

CATHARINECLARKGALLERY



Above: Masami Teraoka, *Pussy Riot Kubie Series/ Nadya and Peter*, 2017-2022 (open and closed views).

Masami Teraoka: *The Last Swan Lake* | Al Farrow: *New Sculptures*

April 23 – May 28, 2022

Media and Viewing Room: Zeina Barakeh: *Wild Cards*

Opening reception: Saturday, April 23 from 2 – 5pm; artists' talks at 3:30pm

San Francisco, CA: Catharine Clark Gallery opens its Spring 2022 program with Masami Teraoka: *The Last Swan Lake* and Al Farrow: *New Sculptures*, two ambitious solo exhibitions presented in tandem from April 23 – May 28, 2022. Equally acclaimed for their high craft and their commitment to social commentary, Teraoka and Farrow create works that investigate pressing issues of our time: the devastating impacts of war; human rights violations; and environmental collapse. Their exhibitions, presented in conversation with one another, powerfully ask us to pause and reflect on our collective responsibility to one another, and what's at stake when we allow violence to go unchecked.

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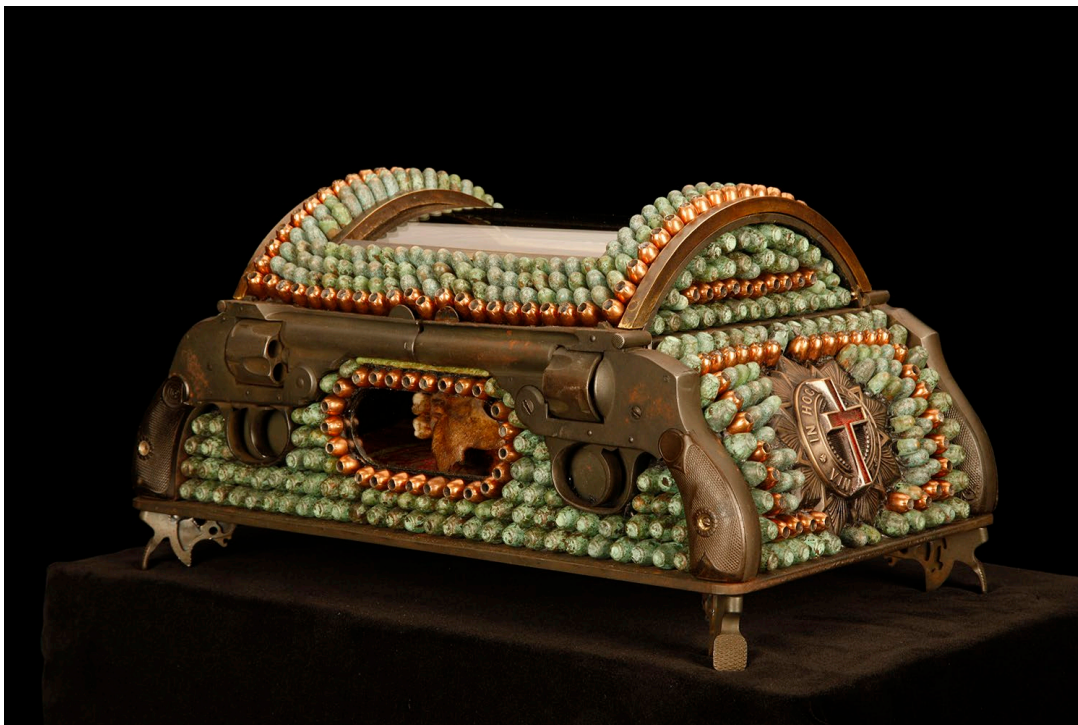
Al Farrow's now-iconic *Reliquaries* series — featured in the multi-venue traveling survey exhibition *Al Farrow: Divine Ammunition* (2015-2019) — casts a striking visual commentary on the contemporary political climate, religion, war, history, culture, and faith. Intricately crafted from munitions and guns, Farrow's sculptures draw on the tension between religion and violence, peace and brutality, and the sacred and the unholy.

