

Masami Teraoka

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*Putin, The Pope, Pussy Riot in pieces of satire.*

By Kimberly Chun, Thursday, January 28, 2016

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## Putin, the pope, Pussy Riot in pieces of satire

What do Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, Pussy Riot and Vladimir Putin, the Catholic Church and a geisha with the boyish, folkloric name of Momotaro have in common?

They've all inspired Hawaii artist Masami Teraoka, whose latest large triptych paintings, on exhibit in "Masami Teraoka's Apocalyptic Theater/The Pope, Putin, Peach Boy and Pussy Riot Galore" at Catharine Clark Gallery, alternately lampoon and celebrate those figures and institutions with his archetypal flair for shock and subversion.

Best known for his works in the style of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints that incorporated the imagery of McDonald's, environmental upheaval and the AIDS crisis, Teraoka's been referencing Renaissance painting and sharply satirizing Western religious iconography — and the West's hypocrisies — since the 1990s. It all began at the time of the Clinton impeachment proceedings, which he com-



Catharine Clark Gallery

Masami Teraoka's "The Cloisters/Arezzo Converters" (2015) at Catharine Clark Gallery.

**Masami Teraoka's Apocalyptic Theater/The Pope, Putin, Peach Boy and Pussy Riot Galore:** 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday. Through Feb. 20. Catharine Clark Gallery, 248 Utah St., S.F. (415) 399-1439. [www.cclarkgallery.com](http://www.cclarkgallery.com).

pares to the Inquisition.

"I started thinking, I better really, really study what this country's whole cultural roots are all about, especially the moral value judgments coming from the Vatican," explains 80-year-old Teraoka from his Hawaii studio.

The native of Onomichi,

Japan — who received a Lee Krasner Award last year and will be given an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Otis Art Institute, in May — goes on to detail his research into sex abuse in the Catholic Church and his fascination with Pussy Riot's 2012 protest performance in a Moscow cathedral. His 2015 "Pussy Riot/Swan Lake" can be interpreted as a critique of the church and Putin as well as a feminist punk-geisha love story, though Teraoka professes: "I'm not trying to shock — but all these images definitely came out of from my imagination."

— Kimberly Chun