



# Leiko Ikemura

## Our Planet

### Earth & Stars

2019.1.18 Fri. – 4.1 Mon.

The National Art Center, Tokyo (Kokuritsu-Shin-Bijutsukan),  
Special Exhibition Gallery 1E

Closed: Tuesdays

Opening hours: 10:00–18:00 (10:00–20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)

※ Last admission 30 minutes before closing

Organized by the National Art Center, Tokyo; Kunstmuseum Basel

With the support of the Embassy of Switzerland in Japan

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## Our Planet

Earth & Stars

press release 1

### Exhibition Overview

We are pleased to present this large-scale solo exhibition by Leiko Ikemura, who has worked extensively in Europe and is widely acclaimed internationally.

Leiko Ikemura went to Spain in the 1970s, then to Switzerland, then since the early 1980s has been active in Germany. Ikemura works in a wide range of media, including painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, prints, and photography. This versatile use of diverse media points to the unique artistic task Ikemura has set for herself, in terms of expressing infinite possibilities still invisible yet latent in the creative process. Through approximately 210 works, this exhibition traces the arc of Ikemura's determined approach to this seemingly impossible challenge.

Ikemura started painting in earnest while living in Switzerland, then moved to Germany in 1983. At the time painting was dominated by the Neo-Expressionist movement, in which emotions were conveyed through powerful colors and shapes. Ikemura also immersed herself in experimentation with this mode, in fiercely expressive paintings addressing the difficulties of being a woman and a stranger, and drawings with richly varied lines that brim with humor and humanity. After this body of work, since the 1990s she has dealt with themes such as small creatures and innocent girls, mothers and children, human figures merging with trees and mountains, and mythical primeval scenes that evoke birth and death.

Contemporary society, founded on the control and organization of people and nature, is continually being disrupted not only by natural disasters but also by all sorts of human-made calamities such as nuclear accidents. Ikemura's ephemeral girls floating in empty spaces, mothers with children (a theme rarely depicted directly in contemporary art) and small fantastic hybrid creatures blending into the natural environment, convey a powerful philosophy of acceptance and embrace of the diverse beings born into this world, or to be born in the future, just as they are. The introspective world of her work – quiet, modest, and immersed deeply in its own distinctive vision – is in this sense keenly critical of the world and society surrounding us today. This vision rewards the viewer richly with revelations that only Ikemura can convey with a keen sensitivity nurtured in the very different soils of Japan and Europe.

Her latest large solo exhibition, *Leiko Ikemura: Transfiguration* was held at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and Mie Prefectural Art Museum in 2011, and the artist says that since then she has become more consciously engaged with society. The current exhibition is organized as a group of 16 installations that retrace the trajectory of Ikemura's unique practice and explorations into the essence of a society in crisis, and deliver the viewer multifaceted vicarious experiences. The climax of the exhibition is a room of large landscape paintings presenting a comprehensive vision of the artist's recent worldview in expansive, mythical spaces. We think that this exhibition will serve as a portal for many viewers to see into and think about the vast world that lies inside these landscapes.

This exhibition was organized jointly with the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland. A replication of the Tokyo exhibition is scheduled to travel to the Kunstmuseum Basel in spring and summer 2019.

## Exhibition Highlights

### 1. Ikemura's largest solo exhibition yet

A gallery totaling 2,000 square meters and an outdoor exhibition area will be used to present approximately 210 works. These include works in all the media Ikemura has used thus far, such as painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, printmaking, photography, and video. Ikemura is also an abundantly talented writer. Examples of her poetry will be displayed here and there throughout the venue.

### 2. 16 installations

The exhibition consists of 16 installations, based on 16 themes that Ikemura has been exploring. A map is to be distributed to viewers to guide them around these installations. The structuring of the show was supervised by the architect Philipp von Matt, who has collaborated with Ikemura many times before.

### 3. Early drawings and paintings

Ikemura studied at the University of Seville, Faculty of Fine Arts in Spain, moved to Switzerland in 1979 and became fully active as a contemporary artist. This exhibition includes about 40 early drawings and large Expressionist paintings from Switzerland, a significant site of the artist's development. These early works provide glimpses into the themes that have consistently concerned Ikemura until today.

### 4. Recent works in a new mode

In recent years, Ikemura's paintings have once again grown larger. Figures of people and animals melt into these mysterious scenes evocative of traditional East Asian landscape painting. Her latest work, *Sinus Spring*, is executed in bright, warm colors vividly conveying the thrill of life reawakening during the spring season. We are sure that viewers will enjoy an experience of physical and mental communion with these immersive landscapes filling the spacious gallery.

### 5. A flow of associated images

In Ikemura's works, people, animals, trees and mountains shift shapes and there is a repeated process of images flowing into one another. These flexible images seem to change appearance in response to the memories and mental state of the viewer. In this exhibition, viewers will not only vicariously experience Ikemura's vision but also be able to weave webs of images in their own imaginations.

# Leiko Ikemura

## Our Planet

Earth & Stars

press release 3

### Exhibition Structure

This exhibition consists of 16 sections, each of which constitutes a separate installation in its own right.

#### 1. Prologue



*Circle of Life*  
1977, etching on paper, 29×26.5cm  
Collection of the artist

#### 2. Origin



*Skier on Maloja Lake*  
1990, tempera on canvas, 120×94cm  
Toyota Municipal Museum of Art

#### 3. Organic and Inorganic



*Mother with Miko*  
1995, terracotta, glazed  
91×55×55cm  
Private collection, Germany



*Bride*  
1990, terracotta, glazed  
97.5×45×31cm  
Collection of the artist

#### 4. Realm of Drawings



*Study for Annunciation*  
1985, charcoal on paper,  
42×29.8cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel- gift of  
Dieter Koeplin, Basel



*Untitled*  
1985, charcoal on paper, 20.9×29.7cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel- anonymous gift

#### 5. Girls



*Standing with Miko in Yellow*  
1995/96, oil on canvas, 83.2×62.5cm  
Collection of the artist

#### 6. Amazon



*Amazona*  
2015/18, inkjet print  
Courtesy of the artist

# Leiko Ikemura

## Our Planet

Earth & Stars

press release 4

### 7. War



*Kamikaze*  
1980, acrylic on paper, 120×90 cm  
Collection Christoph Schenker, Switzerland

### 9. Mountains



*Fuji Face*  
2013, terracotta, glazed, 42×87×70 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Kenji Taki Gallery, Nagoya

### 11. Trees



*Red Tree*  
2013, tempera on jute, 70.5×50.5 cm  
Collection of the artist

### 8. Usagi Kannon / 10. Garden



Installation view of *Usagi Kannon* (2014, patinated bronze),  
St. Moritz Art Masters, 2014

### 12. Flame



*Haruko I*  
2017, tempera on jute, 120×120 cm  
Private collection, USA  
Courtesy of Jim Murren, Chairmann of MGM Resorts



# Leiko Ikemura

## Our Planet

Earth & Stars

press release 5

### 13. Horizon



*Ocean I (Between Horizons)*  
2000/01, oil on jute, 120×160cm  
Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan, Lichtenstein



*Ocean II (Between Horizons)*  
2000/01, oil on jute, 130×160cm  
Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan, Lichtenstein



*Ocean III (Between Horizons)*  
2000/01, oil on jute, 120×160cm  
Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan, Lichtenstein

### 14. Memento Mori



*Memento Mori III*  
2012, terracotta, glazed, 15×45.3×19.5cm  
Courtesy of the artist and ShugoArts, Tokyo

### 15. Cosmic Landscape



*Genesis*  
2015, tempera on jute, 190×290cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie karsten Greve, St. Moritz, Paris, Cologne



*Sinus Spring*  
2018, pigment on jute, 190×290cm  
Collection of the artist

### 16. Epilogue



*Trees out of Head*  
2015, terracotta, glazed, 30×37×24cm  
Private collection, Germany  
Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz

# Leiko Ikemura

## Our Planet

Earth & Stars

press release 6

### Overview

Exhibition name: *Leiko Ikemura Our Planet - Earth & Stars*

Date: January 18 (Fri.)–April 1 (Mon.), 2019

Closed: Tuesdays

Hours: 10:00–18:00 \*10:00–20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays \*Last admission 30 minutes before closing

Venue: The National Art Center, Tokyo (Kokuritsu-Shin-Bijutsukan),  
Special Exhibition Gallery 1E

Organized by: The National Art Center, Tokyo; Kunstmuseum Basel

With the support of: Embassy of Switzerland in Japan

Admission (tax included)

General: Adults 1,000 yen/College students 500 yen

Advance/Group: Adults 800 yen/College students 300 yen

\*Free admission on February 24 (Sun.), 2019 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Emperor's enthronement.

\*Visitors who are under 18, including high school students, will be admitted for free.

\*Disabled persons (along with one assistant) will be admitted for free upon presenting a Disabled Person's Booklet or an equivalent form of government-issued ID.

\*Advance tickets on sale from November 14 (Wed.), 2018–January 17 (Thu.), 2019.

\*Tickets, both Advance and General, are available through the National Art Center, Tokyo (open days only), ONLINE TICKETS(e-tix), and Lawson Ticket (L code 34610). Service charges may apply. (These services are only available in Japanese.)

\*Group tickets (for groups of a minimum of 20 people) can only be purchased at the National Art Center, Tokyo.

\*Visitors who present a ticket or ticket stub from another exhibition currently underway at the National Art Center, Tokyo, the Suntory Museum or the Mori Art Museum (the three facilities that make up the Roppongi Art Triangle) will be eligible for the group discount.

\*Visitors 65 and over (I.D. with proof of age required) who present a ticket stub from the Artist Associations' Exhibition held at the National Art Center, Tokyo concurrently with *Leiko Ikemura Our Planet - Earth & Stars* will be admitted to the exhibition at the college student group rate.

\*Students, faculty and staff, or "Campus Members" can apply for group discounts.

The National Art Center, Tokyo (Kokuritsu-Shin-Bijutsukan)

7-22-2 Roppongi Minato-ku Tokyo 106-8558 Japan

URL <http://www.nact.jp>

Twitter: @NACT\_PR /Facebook: @nact.jp /Instagram: @thenationalartcentertokyo

Access:

Tokyo Metro Chiyoda Line, Nogizaka Station, direct access from Exit 6

Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line, Roppongi Station, approximately 5-minute walk from Exit 4a

Toei Oedo Subway Line, Roppongi Station, approximately 4-minute walk from Exit 7

\*There is no parking lot at the Center.

Related events

Information on events will be posted as soon as details are decided.

For the latest information, please visit the National Art Center, Tokyo website.

Concurrent exhibitions

21st "DOMANI: The Art of Tomorrow" Exhibition

Showcasing Participants from the Agency for Cultural Affairs Program of Overseas Study for Upcoming Artists

Date: January 23 (Wed.)–March 3 (Sun.), 2019

Venue: The National Art Center, Tokyo (Kokuritsu-Shin-Bijutsukan), Special Exhibition Gallery 2E

Press Inquiries

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