

Roman Frechen, Yukiko Terada

30 April - 22 August, 2026

The exhibition by Roman Frechen and Yukiko Terada at Galerie Deschler brings together two distinctly different artistic positions, each engaging in its own way with questions of identity, corporeality, and cultural attribution. While Roman Frechen draws upon phenomena of Japanese pop and subculture and translates them into a contemporary painterly language, the Berlin-based Japanese artist Yukiko Terada creates fragile, poetic works that reflect on transience, transformation, and the conditions of life itself.

At the center of Frechen's works lies the Japanese Gyarū subculture of the late 1990s and early 2000s. The paintings presented here focus in particular on the style known as Ganguro or Kurogyarū—a movement that deliberately opposed traditional ideals of female beauty in Japan. In place of restraint, dark hair, and pale skin, its followers cultivated deeply tanned skin, brightly dyed hair, striking make-up, and extravagant clothing. Frechen is less interested in documentary representation than in the cultural and emotional charge embedded within this aesthetic. His paintings move between appropriation, memory, and projection, portraying figures that appear both self-consciously staged and imbued with a subtle sense of melancholy.

The Ganguro style largely disappeared from public view in the mid-2000s and only experienced renewed attention more than a decade later. Groups such as Black Diamond, along with the emergence of new social media networks, helped bring the movement's aesthetic and spirit back into international visibility. Today, the Gyarū community exists worldwide and remains closely connected through platforms such as Instagram. Frechen's works engage with this shift between subculture, memory, and the circulation of digital imagery, translating it into a contemporary painterly language.

Yukiko Terada's work likewise revolves around transitions and states of transformation, albeit in a quieter and more existential register. Her work *black bird + white bird* juxtaposes opposites such as life and death, light and darkness, wedding attire and mourning garments. The birds' feathers function as metaphors for living beings, evoking fragility and metamorphosis. Created during the artist's pregnancy, the work reflects a period of heightened bodily and emotional awareness. The transformations of her own body and the daily biological development of the unborn child coalesce into a visual language that intertwines intimacy with universal human experience.

As different as the two artistic positions may initially appear, they are united by a sensitive engagement with forms of identity that are constantly shifting and redefining themselves. Both artists explore socially constructed images of the body and the traces left by cultural narratives, memories, and personal experience. The exhibition thus opens up a space between pop culture and poetry, between staging and vulnerability, between surface and existential depth.