

# KAITO Itsuki

## The Monopolistic Sweet Spots

December 7, 2022 – January 14, 2023

Lower ground Floor

MAMOTH is pleased to announce KAITO Itsuki's first European and London solo exhibition, opening at the gallery December 7, 2022.

KAITO Itsuki pairs bold coloration with elastic narratives in which humans, animals, and imagined creatures metamorphosize and come to terms with identification. Itsuki came of age in Sapporo, Hokkaido during the turn of the 21st century, when the expanded possibilities of the world wide web allowed for the overwhelming influx of visual materials. Her referential database is informed by nonhierarchical images insofar as she wasn't in proximity to much fine art growing up. The emergent mythologies that Itsuki formulates are reflexive prompts for the viewer to contend with social and psychological structures. Individual peculiarities are weighed against cultural mores in an effort to expand the self beyond the bounds of an implicit order. Itsuki achieves this outcome by utilizing both cute and austere imagery, tracking the semiotics of her forms and pursuing the potential within unlikely combinations.

KAITO Itsuki collects her references everywhere, from the street to museums, her current tenure in London providing a fresh database to pull from. She embarks from a place of curiosity, paying mind to the unique patterns of medical illustrations and the ways they connect to the sensing body. These paintings contain specific stories as Itsuki seeks to create work that deals with the system of identification. However, she maintains that it is not necessary for these narratives to be clear to the viewer, and that she encourages disparate understandings of her visual forms. Itsuki's content is auto-generated as she moves between her paintings, carrying aspects from previous works to new ones. Her intuitive colour selection places the onus on contrasting tones rather than gradation. Grotesque shades of brown collide with candy pinks and blues to a satisfying effect. Itsuki ensures that the compositions are tonally resolved despite their unlikely colour arrangements.

Itsuki's consistent implication of a figure reflects her ongoing curiosity about embodiment. These entangled forms are likewise inspired in part by her formative exposure to Jan Švankmajer's films, particularly *Conspirators of Pleasure*. This bizarre comedy features a *mélange* of characters engaged in erotic displays. The strange narrative pacing in Švankmajer's film is echoed in Itsuki's systematics. She mirrors the fetishistic content in less explicit terms. Švankmajer's offbeat feature reaches a particular climax as one of the characters drags brushes erotically around his body. A close-up shot sees a confluence of bristles caressing the man's feet, which Itsuki draws reference to in *The monopolistic sweet spots (Mapping*

of senses). The painting is an abstraction of this scene, as here the artist has illustrated a pair of feet with bandages and multicoloured spots dotted about their pale soles – an approximation of reflexology diagrams.

One can also see allusions to R.B. Kitaj's collaged images where limbs bend awkwardly and objects deny gravitational limits. *Notre Dame de Paris* and *Walter Lippmann* are both tumultuous jumbles of figures and artifacts that appear to communicate something just beyond the viewer's grasp. Robert Hughes accounts for this, writing about Kitaj's 'disconnected emblems of a moment', contributing to 'the sense of not having the whole story that comes from living at no remove from traumatic events'. The painter's surreal idiosyncrasies remain consistent and compelling, an aspect that Itsuki absorbs into her methodology. Her compositions are assembled so that they become mobile systems imbued with inexhaustible energies. They are grounded in her unique approach to content and form.

These kink-infused images demarcate power structures and sexual proclivities without concern for divisions between good and bad. Itsuki's neutral experimentation extends from her sensorial and mythological curiosities, as she seeks links between her images and thematic constants. Her unification of fragments is accomplished through veins and arrows that act as connective tools. Metaphors appear as stand-ins for direct explications, as Itsuki persistently addresses human behaviours and senses that are private and thus unknowable to others. By diagramming thoughts, figures and objects, she sets out to configure alternative modes of communication.

Text by Reilly Davidson

Reilly Davidson is a curator and writer based in NY.

