

Press Release: Catharine Clark Gallery at Art Basel Miami Beach

Catharine Clark Gallery makes its **debut presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach** with two featured artists: a Survey sector presentation of historic and recent work by American artist **Masami Teraoka** (b. 1936, Japan) and a Meridians sector presentation of a major platform installation by American artist **Stephanie Syjuco** (b. 1974, Philippines). Syjuco's presentation is **co-presented with RYAN LEE Gallery** in New York.

Masami Teraoka: Integrating the Historical and Contemporary

Masami Teraoka's work integrates reality with the surreal, humor with social commentary, and the historical with the contemporary. His early watercolors often focus on the cultural meeting of East and West, evident in series that began in the 1970s such as **"McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan," "New Views of Mt. Fuji,"** and **"31 Flavors Invading Japan."** The works on paper from this period reflect the impact of economic and cultural globalization.

While sexuality is a recurring subject in his work, his representation of sex shifted from positive depictions of free-love in the 1970s and early 1980s to concern for the spread of HIV in his work of the mid-1980s. The medium during this **"AIDS Series"** period shifted from watercolor on paper to **watercolor on canvas**, enabling him to work at a large scale to address the enormity of the social and health crisis impacting affected communities.

Catharine Clark Gallery's presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach offers a rare opportunity to see watercolors, drawings, and multiples from Teraoka's **"AIDS Series,"** in conversation with a selection of watercolors, multiples, and studies from projects ranging from 1974 to the present day.

The AIDS Series

From 1960 to 1984, Teraoka lived and worked in Los Angeles, during which time he produced his signature **ukiyo-e** (or **"pictures of the floating world"**, generally rendered as woodcuts in the Edo era of Japan) compositions that reflected on cultural hybridity, represented in series like *McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*, *31 Flavors Invading Japan*, and *New Views of Mt. Fuji*.

The onset of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the early 1980s brought a new urgency to Teraoka's work and inaugurated a five-year span in which he created monumental watercolors on paper, screens, and canvas. These included ***American Kabuki/Oishiwa* (1986)**, a multi-panel watercolor mounted to a folding screen in the collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. These compositions depicted figures with visible symptoms of infection, such as lesions caused by Kaposi sarcoma, dressed in Kabuki-style make-up and costumes, and set in tumultuous and often menacing landscapes.

Teraoka was one of the few major American artists creating work about HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and early 1990s. His paintings were particularly radical at a time when the American government largely ignored public health data on infection and transmission rates, and refused to adequately address a public health crisis that disproportionately impacted queer people and communities of color.

Work from this era of his practice was included in the recent exhibition and attendant catalogue *Art, AIDS, America*. The exhibition and catalogue was the first comprehensive overview and reconsideration of 30 years of art made in response to the AIDS epidemic in the United States. It foregrounded the role of HIV/AIDS in shifting the development of American art away from the conceptual foundations of postmodernism and abstraction toward a new, more political, and autobiographical voice.

Art, AIDS, America surveyed more than 100 works of American art from the early 1980s to 2015, exploring the spectrum of responses to HIV/AIDS, from activism to elegy. It was organized by Tacoma Art Museum in partnership with The Bronx Museum of the Arts, and co-curated by Jonathan David Katz, Director, Visual Studies Doctoral Program at the University at Buffalo (The State University of New York), and Rock Hushka, Chief Curator at Tacoma Art Museum.

Later Work and Recognition

Seeking respite and solace from the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on his artist community in Los Angeles, Teraoka began traveling between LA and Hawaii in 1984, and eventually moved to the island of **Oahu**, where he continues to live and work today. Finding escape and comfort in the natural beauty of Hawai'i, Teraoka began painting evocative waterscapes, some of which are mounted on traditional Japanese scrolls. Drawing inspiration from Edo-era, historic landscape prints by artists such as Hokusai and Kunisada, Teraoka created this new series of meditative works as a counterpoint to the intensity of his AIDS Series watercolors. In the process, he continued to experiment with scale and materials, eventually evolving into the large-scale triptychs that emerged in the later 1990s.

The gallery's booth at Art Basel Miami Beach features Teraoka's iconic *AIDS Series/Father and Son (1990)*, one of the rare "canvases" in the series. These canvases, nearly nine feet tall, portray figures in the end stages of infection. Two of the paintings depict a mother and father tenderly holding infants who have died, with their eyes cast downward and away, capturing a moment of overwhelming and indescribable loss. These canvases are among the last of his ukiyo-e style works and represent the culmination of his AIDS Series.

