

For Immediate Release

January 7, 2016  
Los Angeles, CA

COREY HELFORD GALLERY

# HIKARI SHIMODA

## “RECYCLING HUMANITY”



OPENING RECEPTION SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, FROM 7–11PM  
ON VIEW JANUARY 16 – FEBRUARY 13, 2016

On Saturday, January 16th, 2016, Corey Helford Gallery in Los Angeles presents Japanese artist Hikari Shimoda’s second solo exhibition, “Recycling Humanity” at CHG. Hikari’s new work will be on view in Gallery 2.

Cheery, bright, colorful, magical, melancholy, and even dark, Hikari Shimoda’s portraits of starry-eyed children carry a different meaning for anyone who looks at them. The sparkling and sweet demeanor of her young subjects is at once enchanting and disarming, full of possibilities as they seemingly stare into space while reflecting light and darkness. Born and currently based in Nagano, Japan, but raised on Japanese animation comics, Hikari Shimoda herself is not unlike her characters, living on the edge between a world deeply rooted in its beliefs and traditions and an exciting, however uncertain, future. “Recycling Humanity” continues Shimoda’s theme about the balance between past and future, life and death, the world we live in, and the world yet to be reborn. The exhibition will feature new additions to her two main portrait series: “Whereabouts of God”, her response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and accident of Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, and “Children of this Planet”, portraying children of the disaster now decorated by a twinkling “Chernobyl necklace”.

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The exhibition will also introduce two new series, “Children on the Edge” and “Children of Emptiness”, ambiguous horned children decorated by gentle butterflies who represent facets of Shimoda’s own mind and feelings. “The horns are my way of communicating what cannot be said. I call them wordless words,” she says. “I am using this motif in my painting that portrays a child standing on the “edge,” which has many meanings. It could be the edge of childhood, before becoming an adult, or the edge between two worlds, the spirit world and our reality, or, finally, the border between my home country and other countries.” This body of work also shows new collage pieces, where Shimoda applies looser brush strokes, splatters, abstract details and incorporates recently learned English words to more directly express her emotions. This includes the show’s titular painting, “Recycling Humanity”: “This title derives from the Buddhist idea of “samsara”- a never-ending cycle of life and death. The girl represents a savior, who saves human souls from this world of pain and reborn in the new world of peace. She is embarrassed, and then depressed by their death, and her existence as a god turns into a devil. The girls’ hand gestures are just the same as Buddha as he collects the spirit of a dead person, and in the background is a collapsed world and crumbling people. What this piece asks is, what is the real meaning of salvation, peace, and hope?”

The opening reception for Hikari Shimoda will be hosted Saturday, January 16th, 2016, from 7-11pm at Corey Helford Gallery. The reception is open to the public, and the exhibition is on view through February 13, 2016.

### **Hikari Shimoda**

Based in Nagano, Japan, Hikari Shimoda first studied illustration at the prestigious Kyoto Saga University of Art and Aoyama Juku School before beginning her career as a contemporary artist in 2008. Soon afterward, Shimoda was selected for her first solo exhibition at Motto Gallery in Tokyo, and since then has held exhibitions annually in galleries worldwide, spanning Japan, the United States, Canada, and Milano, Italy. Shimoda’s artwork paints a world where cuteness and horror coexist, and fantasy meets reality. She credits the Japanese pop culture she grew up with as the main source of inspiration of her Lowbrow Irasuto style, inspired by anime and manga. There are often children putting on heroic costumes such as Superman and Shojo girls, an anime sub-genre of young girls who use magic. Through depicting children especially, Shimoda reveals the problems people in today’s society struggle with from within. Children possess a simple existence because their identity is ambiguous which provides her with an original point of view. In her Whereabouts of God portrait series of other-worldly horned children, she also comments on Christianity’s anointment of Jesus Christ as savior of humanity and mirror of our fantasy heroes. These characters not only represent heroism but an adult desire to watch our children grow and defend the world we have constructed. With each new piece, Shimoda advances her search for salvation and her deeper understanding of this chaotic world.

### **COREY HELFORD GALLERY**

Corey Helford Gallery was established in 2006 by Jan Corey Helford and her husband, television producer and creator, Bruce Helford (Anger Management, The Drew Carey Show, George Lopez, The Oblongs). Corey Helford Gallery represents a diverse collection of Contemporary artists influenced by today’s pop culture, encompassing the genres of New Figurative, Pop Surreal, Graffiti and Street Art. Artists include Josh Agle (Shag), Ron English, D\*Face, Chloe Early, Eine, Natalia Fabia, Hush, Liz McGrath, Richard J. Oliver, Herakut, Kukula, Sylvia Ji, Eric Joyner, Brandi Milne, Korin Faught, Mary Jane Ansell, Martin Wittfooth, Lori Nelson, Hannah Yata, Camilla d’Errico, Hikari Shimoda and more. Renowned for its notable exhibitions, the gallery has presented “Charity By Numbers,” which was cocurated by Gary Baseman and featured an unprecedented lineup of artists including Mark Ryden, Marion Peck, Shepard Fairey, Todd and Kathy Schorr, Camille Rose Garcia, and Michael Hussar, as well as “La Noche de la Fusion,” an epic Carnavalesque festival and solo exhibition for Pervasive artist Gary

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Baseman. In 2010, Corey Helford Gallery partnered with Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery for the transatlantic collaboration "Art From The New World," a world-class United Kingdom museum exhibition showcasing work by a formidable group of 49 of the finest emerging and noted American artists. Corey Helford Gallery presents new exhibitions approximately every four weeks. For more information and an upcoming exhibition schedule, please visit [coreyhelfordgallery.com](http://coreyhelfordgallery.com).

Corey Helford Gallery  
571 S Anderson St (Enter on Willow St)  
Los Angeles, CA 90033  
Tel. 310.287.2340  
Open Tuesday-Saturday, Noon to 6pm  
[coreyhelfordgallery.com](http://coreyhelfordgallery.com)

Press and Media Inquiries:

Perry Simnowski  
[Perry@coreyhelfordgallery.com](mailto:Perry@coreyhelfordgallery.com)  
Tel. 310.287.2340