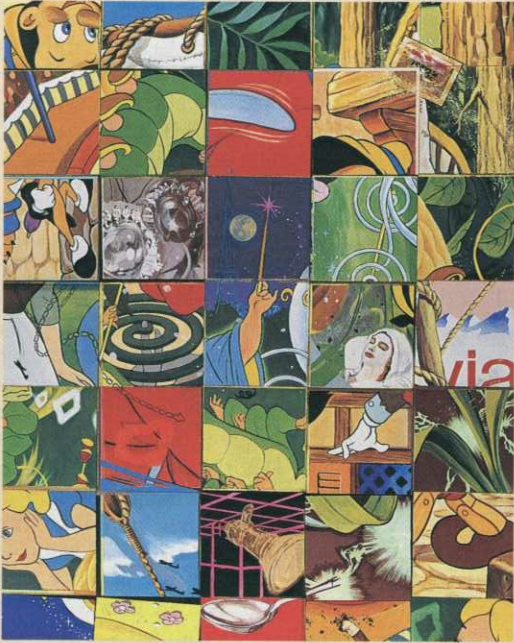


The Infinite Possibilities of Flatness: Fukuda Miran

By Iseki Masaaki



Picture Block, 1989; 227.2x181.8cm, acrylic

Why do people create pictures?

Fukuda Miran says that she used to paint pictures for the sheer fun of it, and before she knew it had become a painter. Asked what pictures meant to her, she began to look for new possibilities in painting.

Her quest, to learn what people can do with pictures, is an earnest one.

"I wanted to deal purely with the issue of painting, but I decided to go beyond the concept of the painting, rethink it as a two-dimensional surface, and seek out new possibilities for paintings in modern times," she says.

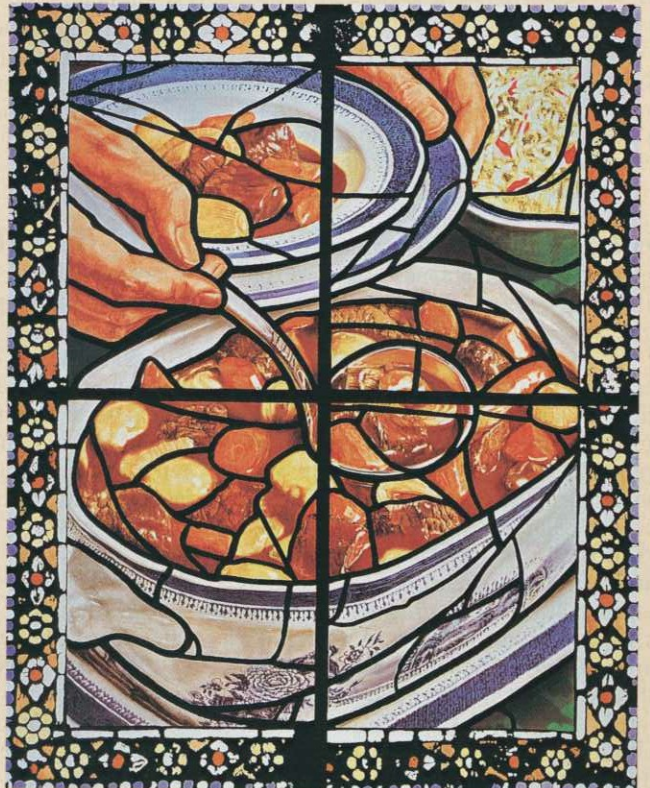
The new possibilities she is referring to are the photographs, ads, labels, comics, television and computer images that surround us, the assimilation of all sorts of information emanating from modern mass society. Fukuda began to make free use of these elements, creating works that consider the problems depicted in today's paintings from a perspective that departs radically from past ideas about painting. For her, these elements put the focus not on what is

expressed but by what means it is expressed, the process of creating the work becoming what is important. In other words, as long as there are no limitations on what materials are used, there is also no limit to the possibilities.

In her 1992 work, *Two bouquets*, real flowers are attached to the bouquets that the woman holds. In *Knit* (1991), real knitting protrudes beyond the frame from the hands of a woman depicted knitting. In her 1994 *Adoration of the Magi*, a Magi is worshipping the Christ child, and the tissue paper he holds in his hand is arranged so that it can be pulled out by viewers. The idea of incorporating real things into paintings is no stranger to modern art. But because the things Fukuda Miran uses are commonplace in our mass-consumption society, her use of them becomes a means of discovering reality, an unexpected depiction of the world.

She uses a myriad of ways to create such depictions.

In her 1991 *Woman with a letter*, for instance, the surface, including the picture frame, is split up with no reference to the image itself, the fragments scattered and placed at will,



Stained glass, 1993; 227.2x181.8 cm, acrylic painting on panel

transforming the original meaning of the work. *Picture Block* (1989), brings together indiscriminate fragments of subjects, simulating modernity with no relation to their meaning, and by incorporating several computer mosaics of old masterpieces, Fukuda completely breaks down cosmological differences of past, present and future.

She uses extreme high tech as an easy way to cite from her own works.

She slips common images from everyday life into old masterpieces, and thus her basic approach is not to paint pictures by observing nature or some other subject, but to see a picture and then create it. To do this, she incorporates both high-tech techniques and everyday things.

When we ask ourselves why people create pictures, we could say that it is because of the fascination and enjoyment of reproducing what one sees. With her new approach to painting, Fukuda Miran interjects into her works an artificial reality, a virtual reality that is unlike the works of her predecessors.



Adoration of the Magi, 1994; 227.2x181.8 cm, acrylic painting on panel, tissue box

By slipping everyday images into old masterpieces, she popularizes them, with the result that in this modern information age, the works of masters such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael or Botticelli are reduced to the same artistic value as the kitsch landscapes sold on so many city streets.

In this way, because of the painting's unexpected imagery, the viewer can lose him or herself in its double reality and know the freedom and joy of expression.

In the final analysis, Fukuda Miran's paintings are not representations, but paintings, in every sense of the word.

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Woman with a letter, 1991