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GAJIN FUJITA

ADAA Fair
12 November –16 November 2026

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ADAA Fair
November 12–16, 2026

Park Avenue Armory
643 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Preview Gala
Thursday, Nov 12

VIP Preview: Friday, Nov 13, 10:00am–12:00pm
Friday, Nov 13, 12:00–7:00pm
Saturday, Nov 14, 11:00am–7:00pm
Sunday, Nov 15, 11:00am–6:00pm
Monday, Nov 16, 11:00am–5:00pm

Title Page Artwork: Gajin Fujita
(cropped) Cherub of Justice, 2026
24K gold, palladium, spray paint, stencils,
paint markers on four panels
Overall: 48 x 64 in. (121.9 x 162.6 cm)

L.A. Louver is pleased to participate in the ADAA Fair, with a solo presentation of new paintings and drawings by internationally renowned artist Gajin Fujita. The fair is taking place at the Park Avenue Armory in New York, **November 12-16, 2026**.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Fujita has spent over forty years creating works of art that explore his unique relationship with the city, his fascination with traditional Eastern and Western iconography, and his personal experience as a first-generation Japanese American. This dynamic presentation of work, mostly made within the last year, marks a pivotal moment in the artist's career, in subject and technique.

Within the last decade, Fujita has shifted away from his exclusive use of ukiyo-e woodblock print imagery as primary subjects in his work, to more culturally relevant and personally charged imagery and narratives. Though the artist's striking artworks remain complex and sophisticatedly layered with Fujita's own societal and cultural ideologies, the imagery and narratives have become more vulnerable, existential, and visceral in concept. Fujita unabashedly interweaves his personal memories and emotions surrounding his parents, memorializing them through his current practice.

In this body of work, Fujita has introduced contemporary, iconic Japanese anime and film heroes into his paintings, blending modern iconography and ideology naturally to create a playful, enticing visual dialogue between the artwork and viewer.

As seen in Fujita's paintings, *Press Play* and *Press STOP (7867)*, the artist's exploration of new techniques has allowed him to paint in a more representational manner at a level never explored or seen before. Fujita's paintings incorporate a range of materials and methods, including spray paint (applied through intricately hand-cut stencils), paint markers, and gold and white gold leaf on wood panels. The artist's skilled, intrinsic use of these materials paired with his new introspective curation of imagery has resulted in a powerful collection of paintings and drawings that beautifully capture the best of the artist, then and now, with more to come.

Born in 1972, is the son of Japanese parents. His father was a fine art painter from Hokkaido, and his mother was an art conservator from Tokyo. His parents raised him and his brothers in Boyle Heights, a historic immigrant neighborhood just east of Downtown Los Angeles and the L.A. River. Fujita became fascinated with graffiti as a teenager, joining the tagging crews KGB (Kidz Gone Bad) and KIIS (Kill to Succeed). Through graffiti, Fujita followed his own path towards fine art and received his BA from Otis College of Art & Design, Los Angeles, and his MFA from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he found mentorship under art critic Dave Hickey. Fujita was also lauded by Christopher Knight of the Los Angeles Times as "the most important 21st century iteration of graffiti's influence on art."

Gajin Fujita has been included in museum exhibitions worldwide including *Conversations through Asian Collections*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2015); *Gajin Fujita*, Hunter Museum of America Art, Chattanooga, TN (2015); *Gajin Fujita: Ukiyo-e in Contemporary Paintings*, USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA (2012); *Gold*, Museum of Belvedere, Vienna, Austria (2012); Edo Pop: *The Graphic Impact of Japanese Woodblock Prints*, The Minneapolis Art Institute, Minneapolis, MN (2011); *Prospect.1*, curated by Dan Cameron, New Orleans, LA (2008); *Zephyr: Paintings by Gajin Fujita*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas, MO (2006); *Contemporary Projects 9: Gajin Fujita and Pablo Vargas Lugo*, curated by Ilona Katzew, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA (2005); *Floating World Redux: Gajin Fujita and Yasumasa Morimura*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC (2002); and *Beau Monde: Toward a Redeemed Cosmopolitan*, curated by Dave Hickey, Site Santa Fe's 4th International Biennial, Santa Fe, NM (2001).



