

Ryosuke Kumakura: Habituation**Dates: 2023.07.22 – 09.09****Address: Capsule Shanghai, 1st Floor, Building 16, Anfu Lu 275 Nong, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China**

Capsule Shanghai is pleased to present “Habituation”, the first solo exhibition of Ryosuke Kumakura (b. 1981, Niigata, Japan) in China, showcasing recent works realized between 2019 and 2023. The show will be on view at Capsule Shanghai from July 22 to September 9, 2023.

Ryosuke Kumakura’s interest lies in the relationship between artistic practise and mundane activities. Inspired by everyday objects, his still-lives break the boundary between painting and daily experience. Reimagining the physicality of the canvas, he highlights its texture and sculptural quality, and captures the natural state of common objects, such as socks and towels, in a two-dimensional space.

Frequently on the move over the past few years, the artist tangles with the concept of habituation, and contemplates how we adapt to new environments and the consequent emotional impact. Just as setting up his studio and making works award the artist a familiarity that eases the transition into a strange surrounding, custom and routine are cornerstones in the construction of a physical and emotional sanctuary. Each experience of moving house prompts Kumakura to re-evaluate his habits and the marks they make, and reflect on their underlying psychological drive. In the juggle of old customs and new stimuli, decisions are made to reinforce or abandon existing ways of being in the hope of a material and emotional renewal of the self.

By exposing the meticulously treated stretchers, Kumakura has blurred the boundary between the works and the living / exhibition spaces. This is most evident in the “Night Window” series. Charcoal drawings of nocturnal scenes are contained in window-like wooden frames and partially covered by double-pane glass, obscured by the reflection of the glazing. Looking at the works is vividly reminiscent of gazing through a half-open window at the hazy silhouette of trees under the moonlight. The artist fabricated the charcoal by burning winter branches from his courtyard. The use of domestically sourced materials and the control on the physical makeup of the work fortify the tie between the work and daily life. The series was first started when the artist moved from New York to New Hampshire. Consequently, the night outside his window changed from city lights to shadows of the woods. Through his deft visual play with the dark charcoal drawing and the reflection on the glass, a viewing difficulty otherwise regarded as a curatorial flaw is transformed into an emotional tension of desolation and eeriness. In the attempt to see the darkness of the unknown, one cannot help but catch their own reflection.

The “Socks” and “Towel” series, while deceiving the viewer with their illusory texture of fabrics, embody Kumakura’s observation of and affection for his family members. The act of taking off socks signifies a peculiarly intimate state of mind that differs from the casualness of taking off a coat or the privacy of removing undergarments. It represents a moment of ease and security. Compared to his other works, these paintings are larger in size due to the exposed, narrow wooden stretchers, which take the shape of long mirrors. While the half-filled emptiness within the stretchers reflects the absence of a person in the “mirror”, the canvas stacked and creased at the bottom resembles socks strewn on the floor that still retain the wrinkles from being worn, implying human traces. The “Towel” series began when the artist started living with his partner and learning the other person’s idiosyncrasies. His partner’s habit of folding towels neatly on the rack inspired him to ponder over the similarities between towels and canvases, not only in terms of their texture, but also their potential as mediums of emotions. From the series, the paintings of towels with stripes and floral patterns stand out from the remaining monochromatic “towels” in this exhibition; the towels depicted in these two works were left by the artist’s mother at his home. The works convey the artist’s appreciation of and affection towards his loved ones for these aesthetic choices on domestic trivia, considered or subconscious, are telling of the choice maker’s character.

Kumakura’s acute perception of details extends from his personal life to his studio practise. Once in the process

of stretching a canvas, he noticed that the randomly folded fabric coincidentally resembled a cat's ear, which inspired the iconic form of the "Cat" and "Fur" series of paintings. Taking as a starting point the pre-existing structure of the painted material, he started to create portraits of cats, a creature he deems reliable but not necessarily friendly, speaking from his experience of growing up with the animal: "A person's relationship with their cat is like a painter's relationship with painting." In the exhibition, two cats on the canvas sit on a pile of used towels by the window, gazing back in profound silence. The "Fur" series directs the viewer's eyes to the surface of the canvas, as Kumakura explores the expressive potential of the material by recreating cat fur and patterns through the texture of the fabric and the brush strokes.

