




SWEET PARADOX

 IZUMA GALLERY

OHATA Shintaro
ITO Enpei
YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE
YOSHIDA Akira
WATANABE Osamu



sweet PARADOX

11 July - 10 August 2014

MIZUMA GALLERY

FOREWORD

SWEET PARADOX

Mizuma Gallery is delighted to present *SWEET PARADOX*, a Japanese group show curated by father and daughter Sueo and Yukari Mizuma. The show exhibits artworks of leading young generation of Japanese contemporary artists, such as Ohata Shintaro, Ito Enpei, YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, Yoshida Akira and Watanabe Osamu. The Exhibition showcases 22 artworks ranging from ready made sculptures to paintings.

SWEET PARADOX focuses on contemporary artworks that are very animated and visually pleasing. However, looks can be deceiving as the concept and thought behind each work is very complicated as it touches complex issues in daily life.

The definition of paradox (pa-ra-dox) by oxford dictionary;

- A seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which when investigated may prove to be well founded or true; - a statement or proposition which, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems logically unacceptable or self-contradictory; - a person or thing that combines contradictory features or qualities.

The above definition reflects exactly what artists are trying to convey in this exhibition. With an intricate subject ranging from environmental, political-historical, to the topic of existensialism, the execution of such is done by 'sweet-looking artworks; a personal playful touch by the artist. After all a little bit of irony will give the audience something to remember, a bitter-sweet food for thought.

OHATA SHINTARO

Ohata Shintaro (b. 1975, Hiroshima, Japan) is known to create artworks that capture and display breathtaking, frozen scenes from everyday life that we normally take for granted. He uses different types of light in his work (strong light expressions) to dramatize the otherwise ordinary sceneries, which essentially gives a very unique touch.

He has a very distinct style where in an artwork he would place sculptures in front of paintings, hence combining 2 and 3 dimensional worlds. The reason for this, is because by doing so, he believes that he could bring a different “atmosphere of dynamism” to his artworks.

The turning point of Ohata’s work was when he first moved from Hiroshima to Tokyo. He was fascinated by the artificial lights shining from the skyscrapers and big billboards at night in the metropolis which he couldn’t find in his hometown.

Ohata focuses on only one figure in his artworks because he wants the viewer to be able to focus on the world that the character is in. Not the relationship between characters. He explores moments that one might experience when he or she stops and gets lost in time.

The artist draws his inspiration from everyday life scenes to movies. He first created the work with 2 dimensional painting and 3 dimensional sculpture as he was inspired from the movie The Wizard of OZ. The painting of The Yellow Brick Road behind and people in front, makes him feel like the action comes up right in front of him. He wanted a more realistic feel of his painting without changing his painting style, thus he came up with the idea of making sculptures.

The artist explains his work with the word “setsunai” in Japanese. “Setsunai” can not be translated into an exact word because it includes different emotions such as grief, sorrow, pity, and reminiscence. He aims to create his own “setsunai” that the viewer can feel immediately without any explanations needed.

Ohata was given an award by Yukari Mitsuma at the GEISAI 2006 and at the same show he was awarded WWD Japan award, DENTSU award and GIANT ROBOT award as well. Since then his work has been shown all over Japan and exposed internationally.

