

Project Native Informant is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Harumi Yamaguchi outside of Asia. A leading name in the world of Japanese advertising, she pioneered the highly dramatic but elusively flat airbrush aesthetic closely associated with commercial illustration. Yamaguchi's practice places her in the vanguard of new painterly practices and as a celebrated documenter of an emerging feminist aesthetic from the 1970s onwards.

Born in Matsue in the Shimane prefecture, Yamaguchi graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts in oil painting. She began her career as a freelance illustrator, spearheading the advertising for the renowned retail establishment PARCO. From its outset, PARCO was established to combine a commercial retail establishment with a cultural facility, combining platforms such as museum, theater, and publishing in addition to retail. Yamaguchi's role as engineer of the project's *mise-en-scène* places her in the center of art and design in Japan.

As one of the original *gyaru*—commonly known also as “Shibuya Girls” rising from out *ūman ribu* or the feminist movements of the 1970s and generally applied to professionally-empowered but trend-conscious young women—Yamaguchi's position at PACRO gave her license to portray an emerging cosmopolitan woman, liberated from the vestiges of traditional femininity and empowered through consumerism to define her own individuality. “Harumi's gals” are often active and in motion—be it throwing a ball or swimming in a crystal blue pool—and returning the gaze of the viewer. As Chizuko Ueno noted in her essay published in connection to *Women of the 70s PARCO Poster Exhibition 1969-1986* exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in 2001, “while appearing to adhere to the scenario of male-tailored eroticism, Yamaguchi deconstructs male desire through her exaggerative depictions. As a consequence, the female body is idealized to a realm unreachable by male hands”.

Yamaguchi is in the collection of the CCGA Graphic Art Center, Fukushima; Kawasaki City Museum, Kanagawa, Japan; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

This exhibition will feature a series of unique paintings as well as a selection of advertising posters and videos, which are central to Yamaguchi's practice.

We thank Nanzuka Underground with the development of this exhibition.

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