

 New solo exhibition by Japanese artist Keiichi Tanaami starts at Mizuma Gallery 6 Aug.

Birth and Death Bridge

6 August - 29 September 2013

Mizuma Gallery is pleased to present *Birth and Death Bridge*, a solo exhibition by Japanese artist Keiichi Tanaami (77) starting 6 August, 2013. In this show the artist reveals the depths of his personal universe through 12 sharp and vivid acrylic paintings.

Keiichi Tanaami was born in Tokyo in 1936 and graduated from [Musashino Art University](#)'s college of design. As a successful graphic designer, he worked for legendary rock bands like [The Monkees](#), was the first artistic director of the Japanese monthly edition of [Play Boy](#), and collaborated with numerous fashion designers such as [Paul Smith](#) and [Mary Quant](#). Since the 1960s, when his work played a significant role in introducing [pop art](#) and [psychedelic culture](#) into Japan, he has crossed the boundaries of media and genre, going beyond the confines of graphic design such as art direction and illustration, to work with a wide variety of mediums including animation, experimental film, painting and sculpture. An iconic forerunner as a multitalented artist, Tanaami continues influencing generations of artists across the globe.

His own influences range from pre-war [kamishibai](#) heroes to American [B movies](#), from manga author legend [Tezuka Osamu](#) to pop art guru [Andy Warhol](#), from film icon [Marilyn Monroe](#) to [Sergei Eisenstein](#)'s [montage theory](#). The subject matter of his work, however, is deeply rooted into his experience of the Tokyo bombings through World War II: roaring American bombers, Japanese searchlights scanning the skies, firebombs and flares dropped from planes, the city a sea of fire, fleeing masses, and the flashes of the bombs reflecting off of his grandfather's deformed goldfish swimming in his tank. "Dreams and reality are all jumbled up in my memories" says Tanaami, and "these memories, changing daily as if at their own convenience, greatly sway who I am."

These half-dream, half-memory visions appear in his work as grotesque, luminescent creatures, light beams, macabre monsters, naked women and fish-like beings. When he became gravely ill at the age of 45 and stood on the verge of death, his medications gave him hallucinations often featuring pine trees that since then often appear in his creations. This episode renewed Tanaami's creative energy, exacerbating his consciousness of the fragility of life. This close encounter with death also eventually brought him to the idea of the bridge as a connection between this world and the next, but also as a metaphor for the journey of life itself as the title of this exhibition suggests.

Tanaami's painting style mimics various techniques such as isometric perspective reminding of Edo period [ukiyo-e](#), [anamorphosis](#) which is often used on packagings, [Ben-Day dots](#) from the printing industry (and fellow pop artist [Roy Lichtenstein](#)) and a sense of collage as initiated by the [Dada](#) movement at the dawn of the 20th century, mixing religious symbols and popular culture icons. However despite its mechanical appearance, Tanaami's paintings' surface betrays the true sensuality that animates his brush. "Even today I feel a physiological pleasure when I am layering on coats of paint" he says.

Since 1965, Tanaami has exhibited extensively on 5 continents in prestigious venues such as the [MoMA](#), New York (USA), the [Centre Pompidou](#), Paris (France), the [Museum für Gegenwart](#), Berlin (Germany), The OCT Museum, Shenzhen (China), or the [Fondation Speerstra](#), Apples (Switzerland). His work is in the collection of over 25 public institutions and museums worldwide, including the [Singapore Art Museum](#).

The artist will be present at the exhibition opening on Tuesday, 6 August, 6-8PM.

Opening Reception

Tuesday, 6 August 2013, 6PM

The exhibition will open on **Tuesday, 6 August 2013, 6PM**. The artist will be present.

Gallery Profile

Mizuma Gallery was first established in Tokyo by Sueo Mizuma in 1994 with the mission of promoting Asian and Japanese artists both on the local and international contemporary art scenes. Its Singapore opening will be the 3rd expansion for Mizuma Gallery with current spaces in Tokyo, Japan and Beijing, China. Mizuma Gallery is a key gallery for the development of Japanese contemporary art and has exhibited at important art fairs such as ARCO (Madrid), Armory Show (New York), Frieze (London), FIAC (Paris), Art Basel Miami Beach (Miami) and Art Basel Hong Kong (Hong Kong).

About Gillman Barracks

Gillman Barracks (GB) is Asia's up-and-coming destination for contemporary art. It is distinguished as a vibrant centre in Asia for the creation, exhibition and discussion of contemporary art. Named after British general Sir Webb Gillman, GB is set amid lush greenery and was once a stronghold to the First Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. The conserved colonial barracks house galleries and creative businesses, as well as the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Singapore, opening on 23 October 2013. The international galleries feature diverse and ever-changing contemporary art exhibitions, while CCA Singapore will bolster the region's visual arts landscape through its international artist residency, research and exhibition programmes. By fostering cultural exchange and creation, showcasing the best and most innovative art of our times, as well as generating discourse and research, CCA Singapore will establish Singapore as an important centre for contemporary art in Asia. Gillman Barracks was officially launched on 14 September 2012, and open to the public from 15 September 2012. More information on Gillman Barracks can be found at GillmanBarracks.com.

