



**MEL RAMOS (1935-2018)****Leta and the Hill Myna****Ramos 69-8**

Signed verso "Mel Ramos"

oil on canvas

60 x 52 in. (60 3/4 x 52 3/4 x 2 in.)

152.4 x 132.08 cm (154.31 x 133.99 x 5.08 cm)

1969

40998

**PROVENANCE:**

JJ Brookings Gallery, California

Private Collection, California

**EXHIBITION:**

Sacramento, California, Crocker Art Museum, *Mel Ramos: 50 Years of Superheros, Nudes, and Other Pop Delights*, June – October 2012

Leipzig, Germany, Museum Bildenden Kuenste, *Beauty and the Beast*, October 2013 – December 2014

West Palm Beach, Florida, Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, *Figurative Masters of the Americas*, January 4 – February 12, 2023

**LITERATURE:**

Ramos, M., Shields, S. A., Keats, J., Daniels, D. L., & Crocker Art Museum. (2012). *Mel Ramos: 50 years of superheroes, nudes, and other pop delights*. San Francisco: Modernism Inc. p. 45-46

Ramos, M., In Levy, T., & Gardner, B. G. (2016). *Mel Ramos: Catalogue raisonne of the paintings 1953-2015*

*Beauty and the Beast*: October 2013 – December 2014, Museum Bildenden Kuenste, Leipzig, Germany ill. Back Cover

Mel Ramos is best known for his paintings of superheroes and female nudes juxtaposed with pop culture imagery. Many of the subjects in his paintings emerge from iconic brands or cultural touchstones like Chiquita bananas, M&M bags, or Snickers. In these works, visual delight is combined with suggested edible and commercial indulgence.

*Leta and the Hill Myna* diverges from some of Ramos' other nudes. Here Ramos depicts his wife, whom he spoke of as his greatest muse. Like his works depicting superheroes, *Leta and the Hill Myna* is imbued with mythos and lore. Myna birds are native to South Asia where some are taught to speak, often to recite religious. Furthermore, playing on his wife's name and the avian theme, Ramos is referencing the famous tale of Leda and the Swan in which Zeus embodies a bird to rape Leda. The story has been reinterpreted throughout history, including by great artists such as Paul Cezanne, Cy Twombly and Fernando Botero. With this depiction, Ramos places himself in that same art historical lineage.

Mel Ramos is a California based Pop artist best known for his paintings of superheroes and female nudes, including Marilyn Monroe and Scarlet Johansson, with pop culture

imagery. Many of his subjects emerge from Chiquita bananas, 100 Grand Bars, and M&M bags, or lounge around large Coca Cola bottles, or cigarette boxes.

Ramos emerged from the 1960's Pop art movement through his appropriated imagery from mass media and pop culture – his paintings of women reference the sensuality of pin-ups and Playboy spreads, while commenting on clichés in advertising.

Ramos has participated in over 120 group shows in the US and Europe since 1959, with Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, and others. His artwork is featured in permanent collections internationally, including the Whitney Museum of American art and Neue Galerie Stadt Aachen, Germany. The Crocker Art Museum hosted a retrospective of over 50 years of his artwork in 2012

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