

# SHOP



Taka Ishii  
Gallery

**“HANGA” Tomoo Gokita + Sanya Kantarovsky**

**Dates: May 7 – Jun 19, 2022**

**[Closed from May 24 – 29 during Art Basel Hong Kong 2022]**

**Location: SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong**

**By appointment only**

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SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to present “HANGA” Tomoo Gokita + Sanya Kantarovsky, from May 7 to Jun 19, 2022. The title “HANGA” means the art of printmaking in Japanese.

Both artists have been indulging in the painterly exploration of oneiric human figures, wilfully engaging or altering artistic or historical references in their own signature styles. Through various printmaking craftsmanship on different paper supports, all produced in limited editions, Gokita’s paintings in soft tones are transmitted in precise details, while Kantarovsky’s painted compositions replete with satire and sensations converse with the tradition of Edo-period woodblock prints. We invite you to take this chance to view the masterful printmaking techniques and their dialogues with the prominent body of works of the artists.

As varied as his artistic resources spanning from music, magazines to personal encounters, **Tomoo Gokita’s** oeuvre comprises not only paintings but also prints, record covers and apparels among others. Whether in monochrome or pastels, Gokita’s works are characterised by his gradient hues and velvety brushstrokes, depicting psychological characters that exist between abstraction and figuration.

In an effort to faithfully transmit Gokita’s canvases into prints, two distinct techniques were employed: in “MAE E NARAE” and “Oscalypso”, the original paintings were rendered through silkscreens, a method in which ink or paint is pushed through a fine mesh screen; whereas in “Housewife”, the prints were created as stencilled pulp paintings, where ink is applied over pulp paper with cut-out shapes. Each sheet of screen or pulp paper finely contours imagery based on the colours dissected from the originals, while preserving the movements of Gokita’s brushworks. The contrast between the stillness of the prints, which were hand-executed by printmakers layer after layer, and the seemingly moving paints on the surface, creates a unique viewing experience and a collectable work in refreshing textures.

On the other hand, **Sanya Kantarovsky** developed a series of ink and watercolour studies during a residency at the Troedsson Villa in Nikko in 2018. Closely considering the Edo-period Ukiyo-e prints that draw on Kabuki and Noh theatre, and works by masters such as Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Kantarovsky created a set of dark and satirical pictorial drama titled “Paradise”, akin to his works that often allude to humanist paintings and caricature. The compositions were then translated into an edition of Ukiyo-e prints by the Adachi Hanga printmakers, who strive to keep alive the Japanese woodcut printing technique, in which a woodblock is carved, inked, and pressed against a piece of washi-paper to create images. Provoked by the confrontations between the characters, the grisly and haptic themes are transmuted through the subtlest lines and colours, scrubbed and veiled with a persistent restlessness.

This exhibition marks the first presentation of Kantarovsky at the Hong Kong space. The Russia-born, New York-based artist’s practice revolves around painting, taking aim at imagined human subjects, which are often entangled in a variety of discomforts, both psychological and physical. This indulgence is marked with a wry self-reflexivity, acknowledge the futility of faithfully transmuting lived experience.

This exhibition is in held in collaboration with T&Y Projects, BLUM & POE, Pace Prints, and the Adachi Institute of Woodcut Prints.

**Tomoo Gokita** was born in 1969 in Tokyo where he is based. In the late 1990s, Gokita received acclaim for drawings made with charcoal and ink on paper. His first book *Lingerie Wrestling* was published in 2000. Starting with a show in New York in 2006, Gokita has exhibited his works in solo exhibitions internationally. In 2012, his work was featured in “The Unseen Relationship: Form and Abstraction” at the Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art. In 2014, “THE GREAT CIRCUS”, a solo exhibition of Gokita’s works, was held at the same museum. In April 2018, “PEEKABOO” was held at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery followed by “Get Down” held at Dallas Contemporary, Texas in June 2021. His first solo exhibition with the gallery was held in 2008 and also “Variety Show” (2012), “Holy Cow” (2017) and “MOO” (2020). His books and exhibition catalogues include *Shuffle Tetsudō Shōka* [shuffle railroad songs] (Tennen Bunko, 2010); *777* (888 Books, 2015); *Holy Cow* (Taka Ishii Gallery, 2017); *PEEKABOO* (Tokyo Opera City Cultural Foundation, 2018); and *MOO* (Taka Ishii Gallery, 2021).

**Sanya Kantarovsky** was born in Moscow, Russia in 1982 and currently lives and works in New York. He studied painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, RI and received his MFA at the University of California, Los Angeles. Kantarovsky has presented a solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2018). Recent group exhibitions include Baltic Triennial 13 “GIVE UP THE GHOST”, Vilnius (2018); “The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin” at the Jewish Museum, New York (2017); “The Eccentrics”, at the Sculpture Center, New York (2016); and his curatorial project “Sputterances” at Metro Pictures, New York (2017). Other important presentations include “Happy Soul” at LAXART in Los Angeles (2014); “You are Not an Evening” at Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst in Bremen (2013); “What Were You Expecting, Mr. Milquetoast, a Plot?” at Badischer Kunstverein in Karlsruhe (2014); and “Apricot Juice”, with Ieva Misčeviūtė, at Studio Voltaire in London (2015). A comprehensive monograph entitled “No Joke” was co-published by Studio Voltaire and Koenig Books in 2016. Kantarovsky’s works belong to several prestigious museum collections, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; the Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Tate Modern, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York among others.



Tomoo Gokita  
 “MAE E NARAE”, 2021  
 Silkscreen on paper  
 49 x 41 cm  
 © Tomoo Gokita  
 Courtesy of T&Y Projects



Sanya Kantarovsky  
 “Curtain”, 2019  
 Woodblock print on washi paper  
 40 x 29.5 cm  
 © Sanya Kantarovsky  
 Courtesy of the Adachi Institute of Woodcut Prints

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