

PRESS RELEASE

Arisa Kumagai: My yearning to be You
April 16 – June 25, 2022

大勢の神様の顔横並べ一つ選んであなたがいい

Of all the subjects of worship
You are the one for me



Gallery Koyanagi is pleased to present a solo show by Arisa KUMAGAI titled "My yearning to be You" from Saturday, April 16th to Saturday, June 25th.

In the exhibition "Shell Art Prize – Artist Selection 2020" held at The National Art Center, Tokyo in 2020, Kumagai presented a series of work depicting a ceramic leopard symbolizing one's potential of becoming an assaulter. Deciding to move forward, the artist herself terminated the perfection of that leopard, and portrayed its remnant. After 3 years since the last solo show, we will be showing all new works including that leopard.

*A craving to cause pain to someone, exists.
So does an urge to want to think, that the other is a part of oneself.
A hazy vengeance, is there.
And that seemed to have been in me too, innately.*

*Discovery brought despair, along with a cleared feeling coming out of a fog.
I can only live by continuing to ruin myself.*

*If I couldn't evade my own compulsion,
to keep on destroying myself and making an advancement, was one of the answers.
That, could possibly be the ethic and moral of myself in entirety.*

Kumagai's works always reflect her own background as a starting point, focusing on the irrational and contradictory nature of human existence and its inextricable emotions and forms, such as wealth and poverty, life and death, love and hatred.

What Kumagai depicts is the thorn that appears when the resolution of the superficial "beauty" is raised acutely; or the domain of inauspiciousness. It implies that the positive world in which we live, such as beauty, love and happiness, stands on an uncertain ground, transient and brittle, such as restless consumerism and power imbalance due to gender.

–Tomoko Yabumae, the jury member of Shell Art Prize

The works, with their unsettling presence depicted with outstanding realism, born from Kumagai's confrontation with her personal feelings and experiences, her own past and present, penetrate the viewer with a strong energy, transcending one's personal background. In this exhibition, texts that evoke a rich imagination in the viewer are juxtaposed, foreshadowing new developments in Kumagai's creative process.

The artist will be present on Saturday, April 16th, the first day of the exhibition. We will be honored if you could find the time to drop by.

Please contact the person in charge for requests for press images. Please let us know if you would like to include your information in the publication.

Gallery Koyanagi

REFERENCE

Artist statement for "Shell Art Award 2020/Shell Artist Selection 2020," The National Art Center Tokyo, 2020



Over the canvas of my own upbringing and the others' upbringing, I paint art focusing on the emotions and looks of people, in the irrational and ironic state, in dichotomy such as wealth and poverty, life and death, love and hate, like the opposite sides of a same coin.

This ceramic leopard was painted specially to symbolize our doomed possibility, personally and socially, of becoming an assailant.

I married a very big man. He made me reconfirm, once again, the fact that I was physically vulnerable, and this revelation made me jealous, but also made me yearn for him. By the time I noticed it, I found the faint feeling that "I wish I was born a man" accumulated as a deranged feeling that "I wanted to be given life as you, my lame thing".

One night, my better half had a nightmare and unknowingly got up and strung me in the neck. Soon he woke up to see what he's done, and cried shamelessly saying "I might kill you one day" shrinking his massive body to its minimum. I felt the spur of happiness to this situation that I "with such fragile physique could brutally harm this Herculean man's heart" and at the same time felt "how lovable" my husband was, pouring tears over his own innate violence.

I know that I will not be able to evade the possibility of becoming an assailant myself, as long as I continue to create my art.

Arisa Kumagai

REFERENCE

Recommendation by Tomoko Yabumae, the jury member of Shell Art Prize, 2020

In the works by Arisa Kumagai, there's a strange coherence uniting the extraordinary and ordinary, and extravagant texture of high fashion and mundane memory of her family, since her parents ran a boutique for the outlaws.

What Kumagai depicts is the thorn that appears when the resolution of the superficial "beauty" is raised acutely; or the domain of inauspiciousness.

And it suggests to us that beauty, love and happiness, those approbatory aspects of life are on uncertain grounds, transient and brittle, affected by the restless consumerism or power imbalance due to gender, surrounding our lives.

