

ARTFORUM

“The Way of Painting”

TOKYO OPERA CITY ART GALLERY

3 Chome-20-2 Nishishinjuku

July 12, 2014–September 21, 2014



Shimon Minamikawa, *4 paintings, two legs*(detail), 2013, water paint on board, 6 x 15'.

Against the ever-debated status of contemporary painting (“zombie formalism,” etc.), the twenty-four artists in this exhibition make one thing collectively clear: There’s simply no stopping them. The artistic arguments they support are various and decentered, but their works manifest tendencies that might generally be described as, for instance, “formalism meets Pop” or “neo-Surrealism,” while also displaying and negotiating conceptual challenges of the post-medium condition, the nature of the uncanny, and a reverence for manga. As the works link to one another through subtle formal and material dialogues, the featured artists remix a broad vocabulary of painting discourses, developing their own aesthetic through differences and variations in our digital age of copy-and-paste.

Shimon Minamikawa’s *4 paintings, two legs*, 2013, comprises two billboard-like structures: Four piercing neon-pink panels open the exhibition and are echoed by a silver sister work in the middle of the show. Meanwhile, Shinichiro Kano’s paintings depict enigmatic games of chance operations (as in *plot [12615]*, 2011). In Yui Yaegashi’s series of small canvases, it feels as though an abstract informational interface gazes back, while the semiabstract abandoned landscapes of Asuka Yokono’s works unfold through reduced strokes via a pulling effect that evokes a black hole (see *curve*, 2014).

Facing the revival of 1960s-era Japanese art in Japan and abroad (as with recent exhibitions at MoMA and the Guggenheim in New York), the exhibition opens up perspectives on painting’s legacy in this country. More important, it raises consciousness of a new generation tackling often-impenetrable images in our mediated, everyday reality.

— Gabrielle Schaad