

Tadanori Yokoo: Kora-ju
April 26 – June 8, 2012

On April 26th, Friedman Benda will open its third gallery exhibition for Tadanori Yokoo, the celebrated Japanese artist and graphic designer. Since first achieving fame with his transformative 1960s avant-garde posters, Yokoo has become a sweeping influence on Japanese popular culture. This show will present his new collages, offering a look at recent work in a medium the artist has explored for decades.

These new works offer unique insight into Yokoo's practice, since the mindset and process of collage lay the foundation of much of his output. The exhibition's collages use images from 1950s to 1970s American magazines such as *Life*, *Time*, and *Playboy*. By engaging the images from a past American vernacular, Yokoo taps the phantasmagoria of post-1945 Japanese society with its blend of Elvis and American refrigerators beside destroyed temples and woodblock prints.

Commonly one finds in his art an idiosyncratic motif, such as the Pink Girls of the 1960's, laid beside woodblock images of Mt. Fuji, or segments of French Fontainebleau painting spliced alongside movie stills, psychedelia blended with Art Nouveau. The end results, processed through the unique prism of Yokoo's mind, embody what Yukio Mishima describes as "things which are in us but which we do not want to see."

Always surprising, and masterfully handled, these dynamic compositions are the pay-off of decades of careful plumbing of human consciousness and they mark another milestone in his *oeuvre*. On display is an extensive group of nearly 70 collages, dating from 1972 to the present, the majority of which were created in the last decade with special emphasis on those collages made in 2012.

Tadanori Yokoo was born in Nishiwaki, Hyōgo Prefecture, in 1936. He joined the prestigious Nippon Design Center in 1960, but left after four years to pursue his personal path in art. By 1972, he was featured in a solo exhibition, *Graphics of Tadanori Yokoo*, at the Museum of Modern Art, as one of the youngest artists to receive the honor. After witnessing a Picasso retrospective at the same museum in 1980, he famously retired from design work and devoted himself to painting.

Yokoo's work has been the subject of countless solo exhibitions and is held in the permanent collections of international museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Fondation Cartier, Paris; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

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