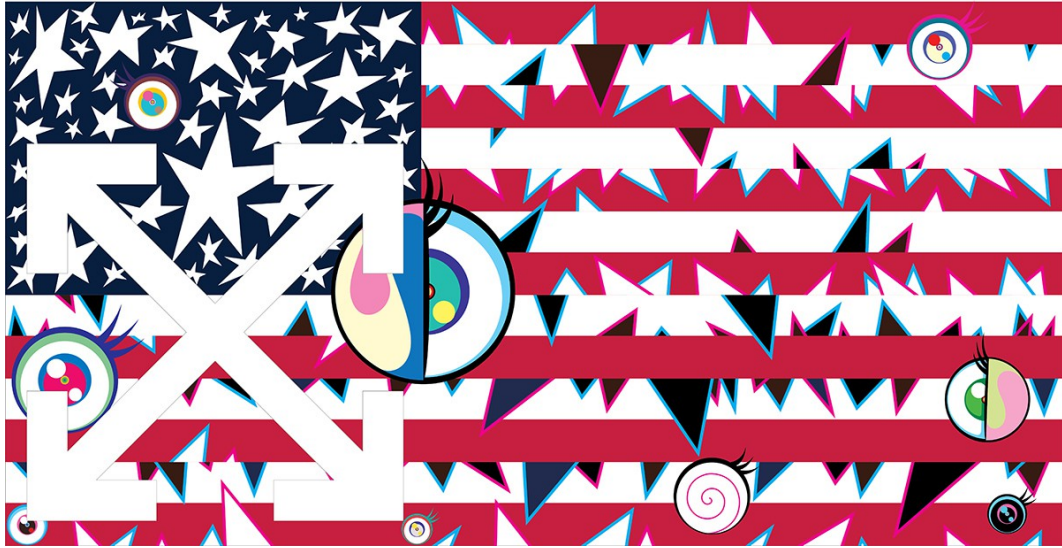


GAGOSIAN



MURAKAMI & ABLOH

“AMERICA TOO”

Opening reception: Wednesday, October 10, 6–8pm
October 10–25, 2018
456 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills

Takashi Murakami and Virgil Abloh, rendering of “*MATERIAL TOO*”, 2018 © Virgil Abloh and © Takashi Murakami

October 9, 2018

There is a zone of supremacy in the art world and there is a sense that fine art is the most precious and has the highest status. My collaboration with Virgil is trying to create something that is completely outside of that framework.

—Takashi Murakami

Satire and irony are looming themes that are part of our now. Our dialogue is not so much embedded in the art; it's embedded in the atmosphere that we're creating.

—Virgil Abloh

Gagosian is pleased to present new works by Takashi Murakami and Virgil Abloh, following *future history* at Gagosian London, and “*TECHNICOLOR 2*” at Gagosian Paris.

Murakami and Abloh have created an art, media, and production collaboration in layered paintings, large-scale sculptures, and the merging of their respective trademarks and brand names.

Multihyphenate cult figures in their fields, they push against the parameters of fashion, art, and popular culture, provocatively blurring the lines between them.

In his protean oeuvre, Murakami draws from sources as diverse as classical Japanese painting, *otaku* subculture, Western art theory, Hollywood cinema, and hip-hop. His expansive art production spills over into fashion, film, and commercial commodities both luxurious and inexpensive, eschewing entrenched divisions between high art and popular culture.

Abloh, trained as an architect and engineer, works across fashion, architecture, performance, and consumer products, often deconstructing the creative process in public to challenge and analyze existing aesthetic systems and their distribution. His street-couture label Off-White, which he founded in 2013, combines conventional tailoring with more subversive references, while his role as the artistic director of Louis Vuitton's menswear places his current design work in dialogue with Murakami's celebrated collaborations with Vuitton, beginning in 2002.

For "AMERICA TOO" Murakami and Abloh have produced works in which their respective styles and trademarks intersect in a stream of freewheeling, punkish mash-ups. The two artists, kindred spirits from different sectors of a broader cultural zone, reflect incisively on the signs of the current times while working to disrupt the stratifications of cultural production.

A series of new paintings borrows motifs from both Murakami's and Abloh's individual work histories and combines them with art-historical imagery. The signature arrows of Abloh's label Off-White are overlaid onto Murakami's iconic rainbow flower, stenciled canvases in gradations of color, and images of Mr. DOB, the whimsical character that became Murakami's first signature creation inspired by anime and manga characters. Bernini's *Self-Portrait as a Young Man* (1623) dissolves in a psychedelic swirl of color, in which traces of Mr. DOB transform the youthful silhouette of the Baroque artist. A series of sculptures that are composites of each artist's trademark becomes oversize, glossy, and almost threateningly sanguine. Human-scale plastic iterations of the flower and arrows repeat, this time in three-dimensional media.

Takashi Murakami was born in 1962 in Tokyo, where he lives and works. Collections include 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Museum of Modern Art, New York. Recent institutional exhibitions include *Murakami Versailles*, Château de Versailles, France (2010); *Murakami: The 500 Arhats*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2015); *Murakami by Murakami*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2017); *The Deep End of the Universe*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; *Under the Radiation Falls*, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2017); *The Octopus Eats Its Own Leg*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2017, traveled to Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada, and Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX, in 2018). Murakami is the founder of Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd., an art production and art management corporation, which both produces his work and functions as a supportive environment for emerging artists.

Virgil Abloh was born in 1980 in Rockford, Illinois. After earning a degree in civil engineering, he completed a master's degree in architecture. In 2013, he founded the Milan-based clothing line Off-White, for which he was awarded the British Fashion Council's Urban Luxe award in 2017. In March, Louis Vuitton named Abloh its new artistic director of menswear. He showed his first collection for Louis Vuitton during Paris Men's Fashion Week in June 2018. In 2019, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, will hold a retrospective of his work, curated by Michael Darling.

#MurakamiandAbloh

Press

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