

Masami Teraoka

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THE STUDENT VOICE OF CAL STATE FULLERTON

“Floating Realities” explores globalization

January 30, 2017

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Masami Teraoka's art is being honored at the VA Begovich Gallery, inspired by topics such as globalization, AIDS and McDonald's. (Kevin Ley / Daily Titan)

Goliath snakes and pale ghosts fill the space of Masami Teraoka's watercolor painting “Makiki Heights Disaster” in his “Study for AIDS” series.

Using snakes as a symbol of fear and taking inspiration from the flood that hit close to home, Teraoka was able to depict the effect AIDS was producing in 1980s culture in this 1987 painting.

Teraoka's art is displayed in the CSUF Begovich Gallery “Floating Realities.” Teraoka took inspiration from the Japanese wood block art called Ukiyo-E.

The gallery is made up of more than 70 pieces of Teraoka's artworks, varying from paintings to sketches in a style reminiscent of traditional Ukiyo-E. Teraoka tried to mimic this style in his earliest work and is the focus of this art gallery.

Amena El-Mekhgiange, co-curator of the gallery exhibition, said “Floating Realities” means “the reality we can't actually see, things that are basically up in heaven, things that are around, things that cannot be seen.”

El-Mekhgiange said Teraoka's artwork takes on how the world is becoming more and more of a melting pot as each culture affects and possibly shocks each other's views and values.

American culture and its influence on the rest of the world is often examined in Teraoka's art. Early work such as "McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan" and "31 Flavors Invading Japan" takes on the fast food industry and its effects.

"On a big scale, I'm talking about organization taste. If McDonald's goes all over the globe, people might lose all their local cuisines," Teraoka said.

Starting from the back of the gallery, the exhibit shows a timeline of his work that continues toward the front. Among the works shown are "La Brea Tar Pitts" (1974) from his "New View of Mt. Fuji" series, "Fish and the Artist" (1984) from his "Los Angeles Sushi Ghost Tales" series and "Seventh Heaven" (2001) from his "Sarah and Octopus" series.

"For this exhibition, we are focusing on historical artwork and his artwork with Ukiyo-E style and the connection between it for the retrospective. Because he does create art in that style in the past, but he does it basically with issues from nowadays like awareness for AIDS, globalization, the list goes on," El-Mekhgiange said.

El-Mekhgiange helped procure and handle the logistics of showcasing the artwork at CSUF. The artwork came from two donors: the Catharine Clark Gallery and art collector Brian Pawlowski's private collection.

"Floating Realities: The Art of Masami Teraoka" can be seen at the CSUF Begovich Gallery located at the Visual Arts Complex from Jan. 28 through March 2. Hours of operation are Monday through Thursday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.