Farrow's recent sculptures include reliquaries to Santo Guerro, Farrow's invented "god of war" whose likeness has been reduced to stray relics — the bones of a middle finger or two thumbs — that both evoke a macabre and gothic humor while reminding us of the very real human costs of war.

New Sculptures also features secular reliquaries like *LEGACY* (2021/2022), in which a rusted blue helmet — a reference to the United Nations — perches over a child's gas mask, with ammunition strewn around the base. Through this unsettling juxtaposition, Farrow opens his critique to non-faith-based institutions that, while ostensibly meant to protect our human rights, are also culpable of violence through inaction.

Left: Al Farrow, *LEGACY*, 2021-2022.

Below: Al Farrow, *CASKET RELIQUARY, SKULL FRAGMENT OF SANTO GUERRO*, 2021-2022



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Above: Masami Teraoka, *Grand Swan Lake/Final Dress Rehearsal*, 2022 (open and closed views).

In a career spanning over six decades, Masami Teraoka's work has engaged topics such as HIV/AIDS, the contamination of environments and landscapes, and the tensions around immigration/assimilation between Western and non-Western cultures. Acclaimed for his contemporary reimagining of traditional Japanese Ukiyo-e, Teraoka's work since the early 1990s has also referenced the baroque and gilded paintings of Western Renaissance art, with its highly detailed and often disturbing depictions of Christian allegory and parables.

In recent works, Teraoka reincorporates figures and motifs from Ukiyo-e, such as geishas and torii gates, into his compositions. In revisiting the dreamlike forms of Ukiyo-e — a term that traditionally translates into English as “floating world” — Teraoka also reflects on a less familiar translation of the term as “contemporary suffering,” a tension that, for Teraoka, locates his work at the intersection between imagination and social commentary.

In 2017, Teraoka began creating work in tribute to the Russian activist and performance group Pussy Riot, whose members have been imprisoned by the Russian state for their protests against injustices enacted by President Vladimir Putin's authoritarian government. Teraoka's recent triptychs feature Pussy Riot as characters in a surreal drama in which figures like Putin appear as sinister antagonists in 16th century inspired costume, a nod to the grotesque performativity of the human rights violations and military hostilities currently being played out on our world stage. The newest works on view, completed in Spring 2022, directly respond to the crisis in Ukraine, depicting landscapes overrun with corpses and tanks, demolished buildings, and skies streaked red by fire and destruction, an apocalyptic foretelling of existence torn apart by war.

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Teraoka's recent paintings also explore his memories of witnessing the bombing of Hiroshima as a child in Onomichi, Japan — a city 45 miles away from Hiroshima — in which Teraoka, then nine years old, observed “two suns” in sky on the day of the blast, one coming from the east and another from the west. This unnatural image of the explosion imprinted upon Teraoka's consciousness, and in collapsing a wartime past with the calamities of the present day, Teraoka implores his viewers to consider how a seemingly ordered world can be perilously thrown out of balance by forces beyond our control - viruses, fires - as well as those firmly within it.



Above: Zeina Barakeh, still from *Homeland Insecurity*, 2016.

The gallery's Media and Viewing Room features *Wild Cards*, a presentation of video animations and works on paper by Zeina Barakeh. The title of Barakeh's exhibition references both the unpredictability of war, as well as ID cards and credit cards that are connected to warfare. Her video, *Homeland Insecurity* (2016), for example, draws on current events that illustrate the mechanisms of war, as well as the history of cotton as a core resource in the economic growth and spread of Empire from the Islamic Era through the Crusades, and from slavery into the present.

The main characters are the Centaur — a male human head and torso with a lower body of a horse — and the Horse, an avatar of the artist's own body with the head of a horse. The colonizing Centaurs are based on the mounted soldiers of the British Mandate of Palestine (1920–1948), in struggle with the Horses who, as stand-ins for colonized subjects, embody agency and resistance. At once both humorous and unsettling, Barakeh's painstaking animations invite a deeper consideration of how we related to histories of imperialism and their manifestations in our present-day.

Join us for an opening reception with Masami Teraoka, Al Farrow, and Zeina Barakeh on Saturday, April 23 from 2 – 5pm; artists' talks at 3:30pm.