

Akiko Kawabata



Artist Voice :

My work is based on collage, using everyday materials such as paper and wood. At its core, my creative process is about playing with colors and forms—seeking them out before they become part of a story.

I find myself drawn to the textures and colors of things that remain even after their original meanings have faded with time.

These traces left behind inspire me, as if echoing the footsteps of those who came before, and they offer me comfort in the present.

I have often turned to ancient motifs in search of clues—clues that might help me break through the walls standing before me.

It was around the time when digital tools like social media were beginning to flourish.

Alongside traditional materials like paint and colored pencils, new processes entered my practice: editing images with apps, printing them out with digital devices.

These unfamiliar methods opened the door to new motifs—“speech bubbles” being one of them.

I feel that icons are powerful tools for representing the world as it is today.

By presenting them in a deliberately weathered, timeworn style—as though they’ve been excavated—I hope to offer a more detached, panoramic perspective.

As I moved back and forth between digital and analog media, I began to feel a kind of ambiguity surrounding the nature of the artwork itself and the space in which it is displayed.

I began to seek “catalysts” for the future—ones that transcend place and time—and found a hint in Japan’s tokonoma, the alcove traditionally used to display art.

I wanted to create an entrance—an experience—that would feel like stepping into another dimension.

As I studied the tokonoma more deeply, I rediscovered the richness of what is “crafted” through imagination and interpretation.

In its spirit of hospitality, which shares something in common with play, I sensed how Japanese craftsmanship has been passed down not so much through fixed forms (katachi), but through inherited patterns and conventions (kata)—structures shaped by tradition.

Drawing from the abundant gifts of the four seasons, these works are created with the understanding that they may one day be dismantled. That impermanence is precisely what makes them so fleeting and beautiful.

Wanting to surrender myself even more to that sense of play, I began expanding my work into three-dimensional forms.

Now, the worlds I envisioned from different angles have come together—layered and overlapping—to form a kind of paradise.
It would mean a great deal to me if you would accompany me through this emergence.

BIO

Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1986.

Self-taught in painting and sculpture since graduating from junior high school.

Creates collages and assemblages using familiar materials such as paper and wood, as well as prints on *Washi* paper.

Starting from the notion of play, explores moments when new narratives emerge through encounters between color and form.

Selected Exhibitions

Solo Exhibitions

2026

Funerary Objects Dream of Startups — Ise Edition
EXPERIENCE ISE MIYAMACHI HOTEL, Mie, Japan

2024

KAZARI — Hospitality for Spirits and Gods
Gallery G-77, Kyoto, Japan

2023

Playing with Colors to Find Forms Before They Become a Story
Umeya Art Gallery, Kyoto, Japan

2009

Mixed Colors
Shinanobashi Gallery apron, Osaka, Japan

2007

Secret
Shinanobashi Gallery, Osaka, Japan

2006

Place
Osaka Contemporary Art Center, Osaka, Japan

2005

Toward
Shinanobashi Gallery 5, Osaka, Japan

2004

Akiko Kawabata Exhibition
Shinanobashi Gallery 5, Osaka, Japan

Group Exhibitions

2026

AKIKO KAWABATA × He Anna, *Which Star Are You From?*
GULI GULI, Osaka, Japan

2025

AKIKO KAWABATA × Yoshihiko Osamura, *Prayer as a Template*
Goozen, Kanagawa, Japan

2023

GEISAI #22 & Classic
Tokyo Big Sight, Tokyo, Japan

2013

GEISAI #18
Tokyo Metropolitan Industrial Trade Center, Tokyo, Japan

2010

Tokyo Wonder Wall 2010

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

2010

Tokyo Wonder Seed 2010

Tokyo Wonder Site Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

2009

Gallerism 2009

Osaka Contemporary Art Center, Osaka, Japan

2006

+α Exhibition

Kobe Art Village Center, Hyogo, Japan

2003

Laboratory Exhibition

Osaka Contemporary Art Center, Osaka, Japan

Collections

Shisen Hanten, Singapore