

| Hiroka Yamashita | 山下紘加 |

INTRODUCTION

After receiving her BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2017 and her MFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, New Jersey in 2019, Hiroka Yamashita (born in 1991 in Hyogo, Japan) is currently based in Okayama, Japan. Having set up her studio in a former pharmacy, Yamashita creates paintings by combining scenes from daily life and visions in an animistic way, focusing on the spiritual dimension of the natural world. Many of her compositions seem gently surreal, such as the ascending *Field (Tōge)* (2022) in which embracing human figures soar above a forest, against a torched sky. The artist nurtures scenes by spontaneously applying colours on canvas, allowing human figures and natural forms to emerge over time; in the process, she may cover or transform one thing into another, leaving the initial forms and brushstrokes visible. Via this gesture of intuitive accumulation that lays bare incompatible, abrupt developments, Yamashita's compositions grow into ambiguously structured, morphing entities.

Yamashita contends that, as dreamy and improbable as the paintings may appear, they are realistic and faithful to what she sees. From the flat and fast *Snow on Fingers* (2022), to the absorbing, whirling *Field (Body)* (2022), they are truthful in terms of both colour and form. She also speaks of this truthfulness in relation to her interest in physics and the idea of a field, deeming it meaningful to de-associate truthfulness from what meets the eye.

Although human figures — inexpressive as a number of Pierre Bonnard's characters are — appear frequently in Yamashita's paintings, she is deeply interested in developing a high degree of abstraction, wedding the representational with the utterly abstract. Recent paintings such as *Field (Blue and Green)* (2022) and *Field (Surface II)* (2022) are exemplary in this respect: they are both depictions of expansive landscapes, independent from human presence or narratives. It is also the case with the mysterious *Force (Two Tips)* (2022) and the no less enigmatic *Hole* (2022); Yamashita cheerfully refuses to identify what is exactly portrayed in the two paintings, leaving the right to interpretation to the viewer.

On the other hand, as an artist who has received rigorous training in Japanese calligraphy, Yamashita actively examines the significance of traditional Japanese art and literature. She refers time and again to Matsuo Bashō's (1644-1694) haiku (particularly his masterpiece *Oku no Hosomichi*, or *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*), and Azuchi–Momoyama period painter Hasegawa Tōhaku's (1539-1610) traditional paintings. Yamashita's disproportionately wide painting *Field (Persimmon Tree Sprout)* (2022) is a recent attempt at making scrolls, and at incorporating motifs favoured by masters of traditional Japanese art. In the centre of the sparse composition is a persimmon tree — based on the distinctly regional plant Yamashita grows in her own garden — acting as either a screen or a ward, separating a human figure from a collective that seems ambiguously intimidating. Grafting concerns for humankind's fate onto extraordinary visions, Yamashita presents pictures that are at once soothing and ominous.

Hiroka Yamashita (born in 1991 in Hyogo, Japan) lives and works in Okayama. She received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2017 and her MFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, New Jersey in 2019. Recent solo exhibitions include: “Earthing”, Caprii, Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf (2024); “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo”, BLUM Gallery, Los Angeles (2024); 'GEN 玄', Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo (2023); 'Fūdo', Tanya Leighton, Berlin (2022); 'project N 84', Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2021); 'Cosmos Remembered', The Club, Tokyo (2021); and 'Evanescence Horizon' (with Naoya Inose), FOMO Art, Taipei (2021). Her work has been included in recent group exhibitions: 'Their private worlds contained the memory of a painting that had shapes as reassuring as the uncanny footage of a sonogram', curated by Sedrick Chisom, Matthew Brown Gallery, Los Angeles (2022); 'Dancing in Dark Times', Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London (2021); and 'Daichi Takagi, Lucía Vidales, Hiroka Yamashita', Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo (2020), among others.

介紹

山下紘加 (1991年生於日本兵庫縣) 在2017年獲得紐約視覺藝術學院藝術學士學位，在2019年獲得羅格斯大學梅森·格羅斯藝術學院藝術碩士學位，現生活工作於日本岡山。她在前身是一家診所的工作室中發展其繪畫實踐，以有泛靈論傾向的方式結合日常生活情境與心靈圖景，探索自然世界的精神性維度。她多年來創作的許多畫作均帶有柔和的超現實姿態：以《場 (峠) 》(2022) 為例，這幅作品中的人類形象扶搖上升，在森林上空盤旋，擁抱彼此。在作畫時，山下在畫布上揮斥顏料，讓人物及自然形態逐漸顯現；她繼而在此過程中對畫面做出調整，用顏料覆蓋某個形象，或將某個形象轉變為截然不同的物，但也常留下原初筆記的清晰印跡。通過直覺式地在畫面上累積色彩及形狀，山下的繪畫實踐揭示了異質、突發性的構圖邏輯，催生了一幅又一幅結構曖昧、不斷演變的畫面。

山下也指出，儘管其畫中場景看起來是夢境一般的，這些畫面事實上是忠實於其目之所及的現實的。無論是扁平、迅疾又代表了緩慢時間的《手上雪》(2022)，還是意欲將人吸納至畫面內部的螺旋狀《場 (身體) 》(2022)，對於藝術家來說，其中的顏色和形式都是真實的。她也指出，此種真實性與其對包括「場」在內的物理基本概念的興趣有關：在場之中，視覺所觸碰的事物並不是真實性的全部內涵。

山下常繪製人類形象，這些人物如皮埃爾·波納爾筆下的一樣不帶有鮮明的表情；然而，與此同時，她深深感興趣於發展高度抽象、無明確人物形象的畫面，將再現形式與抽象形式合而為一。包括《場 (藍與綠) 》(2022) 及《場 (面II) 》(2022) 在內的近期畫作展現了這一點：這些小尺幅畫作均描繪了遼闊、延展的風景，完全獨立於人類存在，也不帶有敘事結構。神秘而富有魅惑力的《力 (兩端) 》(2022) 及《穴》(2022) 以同樣的方式拒絕澄清畫作中的形象主體，坦蕩地將解讀的權利留給觀者。

另一方面，作為一名曾接受嚴格日本書法訓練的藝術家，山下也積極地檢視傳統日本藝術及文學的當代重要性。她多次談起松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694) 的俳句 (尤其是這位文豪的名作《奧之細道》)，以及日本歷史上偉大畫家長谷川等伯 (1539-1610) 的作品。山下寬廣的近期畫作《場 (柿樹枝桠) 》(2022) 便是模擬了傳統日本繪畫的卷軸形態，她也在此飄逸的畫面中引用了古典繪畫大師的多個經典元素。稀落構圖的核心是一棵柿子樹——這植物的現實來源就是山下在自家花園中種下的柿子樹——這柿子樹像是一面屏風，分隔了近處的孤立人物，以及遠處逼近的群體。山下在將獨特的夢幻視角與對人類命運的反思相結合，呈現怡然又詭譎的畫面。

山下紘加 (1991年生於日本兵庫縣) 生活工作於岡山。她在2017年獲得紐約視覺藝術學院藝術學士學位，在2019年獲得羅格斯大學梅森·格羅斯藝術學院藝術碩士學位。近期個展包括：「Earthing」，卡普里 Sies + Höke畫廊，杜塞道夫 (2024)；「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」，BLUM畫廊，洛杉磯 (2024)；「GEN玄」，Taka Ishii畫廊，東京 (2023)；「風土」，Tanya Leighton，柏林 (2022)；「project N 84」，4層迴廊，東京歌劇城美術館，東京 (2021)；「Cosmos Remembered」，The Club，東京，及「情緒線」(與猪瀬直哉聯展)，FOMO Art，台北。她的作品曾參加多個近期群展，包括：「Their private worlds contained the memory of a painting that had shapes as reassuring as the uncanny footage of a sonogram」(由塞德里克·池森策展)，Matthew Brown，洛杉磯 (2022)；「Dancing in Dark Times」，Pippy Houldsworth Gallery，倫敦 (2021)，及「Daichi Takagi, Lucía Vidales, Hiroka Yamashita」，Taka Ishii畫廊，東京 (2020)。

Group Exhibition
開幕群展
2024

Taka Ishii Gallery Kyobashi, Tokyo, Japan
Taka Ishii 京橋畫廊，東京，日本
02.11 - 14.12.24



Installation view
展覽現場

Image Courtesy of the Artist and Taka Ishii Kyobayashi. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家及Taka Ishii京橋畫廊畫廊提供・攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view
展覽現場

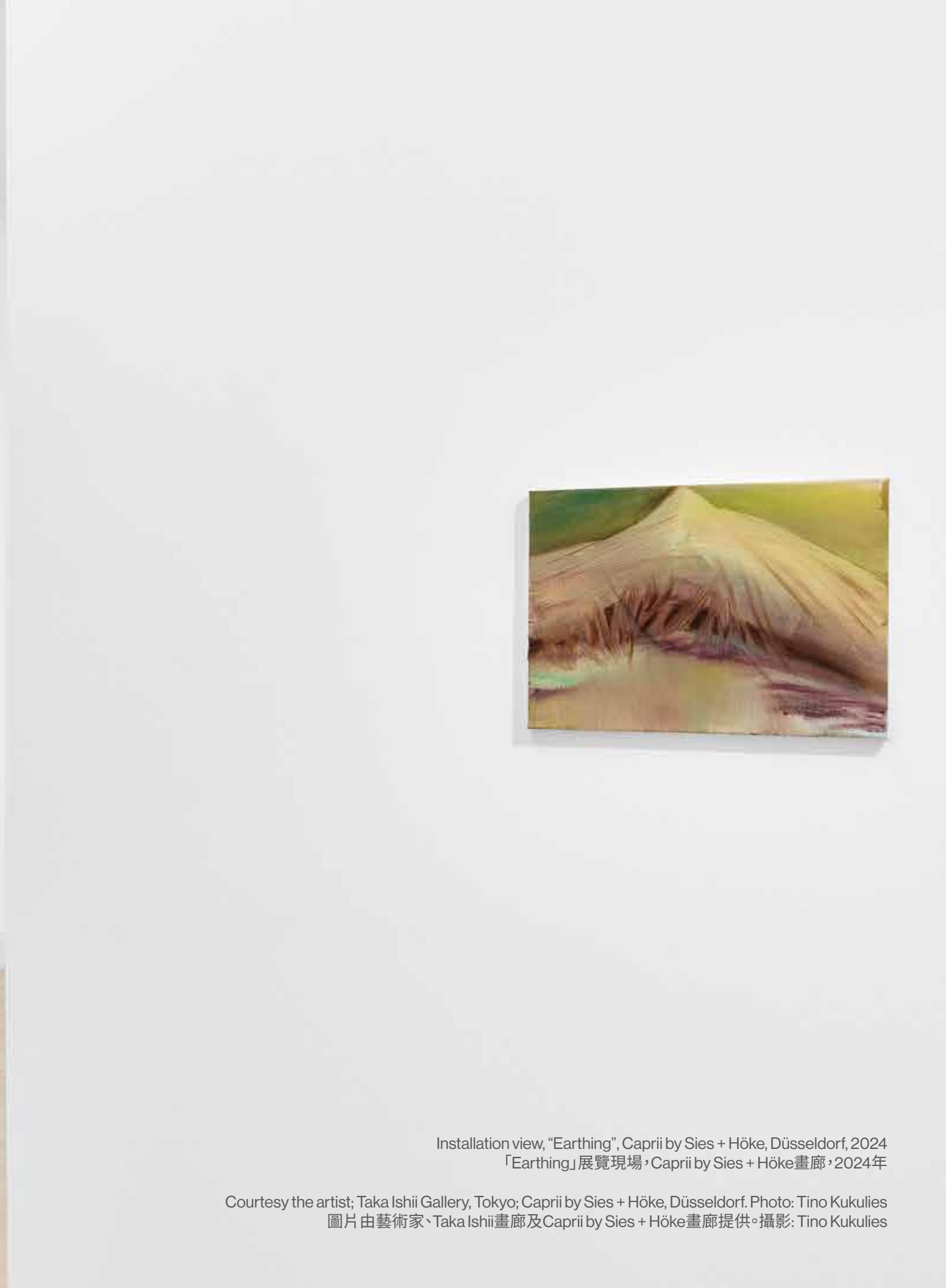
Image Courtesy of the Artist and Taka Ishii Kyobayashi. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家及Taka Ishii京橋畫廊畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Image Courtesy of the Artist and Taka Ishii Kyobayashi. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家及Taka Ishii京橋畫廊畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi

