

# BLUM & POE

Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Michael Ho, Su Yu-Xin, Hiroka Yamashita**

**Blum & Poe, Tokyo**

**January 20–March 11, 2023**

**Opening reception: Friday, January 20, 6-8pm**

Tokyo, Japan, January 10, 2023—Blum & Poe is pleased to present an exhibition of recent work by Michael Ho, Su Yu-Xin, and Hiroka Yamashita. All born in 1991, they each conjure material and metaphysical landscapes and excavate notions of earth and environs as zones where psychological elements can be performed or confronted. Their respective bodies of work are shown here as three strata of varying depth: the aboveground, the liminal, and the subterranean.

Born in Hualien, Taiwan, Su Yu-Xin has an academic background in techniques associated with *nihonga*, or “Japanese-style painting” that binds pigments derived from natural ingredients like minerals, shells, or semi-precious stones with glue made from animal hide. She collects and processes these materials, lifts them from the earth’s crust, and invents a new order on blocks of hand-formed wood where terrains are formed in dense layers of color and flowing linework. Other paintings appear as diagrams and infographics that classify the substances that make up our physical world or track forces of nature as they shift in tandem with human intervention. Embedded within the tactility of Su’s work is an awareness of anthropogenic hazards on micro and macroecological systems, as well as an engagement with the history of painting as a formalist, aesthetic tradition and a function of modern economic and cultural systems.

Concealed in Hiroka Yamashita’s landscapes are figments of the mind’s eye, ghostly figures rolled into mountain ranges and whisked into the atmosphere in varying states of dissolution. Born in Hyogo, Japan, Yamashita draws inspiration from a relationship with her ancestral land, the spiritually fertile landscape of the Okayama countryside where she currently resides, and the practice of daily routines living in communion with nature and local communities. Here, in the border region between foothills and surrounding flatlands, human settlements greet the wild and the literal diffuses into the figurative. The curious theater of her work appears less as a dream from a singular imagination and more as an articulation of a collective psyche, a congregation of local deities in harmony with surrounding forests and the changing seasons.

Through an ashen veil that permeates Michael Ho’s work, we sink into the underground, the cavernous subconscious where artifacts left from eras of colonialism, experiences of otherness, queerness, folklores, and memories of loved ones passed lie dormant. Pressing layers of paint from the back of the canvas to the front before composing the final image, Ho’s practice of traversing from one side to the other speaks to his familiarity with navigating the in-between as a second-generation Chinese immigrant born in the Netherlands and growing up in Germany. This movement between perimeters is shown in the narrative of *Into the Shores of the Night*, where we see the legs of a galloping horse suspended in mid-motion just above a liquid surface, but the image of its body is obscured through fluid refractions. Just as the anthropomorphic horses from Jean Cocteau’s *Testament of Orpheus* tempt the bard away from his waking life, Ho’s black horse similarly leads us into the underworld, treading through pools of groundwater and enigmatic prairies.

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Despite having grown up in diverse cultural contexts and moving through the world on unique paths, Ho, Su, and Yamashita return to the soil, depicting organic environments as metaphors for or carriers of more profound states of being and depths of perception. In their lava beds, mountainous borderlands, and grottoes cast in twilight lies an invitation for the viewer to reconnect with deeper, sedimentary layers of their own geological horizons.

Michael Ho (b. 1991, Arnhem, Netherlands) graduated from the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, UK in 2019 and currently lives and works in London, UK. He and his previous work partner Chiyan Ho presented an exhibition as an artist duo at V.O Curations, London, UK (2021). His works have been featured in group exhibitions including *Current Transmissions*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK (2022) and *Virile*, The House of St Barnabas, London, UK (2022). His film projects have been screened at Piccadilly Circus, London and at the ICA, London. Ho's newly commissioned video work by Film and Video Umbrella, London was part of the group exhibition *Hollow Earth: Art, Caves & the Subterranean Imaginary* at Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK in 2022. His work is represented in the collection of Asymmetry Art Foundation, London, UK.

Su Yu-Xin (b. 1991, Hualien, Taiwan) received both her BFA and MFA from Taipei National University of the Arts, Taipei, Taiwan and received a second MFA from Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Su mounted her first major institutional solo exhibition *A Hue to Spell* at the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan in 2019 and will present *Dust That Rides the Wind* at the Longlati Foundation, Shanghai, China in the spring of 2023. Select group exhibitions include Beijing International Art Biennale, Beijing, China (2022); *The Rearview Landscape, or a Trip of Ownership*, UCCA Dune, Beidaihe, China (2021); *A Long Hello*, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2020); and *hic sunt leones*, 798 Art Centre, Beijing, China (2019). Su was a nominee for the Huayu Youth Award, China in 2020 and was awarded a residency at Longlati Foundation, Shanghai, China in 2021.

Hiroka Yamashita (b. 1991, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan) received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY and MFA from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. She currently lives and works in Okayama, Japan. Recent solo exhibitions include *project N 84*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2021). Her work has been shown in group exhibitions including *YES YOU CAN: The Strength of Life through Art*, WHAT Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2022).

## 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-one artists and nine estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

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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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