

**Kelly Akashi**

*Infinite Body*

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

April 27 – June 10, 2023

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to announce Kelly Akashi: *Infinite Body*, the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery, on view in New York from April 27 - June 10, 2023.

Exploring the biological memory of the body through the language of geology, *Infinite Body* presents materially diverse translations of the artist's personal and shared experiences along a broader temporal landscape. Throughout the exhibition, cast representations of the artist's body are broken into pieces, mended together, and merged with other representations of natural bodies on large rammed earth platforms. The fragmented body becomes a poetic experiment encapsulating the impermanence of life while also reflecting the romance and history of material processes. The body as a vessel of consciousness is conceptually connected to altar-like calcite forms and personal objects presented through the exhibition.

Downstairs, a pair of the artist's cast bronze hands interlock in the form of vesica piscis, a geometric symbol formed by the intersection of two discs. With many historical references, this overlapping shape brings two bodies together, the physical and spiritual. Glass flowers are intertwined around the fingers, growing out of the merging worlds.

Presented on the two largest platforms are several sculptures made from carved stone, bronze, cast crystal, hand-blown glass, and found objects imbued with personal history. Akashi records geologic time through the layered earth that forms these platforms. Particularly interested in the transformation and history of materials, these works also encapsulate time, from the short-lived experience of chewing a piece of gum to casting momentary gestures into perpetual existence.

Throughout the exhibition, friendship necklaces from broken relationships accompany voluminous glass leaves. The recognizable jewelry signifies one part of a meaningful relationship, fragmented and separated between bodies. These contemporary artifacts speak to shared and individual senses of time and history. Tiny formations made from pieces of chewing gum are also affixed to the leaves. Enveloped in saliva, the scent of spearmint or cinnamon leaves its trace in the air temporarily.

An intricate network of borosilicate glass, formed into a large orb, slowly rotates on a circular concrete pedestal under the skylight upstairs. Resembling a planetary body, delicate glass cherry blossoms grow from its core while its roots branch inward and internally. In her practice, cherry blossoms are incorporated to reference Hanami, the Japanese tradition of appreciating ephemeral cherry tree blooming. This fleeting notion of time captures the impermanence of nature and our bodily existence.

Mapping time in connection to the past and future, Akashi's new series of photographs are made from large astronomy glass plate negatives taken by telescopes. Focusing on nebulas, this body of photographs consists of contact prints that document the creation and dissolution of star formations. In *NGC 7293*, known commonly as the Helix Nebula, the gaseous body of a star is pictured as it slowly loses its outer layers to the cosmic landscape. The infinite vastness of these

cosmological landscapes mirrors the cyclical nature of the geological particles presented throughout the exhibition, while simultaneously observing the incomprehensible notion of deep time.

In the adjacent room, a large bronze thistle hangs from the ceiling; its prickly surface and threatening bloom is adorned with small lights. Underneath this work, a crystal cast of the artist's torso is engulfed by a thorny bronze cage-like structure. These works collapse the boundary between protection and pain and represent the necessary difficulties that inspire new growth.

Born in 1983 in Los Angeles, Kelly Akashi currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California. The artist graduated with a MFA from University of Southern California in 2014. Akashi studied at the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste - Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main and received her BFA at Otis College of Art and Design in 2006.

Currently, Akashi has a major solo exhibition at the San Jose Museum of Art entitled *Formations*. The exhibition will travel to the Frye Museum of Art in Seattle and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. Upcoming in September, Akashi will present a commission project at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle. In 2020, Akashi had a solo exhibition of a commissioned sculpture, *Cultivator*, at the Aspen Art Museum and in 2017, she had a significant solo exhibition, *Long Exposure*, at SculptureCenter in New York.

Winner of the 2022 Art + Technology Lab Grant at LACMA, Akashi also received the 2019 Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation Art Prize and completed a residency at the foundation in Ojai, California. Other residencies include ARCH Athens, Greece (2019) and Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA (2019), both of which concluded with a solo exhibition.

Notable group exhibitions include *Ground/work* at the Clark Art Institute (2021), *Possédé·e·s* at MoCo Montpellier Contemporain, France (2021), *Brave New Worlds*, Palm Springs Art Museum (2019), *Made in L.A.*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2017); *LA: A Fiction*, Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France (2017); *Take me (I'm Yours)*, Jewish Museum, New York (2016); *Can't Reach Me There*, Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2015).

Kelly Akashi's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; San Jose Museum of Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; CC Foundation, Shanghai; X Museum, Beijing; The Perimeter, London; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Sifang Museum, Nanjing, among others.

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