



DEODATO ARTE
Milan, via Nerino 2

Tomoko Nagao: iridescent obsessions

curated by Paolo Campiglio and Christian Gangitano

27 September – 27 October 2018

opening Wednesday 26 September, 6.30pm

press release, 26.07.2018

The solo exhibition of Tomoko Nagao (Nagoya, 1976) - on display from 27 September to 27 October 2018 at Deodato Arte Gallery of Milan in the venue in Via Nerino – focuses on the **recent and spectacular never seen before works by the Japanese artist**. She has been present in great Western art for years, with myths from the manga culture along the path of the micro-Pop trend.

The new series here presented is that of *Flowers*, the recent works in vector-graphics format that represents a re-enactment of classical Flemish vases, especially those by Jan Brueghel, in Pop art style: the glory of flower varieties and the magnificence of colours are translated on the surfaces via a unique digital elaboration. The *hana* flowers represent one of the fundamental elements of the ephemeral beauty ideal of the aesthetics of Japanese culture. Takashi Murakami had already introduced them according to an ultra-Pop style. He used the flower theme serially, among unique works, prints and capsule-collections, presented with “emoticon” faces as a *link* between Western and Eastern Pop art imaginaries.

In Tomoko's interpretation, the theme is linked to the *vanitas* (vanity) and represents a further reflection on the theme of death through its opposite, life. The choice of this particular iconography by the artist follows the same criterion that in the past brought her closer to Caravaggio's detail of the rotten apple, the image of Narcissus gazing at his reflection or the bloody Medusa's head, representing a sort of happy obsession.

A careful reading of the themes that Tomoko chooses points out the reoccurrence of slightly erotic female figures or Western beauty myths, which are translated into the *kawaii* (cute, light) aesthetics. They are women like *Salomè* whom the artist wants to rehabilitate as heroic icons of a femininity always subjected to the stereotyped violence of a male culture, from which they want to break free and burst through as protagonist. Hence, there is a further and more intimate sense of how to operate that is linked to her own experience as a female artist in the art world, with the difficulties and ambiguities that making art involves. It is also meant to spread to the contemporary Japanese female condition, more and more fragile, but able however to hide the most painful experiences behind a happy and cheerful icon.

In the rooms of Deodato Gallery are set on display another **new series** by Tomoko, all from 2018: they are stencil works, which represent a variation on the previous production on materials that are particularly iridescent and reflective, able to make the icon lighter and lighter in its transfer from digital to the transparent surface. The stencil technique, known to the art world thanks to the languages of street art (from Banksy onwards) is re-presented and experimented with on shimmering materials that go beyond the simple change of media and become an important technical and technological display.

A section is dedicated to the recent oil paintings of the *Gioconda*. They reflect the gradual growth of the artist in her oil on canvas production. The image is more and more “corrupted” by the background that comes through, as if the icon became inconsistent and transparent in relation to the painted area, to the brush stroke that becomes the protagonist. The digital, the

vector-graphics – with its unmistakable graphic perfection – is slowly invaded by a new pictorial magma.

Tomoko's art adheres to the *Superflat* cultural experience, able to elaborate devices of layered reading. Apparently, they seem ordinary, based on the icon and its "different" repetition of the image taken from the old and changed into thousands of variations. In her works, we are witnesses to the transplant of the *anime* from the Japanese culture into the myths of Western culture, especially Italian, in fact already sieved through during the Pop art experience of the 1970s and reinterpreted by post-modern trends in the 1980s. Myths to which Tomoko overtly reconnects: Caravaggio, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Tiziano, Velasquez, Fontainebleau school, and Delacroix. In this contamination and reinterpretation of the past as present, also the icons from the most famous brands find a place of significance, wittingly introduced between irony and sarcasm. They become an emblem of what is contemporary, of the society of global economy and mass consumption.

Deodato Arte

Deodato Arte is a dynamic contemporary art gallery with venues in Milan, Como and in Brusino Arsizio (Lugano), Switzerland. Since 2010, it has presented internationally known artists, modern and contemporary, such as Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst and Christo. Special interest is given to Pop culture to which group and solo exhibitions have been dedicated, displaying artists the likes of Mr. Brainwash and Takashi Murakami. In addition to its own exhibitions and projects, the gallery collaborates with museums and takes part in national and international fairs.

Since 2017, they are present also with a new gallery in Via Nerino n. 2, a few meters away from the historical venue in Via Santa Marta n. 6, in the circuit of 5VIE, the beating heart of Milan. In 2018 they have opened the third exhibition space in Milan, in Via Cuneo n. 5 (near Piazza Piemonte, Via Marghera) and a new gallery in the historical centre of the city of Como.

The gallery operates with multimedia tools, two its websites: www.deodato.gallery dedicated to the exhibitions and the artists, and www.deodato.com with an exclusive e-commerce service for collectors.

Exhibition details

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Curated by Paolo Campiglio and Christian Gangitano

Venue Deodato Arte, via Nerino 2 - Milan

Dates 27 September – 27 October 2018

Opening Wednesday 26 September, 6.30pm

Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday, 10.30am-2pm / 3pm-7pm

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