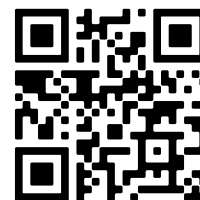


LEIKO IKEMURA

Riding the Waves

24 February - 2 April 2022



Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to present *Riding the Waves*, a solo show by Japanese-Swiss artist Leiko Ikemura. Presenting a combination of new works alongside signature pieces, this exhibition showcases bronze, ceramic and glass sculptures as well as paintings.

Leiko Ikemura is an internationally celebrated and well-established, Japanese-Swiss artist, based in Berlin. Originally from Tsu in the Mie Prefecture, Japan, Ikemura studied painting in Seville, Spain before relocating to Switzerland and then Germany. She fuses Eastern and Western art and explores themes of hybridity, cross-culturalism, sexuality, and the life cycle. She works at the intersection of abstraction and figuration, shifting fluidly between media, and imbuing her pieces with raw energy and emotion. Blurring the border between species, between inner and outer worlds, Ikemura encourages the viewer to discover mystery in her narratives and turn them into something fantastic or, on the contrary, to keep them within the bounds of reality. The materials used by the artist—such as bronze, clay and pigment—are closely linked to the earth, emphasizing the aspect of the human being as part of nature.

The title of the exhibition, *Riding the Waves*, refers to the artists' interest in transformation. Waves are a symbol for movement and transfiguration as they represent the movement of energy within the sea. According to Ikemura, "All living beings are part of cosmology and this energy can be felt like waves." The presentation of the works emphasizes this statement, with a big base shaped like the sea's winding waves, on which different creatures of Ikemura can be found. The exhibition design has been conceived by architect Philipp von Matt and offers an important contribution to the playful presentation of Ikemura's sculptures. All the paintings and sculptures are connected and have a special focus that addresses aspects of the natural world: female figures, landscape, and the animal creatures that inhabit it.

Among other mythical creatures, the 'Usagi' (Japanese for rabbit) is one of Ikemura's most famous and frequently used motifs. Throughout different cultures the animal symbolizes fertility and renewal. Ikemura's large scale bronze sculpture 'Usagi Greeting' (or 'Rabbit Bodhisattva of Mercy') invites visitors to seek shelter within its wide robe. The work offers various possibilities for association and an ambiguity for those seeking meaning as a hybrid being of mercy and hope.

Ikemura's work has been presented in the Tokyo Biennale (1988) and the Melbourne Biennial (1999). She has had solo exhibitions at Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich (2021); Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències, Valencia (2021); Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2002); The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2011); and Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel (2019). Her works can be found at, among others, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland; Fundación Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, Spain; The National Art Center, Tokyo, Japan; MOMAT-The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; MAC's -Musée des Arts Contemporains, Grand-Hornu, Belgium; Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, UK; Kunstmuseum Ahrenshoop, Ahrenshoop, Germany; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, US; Museum for Ostasiatische Kunst Köln, Cologne, Germany; Neues Museum Nürnberg, Nuremberg, Germany and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, Liechtenstein.