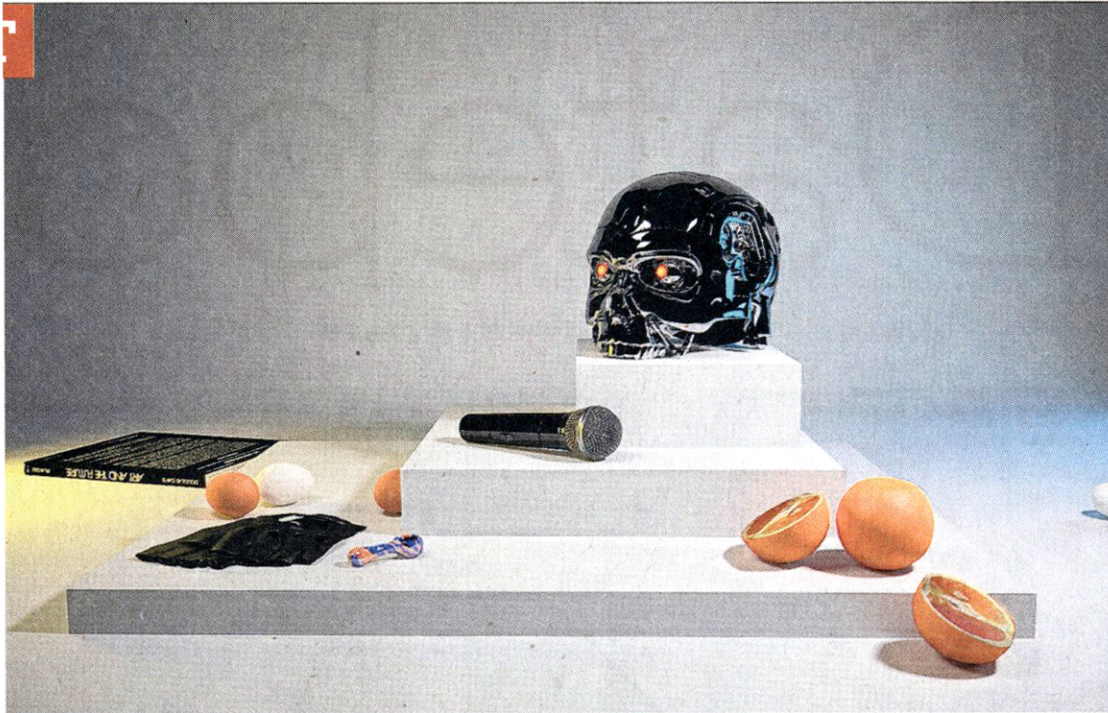


San Francisco Chronicle

California's Best Large Newspaper AS NAMED BY THE CALIFORNIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION | \$1.00 ★★★★★



Takeshi Murata / Ratio 3

“Art and the Future” (2011), pigment print by Takeshi Murata.

Takeshi Murata: Get Your Ass to Mars: Video and photographs. Through June 11. Ratio 3, 1447 Stevenson St., S.F. (415) 821-3371. www.ratio3.org.

Eye-popping Murata: Takeshi Murata also has a show anchored by a strangely entrancing new video at Ratio 3. After learning that the copyright on Popeye the Sailor had expired in Europe, Murata created his own computer-animated version, bafflingly titled “Get Your Ass to Mars” (2011).

In it Popeye, as Murata rendered him from memory, falls

asleep at his job canning green goo labeled “spinach,” gets fired, then threatened with eviction by his landlord, Wimpy. After sitting with a gravely ill Bluto, Popeye visits Olive Oyl’s grave, goes on a spinach-induced rampage in his apartment and hangs himself.

A posthumous epilogue has him driving a gold-plated hot rod into an abstract sunset of flash animation.

Behind the projected video’s diverting absurdity may lurk some glum symbolism of American decline, but it cannot steal the show.

In the gallery’s larger room, Murata displays computer-synthesized photos: still lifes such as “Art and the Future” (2011) that let us look unhurriedly into the eerily smooth dimension of “Get Your Ass to Mars,” where not even past, present or future seem to keep their places.

E-mail Kenneth Baker at kennethbaker@sfgate.com.