OHATA Shintaro

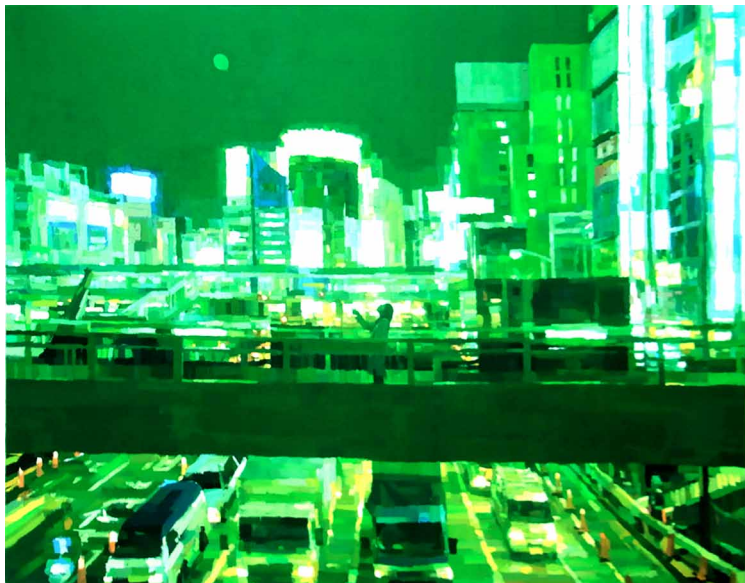
Remember Me

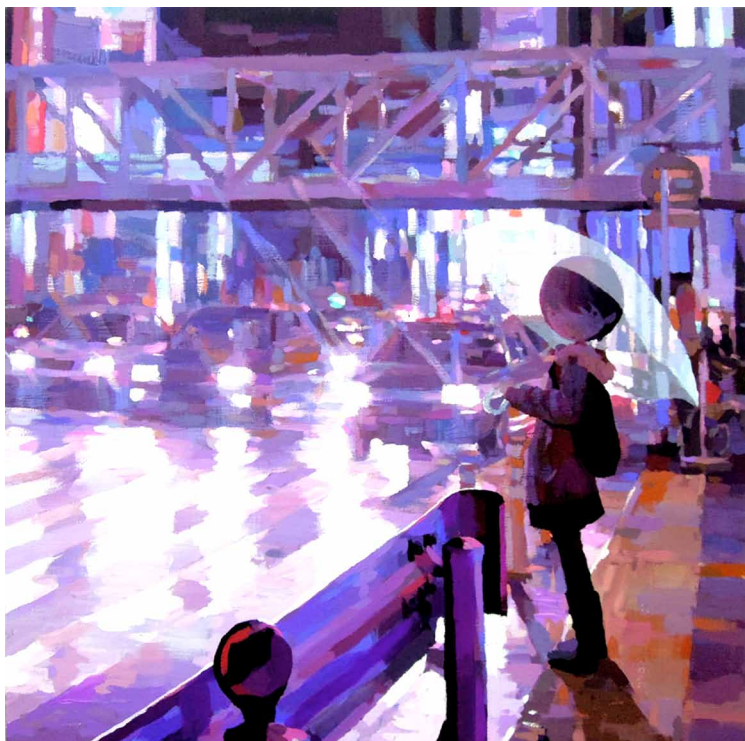
2011

Acrylic on Canvas

112 x 145.5 cm

© OHATA Shintaro, courtesy of YUKARI ART





OHATA Shintaro

Waiting for A Traffic Light on The Way Back Home
2012

Acrylic on Canvas

65.2 x 65.2 cm

© OHATA Shintaro, courtesy of YUKARI ART

OHATA Shintaro

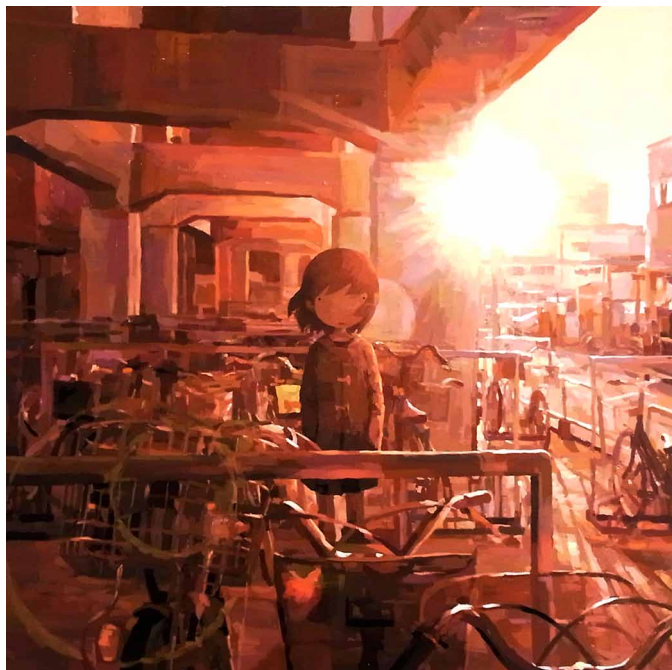
Wind Trail

2014

Acrylic on Canvas

100 x 100 cm

© OHATA Shintaro, courtesy of YUKARI ART





OHATA Shintaro

Sakaagari no Sora

2014

Mixed Media

145.5 x 112 cm (painting)

95 x 37 x 15 cm (sculpture)

© OHATA Shintaro, courtesy of YUKARI ART



OHATA Shintaro

Balloon

2014

Mixed Media

162 x 130.3 cm (painting)

130 x 95 x 80 cm (sculpture)

© OHATA Shintaro, courtesy of YUKARI ART

ITO ENPEI

Ito Enpei (b.1976, Kasama, Ibaraki, Japan) graduated from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music graduate school (MA) in 2002. He is always inspired by the great outdoors surrounding him. He has been creating paintings and sculptures with the same light textures in the form of humans and animals.

However, he is now moving onto more non-figurative themes, as he states, “I don’t pursue only visible subjects. I feel that one of the very important elements for my further self-expression and my current aim is that by including various senses of vitality, my works will start to move and function just like living creatures”.

What draws your attention to the artist’s works is the sense of ‘skin’ texture in each of his works. They are created with a persistence in detail, with a wrinkly textures leaving a mysterious and other worldly impression that is almost alien to the eye. However the color he uses to balance the texture are mostly natural colors and easy on the eye.

Besides the sense of ‘skin’ as his signature style, depiction of each character’s or animal’s eyes with that of a Buddha painting is one of his other trademarks. He draws eyes just like eyes found on ancient Buddha statues, giving off very intense and realistic feel as if the character is looking straight at the audience.

ITO’s paintings and sculptures are mostly done without any background. He believes that the subject of his work will turn to the viewer and tell their own story.