Gajin Fujita
Criminal Minded, 2026
24K & 12K gold leaf, spray paint, paint markers on wood panel
24 x 16 in. (61 x 40.6 cm)
(Inv# GF26-005)

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Gajin Fujita's inspiration for the central figure of ***Criminal Minded*** came from an 1865 print by Ukiyo-e artist Toyohara Kunichika titled *Evening glow at the Eitaibashi* from the series *Eight views of bandits parodied*. Kunichika illustrates the notorious robber Oniazami Seikichi—a real-life criminal from early 19th-century Japan—hanging onto the underside of the Eitai Bridge in Tokyo. His arms are covered in sleeves of thistle tattoos done in the traditional Japanese style, a detail rarely seen in Ukiyo-e prints.

Fujita reimagines the bandit inserted within the landscape of Los Angeles, seemingly oozing from between gaps in the concrete architecture. In the foreground of the painting, a sword stands upright, perhaps impaled in something or someone. The figure reaches out with his smartphone, seemingly to snap a selfie or capture the implied crime scene on camera. The bandit's traditional thistle tattoos have been exchanged for contemporary Western-style ink. To select the tattoos, Fujita looked through photographs of East Los Angeles gang members and located tattoo motifs that reoccur across subcultures and ethnic enclaves, including spiderwebs, pistols, a die (rolled to reveal the 213-area code), and Comedy and Tragedy masks rendered in the black-and-white Chicano style.

The silver and gold gilded background of this work was inspired by the skyline of downtown Los Angeles. Ample graffiti tags cover the silver portions, transforming them into the palimpsestic, textured concrete surfaces of the city streets. A hazy, red "LA" tag acts as a setting sun, beating down on the concrete and the half-dressed figure. "I wanted to capture the idea that it's about to get dark and the freaks are about to come out," Fujita says.



Detail of ***Criminal Minded***



Gajin Fujita
Press Play, 2026
22K gold leaf, 12K white gold leaf, paint markers and spray paint on three wood panels
72 x 66 in. (182.9 x 167.6 cm)
signed, titled and dated verso
(Inv# GF26-008)

INQUIRE

Within the last decade, Fujita has gradually moved from using ukiyo-e woodblock prints as his main source of inspiration and introduced more contemporary imagery in his practice.

In ***Press Play***, Fujita painted Jūbei Kibagami, a protagonist character played in the 1993 anime film *Ninja Scroll*. The director, Yoshiaki Kawajiri, based the character off one of Japan's most famous real-life samurai folk heroes, Yagyū Jūbei Mitsuyoshi. The real-life samurai, Jūbei, was a legendary swordsman from Japan's early Edo period, who served the Tokugawa shogunate. Fujita chose the animated Jūbei Kibagami as the central subject of the painting *Press Play* because he wanted to honor and pay homage to Yoshiaki Kawajiri, one of Fujita's favorite writers and artists, who was best known for his dark, fantasy anime that was targeted and made more for adults than children. When Fujita watched *Ninja Scroll* from the first time, "I was blown away," remembers Fujita.

When Fujita began laying down the groundwork for this painting, he recalled that something wasn't working. He printed out several screen shots of Jubei, and came across one that accidentally included the play, forward, and rewind dial icons included. This was Fujita's aha moment with the work. Including the buttons brings an illusionistic, interactive layer to the painting. It slyly invites the viewer to engage with the painting like a phone or television screen, and it introduces conceptual layers of technology, which the artist has creatively infused in his work over the last decade.

The gold and white gold gilded background depicts a pyramid, meant to represent the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Inside the triangle is the traditional Japanese water (Seigaiha) pattern, which literally translates to "blue sea and waves," and is meant to symbolize unbroken peace, tranquility, good fortune, and the endless rhythm of life.

In *Press Play*, Fujita uses a more refined technique with the spray can (holding the cans upside down, such that the paint can be applied in a soft mist). Using this technique, Fujita was also able to achieve the rippling effect inside the centered play button, as well as the forward and rewind buttons, giving them the frosty effect familiar on our phone screens. Fujita included this concept of a phone screen and dial buttons in his next painting, *Press STOP (7867)*.