Earthing
2024

Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, Germany
Caprii by Sies + Höke 畫廊，杜塞道夫，德國
11.10 - 09.11.24

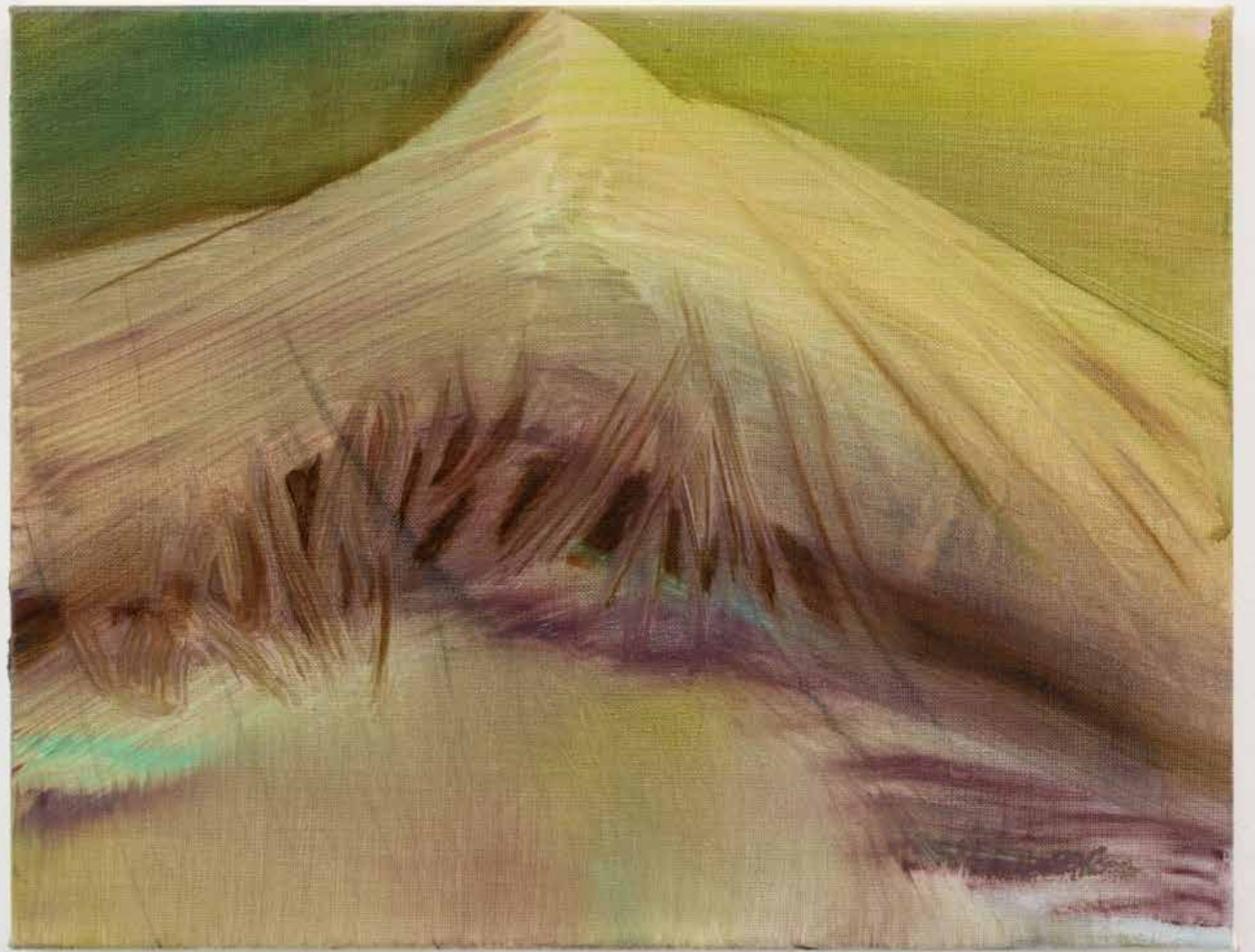


Installation view, "Earthing", Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, 2024
「Earthing」展覽現場，Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊，2024年

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. Photo: Tino Kukulies
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Tino Kukulies

捕食 *Predation*
2024
Oil on linen
31.5 x 41 cm

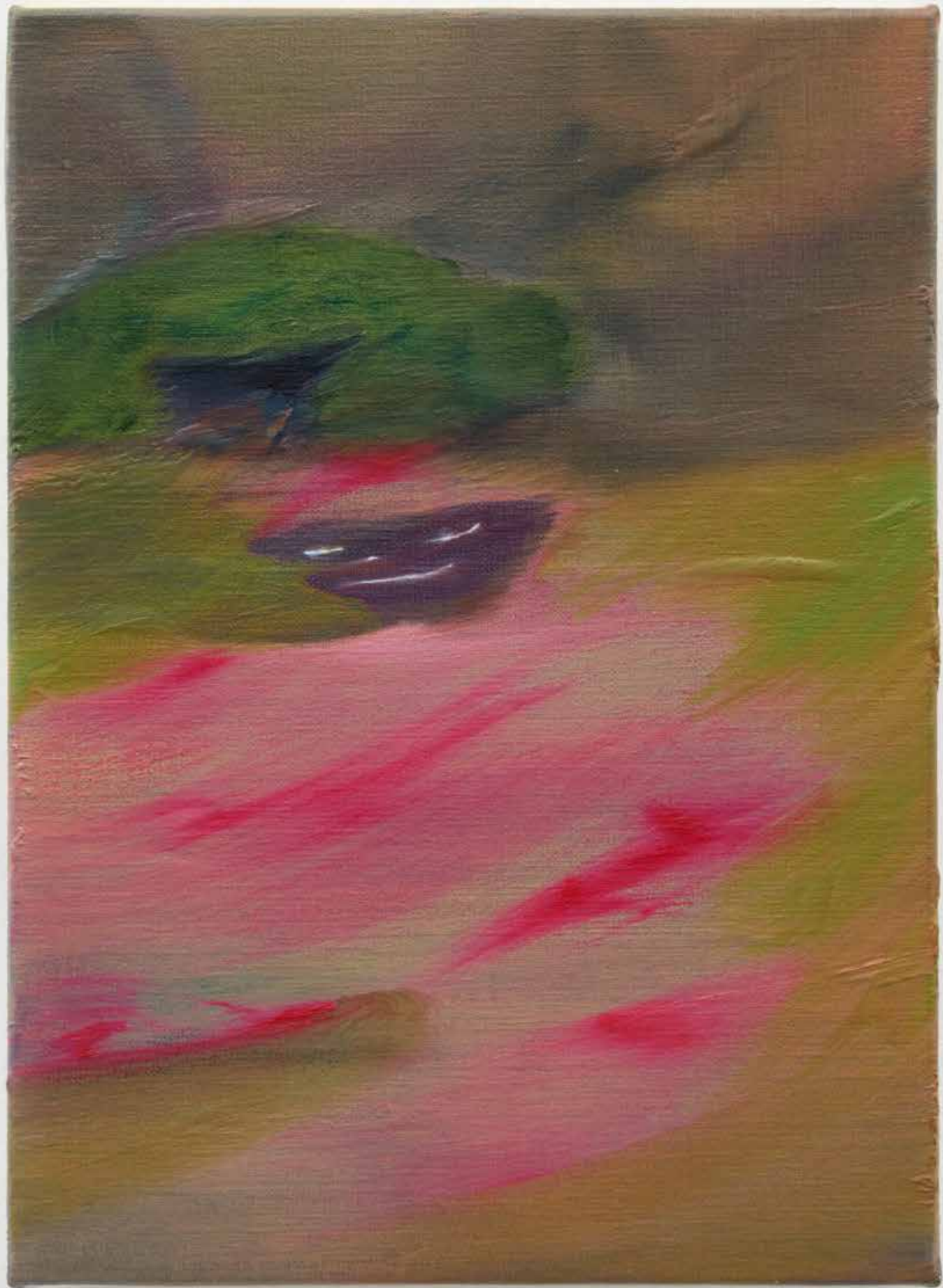
Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi





Installation view, "Earthing", Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, 2024
「Earthing」展覽現場，Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊，2024年

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. Photo: Tino Kukulies
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Tino Kukulies



Outdoor Napper
2024
Oil on linen
33.5 x 24.5 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "Earthing", Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, 2024
「Earthing」展覽現場，Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊，2024年

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. Photo: Tino Kukulies
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Tino Kukulies



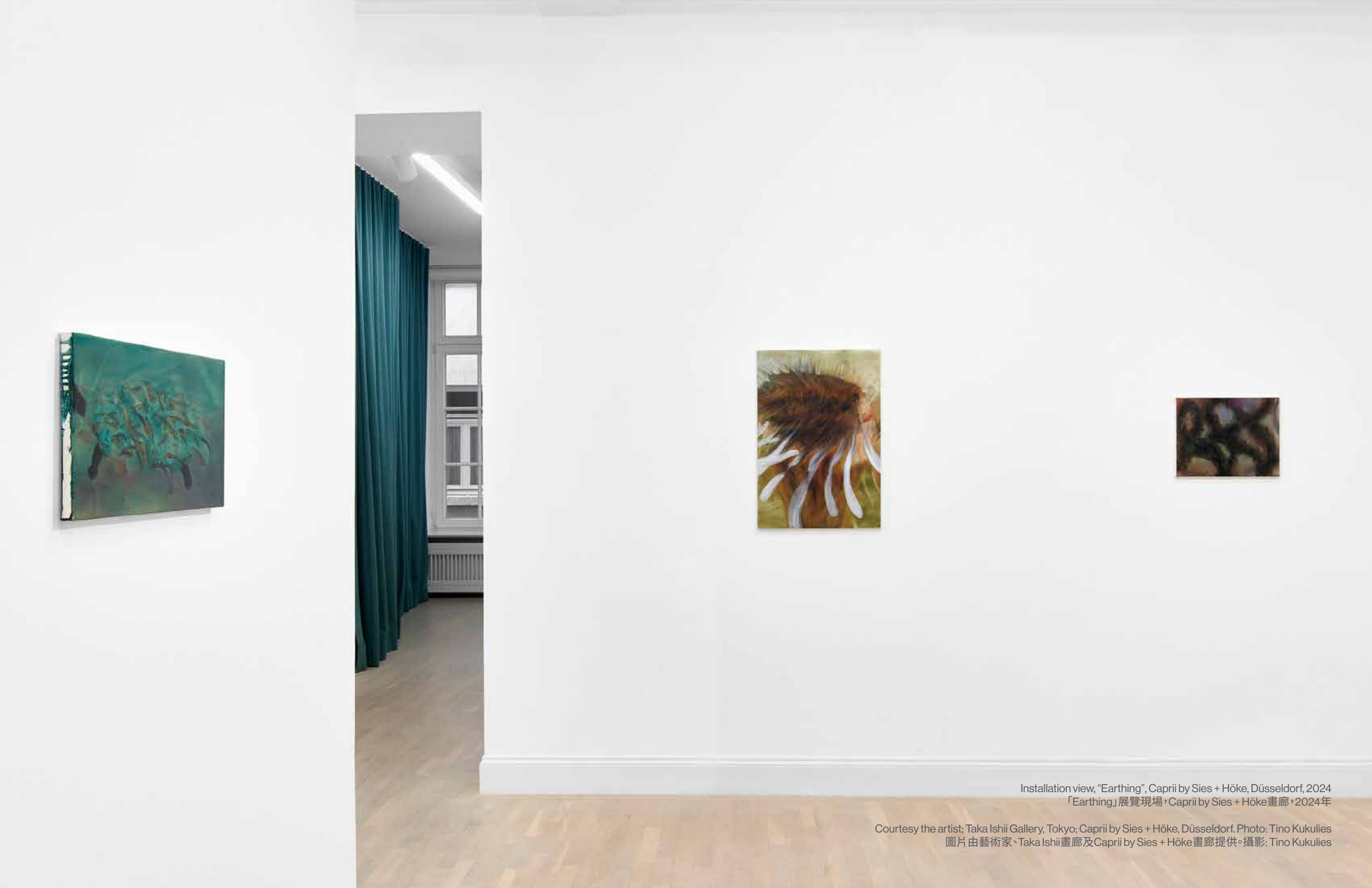
Stolen Potatoes
2024
Oil on linen
97 x 194.5 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



