WHITE
CONDUIT
PROJECTS

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YUMI KATAYAMA
LAND
RECENT PAINTINGS
Opening: Wed 28 OCT 6 – 8:30 pm
Until 28 Nov

Yumi Katayama moved to Britain on her own at the age of twenty in 1978 and has lived and worked in London ever since. She grew up in a free-spirited, unconventional atmosphere shaped by her father, a renowned tanka poet, and by the art of the late 1960s, which challenged established rules and conventions.

Inspired by her poet father's gift for conveying inner worlds and emotion, Katayama has cultivated an exuberant, uninhibited practice, forging a distinctive visual language that resists convention.

In her search for examples, Katayama regularly visits museums across Europe, while spending periods of concentrated work in her studio in southern France. These changing environments are part of her everyday life, and have also deepened the relationship between the artist and her work. Her Japanese sensibility remains deeply rooted in her practice, blending with Western approaches to perspective and colour, as well as with her own singular non-Western, non-Eastern vision.

In Katayama's paintings, different elements collide, adhere to one another, and form larger clusters. She captures the moment of coagulation—when particles come together—with force and intensity on the canvas. She identifies the subjects that catch her eye while they are still unfolding, then fixes these feelings precisely in her work. Her paintings might be described as "specimens of floating reality." A beautiful chaos emerges on the surface.

Following her 2024 exhibition, images such as a monster fish lurking in dark water, teeth attached to bone, a jewel submerged nearby them, a cicada awaiting death, and "Antique Queen"—part plant or jellyfish-esq, part brightly adorned figure—appear once again. These works unsettle the boundaries between life and death, beauty and ugliness, the natural and the artificial.

During a record-breaking heat of this summer, Katayama encountered the intense sunlight and vast golden landscapes of southern France and other parts of Europe. These impressions find expression in striking paintings rich with gold. By contrast, a series made in the often-cloudy light in East London's studio is restrained in saturation, beautifully capturing a sense of atmosphere and mood. Its blurred, abstract backgrounds are more than mere backdrops: they possess a presence of their own. Against them appear suspended animals, as if painted by Soutine or Rembrandt, alongside hares and short-lived cicadas. Gold and death, beauty and ugliness—all unfold within this landscape.

Katayama continues to resist settling into a single style. Her paintings hold the thrill of not knowing what might happen next: different landscapes, sensations, and images collide, mingle, and take on unexpected forms. This exhibition offers a vivid encounter with the distinctive world she has forged through her painting.

YUMI KATAYAMA. 1955 born Tokyo

EDUCATION

1978 Chelsea School of Art
1979-82 Goldsmith's College (BA Fine Art)
1982-83 Central School of Art (Post-graduate Printmaking) 1984-86 Royal College of Art (MA Printmaking)

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1982 One Woman Show (Cambridge Town Hall Gallery) 1983 Stowel's Trophy Exhibition (Royal Academy, London)
One Woman Show (Gallery 21, Tokyo)
1985 'Japanesque' (Mostyn Art Gallery, Llandudno)
One Woman Show (Village Voice, Paris)
London Open (Riverside Studios, London)
1986 International Print Biennale (Bradford)

1988 'Acid Mix', (Spitalfields, London)
Group Show (Nigel Greenwood Gallery, London) Four Painters (Galerie Wittenbrink, Munich)
1989 One Hundred Years of the Royal College of Art (Barbican Art Gallery)
1990 One Woman Show (Gallery Kato, Osaka)
Alistair Grant and Friends (Royal College of Art, London)
1991 Group Show (Anna Bornholt Gallery, London)
1992 One Woman Show (Galerie Wittenbrink, Munich)
1994 'Best Paint' (Galerie Wittenbrink, Munich)
1995 'White Out' (Curwen Gallery, London)
1996 Group Show (Gallery Art Dune, Hamamatsu)
1999 One Woman Show (Gallery M, London)
2000 Three Artists: New Prints (Flowers Graphics, London)
2002 Small is Beautiful (Flowers East, London)
2005 20 Artists (Gallery Art Dune, Hamamatsu)
2007 New Work (Studio Gallery, Beziers)
Sugai Vasarely Katayama (Gallery Art Dune, Hamamatsu)
2008 The Artists of Realities Nouvelles (Gallery Art Dune, Hamamatsu)
2011 One Woman Show (Gare Expo Association, Lamalou-les-Bains)
2013 One Woman Show (Gallery Alpha, Osaka)
One Woman Show (Gallery O2, Tokyo)
Chelsea Girls (Castello 2077, Venice)
2015 Edition Works Show (Gallery O2, Tokyo)
2018 One Woman Show (Gallery Diego, Tokyo)
2020 Spring Show (Bernard Jacobson Gallery, London)
2022 Yumi Katayama Prints, Recent Paintings (White Conduit Projects, London)
2024 'Japan Likes Pink' (Gallery O2, Kanazawa)
Croatian Pavilion (Venice Biennale)
Recent Paintings ((White Conduit Projects, London)
2025 Flat Volume (APT Gallery, Deptford)
New Prints (Gallery Diego, Tokyo)
Satellite, (Gallery O2, Kanazawa)

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Gallery Hours
Wed + Thu: 11am – 6pm
Fri 12pm – 5pm
Sat 12pm – 6pm
Sun 11am – 4pm
Nearest station ⊖ Angel