



All images: the Artist

MIYA ANDO: A WOMAN OF STEEL

Not quite Superwoman, but every bit a woman of steel, artist **Miya Ando** is best known for her metalwork in the form of anodized aluminium that is hand-dyed to achieve beautiful end results; work that is industrial and ephemeral at the same time.

The choice of working with metal as canvas was not by accident. Miya, who is of Russian and Japanese ancestry, and is currently based in Brooklyn, was for a part of her childhood raised by Buddhist priests in a temple in Japan. Her ancestors were swordsmiths before becoming Buddhist priests.

"Initially my interest in metals was influenced by my family history; as an adult I've chosen to work with metals for their ability to

reflect light and convey my artistic expressions," she explained.

We asked Miya to define beauty and she only had four Japanese words for us: "*Wa, ke, sei, jyaku* (harmony, respect, purity, tranquility)". The four qualities are reflected in her work. There truly is beauty in simplicity.

But let not the abstraction of her work fool you; there's nothing simple about the process behind it. We are told categorically that it is "laborious and repetitive" but that "it is something of a ritual" that "is meditative and calming" for Miya. She typically works in layers and applies a layer a day, sometimes for months per piece. Depending on her task at hand, her music of choice ranges from Led Zeppelin to Israel

Vibration, UA, Chemical Brothers or Boards of Canada.

Her hard work does pay off. In January this year, Miya held a solo show at the Sundaram Tagore Gallery in Hong Kong titled *Light Metal*, which garnered critical acclaim. Even brands such as Bang & Olufsen and Element have taken notice and have engaged her to collaborate on exclusive speakers and skateboards respectively.

Metal aside, Miya has been dabbling in making works on paper with some monotypes she has created. It shouldn't surprise since, as she reminds us, she has worked with a range of mediums from metal, to wood, to paper and even leaves. What next? "It's a blank page as to the future work," she said. ●