

PRESS RELEASE

**AKI KURODA**  
**MIDNIGHT SPAGHETTI**  
CURATED BY YOYO MAEGHT

MAY 7 - JUNE 12, 2022

OPENING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, MAY 7<sup>th</sup>, 6-9 PM

RICHARD  
TAITTINGER  
GALLERY

154 LUDLOW STREET NEW YORK, NY 10002  
TUESDAY - SUNDAY 11 AM - 7PM

T +1 (212) 634-7154  
@richardtaittingergallery



MIDNIGHT SPAGHETTI, 2017, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 39% X 39% IN (100H X 100W CM).

RICHARD TAITTINGER GALLERY is pleased to present **MIDNIGHT SPAGHETTI**, the second New York solo exhibition with world-renowned Japanese artist **Aki Kuroda** (黒田アキ) (b. 1944). Consisting of 26 paintings and 1 NFT produced between 2000 and 2022, this new exhibition demonstrates the reverence simplicity of Kuroda's work through its color palette and technique. **MIDNIGHT SPAGHETTI** is curated by **Yoyo Maeght** whose friendship with Kuroda has lasted 40 years since the artist's first exhibition in France - *Les Ténèbres* - at Galerie Maeght in Paris in 1980.

Born in 1944 in Kyoto, Kuroda is an artist known for espousing chaos as he works with diverse mixed media with various perspectives at play. For Kuroda, there are no limitations nor rules when conceiving his art; he has worked in performance, literature, and ballet set design. As candid conversation between East and West, Kuroda plays with space and time, merging the past, present, and future to create a timeless interpretation of contemporary art intersected with modern mythology and cosmology.

As a symbolic approach, Kuroda utilizes the visual repetition of intimate characters, including his famous

bunny seen in the piece **RABBIT** (2015), faces seen in the piece **MEDUSA** (2019), floral arrangements, and versions of caryatids. Kuroda pulls from the exchange of body and energy, bringing the inside out and the outside inwards. A simple illustration of this exchange happens when his caryatids occasionally morph into portals or openings to other realms.

Despite the depth of his themes, Kuroda plays with lightness and whimsical ease, which is evident in his expressive strokes and vivid hues. Kuroda's blues and yellows bring deep luminosity into his artworks. This exhibition sketches a new story and strips itself of the color wheel, finding homage in the neutrals - deep blacks and subdued whites.



RABBIT, 2015, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 97H X 130W CM (38.19H X 51.18W IN)

For this exhibition, Aki Kuroda revives his first only black paintings, commented on by the filmmaker and writer Marguerite Duras in 1980. Similar to Henri Matisse, who was known for painting with color, his works on a black background are still emblematic of his vision. While known for his extraordinarily luminous and shimmering paintings, Aki Kuroda creates purpose with his blacked-out portraits. When Aki Kuroda goes black, without straying from his universe, we discover his singular writing, humor, and amused view of the society around him. It testifies as much to his hope as to his concern for the world of tomorrow.

Kuroda uses a specific painting style in his predominately black paintings; instead of “adding” paint he must “remove” it, which creates an incredible, dazzling trance. Paint is quickly spread out flat on his huge canvases, and there, he leans like an acrobat over the still fluid material with a sure and lively line as he scrapes the black, letting the white of the skillfully prepared undercoat appear. No repentance and no retouching are possible. In this way **MIDNIGHT SPAGHETTI** pays tribute to Action painting in



ARTIST AKI KURODA (LEFT) AND CURATOR YOYO MAEGHT (RIGHT)

## AKI KURODA

Born in Kyoto in 1944, **Aki Kuroda** (黒田アキ) expressed interest in art his entire life and painted his first work at the age of four. His family significantly influenced Kuroda as a young boy; his father brought him magazines such as *Le Minotaure* from Paris. Through these magazines, Kuroda discovered the work of painters like Picasso and Dalí, which inspired him at this early stage in his artistic career. These resources were extremely valuable to the self-taught

artist. In the 1960s, Kuroda traveled in Europe, and he eventually elected to settle in Paris in 1970. Kuroda struggled during his early years in Paris and planned to give up and return to Japan until a chance encounter with French-American writer and film maker Marguerite Duras, the Spanish artist Joan Miró, and the gallerist Adrien Maeght reversed his fortunes. An acclaimed participation of Aki Kuroda in the 11th Paris Biennial in 1980 launched his career in a meaningful way.

Bucking traditional hierarchy, Kuroda was the youngest artist to have a solo exhibition at National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo in 1993, titled *Corridor = Metamorphosis*. Both acclaimed artists Yoshitomo Nara and Takashi Murakami pay tribute to Kuroda in their memories of this exhibition for influencing their careers. In 2007 Kuroda became the first Japanese artist to be exhibited in China at the Beijing Imperial Museum and at the TSI Museum.

Aki Kuroda’s work is in several public collections worldwide, including in Japan at The National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo and The National Museum of Art in Osaka; in France at the City of Paris Collection, the Marguerite and Aimé Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Strasbourg; in Ireland the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin; and in Netherlands at the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation in Amsterdam.

## YOYO MAEGHT

**Yoyo Maeght** is a French gallerist, editor, and curator. She is the granddaughter of Aimé Maeght, the founder of The Maeght Foundation and Maeght Gallery. After the death of her grandfather, she devoted herself to her family’s passion for art. She is the author of the books *The Maeght Family, A Passion for Modern Art*, and *La Saga Maeght*. Maeght has curated many museum exhibitions at significant institutions worldwide. She was awarded the Chevalier de ‘Ordre national du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit) in 2008 and the Médaille de la Ville de Paris (Medal of the City of Paris) in 2018.

## RICHARD TAITTINGER GALLERY

Founded in 2014 by Richard Frerejean Taittinger, **Richard Taittinger Gallery** is a 3 level, 6,000 sq ft space designed by studioMDA. A pioneer of New York City’s Lower East Side art scene, today RTG is surrounded by cultural institutions including the New Museum, the International Center for Photography, and the Brant Foundation.

RTG represents a diverse roster of leading international artists at various stages of their careers covering every medium and photography. Working closely with museum curators, RTG has successfully placed works by our artists in over 25 prestigious museum collections.

RTG advocates for price transparency and democratization of the art world, showing artists who are outside of the traditional art world system. It is a gallery that supports artists attuned to ethical values, human rights, diversity, feminism, and environmental issues. In July 2019, RTG launched a print program, and in June 2021 launched its NFT program offering affordable works to encourage collecting.