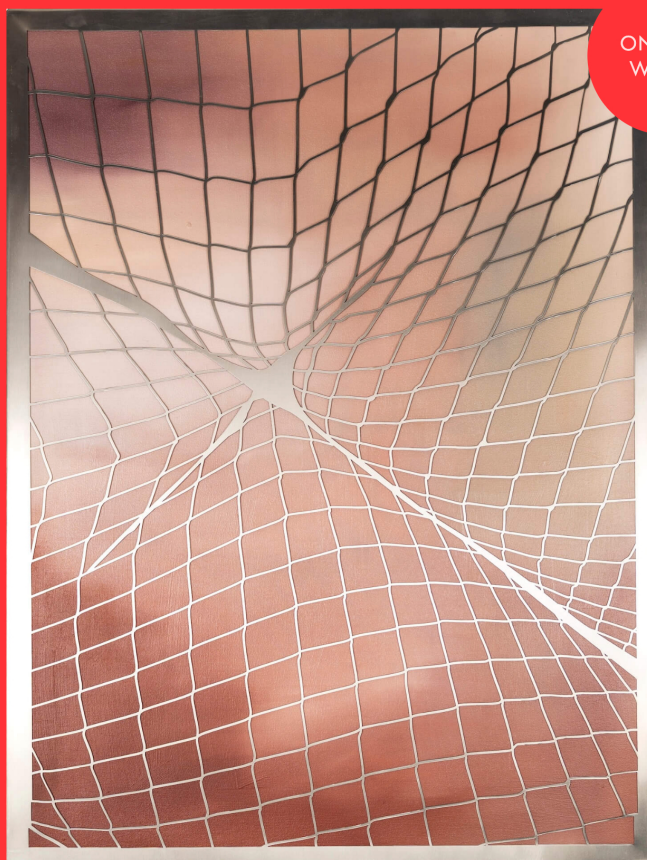


SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Makiko Harris

Championed by Kristin Hjellegjerde



Above Stockings 23 (Bruise), 2025. Photography by Ben Pipe

ONES TO
WATCH

Above Makiko Harris. Photo Credit – Ben Pipe

Interview MAKIKO HARRIS

Photography BEN PIPE

01 October 2025

“From a young age I have wrestled with questions about the body” artist Makiko Harris says. “How does my physicality relate to my sense of identity? How do we negotiate questions of agency in concealing or revealing ourselves? How do we connect with each other in an embodied way, especially in an increasingly digitised world?”

These enquiries devolve into works that span sculpture, large-scale painting and site-specific installation, exploring femininity and intersectional feminism. “I think these inspirations and questions come from my experiences growing up in a multicultural context where identity was often slippery, which resulted in strict definitions of identity often feeling like a theatre performance.”

Harris’ Good Girl series, presented at RCA2023, was an example of this: Harris took high-res scans of kimonos worn by four generations of women in her family. Her family crest, originally embroidered on the kimonos as a symbol of ownership over the wearer’s body, was recreated and abstracted using spray paint and a stencil.

“As the upcoming feature in the Dulwich Picture Gallery Magazine declares, Makiko Harris is “Nailing It” And she truly is,” says gallery owner, [Kristin Hjellegjerde](#). “Makiko is an inventor, she re-imagines the female world and makes it more powerful. Unapologetic, hardcore and confident, her work aims to surprise, always with an added twist of shock. Makiko Harris is the Brilliant Girl Power that demands to be seen and will never be forgotten. We are thrilled to present her in the new “Body Archive” show in Berlin this month.”

Body Archive is a three person exhibit – open from October 15 – where Harris will exhibit with Manuela Benaïm and Emily Pope. She will present works from her Stocking Series, using steel instead of the expected soft textiles to depict the legs, as a way to assert the fixedness and rigidity of gender, as well as signifying resistance and endurance.

It’s the kind of work Harris has become known for, combining material expressions of hybridity that speak to her own multilayered experiences as a Japanese-American. Her academic background and research continues to inform her work too: elucidates in a recent work, pNeedle Dance, a collaborative short film created earlier this year that “captures my needle sculptures interacting with bodies in an underwater performance about connection.”

