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COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MOTHER'S TANKSTATION

Atsushi Kaga

ATSUSHI KAGA

THE JAPANESE

I WONDER WHEN we'll get to claim Atsushi Kaga as our own... He made the curious move of coming over here from Tokyo in the late-1990s to study fine art in Cork and Dublin. He's been bubbling away in the undertow since, standing out in group exhibitions and giving those in the know a new Favourite Emerging Artist to talk about over late-night brandies. His first solo show, *Bunny's Darkness and Other Stories*, took place in Mother's Tankstation this summer.

There really is nothing like his work, both for its depth of feeling and for the way it mixes Japanese and Irish culture. In his Bunny series, his lapine

alter-ego skulls Guinness, goes to dope-smoking parties and generally has the craic with the natives. But he seems bound by the formalities of his Eastern upbringing – he speaks Japanese and always seems careful no matter what his surroundings (he stays on the carrot sticks at the wild parties).

Kaga's prints and animations seem so simple initially, but they suck you in deep. The bear whose leg was cut off in a car accident and who just can't seem to get a break in life; the superhero who tries his best to save people but is no good at it – individually, each will break your heart; as a series, they form a beautiful, strange, tough world.

If you missed the Mother's Tankstation show, some of Kaga's work will be in the Mermaid, Bray as part of a group show from October 11th until November 3rd.