

# 'Happy Art'

## Brooklyn Artist's Paintings of Dreamlike Scenes Are Not Just for Kids' Rooms

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Looking for a new way to brighten up your child's bedroom? Forget about Rugrats and PowerPuff girls and enter the world of Kidmodern — kid art for the 21st century. Designed by Brooklyn artist Gale Kaseguma, each original Kidmodern painting reveals an imaginary universe filled with colorful creatures, authentic wildlife, giant flowers, mystical birds, twinkling stars and rippling oceans. The dreamlike artwork is bright and translucent, with a warm blend of rainbow shades.

With layers of mixed paints combined with collaged rice paper, colored tissue and encaustic wax, each painting's surface is unique in its own way. "No two paintings are the same," said Kaseguma, who gave birth to Kidmodern while pregnant with her son, Guy, two years ago. "I wanted to decorate the nursery with

bright and punchy colors that a child would respond well to." As a result, Kaseguma painted "Oceans," from her Fish and Seas series, and hung it in the nursery. "Not only was Guy fascinated by the painting, but when friends would come over, they would stare at the painting," she said. "The responses were great."

A painter for 15 years and a collector of 20th-century art, Kaseguma's work is inspired by artists from Picasso to Dr. Seuss. "I just love Dr. Seuss," she said. "His silly humor inspires me. His books are similar to my artwork because the audience is for both kids and adults."

On display for the first time ever, Kidmodern opened on Thursday, June 20, at Gumbo Gallery, located at 493 Atlantic Ave. in Brooklyn, and will be on exhibition till Aug. 31. Hung on white brick walls inside this unique crafts and accessory store, nine paintings from different series, including

Flowers in Bloom, Nighttime and Musical Notes, are exhibited.

According to Kaseguma, "City," inspired by the Manhattan skyline and completed after Sept. 11, has been getting a lot of attention. "People really connect with this painting," said Karen Zebulon, owner of Gumbo Gallery. "In light of what happened, the painting really represents a positive image of Manhattan." Kaseguma believes that the artwork represents hope. "It sort of says that New York City has healed after all the tragedy it's gone through."

Twelve-year-old Perry Shusterman, who attended the recent art opening with her father, said, "I really like the 'City' painting. It's really cool, and it doesn't just look like New York City; it could be any city." While Perry admitted to being a little too old to hang the artwork in her bedroom, her father, Kenny, told *New York Resident* that if he had younger children, Kidmodern would be hanging on their walls. "Kids spend a lot of time in their rooms," he said. "These paintings are not only bright and warm, but they are nurturing; [they] invoke thought and provide positive reassurance."

Another admirer, Brooklyn muralist Mason Nye, stated, "These



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are not cutesy kid paintings. They are sly adult paintings with a good sense of design. They are very direct and easy to understand. I'd hang one in my living room."

While the Kidmodern paintings on display at Gumbo are not for sale, Kaseguma customizes commissioned paintings with special names, colors or patterns, depending on people's desires. Every Kidmodern painting is original, so expect variation when working with Kaseguma. Prices for paintings range from \$2,000 to \$4,500.

Interested in decorating her classroom with posters of Kidmodern, fifth-grade Long Island teacher Jennifer Braver said, "They represent being a kid. It's light and happy art. Who wouldn't want it hanging in their room?"



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