Teraoka's work was recently featured in *Japanese Prints in Transition: From the Floating World to the Modern World*, an exhibition with an accompanying catalogue at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. His watercolors and prints were also included in *Spirit House*, an exhibition at the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University. In 2023, Teraoka's iconic folding screen titled *Makiki Heights Disaster (1988)*, a centerpiece of his "AIDS Series," was acquired by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. In September 2024, this work was featured in the major exhibition *Masami Teraoka and Japanese Ukiyo-e Prints*, a survey that presented key examples of Teraoka's ukiyo-e style works alongside traditional ukiyo-e prints by artists like Utagawa Kunisada, Katsushika Hokusai, and Utagawa Kuniyoshi, delving into their visual, strategic, and thematic connections.

Teraoka's work is represented in **more than 50 public collections worldwide**, including the Tate Modern; National Gallery of Australia; Whitney Museum of American Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Library of Congress; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others.

In 2019, the **Whitney Museum of American Art** acquired a significant watercolor by Teraoka, *Los Angeles Sushi Ghost Tales/Fish Woman and the Artist I (1979)*, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the artist's solo museum exhibition. In 2015, the artist was awarded the **Lee Krasner Award** by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in recognition of outstanding lifetime artistic achievement.

Stephanie Syjuco: *Neutral Calibration Studies (Ornament + Crime)*

Catharine Clark Gallery co-presents *Neutral Calibration Studies (Ornament + Crime)* (2016), a major platform-based sculpture by American artist **Stephanie Syjuco**, in collaboration with RYAN LEE Gallery for Meridians.

Syjuco works in photography, sculpture, and installation, moving from handmade and craft-inspired mediums to digital editing and archive excavations. Recently, she has focused on how photography and image-based processes are implicated in the construction of exclusionary narratives of history and citizenship. Born in the Philippines in 1974, Syjuco received her MFA from Stanford University and BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is the recipient of a **Guggenheim Fellowship Award**, a **Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Award**, and a **Tiffany Foundation Award**. Her work is in numerous collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Getty Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, among others. She was a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow at the National Museum of American History in Washington D.C. in 2019–20 and is featured in the acclaimed PBS documentary series **Art21: Art in the Twenty-First Century**. A long-time educator, she is an Associate Professor in Sculpture at the University of California, Berkeley. She lives in Oakland, California.

Artist Statement

The artist writes: "My work recycles, copies, resuscitates, warps, reframes, rips off, plunders, and hinges on existing forms and historical archives because **the past is still unfinished business**. I work in large-scale installation, utilizing photo and image-based processes to create densely layered works that are a result of deep research and archival investigation.

"By examining institutional, governmental, and museum archives and collections, I focus on how power manifests in visible and invisible ways—from American colonial regimes to overseas authoritarian legacies—in an attempt to 'talk back' to the official narrative. At stake for me is how to form an alternative to a codified, exclusionary definition of nationhood and citizenship."

"My recent projects use digital imaging processes (green screen backdrops, Photoshop filters, pixelation, and other manipulated techniques), pairing them with meticulous hand-crafted analog formats (textiles, sculptural displays, large format paper collage prints, outmoded reproduction methods) in an attempt to create productive frictions across different time periods. In some projects, I actively conceal or remove the subject as a way to shift the viewer's focus back on to structures of power—for example, to expose the museum display apparatus (*Blind Spot (Artifacts)*, 2025), or to protect an individual from identification (*Total*

Transparency (Portrait of N), 2018). I want my work to act as a catalyst—a way to reframe what has come before so we can envision ourselves out of what has been defined as settled history.”

The Installation

In the installation *Neutral Calibration Studies (Ornament + Crime)*, Syjuco creates a contemporary “still life” that takes inspiration from photographic color calibration charts, which have long been used to check for “correct” or “neutral” color. The array of images and objects in the work creates a visual friction, challenging the idea of cultural and political neutrality by presenting a coded narrative of empire and colonialism as told through art history, Modernism, ethnography, stock photos, and Google Image searches.

The installation takes the form of a **20-foot wide wooden platform** reminiscent of a stage set or modern-day *vanitas*, set atop a large photographic “neutral gray” seamless paper backdrop. Displaying laser-cut wooden flats mounted with digitally printed images, readymade objects, and a selection of ashen, neutral gray painted props, this alternative “still life” collapses historical imagery with contemporary concerns. The viewer is perceptually thrown off guard, presented with what appear to be 3-dimensional objects mixed in with artificial and flat-fronted representations. As a backdrop, a standard photographic color calibration chart has been enlarged to outsize proportions—printed on poly silk, it hangs on the wall from its top corners, sagging in the middle as if bearing the weight of history and the burden of representative responsibility.

