

ARTIST

**Susumu Kamijo**



Installation View: Susumu Kamijo & Koichi Sato, *Nobunaga 02* two-person exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2021

**Susumu Kamijo**  
*Melancoly in Safari*  
2021

Flashe Vinyl paint on canvas

152.4 × 121.92 cm  
60 × 48 in



# Susumu Kamijo

## *Nobunaga 02*

OCTOBER 8 - NOVEMBER 6, 2021

Now that the pandemic seems to be finally exiting the stage, there is nothing like a joint show, a healthy agglomeration, and in this case, one comprised of two very distinct and yet similar artists accompanied by a multitude of people and sentiments. Although contact is still performed with a little unease, the spectrum of affections both Koichi Sato and Susumu Kamijo mobilize leaves no one indifferent. A little touching and bumping are expected to take place.

Although both artists share a similar background—the two of them having been born in Japan in the middle of the 1970s and now based in New York City—their art, especially in this exhibition, couldn't inspire greater distance. Nevertheless, opposites sometimes do attract each other, as the saying goes, and they do so by creating unforeseeable connections that end up enlightening each of them in retrospect. The extremes connect, and that is what happens when we consider Sato's musical energy, the strident smiles, and untamed vitality, with the eerie specters, the animal enigma, the always open questions Kamijo's paintings instigate.

A figurative language that deals with the ideal and the atemporal animates Koichi Sato's paintings. Here, popular motives, people, and activities vibrate apparently endlessly: the stark contrast between colors, the clash among areas of fragmented detail and vast gestures insinuate a sustained rhythm. The size of the characters' hands indicate the movement, the intentions triggered by the loose and almost improvised brush strokes. A celebration of life. We are caught up in the frenzy of joy and bliss of his paintings, always delivered in major key.

Susumu Kamijo, on the other hand, maneuvers amidst somewhat shady impressions, something that gains much more importance if we consider where the artist is coming from. Those who already saw Kamijo's work in his previous shows at GNYP Gallery will remember his distinctive trademark: the poodle. Using a procedure that we could call a saturation by repetition, that is, an indefatigable fixture in the figure of a dog, the artist deals with different technical ideas, emotional landscapes, and thematic conceptions, continually expanding what we are given to feel via an old topic of art history. The dog, unleashed, takes us on an expressive journey. Now, Kamijo abandons the distinct outline of the pet altogether, delivering ambiguous specters that, nonetheless, still dialogue with his old tenets.

The straightforward, uplifting and cheerful paintings by Sato benefit from these renditions of strange beings, and vice versa. Kamijo's creatures, with their lines and silences, vibrate a little more intensely by neighboring those other canvases full of music. Not only a small sampling of two artists born out of the same generation and situated in the same metropole, this concentrated but potent exhibition is also a celebration of the variegated matter that informs life. The celebrations, the mysteries, colors, and dark corners. All the better if we can experience them together.

by João Gabriel Rizek



Installation View: Susumu Kamijo & Koichi Sato, *Nobunaga 02* two-person exhibition at GNYG Gallery in 2021

**Susumu Kamijo**  
*Summer in the Empire*  
2021

Flashe Vinyl paint on canvas

60.96 × 50.8 cm  
24 × 20 in





Installation View: Susumu Kamijo & Koichi Sato, *Nobunaga 02* two-person exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2021



Installation View: Susumu Kamijo & Koichi Sato, *Nobunaga 02* two-person exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2021





**Susumu Kamijo**

*TheChill*

2021

Flashe Vinyl paint on canvas

152.4 × 121.92 cm

60 × 48 in

*My partner is a dog groomer and I think one day I was helping her at her work, washing the dog for her. And I just noticed their forms and they looked good. It's just being around poodles, it made me feel like I should try. And I'd go out to the dog shows and competitions with her, so I'd see all these dolled up poodles. They're very serious about it.*

Susumu Kamijo



*The pastel pencils and oil pastels that I use for drawings just work best with the subject. I don't know why, because you can cut this really hard edge. There's something about the dryness and ability to smudge. But I think maybe it's something I'll figure out in a couple years why it had to be this way. It's something about the drawing though that it has to be on paper.*

Susumu Kamijo



# Susumu Kamijo

## *I'll Follow You To The Sunset*

MARCH 16 - APRIL 20, 2019

For about three years now, Susumu Kamijo has been creating pictures of poodles. These colourful, fluffy four-legged creatures have long been a kind of personal trademark, immediately recognisable. Recurring elements – landscapes suggested by a horizon, or the circular shape in the background that may be interpreted as the sun or the moon, depending on its colour – mean that these portrait format pieces can be seen as a series. But the sense of sequence contrasts with the specific characteristics of the poodles depicted. The different body postures and detailed facial expressions of each animal confer a distinct personality on every individual image. Whether they're in a group, standing alone or understood to be interacting with a human, some seem playful, others somewhat goofy and others as quite proud, even. It is in the repetition that the differences between individual images initially become especially apparent. Kamijo thus succeeds in this series in becoming the dogs' portraitist.