Gajin Fujita
(detail of) Press Play, 2026



Gajin Fujita
Cherub of Justice, 2026
24K gold, palladium, spray paint, stencils, paint markers on four panels
Overall: 48 x 64 in. (121.9 x 162.6 cm)
Each panel: 48 x 16 in. (121.9 x 40.6 cm)
signed verso
(Inv# GF26-001)

detail of ***Cherub of Justice*** *(following page)*

INQUIRE

In ***Cherub of Justice***, an armored samurai slashes his sword in the direction of a pink-haired cherub who captures the interaction on his smart phone while ascending into the heavens unharmed. The interlocking yellow and white gold background references the alternative cover for Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here*, which depicts two machines shaking hands. Fujita selected the image because he has fond memories of listening to the album in his father's studio as a child. He also found resonance between the image and today's constantly increasing interactions between humans and AI technology.

The strong diagonal composition of the piece imbues each character with a sense of dynamic movement. The dramatic slant also locates the viewer at the clash of multiple realms—East and West as well as heaven and earth, two dichotomies that Fujita has long investigated in his painting and drawing practice. These interests, however, have taken on new urgency after recent deaths of loved ones and the concurrent violent ICE raids occurring in Los Angeles. Fujita casts the samurai, who wears the "LA" symbol like an officer's badge on his chest, as an authoritarian figure in persecution of the angel. The cherub, who Fujita describes as "the real angel of Los Angeles," is forced to defend himself and his city.





Gajin Fujita
Study of Cherub of Justice (samurai), 2026
pencil, ink and spray paint on paper
36 3/16 x 65 13/16 in. (91.9 x 167.2 cm)
Framed: 40 x 69 3/8 in. (101.6 x 176.2 cm)
(Inv# GF26-002)

INQUIRE

detail of ***Study of Cherub of Justice*** *(following page)*



Gajin Fujita
ES LOWREINA ST., 2025
12K white gold leaf, 24K gold leaf, spray paint, paint markers and acrylic on wood panel
24 x 16 in. (61 x 40.6 cm)
signed verso
(Inv# GF25-017)

INQUIRE

In Gajin Fujita's ***ES LOWREINA ST***., the "ES" stands for "East Side" and "LOWREINA" is a play on words for "Lorena" which is the street he grew up on in Boyle Heights (on the eastside of Los Angeles). Fujita liked the idea of calling the work "low-reina," given that "reina" in Spanish translates to "queen." "It's like a 'low queen,'" he says. Street artists often purposefully misspell phrases and words, breaking formalities to mean something completely different. This type of play on words is often very personal to the artist.

The study on paper, or stencil, of *ES LOWREINA ST*. was created in preparation for the actual painting and is considered by Fujita as an essential tool and compositional device for the work.

At the studio, Fujita was often thinking of his mother who suffered for years with, and later succumbed to, dementia. "Ninety-nine percent of my paintings are relative to my mom or dad," says Fujita. His mother was a conservator of fine art and objects, mostly Asian antiques, and he chose a small doll figurine from her collection to memorialize her in *ES LOWREINA ST*. The doll has the visual characteristics of an antique Japanese clay folk art doll (tsuchi-ningyo), which typically depicts a warrior, general, or deity. The doll's exact history is unknown, but Fujita believes it was handmade and hand-painted (although most from that era were mass-produced). This specific style of hand-painted, molded earthenware doll was highly popular in Japan from the Edo period through the pre-war era, and often given as protective symbols, festival decorations, or to bring good fortune. The sword prominently featured in this work is a "naginata,"which is a traditional Japanese polearm made of a curved, single-edged steel blade and mounted on a wooden shaft.

The gold and white gold gilded pyramid in the background is in reference to the Holy Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the clay doll was centered on the panel and meant to represent the sun. The doll's face is looking upward, towards the sky, with an expression of contentment and curiosity. Fujita placed a L.A. Dodgers logo on the doll's chest, with a splash of Dodger blue added to the headdress, both recurring colors and themes in his work.

On the doll's lower-body garment (hakama), Fujita included a checkerboard pattern (ichimatsu), inspired from watching the Zatōichi or Blind Swordsman movies and Japanese TV shows as a child. The checkerboard pattern is a traditional Japanese design that dates back thousands of years. In the 18th century, the popular Edo-period kabuki actor Sanogawa Ichimatsu wore a stage divided skirt (hakama) featuring a checkerboard pattern. Since then, the checkered skirt became a fashion statement, and the public soon renamed the motif Ichimatsu-moyo (ichimatsu pattern) in his honor. Because the checkerboard grid goes on endlessly without interruption, the pattern symbolizes continuity, prosperity of descendants, and business expansion. Also on the doll's legs, Fujita included a traditional Japanese water (Seigaiha) and wave patterns that symbolize peace, resilience, good luck, and eternity. Seigaiha and ichimatsu are both recurring themes in Japanese interiors and artworks and frequently used in Fujita's work.

