



男孩在美術教室 | *Boy in the Art Room*, 2023. 布面油畫 | Oil on canvas. 180.4 x 180 cm. 攝影 | Photo: Yuta Saito. ©2023 Otani Workshop/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. 圖片提供: 貝浩登 | Courtesy Perrotin.

## OTANI WORKSHOP

### Portraits

December 12, 2023 – February 17, 2024

*No more can I pen down a verse.  
Where no poetry dwells, there it exists.  
Only fragments of consciousness turn into these lines—  
Consciousness, a realm of solitude.  
In solitude felt, thus I exist.  
Solitude, the very root of being;  
Solitude, the truest wish for beauty.  
Beauty, a symbol of eternity.*

Junzaburō Nishiwaki, *The Wanderer Never Returns* (1947)

In the creative world of Otani Workshop, solitude pervades each individual. Subtle expressions, unwittingly revealed in solitude, encapsulate everything: smiles brought on by memories, foggy uncertainty about the future, and bewilderment in the present, all frozen in a fleeting slice of time. During his university leave, Otani embarked on a solitary journey, echoing Junzaburō Nishiwaki's sentiment, "In solitude felt, thus I exist." In his wanderings, Otani was in search of himself. Born in Shiga Prefecture and surrounded by pottery from a young age, his tactile memories of playing with clay as a child drew him

## 大谷工作室

### 畫像

2023年12月12日-2024年2月17日

*詩, 無法寫就  
詩, 存在於無詩之所  
只有恍惚的碎片成為詩歌  
恍惚, 是孤獨的  
我感知孤獨, 我存在  
孤獨是存在的根源  
孤獨是美的本願  
美是永劫的象徵*

—西脅順三郎《遊子不歸》(1947年)

在大谷工作室的創作中, 每個人都是孤獨的。那些細微的表情是獨處時下意識顯露出來的: 回憶帶來的微笑; 對於未來的蒙昧無知; 對於現下的迷茫, 是時間在那一瞬的切片, 而在這切片中凝結的是一切。在大學休學期間, 獨自踏上旅途, 遊歷四方的大谷似乎應和著西脅順三郎所說的“我感知孤獨, 我存在”, 他在這孤獨的旅程中, 兜兜轉轉尋找自己。最終, 出生於滋賀的他, 習以為常被陶器圍繞的記憶, 小時候玩泥巴的身體感知, 將他帶回了滋賀。在這裡, 他



怪獸塔尼拉 | *Tanilla*, 2023. 布面油畫 | Oil on canvas. 180.5 × 180 cm. 攝影 | Photo: Yuta Saito. ©2023 Otani Workshop/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. 圖片提供: 貝浩登 | Courtesy Perrotin.

back to Shiga. There, he infused every piece of his work with solitary visions and moments, turning the vague images in his mind into tangible “beings” for others to observe, imagine, and perceive, allowing the solitary to metamorphose into a palpable beauty that can be displayed, conveyed, and even communicated.

On his travels, Otani so observed, “Whether it is a modern or contemporary art museum, an ancient temple, or a historical museum collection. When viewed from the perspective of human history, fine arts, crafts, and other handicrafts are all part of an evolving spectrum.” It is this gradual transition that Otani kneads into his work, crystallizing into ceramic pieces, sculptures, and paintings. Therefore, “Otani Workshop” remains his chosen name. Signifying more than just a contemporary art studio in the Chinese context, it resonates with the Japanese tradition of pottery, aligning more closely with the concept of a workshop or factory in artisanal practice. Yet unlike traditional workshops, his is a solitary endeavor, devoid of any direct lineage or disciples. Otani’s wish for his creations to inhabit an ambiguous stage, blurring the lines between art and craft in our time and age, may stem from his own observations of this evolving spectrum.

Starting his creative career with pottery was a blend of coincidence and inevitability for Otani. The coincidence arose from a conversation with a university senior, who mentioned that in Japan, few sculptors can make a living from their art, casting doubt in Otani’s mind about pursuing sculpture. However, the inevitability lay in his fidelity to the tactile experience. “Directly touching and creating with soft clay brings me joy, and I believe this feeling can also be imparted to the audience.” Indeed, studies suggest that tactile memories are essentially similar to visual representations. Although there lacks sufficient data to reliably compare the intensity of these two stimuli, through Otani’s paintings in



熊 | *Bear*, 2023. 陶瓷、油畫顏料 | Oil on ceramic. 28 × 28.3 cm. 攝影 | Photo: Yuta Saito. ©2023 Otani Workshop/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. 圖片提供: 貝浩登 | Courtesy Perrotin.

