

Anton Kern Gallery

Yuli Yamagata: *The New, the old and the hole*

WINDOW, 91 Walker Street (corner of Walker and Lafayette)
September 8 – October 22, 2023

Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to announce *The new, the old, and the hole*, the Brazilian artist Yuli Yamagata's first solo exhibition at WINDOW, opening Friday, September 8. This new body of work, which includes fabric paintings, Ikebana sculptures, and ceramics, was developed over the course of Yamagata's summer residency at Lacasapark in Gardiner, New York.

In the transition from the fast-paced life of her hometown of São Paulo, to the woodsy seclusion of the Hudson Valley, Yamagata's relation to time and economy of production shifted. Granted this special set of circumstances in which to work, extracted from her familiar surroundings and routine, the artist was able to exist in seemingly suspended time. The works created over the past two months are a blend of premeditated ingredients shipped from the city, and spontaneous ideas that came about while acclimating to a new environment.

Several of Yamagata's techniques, from firing clay in the kiln to creating cyanotypes in the sunlight, allude to the passage of time. In her Ikebana sculptures, time appears frozen. While Yamagata follows the main principles of traditional Ikebana (minimalism, asymmetry, and harmony), instead of watering her flowers, she allows them to dry and coats them in clear resin, thus turning them into preserved sculptures.

The bases for the Ikebana are made from empty cardboard boxes, and stalks of bamboo, which add strong lines. The void within the recycled boxes are intended to balance the physicality of the exterior forms. The boxes and bamboo are coated with plaster, fiberglass, and resin, which serve as preservatives as well, and present a unified white color. The final touch is the adornment of pieces of glazed ceramics and impressions in the shape of corn, a signature motif, laid into the still wet plaster. The roughly hewn organic forms embrace the wabi sabi aesthetic of appreciating beauty in imperfection. As is typical of Yamagata's practice, she continues to incorporate her body into her work. In *Leftover Ikebana*, she includes casts of her hands, and the gestures of her fingers spreading plaster over the base create the overall texture.

This process-driven mindset translates to her fabric paintings as well. Arriving at the residency equipped with a suitcase full of colorful stretchy fabrics from São Paulo and New York City, Yamagata injects the eye-catching colors and patterns of bikini bathing suits and street fashion into her compositions. The imagery in these works were inspired by DIY videos that popped up in the artist's Instagram feed. Populated by hands and feet, each dynamic composition references a physical action. In *Baker*, two hands knead dough on a patterned tablecloth; *Painting Again* shows a hand with paintbrush applying paint to a chair, and *Alchemist Clown* demonstrates how to make olive-shaped novelty candles at home.

Balance is an overarching philosophy for Yamagata, evidenced by her careful weighing of dualities; darkness and light, mass and void, natural and synthetic, repulsion and seduction. It also extends to her lifestyle while an artist-in-residence: embracing solitude and taking advantage of her natural surroundings, while also consuming media and pop culture from home through the internet.



Yuli Yamagata, *You and Me Ikebana*, 2023, Cardboard boxes, plaster, fabric, bamboo, dried flowers, glazed porcelain, polyester resin, fiberglass, and acrylic. 70 7/8 x 31 1/2 x 16 1/2 inches (180 x 80 x 42 cm)

