

Chants d'oiseaux

Futoshi Miyagi, Kouichi Tabata, Tom Howse, Yukari Motoyama

November 5 (Tue) – December 21 (Sat) 2024

Yutaka Kikutake Gallery is pleased to present *Chants d'oiseaux*, a group show featuring works by K Futoshi Miyagi, Kouichi Tabata, Tom Howse and Yukari Motoyama. The show will be held from Tuesday, November 5 through Saturday, December 21. This exhibition was inspired by Hanako Takayama's book *Chants d'oiseaux. forêt de textes*, which focuses on birds in the context of modern and contemporary literature and music in both the West (primarily France) and Japan.

Kouichi Tabata assiduously observes and depicts daily motifs in both painting and video formats, incorporating dynamic elements into the former approach, and utilizing pictorial constraints in the composition process for the latter. In the drawing and video work for this show, 72 colour (birds), Tabata has depicted the same 72 birds with 72 colored pencils, one color for each bird and all with the same composition. Birds exist as inherently ambiguous things, both present and not, and it is this ambiguous presence that evokes the illusion of movement in the work as the birds appear to be breathing through the repetitive mark making. This movement occurs spontaneously in the viewer's mind, creating a moment where the video image resonates with the viewer's imagination. Tabata's material approach encourages a new awareness of transitions, an awareness that exists within the subtle but certain shifts that are often overlooked in everyday life.

Tom Howse, London-based painter, will be showing his work for the first time in Japan as part of this exhibition. Howse's influences from outsider art, folk art, Dada, and Art Brut, as well as his sincere approach to these styles, can be seen in his own paintings. The pigeons that appear in his rustic yet mystical landscapes, reminiscent of folklore and myth, exude a familiar mysteriousness and humor particular to birds. The balance of the warm expressions of the figures and the somewhat eerie pictorial elements characterizes Howse's work as a manifestation of his complex artistry grounded in a wide range of interests. The titles, which express his absurd worldview, also give his work a narrative quality.

By This River is a photographic work taken by Futoshi Miyagi in the winter of 2023 at the Tone River. This river is the setting for Yusuke Norishiro's *Travel Practice (旅する練習)* in which birds play an important role. Miyagi discusses how the numerous swans relaxing in the desolate winter landscape were unlike anything he'd ever seen in his hometown of Okinawa. *River*, which will be shown alongside the other work in this show, takes its title from a Joni Mitchell song about the desire to escape from a town that remains warm even in the winter. As Miyagi writes Joni Mitchell's lyrics "I wish I had a river so long / I would teach my feet to fly" on a blackboard, the erased lyrics are projected to look as if they are falling like snow. Miyagi superimposes these lyrics on his own adolescence, one spent on a small island in Okinawa where it never snowed, looking at the vast ocean and imagining what was on the other side.

Yukari Motoyama will be presenting *Drawing paper (Nest)* and *Drawing paper (Five eggs)*, two of the latest works from her

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Drawing paperseries. Since 2015, Motoyama has been working on this series, one that deconstructs and reassembles the different elements that make up a painting. The work in this series is made by choosing motifs from the numerous drawings she makes with digital painting tools, and then painting those motifs in black and white acrylic paint on transparent acrylic boards. Based on her dialogue with Hanako Takayama, Motoyama chose not to depict birds, but instead used images associated with birds as the subject for her work. This decision is an attempt to imagine and paint the presence of birds in trees without relying on visual information, similar to the way they are described in Chants d'oiseaux. forêt de textes.

Birds have proven to be a compelling theme for these four artists. We invite you to come experience the multifaceted ways in which they have responded to this subject.