In the drawing installation *Practice* (2023), the artist's intention was to rebuild his relationship with certain everyday objects. "I have always had a complicated relationship with plastic pens," says Kumakura when describing the dilemma of the plastic pen as an essential but underappreciated object. When making the work, he has accomplished something that he (and many of us) had never done before - using up the ink of an entire ballpoint pen. Through repetitively drawing the sign of a star on a piece of paper, the ink transforms into a sky of dark constellations. Although a pentagram is far from a realistic representation of the luminous celestial bodies, its meaning is a universal consensus. This familiar convention becomes strange and challenging as a result of repetition. The draping of the paper at the corners lures the viewer to discover upon closer inspection that against the starry sky, translucent plastic pushpins scatter on the paper in the shape of the Cancer constellation. Pens and pushpins, common and overlooked, reincarnate into twinkling stars high above. The disassembled body, cap, and exhausted refill of the pen laying below the drawing sparkle with a crystalline shimmer, commemorating the infinite possibility of ordinary beings under contemplation and reconstruction.

All artworks are self-portraits. Ryosuke Kumakura's paintings mirror the quality of introspection and sensitivity in his nature while extending an invitation to the viewer to reexperience his moments of solitude, tenderness and humor in a time of change. Encapsulating the many thoughts and emotions that gave birth to the works on view, the word "habituation", as the artist reflects, conjures a river of images in his mind:

Birds scared of a scarecrow accustomed to the situation, so they can fly around;
Foster care children going through so many changes to become a new family member;
A husband picking up his favorite picture to make a new house as a "home";
Big waves slowly calming down, then becoming a tranquil ocean;
A street cat appears in your house every day.

熊仓良介：习以为常

展期：2023.07.22 – 09.09

地址：胶囊上海，上海徐汇区安福路 275 弄 16 号 1 层

胶囊上海荣幸呈现熊仓良介（1981 年生于日本新泻）在中国的首次个展“习以为常”。展览涵盖了艺术家在 2019 年至 2023 年期间创作的作品，展期为 7 月 22 日到 9 月 9 日。

熊仓良介长期着眼于日常生活、日用物品与创作行为本身的关系。他抓取身边的具体而细微之物，以静物绘画的方式，完成生活实践与工作室实践的交融。他对画布自身的物质性进行思考，突出画布的雕塑性质及其纹理，进而试图在平面空间中呈现袜子、毛巾等日用物品的自在状态。

展览名称“习以为常”点明了过去数年间艺术家频繁迁徙的漂泊经历中的重要课题，即我们如何适应新的环境以及新环境所带来的情感冲击。正如艺术家借助绘画和布置工作室等熟悉的事务来完成在新居中的过渡，细微习惯和日常节律能够帮助我们在物理和心理上构筑一个私密而神圣的栖居之所。熊仓良介借由迁居的契机来审视其日常习惯和生活痕迹，揣摩它们背后的心理动机，在陌生情景的刺激与循环往复的旧习中，重新选择对日常的坚守或摒弃，完成自我在物质和情感上的新陈代谢。

通过对画框的精心处理，艺术家隐去了作品与起居空间/展览空间的界线。这在“夜晚的窗”（Night Window）系列中最显而易见。他用窗框般的木框进行装裱，用炭笔重现了家中的窗景。部分画面被双层玻璃所遮蔽，在玻璃的反射下，深色的木炭画难以被看清，正如我们透过一扇半开的窗所见到的夜色中的朦胧树影。值得一提的是，艺术家所使用的炭笔也是用家中庭院的树木亲手烧制的。这种就地取材并严格限制作品物质属性的手段，保护了作品与生活空间之间的亲密关系。该系列创作于艺术家从纽约移居至新罕布什尔州之际，他日日所见的窗外夜景也从万家灯火变为了影影绰绰的树林。在力图看清未知的幽暗时，自己的影子却不断浮现——艺术家巧妙利用纸本绘画与玻璃反光之间的视觉游戏，将这种通常在展览中被认为是失误和缺陷的观看屏障，转化为寂寥而吊诡的情绪张力。

