



無題 | *Untitled*, 2023. 布面油畫 | Oil on canvas. 66 × 126 cm. ©2023 Izumi Kato. 圖片提供：藝術家與貝浩登 | Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

IZUMI KATO

March 24 – May 18, 2024

The art of Kato Izumi is characterized by a series of captivating humanoid figures, their identities veiled in mystery. This recurring motif acts as an archetype revisited by Kato again and again, encapsulating “a visual anthropology of not-exactly-human-but-humanoid figuration.” These figures evoke reminiscences of Kodama, tree spirits seen in Japanese anime, bearing qualities reminiscent of fictional extra-terrestrial beings. In Kato’s work, these small figures have slender limbs without hands or feet and are frequently described as “alien-like,” “humanoid,” “expressionless,” “Sphinx-like,” “ghostly,” “primitive,” and “totemic”... They often appear in pairs, gazing out from the canvas with round, hollow eyes. Are they ancestors of humans or future-evolved humanoid forms? Their heads are typically the most developed, with faces being the most formalized with evolved palette. In some cases, their eyes are even crafted from various stones, creating reflections. These figures are connected to the tradition of pantheistic polytheism in Shintoism and the devout animism of Japan’s indigenous culture. Kato’s upbringing in Shimane Prefecture in western Japan, a coastal area renowned for its myths and legends, serving as the backdrop of Kato’s childhood, gradually becoming a significant influence on his visual language.

While many viewers are already acquainted with the mysterious humanoid figures in the artist’s portfolio, works in this exhibition reveal a recent shift: the introduction of animal figures and their significant connection to anatomy. In Kato’s previous works, animal elements often appeared in an anthropomorphic manner, but now they have

加藤泉

2024年3月24日-5月18日

加藤泉的作品由一系列特徵顯著、身份未知的神秘人形形象串聯。他們是加藤反覆回溯的母題和原型，“一種關於非人卻類人的圖像人類學”。他們讓人想起在日本動漫中所見的樹精 (Kodama)，其怪異又易讓人聯想到某種虛構的地外生物。在過去關於加藤泉的寫作中，關於小人形象的描述似乎已被窮盡：“外星人般”，“類人形象”，“面無表情的”，“斯芬克斯般的”，“幽靈般的”，“原始的”，“圖騰般的”……他們四肢纖長，又看不到具體的手腳，時時成對出現，瞪着圓而空洞的大眼。這些生物是什麼，人類祖先？還是未來進化後的人形形態？他們的頭部通常比較發達，面部是這些形象中最形式化和色彩進化最多的部分，其中一些眼睛甚至由各種石頭製成，呈現反光和倒影。他們和神道教中的泛靈多神崇拜傳統以及日本原住民文化的遺產相連，一種樸素的萬物有靈論。加藤來自日本西部的島根縣，一個以神話傳說而聞名的沿海地區，那裏仍然保留着古老的宗教信仰，神祇和幽靈的神話和傳說是加藤童年的底色，而後漸漸成爲影響他視覺語言的重要力量。

許多觀眾對他創作中的神秘類人形象已經相當熟悉，在本次展覽展出的作品中，不難看出藝術家近年的創作轉折：動物形象的出現及其與解剖學之間的顯著關聯。在加藤過去的創作中，動物的元素多以擬人的方式出現，現在則成爲一個獨立的具象形體，與一直以



無題 | *Untitled*, 2023. 布面油畫 | Oil on canvas. 152 × 65.5 cm. ©2023 Izumi Kato. 圖片提供：藝術家與貝浩登 | Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

evolved into independent and tangible forms, coexisting with the perennial protagonists, the humanoid figures. In some paintings, animal figures even assume dominant roles, relegating human figures to secondary positions. These works depict animals standing on or lying beneath humanoid figures, whispering to them, or swimming alongside them in the ocean. If the previous works conveyed a sense of loss through the humanoid figures' perpetual search and solitude, it seems that they have now found companions for their journey. This intriguing role reversal depicted in the new works naturally evokes connections with the growing discourse of posthumanism and animal studies in recent years. It may signify the imagination of re-forging cross-species kinship or serve as a reflection of our reality in the post-pandemic era and global climate crises.

These humanoid figures also exhibit features that resemble both animals and plants. In some past paintings, their legs and feet become stem-like branches, flowers blooming at the tips, leaves growing on top of their heads. They sometimes stand on all fours, resembling centaurs or beings that are half-human, half-deer. The facial structure and palette become increasingly complex and intricate, with contrasting colour blocks and bold lines, offering insight into the artist's fascination with anatomy.

