

# FRESTONIAN GALLERY

## MINAMI KOBAYASHI THE SONG OF JUJUBES



**OPENING WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER – PRIVATE VIEW 6-8PM**  
EXHIBITION DATES 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER – 2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

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Frestonian Gallery is delighted to announce our second exhibition of works by Minami Kobayashi. The show comprises ten major canvases completed over the past year. The paintings' subjects span three continents and several decades, through Kobayashi's signature evocation of the construction of narrative and the function of memory.

The sense of place is evoked first through Kobayashi's great talent as a colourist - from the intense heat of the Southern French afternoon sun in *Miro's Solar Bird and two trees, the sun card and the moon* to the blazing hues of a Californian sunset in *Five pelicans over the Pacific beach*, all the way to the bright chill of a snowstorm in her native Japan in *Girlfriends in the snow garden*.

An equal component of Kobayashi's practice is the production and development of complex yet contained narratives within each work. Kobayashi draws influence from, among many other sources, the 'incidental' and naturalistic compositions of the impressionists and post-impressionists (most notably Pierre Bonnard); modern comic-book graphic art and 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century ukiyo-e Japanese painting and printmaking. Combining notions of both the naturalistic pose and the allegorical narrative her works often pull the viewer in multiple directions, in the manner of surrealists such as Dorothea Tanning, albeit in a subtler fashion. Like the surrealists, Kobayashi weaves a substantial dose of symbology into her paintings, often in the form of animals, signifying anything from love and companionship to dislocation and loss. Inanimate objects too achieve powerful influence in the telling of each work's 'story' through their placement or the manipulation of scale – such as the beguilingly veiled busts in *Art class in 2003*, whose exaggerated size may indicate the importance of both the lessons and the attained skills in drawing-from-life to which the painting alludes.

True to the themes of storytelling and reconstructed memories, the title of the show – *The Song of Jujubes* – relates to a song that Kobayashi used to sing as a 14 year old in the Chorus Club in Nagoya. The song lyrics were written by Eriko Kishida, a famous poet and children's book artist, and the melody composed by Makiko Kinoshita. Of the song, Kobayashi writes: *It is so whimsical and dreamy – perfect for teenage girls to sing. When I learned this song, at 14 years old, I did not know how it felt to miss my hometown so badly, or to fall in love.* In these new works these combinations – of intense joy, loss, love, longing, deep memory and surface playfulness – are writ large.

### Publication Notice

The exhibition will be accompanied by the first major publication on Kobayashi's work: 'Minami Kobayashi: Paintings 2016-2024', published by Anomie Publishing, with new writing by Laura Allsop (Apollo Magazine, Art Review) and Lisa Wainwright (Art Institute of Chicago).

### Notes on the artist

Minami Kobayashi was born in 1989 and currently lives and works in London. She holds an MFA in Painting and Drawing from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago (2018) and a BFA in Painting from Tokyo University of the Arts (2016). Recent solo exhibitions include Et Al Gallery (San Francisco), Goldfinch Gallery (Chicago) and Long Story Short (New York – upcoming). Her work is featured in Museum collections such as the Beth Rudin de Woody Collection, USA; the X Museum, China; The Nixon Collection, UK and in private collections worldwide.