

Sin City
Gallery

HAJIME SORAYAMA
空山基

APRIL 9, 2016

ART FOR MODERN PROVOCATEURS

50 ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART



MAY 2016
EXHIBITING
SELECT
WORKS OF
ART

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Sorayama



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Publication Date: 01/05/2016

Curator: Dr. Laura Henkel

Editor: RJH Berland

Layout and graphic design: William Shea

Front Cover: "Sliver Bobb" by Hajime Sorayama

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<http://sorayama.com>

Introduction

It is a great honor to premiere never before exhibited works by the world-renowned illustrator and painter Hajime Sorayama. This limited engagement exhibition is the only solo show in America of such magnitude and features fifty original art works from a private collection, many of are on public view for the first time. All of the works have impeccable provenance and the show could not have organized without the gracious collaboration of the artist.

Sorayama's vision has permeated global visual culture, from the growth of Manga, anime, digital media, the pages of iconic magazines like Playboy, the films of Hollywood, and even haute couture, and contemporary portraiture. Highly collectible, Sorayama's work is a point of pride for the lucky few that own an authentic work. Today, to great acclaim and a constantly accelerating market, Sorayama continues to produce new and even more gorgeously intriguing versions of his science fiction goddess.

The Iconic Figure of the Sexy Robot

First envisioned in the late 1970s, the artist debuted this fantastic creature in his 1983 book *Sexy Robot*, which took the world by storm. Our show features some of the first in the series, including two stand alone original acrylic on illustration board paintings from 1982 *Sexy Robot*, *Yellow Dress* (1982), and of course, the fantastic *Sexy Robot*, *Purple Swimsuit*.

Sorayama's unique aesthetic is defined by not only his early illuminated treatment of an imaginary cyborg like woman, but also during the 1990s the creation of a series of powerful images that paired the hard with the soft, long legged beauties, bound and chained, the light refracting

of translucent skin, masks, fantastic lingerie and more, most wouldn't mind meeting the raven haired goddess of Sorayama's *November* (1995) all succulent breasts, wild hair and naughty eyes.

Why is she called the postmodern answer to the Alberto Vargas pin up girl? Well, the iconic Sorayama woman is a timelessly alluring paradigm, she is a reflection of modern and contemporary style, fashion, fetish and standards of beauty, rendered by the constantly evolving and perfecting hand of the master Sorayama. Perfect beauty is often elusive in this world, but we get a glimpse in the *Untitled* (2001) painting of a pin up style beauty all bound up in chains, and sex toys, her diaphanous stockings are her only apparel.

Somewhere between utopia and dystopia, her super real neo-science fiction and fantasy world is to enter a floating realm of pure pleasure, of palpable beauty, eroticism and supple flesh welded to super real costumes of metallic silvery steel, sleek black, glimmering sliding blue, hybrid women who are a transfixing breed of half woman half robot. Some of most evocative paintings of this pairing include the succulent pin up in the luminous work *Honey Dew* (1992) as well as the famous pastel series of sexy robots *Tsunami Girls* (1998).

A Reflection of Late Twentieth and Early 21st Century Culture

Sorayama's work is culturally resonant and in a way almost literary, the images play out narratives of science fiction, mythical creatures, and the realm of futuristic fantasy, somewhere between utopia and dystopia. Of particular resonance is the artist's masterly neo-renaissance acrylic painting of an armored woman, pierced like a St.

Sebastian picture, she is an admixture of saintly motifs, heroic knights, robotic creatures, and of course sex appeal. The work is not only beautiful to look at, but it also has historical significance, it reflects not only contemporary style, body images, modes, and roles of sexuality. Specifically, the sexy robot is sometimes thought of a reflection of a cultural fluctuating admiration and fear of the artificially intelligent and robotic, particularly felt and expressed in the late 1980s and through the 1990s, an anxious, probing voice present in media, academic books, films and even erotic dreaming.

A Particular Type of Girl

As the stunning pin up Jayne Mansfield once said “If you’re going to do something wrong, do it big, because the punishment is the same either way.” Since she was so delightfully gorgeous, most people would be inclined to agree and follow her directions. Similarly, these women in Sorayama’s work are equally charming and enchanting with a dash of bad, like the platinum blonde in the painting *May* (1995). In fact, Sorayama’s woman is a brilliant, not to mention erotic admixture of classic 1940s Vargas pin up girls most evocatively expressed in his pretty but titillating painting *Lace Up* (1992). We also see glimpses of those iconic queens of couture, the fashion models of the 1980s and 1990s, like Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista, and Christy Turlington such as *December* (1999) Tall, strong, robust, Sorayama’s women are Amazons full of life, sex, and adventure, wielding weapons and revealing combat uniform in works like *June 18, 2004*. As well, fertility also seems to play a role, one needs only to look at the succulent robotic girl, her firm breasts lactating in the picture *Metalicon Cover Image*, 1998.

