

Akim Monet Fine Arts, LLC



Kenji YANOBE (b. 1965)

Torayan

Thermoplastic polymer (PVC)

12 ⁵/₈ x 6 ³/₄ in (32.2 x 17 cm)

2007

Edition of 300

Published by Billiken Shokai, Japan

Signed under Backpack in marker in Japanese and dated 2007, numbered 189/300 with small doodle of helmet, stamped on back: Copyright KENJI YANOBE BILLIKEN SHOKAI, and numbered 189 with stickers on Geiger counter

In the words of the artist:

A bar code head with a bit of chopsticks, a Polish trickster who sings Polish folk songs. The original [ventriloquist] doll of Yanobe Kenji's father, who was incorporated into the work as a symbol of the fusion of children and adults. Expanding the world while expanding and proliferating.

Source: www.yanobe.com/artworks/torayan.html

PROVENANCE

i Art Co, Ltd, Tokyo

EXHIBITED

Disruptive selection, Fall 2019, Popcorn Gallery Akim Monet Fine Arts, Los Angeles

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NOTES

The 1970 Osaka Expo, with its motto "Human Progress and Harmony" was the beacon for futuristic inventions of the time. Many artists were captivated by this optimistic creative energy, but Yanobe Kenji who visited the festival after it had ended and was already on its way to being dismantled, saw it as a foreboding representation of the end of the future. Ever since this traumatic experience, he went on to create works that appropriated the visual language of these dinosaur bones of the future.

Although his work is very visually alluring, all of his choices are pragmatically dictated and streamlined to create machines of survival; survival of the end of the world. Some facets and gizmos on these machines included Geiger counters, fresh-air giving plants and readymade meals. He counterpoints these semi-delusional tendencies by placing them in historical contexts. An example of this is the suit he made for himself to explore the still dangerously radioactive city of Chernobyl.

Prior to this journey, Yanobe had been mainly interested in his megalomaniacal mission of personal survival, but this journey marked a turning point for him in which he turned to the idea of revival. Many of these revival works were geared towards children and showing them the destructive as well as the creative potentials and histories of large-scale technological endeavors.

Giant Torayan, a gigantic robot that looms high above the viewer, can be given orders via a device that only responds to children's voices. It will dance, sing and even breathe fire, playfully allowing the child to experience the responsibilities and excitement of controlling machines.

Other subtle and soft integrations of weighty issues are found in Cinema in the Woods, which is a quaint but eerily atomic proof cinema viewing hut that shows movies about techniques to survive atomic attacks. This film references scenes from Duck and Cover, a ridiculously futile instructional video on how to survive atomic attacks.

Yanobe's work deals with these heavy issues with a quirky mix of pragmatism and fantasy to help us face them.

Source: <http://azito-art.com/topics/what-made-yanobe-create-torayan/>





Details

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