Gajin Fujita Made in L.A.

13 October – 12 November 2011
Opening reception for the artist: Thursday, 13 October, 6-8 p.m.

Venice, CA -- L.A. Louver is pleased to present twelve new paintings by Gajin Fujita. Made in L.A. is Fujita’s first solo exhibition in Los Angeles in five years.

In his paintings, Fujita blends a rich diversity of cultural influences that range from traditional Japanese ukiyo-e to contemporary manga; from American pop culture, to East L.A. street-life iconography and graffiti. Fujita also combines a variety of process techniques and media. He begins with wood panels that he covers with platinum, white and yellow gold leaf in graphic patterns. Fujita then tags the panels, sometimes inviting members of his longtime graffiti crew, K2S (“Kill to Succeed”) to tag larger-scale paintings. (These invited hands are identifiable by their tags as well as their signatures on the verso of the paintings.) Over the tagged panels, using his own paper stencils that are unique to each painting, Fujita creates intricate compositions, which feature samurais, geishas, dragons, tigers and fish, using spraypaint, paint marker and Mean Streak, in striking colors.

This series of new paintings is remarkable for its broad diversity of scale, from the intimate 8 x 10 inch single panel “Feel Cool” to the mural-size “East vs. West” which, comprised of a dozen wood panels measuring 7 x 22 feet overall, is Fujita’s largest painting to date. Several works, including “High Voltage” and “Rising Sun,” feature a more painterly touch with water conveyed in rich layers of paint that add dimension to the surface. Los Angeles, the artist’s birthplace, home, and the site of the paintings’ creation, is nearly ubiquitously represented: whether symbolized by the charging warrior of “East vs. West” dressed in L.A. Dodgers baseball attire, or discreetly referenced in the L.A. headband of the samurai in “Fearless” or with a nod to Hollywood, through the cartoon characters depicted in “Rabbit Season” and “Year of the Rabbit (Bugs Bunny).”

In his article MOCA’s ‘Art in the Street’ Gets the Big Picture Wrong, Los Angeles Times, May 29, 2011, critic Christopher Knight describes Fujita’s paintings as “the most important 21st century iteration of graffiti’s influence on art.” In these new paintings Fujita backgrounds the graffiti, while giving it compositional force: such as the throw-up in “Bewitched” and the dense conflation of tags in “High Voltage.” The influence of wood block prints is also brought to the fore, and is especially evident in the structure of “Roof Top.”
A fully-illustrated catalogue with a foreword by Peter Goulds, founding director of L.A. Louver, and text by Scott Grieger, artist and professor at Otis College of Art and Design, is published on the occasion of the exhibition.

Born in 1972 in Los Angeles to Japanese immigrant parents, Fujita has been a member of two graffiti crews, first KGB (“Kings of Graffiti Bombing”) and then K2S (“Kill to Succeed”), making art in the streets of Hollywood, downtown L.A., and East Los Angeles in the early and mid-1990s.


For a full artist profile and video of Gajin creating “East Vs. West” please visit our website: http://www.lalouver.com/fujita

Concurrently on view in L.A. Louver’s second floor gallery and skyroom:

Loose Canon 13 October – 12 November, 2011

An exhibition of paintings and sculpture by contemporary artists, who draw inspiration from old master works, featuring Tony Bevan, Rebecca Campbell, Charles Garabedian, David Hockney, Ben Jackel, Tom LaDuke, Michael C. McMillen, Peter Shelton, Don Suggs, Elizabeth Turk, Matt Wedel and Tom Wudl.

For more information and visuals, please contact Elizabeth East, L.A. Louver, 45 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA, USA www.lalouver.com; tel: 310-822-4955; fax: 310-821-7529; e-mail: Elizabeth@lalouver.com