The Legacy of Shunga

We should also point out the Sorayama’s outstanding work also has deep roots in Japanese art historic traditions of erotica, such as the fine legacy of Japanese Shunga, the Japanese erotic

art genre of the 17th-early 20th century tradition including masters like Hokusai and Kunisada of the floating world school (ukiyo-e). Sorayama’s aqueous finely drawn images such as *Ukiyoe I* and *II* draw on this genre most obviously. This vastly popular form of erotica appeared in books, prints, paintings and drawings. Most recently, the British Museum dedicated an entire exhibit to Shunga, and the Japanese tradition.

The Mastery of Sorayama

That Sorayama’s work is more than beautiful women born out of hybrid neo-science fiction narrative may be hard to see at first, the lustrous shine of his femme fatales so enchanting. Yet, he is regarded as an artist whose practice, imagination with all its polish and shine is groundbreaking. Turn to the enticing vampiric woman in *Silver Bob* (1996) for an idea of timeless sex appeal. Some images are more shocking, the bound woman hanging, (1996) *Unt-b 18*, and *Spanish Spider* (January 1998) or another on a torture device, *Unt-b 24* (2004). Still others are amusing, like *Torture Garden* (December 1998) a play on the extravagance of Rococo erotica of the era of the French court painters like Fragonard. Still other works are monochromatic such as the golden *Satin Sheets* (November, 1995) and the grisaille photo realistic image of a wet longhaired beauty on her knees, simply titled *Pin Up*.

The fact that Sorayama’s work continues to have resonance and transform with not only emerging technical tools, but also in tandem with contemporary fashion and style, allows us to gain insight into a particular openness within the artist. His work dispels the idea that there is a high or low type of art, his technical mastery so impressive, and his constant journey of exploration has awarded him a place in worldwide exhibitions and his work has been on view at The Museum of Modern Art, The World Museum of Erotic Art, and is found in the permanent collections of the Carnegie Mellon University as well as MoMA.

Biography

Hajime Sorayama, b. 1947, Imabari, Ehime Prefecture, Japan

As one of the world's most collected pin up artists, Hajime Sorayama is considered among the most influential graphic artists working today. Admired for his iconoclastic outlook, the Sorayama aesthetic of fantasy, sensuality, and science fiction has held a steadfast influence over 30 years, and this unique artistic vision permeates visual cultural worldwide. The mark of Sorayama is seen in haute couture, the music world, film, and Sorayama has become a leading tastemaker in the world of erotica. This prolific and imaginative practice includes painting, digital art, drawing, and graphic illustration.

Sorayama's creative training began at the Imabari Kita High School, followed by time at Shikoku Gakuin University and eventually art studies at the Central Art School, Tokyo. While he has always enjoyed drawing pin ups, professional work began in advertising. This proved to be an advantage, as a graphic designer he was accustomed to rendering galvanized surfaces and textures in his work. This technical expertise developed into a creative exploration of contrasting hyper-real painterly surface and hybridity. The development of the sexy robot series began in 1978, a leitmotif constantly transformed in appearance and style over 35 years.

So, who is this sexy robot? She is a glossy futuristic sexy robot woman, metallic armor over silken pastels and shimmering skin, or darkly illuminated leather clad amazons, awash in nocturnal light. She is a succulent combination of endless womanly curves, part warrior, part mechanical, and part goddess. Sorayama's unique world is a contemporary expression of the Shunga

legacy of Japanese erotica, drawing from the rich and sensual sphere of the ukiyo-e or floating world painters.

Today Sorayama lives and works in Tokyo. To date his work has been the subject of over 45 exhibit catalogs and books, including *Sexy Robots* (1983); *Objects of Design from The Museum of Modern Art*, (2014); *Sorayama's Master Works*, (2010 and 2014); *Vibrant Vixens* (2013); *Sekushi Robotto Gigantesu* (2015). The artist has also been featured in *Juxtapoz* magazine (2014), and most recently in the exhibit catalog *Unorthodox*, The Jewish Museum, New York (2015).

