



Yamaguchi's *Bad Hair Day*

Yuka Yamaguchi's *Indoor Playground*

JENN SHARP

SASKATOON, SK—Yuka Yamaguchi's artwork is cute, colourful and often startling. In *Taste of Mama* a cute child peels what appears to be an apple but is actually a female breast, nipple intact. Others feature children missing limbs or scissors cutting a frog, who sits on a crumpled piece of paper in a twist on the classic game.

Yamaguchi hails from Kobe, Japan but now resides in Saskatoon. A self-taught, full-time artist since 2006, her show *Indoor Playground* is on display at the new Stall Gallery in The Farmer's Market Square until May 24th. A self-professed "child at heart", she hopes people "will have fun looking at the drawings [and] find the show interesting and worth a look without giving a second thought to what it means."

The most powerful part of the exhibit is a wall dedicated to nursing and oppai (breasts in Japanese). The drawings express many of the emotions she felt when nursing her first child. "My drawings mostly end

up as unintentional self-portraits... but that's often an accident. I don't intend my drawings to be an autobiography," Yamaguchi told *Verb*. Yamaguchi says pregnancy and motherhood changed her artwork as she started drawing in vivid colours and noticed images of her baby appearing in her work.

Yamaguchi explains that she does not believe in the idea of influence: "Some people from Canada think my weird ideas must

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be from Japanese culture but most Japanese people think my art is weird too...my art comes out of me." Endearingly honest, she says "I never let myself worry about what other people will think about my drawing. What I'm doing is not based on other people's ideas... I'm drawing for myself."

Each creation in the 20 piece collection combines elements of fun and peculiarity. There is even a space set aside for drawing in case you feel inspired. She also shows her art online, giving people freedom in viewing and making it a "part of their everyday life."