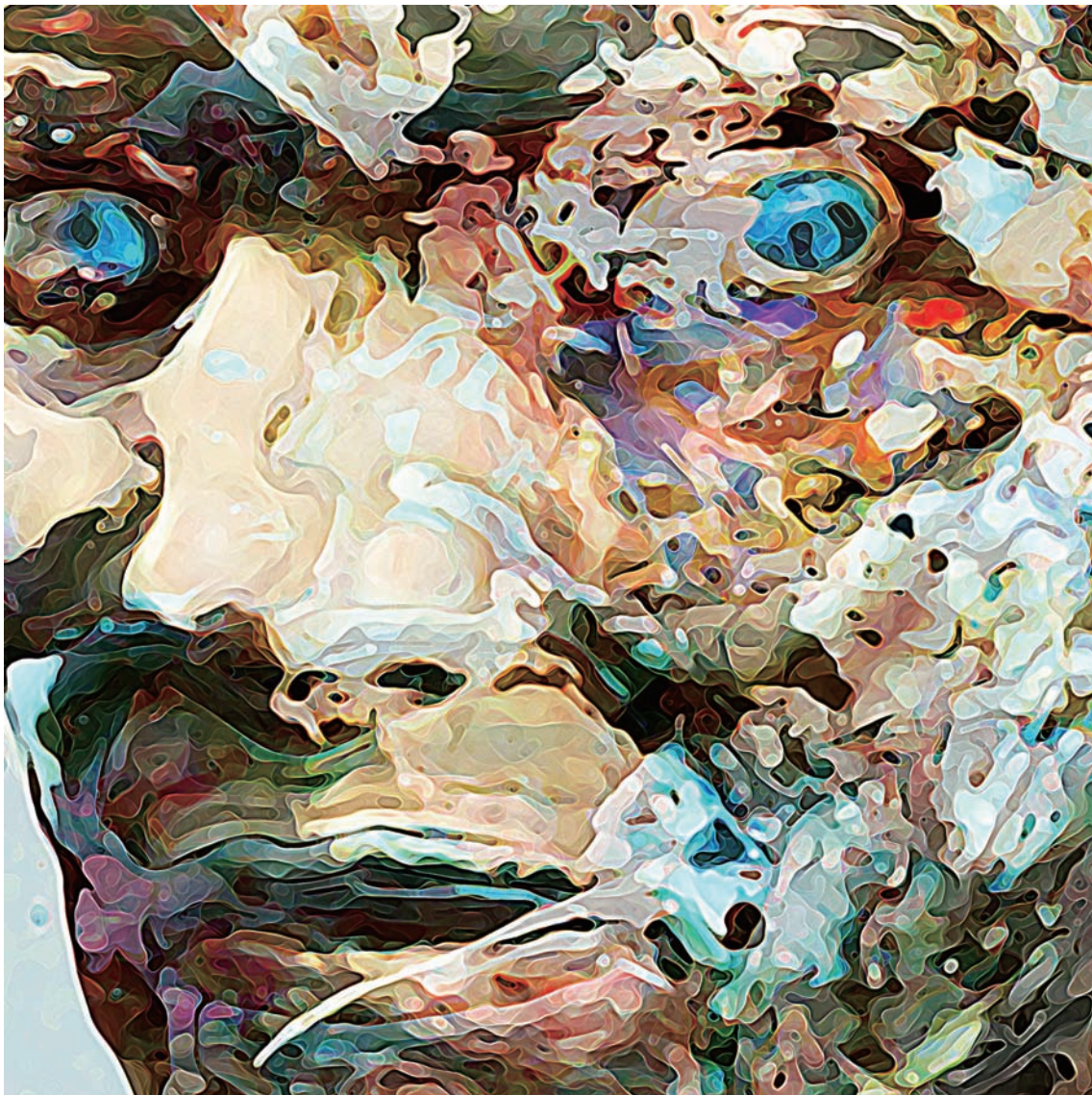


21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

MAKOTO SAITO SCENE [0]

August 2 (Sat) to November 3 (Mon/holiday), 2008



Makoto Saito / *Face Cut Out* / 2007
Acrylic and oil ink on canvas 60 x 60cm © Makoto Saito



金沢21世紀美術館
21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

MAKOTO SAITO: SCENE [0]

