

Yui Kugimiya

New Portraiture: Dancers of Dreams

Online exhibition dates
October 1 - 29, 2024

Taymour Grahne Projects is pleased to present *New Portraiture: Dancers of Dreams*, an exhibition of animations and new paintings by Japanese American artist Yui Kugimiya, opening virtually on October 1.

This exhibition marks Kugimiya's continued exploration of personification and emotion through surreal depictions of everyday life, merging loose brushwork with feline subjects that reveal the nuanced complexities of human existence. This will be Kugimiya's second solo exhibition with Taymour Grahne.

Yui Kugimiya's identity and artistic practice are deeply influenced by themes of alienation and inner life. Born in Japan and having lived in the United States for nearly two decades, Kugimiya's work reflects her journey of personal and artistic transformation. Growing up in 1990s Tokyo, she often felt rebellious against the uniformity of the culture, fueling her desire for an individual identity and voice. Relocating to the United States allowed her to adopt new ideas and develop a new perspective. A sense of 'otherness' has become a dominant motif in her work, used to tell stories and portray the mundane.

Kugimiya's early works, characterized by an unconventional technique, reflect a period of intense experimentation and growth during the 2000s. This era saw her engaging with various mediums, including stop-motion animation, which allowed her to capture the fluidity of movement. Early works such as *Illusions* (2012) and *Cronica De Una Muerte Anunciada* (2012) exemplify this phase, where successive movements of feline figures are meticulously painted to create a sense of motion and continuity.

In her new body of work, Kugimiya retains her signature loose brushwork but achieves a newfound clarity and dynamism. These paintings, while maintaining the thematic presence of feline subjects, are more vivid and precise, reflecting an articulation of her artistic vision. The evolution from her earlier thick impasto technique to a more defined approach signifies a move towards unmasking and revealing deeper layers of meaning. The subjects of her new work continue to inhabit dreamlike realms that mirror the lived experiences and daily interactions of the artist, now with a clear sense of pictorial space.

New Portraiture: Dancers of Dreams positions Kugimiya's work within a broader discourse on identity, performance, and the unconscious. Artworks within the exhibition engage the interplay between human and feline, reality and dream, and consider the performative aspects of daily life. This exhibition is a compelling exploration of identity and emotion, presenting a series of works that are both introspective and universal in their appeal.

*Otherness is my source of creativity and spiritual journey.
It shines a light on interior life for me to see, so I can paint that.*
– Yui Kugimiya

Yui Kugimiya was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1981. She earned an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2007. Kugimiya also participated in the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2010. Early in her career, Kugimiya's work centered around animation, which combined techniques of oil painting and stop-motion animation, often employing feline personality and narrative with audio recorded from real moments in life. Kugimiya's expertise is in the medium of oil paint. Since 2014, Kugimiya has since stopped using manufactured paints and began hand making her own oil paints from dry pigment to explore color; pink hues are frequently used in her palette.

Kugimiya's work is represented in public collections internationally at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse; Allentown Art Museum, Allentown; and the Fundación Amparo y Manuel, Ciudad de México.

Selected solo exhibitions include Marlborough Gallery, New York; Taka Ishii Gallery, Kyoto; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse; and Galeria Enrique Guerrero, Ciudad de México. Selected group exhibitions include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museo Leonora Carrington, San Luis Potosi; Galerie Sebastien Bertrand, Genève; Margot Samel, New York; PAGE (NYC), New York; Taymour Grahne Projects, New York; and The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn.