

## **Yosuke Ueno - *Beautiful Noise***

May 23rd - June 13th

**Thinkspace (Los Angeles)** - is pleased to present *Beautiful Noise*, the gallery's fourth solo exhibition for Japanese artist Yosuke Ueno. A self-taught painter, Ueno has been creating fantastic worlds and characters as long as he can remember. Highly stylized and beautifully imaginative, his works are surreal and emotional; an alternate reality expressed through a quasi-mythological orbit of his own making. Like tightly knit universes unto themselves, his bizarre and wonderfully unhinged worlds feature a recurring cast of characters and repeated motifs. An intensely emotive painter who, by his own admission, allows his cathartic approach to dictate the development of his works as they're made, Ueno's take on pop surrealism is at times explosive and at others meditative, but is consistently seeking the reconciliation of darkness and whimsy.

Inspired by Japanese graphic cultures such as manga and anime, and drawing on the unique stylization of Japanese street fashion, Ueno's graphic paintings are galvanized by his love of visual culture. Channeling both anger and optimism in the creation of his creatures and surreal landscapes, he seeks the transformation of the negative by invoking hope and positivity through his imagery, even when it betrays trauma and distress in equal parts. Ueno approaches painting as a communicative conduit, and as something powerfully invested with the capacity to make people feel. Because of this implicit responsibility, he has actively sought love and redemption in his imagery rather than indulging in destruction and sadness. Painting is a process of discovery for Ueno, one that he likens to scientific experimentation and unknown variables. He allows his paintings to evolve intuitively, not knowing what the end result will be.

His interest in striking a balance between light and dark imagery is immediately apparent in some of his more recent works. These manage to reconcile the suggestion of sweetness and innocence with the presence of something more sinister and foreboding. Wide-eyed, plushy, rainbow-colored characters are offset by skulls and abject anatomical references, and cotton candy landscapes are punctuated by the suggestion of something harder and menacing, or deeply melancholic. Despite a recurring invocation of love and hope that verges at times on a plea, the works clearly convey the coexistence of often irreconcilable oppositions. Ueno has spoken openly about how his work and imagery were greatly affected by the earthquake, and resulting Tsunami, that devastated Japan in 2011; an event that has left an indelible trauma on its culture. His work, following this tragedy, became less about his omission of negativity, and more about his attempt to summon love and hope in its midst.

The multiplicity of characters in Ueno's works, and there are over a thousand, hails from the artist's connection to Japanese Shinto; the polytheistic spiritual tradition in Japan that reveres the greatness in all small things in nature, and seeks the presence of the divine in the minute. In this belief system, there are millions of individual god figures, a veritable plethora of characters and personified energies for even the smallest of natural elements. Each individual part is as important as the whole. This spiritual pluralism is woven throughout Ueno's work, as the artist builds complex symbolic systems, holistic worlds and recurring metaphors to reinvent a personal spiritual iconography.

Yosuke Ueno's works, though beautiful, contemporary and graphic, are loaded with a symbolism that betrays the artist's deeper spiritual connection to making. Giving his imagination free rein to create on impulse, Ueno builds a surreal cosmos with infinite possibilities.

**Ariel DeAndrea - *Chasing the Current***

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Concurrently on view in the Thinkspace project room are new works by Ariel DeAndrea in *Chasing the Current*. Working primarily in oils on linen, DeAndrea's paintings are beautifully serene expanses of water, gently travelled by delicate paper birds. By focusing on the recurring symbol of the origami paper crane, a talismanic object she reiterates in several aquatic contexts, the artist emphasizes the power and beauty of its unassuming simplicity. In a precisely realistic and understated style, DeAndrea renders the paper birds in a variety of patterns and colors, and stages them in open fields of rippling water. DeAndrea creates a stunning repertoire of images by exploring the subtle movement and variety in these repetitions. Not unlike hazy dreamscapes, her works feel intensely personal and heavy with meaning, conveying a feeling of arrested calm that borders on the uncanny at times. We are left with the feeling of having witnessed something simultaneously quiet and intensely poignant.

These inanimate objects become vessels for meaning that far exceeds their tangible significance. Vulnerable and beautiful, something ephemeral haunts the impermanence of the fragile paper bird. Finding resilience and beauty in small, humble things is a concept DeAndrea derives from her interest in the Japanese spiritual tradition of Shinto; a tradition that upholds the spiritual value of nature. By placing the little paper likenesses back into a depiction of the natural world, DeAndrea offers a powerful visual metaphor for a spiritual communion with nature.