

# ARTILLERY



E'wao Kagoshima, Accidental Tourist (2018). Photo: Shana Nys Dambrot

THE BOX:

## E'WAO KAGOSHIMA

by [Shana Nys Dambrot](#)

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Fairies, pixies, anthropomorphic animals, porn actors, newspaper ads, strange symbols, beings from outer space, and leering mystics inhabit colorful, dissolute settings in mostly small-scale works on paper and canvas. These mixed media paintings and drawings by E'wao Kagoshima are fanciful, aggressively bizarre affairs. In fact the artist is quite clear on this point—the work is not supposed to make sense, because their subject is the fact that the world no longer makes sense either. Don't bother trying to figure them out, it won't work. Instead, suspend your disbelief and absorb the dreams they are dreaming for you.



E'wao Kagoshima, *Manhat* (2015). Photo: Shana Nys Dambrot

Born in 1945 in Japan, Kagoshima worked there until 1976. Now based in Brooklyn, his has always been a disjointed project of autobiography, in which the terrible and marvelous transglobal chaos of post-War reality is expressed as a form of personal surrealism. He is something of a bricoleur of his own surroundings, culling objects and collage elements from sources high and low, conceptual and commercial, pop and political. These eclectic visual bytes he arranges along vectors of invented imagery and coy characters rendered in combinations of painting, drawing and collage; using pastel, colored pencil, acrylic, ink, graphite, watercolor, oil; executed on paper and/or canvas; frequently encased in hefty vintage frames.

In small-bore masterpieces like *Accidental Tourist* (2018) and *Manhat* (2015), Kagoshima offers a straightforward strangeness, as his astronaut/deep-sea diver and melty-Cubist portrait are rendered in thick, more painterly pigment and occupy liminal atmospheric spaces. In more crisped-up compositions like *Lasts* (2015) and *Distortion One* (2015), the facture is more evocative of graphic novel vernaculars, with a flattened sense of pattern as space, and composite scenes hinting at an inscrutable narrative, somehow channeling both science fiction and arcane folk legend.



E'wao Kagoshima, *Lasts* (2015). Photo: Shana Nys Dambrot

In larger works like *Untitled One* (2018) and *Drift Dance* (2012), we are offered more expansive pictorial and optical space, room to breathe and meander through the color fields, however the central figures remain as recombinant demigods from a cartoonish demimonde familiar to denizens of the new normal.

E'wao Kagoshima, June 23 – August 4, 2018, at The Box, 805 Traction Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90013. [theboxla.com](http://theboxla.com)