

PRESSBOOK

Izumi KATO

Art Collectors' Asia

March 2018



View of Izumi Kato's solo exhibition at Perotin, Hong Kong, 2018.
Photo: Ringo Cheung, ©2018 Izumi Kato, Courtesy the Artist and Perotin

Izumi Kato All for Painting 加藤泉 全為繪畫

Izumi Kato paints with a recurring motif of unique creatures, and since 2003 has produced three-dimensional work using camphor wood and soft vinyl. In recent years he has widened his field internationally, and in this year has a forthcoming large-scale outdoor project in Hong Kong. With his popularity in the market as well, he can surely be said to be one of the representative artists of Japan's 2000s. We visited him in his atelier in downtown Tokyo.

-- Mr. Kato, your two-dimensional work in recent years has been particularly interesting, the colors and the approach to the canvas continuously changing. There is something fresh about your drawings utilizing collage techniques.

Kato My paintings change as a result of the dialogue between them and me. As a whole, my paintings keep changing and, like the show I did at the Perotin Hong Kong, I exhibit my current approach at each solo show.

The drawings with textiles as a base material are a new series. I make a collage or some stitching using textiles and other things I find around me, like paper. I have also been working for a while on a series using old picture frames I bought at flea markets, and in the aspect of combining various elements, something of my sculptural work is brought back.

The big piece composed on several joined canvases is a slightly complex work. My approach to sculpture is to plan where to cut first and then sculpt the body, or forge connections, and that method is reflected in my painting process.

-- The print making you say you have just started is a fresh challenge.

Kato The lithograph studio 'Idem' in Paris still uses the same lithographic plate that was used to print the artists from the École de Paris (School of Paris) such as Picasso and Chagall. I draw on the stone board, and then the craftsmen print it. The characteristics of the stone, which affect the color and texture, translate to the print, and are checked during the printing process. The technical ability of the printers is incredibly high and, in contrast with my normal process of producing painting by myself, it has led to highly stimulating collaboration. This process of printmaking will impact upon my painting in the future. I try many things, but I am first and foremost a painter, so everything I do is for my painting.

-- The creatures you paint somehow bring fairies to mind. Don't you have

加藤泉長期以來以獨特的生命形態為主題進行繪畫創作，2003年起發表以樟木或軟塑膠為素材的立體作品。近些年來加藤活躍於國際舞台，在香港一個由他創作的大型戶外項目也預期在今年發表。我們到訪了在藝術市場上也可視其為2000年代日本藝術家代表的加藤泉位於東京市內的工作室。

—— 在我們看到的近期作品中，您對色彩、畫布的使用不斷發生變化，而使用了很多素材的拼貼作品也非常新穎。

加藤 繪畫，就是要在和畫交流的過程中不斷發生變化。繪畫作品整體在持續變化，每次個展就是中期匯報，像這次在香港貝浩登的展覽也是如此。

以織物為基礎的紙本作品是一個全新的系列。將布、身邊的紙類等各種各樣的東西拼貼，或用繡花線連接在一起。之前的作品中也使用過在跳蚤市場找到的舊畫框，但將各種不同的要素組合起來的想法更多來自於雕塑作品的反饋。

而那些把畫布拼在一起的繪畫則是有些複雜的創作。比如雕塑是在創作最初階段考慮好「在這裡切」後再把身體分割或連接，那這些繪畫就是這個過程的映像。

—— 最近發表的版畫作品也是一個全新的嘗試。

加藤 巴黎的石版畫工房「Idem」至今還使用著曾經刻過畢加索、夏加爾等巴黎派的藝術家們作品的石版。我直接在石版上畫畫，之後就由工匠們進行刻印。石版因為石材的不同所以顏色和肌理也會發生變化，因此就需要邊印邊調整。工匠們技術高超，這和我以往獨自進行創作不同，是一次令人興奮的合作。而版畫創作的體驗最終也會反映到繪畫作品中。雖然進行了各種嘗試，但我自始至終是一個畫家，所以這些都是為了能夠創作出更好的繪畫。

—— 加藤先生描繪的生命體會讓人聯想起精靈。您沒有計劃使用其他的形象為創作主題麼？

加藤 看過的人會有各種說法，但我只是在作品中放進了一個不特定的人物形象。我出生和成長的島根地區相信妖怪和幽靈的存在，也許這在某種程度上影響了我的意識，但我並不相信這些。

其實畫人以外的東西會更輕鬆。也許因為自己就是人，所

Untitled, 2017, fabric, pastel and embroidery on paper, vintage frame, 31.5×25.7cm
Photo: Kei Okano, ©2017 Izumi Kato, Courtesy the Artist and Perrotin

any other characters than them?

Kato Many people say many things about my work, but all I do is put anonymous human shapes into my paintings. Shimane, where I grew up, is a place with a rich tradition of ghosts and monsters, and that may have influenced my way of thinking. But I don't personally believe in any of those spiritual things.

It is far easier psychologically to paint a subject that is non-human. I think, probably because we are human ourselves, the way we judge human subjects is harsher than how we judge other things, so it raises the bar. Although all artists are on the same path, my choice at the moment is to put a human form of my own creation into my paintings. There is nothing I do with no purpose, but equally I don't make direct explanations of anything.