ITO Enpei

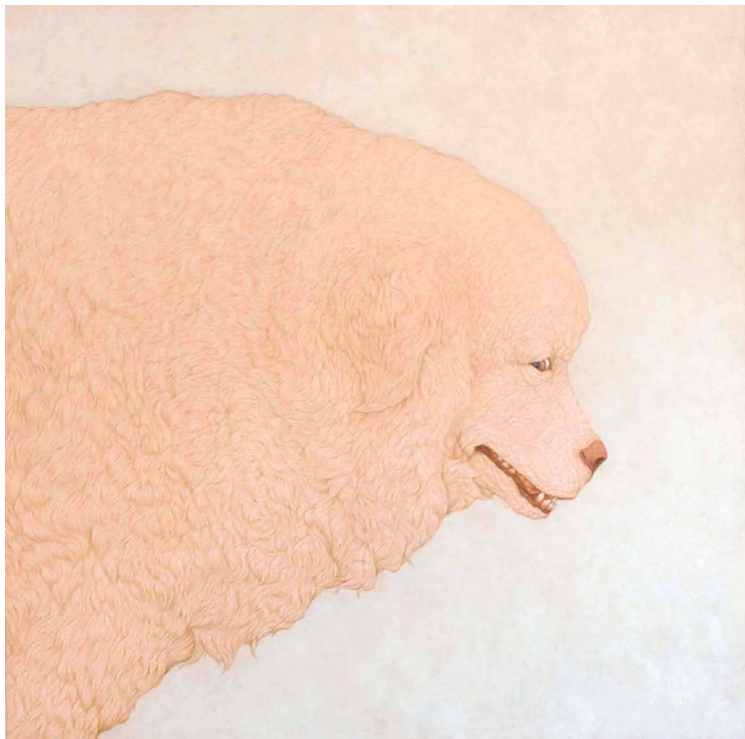
Dog I

2009

Oil on Canvas

116.7 x 116.7 cm

© ITO Enpei, courtesy of YUKARI ART



ITO Enpei

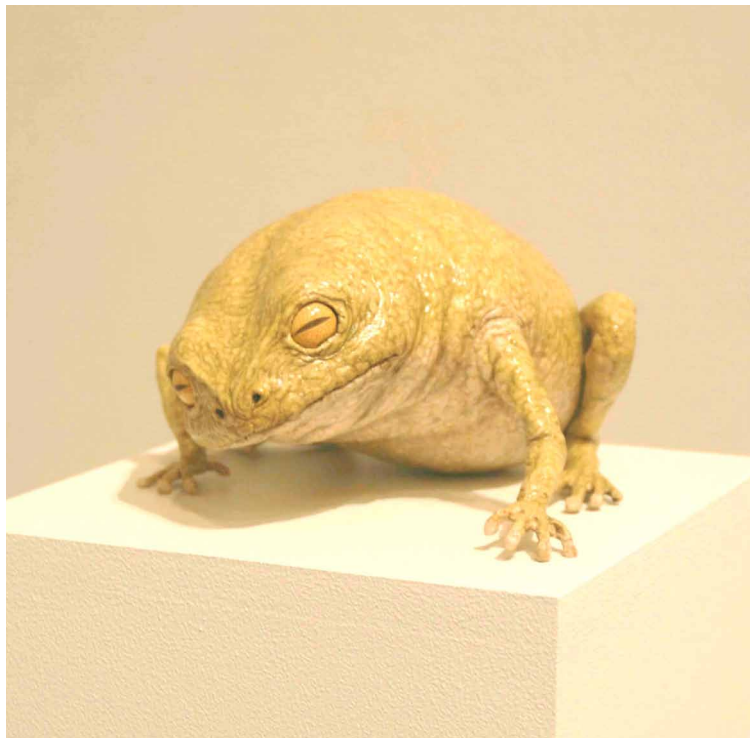
Dog II

2009

Oil on Canvas

116.7 x 116.7 cm

© ITO Enpei, courtesy of YUKARI ART



ITO Enpei

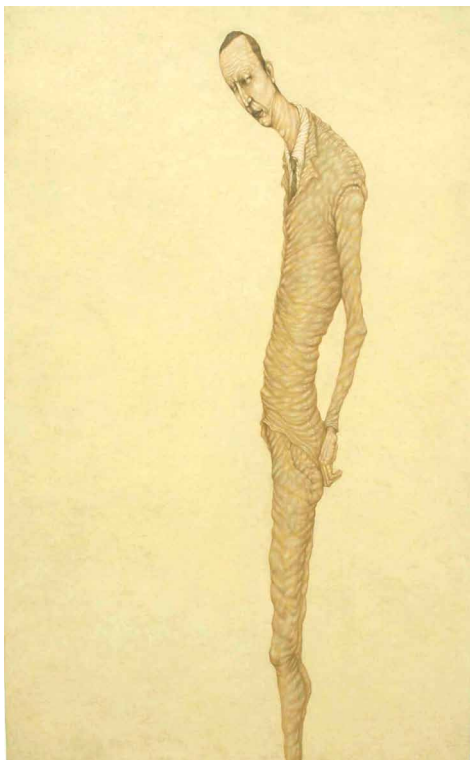
Frog

2012

Oil on Stone Powder Clay, Styrofoam

10.8 x 19.5 x 18 cm

© ITO Enpei, courtesy of YUKARI ART



ITO Enpei

A Man with A Suit IV

2007

Oil on Canvas

116.5 x 73 cm

© ITO Enpei, courtesy of YUKARI ART

YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE is an art group founded by Shibata Hideaki (b.1976) and Matsunaga Kazuya (b.1977) in 2003. Based out of the river terraces of Yodogawa, Osaka, they mainly use garbage that has drifted to the riverbank to create their artworks. Their creations involve making beautiful models and sculptures that completely do not resemble its original form as garbage.