The first large-scale solo exhibition in Japan devoted to Makoto Saito, a creator internationally renowned in the graphic design field. Through innovative expression in the 1980s and '90s, Saito shattered the norms of graphic design, and has since reshaped the design field. Now, in a much-anticipated exhibition of new works he will launch into the twenty-first century, Saito presents some 50 of the paintings he has been incubating for years. Saito's wide-ranging creative activities have heretofore emerged from a perpetual theme—his investigation into the act of “seeing.” In the mid- '90s, Saito began to explore the painting genre in earnest, alongside his activities in the design field. His paintings, this time, reflect as ever the penetrating eye he continually casts on contemporary life. Among their subjects are movies, a medium of special meaning to him that he has felt close to since childhood. Capturing a single, instantaneous shot from a movie, he boldly deconstructs it employing the contemporary filter of digital technology. The exhibition will provide a glimpse into Saito's present creative world and his endeavor to expand the act of “seeing” to an act of “depicting.”

The human figures we encounter in these paintings are veiled in a frosty cold atmosphere from which we sense no warmth. From a temperatureless zero point—SCENE [0]—a disquieting world slowly emerges. It is as if the artist were consciously defying today's trend of conveniently seeking healing in warmth and naturalness. Saito's pictorial space, constructed using his own unique motifs and textures, captures the feel of our times and portrays us, the people of contemporary society, with merciless objectivity.

EXHIBITION FEATURES

Makoto Saito's First Solo Exhibition

The first large-scale solo exhibition in Japan devoted to Makoto Saito, a creator internationally renowned in the graphic design field. Saito's innovative work of the 1980s and '90s shattered the norms of the design field. In recent years, he has expanded beyond graphics into new territories such as product design, product development, and movie direction in giving expression to our times. This exhibition presents some 50 of the paintings he has been incubating for years and looks closely at his present creative world. Saito's first public display of his paintings this time represents an important new step forward for him as a creator.

Pictorial Space Reflecting Saito's View of "Today"

Makoto Saito—a creator who has in past decades reshaped the design field. Even in taking up painting as a new expressive medium, Saito has chosen a totally unorthodox technique—"digital painting."

Digital painting enables the expression of visual textures completely new to our experience. Employing this technique, Saito produces portraits of contemporary humanity, examined through the filter of digital technology. From a canvas that first strikes us as emotionally cold, a multi-layered image gradually comes to life—a totally new kind of pictorial space certain to command attention in the art world.

Through Conversations with the Artist, a Multi-angle Approach

As related events of this exhibition, two "Zero Point" conversations with the artist will be held following the opening. Tokujin Yoshioka, a designer known for his work in the spatial and product design fields, and Akira Asada, critic and Dean of the Graduate School, Kyoto University of Art & Design, will speak with Makoto Saito and explore his yesterday, today, and tomorrow from multiple angles.

Publication of the First Book of Makoto Saito's Paintings

In conjunction with this exhibition, the first ever book of Makoto Saito's paintings will be published by Art Design Publishing (ADP). The volume, designed by Hideki Nakajima and featuring commentary by Akira Asada and an interview with Makoto Saito, will be a publication of comprehensive content, permitting a true appreciation of Saito's paintings.

BOOK

Makoto Saito Scene [0]

Publisher: ADP | Art Design Publishing

Art Direction / Design: Hideki Nakajima (Nakajima Design)
About 130 pages, soft cover (W26 x H32.5cm)
First book of reproductions of Saito's paintings (text in English) includes 80 color plates and booklet with Japanese translation.



EXHIBITION OUTLINE

Japanese Title: Saito Makoto Ten : Scene [0]

English Title: MAKOTO SAITO: SCENE [0]

Period: August 2 (Sat) to November 3 (Mon, a holiday) 2008

Closed: Mondays

(except 9.15, 9.22, 10.13, 11.3) and also 9.16 (Tue) 10.14 (Tue)

Days Open: 83

Organized by: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Venue: Galleries 7-12 & 14, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Works: About 50

Admission: General: ¥1,000 (¥800*); College students: ¥800 (¥600*);

Elem/JH/HS: ¥400 (¥300*); 65 and older: ¥800

Note: Joint admission tickets also allow entry to the Ron Mueck Exhibition (until August 31)

General: ¥1,600 (¥1,500*); College students: ¥1,300 (¥1,200*);

Elem/JH/HS: ¥700 (¥600*); 65 and older: ¥1,300

RELATED EVENTS

● MAKOTO SAITO “Zero Point” Conversations with the Artist

1. “Capturing a Shot”

