

ARATANIURANO Inaugural Exhibition

KATO Izumi - Dear Humans

July 14 - August 11, 2007

ARATANIURANO is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings and sculptures by KATO Izumi who has been invited to participate in the 52nd International Art Exhibition at this year's Venice Biennale.

KATO was born in 1969 in Shimane Prefecture, graduated from Musashino Art University, where he studied oil painting, then embarked on a career in art after a blank period of a few years. He began depicting living beings that are almost primordial-looking, neither fetuses nor larvae, which were then slowly nurtured on canvas through the interaction between the artist and his subject. KATO describes this process: "The relationship between the painting and me is an equal one. I do all I can, with everything I have, to make sure it's always fresh." As the shapes that KATO depicts are arranged on the canvas, metamorphose and begin to take on human form, they appear to be almost floating in amniotic fluid. Sometimes expressed in uncertain colors with no clear boundaries, sometimes in dazzlingly bright colors, KATO's paintings evoke ominousness, endearingness, emptiness, violence, and much else. Beyond all of these, however, lies an intensity that KATO directs at the observer and which can only be described as existence itself.

In recent years KATO has also been producing sculptures in wood that complement his paintings. The sculpture that he showed at the "Lonely Planet" exhibition (Art Tower Mito, 2004) and the "Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture" exhibition (Japan Society Gallery, New York, 2005) – the giant sculpture of a baby-like creature with a huge head, standing unsteadily – has the directness of primitive art; but its powerful presence simultaneously transcends the label of primitive art to remain a fresh, powerful, and representative work for this artist.

Commenting on "Dear Humans," the title of this exhibition, KATO says, "Broadly speaking, art exists for humans and is something that humans involve themselves in voluntarily. I'm a human being too, and I'm interested in, have hopes for and expectations of people. It is as if I'm writing a letter to that bundle of beings we call humans." This explains why KATO's organisms have such an endearing quality, capturing the observer like a mirror, and enabling us to intuitively sense the essential existence of humans. In this exhibition – KATO's first solo exhibition in two years – the organisms and human forms that have been slowly nurtured over the years are now clearly delineated in his paintings and sculptures.

KATO also takes part in the following exhibition:

The 52nd International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia

"Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind. Art in the Present Tense"

June 10 - November 21, 2007. Italian Pavilion, Giardini.

U
A R A T A N I
A
N
O

アラタニウラノ

ARATANIURANO

〒104-0041

東京都中央区新富2-2-5

新富二丁目ビル3A

3A 2-2-5 Shintomi Chuo-ku

Tokyo 104-0041 Japan

Tel +81-(0)3-3555-0696

Fax +81-(0)3-3555-0697

info@arataniurano.com

www.arataniurano.com



1

1. *Untitled* 2007 Oil on Canvas

©Izumi Kato

Photo by Takashi Yamazaki