

GAGOSIAN



SETSUKO

Into the Trees

Opening reception: Thursday, April 11, 6–8pm

April 11–June 1, 2019

4 rue de Ponthieu, Paris

Setsuko, *Chemin de vigne*, 2016–17, enameled terra-cotta, 24 7/8 × 19 3/4 × 15 3/4 inches (63 × 50 × 40 cm)

April 1, 2019

Nature is my master. Without its guidance, how could I paint or work? My Swiss garden is surrounded by forests and mountains. I look closely; Nature shows me.

—Setsuko

Gagosian is pleased to present *Into the Trees*, terra-cotta and enameled ceramics by Setsuko. This is her first exhibition with the gallery.

Working across many mediums, from bronze to gouache, Setsuko combines sumptuous surfaces with tranquil subject matter, often suggesting an optimistic interconnectedness between natural and constructed elements, as well as a symbiosis between life and death.

Blending imagery from East and West, Setsuko's paintings demonstrate a keen sensitivity to texture, from the fur of a cat to the silken petals of a flower. This attention to diverse surface qualities led her to ceramics and the infinite malleability and expressiveness of clay.

The works included in *Into the Trees* were made in Setsuko's studio at the Astier de Villatte workshop in Paris. The ongoing artistic collaboration stems from the relationship between the artist and Benoît Astier de Villatte, who, as a child, lived with his parents at the French Academy in Rome, Villa Medici, where Setsuko's husband, Balthazar Klossowski de Rola (Balthus), served as director from 1961 to 1977.

Setsuko's terra-cotta works evince a deep familiarity with the natural world. Hollow tree trunks and branches—either glazed with milky white enamel or left in earthy brown—reveal their own life cycles, the fragmented, gnarled forms suggesting long histories of environmental change. Yet, in many cases, these worn, warped remains support new life, with fresh young leaves and berries, and poised birds announcing revival and vigor. Setsuko's mark making responds to this fomenting energy, balancing expressive gashes and broad, shallow channels with meticulous, delicately wrought detail. In some cases the liberal application of white enamel amplifies these varying textures.

Setsuko was born in 1942 in Tokyo, and lives and works in Paris and at the Grand Chalet de Rossinière, Switzerland. She has exhibited in Tokyo, Paris, London, Rome, Geneva, and New York, and her work is included in institutional collections such as that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Since 2002, Setsuko has served as the honorary president of the Fondation Balthus, and in 2005, she was designated as UNESCO's Artist for Peace.

#SetsukoKlossowskadeRola

Press

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