VAN GRINTEN
DER GALERIE



Rikako Kawauchi

Lines

13.02.2022–23.04.2022

We are pleased to announce a debut solo exhibition with drawings and sculptural works by Rikako Kawauchi, born in 1990 in Tokyo, and cordially invite you to the opening on Saturday, February 12th from 12 PM - 8PM. This is the artist's first solo show outside of Japan.

Rikako Kawauchi's work has extreme, often disturbing intensity and immediacy, almost as if you could feel her pulse rate in the line of her pencil. Drawing, as Kawauchi writes of her own work method, is like the sound box of her own body, which processes the reactions to other bodies and their physicality. The perception of physicality is, in fact, the focal point of the artist's work, expressed primarily in regards to culinary fare, to food, the ingestion and processing of foodstuffs, and also to sexual interaction, including that of a violent nature, fuelled by obsessive fantasy.

It is all about a state of existence that is indistinguishable from being totally exposed.

Van der Grinten Galerie
Ackerstraße 144
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In the watercolors, especially, it is apparent that the works have little to do with seismographic illustrations of introspection. Rather, the artist is much more interested in the act of intense concentration at hand, as she allows the full physicality of the subject or object of her focus to take shape on the blank sheet of paper before her. Kawauchi thus uses an almost intuitive stroke as a line, which, when multiplied, can form a clear outline. The steady stroke can be as devoid of modulation as a piece of bent wire or, when rendered with various degrees of hand pressure, can appear to be almost three-dimensionally vivid. In earlier drawings these two modalities stand in contrast to teach other; in the latest works both of them contrast with the watercolor sections, which thus take on a stupendously realistic aspect: like still raw or reopened wounds they demand, almost painfully, that attention be paid.

In this exhibition, conceived by the artist as a single holistic installation, we are showing 50 watercolor-drawings created between 2018 and 2020, including two large works in a floor-to-ceiling format, as well as 4 sculptural pieces from 2021. In their materiality and distressing vulnerability these sculptural works might invite a spontaneous comparison with the anatomical sculptures of Belgian artist Berlinde de Bruyckere. But these consist “only”of the line which, in its pulsating vivacity, suggests something flowing though a vein, and visually could, in fact – but for the hugely outsized dimensions – resemble a freshly dissected blood vessel.

Rikako Kawauchi studied oil painting at the Tama Art University, earning first a bachelor’s then a master’s degree, with which she graduated in 2017. While still a student, she received the 1st CAF Award in 2014 followed by the coveted Shiseido Art Egg Award in 2015. Recent accolades include the 2021 TERRADA ART AWARD and the VOCA Award 2022. Rikako Kawauchi is represented in Japan by the Tokyo gallery WAITINGROOM.