

# CULTURED

**Ian Miyamura**

Bureau | 112 Duane Street

On view through February 15, 2025

By Paige K. Bradley



Ian Miyamura, *in girum imus nocte*, 2024. Image courtesy of the artist and Bureau.

The Latin verse *in girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*, commonly attributed to the poet Virgil, is a palindrome, which you can see for yourself by reading it in reverse. It translates to something like “we go round and round in the night and are consumed by fire.” Ian Miyamura broke the line in half to title two of the meticulous oil-on-muslin paintings in his debut at Bureau. The show, “They Learned to Look Up and Down,” opened three days after the Los Angeles wildfires began, and the image *in girum imus nocte*, 2024, felt uncannily apropos. A seagull cruises through a burning, stippled gradient; the dense violet at the canvas’s bottom turns golden as it rises, then pales to pure, eye-searing light. The bird’s sculpted contours resemble those of an industrial object—maybe a warplane.

The second painting, *et consumimur igni*, 2024, which also shows a seagull, flying in the opposite direction, completes the verse, but is hung on a different wall as if it were unrelated to the first. The off-kilter tone set by such choices is underscored by the clash of styles on view, which include both abstraction and photorealism. Strange, small-scale, grisaille pictures depicting H.R. Giger-like thrones and figurines from the tabletop game Warhammer, are made even stranger by their velvety surfaces and tiered wooden artist’s frames. A group of post-De Stijl paintings might seem to be the natural enemy of Miyamura’s numinous goth statements, but the strength of the artist’s craft unites them in a common cause. This series of two-panel, compositions—each dubbed *fraternal painting*—adds depth to the artist’s bewilderingly harmonious multitrack presentation. (One of the works is installed with its two parts at a right angle, in a corner of the gallery, adding a moment of mirth to the show). And for the exhibition’s *pièce de résistance*, the artist hand-copied his self-authored press release, framed it, and laid it on the front desk—a gesture exemplary of a practice as mysterious as it is recursive.