

AYAKO ROKKAKU

FOR THE MOMENTS THAT YOU FEEL PARADISE

23 May to 7 September 2025

Curator: Guillermo Solana

The museum is presenting an exhibition dedicated to the Japanese artist Ayako Rokkaku (born Chiba, 1982) which traces her artistic evolution through around thirty early and recent works, including paintings, sculptures and installations. *For the Moments that you feel Paradise* is the latest event in the exhibition programme devoted to the collection of Blanca and Borja Thyssen-Bornemisza, which includes two paintings by the artist. It reveals a universe in constant transformation, in which past and present intermingle and where paradise is not a destination but a fleeting sensation, just beyond reach but always present.

Known for her large-format canvases painted with her fingers, Ayako Rokkaku is an artist who creates immersive worlds that move between the tangible and the imaginary. Her dream figures first appeared in her earliest paintings, which include motifs that have subsequently recurred in her work, such as fish. Decades later these elements have reemerged in new compositions which reflect the artist's ongoing fascination with change. In Rokkaku's work nothing is fixed: figures emerge and dissolve, evoking the way clouds constantly change in the sky.

A self-taught artist, Ayako Rokkaku began painting at the age of 19. Experimentation with techniques and materials led her to apply acrylic paint directly with her fingers, a process that she finds natural and essential, and which adds energy to her artistic process. At the outset she employed cardboard as a support, which she tore before or after painting in order to create organic and spontaneous forms and which offered her more freedom than canvas or industrial paper. In her quest for her own style Rokkaku has continued to

Image: Ayako Rokkaku. *Paradise*, 2025. © Blanca and Borja Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection

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<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/private-area/press/dossiers/ayako-rokkaku>



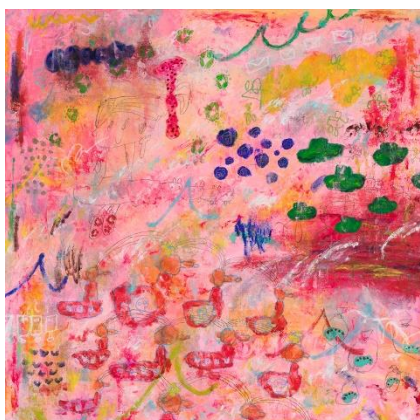
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experiment with different ideas, such as highlighting motifs with bright pink or including motifs based on creatures with large eyes.

In 2011 Rokkaku moved from Japan to Berlin where she started to use pencil and crayons and also employed more childlike lines in her compositions with the aim of maintaining both a child's gaze and the world of childhood. Interested in Abstract Expressionism and artists such as Jackson Pollock and Cy Twombly, whose work she had encountered years before in New York, she now placed more importance on abstract backgrounds in her paintings, in addition to figures or motifs applied to them. Playing with several layers, Rokkaku started adding colours and shapes in front of and behind a principal figure. Multicolored clouds now start to appear in these backgrounds, one of the natural elements most present in the work of this artist, who is attracted to their changing shapes.



Untitled, 2001-06. Courtesy of the artist and König Galerie

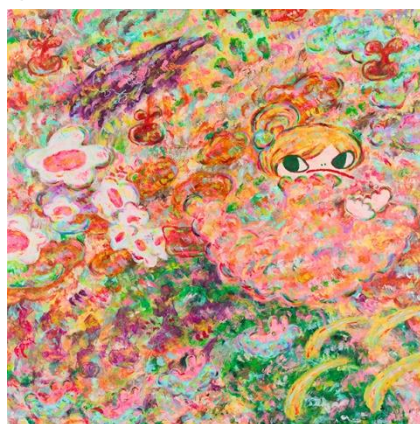


Untitled, 2012. Courtesy of the artist and König Galerie

In recent years Rokkaku has also focused on sculpture, firstly in wood and then in bronze, a new approach which poses the challenge of capturing the shapes, style and energy transmitted by her paintings but in three dimensions.

The artist's most recent and ambitious work is *Paradise* (2025), a monumental 3 x 6-metre diptych that pays tribute to Tintoretto's canvas entitled *The Paradise* in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. This is the first time that Rokkaku has created a work inspired by another one. Painted around 1588 to decorate the Sala del Gran Consiglio in the Doge's Palace in Venice, Tintoretto's canvas depicts Christ crowning the Virgin beneath the dove of the Holy Spirit and surrounded by angels, cherubim and the religious hierarchies, all floating among clouds and stars. In her version Rokkaku maintains the dynamic movement of the clouds while expressing her own Paradise in which Christ, crowned with delicate flowers, offers Mary a garland. The work is a compendium of the artist's universe: fish gliding alongside angels; seated rabbits forming circles and ducklings flying up to the sky.

Rokkaku does not usually make use of sketches, or a predetermined palette and the starting point of her painting is usually improvisation. In addition, since the outset she has made use of "live painting" with the intention of sharing the experience of artistic creation with the public. The artist will offer a pictorial performance at both the inauguration and during the period the exhibition is open.



Untitled, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and König Galerie

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Title: *Ayako Rokkaku. For the Moments that you feel Paradise*

Organiser: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza

Venue and dates: Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, 23 May to 7 September 2025

Curator: Guillermo Solana, Artistic Director of the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza

Coordinator: Paula Luengo, head of the Department of Exhibitions, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza

Number of works: 29.

Publications: Catalogue with texts by Danaï Loukas and Guillermo Solana

VISITOR INFORMATION

Address: Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014, Madrid. First floor galleries

Openings times: Mondays, from 12 noon to 4 pm (free entry); Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 am to 7 pm

Ticket prices: Combined entry: Permanent Collection and temporary exhibitions.

- Standard: 14 €.
- Reduced: €10 for visitors over 65, pensioners and students with proof of status
- Groups (7 and more people): €12 per person
- Free: visitors aged under 18, officially unemployed Spanish citizens, visitors with disabilities, Large Families, working teachers, and holders of the Youth Card and European Youth Card. Advance ticket sales at the box office, on the museum's website and on tel: + 34 91 791 13 70.

More information: <https://www.museothyssen.org>

PRESS INFORMATION

<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/private-area/press/dossiers/ayako-rokkaku>