

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Press Release

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN ANNOUNCES REPRESENTATION OF JAPANESE ARTIST KEIICHI TANAAMI



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** is pleased to announce its representation of Tokyo-based artist Keiichi Tanaami in collaboration with Nanzuka, Tokyo. This news comes during the gallery's first solo exhibition with the artist, **Keiichi Tanaami: Manhattan Universe**, on view at 55 Great Jones Street through October 8, 2022.

Rising to prominence in the 1960s, Keiichi Tanaami (b. 1936, Tokyo) found early success early by creating images now deeply forged in the cultural landscape of both Japan and the United States. He is widely considered the progenitor of the Superflat movement, embodied today by Takashi Murakami and Yoshitomo Nara, among others. Tanaami's work first registered the influence of manga and the Neo-Dada movement in Japan, mingling with his childhood experience of the Second World War, a recurring motif via images of air raids, flares, and blasts of white light from the detonation of explosives. His paintings also reflect memories of *kamishibai*—public theater productions for Japanese children—that beguiled his mind and eye as a child.

Tanaami's artistic practice is likewise characterized by an intensive cross-pollination between modes of production—drawing, painting, collage, graphic illustration, film, and sculpture. In his large-scale works, American pop iconography is placed into complex conversation with historic forms of Japanese illustration, such as traditional *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing. Through these techniques, familiar American-born icons—Betty Boop,

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Western cowboys, and Superman, among others—are transformed into characters in the surreal and enveloping landscapes of the artist's imagination. It is Tanaami's fascination with American pop iconography and its collision with traditional Japanese imagery that explores the tension between disparate forces, such as the East and the West, violence and innocence, and commercial imagery and high art.

Adam Lindemann, founder of Venus Over Manhattan, remarked, "We are honored to be working with Keiichi Tanaami and our wonderful colleagues at Nanzuka Gallery, in a collaboration that, in and of itself, reflects the East-West dialogue so central to this artist's work. Keiichi is a visionary. Given the inventiveness and exuberance of his oeuvre, which has evolved over a six-plus decade career and encompasses every medium, it's no surprise that he revered in Japan—and by many younger artists beyond his home nation who are influenced by him. At Venus, he joins Peter Saul, Roy De Forest, and H.C. Westermann, among others whose fearless approach to figuration and tropes of both popular culture and art history have made them true superstars." Tanaami graduated from Musashino Art University in 1960. His work has been the subject of numerous international solo exhibitions at both public institutions and galleries, including recent presentations at Nanzuka Gallery, Tokyo; Gary Tatintsian Gallery, Moscow; Kawasaki City Museum, Kanagawa; Karma International, Zurich; and the Ikeda Museum of 20th Century Art, Shizuoka, among others.

Tanaami's work is held in the permanent collections of public institutions around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Kawasaki City Museum, Kanagawa; Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama; the Art Institute of Chicago; the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C; National galerie im Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; the Tokushima Modern Art Museum, Tokushima; Ikeda Museum of 20th Century Art, Ito; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, among many others. Tanaami lives and works in Tokyo, Japan.

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55 Great Jones Street., New York, NY 10012
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GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday – Saturday
10:00 am – 6:00 pm

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IMAGE CREDITS

Portrait of Keiichi Tanaami. Courtesy the artist, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, and Nanzuka, Tokyo.