Select solo exhibits include Sin City Gallery, Las Vegas (2016); Fifty24SF Gallery, San Francisco (2015); Nanzuka Gallery, Hong Kong (2013); Gering and Lopez Gallery, New York, (2012), Nanzuka Gallery Underground, Tokyo (2010); World Erotic Art Museum, South Beach, Florida (2008); Show Room, New York (2005). Notable group shows include The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Jewish Museum, New York (2016). Important permanent collections include The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, and the World Erotic Art Museum, South Beach, as well as innumerable private and corporate collections. Select honors and awards include the Best Design Awards, Japan (2000); The Nike Dunk Project, 25 Most Inspiring Japanese Artists; and the esteemed Vargas Award (1996). The artist has also participated in art fairs including most recently Art Basel, Hong Kong, and Art Stage Singapore, 2015.

Sexyrobot Yellow Dress

1982

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (14 1/4 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



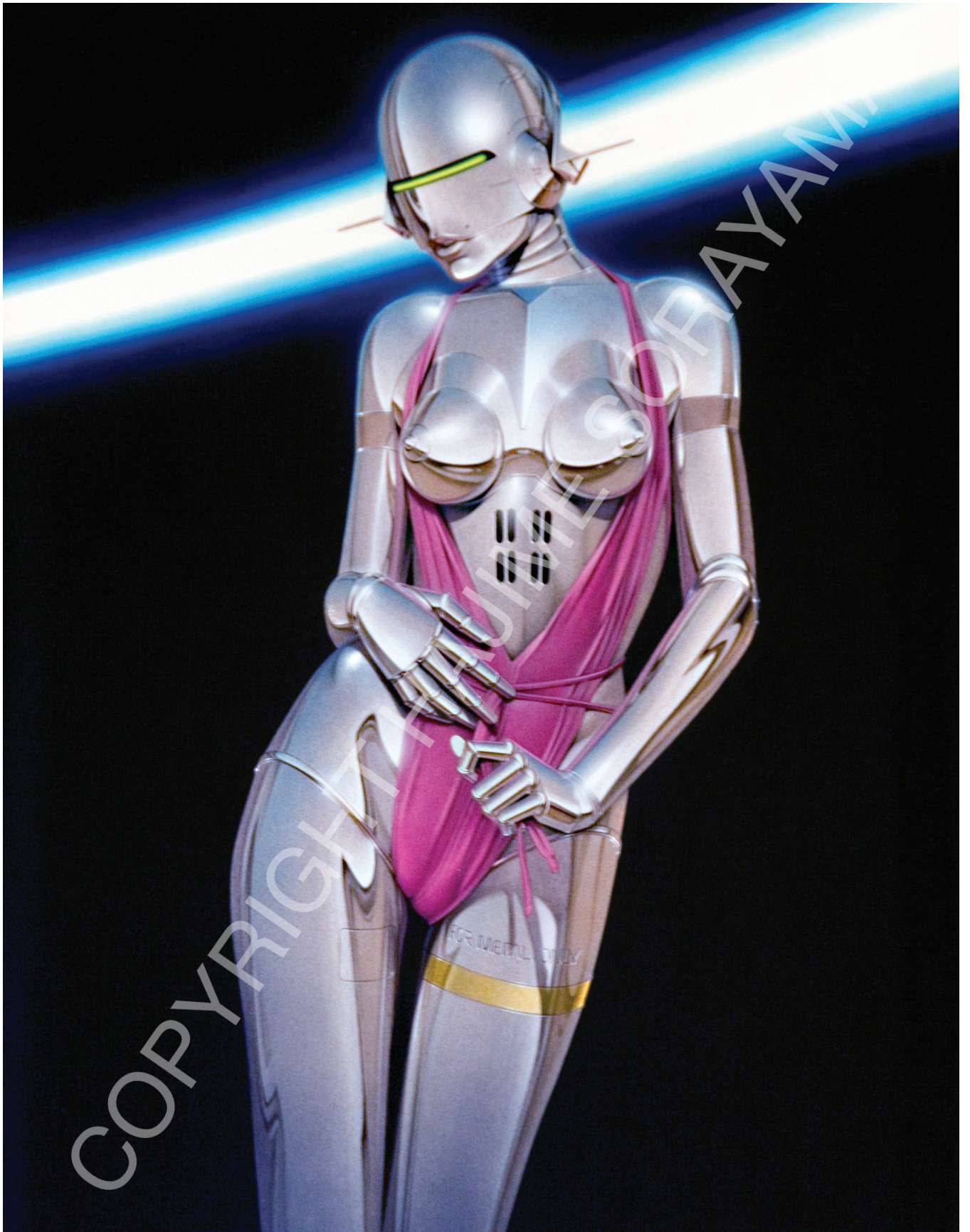
Sexyrobot cover image in purple swim suit

