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By Katya Kazakina

March 29, 2007 (Bloomberg) -- Hot-Pink Portrait

Young Japanese artist Saeko Takagi represents an alternative to her more famous compatriots like Takashi Murakami.

Pop culture takes a back seat in her sensual acrylic paintings inspired by traditional Japanese calligraphy. For her second show at ATM gallery, Takagi turns to nature and portraits of young girls.

Both subjects are realized with a mix of looseness and precision, yielding playful and lighthearted results.

The paintings of intertwining tree branches incorporate drops of brightly colored resin throughout, making the works look jewel-like.

Western influence trickles in through Takagi's colors: Coupled with pastel yellow and gray are bubblegum pink and green, intense peach and royal blue. It's a tender and festive universe worth visiting.

Prices range from \$4,500 to \$9,000. The show is on view through April 21 at 619b W. 27th St.; +1-212-375-0349; <http://www.atmgallery.com> .

(Katya Kazakina is a reporter for Bloomberg News. The opinions expressed are her own.)

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