“袜子”（Socks）和“毛巾”（Towel）系列不仅呈现出强烈的织物质地，更是熊仓良介对家庭成员的观察和情感倾诉。脱去袜子这一动作代表了某种极为微妙而私人的状态，有别于褪去外衣的随意，又不似脱下内衣那样隐秘。换言之，它代表一种自外而内的安全瞬间。相比艺术家其他作品，这系列绘画的较大尺幅主要源自于暴露在外的狭长木质画框，其形状好似一面全身镜，半满的留白映照出镜中人的缺席。而木框底部堆叠的画布则令人想起散落在地板上的袜子，它们还保留着被穿着过的褶皱，暗示着人的痕迹。“毛巾”系列起源于艺术家和伴侣同居后逐渐熟悉对方的生活琐事的经历。伴侣习惯一丝不苟地将毛巾整齐叠放在毛巾架上，这启发了熊仓良介去思考毛巾和画布之间的相似之处——不仅在于二者的质地，更在于它们吸收和承载情绪的潜能。本次展览中两件条纹和玫瑰花纹的“毛巾”系列绘画与其他单色的“毛巾”相比格外显眼，这是因为这两件作品中描绘的毛巾乃是艺术家的母亲留在他的住处的。这种在日常细微处有意或不经意的审美选择引起了熊仓良介的关注和珍视，因为它们为了解物品的主人提供了线索。

艺术家对于事物细节的敏锐从其个人生活延续至艺术创作。在某次绷画布的过程中，折叠的画布偶然形成了一个猫耳的形状，这一巧合便是“猫”（Cat）和“皮毛”（Fur）系列绘画中标志性的猫耳形状的来源。熊仓良介基于这一媒材的固有结构，创作猫的肖像。在成长过程中，他一直与猫为伴，在他看来，猫是可靠却未必友好的动物，而猫和人的关系则与画家和绘画的关系如出一辙。展厅中，画布上的两只猫坐在窗边摞起的一叠旧毛巾上缄然回望，沉静灵动。“皮毛”系列进一步令观者的视线聚焦于画布表面，熊仓良介通过织物肌理和笔触刻画了猫的毛发和斑纹，于纤毫之间探索画布表情达意的可能性。

艺术家创作绘画装置作品《练习》（2023）的初衷是试图重建自己与日用之物的关系。“我和塑料圆珠笔的关系一直都有些复杂”，熊仓良介细述起圆珠笔必不可少却不被重视的窘境，决定在这件作品中实现一件他（以及我们中许多人）从未完成之事——用完一整支圆珠笔的墨水。于是他在纸上不断重复画五角星

的图案，直到墨水全然化为满天黑暗的繁星。五角星的图案并不客观地体现宇宙中发光天体的形状，但在不同文化中通用。这种不假思索的约定俗成，在成千上万次重复的描绘动作中逐渐变得陌生和发人深思。纸张自然垂坠的四角吸引观者仔细观看，去发现细密的星空之上，几颗透明塑料大头针将纸张固定于墙面，组成巨蟹座星系的形状。随处可见的圆珠笔和大头针在这里化身为浪漫璀璨的星河，纸张下方陈列着的分解后的塑料笔身、笔帽和墨水用尽的笔芯熠熠如水晶，宣示着平凡事物在反思和解构下所蕴含的无限可能。

画如其人。熊仓良介本人的内敛与敏感弥漫于画布之间。这些作品邀请观者步入他所珍视的瞬间，体会他在诸多变化中所经历的孤独、柔软和诙谐。“习以为常”一词涵盖了艺术家希望传达的种种思绪，正如他本人所言，这个词在他的脑海中唤起这样的画面：

“鸟儿受惯了稻草人的惊吓，便可以围绕它盘旋；
寄养的孩子经历了许多变化，成为新家庭的一员；
丈夫挂起最爱的一幅画，新房子于是成了新家；
大浪缓缓退去，归于平静大海；
街头的猫，每天准时来到你的家。”