1982

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Untitled 2002.12

February 2001

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



B006 (N45)

November 1995

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

2001.28

May 1998

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Torquere cover image/ wire frame

January 1998

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Sorayama

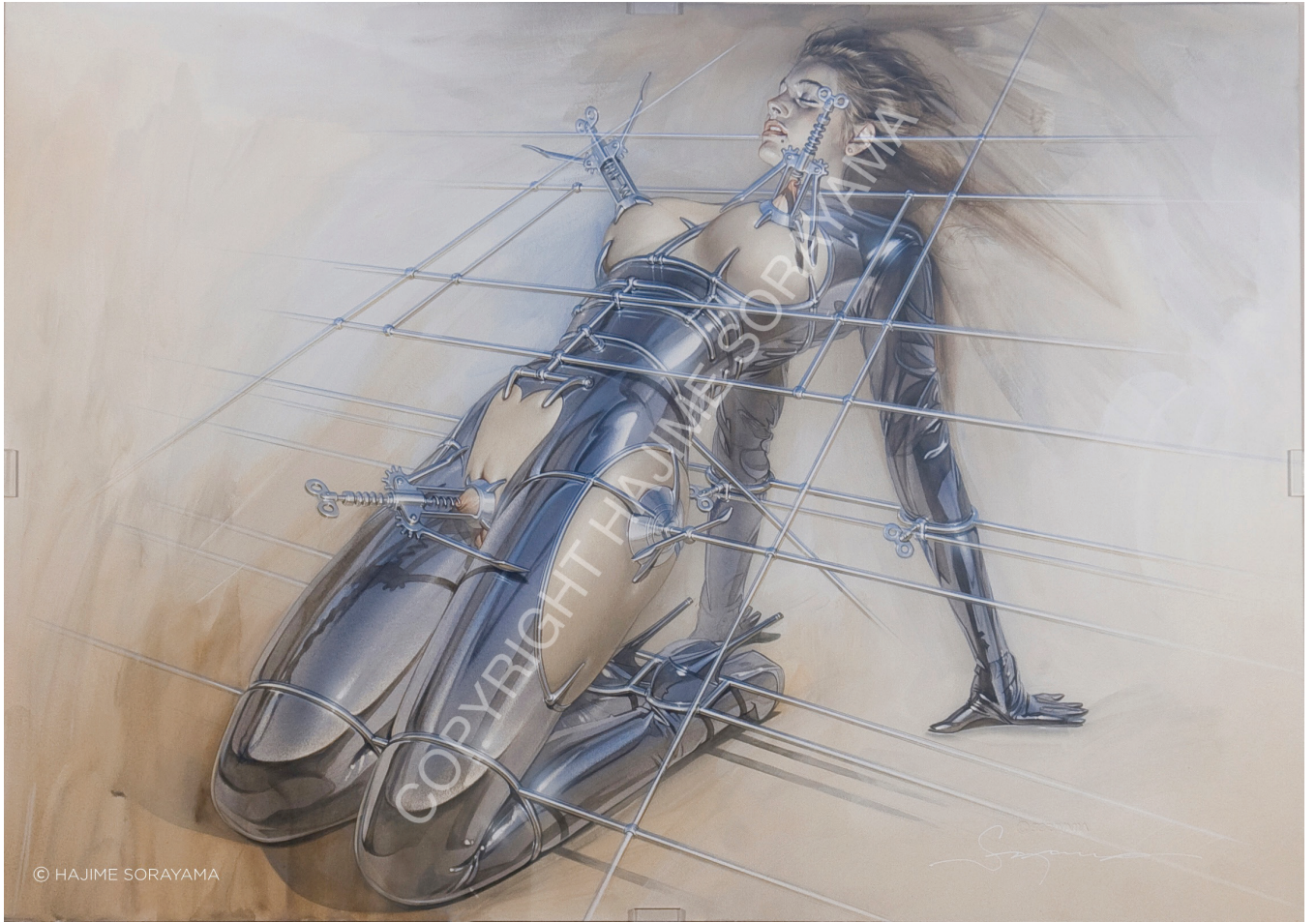
2004.13

July 14, 2003

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Metalicon cover image

