

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Izumi Kato

Friday 18 November - Saturday
7 January 2023

Private view:
Thursday 17 November, 6–8pm

Gallery hours:
Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm
Saturday 11am–5pm



Image: Izumi Kato, 'Untitled', 2022. Oil on canvas, 162 x 261cm (63 3/4 x 102 3/4in).
Copyright Izumi Kato. Courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.
Photo by Kei Okano.

Stephen Friedman Gallery presents the first UK solo exhibition by Japanese artist **Izumi Kato**.

The exhibition, which celebrates the breadth of Kato's practice, comprises painting, sculpture and drawing.

Kato animates figures that inhabit a liminal space between the physical and spiritual realms. His otherworldly subjects include children with distinctive faces, embryos with fully developed limbs, and figures with bulbous heads and large eyes attached to slender, graceful bodies. Speaking of these, the artist says, "They are no one and nowhere"; rather the forms are expressions of the energy and very essence of consciousness.

In the exhibition, Kato's expressive paintings allude to themes of animism and folklore. Describing painting as the root of his practice, with bold clashing colours, the artist intuitively applies pigment to surfaces directly with his hands. Gathering material from his surroundings, he combines painting with stitching, knotting and carving – skills that as an avid fisherman he uses regularly – to create sculptures and installations formed out of found textile, wood and stone.

Kato's mysterious creatures are presented in a variety of scenarios. A figure carved in wood resembles an aircraft, whilst another is adorned with animals, birds and bugs. Continuing the motif of nature, a human-sized sculpture cast in aluminium from found boulders is displayed in the gallery's garden.

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Contact Us

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Izumi Kato

Kato (born 1969) lives and works between Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Kato graduated from the Painting Department at Musashino University in Tokyo, Japan in 1992. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Stand By You', SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, USA (2021); Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing, China (2020); 'LIKE A ROLLING SNOWBALL', Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo and Hara Museum ARC, Gunma, Japan (2019) and Fundación Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Mexico (2019).

Notable group exhibitions include: 'Just Looking, Still Looking, Always Looking', Aranya Art Center, Qinhuangdao, China (2021); 'Garden of Life: Eight Contemporary Artists Venture into Nature', Tokyo, Metropolitan Teien Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2020); 'Unconstrained Textiles: Stitching Methods, Crossing Ideas', Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile, Hong Kong, China (2020) and 'Japanorama. A new vision on art since 1970', Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France (2017). In 2007, Kato was invited to take part in 'Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind: Art in the Present Tense' in the Italian Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale, curated by Robert Storr.

Public collections include: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; Japigozzi Collection, Geneva, Switzerland; K11, Hong Kong, China; Long Museum, Shanghai, China; Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan; The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan; Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing, China; Taguchi Art Collection, Tokyo, Japan; Takahashi Ryutaro Collection, Tokyo, Japan; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan; Zhiguan Museum of Fine Art, Beijing, China and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Ishikawa, Japan.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Stephen Friedman Gallery represents exceptional artists from around the world. Since its inauguration in 1995, the gallery has been based in London on Old Burlington Street, Mayfair. The gallery has three spaces in which it hosts solo and group exhibitions throughout the year. Additional works can be viewed by appointment in private rooms and office spaces. There is also a facility to exhibit outdoor sculpture in a landscaped private garden.