

# Susumu Kamijo

## *Beyond The Hills*

Artist | Susumu Kamijo  
Exhibition Title | *Beyond The Hills*  
Dates | July 3 (Sat.) – August 4 (Wed.), 2021  
Location | MAKI Gallery / Tennoz II, Tokyo



Left: Susumu Kamijo, *While You're Dreaming*, 2021, vinyl paint and pastel pencil on canvas, 238.8 x 182.9 cm  
Right: Susumu Kamijo, *Yesterday's Garden*, 2021, vinyl paint and pastel pencil on canvas, 152.4 x 121.9 cm

We are pleased to present *Beyond The Hills*, Brooklyn-based artist Susumu Kamijo's first solo exhibition in three years at MAKI Gallery / Tennoz II, Tokyo. During his first solo exhibition in Japan held at the gallery in 2018, Kamijo charmed viewers with a series of playful drawings of poodles that combined colorful shapes and patterns. In this exhibition, the poodles have moved from paper to canvas and have become abstracted into more essential visual elements, giving them a unique presence in the gallery space. We hope you will take this opportunity to view Kamijo's new works which were created specifically for this exhibition.

With the seemingly adorable theme of poodles acting as its entry point, Kamijo's work, which invites the viewer into an expressive world of painting woven with colors and shapes, has boldly developed its method of expression in the transition from drawing to painting. The dogs are rendered almost unrecognizable as their physical forms are stripped down to their bare elements. By simplifying the shape of each body part, the focus turns to the pure beauty of its form. Furthermore, Kamijo's depiction of the poodle brings out the true essence of the subject and even an inner eeriness, exposing an opposing duality within the work which possesses a peculiar and unnerving allure. Once the entire composition, including the background, is assembled on the canvas, the abstracted

elements evoke the original subject matter and create a new rhythm within the painting that contains a sense of fun and lightness.

On the other hand, Kamijo describes his paintings' minimalist backgrounds as "akin to Japanese calligraphy and can be regarded as having Japanese sensibilities." Kamijo, who has long been working on paper, attempts to interact with the canvas in the same way, and the resulting large negative space contrasted with the painted subject brings about a profound pictorial space. Through the removal of detailed dot patterns found in his previous works, the flat composition consisting of abstracted elements, and the simplified depictions of plants in the background, one can observe Kamijo's pursuit of expression in trying to capture the essence of *wabi*, the ultimate beauty of the minimal. Living away from Japan since the age of sixteen, the artist may have been unconsciously drawn to the aesthetics of his home country.

Kamijo himself does not know what kind of transformation his poodles and the world they inhabit will undergo in the future. The conceptual existence of the poodle, which attempts to transcend biological boundaries and even starts to resemble a human face the longer one stands in front of the work, enters into the viewers' consciousness step by step with a whimsical demeanor, inviting viewers into a creative space where shapes, colors and lines are at play. Please take this opportunity to experience Kamijo's world in person.

## ARTIST

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— Susumu Kamijo



Born in 1975 in Nagano, Japan, Susumu Kamijo currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Kamijo moved to the US at the age of 16 and completed a BFA in Painting and Drawing at the University of Oregon in 2000, followed by an MFA in Painting and Drawing at the University of Washington in 2002. Kamijo explores the abstraction of familiar motifs such as animals and human faces through the distortion of color and shape and has been actively producing a series of drawings and paintings of poodles since 2014. His recent solo exhibitions include *Lick Me Till Dawn*, Jack Hanley Gallery (New York, 2020); *Fetch Your Own Bones*, Kantor Gallery (Beverly Hills, 2020); *I'll Follow You To The Sunset*, GNYP Gallery (Berlin, 2019); *Walk With Me To The Sea*, Sakurado Fine Arts<sup>※</sup> (Tokyo, 2018); and *I Will Walk You Tomorrow*, Harper's Books (New York, 2018). He has also participated in various group shows in Italy, England, Belgium, and Greece, and continues to exhibit many works, primarily in the US and Europe. In 2017, Pacific published his first publication titled *Poodles*.

<sup>※</sup>renamed MAKI Gallery in June 2020

## ARTWORK

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Susumu Kamijo  
*Welcome To The Tomorrow  
Island*  
2021  
Vinyl paint and pastel  
pencil on canvas  
152.4 x 121.9 cm

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## MAKI Gallery / Tennoz, Tokyo

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### MAKI Gallery / Tennoz I

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Closed on Sundays and Mondays

### MAKI Gallery / Tennoz II

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\*For further inquiries, please contact