September 1998

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

2004. 04

June 18, 2004

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

2001. 44

December 1999

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

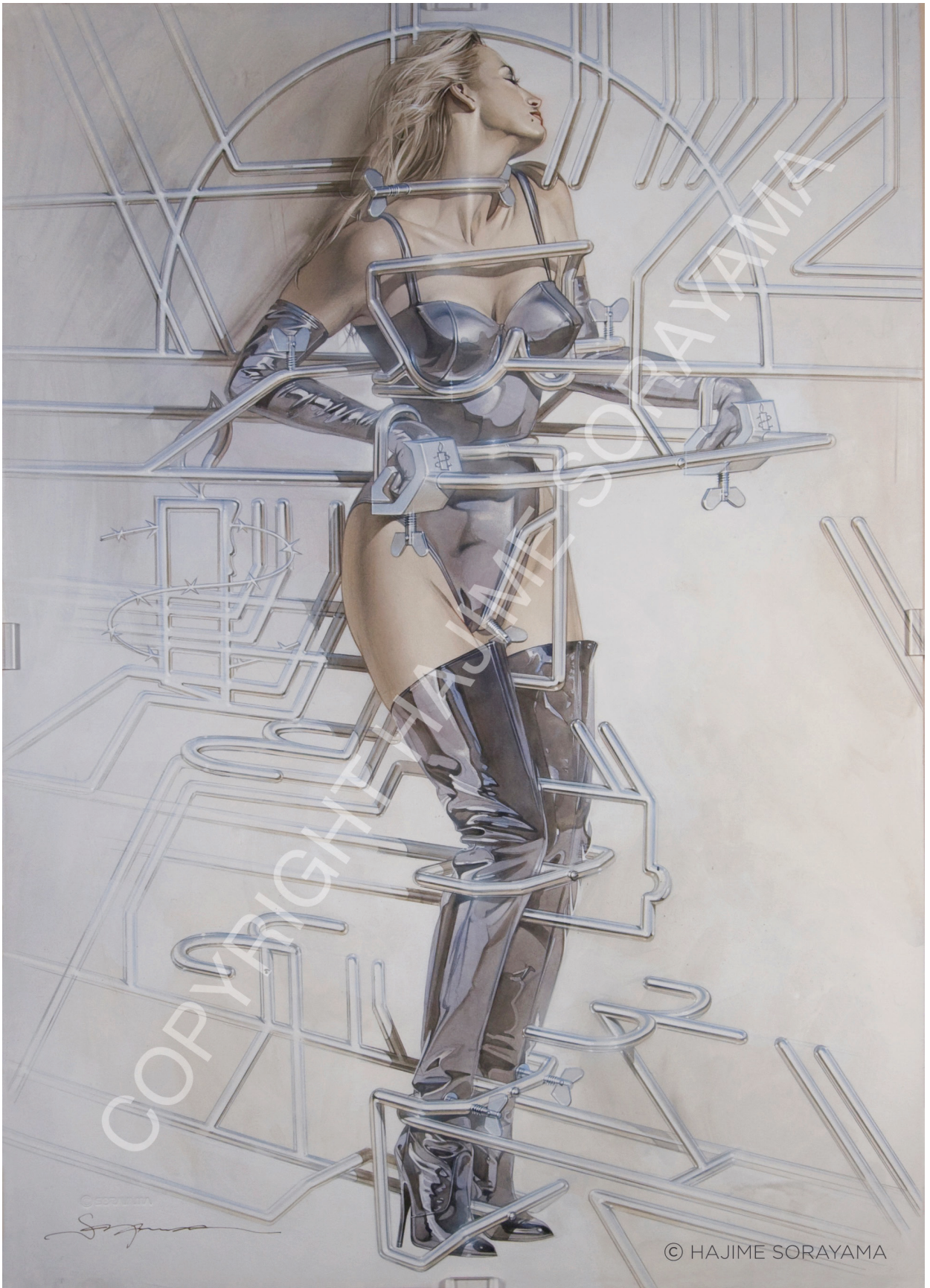
2002. 18

November 2001

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



2002. 29 (*Oshirini Kushi*)
January 27, 2002
Acrylic on illustration board
B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Untitled 2002. 20

