

For Immediate Release:

Shinpei Kusanagi "erewhon"

Sept. 14—Oct. 27, 2007

gallery.sora. is pleased to announce "erewhon", an exhibition focusing on recent paintings by Shinpei Kusanagi (b. 1973), on view from September 14th to October 27th 2007.

The title of the exhibition "erewhon" is taken from the fictional kingdom in the eponymous 1872 Samuel Butler story. "erewhon", or "nowhere" spelled backwards, is a kingdom where values are upside down, which the protagonist discovers beyond an unknown mountain range. Irrationality is a virtue, "progress" is denied, and people live a life attuned to morality. In preparing for this exhibition, I thought it a good opportunity to revisit this book, and--though it was not the point of the story at all--what struck me, and disappointed me, was the fact that even the erewhon people, who live in a specifically different value system, are still bound to the same sense of temporal relation.

All things must come to an end. No one can remain in stasis. No matter how enjoyable or how intolerable the present is, the time, environment, friends, lovers, everything about one's surroundings keeps changing, steadily. Unfortunately there are no options. This is as much our hope as it is our despair. All that is left for us to do, every time our surroundings are remade a blank canvas, is to once again draw as beautiful a picture as we can. Even though, no matter how amazing the pictures we create, or how fantastic the melody we play, it is all fatally destined to be washed away. Important memories we never want to forget, as well as hellish events we never want to remember - once past, they all lose their veracity in time, and disappear. Nothing really is left to us. We all know this, we've all lived it.

And because I always felt the pull of this muddy vortex of temporal relations, toyed with like a floating leaf, I always dreamt of stasis; not taking one step, remaining precisely at one point. I was sure that there had to be a place, which could be reached by seemingly absurd acts, like holding an umbrella in a downpour and not even thinking about raising it... because any choice would create a new current. Then choosing "not choosing" just to spite choice, and then within the still other current that appears from that decision, and cursing this preposterousness with all of my heart, I've still yet not managed to ignore it. Beyond the mountain range of layer upon layer of repainted memories and environments, the accidental hues and accents which compliment and accentuate and resonate amongst each other, out of the billowing mists, I will, maybe, someday reach that "place which is no place=nowhere", the symphony that is "erewhon."

Shinpei Kusanagi



Shinpei Kusanagi
"Juanita", 2007,
acrylic on canvas, 130.3 x 162cm



Shinpei Kusanagi
"AT END OF A SEASON", 2007,
color pencil and acrylic on canvas, 38 x 45.5 m