

Martina Simeti

SOSHIRO MATSUBARA

*Lonesome Diamonds*

1 December 2022 – 8 February 2023

Opening Wednesday 30 November, 6 – 8 pm

“Soshiro Matsubara is an atypical Japanese insofar as he lives at the antipodes of minimalism in the capital of the ornamental: Vienna. His art is the result of a fascinating combination of black humour, refined historical references, aesthetic dandyism and iconographic eccentricity. Soshiro loves pop music as the ultimate repository of collective desires. His favourite song is ‘Sweet Memories’ by Seiko Matsuda, of which he created a memorable cover version.

Soshiro is a samurai of art. He contemplates spaces, objects and people, and then translates them into formally and conceptually rich and layered objects and environments, populated by ceramics, paintings and installations.

He finds inspiration in imagery from the books, magazines, objects and paintings he collects in markets or antique shops. A good number of them end up on Haus Der Matsubara: the IG account of the shop of the same name (an online antique store run by the artist). Parallel to his individual practice, he is one of the founders of the XYZ collective, which not only holds exhibitions in various places but also runs its own space in Tokyo.

Matsubara’s world is a labyrinth pervaded by obsessions that, with a gentle sadism, drag the visitor along accommodating and astonishingly perturbing paths. When you come out, you will want to memorise Seiko Matsuda’s entire discography, imagining her duetting with Keiji Haino inside the Kokoshka Haus in Pöchlarn.”

– Luca Lo Pinto

For his first exhibition at Martina Simeti’s Milan gallery, Soshiro Matsubara presents an installation featuring ceramic works, drawings on paper and paintings on wood. This latest presentation dialogues with and builds on Matsubara’s previous exhibitions, where explicit references to the symbolism of Fernand Khnopff, on one hand, and the life of Oskar Kokoschka, on the other, are always present.

In the centre of the gallery, resting on a black wooden table, stands a ceramic sculpture of a woman titled *You, who are alive, will always be far away to keep me alive*, evoking the passion between Oskar Kokoschka and Alma Mahler. The Viennese painter in fact commissioned a doll with the same features as the woman to keep beside him after the breakup of their relationship. All around, wall-mounted works accompany the exhibition path, which also continues onto the upper floor and into the basement, providing further insights into Soshiro Matsubara's imagery.

Obsessions, private fantasies and the search for impossible love are recurring themes that are re-contextualised as part of the artist's aesthetic, populated with decorative and domestic elements alike. Soft lighting bordering on semi-darkness lends intimacy to the environment that hosts the exhibition, demanding a degree of complicity from the viewer.

Soshiro Matsubara (1980, Hokkaido, Japan) lives and works in Vienna. He has held solo exhibitions at MACRO, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome; Croy Nielsen, Vienna; Schiefe Zähne, Berlin; Bel Ami, Los Angeles; Brennan & Griffin, New York; and with the XYZ collective in Tokyo. Recent group exhibitions include Winterfest, Aspen Art Museum and The Sentimental Organisation of the World, Crèvecoeur, Paris.