

EMMA HILL FINE ART **EAGLE** GALLERY

James Fisher



Sunny-chan, oil on gesso, 30.5 x 25 cm, 2018



Geisha Boys and Temple Girls
mixed media on paper, 39.5 x 26.5 cm, 2019



James Fisher's recent work deploys motifs that relate to the Japanese phenomenon of *kigurumi*, which roughly translates as "dressing up as a stuffed toy". The references are used to explore particular kinds of narratives that are used in his work to conflate biography or fact, with fiction – these have included the journals and poetry of John Clare; Schubert song cycles; Japanese ghost stories; tales of notable, now forgotten women; and characters from folklore and comic books.

Fisher has become increasingly preoccupied by the potential of humour in images to disarm, and *kigurumi* allows him to explore this. *Yuru-kyara*, meaning 'amateur', 'loose' or 'careless' characters, is a Japanese term for a category of mascot figures; usually created to promote local regions and cities. Banks, broadcasting corporations, tourist attractions such as hot-springs and shopping districts, as well as civic organizations such as airports and dentists, also have their own *Yuru-kyara*.

In the drawings, which are outlined in oil on Japanese *Masa* paper and hand-coloured with gouache, *Yuru-kyara* appear as figures held within the frame of a boat sail. *Yuru-kyara* are anthropomorphized figures and are characterized by their use of a *kawaii* aesthetic. As the academic, Sharon Kinsella, explains: "*Kawaii* or 'cute' essentially means childlike", and "is a derivation of a term whose principle meaning was 'shy' or 'embarrassed'".*

This articulation of human emotion at its most rudimentary can be traced back to the early *Edo* period's (1603–1867) mass-produced woodblock prints and distribution of popular images, and to Anime and Manga comic illustrations, through the *Sho-wa* period (1926–1989).

* Kinsella, S. (1995). *Cuties in Japan. Women, media and consumption in Japan*, 220–254.

The Boy Who Came Back
mixed media on paper, 39.5 x 26.5 cm, 2019



Wishful Thinking
mixed media on paper, 39.5 x 26.5 cm, 2019



I Don't Depend On You
mixed media on paper, 39.5 x 26.5 cm, 2019



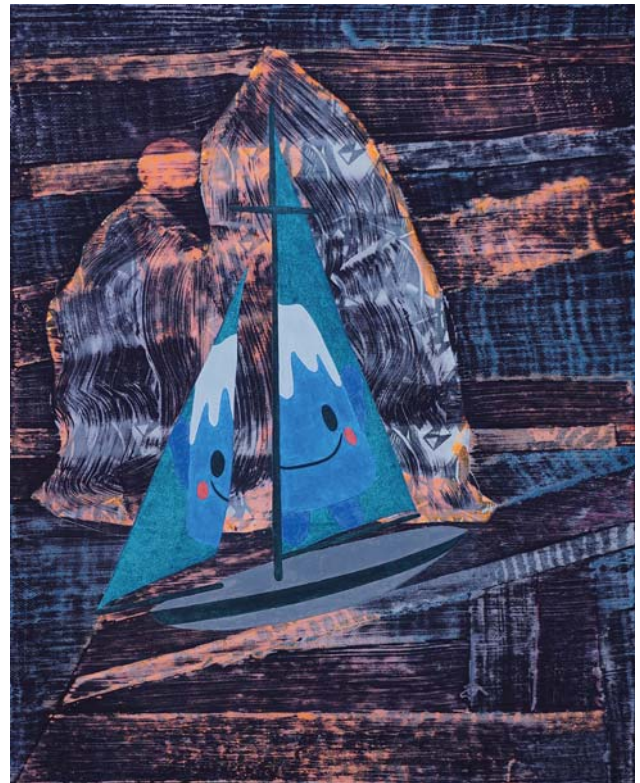
Only After Dark
mixed media on paper, 39.5 x 26.5 cm, 2019



We Are Detective
mixed media on paper, 39.5 x 26.5 cm, 2019

Fisher's paintings, in oil on canvas and gesso panels, follow a similar vein of image and narrative possibility, with the figures held in the boat sails of vessels that are set against backgrounds which are worked back and eroded through processes of layering, scraping and sanding back into the paint's surface.

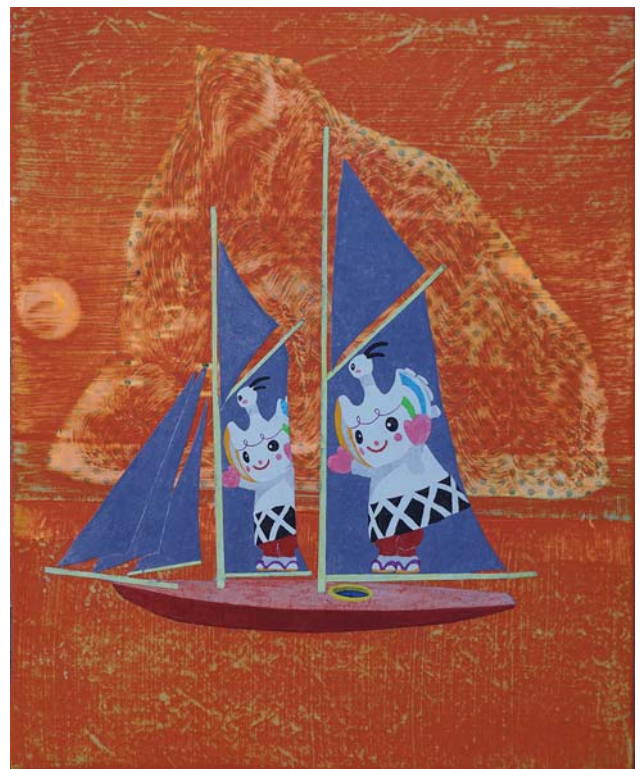
Yuru-kyara are often made by amateur craftspeople in home studios, and are, as their name suggests, characteristically 'poorly' made. *Yuru-kyara* have a naivety both in their construction and in the way in which they portray emotional content, and it is this that distinguishes them from more corporate mascots and enables them to harness the *kawaii* aesthetic. Fisher's images are intended to invite thinking about pleasure, play and diversion – a withdrawal from what Martin Herbert describes in his book, *Tell Them I Said No* (2016), as 'being present'.



