

## Kae Masuda "Daisy"

2020.04.05(sun) — 06.07(sun)

As a prevention measure from spreading infection of the novel coronavirus , the gallery is open by appointment only until further notice.



「向日葵、罌粟草、野薔薇」 2020, 162cmx130.3cm, oil on canvas

### statement

When I first moved to this house that I currently live, there was nothing but dokudami (houத்துynia) and moss in my small, shady garden. Over time, however, the number of plants increased as my friends and family gave me shares of their plants.

The spring begins with flowering of Fritillaria, followed by violets, lavender, dokudami flowers, hydrangeas, and bellflowers. I see them bloom one by one in this order through a glass window in my house.

Beautiful flowers seen from the inside can often betray your expectations as you go out in the garden to take a closer look. Some flowers may harbour insects or diseases, for example. As you approach ever closer, you would notice unexpected forms within these flowers.

Since even before I moved here, there has been a carved wood fish sitting in one corner of the garden, like a heavily eroded Buddha statue.

I did not want to move it inside my house, so I left it there exposed to rain.

I have a moment of relief from the ordinary life, when I imagine a view in the eyes of this fish, looking into the house from the outside—seeing myself and my family as total strangers.

When a major typhoon hit in the fall of 2018, I looked out the stormy garden from the inside of my house, feeling as if I were a powerless fish in a water tank barely protected with a glass window.

[In my painting,] I tried to explore with my hands, playing with perspectives, switching from one viewpoint to another—such as the outside seen from the inside, or the inside seen from the outside, with differing senses of distance.

### “ Palimpsest / Kae Masuda’ s painting ”

Kae Masuda describes her painting process as “counterbalancing a section of free brushstrokes and a section of controlled brushstrokes, while trying not to fully unite them together” . In addition to the brushstrokes, there are other realms of two opposites simultaneously exist in her painting. For example, there are scenes close and afar: there are recent and distant memories if we consider length of time: and there are strong and faint impressions if we consider function of minds. In the work Hearts in Detroit, or Dokudami in My Garden (dokudami is a type of Japanese herb with distinctive scent), images of two disparate scenes or memories overlap and emerge. One is the image of heart-shaped graffiti on the windows of an abandoned building in Detroit where Masuda visited during her stay in Michigan, the United States, and another is the image of dokudami growing all over her garden in Higashiyama, Kyoto. American art critic John Yau has pointed out a group of painters who understand the significance of two turning points in the recent history of painting, the “death of painting” since the 1960s, and the “return of painting” since the 1980s, and pursue painting practice going back and forth these two. In Masuda’ s painting, too, we can recognize these two opposite perspectives.

The subject of Masuda’ s painting is scenes which she actually sees and recognizes. Since 2015, her garden and plants became important subjects. However, the world she paints would never be totally domestic, as scenes of the past would appear through scenes of the present, as if we are looking at a palimpsest.

Natsu Oyobe

Curator of Asian Art, University of Michigan Museum of Art

### Kae Masuda

Painter, born in Kyoto, 1978. Graduated from Oil Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Kyoto City University of Arts in 2004.

Masuda paints landscapes, buildings, plants, among others, using a wide variety of brush strokes. Her work captures a process of transformation from the figurative to the abstract, and embraces such precarity itself. In 2013, she was selected for the Overseas Training Program for Up-and-coming Artists, stayed and worked in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Masuda’ s major exhibitions include “Crazy for Painting vol.7: Yoshie Masuda” (Gallery αM, 2012), “ Faraway Songs - Nearby Voices” (Gallery Koyanagi, 2012) , and “DOMANI: The Art of Tomorrow” (National Art Center, 2018).

Open 11:00 – 19:00

Closed on Monday and Tuesday

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