

Miya Ando

Kumoji (Cloud Path / A Road Traversed By Birds And The Moon)



Installation view, Miya Ando, *Kumoji (Cloud Path / A Road Traversed By Birds And The Moon)*, 2022. Kavi Gupta | Washington Blvd. Fl. 2

September 03–November 05

Opening Reception September 24, 4–7 PM

Kavi Gupta presents *Kumoji (Cloud Path / A Road Traversed By Birds And The Moon)*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Miya Ando. Expressive of the transitory and immaterial quality of clouds at night, the exhibition spotlights nature's impermanence and interdependence, concepts also prevalent in Ando's recent solo exhibitions at the Noguchi Museum, Queens, NY; Katzen Arts Center, Washington DC; and Asia Society Texas Center, Houston, TX; and her recent group exhibitions at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (with Marina Abramović, Marilyn Minter, Ólafur Eliasson, and Ai Weiwei); Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

Ando lived her formative years between a Buddhist

temple in Japan and the mountains of Northern California. The unique vantage point expressed in *Kumoji (Cloud Path / A Road Traversed By Birds And The Moon)* reflects her experiences as an artist occupying the margins between Japanese and Western culture.

Ando's circular night cloud paintings read like memories—never static, fluctuating endlessly depending on the position of the viewer and the available light. Based on actual night clouds Ando photographed in a variety of locations over the past three years, their ephemeral qualities illustrate the sentiment behind the Japanese phrase “mono no aware,” roughly translated as “the pathos of things.” Beauty fades; strength dissolves into frailty. Everything follows this rule; it is the vernacular

of nature.

“Something becomes more beautiful and sublime the more impermanent it is,” Ando says. “There’s a psychological shift that occurs when one recognizes the pathos of falling cherry blossoms, or the moon going through phases, or a passing cloud.”

Kuu, a large-scale, three-panel painting made from reclaimed redwood and silver nitrate, borrows its name from a Japanese word of particular importance to Buddhism, which holds multiple meanings, including sky, void, and emptiness. To create this work, Ando first charred the redwood using a traditional Japanese fire-proofing technique called *shou sugi ban* which requires burning the surface to protect the inner layers of wood from future damage.

“I char the wood because it dematerializes the object,” she says. “The silver nitrate creates a mirror. It becomes like water. A reflection is there and not there; it is material and immaterial.”

The overlap of emptiness and substance is further elucidated in *Mizukagami (Water Mirror, or The Shadow Of The Moon Reflected In Water)*, a hammered steel floor sculpture that evokes the fugitive phenomenon of the moon reflecting on the surface of a pond. Like so many of Ando’s paintings, and like the moon itself, this sculpture seems to emit light despite lacking any source of illumination—a momentary articulation of both presence and absence.

“When you see the moon you see the light of the sun,” Ando says. “That reflected light is reflected again when you see the moon on water.”

Most ephemeral, perhaps, of all of the bodies of work featured in *Kumoji (Cloud Path / A Road Traversed By Birds And The Moon)* is Ando’s new series of paintings depicting stars, rain, and the phases of the moon,

made with natural indigo dye and pure silver powder on mulberry paper. As Ando notes, “Indigo is like a little clock of coloration. The longer it touches a surface, the deeper and darker blue the surface becomes.”

Like the temporary carriers of yesterday’s light they depict, these paintings memorialize and measure that most fleeting of natural phenomena—the passage of time.

Ando’s work has recently been the subject of solo exhibitions at The Asia Society Museum, Houston; The Noguchi Museum, New York; Savannah College Of Art and Design Museum, Savannah; The Nassau County Museum, Roslyn Harbor; and The American University Museum, Washington DC. Her work has also been included in recent group exhibitions at The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Haus Der Kunst, Munich; The Bronx Museum; and The Queens Museum of Art, NY. Ando’s work is included in the public collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); The Nassau County Museum, NY; The Detroit Institute of Arts, MI; The Luft Museum, Amberg, Germany; Socrates Sculpture Park, NY; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, AZ; The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA; Jean Paul Najjar Foundation Museum Collection, Dubai UAE; and The Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA; among many other public and private collections. Among Ando’s many acclaimed public commissions is *9/11 MEMORIAL (SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL)*, a thirty-foot-tall sculpture built from World Trade Center steel installed in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Zaha Hadid Aquatic Centre, London, UK. Ando holds a bachelor’s degree in East Asian Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, studied East Asian Studies at Yale University and Stanford University, and apprenticed with a Master Metalsmith in Japan.



Miya Ando, *Kuu (Sky/Void/Mirror) Shou Sugi Ban* December 20, 21, 22, 2021. Charred reclaimed redwood, silver nitrate, 60 x 180 in.