Body Archive is the latest in a run of institutional shows featuring Harris’ works, including Villa Schöningen and Kunstverein Wolfsburg in Germany, and Dulwich Picture Gallery. Two further yet to be announced institutional exhibitions in the UK are due to be unveiled soon and will take place in early 2026 – expect a live performance element. Also in the pipeline is the artist’s largest ever solo exhibition, taking place at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in West Palm Beach next Autumn.

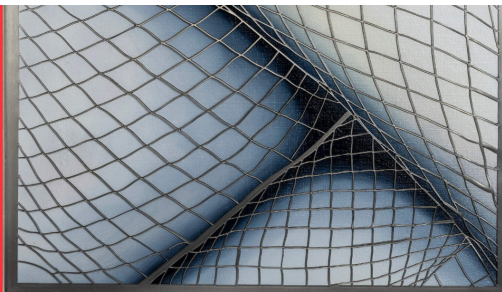
“I think my biggest achievement is to still be making!” Harris explains, modestly. “As an artist, the desire to be seen and the desire to hide are strong opposing forces that make getting the courage to keep showing up and doing the work an achievement to celebrate in and of itself. I do it scared but I do it anyway.”



Since founding her eponymous gallery, Kristin Hjellegjerde has gained a reputation for exhibiting a diverse roster of international and emerging artists. The gallery now has an impressive global presence with two permanent spaces in London, one in Berlin and one in the heart of West Palm Beach's art district. In 2027, marking an exciting new chapter, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery will unveil its newly renovated space in London Bridge. Kristin's commitment to fostering cross-cultural dialogues has led to bold and impactful exhibitions both within her own gallery spaces and at Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium where she curated 'Kubatana', the largest show dedicated to African artists ever staged in Norway, and will stage her second exhibition, focusing on Latin American artists, in 2027.

"Unapologetic, hardcore and confident, her work aims to surprise, always with an added twist of shock."





Above Stockings 22 (Shin in Blue), 2025. Photography Ben Pipe

Place of Birth

Breda, Netherlands (but I grew up in Tokyo and San Francisco Bay Area, California)

Education

M.A., Royal College of Art, Contemporary Art Practice, London, UK, California College of the Arts, Painting, San Francisco, CA, B.A., Tufts University, Major: Philosophy, Minor: Studio Art, Boston, MA.

Awards, Accolades

Part of the Bunker Museum collection by Beth Rudin De Woody, Finalist: Ingram Prize 2024, London, UK, Grand Prize Winner: The HIGH Prize for Excellence, HIGH, London, UK. Grant Recipient: Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, London, UK.

Current exhibitions

Oct 2025 (forthcoming), Body Archive, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Berlin, Germany. Oct 2025 (forthcoming), The Cass Art Prize Exhibition, Copeland Gallery, London, UK. MEGA NAIL IN LADY ALLEYN RED, Lovington Sculpture Meadow, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, UK (until 2027)

Spiritual guides, Mentors

Julia Cameron, The Artist's Way book is my bible. Visionary fashion designers whose work I find breathtaking... Iris Van Herpen, Alexander McQueen, Yohji Yamamoto. The album I return to when I want to be awestruck by the magic of instinct and improvisation is The Köln Concert, Live album by Keith Jarrett, 1975.

Advice for a future spotlight

Being an artist can feel like a solo path; it's important to keep good friends close. Laser focus on your own journey and don't compare to others. Don't worry about being best, just consistently deliver on being the best at getting better, over and over and over again. Ask me again in 50 years, but my impression of having an art career so far is that consistency and tenacity will get you far. Take breaks, eat snacks. Don't forget why you got into it in the first place – always for the love of the work.

Share story



READ MORE



SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Nicole Rose



SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Tania Kovats



SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Giulia Grillo



SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Emily Ponsonby



SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Arjuna
Gunarathne



SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight Jyll Bradley