

Anthony Miler

On Our Way To The Devil's Fortress

Artist | Anthony Miler
Exhibition Title | *On Our Way To The Devil's Fortress*
Dates | January 22 (Sat.) – February 26 (Sat.), 2022
Location | MAKI Gallery / Omotesando, Tokyo

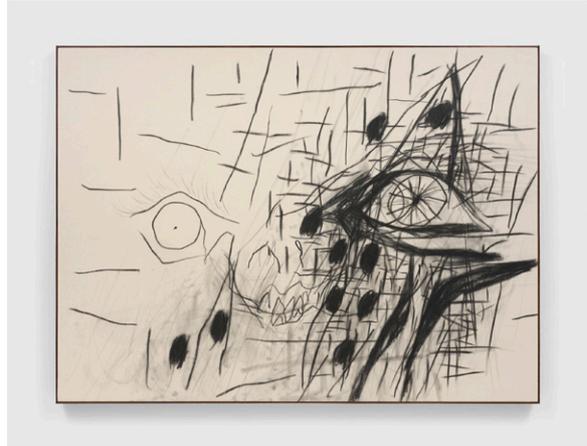


Anthony Miler, *Not Titled*, 2021, oil, acrylic, and graphite on canvas with maple frame, 146.1 x 146.1 cm

MAKI Gallery is pleased to present *On Our Way To The Devil's Fortress*, Brooklyn-based artist Anthony Miler's third solo presentation with the gallery, at Omotesando, Tokyo. The exhibition will showcase 16 new paintings which demonstrate the artist's broad-ranging and dynamic practice. The works are a cumulation of Miler's technical and conceptual exploration over the past two years, breaking new ground while preserving the nuanced beauty for which the artist is well known.

Miler's paintings are often characterized as tranquil and meditative, centered on cycloptic eyes that expand into swooping, birdlike forms. While the overall shapes are simple and geometric, subtle modulations in the linework impart an organicity that brings the canvas to life. For over a decade, raw, unprimed canvas has been the artist's material of choice—a high-risk option with little room for error. Each mark is precisely controlled and concise, the result of extensive studies and deliberation, and reflects the candid way in which the artist approaches his work. The eyes that inhabit his paintings are just as unflinching, gazing straight forward and impervious to distraction.

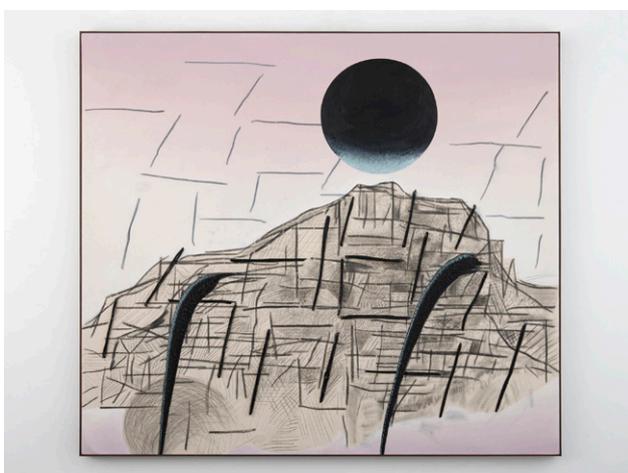
In contrast, Miler's monochromatic graphite works are more gestural, often submerged in a flurry of crisscross lines. The eyes now come in pairs and are noticeably agitated, hiding behind the "thickets" as if wary of the viewer's gaze. Coupled with pursed lips and gritted teeth, there is an emotional intensity that signifies a sharp change in tone from the serene color works. The complex latticework echoes the early work of Mondrian, instilling structure and rhythm in an otherwise chaotic composition while also flirting with the ritualistic and mystical.



Anthony Miler, *Not Titled*, 2020-2021, graphite on raw canvas with walnut frame, 133.4 x 179.1 cm

Over the past couple of years, these two distinct bodies of work have undergone increased cross-pollination—the stark black lines now exist in the same space as the soft gradations of color. Furthermore, Miler has begun incorporating thickly laid oil paint to add a textural, three-dimensional element to his work. The density of the oil weighs down the airy pigment, further contributing to the paintings' structural integrity.

The title of the exhibition, *On Our Way To The Devil's Fortress*, suggests a group either overcoming adversity together, or marching towards collective destruction. Amidst a global pandemic, looming climate collapse, and other catastrophes, one begins to wonder to what extent we have chosen this path for ourselves. A similar sense of apprehension emanates from the painting *The Devil's Fortress*, in which a massive crag looms in the distance, enveloped by an eerily calm, pale magenta sky. Two menacing, snake-like guards dare the viewer to step forward, while an ominous orb, neither sun nor moon, hovers overhead. Yet the so-called "devil" itself is nowhere in sight, and without a clear-cut adversary, the viewer is left to steep in a hazy dread of an impending reckoning.



Anthony Miler, *The Devil's Fortress*, 2021, oil, acrylic, and graphite on canvas with walnut frame, 164.5 x 184.2 cm

Despite dipping into such pervasive themes, Miler's paintings never make any sweeping conclusions. Instead, they offer the viewer breathing room to explore new ideas, to consider the human existence through instinct and internal investigation as opposed to industrial, top-down dictation. A conversation of equals rooted in a deep humility and respect for humanity, rather than one-sided showmanship. We invite you to immerse yourself into Miler's pensive works and openly embrace new realizations that may come forth.

– Anthony Miler

Born in 1982 and currently based in Brooklyn, New York, Anthony Miler received his MFA from The City College of New York, CUNY in 2008. While Miler initially focused on abstract expressionism giving form to inner feelings and emotions on canvas his mode of expression has changed dramatically in recent years. By applying a mixture of powder and liquid pigments, he renders his minimal, architectural lines in soft and deep hues. Referring to the forms in which an “eye” that gazes straight ahead are set, Miler has commented that they “are not necessarily birds. It’s not that I want to paint birds in particular, but I have long been fascinated by their evolution from ancient animals and by the beauty of their form”. As a result, there is a stillness to Miler’s paintings of beautiful “birdlike” forms, which quietly but powerfully draw the viewer in.

Miler’s recent solo exhibitions include *Witness*, The Pit (Glendale, CA, 2021); *05, PM/AM* (London, 2020); *The Sun Sets On Us All*, MASAHIRO MAKI GALLERY* (Tokyo, 2019). He has also participated in group exhibitions primarily in New York, as well as in Denmark, France, and the U.K.

*renamed MAKI Gallery in June 2020

MAKI Gallery / Omotesando, Tokyo

4-11-11 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0001 JAPAN
Tel: +81-3-6434-7705
Fax: +81-3-6434-7706
E-mail: info@makigallery.com
Opening hours: 11:30-19:00
Closed on Sundays and Mondays

*For further inquiries, please contact