January 2002

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Ukiyoe 2

July 2007

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



寺山修観賛江

紫色雁高画



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Ukiyoe 1

July 2007

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Silver Bobb

1996

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Latex Gloves

July 2001

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



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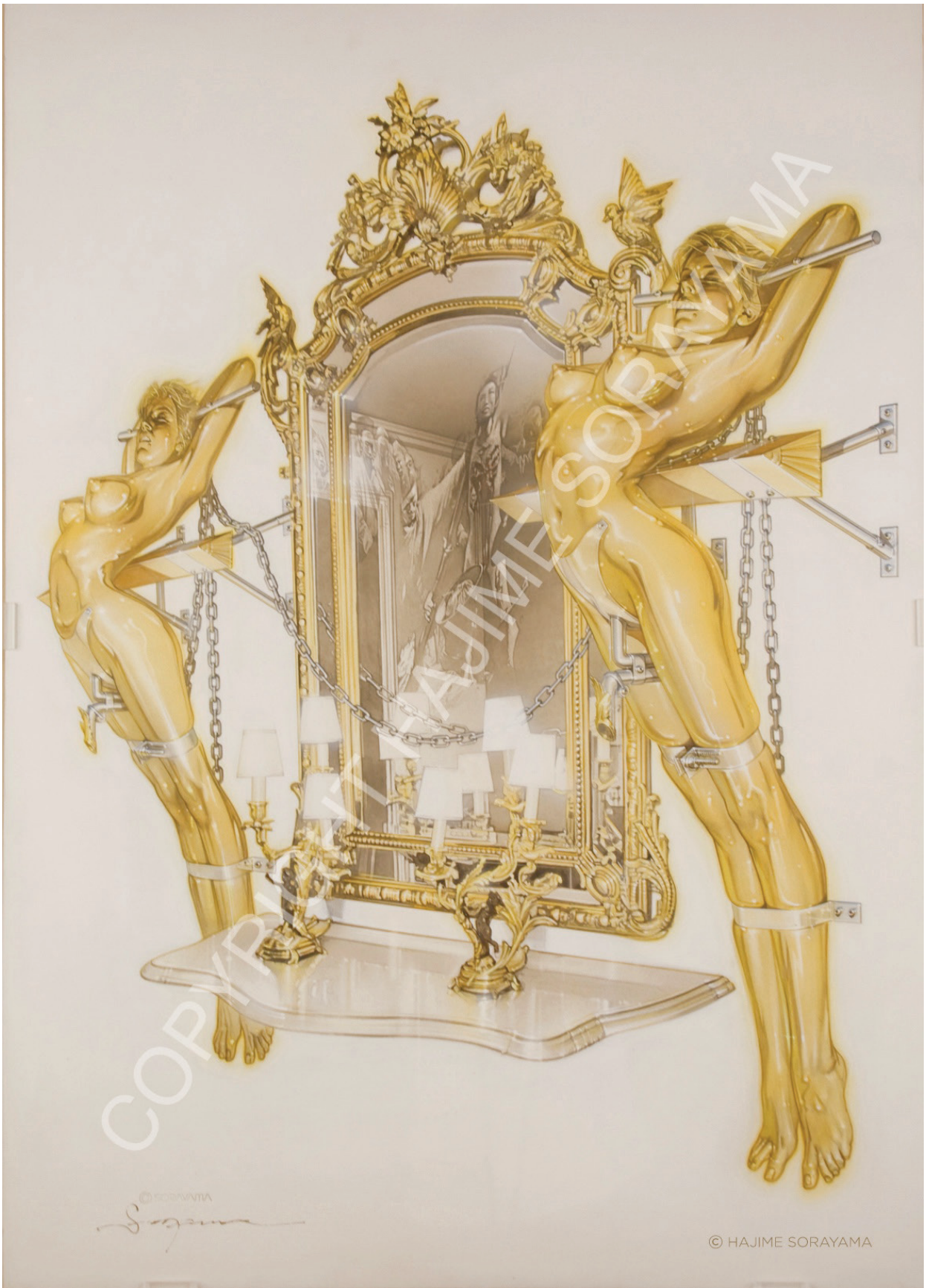
Torture Garden

