

LEIKO IKEMURA
New Girls ou Les Filles Difficiles

Oct. 15 - Dec. 22, 2022

Opening: Oct. 15, 5 - 8pm

11-13 rue des Arquebusiers, Paris

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to inaugurate its new Paris branch at 11-13 Rue des Arquebusiers in the Marais district of Paris with the exhibition *New Girls ou Les Filles Difficiles* by Japanese-Swiss artist Leiko Ikemura (b. in Tsu, Mie Prefecture, Japan. Lives and works in Berlin and Cologne, Germany). On display will be a selection of new paintings, as well as sculptures in glass and bronze that play with the intimate character of the exhibition space.

Entitled *New Girls ou Les Filles Difficiles*, Ikemura's exhibition takes up her perhaps best-known series of *Girls*, which first appeared in her work in the mid-1990s and has since become a key motif. They are delicate silhouettes of flowing colors that meet the viewer like an apparition, woven of light, contrast, and transparency. An implied horizon line suggests a landscape in the background. While the figures often radiated a mixture of innocence, vulnerability and melancholy, the new works reveal a fascinatingly sinister side:

In the two paintings with the same title, *Difficult Baby* (both 100 x 80 cm), the heavy luminosity of the burgundy and purple background highlights the contours of the girlish figure. Despite the shadowy execution, the gaze is insistently directed at the viewer, almost challenging, in readiness to fight. In the work *Difficult Girl* (100 x 80 cm, see invitation card), the girlish features give way to a grim facial expression that emphatically reinforces the defensive pose. The figure in the work *Girl in Yellow* (100 x 80 cm) radiates a childlike strength, defiantly standing up to the conflicted situation of the world. The glazed application of paint makes the work glow with a delicate, warm yellow hue, as if it had absorbed the light of the atmosphere. While no subject is found in the same way, the metamorphosis from figurative to abstract in works such as *Girl in Yellow* (100 x 80 cm) is so harmoniously balanced that the viewer can follow its development like the course of a river.

This idea of the ever-flowing river is metaphorically embraced in the sculpture *Thoughts* (patinated bronze, 40 x 43 cm). The work shows the bust of a graceful female figure. The head is slightly tilted to the side, and the only vaguely discernible facial features have a contemplative effect. The softly shimmering mother-of-pearl luster of the patinated bronze creates the impression of a certain fragility and makes the figure appear at once otherworldly and aloof. An implied hand leads to the mouth and seems to melt into it. It is a gentle version of a recurring motif in Ikemura's work, representing fluid circulation and change, that is on one hand autonomously self-contained, and on the other connected to the outside world and nature.

In the past two years, the artist's repertoire has been expanded by the medium of glass, which allows the play with transparency in sculpture. The milky glass captures the light of the room, allowing the sculptures to glow mysteriously from within. The visualization of permanence and metamorphosis in Ikemura's creative process finds its correspondence in the medium of glass, which, despite its density, unites the feelings of lightness and light.

Leiko Ikemura's works have been exhibited worldwide in solo and group exhibitions since the early 1980s. In 2021, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris showed a comprehensive presentation of Ikemura's works from its own collection. Currently on view at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, is the intervention *Leiko Ikemura: More Light!* (until 27 February 2023). Solo exhibitions are planned for 2023 at the Georg Kolbe Museum Berlin and the Museo de Arte Zapopan in Guadalajara, Mexico. Recent solo exhibitions include CAC La Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències Valencia (2021); Sainsbury Center for Visual Arts, Norwich (2021); Centro de Arte Caja Burgos; Kunsthalle Rostock (2020); Kunstmuseum Basel (2019); Nordiska Akvarellmuseet, Skärhamn (2019) and The National Art Center, Tokyo (2019). In Paris, she was represented in the group exhibition *Ceramix, Ceramic art from Gauguin to Schütte* at Cité de la céramique, Sèvres/ La Maison Rouge (2016) among others. Works by Ikemura are in the collections of important institutions such as the Kunstmuseum Albertina, Vienna; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Kunsthaus Zürich; MCBA-Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, the Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau; MOMAT - The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nevada, and many more.

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