Looking back at history, rivers have played an important role since humans established their first civilization. Undeniably, the process of creation too, is an essential part of the artist's daily life. It is only natural that YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE continues to incorporate everyday life by the river in their creation process. However, as the civilization grows along the river, humans pollute the river ecosystem. The group's artwork have an element of playful irony where they use garbage, the very thing that pollutes the river ecosystem, and transform them into colorful and beautiful fish sculptures.

The group has also participated in *KITA! : Japanese Artists Meet Indonesia*, an exhibition with the Jogja National Museum in 2008. During Their stay in Yogyakarta, they mingled with locals, getting to know Javanese cultures. In the artwork they created, Arowana in Yogyakarta, they used bamboo to construct the skeleton of the fish. Bamboo is one of the most important materials in Java Region. The locals use bamboo to make almost everything. Not being used to working with bamboo, they learnt a variety of ways to process bamboo by making use of its rather light and flexible quality from local craftsmen. The result was a stunning Arowana Raft that floats on Yogyakarta's river and a successful installation at the museum.

The group's focuses on the concept of "Gomunication" which derive from the word gomi or rubbish in Japanese and communication. By finding garbage along the riverbank, in the ocean and everywhere in town, the group get to know the local community and be involved in their everyday life. They are renowned for making works in various places, interacting with locals and doing community projects. Their way of communicating through their art and projects always brings a new perspective for locals and also raises awareness for environmental issues.

YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

Island

2012

Garbage Based Sculpture

24 x 40.7 x 18 cm

©YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, courtesy of YUKARI ART



YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

UKIZAKANA

2013

Garbage Based Sculpture

30.7 x 55.7 x 21 cm

© YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, courtesy of YUKARI ART



YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

KOHAKU

2012

Garbage Based Sculpture

30.7 x 55.7 x 21 cm

© YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, courtesy of YUKARI ART





YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

Heaven and Hell

2013

Garbage Based Sculpture

24 x 40.7 x 18 cm

© YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, courtesy of YUKARI ART



Details of *Heaven and Hell*



YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

Black - CHINU

2012

Garbage Based Sculpture

30.7 x 55.7 x 21 cm

© YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, courtesy of YUKARI ART



Details of *Black - CHINU*



YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE

Arowana in Yogyakarta

(Small version of the original artwork)

2008

Garbage Based Sculpture

34.2 x 66 x 28 cm

© YODOGAWA TECHNIQUE, courtesy of YUKARI ART

YOSHIDA AKIRA

Yoshida Akira (b. 1976, Kanagawa, Japan) graduated from Tama Art University with a Bachelor in Fine Arts in 2002. He is renowned to make sculptures with fiberglass reinforced plastic that is painted over by airbrush. His airbrush skills are so impeccable, done with such great precision and detail, that it looks like the patterns have been printed onto the object.

Visually, his works are very cute and follow pop aesthetics standards. However, ironically, the themes of his artworks revolve around problems of contemporary society. The significant contradiction of the appearance and the concept gives Yoshida's works their unique and charming quality.



YOSHIDA Akira
Inu Hariko (Atomic Cloud)
2011
Fiberglass, Reinforced
Plastic, Urethane Paint,
Airbrush Color
93 x 88 x 42 cm
© YOSHIDA Akira,
courtesy of YUKARI ART

Yoshida's largest piece of *INU HARIKO* are part of public collection permanently exhibited at the City One MTR Station, by one of the biggest railway company in Hong Kong. His artwork MANEKINEKO, a welcoming cat named 'Treasure Cat' is displayed at Nishi Ginza Chance Center, the most popular and prestigious lottery stand in Japan.

The two Harikos that are going to be exhibited at Mizuma Singapore and Hong Kong are the same in shape and size, except that they have completely different theme and paintings on the body.



