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**Albertz Benda Presents
*Tadanori Yokoo: 49 Years Later***

An exhibition of recent work by the acclaimed artist exploring both new and iconic themes

On view November 12 – December 19, 2015



Tadanori Yokoo, *49 Years Later*, 2014.
Acrylic on Canvas, 19.9 x 20.9 inches (45.5 x 53cm)

NEW YORK, NY, October 15, 2015 – Albertz Benda is pleased to present *49 Years Later*, a solo exhibition of new work by acclaimed Japanese artist and 2015 Praemium Imperiale laureate, Tadanori Yokoo. On view from November 12 through December 19, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to view a series of never-before-seen paintings expanding upon two major themes, the swimmer, an ongoing investigation throughout Yokoo’s storied career, and the dancing couple, a new motif borrowed from old Hollywood. Yokoo explores these seemingly quotidian subjects—a woman swimming, a couple dancing—through a variety of perspectives, locations, and degrees of surrealist interpretation. The outcome is two strikingly vibrant, playful bodies of work that offer alternative and evolving views of the everyday.

Yokoo first worked with the theme of the swimmer in 1966 and it remains an integral part of his oeuvre. Yokoo acts as a self-plagiarist, taking and distorting images that he creates. In keeping with his practice, he builds upon his early iconography, showing a depth and continuity in his exploration. Throughout the series, the same swim cap clad girl trudges through the water with her mouth agape. Yokoo brings a different meaning and composition to each of his paintings through a variety of settings that serve to decontextualize and re-contextualize the swimming girl, as well as expand on our understanding of Yokoo’s work. In one painting the swimming girl is set in open water under a night sky, in another she is racing against her duplicated self. Yet in another, her face is distorted in possible desperation. Yokoo’s repetition of the same image reveals an array of styles he has developed over the past fifty years, allowing him to explore multiple dimensions within the same set of images.

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The second series featuring dancing couples—a new theme for the artist—is a shift away from his early work. Its emphasis on vivid colors and nuanced repetition presents a stylistic evolution. Each painting in this series incorporates a woman and a man holding the same dramatic dance pose, taken from classic Hollywood imagery. The series favors geometric shapes and bold colors, an expansion of Yokoo’s painterly vocabulary. The trope of the romantic Hollywood couple is altered and deconstructed yet still visible. The series picks up where Yokoo left off with his acclaimed *Teshima Island* exhibition, a permanent installation in which Yokoo converted three one-story homes into a collage-like art museum in 2013. The winding pathways in the ancient fishing village at Teshima Island are echoed in the mosaic imagery of *Arabian Dream The Sky and the Roses*, a painting that borders on being wholly abstract.

The two motifs intersect in the boldly titled painting, *No Goal for Art*. A dancing couple in the foreground is joined by one of the famous swimming girls, above which is written *No Goal for Art*. The work captures the surrealist nature of Yokoo’s practice, as it unites one of his iconic motifs with a recent one, bridging the gap between the past and present.

49 Years Later celebrates the through lines in Yokoo’s body of work as well as his lifelong commitment to painting, a highly personal medium and intimate means to communicate his creative vision. Tadanori Yokoo continually surprises with unexpected overlapping images, clever alterations, and cheeky repetition, challenging the way we read images in an era of media overload.

About Tadanori Yokoo

Tadanori Yokoo was born in Nishiwaki, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1936. He was adopted into a family of kimono makers whose textiles have influenced his work to this day. He began by making posters for local businesses, which allowed him to move to Kobe in 1956. This was followed by a move to Tokyo in 1960, where he joined the prestigious Nihon Design Center. After four years at the Center, Yokoo left to focus on his own style, earning a reputation as a strong voice within the art community. He became a rising figure within a generation of young artists in Japan and in the international Pop art movement. He designed album covers for The Beatles, Santana, and Miles Davis, among others. He counts a circle of renowned creative minds as his closest influences and peers, including the late poet Yukio Mishima. By 1972, he was featured in a solo exhibition *Graphics of Tadanori Yokoo*, at the Museum of Modern Art, NY. After witnessing a Picasso retrospective in 1980, he retired from design work and devoted himself exclusively to painting. In Yokoo’s words: “The subjects of my paintings should be scenes cut loose from personal notions.”

Yokoo’s work has been the subject of many solo exhibitions and is included in the permanent collections of numerous international museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Fondation Cartier, Paris; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the M+ Museum, Hong Kong. He has his own museum, the Tadanori Yokoo Museum of Contemporary Art, in Kobe, Japan.

About Albertz Benda

Opened in Fall 2015, Albertz Benda is a new gallery partnership between Thorsten Albertz and Marc Benda committed to presenting and nurturing a contemporary visual arts program, featuring a distinct roster of emerging and established artists.

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