



Koichi Enomoto
Taxi Driver, 2022
Oil on canvas
38 1/4 x 76 3/8 in
97 x 194 cm

Koichi Enomoto
Against the day

December 10, 2022 - January 21, 2023

Opening Reception:
Saturday, December 10, 6-8pm

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Nonaka-Hill is delighted to present *Against the day*, paintings by Koichi Enomoto and his first solo exhibition outside of Japan. Enomoto's paintings are distinguished by their maximal compositions that hold no space, literally and figuratively, between reality and fantasy, nature and technology, the pop-cultural and the personal. As an expert practitioner of manga, Enomoto pairs exacting draughtsmanship with highly modeled forms in a collage-like, quasi-digital space. Across its backgrounds are patterns interlaced with teeming cityscapes over which manga youths commingle with birds, dogs, reptiles, fast food, and other motifs. In such density, Enomoto mounts an ongoing narrative of obsessions in a trans-dimensional world.

Belying their vitality, a certain romantic nihilism emanates from Enomoto's paintings. He devotedly pairs elements of nature and culture on a collision course that cannot be reconciled. Depictions of such fatalism spiral technology destroying humanism and individualism destroying the collective. But his idealized manga youths, as if part of a tight-knit street gang, appear to seek no meaning or comfort in this predicament, and thus only experience pleasure or wonder, or at worst, ambivalence. They are avatars indifferent to strife, accompanied by parrots, owls, pigeons, and dogs, joyfully constellating without boundaries or hierarchies. Horror vacui appears to belie this vision of solidarity, at least in his most heaving paintings (he has been known to paint upward-slanting stripes on their sides to release them from gravity), in which he ardently embellishes every square inch, as if to prevent the dread of globalism from seeping through their surfaces. Yet interchangeable imagery from the East and West finds itself in Enomoto's matrix, bouncing their mutual refractions into his manga youths' worldview.

Case in point: in *Taxi Driver*, 2022, eponymously titled after the classic film's anti-hero character (a reflection of our times?...), we see two youths mimicking the style of its two main characters, Travis and Iris. Armed with a full spread of fast food, they are in reverie while flanked by their heroes in floating film stills. The two youths blend into an elaborate patterning, some which harking back to early and late modernist tropes of abstraction. It is a space where trans-cultural objects of fascination and fantasy happily coalesce. In other paintings, manga youths pose like odalisques or subtly resemble the uncanniness of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (other more direct Picasso references can be found in other works), but reincarnated as manga consumers of food and fun.

In *Eternity*, 2022, we see the only naturalistic figure in the exhibition turned away from us. She's wearing a Mondrian hair tie, pondering a sublime sprawling metropolis. The owls, parrots and pigeons that surround her stare back at the viewer, as if to reverse the object of contemplation. Such are the shifting registers that subtly alter the exuberant tonality of Enomoto's paintings upon closer inspection. In other works, we see realistic depictions of human hearts and arteries doubling as ornamentation behind the nonchalance of animals and youths. This tonality of joy and lust for life, even with its undertones of romantic nihilism, was embodied by Enomoto's contribution to a group exhibition at Nonaka-Hill last year during the height of the

pandemic. His painting's depiction of love, fun, and reckless abandon was a welcome elixir to that moment in time. The latter half of the exhibition's title, *Natsuyasumi: In the Beginning Was Love*, mirrored the title of his painting.

Koichi Enomoto was born in Osaka, Japan in 1977 and lives and works out of Tokyo, Japan. He has held numerous solo exhibitions at Taro Nasu Gallery, Tokyo (2022, 2017, 2014, 2011) and hiromiyoshii, Tokyo (2007, 2006, 2004). Group exhibitions include *Natsuyasumi: In the Beginning was Love* at Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles (2021); *FLOWERS & BIRDS* at Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo (2021); *Roppongi Crossings 2019: Connexions*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2019); *Light/Electricity/God: Thunderbolts & Art*, Gumma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi, Gumna, Japan (2017); *The Way of Painting*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo (2014); *Portrait Session*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima (2007); *After the Reality*, Deitch Projects, New York (2006).

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720 N. Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA, 90038.

Hours: Tuesday- Saturday, 12noon – 7pm or by appointment

For images or more information regarding the exhibition, please contact Nonaka-Hill at gallery@nonaka-hill.com

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Koichi Enomoto

Biography

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Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2022 *Against the day*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles
- 2021 *Aimai no Shirushi*, Kanazawa Art Gummi, Ishikawa, JP
- 2020 *NEW LIFE !!*, TARO NASU, Tokyo, JP
- Shadows of birds, soda*, Tokyo, JP
- 2017 *Stone*, TARO NASU, Tokyo, JP
- 2015 *The 6 Way to the Psychic JPN*, HAPS, Kyoto, JP
- 2014 *21 Century Standard Bearer*, TARO NASU, Tokyo, JP
- 2013 *Good Life*, sprout curation, Tokyo, JP
- 2012 *TIGERS*, taimatz, Tokyo, JP
- differs*, taimatz, Tokyo, JP
- 2011 *FUDARAKU-TOKAI the captain of the ship*, TARO NASU, Tokyo, JP
- 2007 *surrogate*, hiromiyoshii, Tokyo, JP
- 2006 *PIGEON'S RIOT*, hiromiyoshii, Tokyo, JP
- rest of a*, NADiff, Tokyo, JP
- 2004 *Blue in gas light*, hiromiyoshii, Tokyo, JP
- Mojyamo*, Voice Gallery, Kyoto, JP

- Selected Group Exhibition
- 2021 *Natsuyasumi: In the Beginning Was Love*, Los Angeles, CA, USA
 CADAN x ISETAN ART GALLERY : *Figuration*, Isetan Art Gallery, Tokyo, JP
FLOWERS & BIRDS, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, JP
- 2019 *Roppongi Crossing 2019 : Connexions*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, JP
- 2018 *Photographs by 7 Painters*, soda, Kyoto, JP
- 2017 *Light / Electricity / God : Thunderbolts and Art*, Gunma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi, Gunma, JP
Fujisanten β, AWAJI Cafe & Gallery, Tokyo, JP
- 2016 *Adachi DELTA*, Adachi DELTA, Tokyo, JP
- 2014 *The Way of Painting*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, JP
Graphic Novel, Arario Gallery, Seoul, KR
- 2012 *Humour, parodie et videos Créations vidéo du Japon contemporain*, Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris, Paris, FR
 VOCA 2012 - *THE VISION OF CONTEMPORARYART* , The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, JP
- 2011 *Cowboy and Photon*, capsule, Tokyo, JP
ask the wine, MUZZ, Kyoto, JP
- 2008 *ECHO*, ZAIM, Kanagawa, JP
- 2007 *Portrait Session*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, JP
- 2006 *FUKUTAKEHOUSE in Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial 2006*, Nigata, JP
AfterThe Reality, Deitch Projects, NewYork, USA
- 2005 *Zone-Poetic Moment*, Tokyo Wonder Site, Tokyo, JP
Girls of Summer, Monique Meloche, Chicago, USA
- 2004 *The Secret Forest of Princess Knight* (curated by Taro Chiezo), M.Y. Art Prospects, NewYork, USA
After the Reality (curated by Kentaro Ichihara), hiromiyoshii, Tokyo, JP
- 2003 *Sogashu*, Voice Gallery, Kyoto, JP
- Public collections Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, JP