Our Posthuman Future
the Portraits of the Last Man in Postwar Japan

Images

John Hathway
Magic Rocket Station
2012

Nemu Yumemi
2008–

Tetsutaro Kamatani
Human Paradise—Tokyo
2011

Msaru Aikawa
DVDs
2013

Hiroshi Nakamura
Clothing Fetishism
1971

Artists

John Hathway  Nemu Yumemi  Tetsutaro Kamatani  Masaru Aikawa  Katsuko Ishigaki  Hiroshi Nakamura  Tamiji Kitagawa

Information

2013/8/15/Thu.–9/7/Sat.
open Tuesday- Saturday 12-7PM
curated by Yoohsuke Takahashi, Aomori Museum of Art
eitoeiko
32-2, Yaraicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

Concept

The works of Japan’s young generation of contemporary artists show a prominent trend toward using the subculture, such as animation, manga, video games, and pop culture idols, as their source of creativity rather than art history. This also signifies that even after the 3.11 earthquake disaster the young artists and the viewers are using a fictional existence unrelated to actual politics or religion as a metaphor for expressing their feelings and volition. The painting of unreality and fictional characters itself can probably also be seen in the classical arts. However, the fictional human image expressed by this generation, which does not have an ideology like Marxism as a common language, is full of euphoria and thus more often than not is different from the fictional human image painted by the avant-garde artists who experienced World War II and paint for the purpose of political satire or to express despair not possible using realism. Therefore, this exhibit questions the transformation of the human image in Japanese contemporary art by comparing the works of Hiroshi Nakamura (1932–) and Tamiji Kitagawa (1894–1989) from the generation that experienced war, with the works of John Hathway, Nemu Yumemi, Tetsutaro Kamatani, Masaru, Katsuko Ishigaki from the generation that has grown up in a peaceful Japan without directly experiencing war. In other words, the exhibit portrays the human image expressed by the young generation that is divorced from history, politics, and religion as the image of the Nietzsche’s “Last Man” at the end of history who struggles against nothing, feeling no dissatisfaction or the “Posthuman” who experience the loss of traditional values in the age of hypercapitalism and democracy without individualism in Japan.

Acknowledgement

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