

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HAJIME SORAYAMA: 1970 – 2010

January 7 – February 19, 2011



GERING & LÓPEZ GALLERY is pleased to present **HAJIME SORAYAMA: 1970 – 2010**, the first ever retrospective of the Japanese master illustrator's extensive career.

Throughout the decades, Sorayama has served as a vanguard for society's conception of the erotic. His iconography has explored human experiences of desire, pleasure, and pain. He utilizes images of women, men, consumer goods, and military weaponry to illustrate these machinations. This exhibition traces the different depictions of females Sorayama has evoked over the years, venturing through various familiar Eastern and Western landscapes, voids, and scenes of a surrealistic future world these women inhabit. Through this journey, the exhibit seeks not to display the twisted fantasies of a single individual, but instead to illustrate how Sorayama has created these works as a mirror and foil to the shifting mores and taboos within and outside of Tokyo.

Beginning with paintings on paperboard from the 1970's and extending into his most recent pieces, the exhibition highlights several bodies of work, all created by hand in acrylic with several different recognizable techniques. Sorayama's famous *Gynoids* and "sexy robots" feature what at first glance appear to be utopic visions of the future female, now retro when set against 21st century New York. However, these gleaming chrome-skinned women from the 1980's sexualize a global fixation on technology that is still very much alive today. In a series begun in 2005 that coincided with the War on Terror, the visages of famous Hollywood starlets pose in front of World War II bombers, sporting ironic tattoos and conflating our conceptions of glamour, sexual desire, and violent destruction in addition to commenting on our ability as a global society to progress past the atrocities of history. In another series of women adorned in draping kimonos under phallic trees with Japanese script scrolled down the side, Sorayama creates images of 17th century Kyoto courtesans with Anglo-Saxon features, providing us with a historical lineage for desire in the East. The Western counterpart takes the form of traditional pin-ups, seducing the gaze of the viewer. Finally, Sorayama's notoriously naughty ladies of the boudoir appear in leather, lace, silk ribbons, and metal chains, eyes firmly fixed on their audience.

Hajime Sorayama was born in 1947 in Takamatsu, Ehime, Japan and lives and works in Tokyo. He graduated from Chubu Central Art School, Tokyo, in 1969 and has worked as an illustrator for diverse publications from *V Magazine* to *Penthouse*. He has designed toys, collaborating with Disney on *FUTURE MICKEY* and *KAWS* on *NO FUTURE COMPANION*. His fine art has been internationally exhibited in Los Angeles, Munich, Rome, Miami, and Tokyo. His creations are housed in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum of Modern Art, NY. This is Sorayama's first exhibition with the gallery.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm. For further information please contact Julie Bills at 646.336.7183 or julie@geringlopez.com.