For him, it is less about the animal being depicted itself than its form. What motivated Kamijo to choose poodles as the subject of his art was the peculiar shapes of their bodies – particularly those that are clipped and coiffed. Since this discovery, which he made one day whilst out walking his girlfriend's dog, Kamijo has used photographs from dog shows or magazines as inspiration for his drawings, meticulously selecting the ones he wishes to use as models for his own work. Kamijo has always been fascinated by the fundamental elements of shape and colour in all images. With the poodles his aim now is to exploit these elements to their full potential. Guided by this aspiration, a tension between figurative and more abstract emerges as integral to his artistic practice.

One of Kamijo's major influences from art history is his passion for the German Expressionists. They created impactful images with the heavy application of opaque, vibrant and even dark colours. And (whether he intends it or not) parallels with his source of inspiration can indeed be found in Kamijo's work. The first to strike the viewer is the contrasting constellations of colours. The rough execution of lines and flat blocks of colour are also reminiscent of the woodcut style that was rediscovered at that time. But more evocative of Expressionism than anything is how Kamijo's work balances the abstract and the figurative.

Despite the hyper realistic intensity of the image, its relation to its subject and to reality remains intact, keeping viewers grounded amidst the dynamic impact of colour and shape: it is, after all, entirely clear that what is being depicted is poodles. Yet if you focus on individual sections, they appear to break up into dots and short lines. And Kamijo's conscious choice of paper and pastels also gives his pictures their very own texture and feel, further accentuating the abstract elements. It makes patterned surfaces, for example, seem dynamic and turbulent. And as for the vibrant colours, rather than playing down the somewhat banal subject, they form an exciting contrast with a rich black that, depending on how it is employed, either brings a sense of solidity to the image or adds to its dynamism. Kamijo's poodles are so much more than the animals they depict. They are vibrant constellations of stimulating colours and shapes, hybrids between portrait and abstract art that command the attention of anyone who sees them.

by Klara Niemann



Installation View: Susumu Kamijo, *I'll Follow You To The Sunset* solo exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2019



**Susumu Kamijo**

*The Longest Afternoon*

2019

pastel pencil and oil pastel on Lenox 100 cotton paper 250gsm

81.2 x 66 cm

32 x 26 in



Installation View: Susumu Kamijo, *I'll Follow You To The Sunset* solo exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2019



**Susumu Kamijo**  
*Before The Feast*  
2019

pastel pencil and oil pastel on Lenox 100 cotton paper 250gsm

182.8 x 139.7 cm  
72 x 55 in



**Susumu Kamijo**

*Harvest Time In The Desert*

2018

pastel pencil and oil pastel on Lenox 100 cotton paper 250gsm

81.2 x 66 cm

32 x 26 in





Installation View: Susumu Kamijo, *I'll Follow You To The Sunset* solo exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2019

