

New Britain Museum of American Art acquires major work by Japanese-American artist Nobu Fukui



Nobu Fukui, *Incredulity*, 2013 (detail). New Britain Museum of American Art, Paul W. Zimmerman Purchase Fund, 2014.04.

NEW YORK, NY.- [Stephen Haller Gallery](#) announces that *Incredulity*, a major artwork by Nobu Fukui, has been acquired by the New Britain Museum of American Art.

Thanks to support from the Paul W. Zimmerman Purchase Fund the 94 x 144 inch collage painting, called “a masterpiece” by New Britain Director Douglas Hyland, will become part of the museum’s extraordinary permanent collection. In an *Art in America* profile of the artist, critic Carter Ratcliff wrote that Fukui’s “process blends virtuoso control over his materials with an inexhaustible willingness to improvise.”

Paint, collage, three-dimensional beads – these are some of the ingredients of this exciting work of art. Benjamin Genocchio in *The New York Times* wrote of Fukui’s work: “like bubbling cauldrons of imagery. It is part Pop Art, part potpourri...” In its decision to purchase the work, the NBMAA engaged the opinions of its entire staff and the general public. Viewers to the museum, from adults to the very young, penned overwhelmingly positive responses to the artwork.

Of the Acquisitions Committee Meeting, Assistant Curator Anna Rogulina wrote: “The Committee unanimously voted in favor of the purchase, citing its incredible scale, technical mastery, as well as visual and symbolic richness. Simply, it is a work that stops you in your track and inspires you to look, and look again.”

The first US museum dedicated to American art, the museum is set on the edge of a majestic Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park in Connecticut. The museum’s collection ranges from Gilbert Stuart to John Singer Sargent, Mary Cassatt to Romare Bearden, Georgia O’Keeffe to Andy Warhol – right up to cutting edge contemporary artists. Under the leadership of Director Hyland, the NBMAA is in the process of a major building expansion to house its growing collection.

Nobu Fukui’s *Incredulity* is currently on view at the museum. Fukui’s work is also on exhibit at the Bates College Museum of Art in Remix, and his solo New York City exhibition opens at Stephen Haller Gallery in Chelsea on March 13th and runs through April 19th.

Fukui’s work reads as non-objective painting at a distance, yet on closer observation intrigues with surprising imagery that suggests narrative. The eye plays across the surface of his work as if watching a video game in giddy visual delight. Paint, collage, three-dimensional beads: these are some of the ingredients of this exciting work. Benjamin Genocchio in the *New York Times* wrote: “In fact, some works are so densely layered that they are a bit like bubbling cauldrons of imagery. It is part Pop Art, part potpourri...”

Fukui’s work makes brilliant use of the instant recognition of iconic popular imagery: a shorthand for the tropes of our daily lives gathered from art magazines, anime and cartoons, news, and popular culture. And in this new series he uses many distinctly American archetypes. There has always been a push-pull in Fukui’s collage-based paintings of the last few years – a sensation of almost falling into the celestial spaces of the early series, or of being drawn in to the densely packed imagery of his *Art in America* or *Superheroes* series. In this quicktime of social media our shorthand of texting and images accelerates.

Some of these new works include focal points which draw the attention of the viewer in like a vortex. Fukui’s distinctly fresh approach creates a kind of Pollock-like frenzy of color, re-inventing action painting with a Hadron Collider of images.

Fukui has always grounded his collage paintings in a first layer of newspaper which he leaves visible, wrapped around the sides of the work. This grounds his work in the quotidian texts and visuals of our daily lives – the currency of exchange – the detritus of the collective unconscious that has become ever more universal in the social networks of our contemporary life.

Born in Japan, Nobu Fukui lives and works in New York.