

AKIHIKO SUGIURA

KYORAI (去来) : Coming and Going

29 May – 15 July 2019

PRESS RELEASE

29 May 2019 (New Orleans, LA) **JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY** is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of Japanese artist, **Akihiko Sugiura**, entitled *KYORAI (去来) : Coming and Going*. This exhibition stems from the collaboration between Arte Laguna Prize and Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, which selected Akihiko Sugiura as a finalist in the 13th edition of the Arte Laguna Prize 2018.19. Sugiura presents seven new paintings and two sculptures. The title of the show, *Kyorai*, roughly translates to “coming and going,” “recurrence” or somewhere between past and future. Typically, this Japanese saying is used for the “coming and going” of feelings, memories, views, or perspectives. Sugiura invites the viewers to experience the mindset of floating between their memories and views/hopes/fears about their future through his art works. The works reject the conventional understanding of painting by asking the viewer to question their self-existence. The exhibition will be on view from 29 May through 15 July 2019 with an opening reception coinciding with the Arts District of New Orleans’ (ADNO) *First Saturday Gallery Openings* on Saturday 1 June 2019, from 6-9 pm.

The artist discusses his new and previous paintings...

My body of work is an experiment in rejecting conventional views of painting, reconsidering the very act of viewing, and reassessing traditional oil painting.

I want to draw viewers into the imagination of these paintings by depicting characters that represent various modern-day questions such as: Are we alive or dead? What is gender? Are humans something else? Real or virtual? At the same time, I also want to push viewers back into reality through the inclusion of blank spaces and the arrangement of actual materials in various places around the canvas.

In my work, there is also a feeling of being beckoned to return to a world of imagination. Everything can be interpreted in many ways depending on the extent of contact. Such a view is connected to and inspired by the philosophical and Zen Buddhist perception of the world, which I feel is an important way of thinking in people’s lives.

Ultimately, while my artwork certainly takes the form of painting, it is not painting in the traditional sense. It represents something yet does not represent anything. There is meaning, and yet it is meaningless. It is retinal artwork, yet it is simultaneously ideological art. While there are correct interpretations of this artwork, at the same time, there are no incorrect interpretations.

As for the glassworks, they present new concept to break-up the main flow of contemporary art. Additionally, glassworks have philosophical elements. They contain the philosophy of all ages and countries, as well as the conflicts. While this work includes the history of any art, it is totally denied by them as well.

AKIHIKO SUGIURA (b. 1979) is a Japanese painter from Hyogo, Japan whose artistic style mixes purely physical non-representational art with a base of traditional representational painting. A common theme that emerges from Sugiura’s body of work is that all types of extremities coexist, coming and going therein.



Sugiura lives and works in Tokyo. He graduated from the Faculty of Business Administration, Yokohama National University, Japan. After learning art by himself for two years, he decided to give up the business world and devote himself to art in 2015. He participated in Shell Art Award Exhibition and some exhibitions in Japan (2017) and held his first solo exhibition at Niche Gallery (Tokyo, Japan) in 2018. In 2019, he won the Artist in Gallery Prize in the ARTE LAGUNA PRIZE (Venice, Italy). As a finalist in the 13th edition of the Arte Laguna Prize 2018.19, for the first time in the United States, Akihiko Sugiura will debut a collection of his artworks for a solo exhibition at Jonathan Ferrara Gallery.

For 13 years **Arte Laguna Prize** has been promoting contemporary art, creating dissemination channels and an international public participation; it motivates the relationships among people who work in the visual, multimedia and performative arts world; it creates concrete opportunities of growth and of launch of the professional career of artists; it generates special projects which spread from Venice throughout the world, building lots of collaborations with foundations, museums, galleries, art residencies and companies.

An international network has been built and it is growing and strengthening every edition and every day a system of relationships made by people and ideas is created and it is always looking towards new horizons.

With the special prizes “Artist in Gallery” Arte Laguna Prize created a format of collaboration with international galleries that gives them the opportunity to view a large array of artistic proposals selected by an international jury, composed of experts in contemporary art, directors of Museums and Foundations, independent curators and art critics, and then to choose the artist with whom to organize a new exhibition.

For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact Gallery Director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.343.6827 or matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com. Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@JonathanFerraraGallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags: #AkihikoSugiura, #JonathanFerraraGallery and #ArtsDistrictNewOrleans.