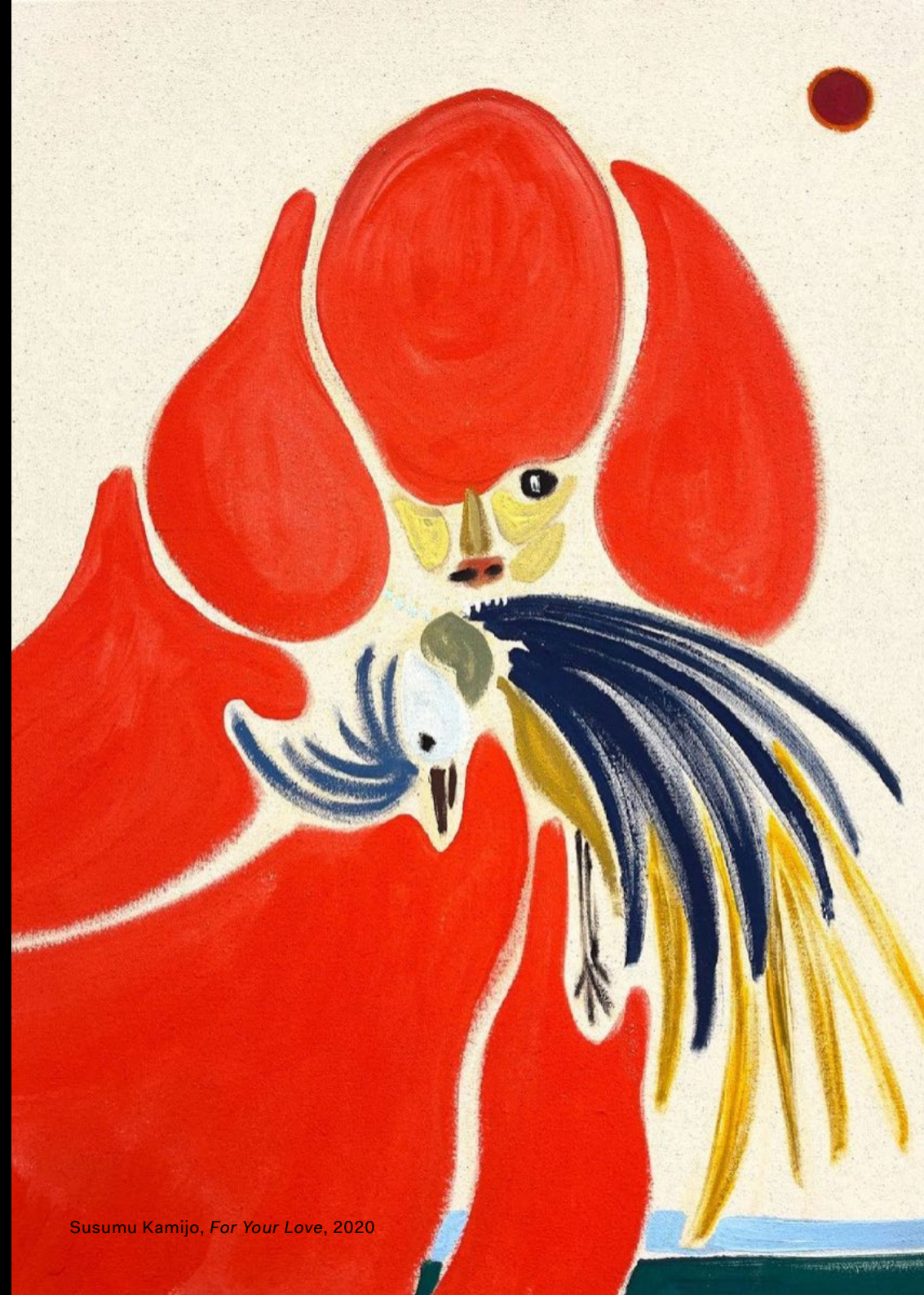


Installation View: Susumu Kamijo, *I'll Follow You To The Sunset* solo exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2019

# Susumu Kamijo

Since 2014, **Susumu Kamijo** has been working on a series of colorful drawing depicting dogs, something that has become a sort of the artist's trademark. His continuous meditation on the forms of the dogs, though, renders many variations. No work is the same. Sometimes, the level of detail he attributes to, say, a ear, or a dog's hair, touches on abstraction — the dog emerging as a puppy or as a menacing and sensuous creature.

Living currently in Brooklyn, Susumu Kamijo is originally from Nagano, Japan. Born in 1975, he moved to the United States when he was 16. There, he completed his BFA in Painting and Drawing at the University of Oregon in 2000, followed by an MFA in Painting and Drawing at the University of Washington in 2002.



Susumu Kamijo, *For Your Love*, 2020

## Susumu Kamijo

### Solo Exhibitions

#### 2021

*How was your summer?*

Harper's Gallery, East Hampton (USA)

*Beyond The Hills*

Maki Gallery, Tokyo (Japan)

#### 2020

*Lick Me Till Dawn*

Jack Hanley Gallery, New York (USA)

*Lick Me Till Dawn*

Marvin Gardens, New York (USA)

#### 2019

*I Will Follow You To The Sunset*

GNYP Gallery, Berlin (Germany)

*When You Came At Dawn*

Stems Gallery, Brussels (Belgium)

#### 2018

*Walk With Me To The Sea*

Sakurado Fine Arts, Tokyo (Japan)

*I Will Walk You Tomorrow*

Harpers Books, New York (USA)

*Poodles*

Tortoise, Los Angeles (USA)

#### 2017

*Poodles, Sotheby's S2*

New York (USA)

*Komagata Maru*

Queens, New York (USA)

#### 2016

*I Think So*

Marvin Gardens, Queens (USA)

### Group Exhibitions (selected)

#### 2021

*Susumu Kamijo & Koichi Sato: Nobunaga 02*

GNYP Gallery, Berlin (Germany)

*It's Cozy Inside*

Nepenthes NY, New York (USA)

*Stockholm Sessions*

Carl Kostyál, Stockholm (Sweden)

#### 2020

*Susumu Kamijo & Koichi Sato | Nobunaga*

Bill Brady Gallery, Miami (USA)

#### 2019

*Ford Taurus, Family Car, 1986 - A collage group show,*

SHE Gallery, New York (USA)

*Paper View*

The Hole, New York (USA)

#### 2018

*Friends of Marvin Gardens*

Rod Barton, London (UK)

*Paper Bound,*

Turn Gallery, New York (USA)

*New York Now*

Allouche Benias Gallery, Athens (Greece)

*Walk With Me To The Sea*

Sakurado Fine Arts, Tokyo (Japan)

*Friend's of Marvin Gardens*

Rod Barton, London (UK)

*The Beverly Hills Hotel Pop Up*

Harpers Books, Los Angeles (USA)

#### 2017

*Geranium*

Stems Gallery, Brussels (Belgium)

*Gumbo*

MAW, New York (USA)

*NADA New York*

Marvin Gardens, New York (USA)

CONTACT & INQUIRIES

**GNYP Gallery**

Knesebeckstraße 96  
10623 Berlin

+49 (0) 30 31 01 40 10

[office@gnypgallery.com](mailto:office@gnypgallery.com)  
[www.gnypgallery.com](http://www.gnypgallery.com)