

# RAWVISION

O U T S I D E R A R T B R U T

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WILLIAM HAWKINS • MARCUS SCHUBERT • MARTINE LUSARDY • OUTLIERS





Marie Suzuki

### KOMOREBI: ART BRUT JAPONAIS

le lieu unique, Nantes, France  
October 21, 2017 – January 14, 2018

In Japanese, “komorebi” refers to sunlight filtered through tree leaves. This exhibition’s organisers employ it to poetically evoke what their introductory wall text describes as a sense of an “interior light” within the self-taught artists whose works, produced “on the borders of art”, it showcases. This is the latest exhibition at a European venue whose realisation was facilitated by GLOW, a so-called social-welfare organisation (with a cultural-educational mission) in Japan, which promotes the artistic efforts of disabled people. It is closely associated with the Borderless Museum Art NO-MA, a small institution in Shiga Prefecture. Largely thanks to their initiatives, today within and outside Japan, the meaning of the term “Japanese art brut”, which this exhibition’s title includes, has become synonymous with “art made by disabled persons”.

To its credit, “Komorebi: Art Brut Japonais” mostly downplays that inaccurate designation, instead celebrating the inventiveness of several dozen artists. It is broken up into groups of works sharing common, visible themes, with section titles including “Pop Culture”, “Phantom Cities”, “Interior

Landscapes and Intimacies” and “Structures and Classifications”.

The makers of many of the works on view appear to be obsessed with certain thematic or formal aspects of their subject matter or with their art-making techniques. **Kazushi Hirayama** makes super-long scrolls covered with drawings of battles between large and small insects. **Takayuki Isono** fills massive tomes with drawings of endless rows of telephone poles, while **Sadayuki Kagawa** and **Norimitsu Kokubo** produce meticulously rendered, aerial views of cities, and **Moeko Inada** offers simple, squat, coloured-pencil circles set against white backgrounds, all glowing rings of wiry lines. With their complex compositions filled with observant eyes, writhing bodies, ominous pairs of scissors, nipples and human orifices, **Marie Suzuki**’s sexually-charged, marker-on-paper drawings (and a large, folding screen) are psychologically and emotionally intense.

In late October, “Art, Care, Citizenship”, a two-day symposium related to this exhibition, took place in Nantes. With speakers from Japan and Europe, it explored approaches to involving disabled persons in art and cultural activities as a means by which to help integrate them more fully into mainstream society.

**Edward M. Gómez**