蔦 Ivy
2024
Oil on linen
32 x 41 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "Earthing", Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, 2024
「Earthing」展覽現場，Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊，2024年

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. Photo: Tino Kukulies
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Tino Kukulies

種頭 *Seedhead*
2024
Oil on linen
72.5 x 50 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi





Installation view, "Earthing", Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, 2024
「Earthing」展覽現場，Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊，2024年

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. Photo: Tino Kukulies
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Tino Kukulies

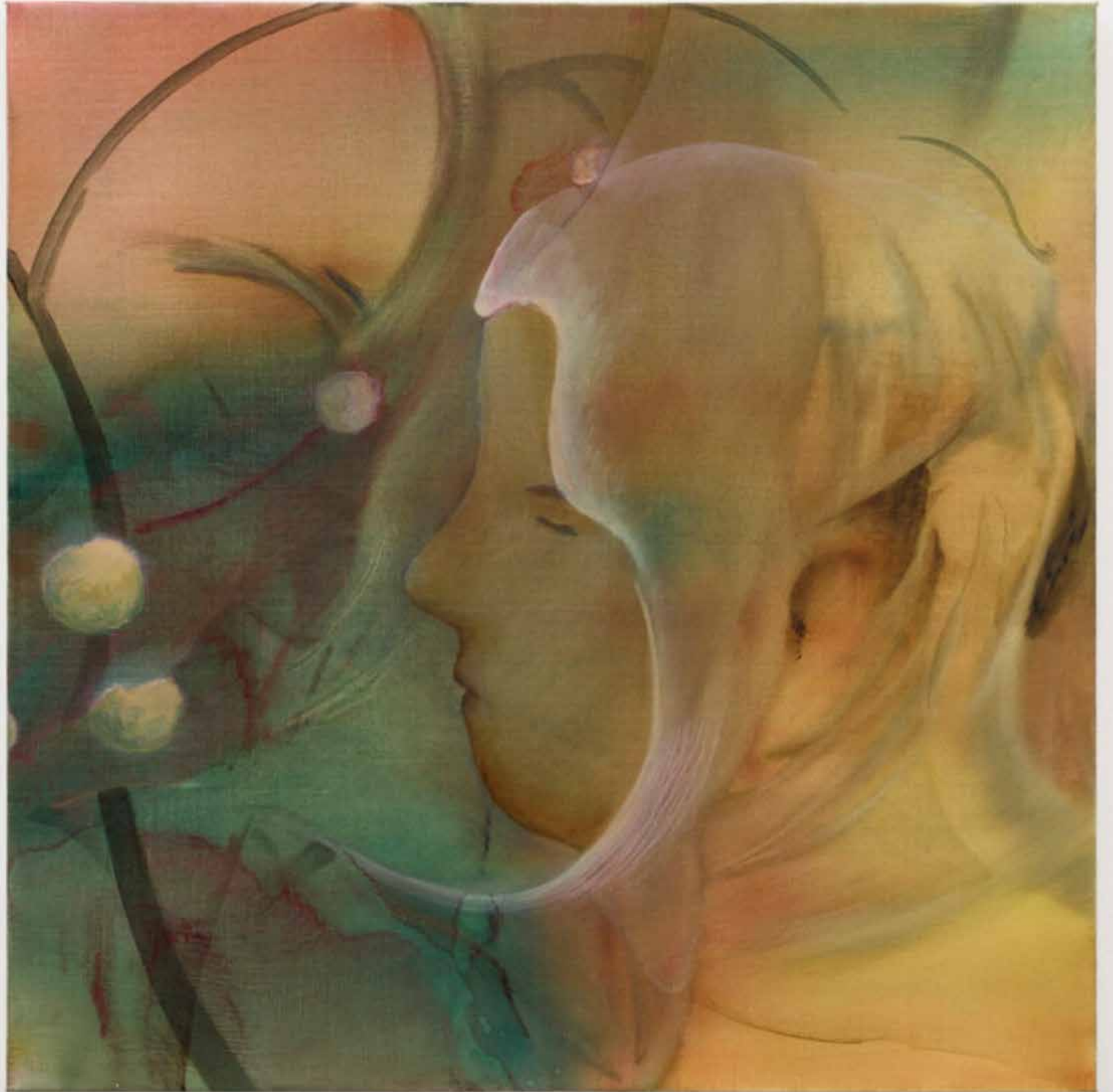


亀 *Turtle*
2024
Oil on linen
27.5 x 45.5 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi

Earthing
2024
Oil on linen
60.5 x 60.5 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf
Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi





Installation view, “Earthing”, Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, 2024
「Earthing」展覽現場，Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊，2024年

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf. Photo: Tino Kukulies
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Tino Kukulies



桔梗 *Balloon Flowers*
2024
Oil on linen
45.5 x 27.5 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi

蚕 *Silkworm*
2024
Oil on linen
33.5 x 24.5 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi





草むらの甕 *ajar in the grass*
2024
Oil on linen
116.5 x 91 cm

Copyright the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由藝術家、Taka Ishii畫廊及Caprii by Sies + Höke畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi

ころころ *koworo-koworo*
2024

BLUM Gallery, Los Angeles
BLUM 畫廊，洛杉磯
13.07 - 30.08.24

BLUM presents “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo”, Okayama-based artist Hiroka Yamashita's first solo exhibition with the gallery, and the artist's first in Los Angeles.

The paintings that Yamashita presents in “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo” exist within adjoining transitional spaces: between the otherworldly forces of myth and everyday reality or between the knowledge cultivated in times past and instances of historical amnesia in the present. Placing ghostly figures in serene landscapes, the artist reconsiders and gives harmonious form to these stark contrasts. Through her painting style—which straddles abstraction and figuration—and subject matter, Yamashita examines a core concept of animism by exposing the seraphic in the everyday. The exhibition title, an onomatopoeia that sounds like the stirring of the ocean and refers to the origin myth of the Japanese archipelago, insinuates the mining of ancestral customs, giving these intentionally forgotten tales a fresh embodiment. Conveying pervasive folklore anew, Yamashita's works on linen refashion long-established parables in dazzling tones and strokes.

The ethereal or hazy quality of Yamashita's brushwork further characterizes the worlds that she's building—emphasizing the fantastical elements inherent to each vignette. With delicate marks made with oil paint, the artist alternates filling portions of her canvas with either airy translucency or sharp opacity—through these finishes effectively discerning between what belongs to the terrain of reality or the imagination. In 《戸開》*Tobiraki* (2024), for instance, a spectral figure hovers outside of a sepia-toned cave, its form marked only by the sheerest application of white pigment.

Like much of the imagery in Yamashita's recent work, the scene depicted in 《戸開》*Tobiraki* is taken from Japanese mythology. Separate works depict portions of the well-known story of Amano-Iwato wherein the Sun Goddess Amaterasu secluded herself in a cave, discouraged by the violence she saw from her own brother, thus plunging the world into darkness. To coax the goddess out of hiding,

the other gods gathered outside of the cave to dance and celebrate—as shown in Yamashita's painting 《ウズメ》*UZUME* (2024). Amaterasu, curious about the laughter she heard, peaked outside of the cave and was captivated by her reflection in a mirror that had been placed there for this purpose. This scene is depicted in Yamashita's 《鏡 (アマテラス)》*Mirror (Amaterasu)* (2024).

“This exhibition mainly features works related to Bitchū kagura, a traditional dance practice rooted in Shinto rituals that has been passed down for generations in the Okayama, Bitchū area,” Yamashita says. Thought to derive from the event of luring Amaterasu from her cave, kagura is a type of Shinto ritual ceremonial dance. In most kagura performances in Japan, there is a portion dedicated to the story of Amano-Iwato. Yamashita's painting 《猿田彦》*Sarutahiko* (2023) depicts the jovial movement of this choreography through a frenzy of brush strokes and dripping paint, as a subtle outline of a tree emerges from a pool of blade-like grass. The custom's connection to the unearthly is also referenced in the upper left of the painting, where a dark figure appears to hover.

These traditional Japanese myths have not often been referenced within Japan in the wake of World War II. Deployed as propaganda during the war, mythology in the country was then associated with toxic nationalism. Cut off from elements of their history, Yamashita and others of her generation have begun to revisit these stories, parsing them from their negative usage to better understand the currently overlooked pillars of the society in which they live. Yamashita says of the exhibition, “Rather than depicting a typical mythological scene, I wanted to create works that touch upon forgotten deities and the hidden history that has vanished from the center stage... Just as the title refers to the beginning of the country, I hope these paintings also signify the new beginning of a better world.”

- Text by BLUM Gallery



Installation view, "こをろこをろ koworo-koworo" at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覽現場，BLUM畫廊，2024年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影：Hannah Mjøltnes



Installation view, “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo” at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覧現場, BLUM 画廊, 2024 年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由 BLUM 畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjøltnes



Installation view, “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo” at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覽現場，BLUM畫廊，2024年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影：Hannah Mjøltnes



《ウズメ》UZUME
2024

Oil on linen
89 5/8 x 57 1/4 x 1 5/8 inches

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøl̥snes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjøl̥snes

《鏡 (アマテラス)》Mirror (Amaterasu)
2024
Oil on linen
89 5/8 x 63 3/4 x 15/8 inches

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjølunes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjølunes





《白蓋》Byakkai
2024

Oil on linen

64 x 51 3/8 x 1 1/4 inches

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjølunes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjølunes



Installation view, “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo” at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覽現場，BLUM畫廊，2024年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影：Hannah Mjøltnes



《羽衣》Hagoromo
2023
Oil on linen
71 5/8 x 89 1/2 x 13/8 inches

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjøltnes



Installation view, “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo” at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覽現場，BLUM畫廊，2024年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影：Hannah Mjøltnes



《猿田彦》Sarutahiko
2023
Oil on linen
89 5/8 x 57 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjølunes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjølunes

