

Petzel

HIROKI TSUKUDA

The Days of Humans

November 7 – December 21, 2024
520 W 25th Street

Petzel is pleased to present *The Days of Humans*, an exhibition of eight new works by Tokyo-based artist Hiroki Tsukuda. The show marks Tsukuda's third solo exhibition at the gallery and will be on view from November 7 to December 21, 2024, at Petzel's Chelsea location at 520 W 25th Street. Tsukuda will present a new group of portraits, continuing the artist's exploration of humanoid imagery. Influenced by science-fiction movies and novels, video games, and manga, Tsukuda continues to create a vision of a bionic, dystopian world.

Tsukuda began creating his bionic portraits over a decade ago, drawing on representations of the female figure in mainstream advertising and media, with a retro-futurist twist. Tsukuda's practice is characterized by the creation of digital collages as the foundations of his works, often fusing found imagery with original drawings. Tsukuda then translates the composites to large-scale drawings entirely by hand in ink, charcoal, and pencil, resulting in complex, monochromatic compositions.

Tsukuda originally grounded his portraits in a commodified and consumerist aesthetic of smut, spawned by the over-proliferation of gravure magazines and the obsession with idol culture in Japan. The artist has since expanded this series, developing an array of player card-like entities which negotiate representations of gender, sex and automata. Tsukuda's portraits have evolved toward warped humanoid forms, some android, some more robot than human, though the line here is blurred. His figures, while retaining some human qualities, are distorted, sampling idealized representations of the body that, while anthropomorphic, are mechanical and uncanny in anatomy.

Tsukuda's practice encompasses drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, and installation, all focused on webs of infrastructure both supporting and endangering human life. Through his use of industrial materials, such as plywood, the artist cites the material language of construction, craft, and commercial transport. Tsukuda reminds the audience of the global networks, reliant on various systems of labor and energy, which presuppose the existence of the exhibition itself. Further, the mechanical elements of his subjects seem to overtake each of them to varying degrees, akin to viruses in various stages of invasion. In our age of increased tech dependence, the artist's progress images of molecular hijacking can be read both as a daunting devolution narrative, as in, the days of humans are numbered, while also highlighting the urgency to preserve humanity, in the days of technological supremacy.

In this way, the artist's bionic figures and imagined cityscapes signal both our future condition and Cyberpunk fantasy. Tsukuda works highlight the proliferation of Internet materials and sci-fi media as a pictorial framework to characterize looming existential threat. Through his cyborg figures and extraterrestrial cartographies, Tsukuda theorizes a planet devoid of human sentience, in which the humanoid entities we've created are left to inherit the world.

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About Hiroki Tsukuda

Hiroki Tsukuda (b. 1978, Kagawa, Japan) lives and works in Tokyo. He graduated from the Department of Imaging Arts & Sciences at Musashino Art University in 2001.

The artist's drawings and digital collage explore the turbulent, futuristic cityscapes of his imaginings. Created with meticulous detail, these intricate, monochromatic works illustrate collapsed spaces, in which mechanized worlds merge with sci-fi mythos in states of controlled chaos and organic mutation. Similarly, Tsukuda creates installation works out of raw industrial material, flora, and found objects that transpire directly from the artist's drawings.

Tsukuda's work was featured in the 8th Yokohama Triennale (2024). He has mounted solo exhibitions at Nanzuka Underground, Tokyo (2022); Petzel, New York (2020); Museum of Modern Art, Gunma (2019); Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2018); and Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen (2017), among others. He has been included in group exhibitions at Parco Museum Tokyo, Tokyo (2024); AISHONANZUKA, Hong Kong (2023); Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich (2023); Tezukayama Gallery, Osaka (2021); Jeffery Deitch, Los Angeles and New York (2019); AC Málaga, Antiguo Mercado de Mayoristas, Malaga, (2019); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2019); Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2019); Jack Hanley Gallery, New York (2016); and Brandenburgischer Kunstverein Postdam e.V., Potsdam (2015), among others.

His work is represented in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Mori Art Museum, Japan; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Foundation, Wein; and the Jean Pigozzi Foundation, Geneva.

Petzel Gallery is located at 520 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Karolina Chojnowska at karolina@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.