December 1998

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



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Unt - le63

January 2001

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Unt - b24

May 2004

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Unt - b04

October 1999

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Unt - b18

June 1996

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Spanish Spider

January 1998

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Lace Up

1992

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Bloody Tip

April 2000

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Honey Dew

1992

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Untitled 2002. 17

December 2001

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Neck Brace

June 2005

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Tsunami Girl 2

1999

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Tsunami Girl 3

January 1999

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Tsunami Girl 1

July 1998

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Shikisokuzeku

1992-94

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



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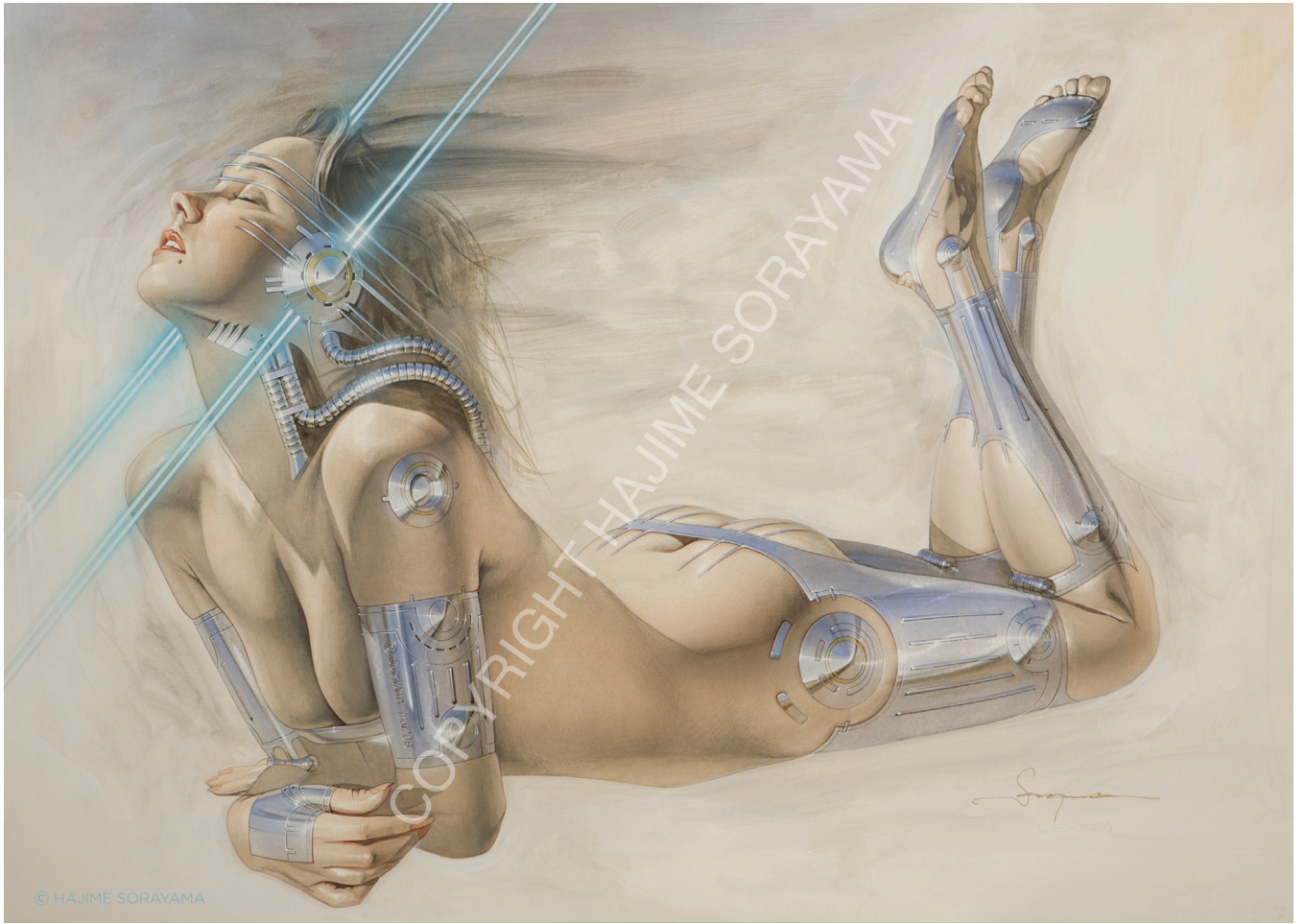
Untitled G04 (Nihon Neon)

March 2008

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Blind Beauty

1992

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

S23 (Catheter)

October 1997

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

S9 (Red Pins)

October 1997

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Image for Hysteria Mini by Hysteria Glamor

circa 1995

AP #2/4

Signed © Sorayama



circa 1980s
#69/125

Signed © Sorayama



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To = Antonio with best wishes 69/125 Sorayama

issue one

January 2009

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

See-through

circa 1992

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Pin-Up illustration

circa 1980s

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Pin-Up in Bunny Costume
circa 1980s
Acrylic on illustration board
B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Pin-Up

