



FS Colour Series: Soft Pink inspired by Takashi Murakami's Candy Kitsch

Description



Lots, Lots of Kaikai and Kiki / Takashi Murakami / 2009

Kaleidoscopic colour bursts forth from Takashi Murakami's world of fun, spilling out from canvases into the walls and carpets beyond. Amidst his myriad displays of riotous, wildly optimistic colour, the pale, candy hue of [SOFT PINK Linen](#) is usually lurking somewhere, tinging the faces of his *manga*-like characters, the petals of beaming flowers or the tips of curling

octopusâ legs. Known for poking fun at the seriousness of the art world, Murakamiâs mad-cap, kitsch universe encompasses a vast range of materials including painting, printing, installation, wallpaper, graphics, costume and fashion design, merging high and low art forms together, for, as he sees it, âart and commerce are one.â



IL019 SOFT PINK Softened 100% Linen

Murakami was born in 1962 in Tokyo; his father was a taxi driver while his mother made embroidery and textiles, influencing her son's attraction to the arts. Throughout his childhood, Murakami was aware of the conflicting influences that defined the identity of contemporary, post-war Japan, as it

absorbed the commercialised Americana of the west, while maintaining ancient Japanese traditions. The imagery of Japanese *anime* and *manga* animation that arose during this time fascinated Murakami throughout his teenage years, particularly the subculture of *otaku*, a strand of cartoon imagery that combines cute, childish innocence with perversions and violence.

These early interests led Murakami to study in the *nihonga* department of Tokyo's National University of Fine Arts and music, a department which taught Japanese painting techniques as well as Western influenced ideas; he remained there to study a masters and a PhD, where he learned both the intellectual histories of Japanese art, as well as the more contemporary ideas of emergent international artists, particularly in relation to Pop Art and Capitalist Realism. But it was during a fellowship to New York in the 1990s that Murakami truly found his signature style, embracing the Japanese *nihonga* tradition that had defined his adolescence and elevating it into works of art through experimental exaggerations and unusual techniques.



727 / Takashi Murakami/ Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd / 1996

In one of his most famous paintings, 727, 1996, Murakami introduces the fictional alter-ego, Mr DOB (abbreviated from the Japanese term *adobotzitea* or *why?*), seen in the centre, a character inspired by the commercialised brands of Mickey Mouse and Hello Kitty, but with a playful sense of menace. His pale skin is as pink and juicy as fresh fruit, emerging from an aged, worn-looking backdrop as if riding an oriental wave from the traditional past into the synthesised, commercialised Pop Art of the future.



DOB's March / Takashi Murakami / 1995

The lithograph print *Kaikai Kiki News*, 2002 features the two characters, Kaikai, in white rabbit ears and her malevolent friend Kiki – the pair form a contrasting yin-yang duo in Murakami’s universe. Seen here against a dazzling backdrop of blooming flowers, their pale pink skin has the smooth, innocent artificiality of a brand-new toy, a mood only quietly undercut by Kiki’s roaming third eye and razor-sharp fangs. Alongside his commercialised characters, Murakami has become known for his own flamboyant personality, which he has embellished with extravagant, hand-made costumes, often featuring candy coloured baby pinks which ramp up the kitsch, faux-naïve irreverence of his art, as seen in the octopus-inspired costume he wore to promote *The Octopus Eats His Own Leg*, 2017, at the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Chicago.



Big Box PKo2 / Takashi Murakami / 2011

More recently, at Tai Kwun's JC Contemporary Art Gallery in Hong Kong in 2018, Murakami staged a huge series of interactive displays featuring many of his most iconic characters and motifs amidst what he calls the "Superflat", a synthesised, artificial world filled with flattened repeat

patterns. In both the installations *Superflat Flowers*, 2018 and *Enso*, 2018, a glimmering shade of pale pink is the sweetest colour that sings above all the others, encapsulating the cheeky, hedonistic, and ridiculously optimistic quality that has made Murakami so celebrated and popular today.

[IL019 SOFT PINK Softened 100% Linen comes in Mid weight and Heavy Weight](#)

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