Included on the platform are depictions of **Freud’s analyst couch** covered in ethnic rugs (downloaded from the internet and blown up to an overly-pixelated state), ancient cultural figurines also harvested from online Google image searches for Freud’s Vienna study, French Modernist designer **Charlotte Perriand** reclining on a Le Corbusier classic lounge, **Man Ray’s famous photograph** of a white female model posed next to an African mask, and peppered with patterns and textures ranging from ethnic textiles to photographic color calibration charts. *Neutral Calibration Studies* presents to the viewer a channel-surfing vision of connections and pathways that is anything but neutral. Indeed, Freud’s development of psychoanalysis hinged on examining trauma and suppressed narratives, and his study room was heavily populated with ethnic and cultural artifacts meant to elicit projected stories from his subjects.

Hidden amongst the larger components are hints of a counter story: images of members of the **Tasaday tribe** in the Philippines (a group later exposed to be a fictional construct), the Black Panthers’ militant **Huey Newton** famously posed on a traditional Filipino rattan “butterfly chair,” Filipino **ikat weavings**, copyrighted stock photo images of camouflage patterns, and Turkish rugs downloaded from eBay and blown up to “real size.” A selection of both real and artificial plants dot the installation, calling into question what we **naturalize** for the sake of the master narrative.

Upon walking behind the installation, the viewer notices that the entire backside is neutral gray; the wooden struts and fabric sandbag weights are also grayed-out as if attempting to not be “seen.” The fact that the infrastructure itself is visually neutralized hints at the idea that the structure and apparatus of power that maintains historical narrative is itself a construct. *Neutral Calibration Studies* furthers Syjuco’s exploration into the structures of power and the alternative stories that are possible.

Press Images / Booth Checklist. High-res images are [available here via DropBox.](#)



Masami Teraoka

AIDS Series/Father and Son, 1990

Watercolor on unstretched, prepared canvas

108 x 84 inches



Masami Teraoka

AIDS Series/Mother and Child, 1990

watercolor on paper

Sheet: 22 1/8 x 15 inches

Frame: 28 3/4 x 21 1/2 inches



Masami Teraoka

New Views of Mt. Fuji/Dolphins and Samurai, 1979

Watercolor on two sheets of paper

Sheet: 11 x 55 inches



Masami Teraoka

Wave Series/Tattooed Woman at Makapuu Beach, 1984

Watercolor on paper

Sheet: 20 x 29 inches



Masami Teraoka

Venice Snow Scene/Sushi Turn, 1979

Watercolor on paper, mounted as a scroll

Sheet: 50 x 14 inches

Scroll: 90 x 17 1/2 inches



Masami Teraoka

New York Restaurant Series/La Boulangerie, 1992

Watercolor on paper

Sheet: 60 x 21 7/8 inches

Frame: 64 x 25 1/2 inches



Masami Teraoka

McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan/Tattooed Woman and Geisha III, 2018

A woodcut in 43 colors from 37 blocks of laminated cherry wood carved by Motoharu Asaka. Printed by Satoshi Hishimura (Tokyo) and Keizo Sato assisted by Makoto Nakayama (Kyoto) on Echizen - Kizuki Hosho paper made by Ichibei Iwano, who bears the title National Living Treasure.

Edition of 85 + 20 proofs

Sheet and image: 12-1/4 x 18-1/2 inches



Masami Teraoka

Sarah and Octopus / 7th Heaven, 2001

Twenty-nine-color woodcut made from hand-carved blocks of cherry wood printed on Hosho paper. Numbered edition of 200 plus proofs. Signed and numbered in pencil on the verso. Carved and printed by Tadakatsu Takamizawa, Ukiyo-e Research Center, Tokyo, Japan. Published by Masami Teraoka.

Sheet and image: 10 3/8 x 15 5/8 inches



Masami Teraoka

31 Flavors Invading Japan (Macadamia), 1978/2023

Five-color hand printed relief print with oil-based lithography and etching inks on handmade Hamada Kozo from a polymer relief plate and an original zinc key plate

