



## Daisuke Fukunaga “Time in Fermentation”

November 16 - December 14, 2024 11am-7pm CLOSED: Sun, Mon, National Holidays

---

“Time in Fermentation”

In my studio are some cockscombs cut from their stems, arranged in a jug with no water in it. The petals droop and sag day by day, losing their bright yellow as they turn brown and shrivel up. Next to it, a pretty wisteria color with a husk withers and blooms as if time has stopped.

Daisuke Fukunaga

---

Tomio Koyama Gallery Roppongi is pleased to present the exhibition “Time in Fermentation” by Daisuke Fukunaga. This will be the artist’s seventh solo exhibition at the gallery, and the first in four years, and will feature new paintings.

**【About Daisuke Fukunaga and his works - The euphoric and melancholic presence of back alleys, mops, and people at work】**

Daisuke Fukunaga was born in Tokyo in 1981, graduated from Tama Art University in 2004 with a major in oil painting, and received the first Koji Kinutani Award in 2009. Currently based in Tokyo, Fukunaga has been active both in Japan and overseas, holding solo exhibitions at Nonaka Hill (Los Angeles), Antenna Space (Shanghai), and High Art (Paris) among others in recent years.

Since the early days of his career, Fukunaga has been fascinated by back alleys and backyards, seeing a unique kind of presence in objects that tend to be overlooked, such as mops, tires, and motorcycle seats. He paints as if to document his own sensations when these objects come alive to him. His works depict how objects standing quietly in the background come to appear dignified and sublime, as if they had feelings of their own.

At his solo exhibition at Tomio Koyama Gallery in 2020, Fukunaga presented a work depicting people at work taking a break. It was highly acclaimed for the contrast between the social appearance and demeanor of these workers and the way their personalities started to emerge as they relaxed during their break. These aesthetic, graceful, and melancholy expressions and poses are suffused with a strange sense of euphoria and darkness.

The unique fluctuations on the pictorial surface, the pale and vivid colors of blue, green, purple, pink, and orange, and the background that is suggestive of no single country in particular all imbue the picture plane with a fictional quality, and develop a worldview that is dense and original.

The new works in this exhibition represent a continuation of those that were shown at his 2020 solo exhibition. While they are based on the same subject of working people, the worldview here has been developed further. These paintings depict a kind of “time in fermentation” in which people at work are released and detached from their labor, and something is generated.

**【About the exhibition and the exhibited works: depictions of a “time in fermentation” where one is released from labor and sublimated, the ephemeral nature of people and flowers, and an outlook on life filled with brilliance】**

The new work *Rising* depicts “the feeling of starting up or being activated,” as if someone at work was just coming off a break.

The helmet strap hanging glossily over his face, his disenchanted gaze and model-like pose, the graceful flowers in the background, and the cityscape that evokes a foreign country. All of these details suggest that the artist has carefully refined the situation in order to capture this single moment — sublimating this scene of being released from labor, which is never actually seen by anyone, into an artistic moment. The buildings are actual structures that can be found in Fukunaga’s daily life: European-style ready-built houses.

*Thoughts in the Hole* is an image of being in a hole, figuratively speaking, as if one were lost in thought, blocking out the outside world. The figure here is wearing a helmet, his hands folded together. Seemingly at peace in the darkness, he gives the viewer a sense that he is about to fall asleep.

Artist and art critic Takuma Ishikawa, in his review of Fukunaga’s 2020 solo exhibition, wrote that “Fukunaga’s artistic stance is to show the sleep of workers, that is their mental activity, in attractive ways, and this in itself engenders an intensely colorful presentness. And just as in vanitas paintings flowers indicate the finite nature of time, these workers on their breaks also possess a certain ephemerality. This is the true nature of the melancholy in Fukunaga’s works: ephemerality with a faint whiff of death.”

(Takuma Ishikawa “Privileged sleep” Art Collectors, 2021)

The challenge that Fukunaga has taken on in his paintings is to expand the great possibilities of how to depict the human figure in contemporary Japan from the perspective of labor, and to present a number of important issues for our consideration. In these new paintings, the changes in sensation that come to pass with increasing age coincide with a view of life whose brilliance remains undiminished, even after these people and flowers have passed their prime. We hope you will take this opportunity to come and see his new works.