

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Asuka Anastacia Ogawa

Blum & Poe, New York

September 20–October 29, 2022

Opening Reception: Tuesday, September 20, 4-7pm

New York, NY, September 15, 2022—Blum & Poe is pleased to present Asuka Anastacia Ogawa's third solo presentation with the gallery.

In this selection of new work, Ogawa explores her interests in the art of ikebana and the slow movement of flowers as they reach toward the sun. Having pondered these phenomena thoroughly, Ogawa plays with the underlying principles in a manner that both expands on and complements her signature figurative style. In the loose narratives behind its vignettes, this exhibition emphasizes concepts that have been garnered through Ogawa's recent studies: an appreciation for beauty in the natural world, the use of elements of nature as conduits for prayer, and the jubilation that comes from working without haste.

The origins of ikebana are thought to reach back to the sixth century, when Buddhism was introduced to Japan from China and Korea, and floral offerings to Buddha, known as *kuge*, were placed on temple altars. This custom was informed by the animistic polytheism at the root of Japanese Shinto culture. Echoing the sentiments of this practice, Ogawa's subjects are depicted in the midst of acts of devotion or grounding, daily rituals that revolve around organic artifacts such as garlic cloves, cut or rooted flowers, and eggs.

Agosto (2022) finds its subject in a placid state of prayer or reflection. Depicted against a sage backdrop, the figure is aided by a candle and the multiple garlic cloves that dangle from the brim of their hat. In *Hi, flower* (2022), one of the artist's androgynous figures cranes over a technicolor bloom as their face, backed by the night sky, is reflected in the flower—a reflection directed at both the subject and the viewer of this work. Ogawa describes this composition as a meditation on the self—an inquiry into how the subject and the viewer, as corecipients of the reflection, might perceive themselves as coexisting with or going against the natural state of things—and a surreal communion between flower and individual, as they gaze upon each other in equal parts.

Beyond an anecdotal interest in the philosophies of ikebana and the leisurely disposition of flowers, Ogawa has taken to heart the knowledge that supports these pursuits—using it, beyond her subject matter, in the way that she approaches art making. “It’s helped me to understand more of my practice,” she says.

Ogawa was born in Tokyo, Japan where she spent much of her childhood. When she was three years old, Ogawa moved from this vertical urban backdrop to rural Brazil, where she passed a handful of formative early years amongst wandering farm animals and rushing waterfalls. The artist later relocated to Sweden when she was a teen, where she attended high school, and soon thereafter she moved to London to pursue

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her BFA from Central Saint Martins. After having her first solo show at Henry Taylor's studio in Los Angeles, CA in 2017, she had a solo show at Blum & Poe, Tokyo in 2020 and at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles in 2021. Her work is in the collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC, and X Museum, Beijing, China. She is currently based in New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA.

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents fifty artists and nine estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000-square-foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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