

Atsushi Kaga's World: The Philosophy of Rabbits and the Fusion of Irish and Japanese Cultures, Gen de Art Le Magazine, September 2023.

GEN DE ART
Le Magazine

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Atsushi Kaga is an artist who straddles two distinct cultural backgrounds, that of Ireland and Japan. His pieces captivate audiences with their unique perspective and compelling narratives. From a childhood in the Tokyo suburbs pondering a potential career in film to ultimately embracing art, to garnering fresh inspiration during his stay in the ancient city of Kyoto, this interview delved deep into Kaga's passionate artistic perspective and the profound philosophy inherent in his work.



Atsushi Kaga

Gen de Art: Could you share a little about your early years?

Kaga: I spent my early years in the suburbs of Tokyo, not differing much from other children. Given that both my parents were working, I often found myself alone at home. During these times, I immersed myself in manga, reading volumes I picked up from local bookstores and convenience stores. These experiences laid the foundation for my artistic expression, particularly as a form of language.

Gen de Art: Although you originally considered majoring in film, what was the primary reason you chose the path of an artist?

Kaga: The most significant factor that led me to choose the path of an artist was the feeling that painting was the perfect avenue for my passions and talents. While my paintings often contain stories and narratives, these are elements I also wanted to explore in film. However, in painting, I can easily incorporate elements from the manga I loved as a child. Incorporating these elements in film, unless it's animation, can be challenging. Furthermore, given my inclination to value solitary moments during the creative process, I felt that painting was more aligned with my nature than the collaborative nature of filmmaking.

Gen de Art: What inspired the adorable animal motifs in your paintings?

Kaga: The idea first struck me during my fourth year at university. Until then, the thought of using cute animals as motifs in my art never crossed my mind. However, around that time, I began to realize that my experiences and sensibilities were unique. Even now, I have an affinity for cute things and animals, which I believe is deeply rooted in the Japanese culture and history.

Gen de Art: Within Irish art and traditions, what influenced your artistic style and thought process the most?

Kaga: Irish ethics and political perspectives had the most profound impact on me. Ireland, being a relatively young nation, has a history of being ruled by other countries. The resulting distinctive political and ethical attitudes of Ireland deeply influenced my thought process and values. Furthermore, the Irish sense of humour is vital to me; their ability to find laughter in any situation has influenced my work.



2021 年
It always comes; a solace in the cat.」展示風景
MAHOKUBOTA GALLERY、東京
Photo by Keizo Kioku

Gen de Art: Of all the feedback and questions you've received, what stood out the most?

Kaga: A recurring question is, "Why rabbits?" Answering this isn't straightforward, but primarily, it's because I find the rabbits I paint charming and expressive. Furthermore, anthropomorphic rabbit characters feature in many countries' fairy tales and myths, making it easier for audiences to connect with my work. Additionally, I am very attracted to the slightly clumsy and mischievous nature of rabbits.

Gen de Art: Did your stay and studio work in Kyoto from 2018 onward lead to any particular changes or influences?

Kaga: My time in Kyoto allowed me to deeply resonate with the works of traditional Japanese painters such as those from the Rinpa school, Jakuchu, and Ogata Korin. In particular, I was significantly influenced by the unique designs and perspective of the Rinpa style. While I had previously connected, from a different viewpoint, with Edo period painters like Hokusai, Kuniyoshi, and Hiroshige, my experiences in Kyoto directed my artistic approach in a new direction.

Gen de Art: Any advice or insights for Japanese artists seeking to remain active on the international stage?

Kaga: While operating on an international platform does have its challenges, especially with the barriers and misunderstandings that can arise from cross-cultural communication, from my experience, the most crucial aspect is to continue believing in oneself. It's also essential to maintain a sense of humour and flexibility in embracing other cultures, which act as a universal language transcending nations and cultures.

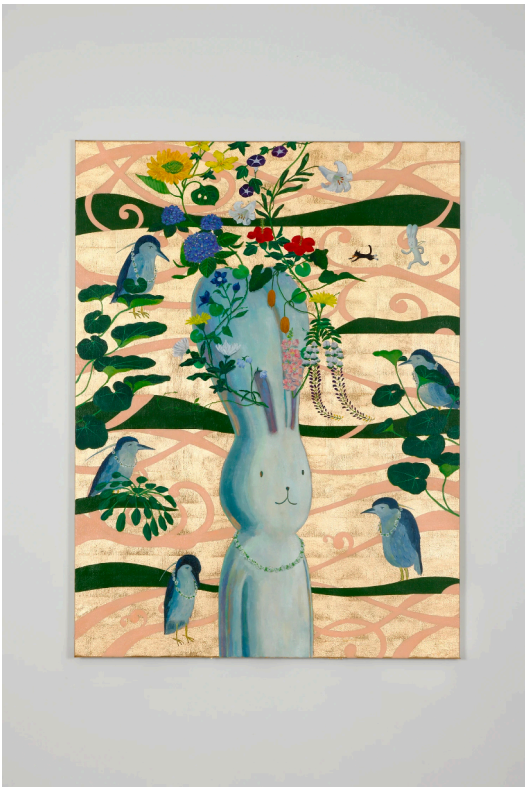
A message to our readers:

"Recently, my activities in Japan have increased, allowing many to become acquainted with my work. This feeling is quite surreal, but I'm truly grateful. I plan to continue increasing my presentations in Japan in the future."

Atsushi Kaga's work



アーティスト:Atsushi Kaga
作品タイトル:Cucumber horse and aubergine cow
制作年:2022年
サイズ:151 x 120 cm
素材:キャンバスにアクリル絵具、イミテーションの金箔
(Acrylic, imitation gold leaf on canvas)
Photo by Keizo Kioku



アーティスト:Atsushi Kaga
作品タイトル:Coming home
制作年:2022年
サイズ:131 x 97 cm
素材:キャンバスにアクリル絵具、イミテーションの金箔
(Acrylic, imitation gold leaf on canvas)
Photo by Keizo Kioku



アーティスト:Atsushi Kaga
作品タイトル:Goodbye Chami-Chan (brown ears)
制作年:2022年
サイズ:150 x 120 cm
素材:キャンバスにアクリル絵具、イミテーションの金箔
(Acrylic, imitation gold leaf on canvas)