

PACE

PRESS RELEASE

Yoshitomo Nara

534 West 25th Street, New York

May 10 – June 29, 2013

Opening reception: Friday, May 10, 6 to 8 PM



Pace is pleased to present its first exhibition of Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara, who joined the gallery in 2011. The exhibition features new paintings, bronzes, and works on paper, some of which were recently included in the solo exhibition *Yoshitomo Nara: a bit like you and me*, organized by the Yokohama Museum of Art and subsequently shown at the Aomori Museum of Art and Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto.

The exhibition is on view at 534 West 25th Street from May 10 through June 29, with an opening reception for the public on Friday, May 10, 6 to 8 PM. A catalogue with an essay by artist and musician David Byrne accompanies the exhibition.

Nara fuses Japanese visual traditions and Western Modernism with elements of popular culture ranging from *manga* to American pop and punk music, the lyrics of which appear in many of his paintings and drawings. "When I look at Nara's work, I see its roots in the 'Kulture of Kute' (the Japanese term is *kawaii*): the big eyes on the little kids," writes Byrne. "On the surface, they're pretty damn cute. But Nara has stepped outside that world in a big way. The kids and dogs in his pictures and bronzes are defiant, angry, annoyed, and pissed off. They have rebelled against their roots, and their big eyes are cold, slightly alien. Nothing is scarier than something that is the opposite of what it seems—a cute kid who is in fact a bad seed."

Though often associated with Pop, Nara's newest works reveal an engagement with the acts of painting and sculpting that places him closer to artists like Rothko and Bonnard. The layering of color and the texture of brushwork is even more luminescent than in earlier works, and Nara's rough-hewn bronzes leave traces of the artist's own hand, in contrast to the smoothness of his fiberglass sculptures.

This exhibition marks Nara's solo return to New York following the Asia Society Museum's exhibition *Yoshitomo Nara: Nobody's Fool* (2010–11), for which the museum collaborated with the Park Avenue Armory to rebuild an installation



work and to establish a temporary studio.

Yoshitomo Nara (b. 1959, Hirosaki, Japan) has exhibited extensively around the world. In addition to his recent traveling exhibition *Yoshitomo Nara: a bit like you and me*, recent solo exhibitions include the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, U.K.; *NARA + GRAF*, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain; *Moonlight Serenade*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan; *Over the Rainbow: Yoshitomo Nara and Hiroshi Sugita*, Pinakothek der moderne, Munich (traveled to the K21, Düsseldorf, Germany). Selected recent group exhibitions include *Print/Out: Multiplied Art in the Information Era, 1990–2010*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Bye Bye Kitty!!! Between Heaven and Hell in Contemporary Japanese Art*, Japan Society, New York; *A Perspective on Contemporary Art 6: Emotional Drawing*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; *Cult Fiction*, Hayward Gallery (traveled to New Art Gallery, Walsall; Nottingham Castle, Nottingham; Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds; Aberystwyth Art Gallery, Aberystwyth; Tullie House, Carlisle); *Pretty Baby*, The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX, and *Portrait Session*, NADiff, Tokyo (traveling to Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art).

His work is held by important public and private collections worldwide, including The Art Institute of Chicago; British Museum, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi.

Nara studied in Japan and Germany. He lives and works in Tochigi, Japan.

For more information about Yoshitomo Nara, please contact Sarah Goulet at 212.421.8987 / sgoulet@pacegallery.com. For general inquiries, please email newyork@pacegallery.com; for reproduction requests, email reprorequest@pacegallery.com.

Images:

Yoshitomo Nara, *Oddly Cozy*, 2013. Acrylic on canvas, 76-3/8" x 63-3/4".

Yoshitomo Nara, *When You Feel So Sad*, 2012. Bronze, 63-7/8" x 35-1/2" x 35-1/2", overall installed.