

TOMIO KOYAMA GALLERY

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Masahiko Kuwahara (1959-2021)

January 6 - January 8, 2022

The artist Masahiko Kuwahara passed away in April, 2021.

For three days in the New Year of 2022, we will hold an exhibition in memory of Masahiko. To accompany the exhibition, we have gathered messages from people who knew him during his lifetime to make a booklet.

The booklet features comments from artists, friends and gallerists who had a close acquaintance with Masahiko.

We invite you to come to the gallery and see the footsteps of Masahiko Kuwahara.

Tomio Koyama

Masahiko Kuwahara

Born in Tokyo in 1959, passed away in April 2021.

Kuwahara held twelve solo exhibitions with Tomio Koyama Gallery: "Abandoned Child" (1997), "View" (1999), "Life and Pus" (2001), "Land Development" (2005), "In the End of Summer" (2007), "Window" (2008), "Sweet and Desserts" (2010), "Only in Dream" (2012), "Bright Days" (2015), "Summer Days" (2019) and "heavenly peach" (2021). He also held two solo exhibitions at Richard Heller Gallery in Santa Monica, the United States, in 2001 and 2008.

His major group exhibitions include "TOKYO POP" (Hiratsuka Museum of Art, Kanagawa, 1996), "The

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Japanese Experience – Inevitable” (Ursula Blicke Stiftung Foundation, Kraichtal, Germany, 2002; traveled to Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria in 2004), “POPjack: Warhol to Murakami” (Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, 2002), “Japan Pop” (Helsinki City Art Museum, Helsinki, 2005), “Portrait Session” (NADiff, Tokyo / Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, 2007) and “Pathos and Small Narratives” (Gana Art Center, Seoul, Korea, 2011).

Kuwahara started exhibiting his work in the 1980s. He consistently expressed a sense of absurdity with regard to scenery and humanity being changed by modernization. Inorganic buildings and sceneries created by Japan’s economic prosperity during the 1960s and 70s, dolls and toys that were consumed and abandoned to anonymity, and uncanny creatures living by polluted water, are the primary scenery in which Kuwahara himself grew up. He depicted their sadness in light and humorous ways, assimilated with pale color tones and blurred outlines, suggesting our contemporary feelings of fleeting emptiness, dullness, and loneliness, yet also enabling us to sense a mysterious kind of happiness.

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