



Taka Ishii

Gallery

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Makoto Saito “Visible, Invisible. Face Landscape 2021”

Dates: Nov 27 – Dec 25, 2021

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery (complex665)

Opening reception: Saturday, Nov 27, 17:00 – 19:00

Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition by Makoto Saito, “Visible, Invisible. Face Landscape 2021” from November 27 to December 25, 2021. This is Saito’s first solo exhibition with the gallery, and will be composed of four new large-scale works (215 x 163 cm) and several small works (70 x 54 cm) from the artist’s “Face Landscape” painting series.

Among the many famous quotes of Friedrich Nietzsche is the phrase, “There are no beautiful surfaces without a terrible depth.” One may be inclined to think that there is some depth or real truth beneath the surface, or that one’s true face lies behind the mask, yet there is indeed no such thing. Should there be anything there at all, it would simply be an endless overlapping of surfaces. In that sense, surfaces are that which are profound, and utterly terrifying. I believe that painting is a means of expression that is related to such notions of surfaces.

Akira Asada “Special Interview: Makoto Saito x Akira Asada”, *Makoto Saito – Criticality –*, Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, p.137

Created through the painstaking and time-consuming procedure of depicting countless dots by hand, Saito’s paintings present viewers with an overwhelming visual experience. The paint, densely overlaid in a way that each application appears reminiscent of an independent, microscopic work of sculpture, also brings to mind the image of a myriad of cells in the process of proliferation.

Saito, who began producing paintings in the mid-1990s, selects as his subject, people whose faces have the power to stimulate his creativity. While initially appropriating full-body images of filmmakers like Stanley Kubrick or figures who feature in a particular scene within their work, he eventually shifted his focus to the “face” upon which the madness and furor of human beings are engraved. Saito established a distinct style of working, whereby he digitally disassembles and reconstructs portraits of figures such as Lucien Freud, Francis Bacon, and Antonin Artaud to create blueprints comprised of a series of halftone dots, the digital data of which he transcribes onto the canvas through richly textured applications of paint.

Furthermore, Saito discovered other unexpected images from within the details of the enlarged data that he came across during the process of digital disassembling and reconstruction. The “Face Landscape” series of abstract paintings were conceived through collecting these fragments and collaging them in multiple layers upon new canvases.

It is indeed difficult to process and grasp at a mere glance the visual information of Saito's paintings, which are constituted by sheer volumes of color and paint. The pictorial space constantly appears to quiver ever so slightly, and the viewer, while observing the works from various distances and angles, are led to encounter an infinite plethora of landscapes from both macro and micro perspectives. We welcome viewers to take this opportunity to engage with the unique and unparalleled world of Makoto Saito's work.

Makoto Saito was born in 1952 in the Fukuoka Prefecture, and currently lives and works in Tokyo. His major solo exhibitions include "Makoto Saito –Criticality–," the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Fukuoka, (2019), and "MAKOTO SAITO: SCENE [0]," the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (2008). His works are housed in the collections of numerous museums in Japan and overseas including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, and the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

For further information, please contact:

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Tue-Sat 12:00-18:00 Closed on Sun, Mon, and National Holidays



Makoto Saito
"Face Landscape 2021_01", 2020-21
Oil on canvas
163 x 215 cm
© Makoto Saito



Makoto Saito
"Face Landscape 2021_02", 2020-21
Oil on canvas
163 x 215 cm
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