

LEIKO IKEMURA

Mia Mamma Roma

16 November 2024 - 1 February 2025

Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to present *Mia Mamma Roma*, the third solo exhibition by the internationally renowned artist Leiko Ikemura. In this exhibition, Ikemura presents a new series of paintings, continuing on her *Girls* motif, alongside sculptures.

With Rome being the first city Ikemura arrived in when she left Japan for Europe at a young age, she still feels a very special connection with the city. "The long history of the city, the old Roman Empire, and the archeological foundations fascinate me. I feel the layers of time and see traces of stories from almost 3000 years vividly in the faces of people in the street" says the artist. The title of the show *Mia Mamma Roma* also reveals her great affinity with Italian cinema, more specifically the films of the Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975). His profound insight and unconventional approach to different aspects of the human condition left a deep impression on Ikemura. Upon entering the exhibition space, visitors can feel his presence through a selection of film stills from his second film, *Mamma Roma* (1962), the story of a mother who tries to escape her own history to ensure a better future for her neglected son. Like Pasolini, Ikemura shares an interest in the humanization of characters that are often overlooked by society and asks questions about our moral circumstances and how we can find harmony in a world that is fractured by our own biases.

A distinct stylistic change becomes apparent in the series of paintings Ikemura began in the 1990s and is still working on, titled *Girls*. These paintings can be seen as a veiled critique of the depiction of the female figure as passive and voiceless in visual art. They are delicate silhouettes of flowing colors that meet the viewer like an apparition, woven of light, contrast, and transparency. While earlier figures often radiated a mixture of innocence, vulnerability, and melancholy, her new works reveal a fascinating courageous side. These *girls* are awakened in our time of uncertainty, where the artist leaves their narratives open for the viewers to their thoughts on childhood, coming of age, and motherhood can come together. These paintings are presented alongside sculptures. The sculpture *Mia Mamma Roma* reveals a figure out of the shape of a vase, embodying concepts such as shelter, protection, security, nurturing and motherhood, the ultimate metaphor for creation.

Leiko Ikemura was born in Japan and is now based in Berlin, Germany. She has had a highly acclaimed career, spanning over five decades. Ikemura left Japan in 1972 and studied art in Seville, Spain, before moving to Switzerland in 1979, and later settling in Germany in the 1980s. The influence of the different cultures she has lived in is apparent in both her attitude towards her work and to the world. Ikemura's work has been presented in the Tokyo Biennale (1988) and the Melbourne Biennale (1999). Her works can be found in prominent public collections at, among others, Centre Pompidou (FR); Museum Ludwig (DE); Kunstmuseum Basel (CH); Fundación Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos (ES); The National Art Center (JP); MOMAT - The National Museum of Modern Art (JP); MAC's - Musée des Arts Contemporains (BE); Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (UK); Kunstmuseum Ahrenshoop (DE); Nevada Museum of Art (US); Museum for Ostasiatische Kunst Köln (DE); Neues Museum Nürnberg (DE) and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (LI).