將自己獨自看見的景象、獨自經歷的每個瞬間，融入每一件作品中，腦中模糊的形象成為一個具體的“人”，讓人們觀看、想像、感知，讓孤獨轉化為具象的美得以展現、傳達，乃至交流。

他在旅途中看到的所有，「無論是現代/當代美術館，還是古寺、歷史博物館的藏品，當我們從人類歷史的角度來審視時，美術、工藝和其他手工藝都在漸變的譜系之中」，他便是將這樣一種漸進，“揉”進了他的作品，凝結成一件陶藝作品、一座雕塑、一幅畫面。因此，大谷工作室是他堅持使用的名號，「工作室」一詞儘管是與中文相通的漢字詞彙，卻並非中文語境中當代藝術家的工作室藝術，而是在日本陶藝傳統中，更接近「工場」或「工作坊」的手工藝品製作現場。然而，與傳統工作室不同，他是只有一個人的勞動，沒有師承、沒有弟傳。或許，正是因為他自己觀察到這樣一種漸變的譜系，希望讓自己的作品處於某種曖昧的階段，並以此在當下這個時代模糊藝術和工藝之間的界限。

以陶藝作為切入口開始自己的職業創作生涯，對大谷而言是某種偶然的必然。偶然來自於某次與大學學長的對話，學長提到在日本很少有能夠靠雕塑養活自己的雕塑家，讓他對於自己是否要成為雕塑家產生懷疑，而必然則在於他始終忠於自己切實的身體感知。「直接觸摸柔軟的泥土並進行創作使我感覺很愉悅，我相信這種感覺一定也能傳達給觀眾。」事實上，有研究表明，觸覺記憶陳述在本質上是相似的視覺陳述，雖然沒有足夠的數據來可靠地比較兩種刺激的強度，但是透過大谷這次展覽的繪畫作品，我們的確能夠感受到手與眼相通的感知。



熊 | Bear, 2023. 木板上布面油畫 | Oil on canvas, wooden panel. 219.7 × 197.9 cm. 攝影 | Photo: Yuta Saito. ©2023 Otani Workshop/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. 圖片提供: 貝浩登 | Courtesy Perrotin.

this exhibition, we can indeed feel the congruent perceptions of hand and eye.

Otani transfers the unique tactile sensation experienced during the ceramic-making process — the careful molding and shaping of clay with his fingers — onto two-dimensional mediums. He selects varied bases such as canvases, burlap sacks, wooden panels, and plates, and renders the tactile sensation through the dotting and layering of paint, creating a distinct textural effect in his paintings. At the same time, he severs the direct connection between touch and ceramics, expanding this bodily experience across various mediums. Thus, what was originally a specific tactile sensation evolves into an abstract sensibility, freely flowing through the imageries he creates.

Otani's unwavering loyalty towards his own perceptions allowed him to break free from the increasingly rigid cage formed by knowledge, systems, and education in reality. When he doubted the educational approach of art schools, he chose to take a sabbatical to experience life directly. As a beginner in Shigaraki, the epicenter of Japanese ceramics, Otani persisted in his trials and learning, seeking help from local artisans to tackle technical challenges. Despite uncertainties about becoming a sculptor, he tirelessly worked in his studio from dawn to dusk, transforming the visions in his mind into tangible works in his hands.

While standardized norms continually suffocate genuine bodily perceptions, Otani has established his own standard as an individual. His world might appear hazy and elusive in his paintings, but such is the reality of our world. And it is in chaos and uncertainty that poetry blossoms and beauty flourishes.

他將陶藝製作過程中手指擠壓黏土，一點一滴、一分一毫地進行修正、塑形的獨特觸感，轉而遷移至二維的繪畫，選擇畫布、麻袋、木板、盤子等作為基底，將自己手指承載的觸感透過顏料的點畫、堆積呈現出獨特的畫面質感，與此同時，他也切斷了觸感與陶瓷之間直接的聯繫，而將這種觸感進行朝向普遍化的拓展，讓這種身體的感知能夠不斷地透過各種媒介傳達出來。於是，原本相對具體的某種觸感，轉而成為一種抽象的感性，在畫面之間自由流動。

正是對於自身感知的絕對忠誠，讓他得以出離現實中過度傾斜而越來越僵化的知識、體系、教育所形成的“牢籠”，當他對藝術院校的教育產生疑惑時，可以選擇休學，讓自己直接地去感受；在陶藝之都信樂剛開始接觸陶藝時，他也堅持自己嘗試、學習，從路過的當地老師傅那裡尋求幫助，解決技術難題；對於自己是否能夠成為雕塑家毫無把握之時，仍然不知疲倦地在工作室從早到晚，將心中的那個意象轉化為手中的作品。

