on to say, allowed her to deepen her sensitivities to colors, to sources of inspiration, and to the impact of her brushstrokes. The results of Aya's profound realizations and her imaginative prowess are now presented at Perrotin New York.

Miriam Chusid

More information about the artist >>>