

Kosuke Kawahara
Into Ultrablack

May 12 — June 19, 2022

On View at rainraingallery.com from May 12

RAINRAIN is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition **Kosuke Kawahara: Into Ultrablack**, a solo show of Brooklyn-based artist Kosuke Kawahara (b.1980). This is the first of a series of online presentations by RAINRAIN, renamed from L-Art Gallery (2011–2017). This exhibition assembles six works from the artist's slightly divergent series, but they all speak to notions of growth, decay, modes of communication and perception, spiritualism, interdependent relationships, and human behavior in ever-shifting environmental conditions. The exhibition will be on view at rainraingallery.com from May 12, 2022.

Across Kosuke Kawahara's works, one repeatedly encounters underlying structures: veins, root systems, bones, connective tissue, cavernous networks, and other interstitial environments. These corporeal elements are enhanced by the artist's frequent use of materials from living matter: coffee grounds, rabbit skin glue, cotton, wood, beeswax, and various types of paper. His painting process follows an organic, intuitive approach, meaning that his manipulation of materials is guided by impulse, allowing chance and entropy a fertile foothold within the manifold realms he creates.

Like Dieter Roth (1930–1998) and other artists in the twentieth century who intentionally worked with destabilizing or decaying substances, Kawahara allows his paintings to chip, flake, and deteriorate—thereby fusing the cryptic, bodily imagery that populate his canvases with the object's layered materiality. This complexity can be seen in *Osedax [Bone Eater]* (2018–2021), in which Kawahara has constructed a rather unstable image with slightly discernible crystalline structures as well as threads arranged like bacteria.

Kawahara is interested in ethological theories around *Umwelt* (from the German *Umwelt* meaning "environment" or "surroundings"; each species lives in its own unique sensory world, to which other species may be partially or totally blind [Sebeok 145]*). He is invested in representing the exchange and communication occurring between organisms at a microscopic level—calling attention to how we experience the same reality, but perceive or process it differently. As such, his actively changing tableaux can be seen as materializing some of these ideas. This level of exchange, symbiosis, and transformation can be seen in works like *Burial in the Sub-Space* (2013–2017), whose title hints at the artist's abiding fascination with in-between spaces.

Parallel to these readings of Kawahara's works, the paintings in the show are from his ten-year investigation into darkness and the metaphorical significance of light and dark across cultures. Through imagery that evokes caves and grottoes on one hand and Japanese lacquerware on another, the artist plumbs the depths of the cultural conditioning surrounding darkness, the void, and the unknown. Many works take Kawahara several years to complete, reflecting his working method and purpose. The whole process of creating a work from the start to its

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end is a process of the artist constantly exploring and (re)constructing the alternative space around darkness. Kawahara hopes to push viewers to realize that darkness spurs curiosity and stimulates the imagination while keeping his paintings utterly open to interpretation.

* Sebeok, Thomas Albert. Signs an Introduction to Semiotics. University of Toronto Press, 1999.

About the Artist

Kosuke Kawahara was born in 1980 in Kyoto, Japan, and moved to New York in 2011. Kawahara currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He earned a BFA in Design from Okayama Prefectural University, and graduated with an MFA in Painting and Drawing from Pratt Institute. He has previously exhibited at Brian Leo Projects, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA), Trestle Gallery, Paradise Palace, Susan Eley Fine Art, and Super Dutchess Gallery. He has been awarded the 2021 City Artist Corps Grants, and First Prize in Works on Paper by The Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts & Sciences in 2021. He completed an artist residency at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Governors Island Residency Initiative, and is currently a member artist at the EFA Studio Program.

About the Gallery

RAINRAIN (formerly L-Art Gallery) was founded by Rain Lu in 2011, in Chengdu, China. From 2011 to 2017, the gallery worked closely with emerging and mid-career artists and played a significant role in introducing a new generation of artists to audiences in Asia. After Rain's relocation to New York City, the gallery program continues in 2022. It carries on with the passion for supporting and working with artists whose unique and inspiring work depicts and reflects individuals, society, and our time. At the same time, the gallery works to initiate more dialogues between Asia and the West. RAINRAIN understands the fluidity of identities and perspectives, appreciates differences, and hopes to create a community that celebrates openness, cross-cultural interactions, and ultimately, the love for art.

Press Inquiry

press@rainraingallery.com