《託宣》Oracle
2024
Oil on linen
89 5/8 x 63 7/8 x 15/8 inches

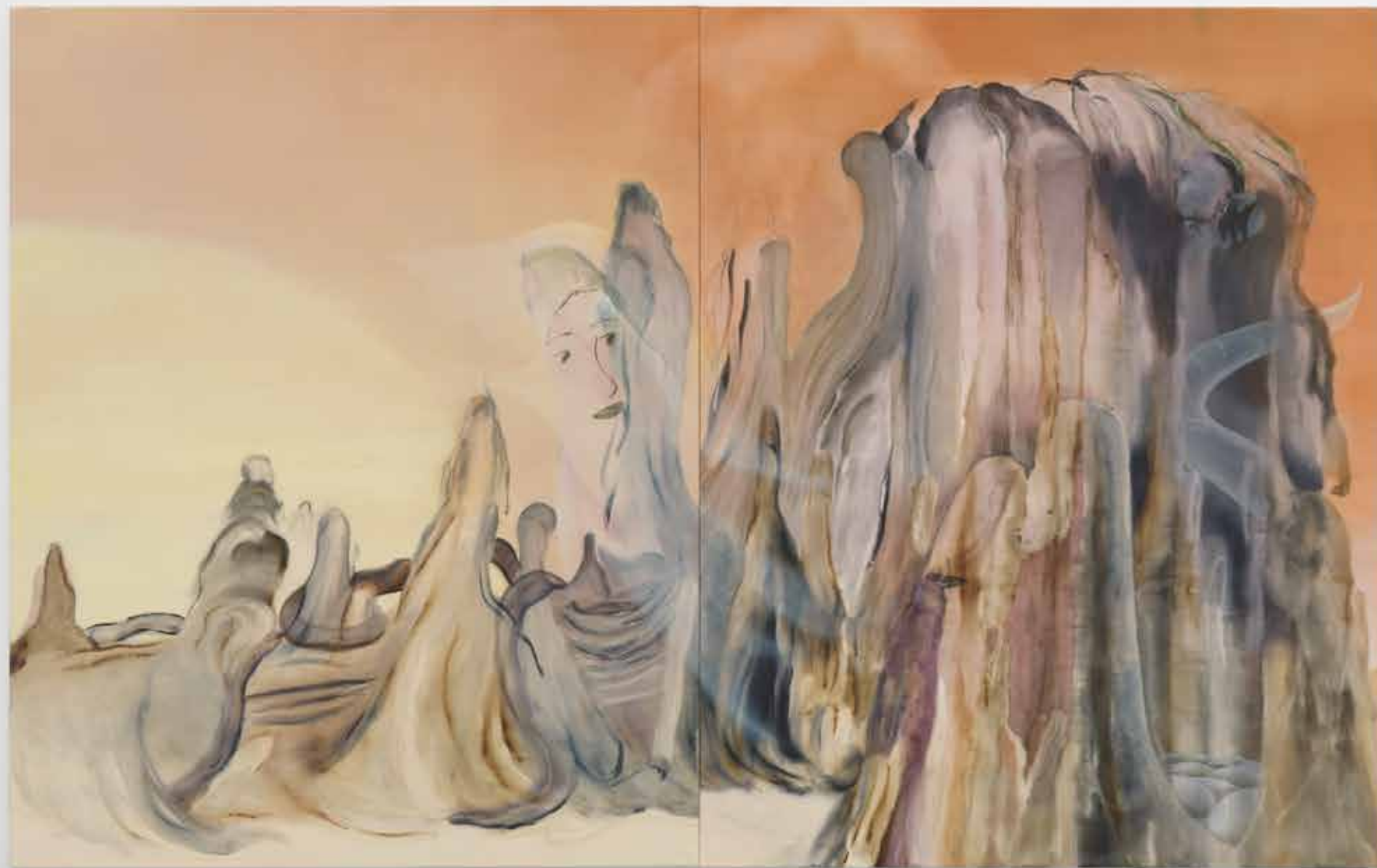
Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjølunes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjølunes





Installation view, "こをろこをろ koworo-koworo" at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覧現場・BLUM畫廊・2024年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjøltnes



《戸開》Tobiraki
2024

Oil on linen

Two parts; 89 5/8 x 143 1/4 x 15/8 inches overall

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影: Hannah Mjøltnes



Installation view, “こをろこをろ koworo-koworo” at BLUM Gallery, 2024
「こをろこをろ koworo-koworo」展覽現場，BLUM畫廊，2024年

Image courtesy of BLUM Gallery. Photo: Hannah Mjøltnes
圖片由BLUM畫廊提供。攝影：Hannah Mjøltnes

Taka Ishii Gallery presents Hiroka Yamashita’s solo exhibition, “玄 GEN”, from Saturday, December 2 to Thursday, December 28, 2023. Following her participation in a group exhibition at Taka Ishii Gallery in 2020, this is her first solo show at the gallery, featuring 14 new paintings.

I feel the works have become more visually attuned to the coldness of stone, the softness of soil, the ever-changing appearance of the moon and clouds in the night sky, all sorts of textures and sounds, nostalgic sensory memories and aerial vibrations. The scenes that appear before my eyes contain imperceptible entities, recollections and thoughts belonging to others, and memory inherent in the land itself, all floating around, and when I paint it feels as if these elements naturally reveal themselves in various forms. Just as everyday life is full of many new discoveries, I welcome these revelations as I depict this world which can never be fully understood in a single person’s lifetime. If something unknown manifests itself in a painting, I let it stay there. Maybe I will understand it someday, and maybe I won’t, and that’s fine too.

Hiroka Yamashita
November 2023

This exhibition, titled “玄 GEN”, presents paintings inspired by the artist’s experiences at sites she visited in person such as the ancient Tsukinowa Kofun tomb, Mt. Daisen, and the lava tunnels of Shimane Prefecture, as well as memorable stories heard from locals. These works draw on raw sensations encountered in nature, tales passed down from one generation to the next, and explorations of local archives and histories. They thematically incorporate spirituality and connections between nature and humanity intrinsic to ancient Japan into uniquely constructed compositions. The colors range from pale pastels to deep, somber shades, with thin, delicate layers and brushwork that imbues intangible atmospheres and presences with a sense of reality. The works on view are further enhanced by a dark, meditative palette, which powerfully and mysteriously elevates them to a state in which they emerge from deep darkness as beacons that summon forth light.

GEN
玄
2023

Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo
Taka Ishii 畫廊・東京
02.12 - 28.12.23

山下紘加 Hiroka Yamashita
玄 GEN

Taka Ishii
Gallery

Installation view, "GEN玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii畫廊，2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN 玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN 玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii 畫廊，2023 年 12 月 2 – 28 日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由 Taka Ishii 畫廊提供。攝影：Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii畫廊，2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN 玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN 玄」展覽現場, Taka Ishii 畫廊, 2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN 玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN 玄」展覽現場, Taka Ishii 畫廊, 2023 年 12 月 2 – 28 日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由 Taka Ishii 畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii畫廊，2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii畫廊，2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN 玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN 玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii 畫廊，2023 年 12 月 2 – 28 日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由 Taka Ishii 畫廊提供。攝影：Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN玄」展覽現場, Taka Ishii畫廊, 2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN 玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN 玄」展覽現場，Taka Ishii 畫廊，2023 年 12 月 2 – 28 日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由 Taka Ishii 畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi



Installation view, "GEN玄" at Taka Ishii Gallery, Dec 2 – 28, 2023
「GEN玄」展覽現場, Taka Ishii畫廊, 2023年12月2 – 28日

Image courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery. Photo: Kenji Takahashi
圖片由Taka Ishii畫廊提供。攝影: Kenji Takahashi

Field, Force, Surface
場，力，面
2022

Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong
馬凌畫廊，香港
19.11.22 - 11.2.23

Kiang Malingue presented at its Tin Wan studio space Hiroka Yamashita's first exhibition with the gallery *Field, Force, Surface*, showcasing ten recent paintings by the artist.

Hiroka Yamashita (born 1991 in Hyogo, Japan) lives and works in Okayama after graduating from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University in 2019. Reflecting upon the satoyama lifestyle she confidently leads — turning away from the metropolitan to live with nature and the invisible, spiritual dimension of the environment, Yamashita employs as guiding principles key ideas from the realm of physics, and creates paintings that either vibrate as recollections, or undulate as consolidations of visions.

Included in the exhibition were *Field (Blue and Green)* and *Field (Surface II)*, two starkly abstract landscapes, in which human figures are absent. Putting pictorial depth into play while emphasising the spatial and the atmospheric, the two artworks reconsider Azuchi–Momoyama period painter Hasegawa Tōhaku's (1539-1610) legacy and Yamashita's training in traditional Japanese art, speaking of a verisimilitude that almost seems incredible as the artist highlights illuminated undercurrents and a hazy pink scene, invaded gently by sap green zigzags.

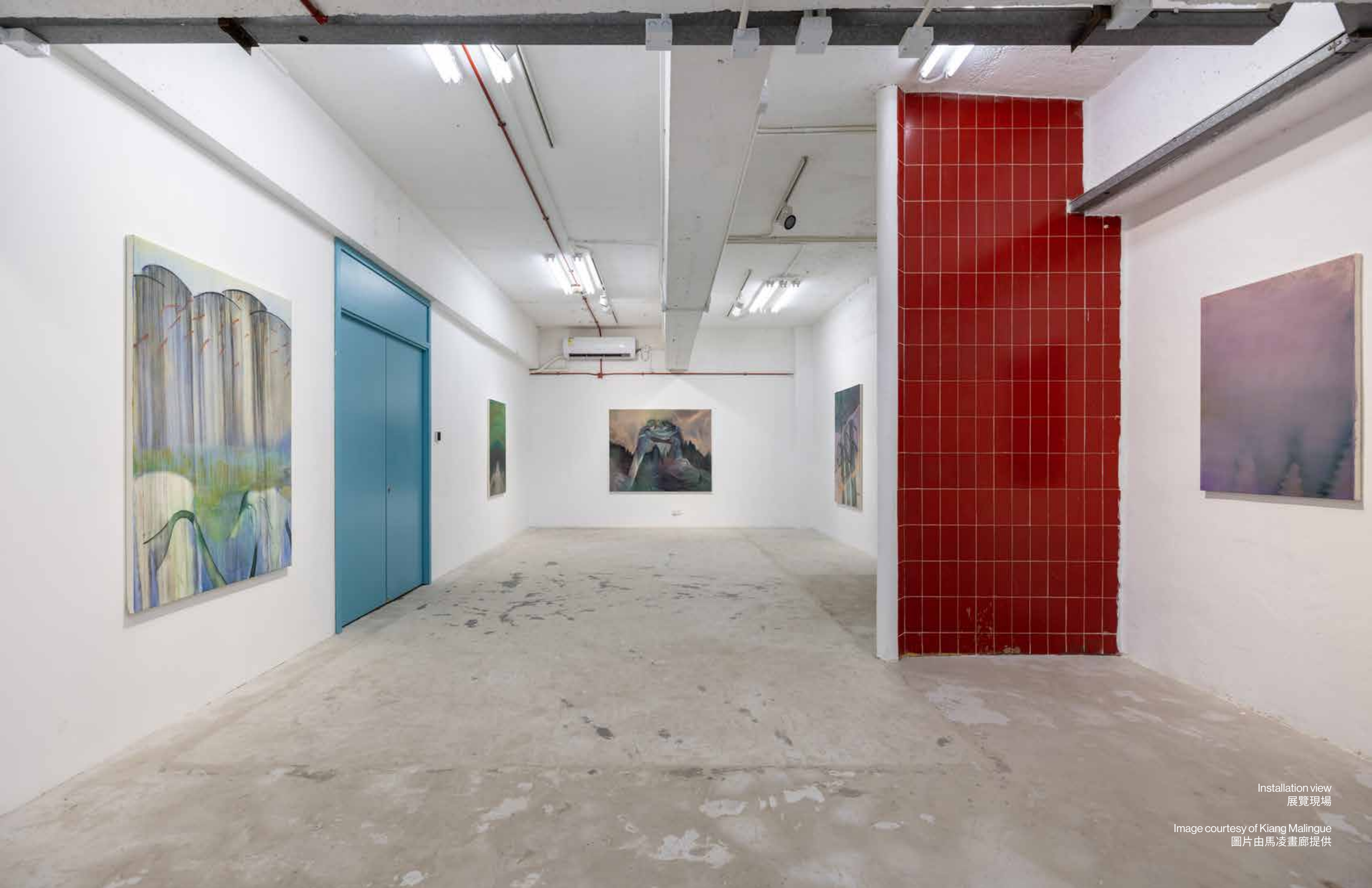
The diptych *Field (Persimmon Tree Sprout)* makes use of a scroll-like composition, envisaging an encounter between an individual and a foreign community. The motif of the persimmon tree — also found frequently in haiku, a form of literature favoured by the artist — derives directly from the plant Yamashita tends in her garden. “The beauty of the shining sprout, the quiet mountain pass, and the swaying grass, etc... It makes me paint those works, as if it is speaking to me that they know the world much better than we humans do, and we all may come from the same place.” The diptych, along with the ascending, multilayered *Field (Tōge)* and the threefold Shakespearean *Field (with Grass)*, proposes novel ways through which one may exert force, relating to one another and nature. For Yamashita, the second decade of the 21st century commences in abyssal helplessness; the decisively somatic human figures in her recent paintings — inexpressive, caught in distanced confrontations or solemn praying rituals — reflect truthfully her thoughts and experiences in recent times. The artist means to, however, leave open the interpretation process, encouraging the viewer to make their own identifications and associations, and to think beyond individual, secularised destinies.