YOSHIDA Akira

Inu Hariko (Occupied Japan)

2012

Fiberglass, Reinforced Plastic, Urethane Paint,
Airbrush Color

122 x 117 x 56 cm

© YOSHIDA Akira, courtesy of YUKARI ART

WATANABE OSAMU

Watanabe Osamu is one of Japan's leading contemporary decorative artists. He first started decorating reproductions of Vincent Van Gogh and Pierre Auguste Renoir's masterpieces using 'fake cream' made of modeling paste and wax.

Watanabe traces his fixation with all things sweet to his childhood. "My mother was a confectionery school teacher, and since I was a child I watched her there. It made a deep impression on me and those images remain, so it's natural to me to work with sweets as a theme," says Watanabe.

Regardless of artists' and critics' dismissal towards decorative art, Watanabe believes in its important quality and continues to create decorative art. He started a revolution that has shifted the art scene from puzzling contemporary art to charming decorative art that can be enjoyed by everyone.

Watanabe is a part of the kawaii art movement that is gaining popularity in Japan. His work has been exhibited across the country, not only in galleries and museums but also department store shows.

Combining his love of travel and seeing World Heritage sites with his art, he has taken to photographing cream dollops in front of sightseeing spots. Watanabe has also created a travel series called "Trip of Cream."



Detail of *Sweet Giraffe*



WATANABE Osamu

Happiness

2014

Wood, Modelling Paste, Acrylic, Resin, Clay

w50 x d30 x h80 cm

base diameter 60 cm, base height 15 cm

© WATANABE Osamu, courtesy of Mizuma Gallery



WATANABE Osamu

Sweet Castle

2014

Wood, Modelling Paste, Acrylic, Resin, Clay

h20 x w41 x d14 cm

© WATANABE Osamu, courtesy of Mizuma Gallery



WATANABE Osamu

Small World

2013

Wood, Modelling Paste, Acrylic, Resin, Clay

50 x 50 x 60cm

© WATANABE Osamu, courtesy of Mizuma Gallery



WATANABE Osamu

Sweet Giraffe

2014

Wood, Modelling Paste, Acrylic, Resin, Clay

160 x 90 x 40 cm

© WATANABE Osamu, courtesy of Mizuma Gallery



WATANABE Osamu

I'm Thinking

2013

Wood, Modelling Paste, Acrylic, Resin, Clay

h52 x w27 x d27 cm

© WATANABE Osamu, courtesy of Mizuma Gallery

GILLMAN BARRACKS

Mizuma Gallery is a part of Gillman Barracks

Gillman Barracks (GB) is Asia's up-and-coming destination for contemporary art. It is distinguished as a vibrant centre in Asia for the creation, exhibition and discussion of contemporary art. Named after the late British General Sir Webb Gillman, GB is now home to 16 local and international art galleries, dining and creative businesses, as well as the Centre of Contemporary Art.

For more information visit www.gillmanbarracks.com

Gallery Profile

Mizuma Gallery was established in Singapore's new art cluster Gillman Barracks in September 2012 by director Sueo Mizuma. The gallery was established in 1994 in Tokyo, and since its opening in Singapore aims for the promotion of Japanese artists in the region as well as introducing new and promising young talents from South East Asia to the international art scene. It has featured the work of Japanese artists including Aida Makoto, Yoshitaka Amano, Tenmyouya Hisashi, and Yamaguchi Akira. It has showcased the work of renowned East Asian artists such as Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba. The Gallery also organises exhibitions showing the creations of Indonesia's forerunner artists including Heri Dono, Nasirun, Made Wianta, Indiegueillas, Edwin Roseno and Angki Purbandono. Mizuma Gallery also participates yearly in Art Stage Singapore, and Art Basel Hong Kong.

Sweet Paradox

11 July - 10 August 2014

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Front Cover : OHATA Shintaro, Wind Trail (detail), 2014, Acrylic on canvas,
100 x 100 cm © OHATA Shintaro, courtesy of YUKARI ART