What I think is good about painting is the fact that all you need to compete is a good piece of work. So in a way, painters are like athletes. There is definitely something you could call a level of quality, which you can immediately see if you are part of that industry. In that kind of world, I would like to reach the same level as the artists who, employing the same methods as me, have left masterpieces. Or even be better than them. Their work is a sort of a record – I mean artists like Francis Bacon, Van Gogh, or Picasso. My biggest motivation is to improve my record and surpass them, so in that sense I don't pay much attention to judgments in the context of contemporary art.

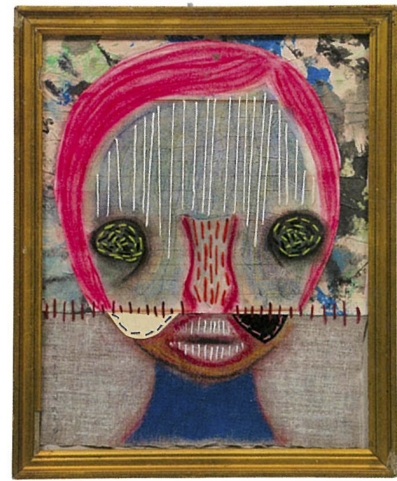
The art world is cruel and unfair, and I feel the judgments that come out of it are impossible to control. But sometimes there are good returns when you produce something successful, which is fulfilling. In that way, it is like life.

-- That's a profound thought. The stone work you produced in Japan is new too. I also hear that you have a new project going on in Hong Kong.

Kato I can't reveal many details, but I have started production of an outdoor project there. Actually, I started thinking about that series in Hong Kong. I have been renting a studio there, and because it is close to the sea I often go fishing. I passed by a rocky area and the idea suddenly came to me. What is most important is that, when intuition strikes, you act on it with a fresh mind. I don't want to repeat the same work I have done before. The rocks I use are mainly collected from close to the exhibition space, so when I worked in Japan there were a lot of round stones, in contrast to square ones in Hong Kong: it is interesting to find unique characteristics of the rocks depending on the location.

I'm not the kind of artist who commits to a single place, but I personally like Hong Kong. You can really see the energy of the city in the frantic movement of people and money. People from almost every country in the world are there, and there are European and American galleries too. Tokyo is a comfortable place to live, but it is perhaps too stable and a bit less exciting. This September I have a solo show in Seoul, and then another in New York, and I aim to show my best work in each space. Also, these days I am in a band called "THE TETRAPOTZ"* with four other artists, and we are planning to release a self-produced album. I'm sure that experience will filter back into my painting someday, too (laugh).

* See THE TETRAPOTZ on the YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3570JHALbOA>)



以在看的時候對於人物會特別的嚴格。因此在藝術家們都站在同一條道路上時，用自己的方法創作人物形象就是我在現在的方式。雖然沒有做任何無意義的事情，但也沒有特別需要我自己來做具體說明的東西。畫家只用作品的好壞來說話，某種意義上來說也是運動員的一種。水平是一定有的，同行一眼就可以分出來。我希望用自己的方式創作出可以達到那些留下不朽名作的藝術家們的水平，最好能夠超越他們。他們的作品就是一個紀錄。弗朗西斯·培根是，梵谷和畢加索也是如此。能夠超過不斷打破的這些藝術家們就是最好的動機，而這和當代藝術的脈絡並沒有什麼關係。

我覺得藝術的世界是不公平甚至殘忍的，人們的評價是不可控的。但是只要有成績就會有回報，就值得去做。這和生活是一樣的。

—— 真酷！最近您也發表了一些使用石頭的新作品。聽說也會在香港發表新的項目。

加藤 現在還不能詳述，但我正在進行戶外作品的創作。

石頭作品系列最初是在香港獲得啟發的。幾年前我在香港租借了一間工作室，因為離海近就經常去釣魚。就是在走過岩石堆時突然想到的。用這些來自直覺的東西進行新的嘗試非常重要，我不想重複做同樣的創作。基本上會使用展示會場當地的石頭，日本多為圓石頭，而在香港方形的就比較多。石頭的個性因為地點不同而有所差異，讓創作變的更有趣。

雖然不是一個應特定地方進行創作的藝術家，但香港是我喜歡的城市。人和金錢都在流動，可以感受到能量。幾乎全世界的人都有，也聚集了來自歐美的大畫廊。東京非常適合生活，可是太平靜了就會有些無聊。

9月在首爾，之後在紐約將會舉辦個展，每處都會全力以赴。另外由我和4位藝術家一起組成的樂隊「THE TETRAPOTZ」*也準備推出自制唱片。我想這部分活動將來也會反映到繪畫中去的（笑）。



Born 1969 in Shimane Prefecture. 1992 Graduated from Musashino Art University. Held numerous solo and group exhibitions. Public Collections: The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, The Franks-Suss Collection (London), Long Museum (Shanghai), etc.

1969年出生於日本島根縣，1992年畢業於武藏野美術大學。舉辦多次個展並參加多個國際展。公共收藏包含國立國際美術館（大阪）、東京現代美術館、The Franks-Suss Collection（倫敦）、龍美術館（上海）等。

Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli

<http://izumikato.com/>