

I met Keka Ruiz-Tagle in Santiago at a workshop I conducted at Ruth Kraskoph's Huara Huara. I was impressed with her ambition, energy and fearlessness. Her tremendous vitality to visualize her near-obsession with her horses and acrobatic riders was admirable.

Keka knew exactly what she wanted to do with clay, as she had fully developed her images in paintings and prints of vibrant colors. Keka learned very quickly how to work with clay and took advantage of the material. Through form and subtle colors, the characters appear to express their individuality; even though they seem timeless and ageless, the surface and textures seem to reveal some kind of history. Having both a sense of gravity and lightness, her horses and riders came out of her canvases into a real and believable space. I imagined this place was a Horse Land where the horses are huge and strong, like the earth, and the people are small, secure and happy, like children. The people show their affection of these earthy horses with their acrobatic dances. The contrast of the stability within in the clay form with the lighthearted movements feels nice. It is like a carefree childhood that develops upon the stability of a mother's consistent love.

Maybe I am a little envious of those people in the Horse Land. In the real world, we wonder who will provide the consistent protection, care, and affection for us. Can we find this trustworthiness in our planet, country, government, community, home or family? If I were suddenly a member of this Horse Land, I wonder if I would be able to recognize this kind of safe happiness. Would I learn to express myself physically that is open and joyful? Perhaps the key is to sit back and look at Keka's artwork and let myself escape into this land. It will be easy to imagine myself as an innocent, tireless, happy man.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "akio" in a cursive, lowercase style, followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Akio Takamori