於是，當那些模式化的標準不斷扼殺人們真實的身體感知時，大谷卻擁有了自己作為個體的標準。在他的世界裡，或許很多事物正如畫中所表現的那樣朦朧、恍惚，充滿著不確定，然而這才是這個世界的真實，也正是在這樣一個混沌、無常的世界中，才充滿著詩意，孕育著美。

在大谷這裡，個體是至上的，每個個體都棲息著不同的靈魂。而他的表達卻是簡單直接的，就像他慣常說的那樣，「每一幅作品都刻畫了一個人，希望觀眾可以逐一觀看每一幅/每個人。」他給「每一幅/每個人」取的標題同樣是平鋪直敘地陳述事實，「男孩」、「熊」、



For Otani, the individual reigns supreme, each harboring a unique soul. The artist's expression is simple and straightforward, as he often says, "Each work portrays an individual, and I hope viewers will observe each one closely." The titles he assigns are equally straightforward, stating facts such as "Boy," "Bear," "Sleeping Boy," "Golden Boy," and so forth. Each protagonist could be you, me, or anyone else, for we all share common memories and experiences.

The recurring figure of "Tanilla" — a small monster with horns and fangs, whose name is a portmanteau of Otani and Godzilla — might well be his self-portrait. Setting oneself as the standard, staying true to personal experiences, and deviating from established traditions and rigid conventions can, in some ways, equate to being perceived as a "monster."

In this upcoming exhibition at Perrotin Hong Kong, viewers will find themselves amidst characters and "little monsters" birthed from Otani's imagination, traversing the worlds he conjured for each soul. Here, you might encounter echoes of your own solitude and moments of shared perplexity. And as you wander, you are free to let your eyes and heart take the lead. Come January 2024, Otani Workshop will unveil a solo exhibition at Kaikai Kiki Gallery. What metamorphosis will his characters undergo then? We await the next chapter of this story with bated breath.

Text by Sara Yuan Jing

### About the Artist

Otani Workshop was born in Shiga Prefecture, Japan; now lives and works in Awaji Island, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. Make no mistake: despite the name, Otani Workshop does not refer to a collective of artists, but to a singular, an eminently singular sculptor who has become the leading representative of Japanese ceramics. Silent and literally bulging heads, figures with their arms raised like praying figures, monumental middle figures extended upwards, anthropomorphic vases, children, animals, soils, bronzes: Otani Workshop's bestiary is a world in itself, a world in which dreams and tales converge as well as fantasies and daydreams, a world in which the queenly imagination and the kingly gesture triumph, in which forces and forms meet.

**More information about the exhibition >>>**

「睡著的男孩」、「金色的男孩」等等，因為這每個人都可能是你、我、他，我們共享著同樣的回憶與經歷。

唯有常出現的「TANILLA」——這個長著犄角、露出尖牙的小怪獸形象，名字來自於大谷 (OTANI) 與哥吉拉 (GOZILLA) 的結合，或許這便是他的自畫像吧。以自身作為標準，忠於個體的切身感受，出離既定的傳統和僵化的系統，在某種程度上的確會被視為「怪獸」吧。

在貝浩登 (香港) 的這次展覽中，我們將會與這些人物和「小怪獸」相遇，沉入大谷為每個靈魂打造的世界中，或許你能找到與你同樣孤獨的人、與你同樣茫然的人，同時，你可以選擇讓自己的眼與心主導，形成自身獨一無二的標準。2024年1月，大谷工作室也將在 KAIKAIKIKI 畫廊舉辦個展，當時他的人物又會發生什麼變化？我們期待故事的新篇章。

撰文：袁璟

### 關於藝術家

大谷工作室1980年生於日本滋賀縣，目前工作生活於日本兵庫縣淡路島。雖然名為大谷工作室，但所指實際上並非一個藝術家組合，而是獨立的雕塑藝術家，目前大谷工作室已成為日本陶器藝術的主要代表。沉默的、鼓著腦袋的形象，舉起雙臂，似乎在祈禱；擬人化的花瓶、孩子、動物、泥土、青銅器：大谷工作室的創作本身就是一個世界，夢想、故事、幻想以及白日夢交織在一起，有著女王般的想像和國王般勝利的姿態，在這裡，各種力量和形式都相遇了。

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