

Daisuke Fukunaga: Beautiful Work

April 7 - May 17, 2022

Nonaka-Hill is pleased to present *Beautiful Work*, an exhibition of paintings by Daisuke Fukunaga. The exhibition is Fukunaga's first solo exhibition outside of his native Japan.

The artworks on view feature "the worker" in active and passive states, always with a pleasant expression.

In the gallery's large space, the exhibition's namesake work, *Beautiful Work* is a frontal portrait of a pert person, perhaps a chambermaid preparing to clean up after others. Compositionally echoing Edouard Manet's *Un bar aux Folies-Bergere*, Fukunaga's ready subject contrasts to the weariness of Manet's barmaid. In the same room, *Crawler in the City* is a self-portrait of the artist as a lone Google mapper, while *Dance* casts cart-pushing co-workers in an homage to Matisse's icon of euphoric choreography.

In urban Japan, it's not uncommon to observe people succumbing to sleep in public places. Long work hours and often long commutes conspire with the sleep-inducing white-noise of commuter trains and the pink-noise of urban bustle. Fortunately, the sleepy can enjoy a sense of security of drifting off in one of the world's safest countries.

In the gallery's smaller space "Sleeping Man 4" depicts a commuting laborer in dark coverall uniform augmented off-hours with an orange scarf, offering a dash of character. It's daytime, but still unclear if he is coming to or going home from work. Fukunaga gives his sleepers a sly smile to suggest that his subjects are finding joy in reconnecting with themselves and their dreams in shut-eyed temporary solitude. Fukunaga, who has been exhibiting in Japan since 2006, is known for paintings which impart anthropomorphic qualities onto ordinary objects. Often nearly monochromatic, Fukunaga's paintings frequently seem to quiver due to his paint handling and color combinations which can be compared to Impressionism and Pointillism.

Daisuke Fukunaga was born in Tokyo, in 1981. He graduated from the oil painting course of Tama Art University in 2004. He lives and works in Tokyo, Japan. Fukunaga's work was featured in Nonaka-Hill's Summer 2021 summer themed group exhibition *Natsuyasumi: In the Beginning was Love*. Fukunaga has participated in group shows such as Fifteen Painters at Andrew Kreps, New York, 2020, *After the Reality 2*, curated by Hiromi Yoshii at Daichi Projects, New York, 2008, VOCA Exhibition 2009 at The Ueno Royal Museum, and The Way of Painting at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, 2014. Also, as a member of the artist group MIHOKANNO, Fukunaga participated in group exhibitions *Hello MIHOKANNO* at Tokyo Wonder Site Shibuya, Tokyo, 2009 and *Good Night MIHOKANNO* at Akibatamabi 21, 3331 Arts Chiyoda, 2011. He won the first Kinutani Koji Award sponsored by the Mainichi Shimbun in 2009. At Tomio Koyama Gallery, Fukunaga has held solo exhibitions in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2020