

## Voices from Artist to the World

No.4

# Yuji Kanamaru

Deep in familiar motifs extends a multi-layered world of unconsciousness. Kanamaru's work invites viewers to a spiritual journey of "fragments of memories."

It has been 15 years since Yuji Kanamaru, currently, probably one of the artists who receive most frequent offers of exhibition, started to work as an artist. His series work with motifs from urban streets to animal and cactus is immediately recognizable as Kanamaru's by its individual deep matière and texture. Hidden behind that is his deep emotion of exploring human beings, which has naturally rendered a characteristic matière for his work.



--We hear that this November, you will exhibit a 100 gou-sized (approx. 160cm x 100 ~ 130cm) large work in "Art Taipei."

Kanamaru (hereafter referred to as K): "Art Taipei" is an art fair with the largest scale and longest history in Taiwan, so I'm very interested in how my large work will be received there. I don't know what the result will work out, but now that fortunately, a gallerist has recognized my work and given me a chance to exhibit there, I feel I should take the chance and work aggressively.

--Do you have any special concern for Asian area?

K: For example, seeing activities of young artists around me, I receive an impression of Asia as a single borderless area. I suppose that unlike its past conditions, Asia has now become nothing particular to us. I think I also had better consider Asia as a borderless area.

--Were you conscious of Taiwan when you made

exhibits for the fair?

K: I'm new at international art fair, so I cannot think a lot about the trend there. I anyway would like visitors to see my expression.

--What kind of work are you going to exhibit this time?

K: Especially, paintings featuring my familiar motif, animals, in which I put importance on their inner world or human-like expression, not their appearance as they are. I expect that I've been working with that stance for long time. About exhibits of this time, often using collage technique, I randomly drew various things, such as sea horse, tree, umbrella, balloon, and moray on hemp cloth or English newspaper. Those motifs are not always related to each other and are scattered on picture plane as if they were fragmental memories. I hope that they will be connected to unconscious part of viewer's memories and will work on their deep psyche. Of course, viewer's first impression of

"cute" or "interesting" is a basic premise for my work, but I'm glad if viewers will face it using much time and come into deeper inside of my work with their past memories connected with unconsciousness.

--Do you want to visit there to make sure of viewer's response to your work?

K: Yes, if possible. I'd like to know details about the atmosphere of the fair, visitors there, or other artists' exhibits, because secondhand information and first-hand experience are completely different. I really want to go there, but I don't know if I have a time or not...

--Other than Taiwan, are there any country or area where you want to exhibit?

K: No, particularly. Today, much information is open to us thanks to Internet. We can easily get information on art scene in countries, but the information on Internet would probably be about a typically major scene of art in a country. If I want to get correct information on a place where I can challenge with my work, I probably have to go see the place, which, though, is a matter of consideration before I choose a place to exhibit.

**I believe that more important is let more people know my work.**

Anyway, I'm sure that I strongly would like to get information about how to challenge with my work in overseas or what in my work could be appreciated there. So, for now, I have no country where I particularly expect to exhibit.

--Currently, you have been very busy here. Are you seriously thinking about overseas development, too?

K: Of course, I feel like developing exhibition activities in overseas, while I appreciate having had chances for exhibitions here and feel I'm lucky enough about that. Speaking about my personal background, I was in Iran soon after I was born, and in New York for 3 years as an elementary schoolchild. Probably, that's why I seem to have no particular feeling about overseas. So, if only I can work enough whether at home or abroad, I will go anywhere and do my



best there. Then, chances will naturally increase. I hope so.

--You mean that you don't have such a special feeling about overseas as suggested in "the world" of our interview series title "Voices from Artist to the World." We understand you're going to take a calm stance on increasing chances in overseas.

K: I don't have a so-called "longing for going overseas." Rather, I'd like to have a calm challenge whenever or wherever I get a chance.

--As an artist, do you have a vision for the future?

K: As an artist Yuji Kanamaru, more important is to let more people know my work. It means that I hope them to see my work, know about me, and make myself successful in developing everything, including my potential artistic expression, my supporters, and cooperators working with me.

#### Profile: Yuji Kanamaru

- 1978 born in Kanagawa
- 2001 graduated from Design division, Tokyo National University of Arts
- 2002 established artist's group "C-DEPOT," and represented the group
- 2003 completed postgraduate course (Masataka Ohyabu's class). EXHIBITION C-DEPOT (thereafter, every year)
- 2004 won Shinsei Award, Shinseiten Exhibition
- 2005 Outstanding Rising Artists Exhibition, Sompō Japan Fine Art Foundation
- 2006 Korea Youth Biennale (Cultural Art Center, Taegu city)
- 2007 ShinPa!, Chinami Nakajima Memorial Hall in Obuse Museum, Nagano, ShinPa!, Sato Museum of Art, Tokyo (thereafter, every year), TCAF 2007, Tobi Art Forum (also in 2008 and 2009)
- 2010 C-DEPOT 2010 Journey, Shun Art Gallery, Shanghai
- 2011 Art Fair Tokyo 2011, Tokyo International Forum
- 2012 Yuji Kanamaru Exhibition, West Gate Streets Kaiyu Museum, Shinjuku, Tokyo  
"Montparnasse," Tokyo  
and many solo/group exhibitions



Living Area in the Sky 30F

--We think that you so far have been very successful in developing your artistic career.

K: I think so. I feel I've been very lucky, because, though I haven't attracted extremely great attention as an artist, I've slowly but incessantly received offers of exhibitions. It has been almost 15 years since my first solo exhibition in 1998. In these years, supporters of my work seem to have increased very much, and I feel it's time when I must come up to their expectation. And it's important that, to meet their hope for me, I must make good work, of course, and grow more as an artist and as a man.

--What do you think about the reason that your work has been consistently regarded to date?

K: It might be because viewers easily get an idea of my painting, and as a major reason, my artistic career got off to a good start. I've received the great blessing of studying dessin in design course with two teachers Masataka

Ohyabu and Chinami Nakajima at Tokyo National University of Arts, and people have placed their hopes on me as a pupil of the two teachers. I really have learned much from them. This year, my respected teacher Nakajima will soon retire from the university.

--What have you learned from them?

K: They taught me that very important is that viewers can visually get an idea of a painting and then can deepen their understanding through the concept presented by artist. I've learned there's such process. And, I've seriously realized, among other things, the great significance of studying directly with the two master artists. Most of those who studied with them, including me, are actively continuing to make painting, and I take to heart the importance of incessantly making paintings while recognizing such benefits of environment.

--You are very busy working constantly. It's surprising that your zeal for creation doesn't stop?

K: As far as I'm blessed with opportunities allowing me to continue to make paintings, my zeal for creation won't probably stop.

--How do you get an idea of what to make next?

K: I sometimes feel that ideas suddenly come into my mind; they don't come if I'm conscious of what to do next, putting out my antenna to catch them. It will be probably because of my narrow outlook or thinking. But, in such a time when I'm taking a shower without thinking anything, I feel I've successfully caught them, thinking to myself "Oh, that'll be good."

--That's how your paintings were born. We hope you will continue to show your excellent works more extensively. Now, I wonder if you are nervous about how your work will be received in Taipei. Thank you for your time.

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Kasanaruinochi (layers of life) 1303 x 450mm