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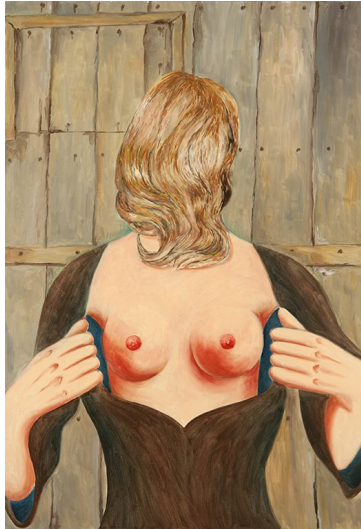
albertz benda presents
Tadanori Yokoo: *Death and Dreams*

On view September 6 – October 13, 2018
515 West 26th Street
New York, NY 10001

Opening reception:
September 6, 6-8pm



Back of Head, 1980. Watercolor on paper. 21 7/8 x 16 1/2 inches.



The Falling Woman III, 2010. Oil on canvas. 40 1/2 x 28 3/4 inches



Black, Red, Blue, 2017. Oil on canvas. 35 7/8 x 25 1/2 inches

New York, NY - albertz benda is thrilled to present a solo exhibition by Tadanori Yokoo, *Death and Dreams*, comprising three bodies of work that span the past 40 years of the acclaimed artist's practice. On view from September 6 through October 13, the majority of the works in *Death and Dreams* are drawn from Yokoo's recent exhibition at the Yokoo Tadanori Museum of Contemporary Art in Kobe, Japan, which is dedicated to the artist. They are shown now both for the first time outside Japan and in a private gallery.

Featuring the complete 1980 series *Back of Head*, the 2010 series *Falling Woman*, and the *Mystery Woman* series started in 2016, *Death and Dreams* examines the fascinating progression of the artist's dialogue with portraiture, repetition, and appropriation of Japanese and Western popular culture over the course of four decades.

Creating series of unique motifs, the artist has developed his own visual language that he constantly references and reconfigures. He deliberately allows for the presence of the artist's hand and slight imperfections from one image to the next in a series. The gaps and disparities that arise through the intervention of time and the nature of the medium of painting are central to Yokoo's explorations of memory and consciousness.

Repetition is another defining characteristic of Yokoo's oeuvre. Painted within one year, the *Back of Head* watercolors present a pivotal moment in Yokoo's career during which he renounced commercial projects and devoted himself to painting. In this series, Yokoo paints the

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motif of a woman with her face turned away from the viewer, varying the overall color, hair texture, and background from one work to the next

Revisiting the theme of the covered face three decades later, the *Falling Woman* works heighten the tension between revealing and obscuring – the female figures hold their dresses open to bare their breasts while faces remain covered by hair and fabric. The genesis of the confrontational naked female form and its iterations evolved from Yokoo’s childhood experience of being taken by his mother to the women’s section of the local communal hot baths. For the artist, the event was erotic, fearful and formative.

Juxtaposing familiar motifs rooted in his childhood and early 20th century European avant-garde painting techniques, the *Mystery Woman* portraits depict women resembling those found on the labels for Banshu-ori textiles and Harima matchboxes (products from Yokoo’s hometown), but with their faces concealed by seemingly random household items – a cabbage, a roll of paper towel, a hat. The playful yet unsettling mystery of his subjects recall the work of Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, whom Yokoo cites as important influences throughout his career. The artist assembles a pastiche of cultural references and styles – allusions to advertising, kitschy nationalism, ukiyo-e and vintage Hollywood – that integrate personal and collective memories.

About Tadanori Yokoo

Tadanori Yokoo was born in Nishiwaki, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1936. 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. He became a rising figure within a generation of young artists in Japan and in the international Pop art movement. 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 renounced commercial design work and devoted himself to painting.

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

albertz benda opened in fall 2015 and is devoted to a contemporary visual arts program focusing on rediscoveries as well as new introductions — from seminal figures in their field whose work warrants further exploration to debut presentations of artists that are new to New York. Follow us on instagram @albertzbenda or via the hashtag #albertzbenda

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