This new work, depicting a decorative object in a form of a leopard, along with a perceptive artist's statement, points out to us the secretive aggressiveness and adoration for subordination buried in affection, are in herself being a woman, however undeniably.

Being aware that such violence is inseparably connected to the act of painting, she confronts the impulsive urge, in tranquility.

REFERENCE

Artist statement for the solo exhibition "Single bed," Gallery Koyanagi, 2019



Single bed

My father died in kodokushi (lonely death).

He was there all winter.

When found in spring, he was mentioned in local newspaper.

It took 2 more months to verify that it was my father.

He was only a little over 50 then.

There was no funeral.

I was the only one who personally showed up to see his relatives.

My mother offered him a big flower arrangement.

Recent funeral flowers are gorgeous and beautiful, despite its motive.

Since then I have been thinking about those beautiful flowers that my mother has offered.

And how one could love so helplessly, and how one hates, and about loneliness that drives one crazy, and about solitude that's hard to let go.

They say that sleeping is like a small death.

I sleep, also today, on my own single bed.

Arisa Kumagai

Currently lives and works in Osaka, Japan

- 1991 Born in Osaka, Japan
 2013 B.A. in Oil Painting Course, Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto, Japan
 2015 M.A. in Mixed Media Field, Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto, Japan

Solo Exhibition

- 2022 "My yearning to be You" Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo
 2019 "Single bed," Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo
 2015 "Leisure Class," Gallery Art Composition, Tokyo
 2013 "MAMA," ATAMATOTE 2-3-3, Tokyo

Selected Group Exhibition

- 2021 "Shell Art Award 2020/Shell Artist Selection 2020," The National Art Center Tokyo, Tokyo
 2020 "Photographs," Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo
 2017 "Portrait," Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo
 2016 "ULTRA x ANTEROOM exhibition 2016," Hotel Anteroom Kyoto, Kyoto
 "ARTOTHÈQUE SELECTION 2016," Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto
 2015 STUDIO HAIDENBAN open studio," STUDIO HAIDENBAN, Kyoto
 "Konton kara Odorideru Hoshi tachi 2015 (exhibition of selected students from Kyoto University of Art & Design)," SPIRAL GARDEN, Tokyo
 Graduation Exhibition of Kyoto University of Art & Design Graduate School, Kyoto
 2014 "Politics Narcissism," ARTZONE, Kyoto
 Group show: Arisa Kumagai, Yuko Tanaka, Reiko Yamazaki, Gallery Kunimatsu, Tokyo/Kyoto
 The 23rd exhibition of Sato International Cultural Scholarship Foundation, The Sato Museum of Art, Tokyo
 Art Collages Exchanging Exhibition, Nagoya University of Arts, Aichi
 Pr PROJECTS exchanging exhibition (Masato Kobayashi laboratory of Tokyo University of the Arts x Kyoto University of Art & Design Graduate School), Pr PROJECTS room, Kyoto
 "SPURT 2014," Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto
 "The Ueno Royal Museum Prize," The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo
 2013 "The Shell Art Award 2013," The National Art Center, Tokyo
 "HOP," Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto
 "PARADE," 3F project room, Kyoto
 "Hajimari no heya (The room of beginning)," Koyodo Museum of Art, Nagano
 Graduation Exhibition of Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto
 2012 "Hongik International Art Festival," Hongik, Korea
 "What is missing? Golden hands," Gallery-i, Kyoto
 Exhibition of selected excellent students from Kyoto University of Art & Design, Kyoto
 "ARTZONE SELECTION," ARTZONE, Kyoto

Awards/Grants

- 2015 Excellence Award, the Graduation Exhibition of Kyoto University of Art & Design Graduate School
 2014 Akira Asada Prize, SPURT 2014 of Kyoto University of Art & Design Graduate School
 Selected for The Ueno Royal Museum Prize
 2013 Selected for The Shell Art Award by Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K.
 Received prizes; Senju Hiroshi Encouragement Prize, Uryuyama Prize, Prize of the department at the Graduation Exhibition of Kyoto University of Art & Design
 Grant from Sato International Cultural Scholarship Foundation, Sato Museum of Art
 Grant from the Japan Arts Foundation