

JESSICA SILVERMAN

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Jessica Silverman Announces *Kei Imazu: Sowed Them to the Earth* Opening July 27, Harnessing Indonesian Mythology to Explore Motherhood and Resiliency in New Paintings and Wire Sculptures



Kei Imazu, *Curves of Time*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and ROH Projects, Jakarta. Photo: Phillip Maisel.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 27, 2023) – Jessica Silverman is pleased to announce *Kei Imazu: Sowed Them to the Earth*, the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery and her first in the United States, running from July 27 to September 9, 2023. Debuting eleven new oil paintings and two wire sculptures, Imazu's point of departure for this exhibition is the myth of the goddess Hainuwele, whose death propagated root crops on Seram Island in Indonesia. Her fantastical paintings connect the region's ecology to its cultural and colonial histories using gestural mark-making and hyperreal depictions of the body, plants, geological maps and ancestral wooden

sculptures. Imazu's practice is world building, and as a mother herself, celebrates a maternal origin for all living beings.

Born in Yamaguchi, Japan in 1980 and educated at the Tama Art University in Tokyo, Kei Imazu's painting practice begins on her computer. Using images she takes herself or finds online, the artist creates 3D renderings of objects and digitally collages them to serve as sketches for her paintings. Translating her tableaus into oil paintings, Imazu's shadow and tonality mimic stage lighting, while her vivid color and linework capture a kind of technological realism.

The artist's newest paintings incorporate images of root vegetables from Indonesian markets and sculptural objects found in local antique stores into surreal compositions. *Curves of Time* (2023) depicts a Jōmon Venus figurine tucked between slices of glowing orange and deep purple yams to suggest a dialogue between the Japanese goddess figure and the Hainuwele myth. Indeed, fragmented dogū figures have been discovered throughout Japan, where sustenance rituals from the Jōmon period also sought to yield crops from the body of a birth goddess. In the background, a spine and ribcage pose ideas around life and death, birth and decay, and the interconnectedness of our corporeal experience to the Earth.



Kei Imazu, *Blossoming Organs*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and ROH Projects, Jakarta.

Lush green and brown earth tones in *Green Veins / Falling Goddess* (2023) parallel Hainuwele's anatomy with the island's geology and petroleum extraction. At six by six feet, the painting is an entanglement of Indonesian vegetation, mammary glands, and organs threaded together with a

vein-like outline of a human figure, launching an ecofeminist critique of colonialism and invading bodies against the reproductive labor of birth and the maternal energy of land. At over 11 feet wide and 6 feet tall, the largest work in the exhibition titled *Blossoming Organs* (2023) melds bodily and ecological narratives into a poetic retelling of Hainuwele's matriarchal legacy. A floating mass of realistic and abstract body parts, tubers, and animals rise from sweeping brush strokes and clamor above the skeleton of the goddess whose death would bring forward life.

Sowed Them to the Earth invites viewers to contend with the complex relationship between humans, nature, and its feminine spirit, moving beyond exploitation and towards protection and care.



Kei Imazu, *Green Veins / Falling Goddess*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and ROH Projects, Jakarta.

ABOUT KEI IMAZU

Kei Imazu (b. 1980, Yamaguchi, Japan) received an MA and BA from the Tama Art University, Tokyo. She has enjoyed solo exhibitions at ANOAMLY, Tokyo; Museum Haus Kasuya, Kanagawa, Japan; YAMAMOTO GENDAI, Tokyo; and ROH Projects, Jakarta, among others. Her work has been included in recent group exhibitions at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; WHAT Museum, Tokyo; Nagoya City Museum, Aichi, Japan; Yokohama Museum of Art, Kanagawa, Japan; Jeonnam Museum of Art, Jeollanam-do, Japan; Palais de Beaux-Arts, Paris; Hübner areal, documenta fifteen, Kassel, Germany; Kyoto International Conference Center, Japan; Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia; and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Imazu lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia.

ABOUT JESSICA SILVERMAN

Jessica Silverman is an ambitious, innovative, and internationally renowned contemporary art gallery with a reputation for curating compelling exhibitions, building artists' careers, and collaborating with collectors who are keen on positive provenance.

Silverman founded her eponymous gallery in 2008 after obtaining an MA in Curatorial Practice from San Francisco's California College of the Arts on the heels of a BFA from Otis College in Los Angeles. Silverman sat on the San Francisco Arts Commission for nine years. She is a founding member of 8-bridges and a member of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA). The gallery represents prominent Californian and international artists at all stages of their careers. Works by the gallery's artists have been acquired by museums all over the world including Tate (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Reina Sofia (Madrid), MoMA (New York), MCA Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Nasher Sculpture Center (Dallas), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, not to mention SFMOMA and the De Young Museum (San Francisco).

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