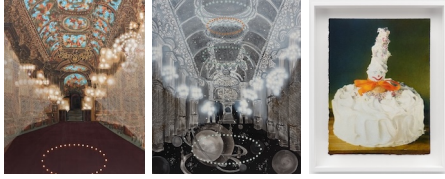


REBECCA CAMACHO PRESENTS



Michiko Itatani: *Cosmic Codes*

Project Room | Laura Rokas: *A Meal in Itself*

26 June through 2 August 2025

— OPENING RECEPTION: Thursday, 26 June, 6:00 – 8:00pm

Rebecca Camacho Presents is pleased to announce the opening of Michiko Itatani: *Cosmic Codes* and Laura Rokas: *A Meal in Itself*. Both artists are exhibiting at the gallery for the first time.

Over the course of her decades-long career, Michiko Itatani has developed a unique pictorial language focusing on the human desire to understand and apprehend the unknown. *Cosmic Codes* assembles six paintings spanning twenty years of Itatani's practice, highlighting works that visualize ornate spaces for gathering. Installed in chronological order, the first painting, *Cosmic Sleepwalk* (2007) and last, *Matrix Identity* (2024), depict the same setting. This long arc of exploration across subject matter is a cornerstone of Itatani's oeuvre.

Creating unique environments with architectural inspiration, both real and imagined, Itatani's fantastical spaces are recognizable and familiar, but belong to no particular place or time. In a process largely influenced by fiction writing, she crafts layered scenes as character investigations of human experience within the larger context of the universe/multiverse. Itatani conjures settings comprised of disparate elements that coexist within the same moment of time; dimensions overlap, night crosses into the day, the celestial and terrestrial worlds intersect, chandeliers hang amongst stars, both illuminating the cosmos. In each painting a luminous set of rings, or portals, hover, offering a possible access point from one realm to another.

— Itatani is most comfortable working at a large scale, and the grand proportions of her paintings allow for an immersive experience. Oscillating between matte, feathery figuration and precise, glossy textures, Itatani engages the viewer with elaborate interiors brimming with objects that gesture towards key human achievements in the arts and sciences. Planes of raised intersecting lines on the perimeters of most works create a visual frame while also conjuring the illusion of depth through linear perspective; a technique used by Itatani across her practice. By foregrounding multiplicity – through a range of vantage points, combining places across time, and so on – Itatani engages in a kind of worldbuilding. She combines what is perceptible and what is imagined, composing spaces where we can ponder the depths of human experience.

In tandem with her exhibition, the gallery published a conversation between Michiko Itatani and Nolan Jimbo, Assistant Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. In it, Itatani and Jimbo discuss the ideas that inform her artistic practice as well as her experiences as an artist and arts educator for over 40 years. The dialogue is also available digitally on the gallery website.

In the project room, the gallery features Laura Rokas: *A Meal in Itself*. Excavating vintage Betty Crocker and Weight Watchers recipe cards, Rokas painstakingly recreates these bygone images in oil paintings on paper. Taken largely from the 1970's, these strange and oftentimes abject concoctions are representative of a time in which women entered the workforce in large numbers while still carrying the sole expectation of family care and social entertaining. The rise of recipes built upon convenience ingredients and packaged foods aligned with a new sense of modernity and busying lifestyles, while also representing a desire to awe and impress. By depicting these images in the idiom of painting, Rokas also wades into a larger history of art centered on food, from Dutch still life painters such as Pieter Claesz to dessert aficionado Wayne Thiebaud, who each tackled, in many different ways, the question of what we eat and, more importantly, how we picture what we eat and what it says about us.

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Rokas's interest in relationship power dynamics reverberates throughout her practice, as does a fastidious dedication to craft and technique. Each of Rokas's intimately-scaled paintings further the point that food can conjure memories, connections and emotions that are far beyond the grasp of language and rational thought. Rokas expertly utilizes accessible kitsch to examine the intricate questions of self, ambition and status, sacrifice and self-sacrifice, and perfectionism.

Michiko Itatani (b. 1948, Osaka, Japan) lives and works in Chicago, IL. She received her BFA and MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and completed studies at the University of Chicago. She is Professor Emeritus at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been shown in more than 100 one-person and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including the University of Wyoming Art Museum, Laramie, WY (2022); Wright 659, Chicago, IL (2022); Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL (2017); South Bend Museum of Art, IN (2014); Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, MO (2003); Frauen Museum, Bonn, Germany (2000); Tokoha Museum, Shizuoka, Japan (1998); Chicago Cultural Center, IL (1992); Musée du Québec, Canada (1988); Rockford Art Museum, IL (1987); amongst others.

Itatani received a Lifetime Achievement Award from The Women's Caucus of Art (2020); Grainger Foundation & Krems Residency Grant (2007); Illinois Arts Councils Artist's Fellowship (1999); John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (1990); National Endowments for the Arts Artist's Fellowship (1980); amongst many others.

Her work is held by a number of institutions including the Olympic Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland; Museu d'Art Contemporani (MACBA), Barcelona Spain; Kemper Collection, IL; Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge, MA; Hyogo Art Museum, Hyogo, Japan; American Embassy, Brasilia, Brazil; Illinois State Library, Springfield, IL; Cincinnati Art Museum, OH; Musée du Québec, Québec, Canada; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; De Paul University Museum of Art, Chicago, IL; amongst others.

Laura Rokas (b. 1989, St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Canada) lives and works in San Francisco, CA. She received her BFA at Concordia University, Montréal in 2013 and her MFA at the San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco in 2016.

Rokas has had solo and two-person exhibitions at 1599fdT, San Francisco, CA (2024; 2023); Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2018; 2016); amongst others. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Warren Flowers Gallery, Montréal, Canada (2024); Speedy Gallery, Santa Monica, CA (2024); Bass & Reiner, San Francisco, CA (2023; 2019); Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY (2023); Et Al Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2023); San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA (2021); NIAD Art Center, Richmond, CA (2018); The Kadist, San Francisco, CA (2018); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2018); amongst others.