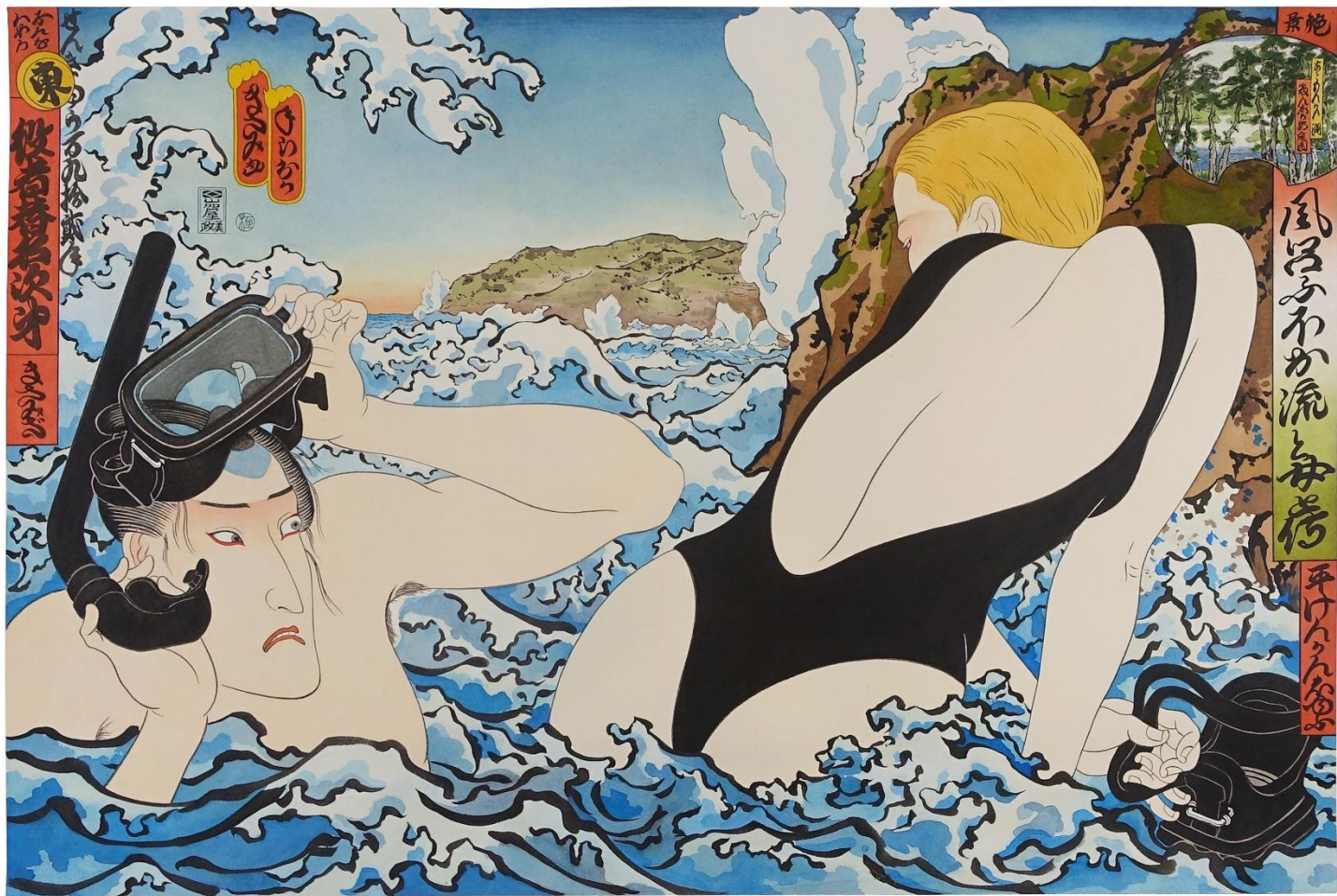
Edition of 50 plus 12 APs plus 10KTP + TPs

The original zinc key plate was produced in 1978 by Ron McPherson of La Paloma Press. Three impressions with hand-coloring were realized in 1978, corresponding to three different flavors of ice cream: *Cherry*, *Pistachio*, and *Peach*. The edition as originally conceived was not realized by Ron McPherson but was later realized by Paul Mallowney, Master Printer of Mallowney Printing, as approved by the artist and Ron McPherson. In 2023, the original zinc key plate was translated into a polymer relief plate and editioned.

Published by Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, CA. Printed by Mallowney Printing, Portland, OR.

Image: 11 x 7 ½ inches

Sheet: 13 x 9 ½ inches



Masami Teraoka

New Wave Series/View From Here to Eternity II, 1992/2025

Watercolor, aquatint, woodblock, and etching on paper

Sheet: 22 ½ x 29 inches

Frame: 27 x 39 15/16 x 1 3/4 inches

Neutral Calibration Studies (Ornament + Crime), 2016

Lasercut wood, archival Epson prints, digital fabric prints, live and artificial plants, mixed media

Dimensions variable; this installation 238 x 98 x 98 inches







