

Editorial: Features

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Gajin Fujita

at L.A. Louver Gallery, Venice, California
Recommendation by Michael Shaw



Gajin Fujita, 'High Voltage,' 2011, white gold and gold leaf, spray paint and paint marker on five wood panels, 48 x 80'

Continuing through November 19, 2011

Gajin Fujita, a local, Boyle Heights hero, has finally returned with a show in L.A. after a five-year absence. He continues to dazzle with his contemporary-classical hybrids, in which graffiti tagging – by him and his crew – along with gold and silver-leaf, serve as uniquely lush backgrounds to traditional Japanese ukiyo-e characters of geishas, samurais, and koi fish. That Fujita is able to integrate raw and street-prone tagging into his work so naturally, even organically, remains an achievement that sets him and his work apart from virtually every graffiti-based contemporary peer. The graphic and stenciling mastery (custom stencils are made for each painting) have for this body been joined by painterly drippings that have been revved up significantly, though still remaining flat enough to remain fully inclusive elements within Fujita's oeuvre. Otherwise, the artist's work hasn't changed much since five years ago. His mastery appears to have reached even greater heights, allowing viewers to stand mesmerized for long periods before the larger works. One wonders if Fujita is stifling any instincts for evolution, as in a more pointed degree of change, or if instead it's perfectly legit that he maintain the level it takes, and which he delivers, to create these superbly-crafted, spray-painted masterpieces.

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[L.A. Louver](#)

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