馬凌畫廊榮譽呈現山下紘加個展「場，力，面」，展出藝術家新近創作的十幅繪畫作品。此次展覽是藝術家在馬凌畫廊的首次個人展覽。

山下紘加 (1991年生於日本兵庫縣) 生活工作於岡山。她在2019年於羅格斯大學梅森·格羅斯藝術學院獲得藝術碩士學位。她在近期繪畫實踐中反思其選擇的「里山」生活——遠離大都會的喧囂，擁抱自然及其無形的精神維度——以來自物理學領域的基本概念為出發點，創作了一系列與記憶及超自然想象緊密相關的繪畫作品。

此次展覽展出的作品包括《場（藍與綠）》及《場（面II）》兩幅出離抽象的風景繪畫，其中罕見地沒有任何人物的蹤影。在進一步探索當代繪畫實踐的場域維度時，藝術家改變了畫面深度，強調了「空」、「氣」等超出感知範疇的屬性。山下紘加也重新檢視了安土桃山時代巨匠長谷川等伯 (1539-1610) 的飄渺藝術遺產，以及她自身接受的日本傳統藝術訓練，在畫面中呈現了如夢幻一般的景象：泛有暗光的湛藍溪流，以及被氤氳綠線波及的粉霧風景。

兩聯繪畫作品《場（柿樹枝枒）》引用了長卷式的構圖形式，描繪了樹下之人與異邦來客相遇的情景。柿子樹的意象常在俳句經典中出現——山下紘加尤其青睞此種古文學形式——而此幅繪畫作作品中的柿子樹則直接來自藝術家在自己庭園種植的樹木。「透光枝枒、寧靜山路及搖曳青草的美，讓我畫出這些作品。它們在訴說：它們比人類更了解這世界，而我們可能全是來自於同一個起源的。」《場（柿樹枝枒）》與多層次、盤旋上升的《場（峠）》以及重構了莎士比亞名著中情景的《場（和草）》提出了施加力量、與彼此相連的奇異方式。在山下紘加看來，21世紀第二個十年始於深淵般的無助感；她描繪的人類形象則與其對當下時代的反思相呼應，強調了身體的物質屬性又鮮有展露情感，或是與彼此遙相對峙，或是在肅穆的群體禱告儀式中沈默冥想。在呈現畫作之時，山下紘加鼓勵觀眾自由開放地解讀作品，依照自身想象及經驗指認其中的人物敘事，並進而思考超越個人世俗化命運的主題。



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of Kiang Malingue
圖片由馬凌畫廊提供



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of Kiang Malingue
圖片由馬凌畫廊提供



Field (Tōge)
《場(峠)》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
130 × 162 cm

Vessel/
《器》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
145.5 x 97 cm





Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of Kiang Malingue
圖片由馬凌畫廊提供



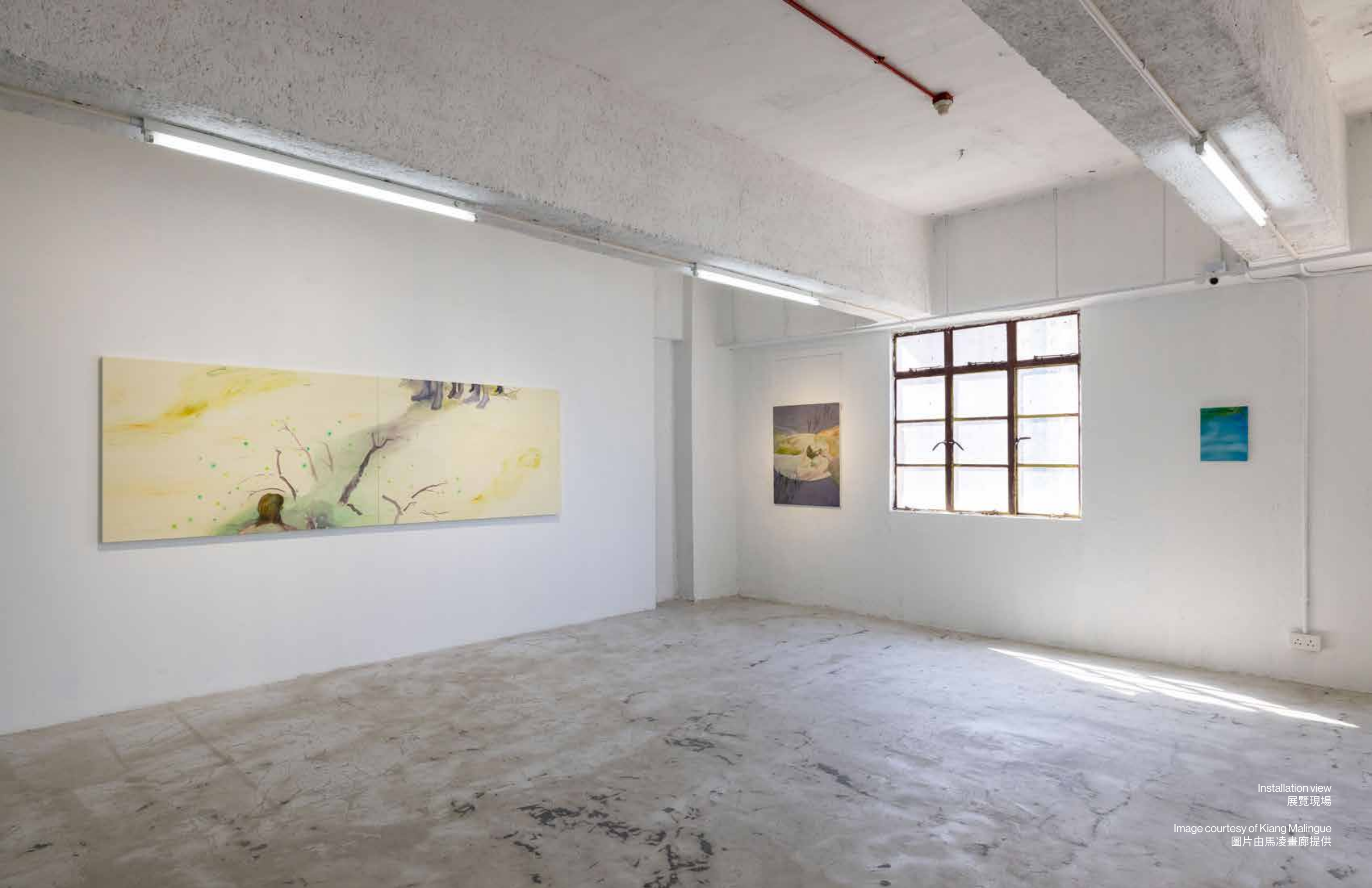
Force (Landscape)
《力(風景)》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
145.5 × 97 cm

Field (Body)
《場(身體)》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
116.5 x 72.5 cm





Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of Kiang Malingue
圖片由馬凌畫廊提供



Field (Persimmon Tree Sprout)
《場(柿樹枝芽)》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
97 x 291 cm

Field (with Grass)
《場(和草)》
2022

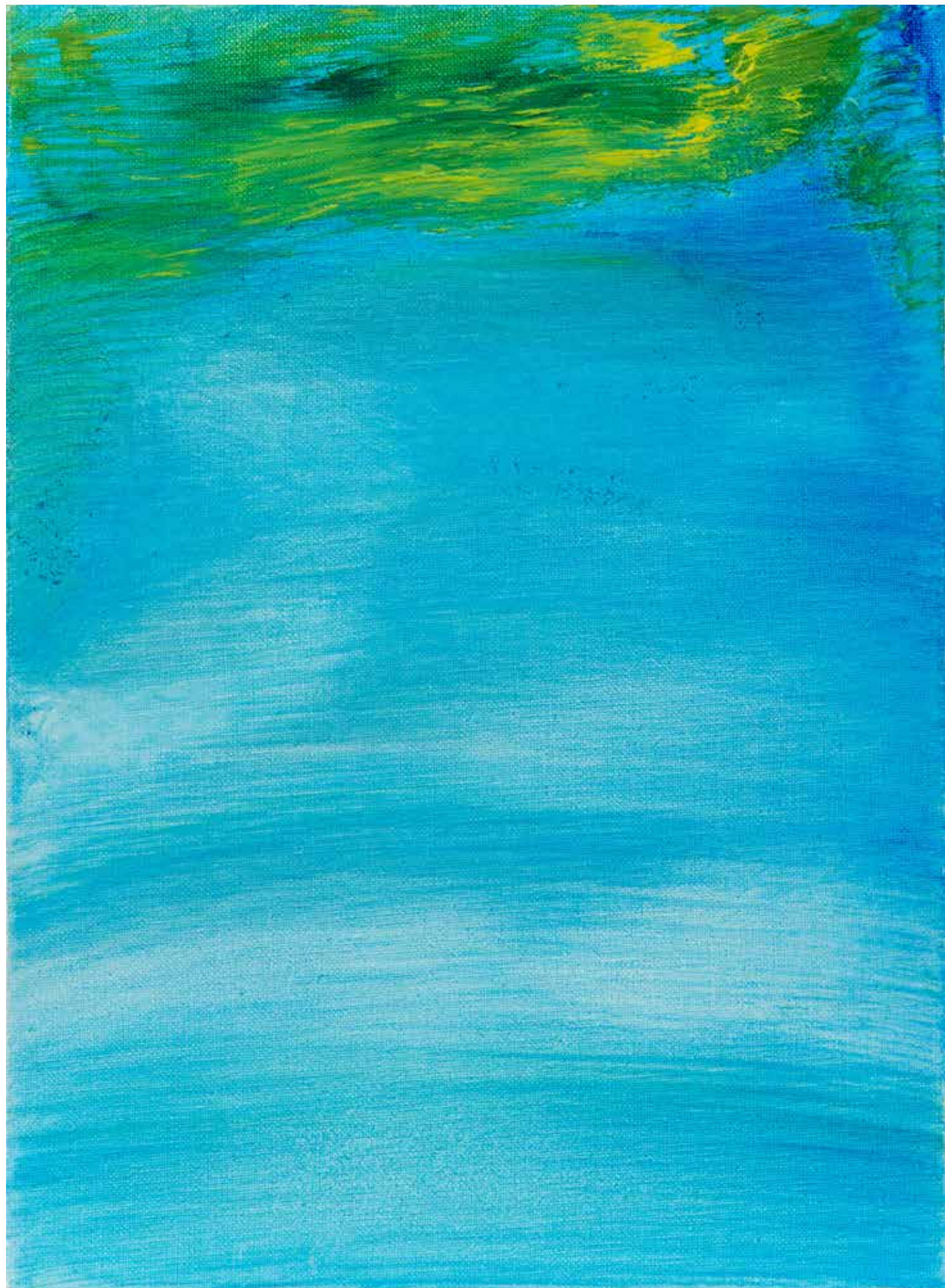
Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
91x72.7 cm





Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of Kiang Malingue
圖片由馬凌畫廊提供

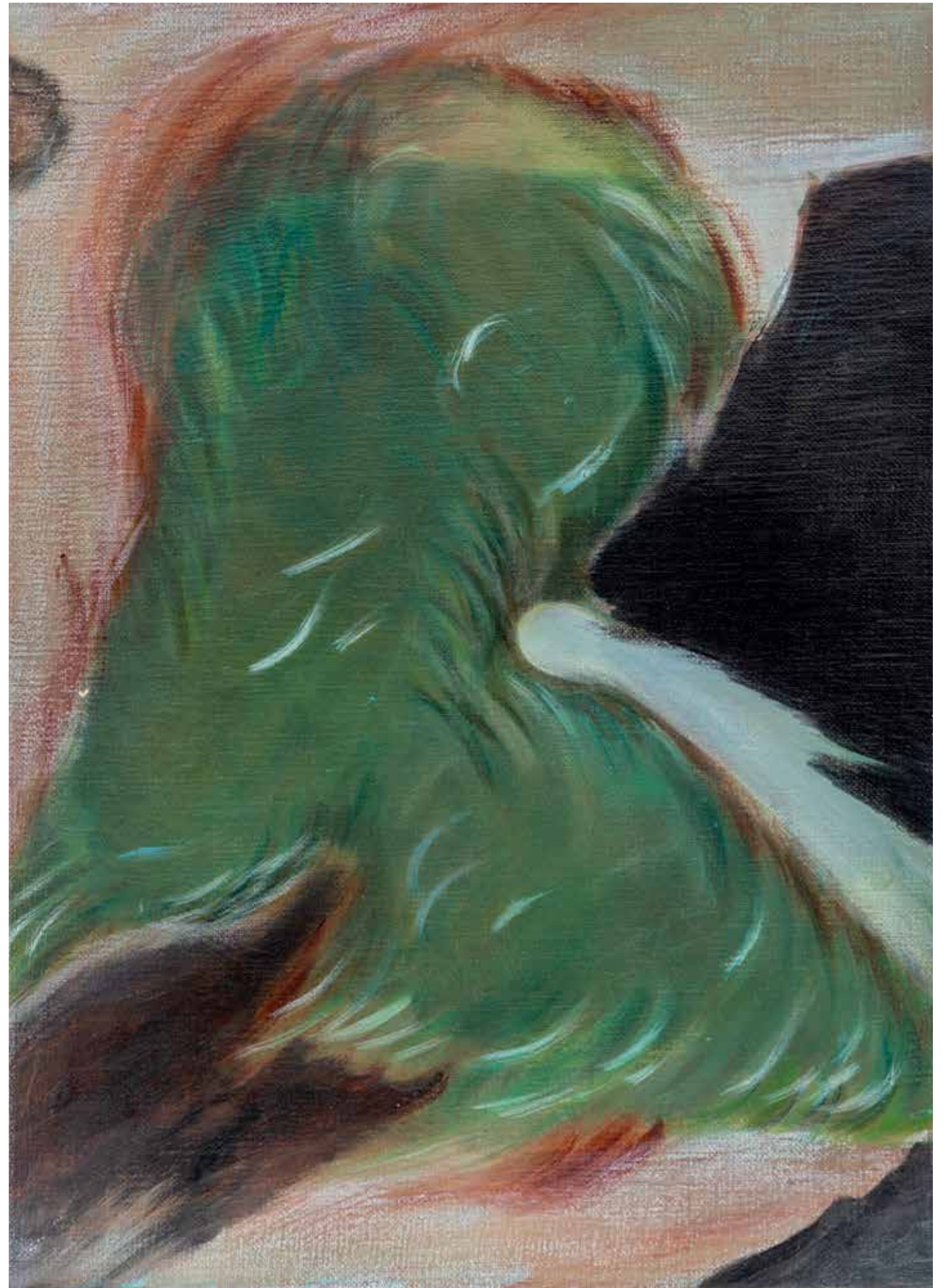


Field (Blue and Green)
《場(藍與綠)》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
33 x 24 cm

Hole
《穴》
2022

Oil on linen
亞麻布面油畫
33 x 24 cm



OKETA COLLECTION consists of antiques and works of contemporary art assembled by married couple Shunji and Asako Oketa over the course of two decades. In recent years, the collection has been exhibited in a range of art museums and gallery spaces, conveying the unique allure of contemporary art. WHAT MUSEUM is now showcasing OKETA COLLECTION in two parts, each with different themes.

Following on from the first exhibition, “Mariage: From Antiques to Contemporary Art” (held April 28–July 3, 2022), the second exhibition, entitled “YES YOU CAN: The Strength of Life through Art,” exhibited works from world-renowned artist Yayoi Kusama, who first sparked the Oketas’ interest in contemporary art, alongside up-and-coming Japanese and international contemporary female artists such as Aki Kondo, Jadé Fadojutimi and Hiroka Yamashita. These works, which the Oketas fell in love with, at first sight, seem to be the very essence of the OKETA COLLECTION, which is full of strength and zest for life, always having fun and never stopping. In today’s unstable society, this exhibition delivered positive energy by exhibiting artworks with the message of believing in yourself and living positively, which is also embodied in the title of one of the exhibiting artist’s Julia Chiang’s artwork, “YES YOU CAN.” Some related events was also held during the exhibition period.

YES YOU CAN : The Strength of Life through Art
2022

WHAT, Tokyo
6.8.22 - 10.10.22



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Red Mountain
2022

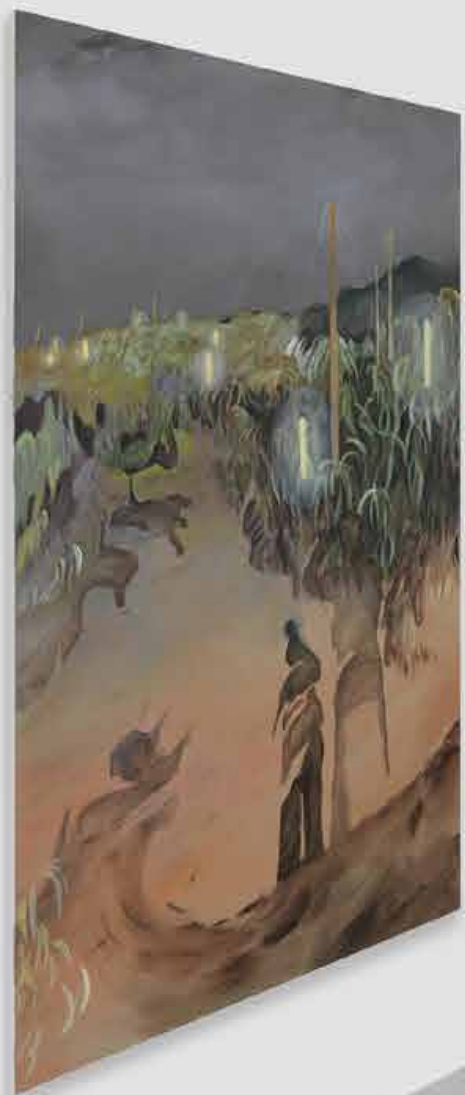
Oil on canvas
136 × 145 cm

‘Fūdo’ by Hiroka Yamashita is comprised of a series of new landscape paintings in which the artist ruminates on the formative relationship between people and their ancestral land. In recent years, Yamashita has gained attention for her otherworldly depictions of Japan in which ghostly figures dissolve into forest mists, windswept fields, and twilight skies. Yamashita’s world is consumed by a haze of sap green, teal, violet, turquoise, and ochre, creating an atmosphere appropriate for the exhibition’s title, which can be crudely translated to ‘climate’. But fūdo has a complicated meaning in Japanese that cuts across history, politics, and philosophy. Literally ‘wind/earth’, fūdo can be used to describe the culture of a region. Fūdoki, a close derivative, for instance, denotes the ancient royal records that surveyed the country’s various provinces – their terrain, customs, and oral traditions. And in more recent memory, fūdo conjures another significant association to which Yamashita wishes to draw attention, namely the 20th-century philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji (1889–1960).

Watsuji’s work plots a foundational relationship between ecology and morality, nature and virtue, and it is to this idea that Yamashita’s work turns into an exploration of her own relationship to place, identity, and spirituality. The scenes that appear in her work are drawn from the artist’s regular walks in and around her home of Okayama. Onto such sites, Yamashita projects her imaginative associations that tap into her knowledge of local customs, folklore, and geographic features, as if—to use the artist’s own words—the painter is a mediator that carries forward an ancient oral tradition. In a country that is subject to earthquakes, tsunamis, monsoon floods, volcanoes, and forest fires, Yamashita reminds us that a spiritual relationship with nature entails a deep acceptance of both its blessings and disasters. Viewed from this vantage, it may be clarifying to think of Yamashita’s work as a kind of fūdoki in its own right.

