

Joshua Liner Gallery

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For immediate release and listing:

AIKO
Love Monster
April 18–May 16, 2009
Opening reception, Galleries I & II: Saturday, April 18, 6–9 PM

New York, NY. April 2, 2009 -- Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *Love Monster*, an exhibition of new mixed-media works by the Tokyo-born, Brooklyn-based artist AIKO. *Love Monster* is AIKO's first solo outing at the gallery and her largest show to date.

As a founding member of the artist collective FAILE, formed in 1999, AIKO helped fuel the current wave of global contemporary street art with spontaneous wheatpastings and stenciling in numerous world capitals. The artist launched a solo career in 2006 with works on canvas that incorporate collage, stenciling, brushwork, spray paint, and serigraphy. This bricolage technique perfectly suits AIKO's eclectic practice—a voracious mash-up of Japanese and American pop culture, including comics, children's book illustrations, advertising, classic movie posters, and soft-core pornography.

AIKO draws inspiration from the urban street, Kawaii culture ("cute" in Japanese), and globalized depictions of female sexuality. While a Media Studies student at New School University in New York, she hid her art in plain sight by wheatpasting images throughout the city. It was then that she developed a signature synthesis of commercial graphics, sexual imagery, and the vocabularies of seduction and fantasy found in print, film, and electronic media. The implied decay of the graffiti-style works reads not only as autobiography but also as a subtle breakdown of surrounding structures. *Welcome to the Planet of Lady A*, for example, features a provocative soft-porn image silkscreened onto a window, all elements reclaimed from cultural and literal junk heaps.

Like Warhol in the '70s, AIKO embraces silkscreen techniques as the ultimate (and seemingly timeless) signifier of the contemporary. *Madam Butterfly* elegantly combines a reproduced newspaper image with collaged decorative motifs, masking and transforming the identity of the painting's female subject. In the show's title work, *Love Monster*, the artist layers nude nymphets holding spray paint with the recurring tags "King" and "Knights" to capture not only the relational aesthetics of the day but also contemporary culture's relative ethics. Here and elsewhere, her visual language borrows from fairytales and pulp fiction—virgins and vixens—exploring themes of romance, morality, and religion. Yet AIKO's energetic works eschew judgment in favor of something more generative, a pop-culture phoenix rising from the real and virtual ashes of the urban street.

AIKO (Nakagawa)'s debut solo exhibition, *Shut up & Look*, took place at Brooklynite Gallery in 2008. Selected group exhibitions include: in 2008, *Heart & Soul*, Alphabeta, Queens, NY; *Time Changes*, Calm & Punk Gallery, Tokyo; *PINK AIKO: Brick Ladies of NYC*, Ad Hoc Art, Brooklyn; and in 2007, *Heart Throb*, Merry Karnowsky Gallery, Los Angeles; *Bestial*, Iguapop Gallery, Barcelona, and *Eleven*, Leonard Street Gallery, London.

Joshua Liner established Joshua Liner Gallery in New York City's Chelsea district in 2008. Building on the success of his former, Philadelphia-based Lineage Gallery, Joshua Liner's Chelsea space introduces an exciting roster of young and emerging artists from the West and East coasts, Asia, and Europe.

For more information, please visit www.joshualinergallery.com, or contact Tim Strazza at 212.244.7415 or tim@joshualinergallery.com.



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1. *Madam Butterfly* Mixed media on canvas 56 x 78 in. 2009
2. *Welcome to the Planet of Lady A* Mixed media on found window 36 x 28 in. 2009
3. *Love Monster* Mixed media on canvas 66 x 62 in. 2008