



Homage to Francis Bacon (Second Version of Triptych (on light ground)), 2016. Acrylic, gold and platinum leaf on canvas mounted on aluminum frame
Triptych (3 panels), 197.8 × 147.5 × 5.1 cm / 77^{7/8} × 58^{1/16} × 2^{1/16} in (each) © 2016 Takashi Murakami/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy Perrotin.

Takashi Murakami

"Heads ↔ Heads"

Opening Saturday April 28, 4 - 9pm
April 28 - June 17

"What is Beauty. It is a momentary flicker of ever-vanishing youth." Takashi Murakami ¹

Perrotin New York is pleased to present a solo exhibition of the work of Takashi Murakami, the fourteenth in twenty-three years of cooperation with the artist.

Spanning three floors, the exhibition presents for the first time in New York recent works, notably from the series *Homage to Francis Bacon* and the *Transcendent Attacking a Whirlwind* fresco, exhibited this past October at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

The exhibition presents a new series of paintings inspired by the work of Francis Bacon. The dense compositions contain the recurring motifs of the artist's iconography—eyes, mushrooms, characters—accentuated by multiple layers of color on platinum leaf. In Murakami's work, the representation of flesh in motion is the pretext for a cosmology of chaotic motifs and colors.

The metamorphoses of faces recall the transformations of Mr. DOB, the whimsical character—sometimes cute, sometimes monstrous and fierce—that Murakami subjects to multiple variations in his artworks. With this series, started in 2002 and continued in 2016, the artist pursues his homage to artists—both occidental and oriental—who have influenced his work.

The exposition continues with *Transcendent Attacking a Whirlwind* (2017), a monumental painting ten meters (33 feet) long, composed of ten wood panels painted in acrylic and highlighted with gold and platinum leaf. The work is a homage to Japanese artist Soga Shohaku, whose painting by the same title created in about 1764 is now part of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts collection.

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Transcendent Attacking a Whirlwind, 2017. Acrylic, gold leaf, and platinum leaf on canvas mounted on wood panel, 300 × 1000 cm / 118^{1/8} × 3931^{1/16} in (10 panels)
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Caught in a storm, several characters in traditional dress surround a sea dragon whose coiled tail merges into the raging waves. The hypnotic motion of the colorful whirls structures the scene and emphasizes the dynamic nature of the composition. Colours and patterns—waves, scales, clothing—are delicately layered like a collage of Japanese paper beneath a shiny lacquer.

Transcending tradition through both a pop and scholarly approach to his art, Takashi Murakami brilliantly revives the principles expounded by his mentor, Professor Nobuo Tsuji: animation, ornamentation (*kazari*), playfulness (*asobi*), religiosity and eccentricity. This massive fresco calls to mind *The 500 Arhats* (2012), a vast panorama 100 meters (330 feet) long in which Murakami revisits the Japanese tradition of scroll paintings. Created in response to recent ecological disasters in Japan, these simultaneously realistic and hallucinatory works marked a turning point in the artist's career.

The pieces presented in this exhibition show the importance of history and tradition in the work of Takashi Murakami, who holds a Ph.D. in Nihonga painting. Incessantly moving between the past, present and future, his oeuvre combines the most modern iconography and techniques with the precision and sophistication of traditional Japanese art.

The artist deliberately maintains a wide gap among the immediate visual impact of his paintings, the apparent accessibility of his work, and the conceptual density of his discourse. His extensive knowledge and sense of irony are two major characteristics of his work: Murakami asserts a desire to mix high culture and popular culture indiscriminately in a «super flat» artwork devoid of prejudice or boundaries, a truly free expression of creativity.

Born in 1962 in Tokyo, Takashi Murakami lives and works in Tokyo, Japan.

In 2018, Takashi Murakami will be exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, at the Fondation Louis Vuitton and at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

Since 2015, seven high-profile international museums have hosted major Takashi Murakami personal exhibitions: Mori Art Museum of Tokyo, Yokohama Museum of Art, Astrup Fearnley Museet of Oslo, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo and Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow. The exhibitions all brought a record number of visitors to the museums in which they were held.

¹ Takashi Murakami and Soyeon Ahn, *The meaning of Superflat Always Remains Mysterious in Takashi in Superflat Wonderland*, PLATEAU Samsung Museum of Art, 2013