Fūdo
2022

Tanya Leighton, Berlin
12.3.22 - 23.4.22

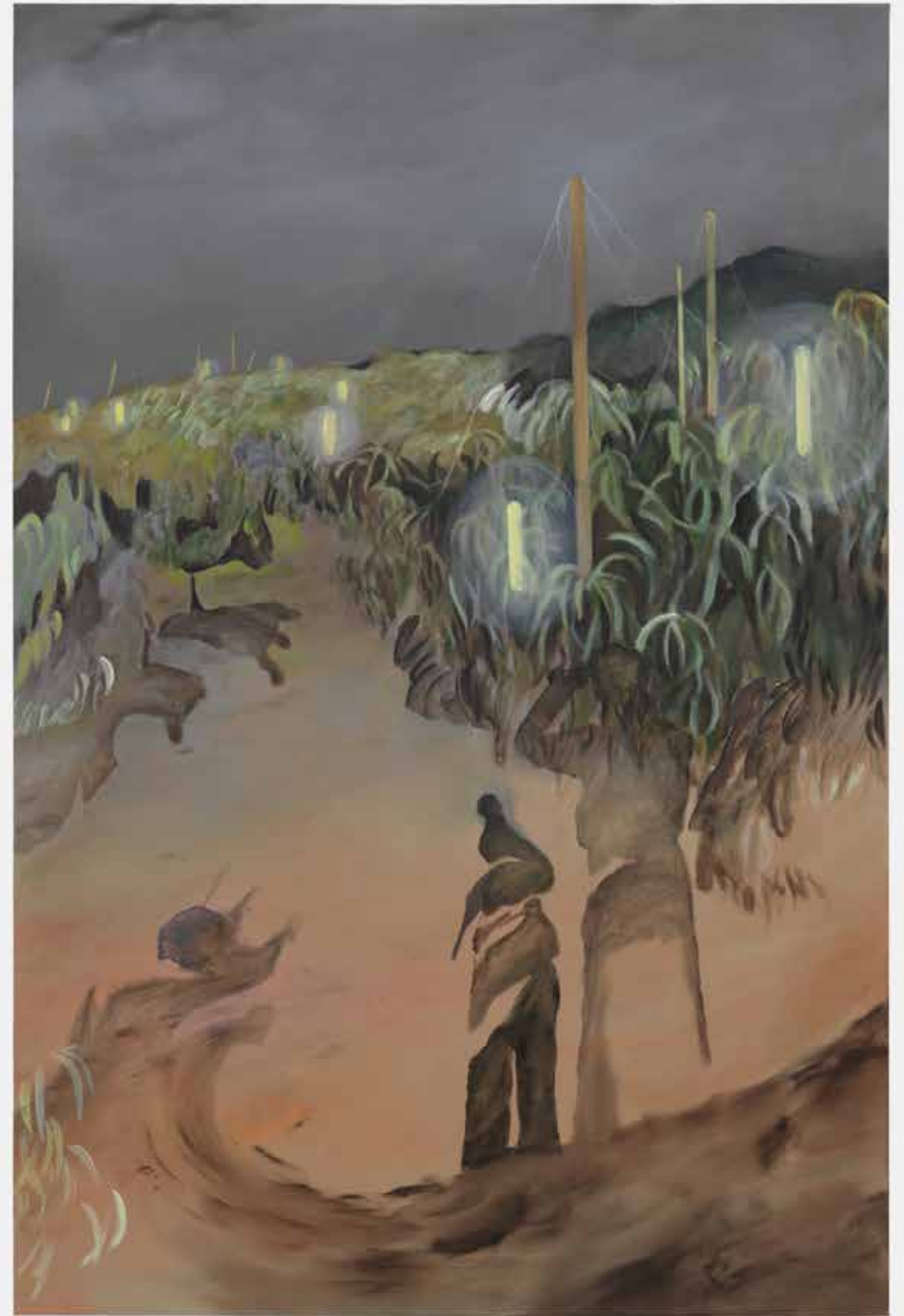


Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供

Peach Farm at Night
2022

Oil on linen
194 × 130.5 cm





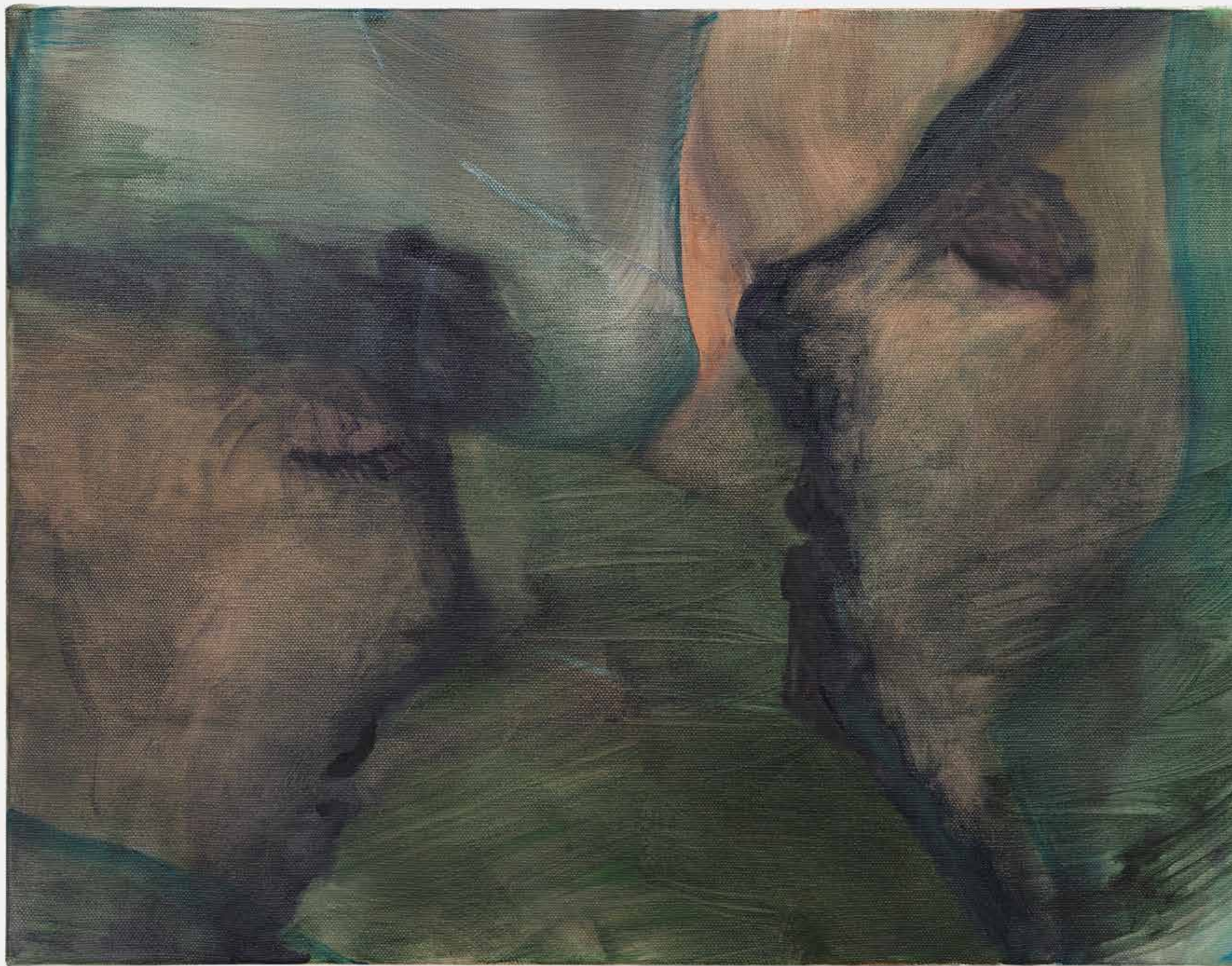
Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



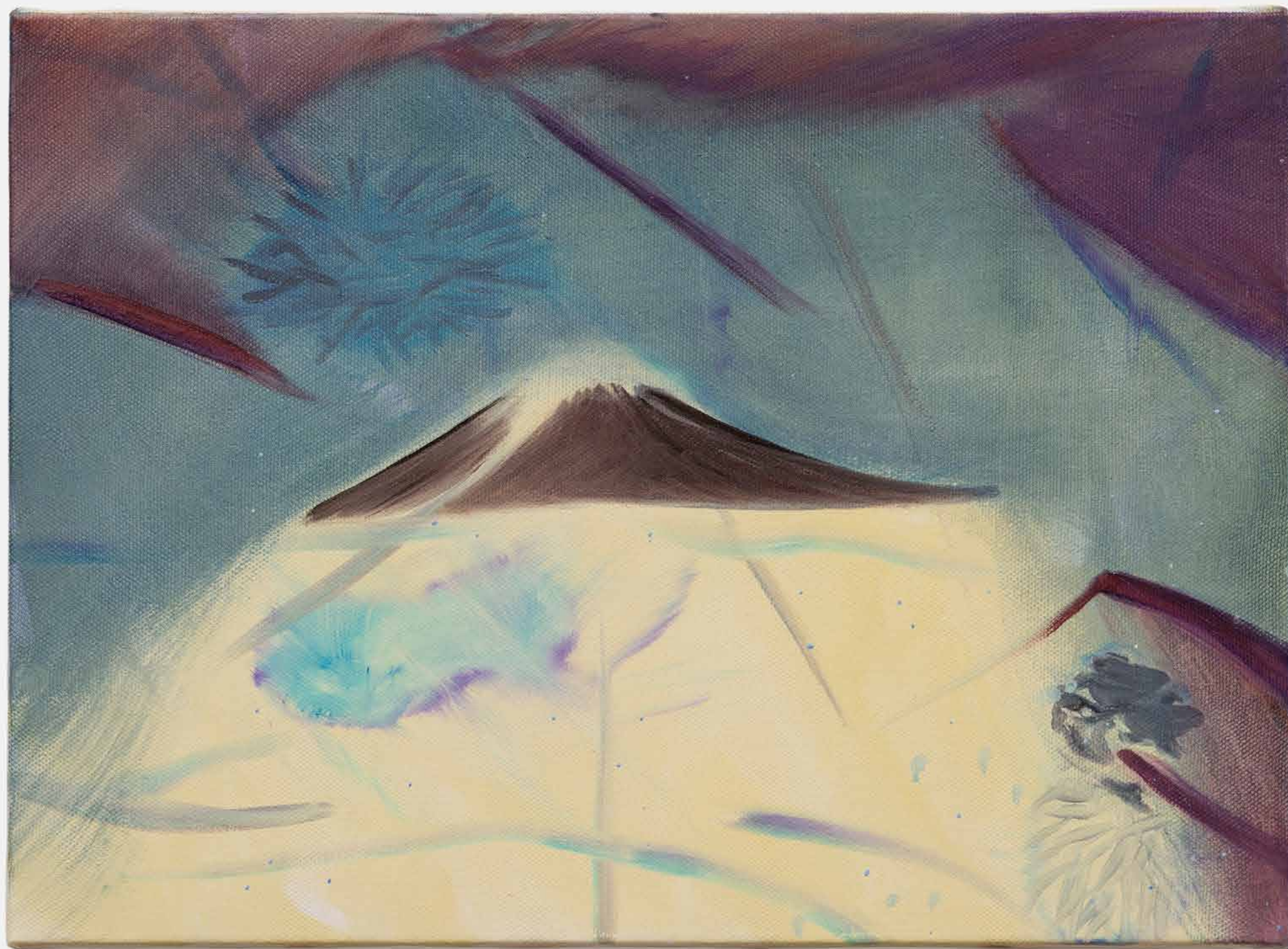
Susuki Grass
2021

Oil on linen
136 × 145 cm



Two Deaths
2022

Oil on linen
32 × 41 cm



Lamp in the Bush
2020

Oil on linen
24 × 33 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供

Lookout with Large Rock
2021

Oil on linen
162 × 130 cm





Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Willow and Figures around a Fire
2021

Oil on linen
112 × 194 cm



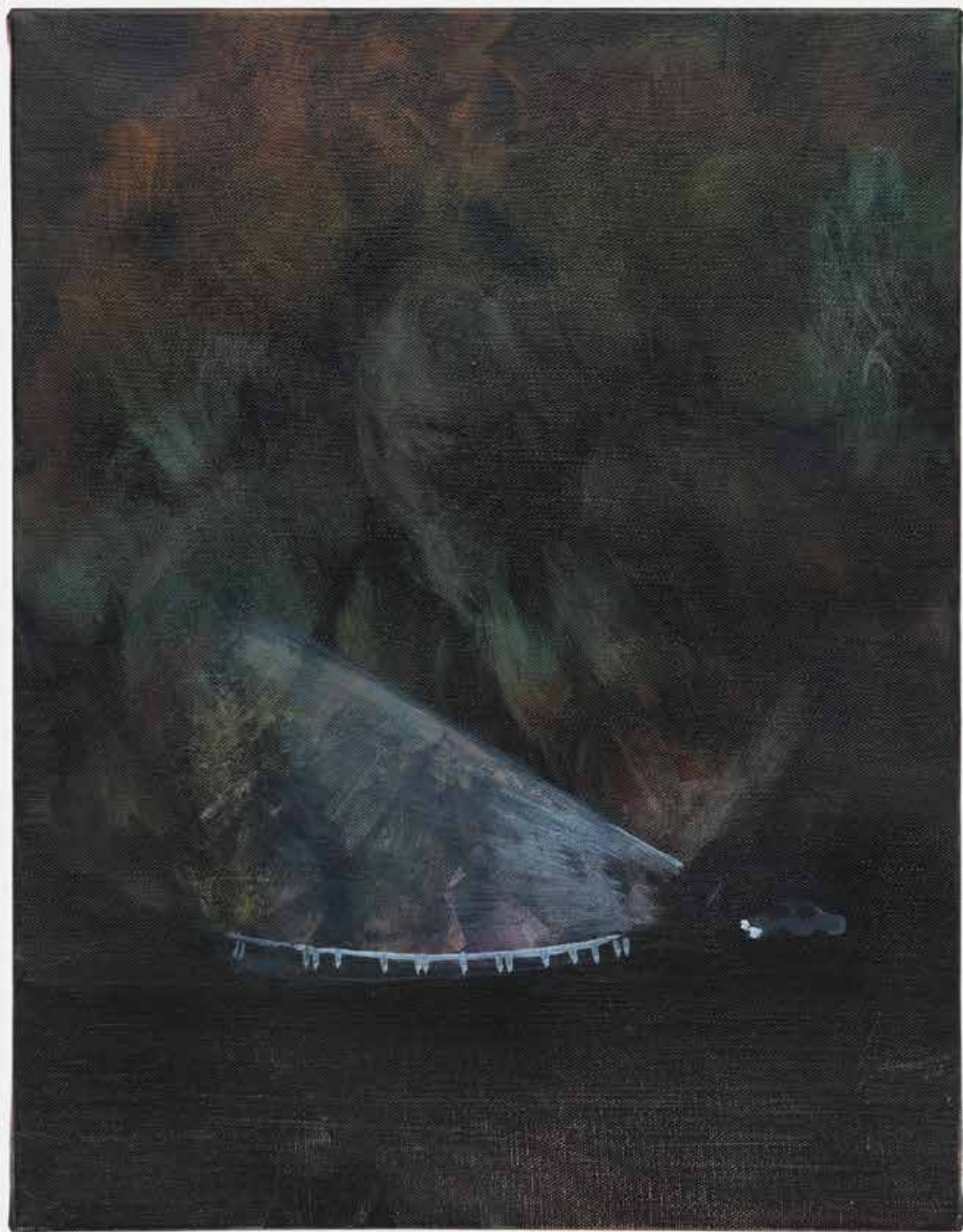
Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供

Moonrise (Route 2)
2021

Oil on linen
162 × 112 cm





Untitled (Headlight)
2022

Oil on linen
41 × 32 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Untitled
2021

Oil on linen
130.5 × 130.5 cm



Lumbers
2019

Oil on panel
22.5 × 26 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Rules for Crossings
2021

Oil on linen
65 × 52 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Untitled
2022

