

Hinako Miyabayashi

wood, oil and spiral

3 May – 14 June 2025

Galerie Guido W. Baudach is pleased to present its first solo exhibition of works by Hinako Miyabayashi for this year's Gallery Weekend Berlin. Under the title *wood, oil and spiral*, the Tokyo-based artist is showing new paintings in a wide variety of formats.

Hinako Miyabayashi paints with colors and other materials on various substrates. But what forms does she create in doing so? And where on the respective surface does she paint the colors? How does she apply them? Thickly, thinly, in clusters or scattered like by a firework? – Many small decisions lead to an art work that addresses a multitude of thoughts and feelings. Hinako Miyabayashi paints her pictures in such a way that all the colors used remain clearly recognizable. Through her gift of taking the painting materials seriously, she draws us to her picture and lends us invisible hare ears, with which we can hear the colors.

Although this metamorphosis remains a fantasy, as such it fulfills the purpose of illustrating the cosmos that the artist develops in her practice. Instead of creating traditional or even representational paintings, Miyabayashi's work explores the painting materials and their properties in the pathos of transience themselves – as elements of the living world with an inevitable end. Without depicting anything concrete, a natural landscape or the like, she creates paintings of vivid atmosphere that are at the same time wrapped in a mood that expresses empathy with all things.

It is a transformation with the concrete means of painting such as surface, color, ductus and composition. This creates a polyphonic poetry and offers a synaesthetic intoxication with parallel worlds of color and sound. Hinako Miyabayashi often develops her settings against an unprocessed background. The resulting negative space follows a precise aesthetic principle. The areas left open create a constant moment of suggestion in the picture. Beneath the unfathomable open space is the depth of a mysterious body of water. The imaginary creatures emerge from it: A lively hare grazes on the bank. If we follow him, we end up like Alice in his burrow, fall into a hole and enter a wonderland – or take a trip into art history.

Albrecht Dürer's *Feldhase* (English: Hare), one of the most popular works of art in the western world, is also remarkably situated in such an indeterminate space, as there is no location for the cute animal other than the sheet of paper on which the hare is painted in watercolors. Instead, every targeted spot of color and every fine line in its fur unites to form the wholeness of the lifelike image. This hare looks close enough to touch, so deceptively real that you think it could hop away at any moment as soon as it detects danger with its perked up ears. Dürer has created a picture here so similar to reality, so perfectly modeled on nature, that it gives the impression that he, the artist, has the divine power to breathe life into things. – But what lives will soon die. Dürer dedicated another famous picture to the inevitable sadness inherent in the thoughtful contemplation of all living things: the engraving *Melencolia*, in English: Melancholy – a human emotion that in Western culture usually is to be kept in check through virtuous diligence.

The feeling of memento mori, which describes the inner pain of seeing the ideal of youthful beauty and perfection inevitably fade away, this melancholy is understood completely differently in Hinako Miyabayashi's work. The artist herself says of her work: "I paint like a 'hand' that 'accepts' the individual textures and everything else that belongs to the respective material." This is reminiscent of the Japanese term ,nare', which can be translated as ,hand shine' and describes the beauty of things through vividly preserved traces of their use. Objects that have been used are deliberately left worn and dirty, as this is the only way to preserve the characteristics of their use and create a symbol of the empathic relationship between people and things.

Hinako Miyabayashi is familiar with both Eastern and Western aesthetic concepts. She studied not only in Japan, but also at the Berlin University of the Arts, where she further deepened her interest in Western art and culture. She is part of a tradition of artists who have fruitfully promoted the intellectual and spiritual exchange of cultures. Interculturality between Japan and the West has been developing in many areas since the forced opening of the country in the mid-19th century, following a long period of strict self-imposed isolation. With regard to the visual arts, one need only think of the enormous influence that the emergence of Japanese woodblock prints had on early Western modernist painting or, conversely, that Abstract Expressionism from the USA had on the painters of the *Gutai* movement in Japan after the Second World War. Here as there, however, the elementary approach to life and the world as well as the corresponding narratives are still noticeably different today.

Looking at Hinako Miyabayashi's works from a Western perspective, it is easy to be tempted to emphasize the foreign, the exotic and to pay less attention to the wonderful adventures of perception and reflection that the artist invites us to embark on by spreading out before us in her pictures a world that is entirely her own and mediates between the cultures.

– Sassa Trülzsch

Hinako Miyabayashi, born in 1997 in Hokkaido, studied at the Tokyo University of the Arts and the Berlin University of the Arts. Solo exhibitions of her work have so far taken place at Gallery 38 in Tokyo (2024) and Galerie Bernd Kugler in Innsbruck (2023).