



Art Exhibition

# Takuma Kamine: Myō-ō in the Shell

Interpretations of Buddhist Sculpture

February 7 - March 9, 2019

# Artist and Exhibition

Born in Osaka and now active in Tokyo, Takuma Kamine graduated with a BA of Fine Arts from the Painting Department at Tokyo Zokei University.

He currently holds a position there as a part-time instructor of Fine Art. Kamine has shown his art in solo exhibitions across Japan and in group exhibitions in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States.

His art practices garnered him the Hirake Goma! Vol. 2 Birth Art Associate Award in 2004 and the 4th MOVE Art Management Jury Prize in 2006.

As a child, Kamine was often taken to the temples in Kyoto, which is where he first encountered *butsuzō*, or statues of Buddhist deities. Despite having no knowledge of who or what these *butsuzō* depicted, he could tell they were something special, sensing the mysterious ambiance they exuded. And though they were intended to inspire confidence in adherents, Kamine found himself terrified.

He recalls, “Perhaps my young mind was just trying to get a sense of the universe, but at the time, I didn’t understand what this feeling was, and it burned itself deep into my mind.” But it was not as if the idea of larger-than-life protectors were foreign to the young Kamine; it was around that time that he became fascinated with “mecha,” mechanical space suits and giant robots popular in Japanese comics and animation, which were either themselves sentient or able to be controlled by a human spirit.

The similar auras of the vastly disparate characters so touched him that even in his adulthood he feels the need to explore this emotional response of great awe.

This exhibition showcases both the sculptures and drawings which resulted from these introspective explorations.

Takuma Kamine’s website:  
<http://studiobau.web.fc2.com>



Gozanze Myō-ō (*Trailokyavijaya*), 12-13th century, from the exhibition catalogue *Daigoji Temple: A Shingon Esoteric Buddhist Universe in Kyoto* (2018)



Takuma Kamine, *8 Guardians, the Vidya no. 2 Trailokyavijaya* (2017)  
Epoxy resin, resin casting, resin plaster, metal

## Myō-ō

Esoteric Buddhism, or *mikkyō*, formally entered Japan in the early 9th century CE by way of two monks: Kūkai (774-835) and Saichō (767-822). Their studies in China under teachers of distinct esoteric traditions culminated in the founding of the Japanese Buddhist schools of Shingon by Kūkai and Tendai by Saichō.

Central to these branches are five great buddhas (Jpn: *godai nyorai*) who, through a concept called *sanrinshin*, or three-wheeled body, take on three forms to fulfill specific tasks: their teaching buddha form, their guiding bodhisattva form, and their wrathful wisdom king form.

The Five Great Wisdom Kings, or *myō-ō* in Japanese - Fudō, Gōzanze, Daiitoku, Gundari, and Kongō-Yasha - have a fearsome presence and, with their multiple arms and faces, represent the unyielding power of Buddhism to overcome human inclinations.

Sometimes depicted atop animal vehicles, these protector deities are associated with the Five Directions - Center, North, East, South, and West - and appropriately wield weapons of war and implements of worship.

Many representations of the myō-ō show them with a roaring flame mandorla at their backs. These flames are a physical manifestation of the myō-ō's intent to purify body and mind.

## Myō-ō in the Shell

Inspiration of his work comes from two of Kamine's greatest influences: science fiction, Japanese anime and comics, including *Ghost in the Shell*, and myō-ō, whose awesome spirit surrounded by flames frightened him as a child but captivated him in his adulthood.

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