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The Little Mermaid By Hans Christian Andersen & Yayoi Kusama: A Fairy Tale Of Infinity And Love Forever



Synopsis

Kusama's delicate drawings both illustrate and interpret Hans Christian Andersen's tale "The Little Mermaid" (1839), a story about a girl from the sea who followed her dreams and suffered a disastrous fate on land, is known all over the world (particularly in its animated incarnation). But the familiar story is brought to new life in this gorgeous edition, a collaboration between the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art and artist Yayoi Kusama. Paired with Hans Christian Andersen's original text, the densely patterned, undulating line drawings of Kusama's Love Forever series (2004–2007) conjure up storms in the roiling waves of the ocean, the Little Mermaid's vast underwater kingdom and her longing to live in the human world. Kusama's fertile, endlessly repeating forms are an ideal match for the poetic and disturbing universe evoked in the fairy tale; the result is a true collaboration. Kusama's drawings both illustrate and interpret Andersen's story, bringing it to terrifying life, and Andersen's words lend narrative content to Kusama's landscapes of unblinking eyes, curling tendrils and disembodied profiles. Yayoi Kusama (born 1929) first left Japan at the age of 28, landing in late 1950s New York. Her oeuvre, now spanning more than 50 years, includes painting, performance, installations and environments, sculpture, film, fashion, design and literary work. She was recently named the world's most popular artist, based on annual figures reported by The Art Newspaper for global museum attendance in 2014.

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Customer Reviews

Kusama's evocative drawings pave the way for new readings of the classic fairytale while the collaboration emphasizes the depth of Anderson's knowledge of the human condition and his understanding of human relationships. (Art and Auction) Her bold, undulating lines, however, bring Andersen's narrative to life, covering pages with waving and wriggling patterns; fanciful plants suggestive of wondrous aquatic wildlife; motifs resembling tentacles and waves; and an abundance of enigmatic, watchful eyes. The repetition of shapes and doodled figures forms a fluid stream of images around Andersen's prose, giving it new and exciting energy. The images and text build a world that might just be as fantastic and mysterious as the one that the little mermaid saw when she ascended from the depths of the sea for the first time. (Claire Voon Hyperallergic) Kusama not only managed to incorporate her distinctive style into the mesmerizing images, but she has also masterfully captured the intriguing and inspiring children's story. (German Henry Sleek) At once whimsical and foreboding, the images perfectly capture the twisted imagination of The Little Mermaid's writer. (Priscilla Frank Huffington Post) Anderson's story is enhanced by Kusama's unique landscapes and Kusama's visuals are given new life within the narrative context. A harmonious collaboration, indeed. (Devon Ivie Interview Magazine)

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