

# Joshua Liner Gallery

548 W. 28th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001  
212.244.7415 joshualinergallery.com

## For immediate release and listing:

Tat Ito + Hiro Kurata

*From Kojiki to Modern Heroism*

February 13–March 13, 2010

Opening reception, Gallery I: Saturday, February 13, 6–9 PM

January 27, 2010 New York, NY -- Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *From Kojiki to Modern Heroism*, a two-person exhibition of new paintings by the New York-based Japanese artists Tat Ito and Hiro Kurata. This is Ito and Kurata's first solo show with the gallery.

As invoked by the exhibition's title, the two artists draw from Japan's earliest narratives to layer their thoroughly contemporary painting with a rich lexicon of visual and historical motifs. Tat Ito has created a unique pictorial style that combines high-color, graphic abstraction with echoes of Edo-era history painting. In his acrylic-on-canvas works, finely rendered scenes of court life, village squares, and columns of military figures are depicted from an elevated, detached perspective. Yet, jostling the picture plane forward and back are flat, decorative passages of Day-Glo grids, camouflage, and other graphic patterns. In the panoramic painting *Kagutsuchi* ("fire god" in ancient Japanese mythology), columns of orange-suited figures dodge explosions and atmospheric clouds of polka-dotted, Yayoi Kusama-style smoke. The artist describes this approach as "a metaphor for Japanese contemporary art and culture upon which the Western viewpoint is floating," if not entirely mixing.

By contrast, Hiro Kurata presents an uncanny integration of East and West in his faux-naïf, acrylic-on-panel paintings, whose prosaic subjects and settings carry allegorical undertones. In *Greek Myth 09*, a baseball player and a samurai-like figure go head to head with bat and sword. In the painting *Death Match and a Novelist*, sumo wrestlers on a seaside boardwalk are backdrop/muse for a seated writer/harlequin in the foreground. There is a distinct and breathtaking meld of art-historical influences in Kurata's highly evolved style, from the contemporary New Leipzig School to Hokusai woodcuts.

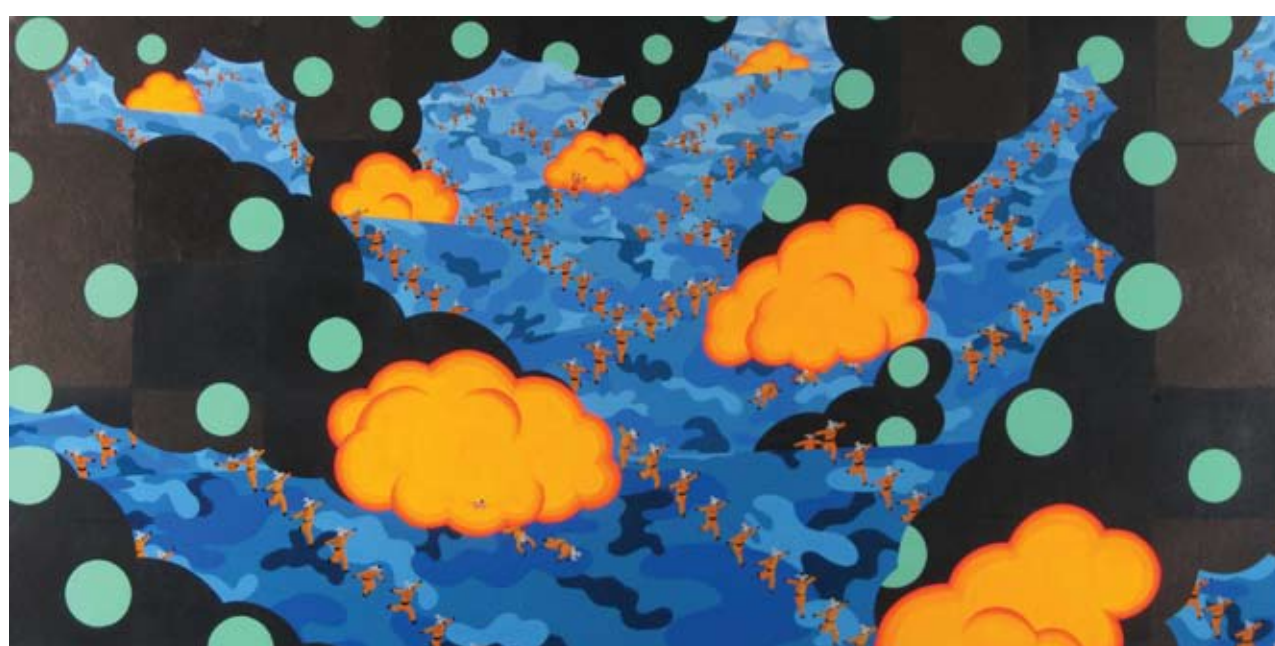
Tat Ito was born in 1978 in Nagoya, Japan, and earned BFA and MFA degrees in painting from Academy of Art University in San Francisco and New York Academy of Art, respectively; he currently lives and works in Queens. His work has been included in the following group exhibitions: *Summer Exhibition*, New York Academy of Art, NY, and *Old School*, Jack the Pelican Presents, Brooklyn (both 2009); *Art in Free Fall*, BWAC, Brooklyn (2008); and *Asobi*, Sutter Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2006).

Hiro Kurata was born in 1980 in Osaka, Japan, and grew up in Tokyo and Chicago; he earned a BFA degree from Parsons School of Design in Brooklyn, where he currently lives and works. Solo exhibitions of his include: *Heroic*, Point Gallery, Tokyo (2008); *Berlin 46*, Gallerie Mille D'Air, Berlin (2006); and *Illustrations & Paintings: 2003-2005*, Hanae Mori Open Gallery, Tokyo (2005). His work was included in the following group exhibitions in 2009: *Scribble.08*, Wonderhaus, San Diego, CA; *New York Connection*, Gallery Target, Tokyo; and a two-person show with Tommii Lim at Ad Hoc Art in Brooklyn.

Joshua Liner Gallery, located in New York City's Chelsea district, presents an exciting roster of young and emerging artists from the West and East coasts, Asia, and Europe.

Also on view, in Gallery II: Tristram Lansdowne, *Refuge*, February 13–March 13.

For more information, please visit [www.joshualinergallery.com](http://www.joshualinergallery.com), or contact Tim Strazza at 212.244.7415 or [tim@joshualinergallery.com](mailto:tim@joshualinergallery.com).



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1. Tat Ito *Kagutsuchi* Acrylic and silver leaf on canvas 24 x 48 in. 2009
2. Hiro Kurata *Greek Myth 09* Acrylic and ink on panel 48 x 48 in. 2009
3. Hiro Kurata *Death Match and A Novelist* Acrylic and ink on panel 30 x 40 in. 2009