Dualism is another recurring theme in Kato's works. The figures in his paintings and sculptures are frequently divided into two halves, a structure seen consistently in his style. The new works introduce additional dualisms, including the interplay between the interior and exterior, and the juxtaposition of humans and animals. In the plastic sculpture pieces, an intricate skeletal structure is enclosed within a transparent vinyl shell, with animal characters serving as anatomical counterparts.



無題 | *Untitled*, 2024. 軟乙烯基、木頭、塑料模型、不鏽鋼、丙烯、軟乙烯基漆 | Soft vinyl, wood, plastic model, stainless steel, acrylic paint, soft vinyl paint. 71 × 19 × 16 cm. ©2024 Izumi Kato. 圖片提供：藝術家與貝浩登 | Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

來的主角——類人幽靈形象並立。在一些畫作中，動物形象幾乎佔據了主導地位，人物形象則成為陪襯；另一些作品裏，動物或站立在臥倒的人形身上，或立於頭頂，或扮作耳語者，或幻化成不成比例的、在水中隨行而遊的巨型的魚。如果說此前的小人所呈現出的迷失姿態，是因為他們處於持續的孤獨和尋覓當中，那麼此時的他們似乎已經尋找到了這一段行程的旅伴。這種在新作品中所呈現的非常有趣的角色反轉，讓人不禁將其與近年來發展壯大的後人類理論和動物研究聯想起來。或許這是一種對於跨物種親緣的想象，或許這只是後疫情時代、全球氣候災難中的現實。

這些人形本身也會呈現出相當的動植物特徵，比如在過去的一些畫作中，小人的腿和腳延伸出來變成類似於植物的莖枝，尾端開出花來，頭頂長出葉子，偶爾四腳着地，看起來像是半人馬或者半人鹿一樣的形象更是在繪畫和雕塑中頻繁出現。臉部結構和色彩愈發複雜和精緻，由無數相互衝突的色塊和線條組成，對於解剖學的發展從此處或許可以略見端倪。

同時，二元結構也是加藤作品中常見的一種組織形式。繪畫中的同一個形象拆解成雙聯，雕塑分成大小不一的兩個組成部分。雙人組合是一種標準的加藤式結構，男女總是成對出現。而新作品中增加了新的二元結構，雕塑的內部和外部空間，繪畫中的表皮和骨骼，以及人與動物的組合。在塑料雕塑作品中，透明的塑料外包包裹着精巧的骨架結構，旁邊的動物角色以解剖學模型的形象扮演人形的分身。

The works in this exhibition seem to emanate from a series of nine sculptures from Kato's solo exhibition in 2023 at Perrotin Paris, where figures and groupings form new archetypes. Notably, elements of landscapes begin to emerge in both sculptures and paintings, resembling dioramas with mountains, rocks, and vegetation. The small humanoid figures are seen riding fish on the water's surface or standing atop an erupting Mount Fuji. An apocalyptic undertone permeates the works, which stage an encounter and recombination of various prototypes. The somewhat mechanical presentation of animal anatomy originated from educational toys related to animal anatomy—prototypes of prototypes.. The creative process, starting from models to paintings, and then from paintings to sculptures, sculptures back to paintings, forms a closed loop.

In a somewhat speculative interpretation, the evolution of these figures, as I perceive it, indicates that in the early 1990s, Kato leaned towards an almost unified monochromatic palette with earthy and mineral hues. Intense colors were occasionally reserved solely for the heads and genitalia of the small humanoid figures. Their shapes were rawer, conveying distinct expressions of despair and anxiety. In recent years, the works have become more vibrant in color, with relatively richer backgrounds. However, emotional signifiers have become more ambiguous, with the gaze of the humanoid figures displaying a sense of confusion and loss. The treatment of facial expressions and the internal aspects of the bodies resemble landscapes. The deadpan expression of the small humanoid figures and the malleability they bring may be considered one of Kato's core methodologies in his creative process. This intentional blurring, and consistent use of untitled nomenclature, render the identity of the protagonist mysterious. One can also observe layers and layers of transformations, seemingly representing the artist's refusal to adhere to a specific set of interpretations. The figures do not speak, they do not commit. In Kato's ambiguous symbolism, they are both spirits floating in deep forests and mountains, and witnesses of modernity's disillusionment in the Capitalocene.

