

Miya Ando

Artist | Miya Ando

Dates | June 2 (Tue.) – July 11 (Sat.), 2020

Location | MAKI Gallery / Viewing Room

*Please note that our gallery name will change to MAKI Gallery in June 2020



Miya Ando, *Kumo (Cloud)* October 3.3.5, 2018, Ink on aluminum composite, 91.4 x 91.4 cm

MAKI Gallery is pleased to present an online exhibition by Miya Ando in the online viewing room on our website. Ando is of American and Japanese parentage, and her artistic sensibility has been polished by her awareness of these two cultures. The certainty that two opposing and sometimes contradictory elements can become one informs her creative practice. In this exhibition, we will introduce her series, *Kumo (Cloud)*, which is representative of this concept, together with another series, *Shou Sugi Ban*, which skillfully incorporates traditional Japanese techniques.

Kumo (Cloud) was inspired by Buddhist teachings that were a great influence on the artist. Clouds do not have fixed forms. They change their shape and color from moment to moment. They seem to have substance but they do not, as expressed in the Japanese phrase, “like grasping at cloud”, which is used to indicate something that is vague or too indefinite to pin down. They are representative of the impermanence of all things, that everything is always in flux, which is why they appear in various ways as motifs in Ando’s work.

Furthermore, the artist draws these clouds on sheets of metal using a laser. Metal is rigid, heavy, and it takes time for them to undergo a material, physical change (or they hardly ever do). It is a substance with a solid presence. Drawing an ephemeral, everchanging cloud on this substance, she achieves the fusion of completely opposing qualities in her work.

Ando has incorporated an ancient Japanese method of preserving wood into her technique, as encapsulated in her series, *Shou Sugi Ban*. The blackened, charred wood would absorb all light were it not for the addition of

silver nitrate, which creates an area where all the light is reflected. Light and dark come to coexist as gradations in a single material. Here, too, we find the expression of opposing qualities in a single work.

Thus, the artist absorbs two different cultures and through a process of sublimation, transcends their duality in a single work. Her work suggests that, viewed from a higher level, dualism is false – all things are one (fuji * 1) and hold the possibility of merging.

We hope that many of you will take this opportunity to view Ando's works, which we are introducing for the first time, via our online viewing room.

* 1 Fuji (不二) is a Buddhist term meaning, "what may appear to be opposed and binary is not opposed and is one, when seen from an absolute standpoint". (Source: Dejitaru Daijiten [Digital Encyclopedia], Shōgakusan)

Artist

- Miya Ando



Born in 1973, in Los Angeles, California, Miya Ando received her BA in East Asian Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, before going on to study Buddhist iconography and imagery at Yale University and becoming an apprentice at master metalsmith, Hattori Studio in Okayama Prefecture, Japan.

Using a variety of materials including steel, aluminum, and wood, Ando creates abstract paintings, sculptures and installations. Her work has also been characterized as Post-Minimalist, with her metal-paintings being perhaps the most well-known. Applying heat to steel or aluminum, the artist layers colors, applies chemicals or lacquers, sands and polishes to add shine to the metal. Through this process, subtle gradations that recall sun, sky or cloud appear on the surface, revealing the artist's unique perspective to the onlooker.

Her work is infused with a Buddhist worldview, as well as a traditional Japanese view of nature, that can be clearly seen in her exhibition titles, such as *Form is Emptiness, Emptiness Form* (lines from the Heart Sutra), *Sky/Emptiness (Sora/Ku)*, or *72 Kō* (ancient Japanese calendar system that divides the year into 72 seasons). This stems from the artist's family background: she is half American and half Japanese, descended from Bizen swordsmiths and spent her childhood in both rural Northern California and at the Buddhist temple overseen by her maternal grandfather in Japan. Ando thus skillfully fuses the traditional and the contemporary, the industrial and the natural, East and West, exploring through her art the connections between people and things.

Her recent solo exhibitions include *Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form*, Asia Society Texas Center (Houston, 2019); *Miya Ando*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery (New York, 2019); and *Clouds*, Kantor Gallery (Los Angeles, 2019). She has held solo exhibitions at institutions including The Noguchi Museum (New York, 2018), as well as participated in group exhibitions at the Haus der Kunst (Munich, 2019) and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA, Los Angeles, 2017). In 2015, her large-scale installation, *Emptiness The Sky (Shou Sugi Ban)*, was shown at the *Frontiers Reimagined* exhibition of the 56th Venice Biennale. Her work is in many notable public and private collections, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA, Los Angeles), the Haus der Kunst (Munich), and the Berkowitz Collection (Miami). Ando has also created numerous public works of art, including a memorial sculpture entitled *After 9/11*, a work which has been installed permanently in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London, and for which she was shortlisted for the Marsh Award for Excellence in Public Sculpture in 2015.

Artworks



Miya Ando
Alchemy (Shou Sugi Ban) 1.20.12.12.1
2020
Charred redwood, silver nitrate
30.5 x 30.5 x 3.8 cm

Installation View



*For further inquiries, please contact