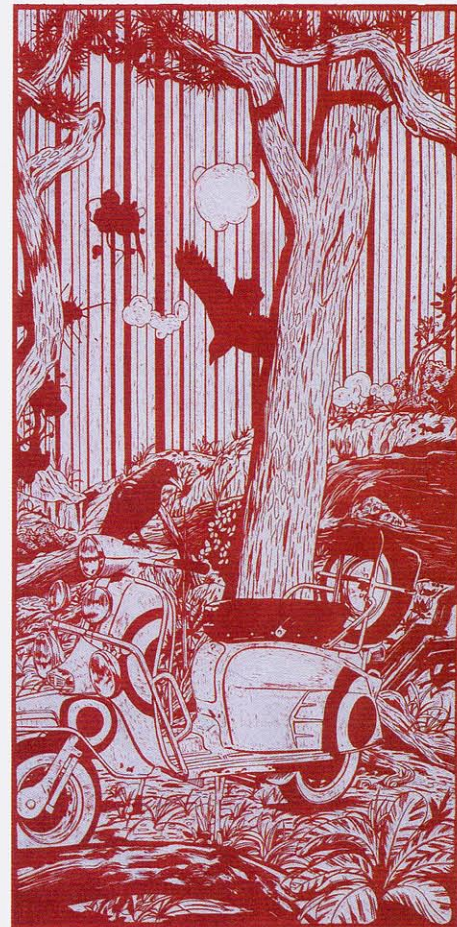
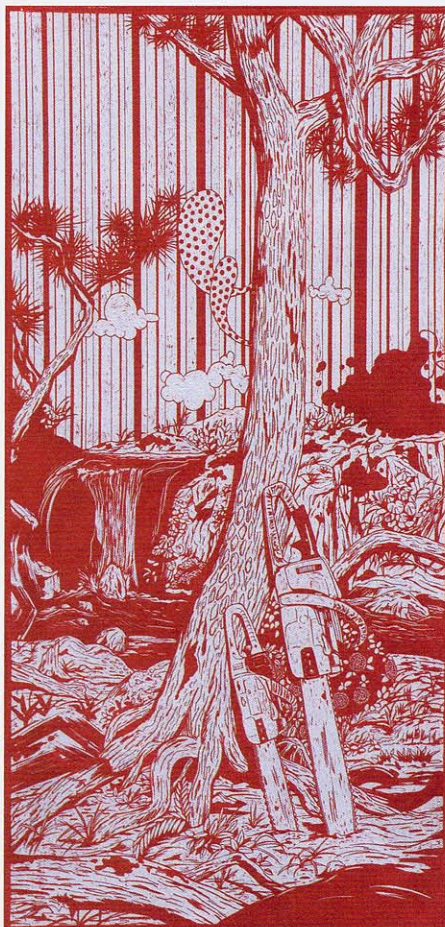
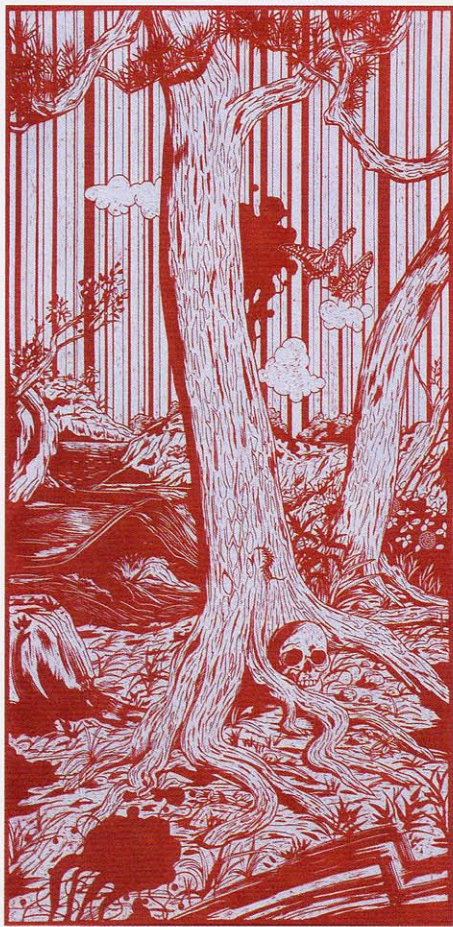


# HI + FRUCTOSE



## Kenichi Yokono

There are two kinds of horror movies, the slash-and-burn-athons generating buckets of blood--à la *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*--and the psychological thrillers like those by Hitchcock, where anticipation and suspense set your teeth on edge for much of the story. Kenichi Yokono's art smacks of the latter. His current show at the Mark Moore Gallery represents what the artist calls "the horror of everyday life." The artwork trips on the boundary between sanity and abnormality, as part of the artist's quest to create beauty amid the unthinkable horrible.

The Japanese artist, who confesses a love for zombie movies, creates images filled with foreboding. The scene before you may not be violent or terrible, but you have clearly walked in on the bloody aftermath, or you have interrupted an escalating drama. If you were in a movie with these compositions, this would be the moment the soundtrack began playing in a minor key. And you are, of course, helpless. Such is the case, for example, in the haunting "Bury Deep in the Ground." The setting is right out of *The Blair Witch Project*, set amidst the woods, with nothing but more trees in sight. Two men and a woman stand flanked by a giant panda bear. The people, a couple of them holding shovels, seem caught in contemplation, as if they are second-guessing a bad decision. Yokono adds to the eerie environment by executing the whole composition in blood red.

Yokono's technique amplifies the tension in his work. He begins by sketching ideas in pencil on a memo pad. He works quickly so he can capture the energy of his figures. Then, he enlarges the sketch before transferring it onto a woodblock. He carves the design into the woodblock and then spray-paints the surface white. He creates stark contrast by rolling red paint onto the engravings. The woodblock itself, rather than a print, is the

Everyday Horrors

by Serena Makofsky

finished piece, with the red enamel, jagged lines and engraved scratches and swirls generating a monster movie vibe.

A veritable freak show of characters and situations populates the show at Mark Moore, but Yokono isn't just about trendy fascination with the macabre. His work with woodblocks is his interpretation of the Japanese printmaking tradition of Ukiyo-e, which the artist calls "the mother of pop culture." The term translates to "pictures of the floating world," describing the experience of transcending physical reality and time to fully immerse yourself in the present moment, a revelation typically inspired by natural beauty. If Yokono captures this evanescence through blood and bones as well as flowers and butterflies, it's only natural. The artist encourages his morbid curiosity to wander to its most sinister conclusions, and he wants you along for the ride. ♦

