

'Dual Doodle Double Square'

Takehito Koganezawa



KOTARO NUKAGA, Tennoz is pleased to present 'Dual Doodle Double Square,' an exhibition by Takehito Koganezawa, from July 7 to August 31, 2023. After graduating from Musashino Art University, Koganezawa moved to Berlin, Germany in 1999, where he established his artistic base. He has participated in major international art festivals such as Manifesta (Frankfurt, 2002), Sharjah Biennial (UAE, 2003), Yokohama Triennale (Yokohama, Japan, 2005), Asian Art Biennale (Taichung, Taiwan, 2009), and Aichi Triennale (Aichi, Japan, 2010); he also boasts numerous solo exhibitions to his name at home and abroad, including 'KOGANEZAWA' at Haus Konstruktiv (Zurich, 2009), 'MIMOCA'S EYE, Vol. 2 – TAKEHITO KOGANEZAWA' at MIMOCA (Marugame, Japan, 2009), 'LUFTLINIEN' at Haus am Waldsee (Berlin, 2012), and 'Paint it Black' at Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken (Saarbrücken, Germany, 2016). He returned to Tokyo, Japan in 2017, where he continues to maintain an active career.

Artist Takehito Koganezawa begins his work with the concepts of "time and space" in the context of video, as well as the dynamic qualities of the medium. From there, he extends the scope of his work to encompass other media—drawing, installation, performance, and so on—developing a compound language through which to communicate new perspectives of the world.

In this latest exhibition, 'Dual Doodle Double Square,' Koganezawa is presenting installations composed of pairs of drawings and video projections, attempting to open new realms of expression and sensory experiences.

A salient feature of Koganezawa's art is his use of the video medium itself. Rather than focus solely on the object output of his video work, he employs it as a tool that influences his work even during the process of its creation, akin to a painter's brush, a sculptor's chisel, or a photographer's camera. The paired drawings showcased in this exhibition were created before a camera, mounted on a tripod and set to swivel at a constant pace. The artist, looking at his hands only on the monitor attached to the camera—that is to say, looking only at a *part* and not the *whole* of the artwork—drew on the overlapping part between the two sheets of paper while constantly repositioning them to stay within his (i.e. the camera's) field of vision. The constant movement of the camera kept changing the artist's field of vision, indirectly shaping how the drawings turned out. The process also had a predetermined duration that was based on the recording limit of a DSLR camera, a regulatory limitation in the camera industry. The duration's end marks the simultaneous completion of a pair of drawings and one video work, two different types of work that embody two contrasting senses of *time*.

Koganezawa describes this creative process, which incorporates the flow of time into the artwork, as being musical. In his recent exhibition 'Double Sister, Divided Brothers' at Berlin's LOOCK Galerie, he drew a comparison with the relationship between a vinyl record and music to provide a deeper understanding of his new work. Cited below is an excerpt from the text he wrote for the LOOCK exhibition. Examining this would certainly yield deeper insight into Koganezawa's work:

In this sense, vinyl records are peculiar things. To appreciate them, one can only listen to the linear series of sounds in sequence and from the start, but when looking at the grooves etched on the surface, visually, all the sounds are occurring at once. Speaking to this work, every moment of a drawing's creation is documented on video and the ultimate result is a drawing being split into two sheets. One action of drawing generates one video and two sheets of paper. Is this the birth of twins? Or a singleton torn apart? Like Cubism coming from opposite directions, the act of drawing is preserved in the time of two different formats.¹

Acclaimed 21st-century science fiction writer Ted Chiang (b. 1967) wrote the short story "Story of Your Life," on which the 2016 film *Arrival* was based.² The protagonist, Louise Banks—portrayed in the film by Amy Adams—is a linguist who attempts to communicate with two extraterrestrial beings referred to as "heptapods." The heptapods communicate by extruding ink from two tentacle-like appendages to produce one ideogram that represents *everything at once*—with no linear sequence or temporality. The writing systems that human beings use are bound by temporality and linearity, having been designed to fit spoken language; having long been conditioned, therefore, to apprehend the world in the same way, the humans in the film struggled to comprehend the all-encompassing meaning of the heptapods' ideographic script. As the story progresses—and as Banks gradually decodes the

language and learns to use it as a medium of communication—she begins to perceive time differently, suddenly gaining memories of events that have not yet occurred. This was the premise of the story.

This communication with the heptapods finds parallels with Koganezawa's vinyl record analogy, as well as with the paired drawings and videos in this exhibition. All these expressions probe our perception of the "part" and the "whole," reflecting on how we cognize the world.

Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980), best known for his influential book *Understanding Media*, contended that "all media—in and of themselves and regardless of the messages they communicate—exert a compelling influence on man and society."³

McLuhan holds that prehistoric man existed in a harmonious sensory balance, perceiving the world through the equal use of hearing, smell, touch, sight, and taste. But innovations in technology expanded some of our senses and ended up changing this balance. In his view, it was the invention of the written language, in particular the alphabet, and later of printing and movable type, which resulted in the dominance of sight above our other senses, explaining as follows:

*Audile-tactile tribal man partook of the collective unconscious, lived in a magical integral world patterned by myth and ritual, its values divine and unchallenged, whereas literate or visual man creates an environment that is strongly fragmented, individualistic, explicit, logical, specialized and detached.*⁴

Since the invention of language to the present day, humans have understood the world primarily grounded in the concept of causality—on the premise that causes produce effects. However, the "heptapods" of *Arrival*, which express the world with ideograms that equate past, present, and future, operate on what Ted Chiang's original short story calls a "simultaneous mode of awareness." While the invention of written language and the development of media through technological innovation have expanded our visual perception of the world, one might argue that we have also lost in that process our original perception of time that connected us to the world.

Meanwhile, American anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1904–1980) wrote about the structure of communication, saying,

*...the fact of conformity or nonconformity (or indeed any other relationship) between parts of a patterned whole may itself be informative as part of some still larger whole.*⁵

Analyzing the stylistic qualities found in the art of indigenous peoples, Bateson's essay discusses the "grace" that humans in modernized societies have lost, arguing that grace is the "integration [of] the diverse parts of the mind."

What components of this message material had what orders of unconsciousness (or consciousness) for the artist? [...] Art becomes, in this sense, an exercise in communicating about the species of unconsciousness. Or, if you prefer it, a sort of play behavior whose function is, amongst other things, to practice and make more perfect communication of this kind.⁶

Koganezawa's works in this exhibition center on the perceptions of time and the sense of "grace" that have been lost to humanity due to the developments in communication, as outlined by McLuhan and Bateson. Koganezawa's analogy of the vinyl record illustrates this perfectly: through our sense of hearing, we listen, in sequence and from start to finish, to the music on the record with its inherent temporality; through our sense of sight, we grasp at a glance the entirety of the music engraved upon it. If we were to be able to liberate our minds from the constructs of causality and temporal tenses, these two distinct perceptions of music would essentially become one and the same perception of the "whole."

The previously mentioned film, *Arrival*, centers precisely on this lost perception of time. It could be said that this also relates closely to what Koganezawa is attempting to recreate through his own creative process and its products. In these works, Koganezawa deliberately focuses his own consciousness on the *part* under self-imposed creative parameters. What emerges as a result, however—the two drawings and one video—represents a *whole* formed through the integration of "diverse parts of the mind." Even while Koganezawa continually directs attention to the *part* through the camera monitor, there arises outside of the artist's consciousness a "graceful" and potent *whole* that seeks to apprehend everything at once. This state of perceiving "everything at once" perhaps represents the structure of that lost perception of the world. When we perceive as one "whole" the time that is woven into Koganezawa's drawings and video—that is to say, when the exhibited installation begins to radiate as one whole—perhaps the world will present itself to us in all its grace.

1. Koganezawa, Takehiko. 'Double Sister, Divided Brothers.' Exhibition at LOOCK Galerie, Berlin.
2. A 2016 U.S. science fiction movie directed by Denis Villeneuve and adapted by Eric Heisserer from "Story of Your Life," a short story by Ted Chiang. Starring Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker et al., the movie received eight nominations at the 89th Academy Awards, including Best Director, Best Actress, and Best Adapted Screenplay, and won Best Sound Editing.
3. McLuhan, Marshall. "The Playboy Interview: Candid Conversations with the Priest of Pop Culture and Media Metaphysician." In *The Essential McLuhan*, edited by Eric McLuhan & Frank Zingrone.

4. McLuhan, Marshall. Ibid.

While the tribal/literate framework can be insightful when taken to denote stages of human history, it becomes an outdated and highly problematic misrepresentation when McLuhan applies it to non-Western cultures of his own time. The quotation has been cautiously included to allow exploration of the impact of written language on human perception.

5. Bateson, Gregory. "Style, Grace, and Information in Primitive Art." In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 1972.
6. Bateson, Gregory. Ibid. p.146–7.