

# Tanya Leighton

Press Release

Atsushi Kaga  
'THINGS WILL CARRY US THROUGH'

22 July – 26 August 2023  
Preview: Friday 21 July, 5–8pm

Tanya Leighton, Berlin is pleased to announce 'Things Will Carry Us Through', a solo exhibition by Atsushi Kaga. Bringing together Kaga's diverse body of work, the exhibition includes acrylic paintings on canvas, bronze sculptures, drawings, and an installation of Japanese Chōchin lanterns.

Drawing from his upbringing in Tokyo and the influence of Japanese subculture, Kaga meticulously conjures up a dream-like world filled with symbolism, memory, loss, and hope. He paints on gold leaf, taking from the Edo period Rinpa School of painting in Kyoto, known for the tradition of lavishing canvases with gilded layers of oil and gold. Making use of decorative strategies typically deemed as "cute", he invites the viewer to reflect on universal themes of fragility, loneliness, companionship, and the passage of time. The characters portrayed in Kaga's work, surrounded by allegorical elements and intricate details, form a distinct pictorial lexicon. They transcend their materials, speaking to one another in a narrative he has constructed for over two decades.

At first glance, the inhabitants of Kaga-land seem to lead calm and uneventful lives in one another's company. Yet, beneath the surface, there is a quiet and sombre melancholy at work. The main protagonist is the identity-searching coffee-addicted big-eared Usacchi, the artist's alter ego bunny who believes he was a Mexican cat in a former life. In these works, he is depicted alongside a whole entourage of anthropomorphic animals: an elephant, a donkey, mice, ducks, dogs, foxes, deer, raccoons, a tiger, a turtle, and a polar bear. In muted dialogue, we see them immersed in nature—attuned with the peace of the forest, sharing food on the side of the road, and at its mercy—sheltering from the rain and swept forth by a flood.

Striking a familiarity with human life in the twenty-first century, Kaga's work evokes surprise, wonder, and contemplation with unique humour and a certainly fantastical vision. In the exhibition title, 'Things Will Carry Us Through', Kaga encapsulates the essence of his work with characteristic sentimentality and unyielding optimism. Against the torrents of difficult times, like the characters in the flood, we carry each other while things carry us through.

Atsushi Kaga (born in 1978 in Tokyo) lives and works in Dublin. Solo exhibitions include 'your memorabilia floats in the air' at mother's tankstation, Dublin in 2022; 'It always comes; a solace in the cat.' at Maho Kubota Gallery, Tokyo in 2021, and 'Melancholy with vegetables surrounded by miracles' at mother's tankstation, Dublin in 2020, just to name a few. He has also held solo exhibitions at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Jack Hanley Gallery, New York; Kantor Gallery, Los Angeles and Galeria Eduardo Leme, São Paulo, among others. His work has been included in group exhibitions at Powerlong Art Museum, Shanghai; the Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar, Ireland; Office of Public Works, Ireland; Blain I Southern, London; Location One, New York; Fenton Gallery, Cork and Temple Bar Gallery & Studios, Dublin, among others.

For more information please contact [info@tanyaleighnton.com](mailto:info@tanyaleighnton.com) or telephone +49(0)30221607770.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am–6 pm and by appointment.