**KAITO Itsuki**

b.1993 Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Lives and works in Tokyo.

KAITO Itsuki obtained her BFA from Tōhoku University of Art & Design (TUAD) in 2016 and MFA from Kyoto city university of arts (KCUA) in 2019.

Recent solo exhibitions include: “Tools are validated”, Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok; “Blacken”, Hive Centre For Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2022; “Restricted Action, Psychofilm”, Hua Art Space, Beijing, 2022; “No excuses for showing up”, LEESAYA, Tokyo, 2021; “Hierarchy of Beasts”, Gallery MEME, Seoul, 2021; “In search of...”, 14a, Hamburg, 2020; “Unsatisfied animals of the cycle”, GINZA TSUTAYA, Tokyo, 2019; “IDÉE FIXE”, Tong Gallery + Project, Beijing, 2019; “Tiger Poet”, CLEAR GALLERY, Tokyo, 2018; “THE WOMEN FROM THE GROUND, DNA”, N’s art project, Osaka, 2017; “Jungle -7,000,000”, MORI YU GALLERY, Kyoto, 2017; “Tiger Technique”, KCUA, Kyoto, 2017.

Recent group exhibitions include: “The Tale of Tales”, G Museum, Nanjing, 2022; “Cope”, No Gallery, New York, 2022; “Temple”, Seventh Gallery, Melbourne, 2022; “Couple of”, Hive contemporary art Centre, Beijing, 2021; “Slow Culture”, KCUA, Kyoto, 2021; “Low Fever”, Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong, 2021; “Collection As Poem in the Age of Ephemerality”, X Museum, Beijing, 2020; “Y-generation artists”, GINZA TSUTAYA ATRIUM, Tokyo, 2020; “A Delinquent Child Having An Out Of Body Experience”, The Residence Gallery, London, 2020; “Complete Metamorphosis”, Super Dutches, New York, 2019; “Scaffolds of Meaning”, MINE PROJECT, Hong Kong, 2019; “Feelings for a spider”, 4646, Tokyo, 2019; “Amazondom”, Pulp, Osaka, 2019; “KUMA EXHIBITION 2019”, Spiral, Tokyo, 2019; “Encounters”, PDX Contemporary Arts, Portland, 2018; “KUMA EXHIBITION”, Spiral, Tokyo, 2018; “KAISEI”, Pehu, Osaka, Japan, Galerie P38, Paris, France, KG, Tokyo, Japan, 2018; “The 4th CAF prize exhibition”, Hillside terrace, Tokyo, 2018.

The awards and scholarships she have won include: KUMA Foundation grant recipient, 2022; 30 artist Under 35 by ARTnews Japan (nominated), 2021; KUMA Foundation grant recipient, 2021; The Peter S. Reed Foundation grant recipient, 2020; ARTIST’s FAIR KYOTO, Kyoto, Japan, 2018; KUMA Foundation scholarship student, 2017.

KAITO Itsuki’s work has been acquired by collections including He art museum, Guangdong, China; X museum, Beijing, China; Tōhoku University of Art & Design, Yamagata, China.

1. *Tiger Poet (Matter Material)*  
2022  
160 × 130cm  
Oil on canvas
2. *The monopolistic sweet spots (Mapping of senses)*  
2022  
180 × 160cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas
3. *Tiger Poet (Yellow shower)*  
2022  
200 × 100cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas
4. *Building with scissors*  
2022  
160 × 130cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas
5. *Tight intelligence (Three tubes)*  
2022  
180 × 160cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas
6. *The monopolistic sweet spots (Effects of stimulates)*  
2022  
180 × 160cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas
7. *Inside of tameness (Dolphin bag and heart)*  
2022  
160 × 130cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas
8. *Amazones and Bijous (in a box)*  
2021  
41 × 32cm  
Oil on canvas
9. *Equilibrium (Belts to Otter bag)*  
2022  
180 × 160cm  
Oil and charcoal on canvas