Tokujiin Yoshioka (Designer) with Makoto Saito

Date/Time: August 2 (Sat) 14:00-15:30 (Doors open at 13:30)

Venue: Lecture Hall, exhibition galleries (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Participants: First 80 arrivals (Numbered tickets will be distributed before the Lecture Hall from 10:00 that day)

Admission: Free of charge (Exhibition ticket is required)

2. “Distancing!: The Birth of Painting from the Ruins of Graphic Design

Akira Asada (Dean of the Graduate School, Kyoto University of Art & Design) with Makoto Saito

Date/Time: August 3 (Sun) 14:00-15:30 (Doors open at 13:30)

Venue: Lecture Hall, exhibition galleries (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Participants: First 80 arrivals (Numbered tickets will be distributed before the Lecture Hall from 10:00 that day)

Admission: Free of charge (Exhibition ticket is required)

● Gallery Talks by Curators

Date/Time: August 16 (Sat), September 6 (Sat), October 25 (Sat): 14:00-15:00

Meeting Place: Lecture Hall (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Admission: Free of charge (Exhibition ticket is required)

● Program for Children: “Look for the Portrait that Strikes You Most”

Children will view artworks and attend a workshop.

Date/Time: September 23 (Tue, a holiday) 13:00-16:00

Meeting Place: Kids Studio (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Participants: First 15 arrivals (Children of elementary and junior high school age. Parents also welcome)

Admission: Free of charge (Exhibition ticket is required)

Application: Please telephone (076-220-2801) or e-mail (kids_21@kanazawa21.jp)

The program will close to participation upon reaching the prescribed number of participants.

● Gallery Tours for Mamas and Papas

Artwork viewing together with art museum staff members.

Useful information for parents with small children, such as about the breast-feeding room and day-care, will also be provided.

Date/Time: September 11 (Thu) 10:30-11:50

Meeting Place: Kids Studio (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Participants: First 15 arrivals (Mothers-to-be and guardians of infants. Day care available with reservation)

Admission: Free of charge (Exhibition ticket is required)

Application: Please telephone (076-220-2801) or send e-mail (kids_21@kanazawa21.jp)

Tours will close to participation upon reaching the prescribed number of participants.

Note: Changes in planning are apt to occur. Please consult the Museum's website for details.

ARTIST PROFILE

SAITO MAKOTO

Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1952.

From the 1970s, Saito embarked into the graphic design field, making his debut in 1980. Winning almost immediate recognition both in Japan and overseas, he has since amassed an impressive list of awards from Japan, the USA, Europe, and South America. His graphics works are in the collections of over 30 art museums around the world, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art alone possesses some 80 of his works.

From the mid-'90s, Saito began to explore the painting genre alongside his design activities, and slowly created the prototype for the paintings he will exhibit this time. In more recent years, he has adopted a new expressive technique for creating paintings. Selecting movie scenes that deeply impressed him as a child, he boldly deconstructs the human image and reconstructs it. Saito's first ever display of his paintings this time, at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, represents an important new step forward for him as a creator.



Selected Exhibitions

- 1986 "83-man Japanese Contemporary Art Exhibition" (National Gallery of Modern Art, India)
- 1987 "Contemporary Icon" (Museum of Modern Art, Saitama)
- 1989 "Today's Art" (Museum of Modern Art, Saitama)
- 1994 "Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950" (The Philadelphia Museum of Art; Center Pompidou National Museum for Modern Art, Paris; Suntory Museum Tempozan, Osaka)
- 1996 "Makoto Saito, the Viewpoint of Modern Design" (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art)
- 1998 "Makoto Saito: Art of the Poster" (Huntington Gallery at Massachusetts College of Art)
- 2003 "The Art of Design: The Architecture and Design Collection" (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) "Makoto Saito: The Tokio Graphism" (Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg, Germany)
- 2005 "The Art of Design" (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art)

