

Fumi Imamura: The Moon Garden, Their Garden
Curated by Julia Tarasyuk

Private View – Thursday, 8th June
Exhibition dates – Friday 9th June to Friday 21st July

Human beings don't have the ability to change their body whereas plants can grow branches and spread their leaves. When I try to express my own body and mind, I feel that I can be much freer to express myself by borrowing the form of a plant than the form of a human being.¹

- Fumi Imamura

Lyndsey Ingram is proud to present the first UK solo exhibition of the Japanese artist Fumi Imamura (b.1982) featuring 40 new works. The artist uses collage and watercolour on paper to create glossy, crinkly floral works. Her delicate, multilayered, subtly coloured creations resemble dried flowers pressed into the pages of a book, but often on a wall-sized scale, like a relief or mural. These works on semi-transparent glassine paper feature botanical motifs inspired by the landscape of her native Aichi province in central Japan, as well as by Japanese folklore. She arranges meticulously crafted floral elements in surreal shapes borrowed from nature to express her own body and mind and imagine a world with an organic sense of freedom.

Significantly, Imamura's plant forms depict both the branching, budding, insect-nibbled blossoms and leaves, along with their roots, which the artist renders as carefully as the flowers. Echoing to the ethos of Japanese crafts, Imamura's works speak to the beauty of the cracked, the faded, and the lovingly preserved.

The artist grew up immersed in her grandparents' garden, imagining the world of plants changing through seasons and various creatures inhabiting it. When she arranges her botanical works, she sees it as planting a garden. Each floral piece added to a blank paper brings out an element of her personality. For Imamura, these gardens offer a space to think about the relationship between the artist and others.

For her exhibition at Lyndsey Ingram, Imamura will transform the gallery into a garden installation made of her works, which will spread across the walls and hang from the ceiling. Lyndsey Ingram comments: 'I am very moved by Fumi's work – there is an ethereal, otherworldly quality to her intricately made and beautifully arranged compositions. The way she makes her work is totally unique and the form it takes is like nothing I have seen before. The result is something that manages to be both exceptionally delicate and at the same time undeniably powerful.'

Her new body of work at the gallery is inspired by tales of other worlds in the ancient legends of two Japanese folk heroines: the real life Princess Chujo and mythical Princess Kaguya. Princess Chujo – often called the Japanese Cinderella and the mother of embroidery – escaped from her stepmother who tried to kill her to become a nun at the Taima-dera Temple. There she made the famous Tiama Mandala that depicted a heavenly world – apparently aided by the Buddha to weave it with Lotus thread in a single day. Princess Kaguya, the heroine of the Japanese epic The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, is a creature from the moon who is discovered as a baby inside the stalk of a glowing bamboo plant. After she grows, her beauty attracts five suitors seeking her hand in marriage, whom she turns away by challenging them each with an impossible task. At the tale's end, Princess Kaguya reveals her celestial origins and returns to the moon. As the artist points out, the heaven pictured in the Princess Chujo's mandala and the moon of Princess Kaguya are far away from the reality of the modern world but they always exist alongside us, as our lives are guided by the phases of the moon.

¹ Artist quote taken from Fumi Imamura's interview with curator Julia Tarasyuk, IKEBANA projects

Imamura has always felt a longing for this world of other creatures. In her new works at Lyndsey Ingram, Imamura creates what she sees as a garden of images in the form of flowers and mandalas. Flowers and insects in Imamura's motifs can be seen as creatures from another world. Yet despite being completely different in appearance and body structure from humans, they are more connected to the universe we all share. As the artist has commented: 'A plant that lives only with its visceral organs is very simply connected to the world and does not question it. I sometimes think that this is a happiness that people have forgotten.'²

Work notes



"Mandala in The Moonlight"

This work is the centerpiece for the exhibition. Flowers and grasses are blooming inside an ellipse. This form has been inspired by *Keman*, a Buddhist ornament, as well as the structure of the human body. This shape and style of work is very characteristic of Imamura's practice. She likes to portray the image of the world expanding from inside. There are also many insects flying among the plants and flowers. She created this lively and happy moonlit garden as a large interconnected plant.

² Artist quote taken from Fumi Imamura's interview with curator Julia Tarasyuk, IKEBANA projects



"One Flower (Plum Blossom) "
 "Plum Blossom Keman"
 "One Flower (Plum)"

The image of a plum and cherry blossom (sakura) has great significance in Japanese culture. These works represent a happy and gentle world where the artist feels at ease and wants to share this feeling with others.



"One Flower (Yellow Chrysanthemum)"
 "One Flower (Purple Flower)"
 "Red Flower and Insects"
 "Circle and Root (Yellow)"

For Imamura, the scale of her botanical structures is very important. The large scale of these mythical flowers that don't exist in nature truly envelops her. She loves spreading these sheets of paper out in her tatami room and layering botanical elements on top. There is something therapeutic in this process and even her cats like to lie on them.



"Two Flowers and Winged Insects in the Neighbour's Garden (Green and Pink)"

"Two Flowers in the Neighbour's Garden (pink)"

These works have multiple layers; flowers are pasted on different sheets of paper. The flowers in adjacent gardens bloom at the same time but are separated by the boundary of the garden. If we compare our relationship with others to a garden, the boundary of the garden is necessary for our sense of self, but it also can create division and mutual incomprehension. However, flowers have no awareness of the boundaries of the garden, and can grow as they please. Just as flowers and insects move between various gardens that are separated from each other, Imamura believes it is important to have a heart that is considerate to others, even when there are boundaries in relationships between people and between countries.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT LYNDSEY INGRAM

Founded in 2016, Lyndsey Ingram is located in a converted Victorian stable at 20 Bourdon Street in London's Mayfair. With over twenty years of expertise in post-war and contemporary prints and work on paper - in particular 20th century British and American masters - the gallery continues to look forward and now represents artists working in all mediums, with a programme that includes painting, photography and sculpture.

Lyndsey Ingram stages exhibitions that combine a deep knowledge and interest in important historic, graphic material, with work by contemporary and emerging artists. The gallery participates in major international art fairs, including The Armory Show New York, Frieze Masters, the London Original Print Fair, Masterpiece London and Untitled San Francisco.

For information on the gallery, its artists and exhibitions please see www.lyndseyingram.com.

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