Fuji-chan oil on gesso, 30.5 x 25 cm, 2018



Kibokko-chan oil on gesso, 30.5 x 25 cm, 2018



Tsuwamin oil on gesso, 30.5 x 25 cm, 2018



Tokitama oil on gesso, 30.5 x 25 cm, 2018

JAMES FISHER

- 1972 born UK
1992–5 University of Brighton
1995–7 Royal College of Art, London
2006–9 PhD University of Gloucester

Solo Exhibitions

- 2005 *The Wanderer* Rochester City Art Gallery, Rochester
 and other recollections Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2008 *I came here a stranger* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 As a stranger I depart Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden
2009 *My Hopes are not Entirely Hopeless* Aldeburgh Music, Suffolk,
 curated by the Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2010 *A Quiet Companion* Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden
2011 *Uchiwa-e* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2012 *Objects in the Mirror...* Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden
2015 *Lies & Camouflage* with Denise de Cordova – Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts
 Project at the London Art Fair, Business Design Centre, London
2016 *Doppelgänger* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2017 *Plaything* with Denise de Cordova, curated by Katrina Blannin, Blyth Gallery,
 University College, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2003 *20 x 5* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2004 *Rose Pavilion Interior* (with muf architecture/art)
 5ème Biennale d'Art Contemporain d'Enghien-les-Bains Enghien-les-Bains, France
2005 *Conscious Fiction* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Ex Roma APT Gallery, London
 Fokelore APT Gallery, London
2006 *Cartoon Collage & The Decorative Motif* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden
 Disrupted Narratives Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 The Worcester Pilgrim Project Worcester Cathedral
2007 *From Elsewhere* Campden Gallery. Chipping Camden
 Cities and Eyes Aldeburgh Music 2007, Peter Pears Gallery, Aldeburgh
 Enchanted Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Baroque Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2008 *Exchange* Paul Kane Gallery, Dublin
 London Original Print Fair, Royal Academy – Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition
2009 Northern Print Biennale, Newcastle
2010 London Original Print Fair, Royal Academy – Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition – invited artist
 Memory's Images Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 ING Discerning Eye Mall Galleries, London
 Then and Now Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
2011 *BITE* Mall Galleries, London
2012 *Generations* Arch 402, London
 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition
2013 *Panel Paintings* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Ceramics, Paintings and Prints Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London

- 2014 *Enclosures, Elsewhere* Lion and Lamb, London (curator)
 Some of My Colours Eagle Gallery, EMH Arts, London
 Garden Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden
 Panel Paintings 2 Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
- 2015 *Multiplied* Christie's South Kensington, Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Neiland's Choice GX Gallery, London
 Unfolding the Archive NCAD Gallery / F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio, Dublin
 Summer Mix Turps Gallery, London
- 2016 *Orpheus Ascending* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
 Towards Night curated by Tom Hammick, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne
 So we beat on Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
- 2017 *Wunderkammer* Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London
- 2019 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition

Awards

- 1995 Travel Award, East Sussex County Council
- 1996 Artist in Residence, The University of Calgary, Canada
- 2001 Abbey Scholarship in Painting, The British School in Rome
- 2002–6 Acme Live/Work Programme, Sugar House Studios, London

Collections

DLA Piper, London; Fidelity Investments, London; Jerwood Foundation Collection; The Hive, Worcester County Council

Publications

Encountering St Ippolyts Etching and letterpress folio published by Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, 2005

The Invisible City Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London, 2007 ISBN 978-0-9554046-3-4

I came here a stranger, as a stranger I depart Martin Holman, Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts and Campden Gallery, 2008 ISBN 978-0-9554046-7-2

The Comic Power of Ken Kiff's Sequence James Fisher, Turps Banana, issue 19, 2018

Ken Kiff: The Sequence Emma Hill, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 2018 ISBN 978-0-9460097-5-6

Selected Bibliography

The Independent, 4 November 2003 – Sue Hubbard: '20 X 5 Drawings'

Galleries Magazine, January 2005 – Corinna Lotz: 'Conscious Fiction'

The Independent, 17 January 2005 – Sue Hubbard: 'Conscious Fiction and other recollections Eagle Gallery, London'

The Pilgrimage Books, published artworks 2006

Printmaking Today, winter issue 2006 – Emma Hill: 'In Pilgrims' Footsteps'

From Elsewhere, Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden, 2007

The Irish Times, 9 April 2008 – Aidan Dunne

Aldeburgh Music 2009 Festival Programme

Galleries Magazine, June 2009 – Blake Hall: 'Aldeburgh Festival'

Royal Academy Illustrated, 2010 – Richard Cork ISBN 978-1-90511-87-1

A Quiet Companion, Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden, 2010

Uchiwa-e, Eagle Gallery, London, 2011

Towards Night, Towner Gallery, 2016

Represented by

Eagle Gallery/EMH Arts, London