Selected Awards

- 1979 Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art Award, 13th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan
- 1983 Highest Award, Tokyo ADC (Japan)
- 1984 Gold Prize, 10th International Poster Biennial Exhibit, Warsaw (Poland); Gold Prize, Japan-U.S. Graphic Design Exhibition
- 1985 Gold Prize, Bronze Prize, 1st International Poster Triennial in Toyama (Japan)
- 1987 Gold Award, 1st New York ADC (USA); Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art Award, 18th Japan Fine Arts Exhibition (Japan); '87 MAINICHI DESIGN Award
- 1988 Gold Award, 2nd New York ADC (USA); Gold Prize, Bronze Prize, 2nd International Poster Triennial in Toyama (Japan)
- 1989 Gold Award, Silver Award, 3rd New York ADC (USA); Grand Prix, 8th Lahti International Poster Biennale (Finland); Grand Prix, 5th International Poster Exhibition of France (France); Highest Award, Colorado International Invitational Poster Exhibition (USA)
- 1990 Silver Prize, 13th International Poster Biennial Exhibit, Warsaw (Poland); Gold Prize, Silver Prize, 19th Brno International Graphic Design Biennial (Czech); Grand Prix, 6th International Poster Exhibition of France (France)
- 1991 Member's Prize, Tokyo ADC (Japan); Gold Prize, 3rd International Poster Triennial in Toyama (Japan)
- 1992 Gold Prize, 6th New York ADC (USA)
- 1995 Grand Prix, Tokyo ADC (Japan)
- 1995 GOOD DESIGN Award successively from '95-'01 (USA)
- 1996 Silver Prize, International Poster Biennale in Mexico (Mexico)
- 1998 Gold Prize, Special Prize, 77th New York ADC (USA)
- 2001 Best of Best Award, Red Dot Award (Germany)
- 2002 Gold Prize, 18th International Poster Biennial Exhibit, Warsaw (Poland)

Selected Public Collections

- The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Poznan Museum (Poland)
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- Museum fur Gestaltung, Zurich (Switzerland)
- The Victoria and Albert Museum (England)
- Colorado State University (U.S.A.)
- National Museum of Applied Art, Munich
- The Chicago Athenaeum
- Wilanow Poster Museum in Warszawa (Poland)
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Lahti Art Museum (Finland)
- Hong Kong Heritage Museum
- Stedelijk Museum (The Netherlands)
- National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- Brandenburg Museum (Germany)
- The Museum of Modern Art, Toyama (Japan)
- Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg (Germany)
- Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art (Japan)
- Design Museum (England)

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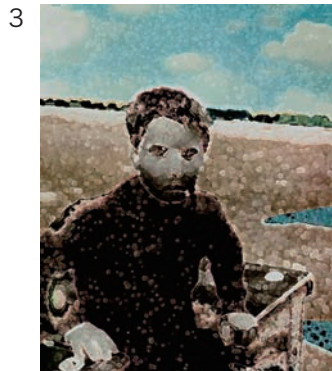
A portrait of film director Michelangelo Antonioni. Variations numbering from 01-07, displayed in a circular gallery space.

Makoto Saito
I am [Portrait of Michelangelo Antonioni] 04
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas 160 x 146.8 cm
© Makoto Saito



The image of a man holding a dead pigeon, with the title "Innocent," evokes various images in our imaginations.

Makoto Saito
Innocent
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas 196 x 155.8 cm
© Makoto Saito



From a movie by Francois Truffaut. Selecting one scene, Saito has imposed upon it a portrait of himself as a child. The expression on the child's face is obscure. The contrast of child with the clouds in the sky and dark color tones produces a disquieting atmosphere.

Makoto Saito
Myself Portrait 01
2006 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas 196 x 155.8 cm
© Makoto Saito



Saito has always liked using the human figure and facial expressions as motifs in his design work. In his paintings as well, portraits are his predominate motif, depicted with a unique texture that gives us to sense no warmth. The adjective "white," placed before the word "greed." Even in this striking work of two conflicting images, the sharp expression of the eyes presses on the viewer.

Makoto Saito
White Greed
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas 196 x 155.8 cm
© Makoto Saito

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Makoto Saito
The Man
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas
160 x 146.8 cm
© Makoto Saito

6



Makoto Saito
Kubrick Adolescence
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas
220 x 152.8 cm
© Makoto Saito

7



Makoto Saito
Sun
2006 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas
190 x 132 cm
© Makoto Saito

8



Makoto Saito
Doll
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas
115 x 115 cm
© Makoto Saito

9



Makoto Saito
Meeting
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas
135 x 220 cm
© Makoto Saito

10



Makoto Saito
Face Cut Out
2007 Acrylic and oil ink on canvas
60 x 60 cm
© Makoto Saito

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Portrait of Makoto Saito

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A



B



C



D

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