Growing up in Boyle Heights, Fujita's family home was positioned on a corner lot with tall retaining walls that were a constant hotspot for local taggers. The random, colorful, and free in spirit manner in which graffiti appears on the picture plane is intended to echo and memorialize the visual landscape that defined his youth. When Fujita invites his friends to tag his panels, they do so carefully, knowing they may get "wiped out," just like on the street. Some artists go big and some go small, and some have even trailed off to sides of the canvas to snag a more secure, everlasting spot on the work.



Gajin Fujita
Press STOP (7867), 2026
12K white gold leaf, 22K gold leaf, paint markers and spray paint on four wood panels
Overall: 48 x 64 in. (121.9 x 162.6 cm)
signed verso
(Inv# GF26-009)

INQUIRE

Detail of ***Press STOP* (7867)** to follow

Gajin Fujita's ***Press STOP (7867)***, captures a unique and crucial moment in the artist's career, both in his own technical exploration and his social critique.

Press Stop (7867) portrays Fujita's frustrations with the overwhelming ongoing violence in the world, and his deep desire to quell its flames. Fujita scoured movies and TV shows he enjoyed in his youth, searching for a person or place in time that best captured his emotions and feelings about violence. He decided to rewatch the classic Akira Kurosawa 1959 film, *Throne of Blood*, and paused at the iconic scene of the rotten shogun, Taketoki Washizu, played by actor Toshiro Mifune, fearfully navigating a barrage of incoming arrows.

Fujita immediately felt a connection to the hopeless samurai, who was alone, outnumbered, and on the brink of defeat. When Fujita decided to use this image, he asked a friend to colorize the scene, to add more life and modernity to the scene and his painting. The actor's mouth hangs wide open, his neck is pinned to the door frame behind him, and the agony on his face is jarringly real.

A large stop button centered in the painting pushes the viewer into a different reality, however. The numbers "78" on the rewind button and "67" on the forward button correlate with the telephone keypad. 7 = **S**, 8 = **T**, 6 = **O,** 7 = **P**. Fujita's insider play on numbers translates to the letters in "STOP," and is meant to mean simply, "Stop the violence." This painting is the first time Fujita has introduced film imagery directly into his work.

The artist also has spent a great deal of time perfecting the rippling effect inside the center stop button, as well as the rewind and forward buttons. Using a specialized technique (holding the spray can upside down, so the paint can be applied in a soft mist), Fujita was able to superimpose a transparent, water-like effect to each icon, further creating the illusion that the painting is an interactive screen.

The large, blue graffiti comes from the hand of Fishe, who first admired Fujita's work at LACMA. Fishe's large blue tag is considered a "throwie," which is a fast, rounded bubble or block letter with a quick fill-in (often two colors). It originated in New York, because the street artists often had only a few moments to tag the train. "'Throwies' are also of form of dissing or crossing out other graffiti writers and their works and I think this critical act of crossing someone else out is the origin of the term 'throw up,'" says Fujita.


78
67
GONE
BAP



Gajin Fujita
Tail Whip, 2007
gold & silver leaf, acrylic, paint marker,
spray paint and Mean Streak on 6 panels
48 x 96 in. (121.9 x 243.8 cm)
(Inv# GF07-5a)

INQUIRE

Detail of ***Tail Whip*** on following page

Tail Whip, 2007, is a painting of harmonic collision: Classic and modern Japanese motifs court and contest each other, while natural and supernatural elements collide and combine with extraordinary energy. Coiling ferociously through a bank of clouds crackling with lightning bolts, Gajin Fujita's fiery green dragon roars through the metallic sky, trailing flames. The mythological beast is a reference to the iconographic canon of revered Japanese tattoo artist Horiyoshi III, and also a nod to the tattoo legacy of Don Ed Hardy, a friend, mentor and artistic influence for Fujita. Fujita imbues traditional Japanese textures throughout the composition — a sayagata pattern in the clouds symbolizes longevity and harmony, while sea spray and foam burst forth from the Japanese seigaiha water design of the text "Whip" in the foreground.


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ADAA Fair Dates

2 - 6 November 2026

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