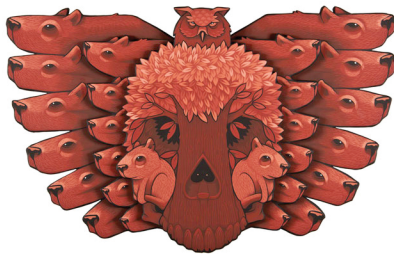


Kenichi Yokono: Rise of the Underground

Woodblock printing, skate decks and cult horror come together in a new show at the Mark Moore Gallery

by Josh Rubin in Culture on 17 October 2011



We've been following **Kenichi Yokono** for a while, and we're continually impressed by the ingenuity the Tokyo-based artist brings to the table. Working in the tradition of Japanese woodblock printing, Yokono weaves anime and horror film influences into the classic form. His stark red and white woodcuts are immediately distinguishable, both for their boldness, and their unflinching depiction of death, sexuality and the paranormal—not to mention some are made from skateboard decks, a nod to his love for American skate culture. In part an expression of rage against the concept of *kawaii* (cuteness) in mainstream Japanese culture, Yokono's raw figures devour the Hello Kitty stigma.

Yokono returns to the **Mark Moore Gallery** after his 2009 showing, with a new, partially-autobiographical exhibition, "*Rise of the Underground*," alongside San Francisco artist **Jeremy Fish**, who has produced his own set of woodcuts. Fish's work is vibrant and playful, using animal figures to communicate tales from popular folklore and myth. The highly-stylized wood paintings show influences from pop art and skate culture, pairing well with Yokono's focus on contemporary life.



Yokono's new work shows a lot of range, moving from the conventional to the cutting edge. "Falling Flower" is a traditional circular landscape, modernized with the presence of a highway. An intriguing set of woodblocks looks at scantily-dressed women in a dilapidated backyard, evoking feelings of confusion, lethargy and dislocation. Whatever the subject, Yokono is uncompromising in his attention to detail and dedication to the emotional integrity of the piece. "*Rise of the Underground*" will be at the Mark Moore Gallery in Los Angeles from 29 October-17 December 2011.