Text by Luan Shixuan

About the Artist

Izumi Kato was born in 1969 in Shimane, Japan; now lives and works between Tokyo, Japan and Hong Kong, China.

Children with disturbing faces, embryos with fully developed limbs, ancestor spirits locked up in bodies with imprecise forms—the creatures summoned by Izumi Kato are as fascinating as they are enigmatic. Their anonymous silhouettes and strange faces, largely absent of features, emphasize simple forms and strong colors; their elementary representation, an oval head with two big, fathomless eyes, depicts no more than a crudely figured nose and mouth. Bringing to mind primitive arts, their expressions evoke totems and the animist belief that a spiritual force runs through living and mineral worlds alike. Embodying a primal, universal form of humanity founded less on reason than on intuition, these magical beings invite viewers to recognize themselves.

Kato graduated from the Department of Oil Painting at Musashino University in 1992. Since the 2000s, he has garnered attention as an innovative artist through exhibitions held in Japan and across the world. In 2007, he was invited to take part in the 52nd Venice Biennale International Exhibition, curated by Robert Storr.

[More information about the exhibition >>>](#)

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這一展覽中的作品似乎都受啟發於加藤在2023年貝浩登(巴黎)展出的9件一套雕塑系列，其中的形象和組合化作新的繪畫原型：見骨的動物，瀕臨噴發的火山。同樣值得注意的還有近期纔出現的雕塑中的風景元素，這一批雕塑作品仿照微型景觀的形式，山石、草叢，小人時而於水面上騎魚飛馳，時而立於即將噴發的富士山上。一種末日情結隱然籠罩。加藤的作品似乎是多種原型的相遇和重組。作品中略帶刻板的動物解剖學呈現，是因為這些作品的前身即是動物模型玩具。它們是對於模型、玩具的解構和模仿，是基於後者的再創作。這些模型是原型中的原型。從模型出發的繪畫，從繪畫出發的雕塑，從雕塑再出發的繪畫，構成了創作邏輯的大致閉環。

作為一種帶着些許自以為是的解讀，我所感知到的該形象的進化發生在90年代初期的創作中，加藤更傾向於統一的單色調，接近土壤和礦物的色系，有時只在小人的頭部和生殖器賦予濃烈色彩，他們的造型也更加隨機，帶有清晰可辨的絕望和憂慮；到近年來，作品在色彩上更加張揚大膽，背景相對豐富，卻在情緒信息層面更加模糊，人形的眼神看似一種失卻後的迷惘，面部和身體的內部會出現類似於風景的處理方式。小人面無表情的狀態及其所帶來的可塑性或許正是加藤創作中的核心方法論之一。他們表現為隨處可見的故意模糊，保證主角身份不明的狀態，以及堅持沿用的“無題”的命名方式，還可以看到層層疊疊的重複轉化，這些似乎代表了藝術家對於解讀的某種拒絕。他們並不說話，或是避而不談。在加藤模糊的象徵主義中，他們既是漂浮於深林山川的精靈，亦是資本世中目睹現代性幻滅的你我。

撰文：樂詩璇

關於藝術家

加藤泉1969年出生於日本島根縣，目前工作和生活在於日本東京和中國香港。

面容令人不安的幼童，四肢發育完整的胚胎，被封存於形狀尚未明確的身體裏的祖先靈魂——這些被加藤泉召喚而出的生物既迷人又神祕。他們帶着模糊的輪廓和奇怪的面孔，基本上沒有五官，加藤強調簡單的形式和強烈的色彩：這些角色的基本形象是一個橢圓形的頭部和兩隻深不可測的眼睛，其餘的描繪不過是粗獷的鼻子和嘴巴。加藤的實踐讓人聯想到原始藝術，其表達喚起了圖騰和萬物有靈論的信仰，即一種貫穿生命和物理世界的精神力量。加藤泉的藝術體現了一種原始的、普遍的人類形式，它較少地建立在理性上，而更多地建立在直覺上。藝術家筆下這些神奇的精靈邀請着觀眾重新認識自己。

加藤泉1992年畢業於日本武藏野大學油畫系。進入21世紀以後，通過在日本和世界各地舉辦展覽，加藤泉開始以革新藝術家的身份備受關注。2007年，他受邀參加了由羅伯特·斯托爾策展的第52屆威尼斯雙年展。

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