

Akira Ikezoe

Not So Still Life

September 3 – October 5, 2024

Marinara is pleased to present, *Not So Still Life*, Akira Ikezoe's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

In 2020, Ikezoe started the painting series *Not So Still Life* as an experiment for creating imaginary circular systems that involve both artificial and natural objects. The idea developed during his recurring trips back to his hometown of Kochi, a provincial city in Japan that is slowly being taken over by nature due to the declining population. On walks around the city, Ikezoe observed weed-ridden playgrounds with rusty equipment, deserted buildings and houses occupied by animals and insects, and discarded farm land.

The scenes in Kochi looked like fusions of the local culture and its surrounding nature, and led Ikezoe to doubt the existence of clear borderlines between human and natural dynamics which tend to be drawn by rulers arbitrarily. Seeing the body as a container of cultural and natural elements, and where conflicts and contradictions often arise between both, Ikezoe is interested in how this tension manifests itself inside and outside of our bodies and is exploring these marginal areas physically and metaphysically in his paintings.

As one of the things that we can find in both our cultural and natural environments, Ikezoe is interested in circulation systems and how they work to make themselves self-sustainable. The cycle of water and evaporation; oxygen and carbon dioxide used in plant photosynthesis and our breathing; astronauts drinking water made out of their own urine; or manure that is used to make farmland fertile. Inspired by these systems, the *Not So Still Life* series presents imaginary designs of circulation systems where both artificial and natural objects and human body parts, such as teeth, semicircular canals, brainwave, carnivorous plants, moths, sphinx, solar panels, etc., are organically related to one another and work together in a closed cycle. The systems appear to be fully automatic and working only for sustaining themselves, instead of producing something useful.

Using saturated colors and graphic imagery, Ikezoe's still life paintings examine how "civilization", or whatever efforts we make in order to separate ourselves from other than human entities, melts into its surroundings, and indicate how painting can be an effective space for future speculation.

Akira Ikezoe (b. 1979, Kochi, Japan) completed his BA at Tama Art University in Tokyo, Japan. Solo exhibitions include shows at Proyectos Ultravioleta, Guatemala City; Brennan and Griffin, New York; and the Ise Cultural Foundation, New York. In 2022, Ikezoe was featured in a two-person booth at Art Basel Miami Beach with Proyectos Ultravioleta. He has been included in group exhibitions at the 8th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art and the 12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale and is the recipient of two Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grants. Ikezoe lives and works in New York City.