Oil on linen
45.5 × 33 cm



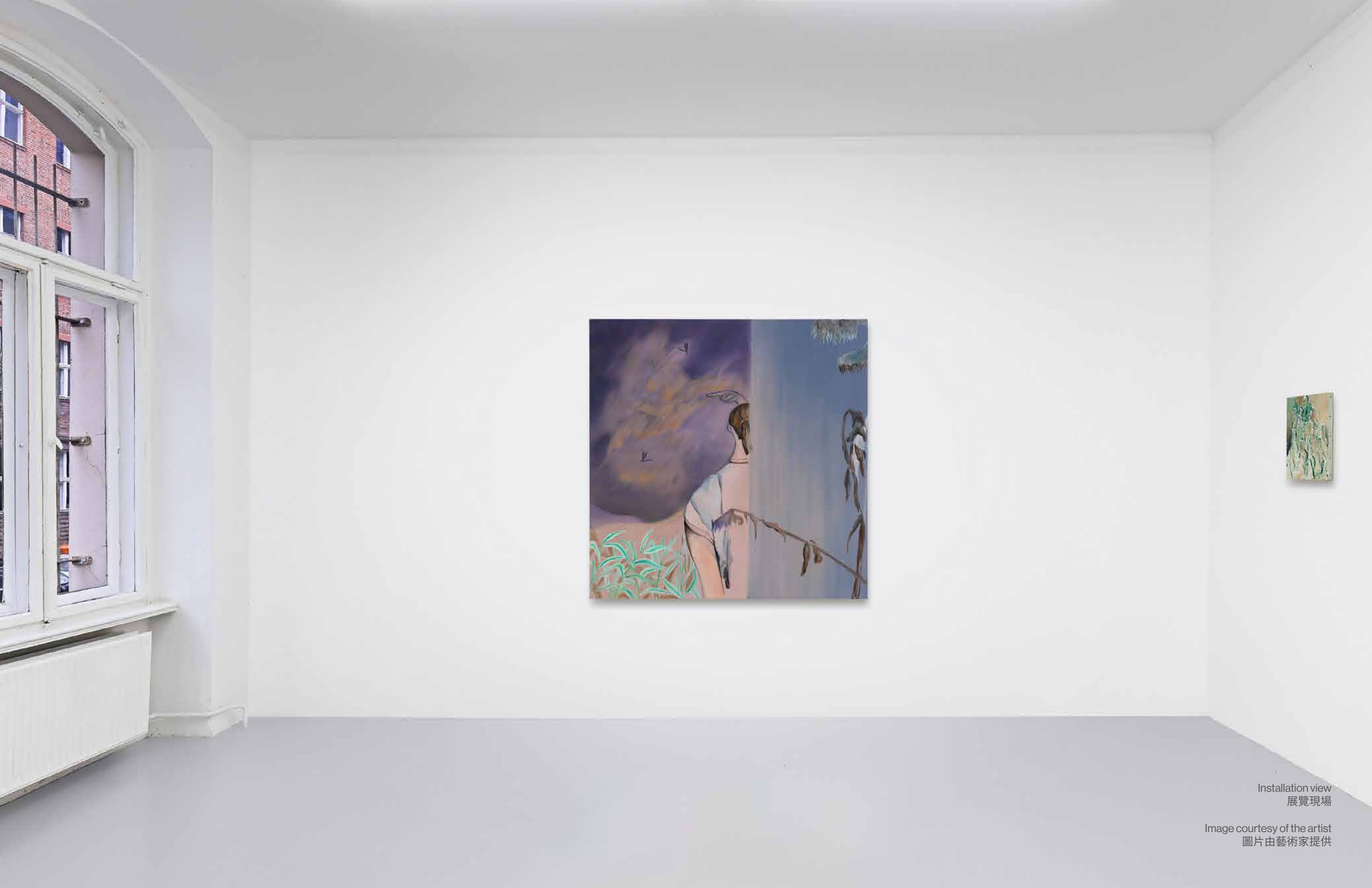
Snow on Fingers
2022

Oil on linen
33 × 45.5 cm



Untitled
2022

Oil on linen
33 × 24 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Damselflies (During a Break)
2021

Oil on linen
130 x 130 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



That Touch
2021

Oil on linen
33.5 × 24 cm

“A good friend of mine once told me that the mark of a good painting show is that it makes you want to drop everything and run to the studio to paint. I have held onto this statement for several years wondering about what it is that makes painters obsess in this particular way. The reason I selected the artists in this show is ultimately very simple; in following the work of each painter included, I have found their responses to the concerns in painting that most haunt me to be such that it forces me to address these crucial questions in my own work. There is not an essential theme that governs my decision to curate this selection of artists but rather sympathies across painting practices and sets of overlapping formal, conceptual, and material affinities that put forward imagina- tions of painting. If anything unites the artists in this show I think it has to do with a certain kind of haptic, giddy, corny, old fashioned belief in the vitality of paint.”

— Sedrick Chisom

***Their Private Worlds Contained the Memory of a Painting that had
Shapes as Reassuring as the Uncanny Footage of a Sonogram
2022***

Matthew Brown, Los Angeles
8.1.22 - 5.2.22



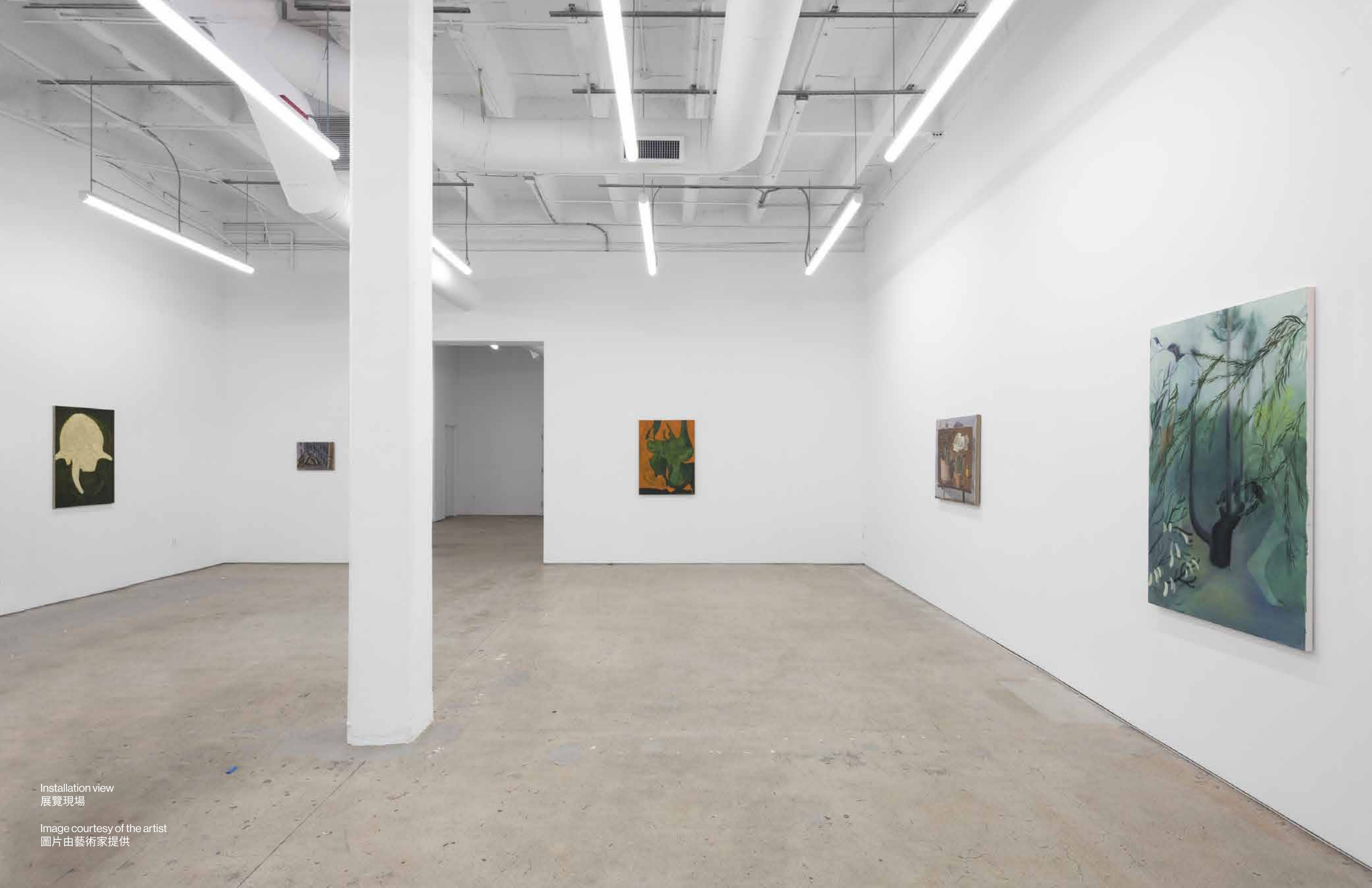
Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供

Cattail Heads
2021

Oil on linen
145.5 × 97 cm





Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Daisugi at Ryōan-ji
2021

Oil on linen
145.5 × 97 cm

Project N 84
2021

Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo
9.10.21-19.12.21





Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



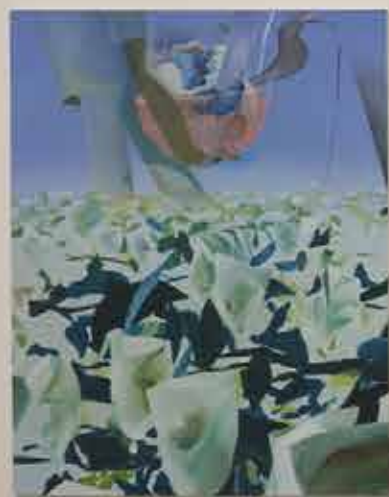
ARTIST'S STATEMENT
DUSK OF THE PINE TREE
2019

Dusk of the Pine Tree
2019

Oil on canvas
139 × 121 cm

Cosmos Remembered
2021

The Club, Tokyo
27.3.21 - 24.4.21



I painted the works in this exhibition after moving back to Japan, inspired from watching one full cycle of the four seasons elapse in this land after spending 10 years away from it.

Compared with what I had done until now, I think this work has a further emphasis on depth, and that there is more layering of colors and spaces.

By painting human figures almost fully blended with scenery, and by depicting the transitions of sight, I think it became possible to feel instants where self and the external, past and future, as well as distant spaces all intersect.

— Hiroka Yamashita

Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供

By definition, “timelessness” is the idea of not being affected by the passage of time or changes in fashion. The exhibition can be understood as a liminal space, a middle-point that exists not here nor there, not now nor later; it is a space that disregards our existing time and space. Conforming to this idea of liminality, the exhibition explored the middle point between dream and reality, transferring the viewers’ sensibilities and physicality.

This exhibition included works of five internationally known artists, Nicholas Hatfull, Naoya Inose, Kayoko Mizumoto, O’Tru no Trus, and Hiroka Yamashita. From Hatfull’s an ocean-like ice creams and ambiguous figures on Yamashita’s canvases, to Mizumoto’s curious contemporary ceramics, O’Tru no Trus’s mystic items found in Awaji island, as well as Inose’s romantic paintings with a cynical touch of postmodernism point of view, all five artists take into account their personal experiences and mundane sceneries in creating their imaginary world. In other words, the artists explore their surreal world through the lenses of reality and their work is a visualization of the ephemeral, where they “represent timelessness, formally and conceptually.”

TIMELESSNESS
2020

The Club, Tokyo
22.8.20 - 23.9.20



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



the Swimmers / the Sleepers
2018

Oil on canvas
111 × 119 cm



Untitled (Pool)
2020

Oil on canvas
99 × 111 cm



Installation view
展覽現場

Image courtesy of the artist
圖片由藝術家提供



Safer in the Bag
2020

Oil on canvas
160 × 130 cm



Untitled (Two Bombs and Two People)
2020

Oil on canvas
73 × 91 cm



Lunch in the Cave
2020

Oil on canvas
41 × 32 cm