

GAGOSIAN

Setsuko to Exhibit Ceramic and Bronze Sculptures, Paintings, and Works on Paper in Gstaad

Into Nature Opens July 1, 2023



Setsuko, *Le chat et l'oiseau*, 2023 (detail), enameled terra-cotta, 32 3/4 × 19 3/4 × 18 1/2 inches (83 × 50 × 47 cm)
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Nature doesn't need us, but we need nature.

—Setsuko

GSTAAD, June 12, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Into Nature*, an exhibition of new and recent ceramic and bronze sculptures, paintings, and works on paper by Setsuko at the gallery in Gstaad. Since 1977, Setsuko has resided in the Grand Chalet of Rossinière, close to Gstaad, making this an opportunity for her to exhibit within reach of her Swiss home. *Into Nature* furthers the bodies of work presented in *Into the Trees*, Setsuko's debut exhibition at Gagosian Paris in 2019, and *Into the Trees II*, a solo presentation at Gagosian Rome in 2022.

On view in Gstaad are new ceramic sculptures, produced at Astier de Villatte's Paris workshop and made of terra-cotta glazed in white enamel. Setsuko's renderings of trees, with their delicately modeled representations of acorns, blooms, foliage, and fruit, emphasize the rooted solidity of their trunks to convey lasting strength and emergent growth. Reminiscent of Japanese ceramics dating back

to the age of Jōmon earthenware (c. 10,500–300 BCE), these works also refer to the animistic Japanese religion Shintō, to which trees are of central symbolic importance.

Setsuko's new sculpture *Le chat et l'oiseau* (2023) represents a cherry blossom tree, a metaphor for life's intensity and transience, with an attendant cat and bird, themselves recurrent symbols in Japanese folklore. *Fantaisie de Magnolia* (2022), another sculpture not previously exhibited, is the artist's only work to combine elements of terra-cotta and painted bronze, the titular plant's earthen blooms emerging from a metallic nest of pale green stalks and leaves. Also included in *Into Nature* are spectacular new, large-scale versions of Setsuko's bronze pomegranate chandeliers, *Grand Chandelier (grenades)* (2023), which are covered in painted leaf forms and produced in two different colored patinas. These are on view together with smaller-scale sculptural candelabras in bronze adorned with fig and grapevine motifs.

A grouping of Setsuko's paintings and works on paper charts her development as an artist since the 1960s, when she was based in Rome, through the COVID-19 pandemic. These works are complemented by *Paysage d'Italie* (2023), a new landscape study representing the loggia of her former house at Montecalvello, near Rome, where she lived with Balthus. The exhibition also features recent works on paper depicting colorful floral bouquets as well as a range of delicate still-life arrangements and domestic interiors. These invest their flattened pictorial spaces with a quiet intimacy, synthesizing traditional Japanese and European modernist aesthetics in a contemplative observation of familiar objects and settings.

In all her sculptures, Setsuko renders sublime natural subjects with rich, tactile surfaces, uniting organic and constructed elements to represent the symbiosis of life and death. In her gouache and watercolor paintings of still-life and floral arrangements, domestic interiors, and landscapes, she conveys the vital joy embodied by natural forms, crafted objects, and atmospheric spaces. Combining historical Eastern traditions with twentieth-century Western ideas, Setsuko presents the viewer with a highly personal set of explorations, interpreting everyday objects and living things in ways that are at once lyrical and precise.

Gagosian will soon publish Setsuko's first monograph with the gallery, detailing her work from the 1960s through the present. The book will feature an essay by novelist Shan Sa.

Setsuko was born in 1942 in Tokyo and lives and works in Paris and at the Grand Chalet de Rossinière, Switzerland. Collections include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Exhibitions include *Setsuko et Harumi: hommage à Balthus*, Palais des Nations, Geneva (2001); *Atelier de Cézanne*, Aix-en-Provence, France (2012); *Grand-Château d'Ansembourg*, Luxembourg (2014); *The Life of Setsuko Klossowska de Rola*, Sogo Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan (2016); and *Regards de Setsuko*, Musée national du château de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison, France (2021). Since 2002, Setsuko has served as the honorary president of the Fondation Balthus, and in 2005, she was designated UNESCO's Artist for Peace.

#SetsukoKlossowskadeRola

SETSUKO

Into Nature

Opening reception: Saturday, July 1, 3–8pm

July 1–September 10, 2023

Promenade 79, Gstaad

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