

TOMOKO NAGAO

WOMEN IN POP

Curated by GEL - Giuditta Elettra Lavinia Nidiaci
October 8th – November 15th 2020
Galleria Vik Milano
210 Art Gallery, II floor



Galleria Vik Milano resumes its activity with the solo exhibition dedicated to the Japanese painter and sculptress **Tomoko Nagao**.



This luxury hotel, located in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, with its 89 artist rooms, collects the best from the Italian and international art scene, thus characterizing itself as a private museum as well as one of the most original and exclusive hotels in the world.

After months of closure due to the lockdown, Galleria Vik Milano restarts its activity, as a luxury hotel and as a showcase of art, beauty and culture with a new exhibition at **Vikissimo**, the exclusive bar-restaurant on the first floor with a selection of over 50 works by Italian and international artists, and at **210 Gallery**, the art gallery dedicated exclusively to contemporary art, through the presentation of the works of Italian and international artists. Both spaces enjoy the

brehtaking view of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.

This new exhibition is dedicated to the most recent works of the artist Tomoko Nagao. Tomoko is of Japanese origin but has lived in Italy for many years and is one of the most interesting exponents of Japanese new pop. The title of the exhibition, **Women in Pop**, alludes to the artist's choice to provide an explicitly feminine look at contemporary society with a strong connotation of social criticism, especially towards the invasiveness of corporate and multinational brands in our lives, albeit always within an extremely pop, ironic and amused setting. "The icon, often reduced to a mere fetish or bulwark of feminism, is brought back this time to the search for an archetype", writes the curator of the exhibition, Giuditta Elettra Lavinia Nidiaci: "it is that of Hello Kitty, of Kawaii aesthetics, of a not superficial lightness. The image of the woman is colorful, but not disruptive, lively but not intrusive. Tomoko's woman is a friend, who holds out her hand,

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and therefore truly "pop" in the original meaning of "popular:" a woman, in short, who wants to talk to everyone."

The artist's choice, typical of post-modern culture, consists in revisiting subjects taken from the past, and in particular from the history of art (from the Mona Lisa, to the Medusa by Caravaggio, to the Venus of Botticelli) and it is always characterized by the desire to lighten and desacralize the historical references with ironic, playful and parodic intentions: as with the revisited Mona Lisa with the features of Hello Kitty (the famous Japanese anime character loved by girls all over the world); or Margherita the Infanta of Spain, already celebrated by Velázquez, revived by Tomoko with a can of Coca Cola in her hand, in a Kawaii key (cute, in Japanese); or Salome, transformed for the occasion into a funny pop icon whose head, in glazed ceramic, is presented to us resting on a plate (the same on which the woman will present the head of the Baptist to Herod); or the Madonnina of Milan transformed, incredibly, into a youthful and SuperPop icon. And then, again, there are the male characters mysteriously transformed by Tomoko's magic into many female characters: like San Gerolamo, a scholar ascetic immortalized by many artists in a cave with his books, transformed in the pop version of Tomoko, into any today girl, closed in her bedroom with a smartphone and PC.

Tomoko's work, presented in Galleria Vik Milano in the spaces of the 210 Gallery, is articulated through the different languages used by the artist: oil painting, which is influenced by the lessons of Nara Yoshimoto, with whom the artist studied in Japan; that made with stencil and spray, which refers to the school of street art, which the artist has practiced on numerous occasions, within festivals and street art events (also made, in his latest production, on unusual supports, such as PVC, with iridescent and reflective tones, capable of making the icon ever lighter and fluctuating); the graphic one, in which ancient and contemporary references, quotes from the history of art, brands, characters from comics and souls intersect in a crazy overlap of different motifs; and, finally, the plastic one, to which the artist has only recently dedicated herself, with glazed ceramic sculptures with a pop effect and very strong visual appeal.

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BIOGRAPHY

Tomoko Nagao was born in 1976 in Nagoya, Japan and today is one of the most original artists in the contemporary art scene. She studied in Japan, assimilating Takashi Murakami's Superflat style and Nara Yoshitomo's style made of stylized shapes into her own. In London she attended the Chelsea College of Art. Today, she lives and works in Milan.

She's considered the most important exponent of MicroPop Art in Italy. She practices the Superflat style, the postmodern Japanese art movement founded by Takashi Murakami. Her artwork is characterized by flat and emphatic images and defined outlines.

She has exhibited in numerous exhibitions and fairs all over the world, from Milan (Palazzo Reale), to Tokyo to Hong Kong. In September 2015, her "Botticelli - The Birth of Venus with Baci" was exhibited at the Gemälde Galerie of Berlin and, in 2016, at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London on the occasion of "The Botticelli Renaissance group show," where it was considered by the critics to be one of the more interesting event of that year.



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