Despite its title, Andy Warhol’s 1965 underground film, *My Hustler*, is not, as far as I can tell, one of the many cinematic references in Stephen Chow’s 2004 madcap action comedy, *Kung Fu Hustle*. Yet, the work of these two artists—Chow and Warhol—both make appearances in MADSAKI’s latest exhibition, and the two films, as different as they are, help to define the logic which structures much of his work: that of the wannabe or hustler.

The majority of MADSAKI’s latest exhibition consists of works inspired by Andy Warhol, along with a selection of paintings depicting stills from Hong Kong cinema classics like *Kung Fu Hustle* and Wong Kar-wai’s *In the Mood For Love*. MADSAKI, like Warhol before him, is skilled in the art of the hustle, and knows a fellow hustler when he sees one. Thus, where his previous copies of art historical “masterpieces” served to shore up the elitism of the western canon, MADSAKI’s reproductions of Warhol’s *Flowers*, *Skulls*, *Guns*, *Dollar Signs*, and *Brillo Boxes* stay much closer to the spirit of their sources, which were themselves often copies of some far distant original. To Warhol, images were not sacred and implacable but something to be passed around like common coin. He believed meaning to always be in the particulars: in the vagaries of execution and amongst variations on a basic theme. This is one of the great lessons of his thirty-two paintings of cans of Campbell’s soup: things can look the same on the surface and still be very different underneath.

MADSAKI
*If I Had a Dream*

**OPENING** | Wednesday Jul 17, 6 – 8pm
**EXHIBITION** | Jul 17 – Sep 7, 2019

Supported by Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd.

周星馳2004年的動作喜劇《功夫》(Kung Fu Hustle), 與及安迪·沃荷1965年的地下電影《My Hustler》，兩者英文戲名相近卻不相干。不過，這兩部作品並列在MADSAKI的最新展覽。兩套截然不同的電影, 成了重要的引言，協助觀者解開MADSAKI作品背後的兩大概念: 對經典的崇拜, 以及變古易常。

這次展出的作品，靈感大多來自安迪·沃荷以及香港電影的經典劇照，例如《功夫》和王家衛的《花樣年華》。MADSAKI深諳易之道，對著擅於複製與轉化的安迪·沃荷，兩者似曾相識。MADSAKI模仿西方藝術史的大師，現在重塑沃荷的《花》、《頭骨》、《槍》、《美元符號》和《布瑞洛盒》，更體貼入妙。沃荷也是仿效各種實物加以創作，藉此顯示意象非一成不變，應如貨幣般流轉。他相信精髓在細節之中，比如創作手法的變幻莫測以及基本主題的發揮。沃荷完成32幅金寶湯畫作後, 得出的結論是: 事物表面可以一模一樣, 但底蘊卻大相逕庭。

MADSAKI的沃荷系列, 保留了沃荷作品的基本構圖、顏色和大小, 卻在繪畫手法、色調和情感方面另闢蹊徑。兩人的主要分別在於創作媒介: 沃荷使用絲網印刷, MADSAKI則使用噴漆。MADSAKI解釋說：「用噴漆來傳遞絲網印刷所表達的東西, 真的很困難。我唯有以自己的方式去做。」雖是噴漆能手, MADSAKI坦承自己使用噴漆的方法「完全錯誤」，把噴嘴當成畫筆, 將噴漆當成畫筆, 有別於一般塗鴉或街頭藝術。正在這種噴漆技巧，MADSAKI的創作更隨性偶發, 可大幅或點滴運用色彩, 加強了作品的質感、氛圍和感染力。
Though MADSAKI’s reproductions share the basic composition, coloration, and size of Warhol’s paintings, it is the differences—in execution, tone, and feeling—that make them his own. The primary distinction comes from the variation between artists’ two signature mediums: silkscreen for Warhol and spray paint for MADSAKI. “It’s really hard to express what could be expressed through silkscreen with a spray can,” MADSAKI explains, “so I’ve got to add my own flavor.” Though he’s a wizard with the spray nozzle, MADSAKI admits that his current approach to the medium is “totally wrong” in the sense that he employs it more as a “brush” than it would be in graffiti or street art. His spray techniques leave much more room for contingency and happy accidents, resulting in splatters and drips that add texture, atmosphere, and sometimes even emotional heft to his paintings. This is particularly evident in MADSAKI’s versions of Warhol’s Double Elvis, 1963, and The Last Supper (The Big C), 1986. Though Warhol also used spray paint to create the silver background of his Double Elvis, MADSAKI’s use of the medium creates a much more painterly and impressionistic appearance, thereby absorbing the doubled figure into the overall composition and pushing the painting closer to the realm of moody abstraction. Created in the final year of Warhol’s life, The Last Supper (The Big C) was painted entirely by hand, a return to an earlier mode of production inspired by Warhol’s recent collaborations with Jean-Michel Basquiat. It has also recently been revealed to be one of Warhol’s most introspective and mournful works, layered with coded references to the artist’s ambivalent feelings about his Catholic faith as well as to the escalating AIDS crisis. (In 1986, HIV/AIDS was still dismally mislabeled as “the gay cancer,” and cancer was colloquially referred to as “The Big C.”) Though painted over thirty years later and in response to an entirely different set of personal and cultural prompts, MADSAKI’s interpretation of the painting manages to sustain, and in some ways underscore, its twin themes of suffering and salvation. By replacing Christ’s downcast gaze with his signature “drippy smiley eyes,” MADSAKI makes the painting at once more irreverent and more sorrowful than the original. Astonishingly, MADSAKI’s small modification manages to push Warhol’s composition closer to the tone and tenor of Chow’s Kung Fu Hustle, proving the notion that, in the right hands, the art of the hustle can pave the way to enlightenment.

–Mark Loiacono


MADSAKI, Dollar Sign II (inspired by Andy Warhol), 2019. Acrylic paint, aerosol on canvas. 51 × 41 cm | 20 1/16 × 16 1/8 in. Courtesy MADSAKI/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. / Courtesy Perrotin.
Perrotin is pleased to present Japanese artist MADSAKI’s first solo exhibition in Hong Kong, his third with the gallery following previous shows in Paris and Seoul. Featuring new paintings and an installation, the exhibition will showcase three of MADSAKI’s iconic series: his Warhol series, Movie series, and Character series depicting popular cartoons. As a special homage to the city, MADSAKI is exhibiting a series of paintings referencing celebrated scenes from Hong Kong cinema, including Wong Kar-wai classics such as In the Mood for Love and Chungking Express, comedy star Stephen Chow’s Kung Fu Hustle, and more.

A graduate of New York City’s Parsons School of Design (BFA, 1996), MADSAKI was born in 1974 in Osaka, Japan and raised in New Jersey, USA, an experience between two cultures that formed his aesthetics and personality. While much of MADSAKI’s work centers on his interest in art history and critiquing mass culture with references to slang, movies, and manga characters, the artist has recently been exploring more personal and intimate topics. To express this visually, MADSAKI developed a signature style using spray paint as a fine art medium, stemming from the fact that he has never participated in illegal graffiti on the streets. The artist is particularly known for his Wannabe series, which at first glance humorously targets old masters, yet its deeper meaning is a recurring theme that can be found throughout MADSAKI’s artistic practice, an attempt to use laughter and humor as both distraction and therapy for his internal turmoil.

More information about the artist

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