

Kazuhiro Kawai – Riding for a Fall

Opening: Tuesday, October 19th, 4 - 8pm

Exhibition Dates: October 20th – December 4th, 2021



Kazuhiro Kawai

Aliens, 2021

Ceramic

H32 x W24 x D24 cm

(kawaik0002)

Courtesy the artist, Sokyo Lisbon.

Art gallery
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Kazuhito Kawai
ART TOWER MITO, 2020
Ceramic
H29.5 × W28 × D36 cm
(kawakt0058)
Courtesy the artist, Sokyo Lisbon.



Kazuhiro Kawai at his studio in Ibaraki, Japan
Courtesy the artist.



Kazuhiro Kawai.
Courtesy the artist.

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Riding for a Fall is Kazuhito Kawai first solo exhibition with Sokyo Lisbon. Using a distinctive approach to ceramic, Kawai's sculptures emerge like castles or vessels in which the extreme glaze overflows with nostalgic expression that holds and traps the artist's emotions and concepts.

The title of the exhibition is a reference to Tracey Emin's homonymous work from 1998, a work that Kawai first experienced while studying art in London. In the video *Riding for a Fall*, Tracey Emin is seen wearing a cowboy hat and riding a horse in circles in a sandy beach. Endlessly and without purpose the set-up renders an all too rehearsed poise. The film imprinted on the young student as an exercise in narcissism. Something now familiar to all when contemplating streams of Instagram, Tik Tok and other social media outlets.

For Kazuhito Kawai, his self-portrait works are equally staged yet they are meant to hold something in their abstraction: "They hold and trap my emotions and memories".

Their titles are references to his thoughts and as such, each sculpture contains a sense of longing or nostalgia, belonging or alienation by which, the familiarity of the name can trigger a gateway for the viewer through his own personal interpretation or empathy.

In the work *Lion King*, Kazuhito Kawai refers to the memory of when his sister took his family to see the Shiki Theater Company's *Lion King* production, with her first salary. *Art Tower Mito*, brings back his memory of the first museum he bought a ticket to and visited on his own. Elsewhere, *Masafumi Sanai and the Seven Stars*, the most enclosed of the sculptures on view, evokes his memories of the loneliness felt when living alone for the first time in Tokyo and the discovery and solace of Masafumi Sanai's photography, which were popular at the time. The high or low brow references run parallel in the artist. It is not so much about their intrinsic meaning but more relatable to what YouTube, music, movies, art, fashion and all kind of subcultures act as a collage in his personal memories.

*"Touching the soil triggers and reconstructs the memories and emotions that are evoked.
What I have trapped in the vessel bursts into a small explosion."*
Kazuhito Kawai, October 2020

The sculptures play with senses and emotions but avoid sentimentality. For Kazuhito Kawai, clay has served as a release, an encounter with the possibility of a new plastic language and an opportunity to ground him to feelings, moments and thoughts perhaps not noticeable to him at first.

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About the artist

Kazuhito Kawai was born in 1984 in Ibaraki, Japan. A while after studying Arts at the Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London (BA.HONS), he returned to Japan and focused on ceramics. He graduated in 2018 at the Kasama College of Ceramic Art, Ibaraki, Japan.

Kawai is one of the most praised emerging artists working with clay in contemporary art mainly because he succeeded to update the possibilities of expression through the ceramic material, going on a completely different path from ceramic tradition.

There are a lot of strong words usually associated to his artworks and all of them seem to be applicable: dynamic, fragile, overwhelming, irregular, creative, entertaining, grotesque. The multiple layers of Kawai's works show a constant dialogue between him and the clay, and also between him and the world around him.

His work has joined the prestigious Takahashi Collection in Japan.

About Sokyo Lisbon

Sokyo Lisbon is a contemporary art and ceramics gallery based in Portugal in partnership with Sokyo Gallery in Kyoto, Japan. Sokyo Lisbon's aim is to present the highest quality of Japanese contemporary ceramics and works of art to an European audience including works by artists such as Machiko Hashimoto, Mishima Kimiyo, Osamu Kojima, Moriyasu Kimura, Toshio Matsui, Eiko Kishi, Toru Ishii, Heechang Yoon, Satoru Hoshino and Kazuhito Kawai, among others.

Atsumi Fujita is Sokyo Lisbon and Sokyo Gallery's Director. Founded in 2013, Sokyo Gallery represents over sixty artists working in ceramics, lacquer, textiles, glass and metal. The gallery participates regularly in international art fairs such as Artissima, ART021, Collect London, Dangdai, Design Basel, TEFAF Maastricht. Sokyo Gallery works closely with prestigious museums and institutions worldwide.

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