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## *Hajime Sorayama's Science Frisson*

### *Sci-Fi's Preeminent Romantic Releases His First Compendium*

"What is inspiring me is always women," says **Hajime Sorayama**, the Japanese illustrator who since the 1970s has masterfully merged technology with titillation via his immaculate images of "gynoids" (translation: "sexy robots"). Naturally, the female form—clad in shining metal and augmented with silver wings or coiling wires—is at the heart of his work, but Sorayama's innovation was to see a continuity between organic shapes and the ongoing evolution of engineering. "Robots that are not organic in form never made sense to me," he says of his designs, which have inspired clients as diverse as **Sony** (who approached Sorayama in the 1990s to design their AIBO Robot Dog) and **Aerosmith** (whose 2001 album *Just Push Play* featured Sorayama cover art). The artist toils on each image for between 30 and 50 hours, minutely building up details with very small brushes, pencil, acrylics and a tiny amount of air brushing for the final details. Recently, thanks to this decade's craze for retro-tinged sci-fi imagery—exemplified by bands such as **Daft Punk**, and, in fashion, **Balenciaga's** Nicolas Ghesquière—Sorayama has noticed a renewed interest in his robot work of the 70s. He is proud of his influence on imagery as diverse as *Star Trek's* "Borgified" females and **Chris Cunningham's** transformation of **Björk** into a lovelorn cyborg for the 1999 video "All is Full of Love." "Some say that my work of the 1970s and 1980s foresaw reality like AIBO and other artificially intelligent robots," he says. "Perhaps, the way I am painting today portends the next 20 or 30 years." On the heels of a retrospective at Tokyo's **Nanzuka Underground** gallery, which opens today, in June the illustrator will release *Sorayama Masterworks*, a 400-page monograph spanning his entire career, available for pre-order from [sorayama.net](http://sorayama.net).

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