Contact

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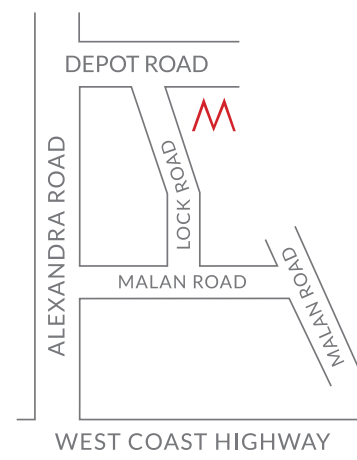
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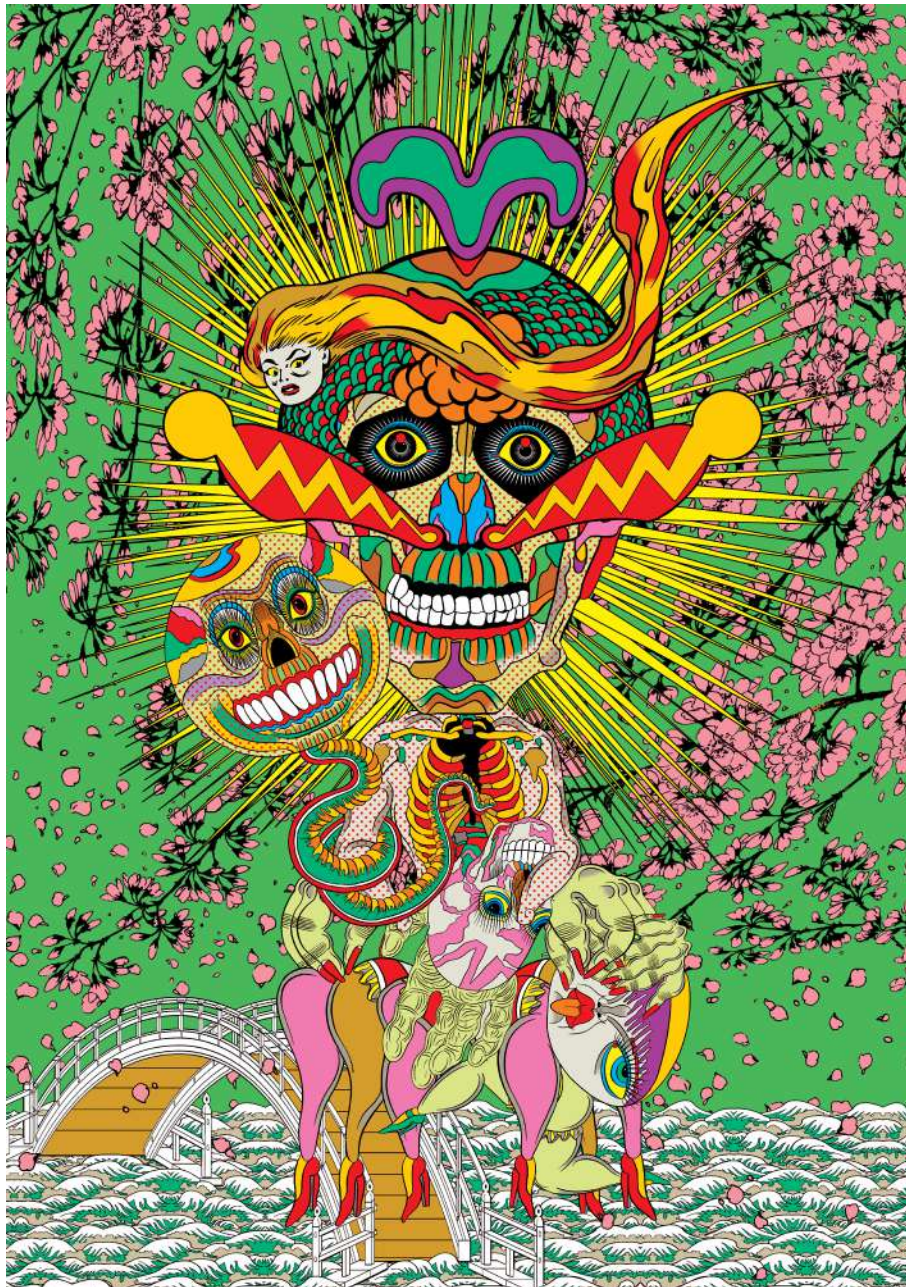
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Hours Tue-Sat 11-7 Sun 11-6





Cherry Blossoms Falling on the Arched Bridge

2013

Acrylic on canvas

1163 x 825mm

©TANAAMI Keiichi, Courtesy of NANZUKA