Acrylic on illustration board
B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Pin-Up

Acrylic on illustration board
B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Satin Sheets

November 1995

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



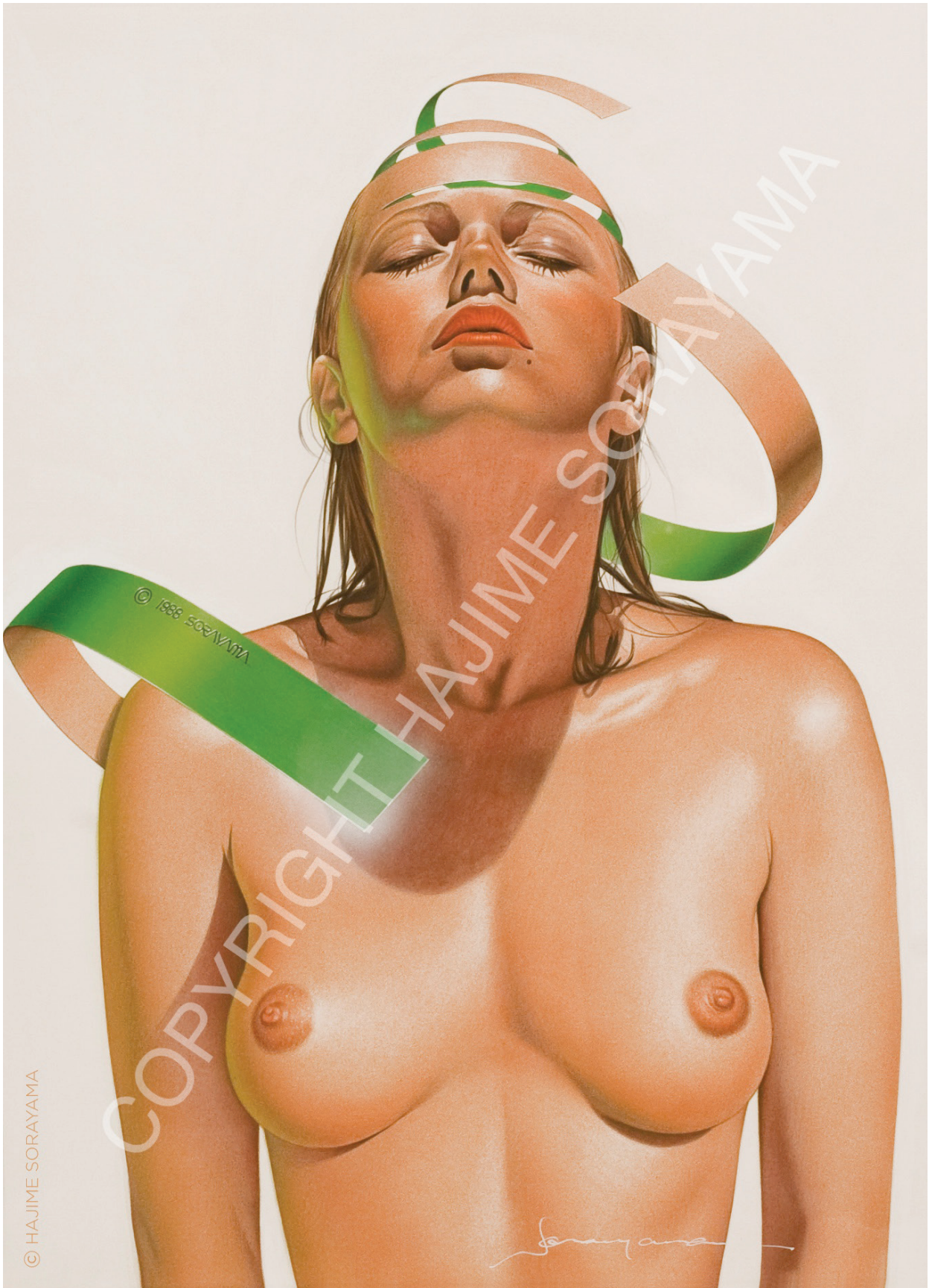
Nude

1988

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Pin-Up

circa 1980s

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Sniper

circa 1992

Acrylic on illustration board

B3 (20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Pin-Up in Leather

circa 1991

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



© HAJIME SORAYAMA

Bowing Down

circa 1992

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (20 1/4 x 28 1/2 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



Kumiko

October 2009

Acrylic on illustration board

B2 (28 1/2 x 20 1/4 inches)

Signed © Sorayama



