

OPEN MIND ART SPACE

RONA v AMABIE

ASKA IRIE

TOMOAKI SHIBATA

PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION WITH JAUS

MAY 23 - JUNE 21, 2020

OPEN MIND ART SPACE

11631 SANTA MONICA BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90025



Aska Irie, *Virus* (detail), 2019, mixed media installation (polyurethane, papier-mâché, golf tees and screws), dimensions variable

Tomoaki Shibata, *Darling Sleeper Amabie*, 2020, mixed media, 20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

(LOS ANGELES, CA) - **Open Mind Art Space** in collaboration with **JAUS**, is pleased to present *Rona v Amabie*, a window exhibition featuring works by Los Angeles based artists **Aska Irie** and **Tomoaki Shibata**. The exhibition will be on view in the gallery's storefront window 24 hours a day from **May 23 - June 21, 2020**. Viewers are invited to walk up to view the exhibition from the sidewalk while adhering to standard social distancing guidelines.

Open Mind Art Space and JAUS had planned a group exhibition featuring a collaboration project by Aska Irie and Tomoaki Shibata, that was originally scheduled to open earlier this month, However, the gallery closed temporarily due to Safer at Home orders enforced by the City of LA, and the show was postponed until further notice. *Rona v Amabie* is a preview of Irie's and Shibata's individual works, which they have adapted for this exhibition to focus more directly on the current coronavirus pandemic.

Irie's *Virus* sculptures were initially created last year as a discourse on how misinformation spreads like a virus. With the development of events over the past few months, they have taken on a more relative significance to the novel coronavirus. Her sculptures are hung throughout the window space in front of Shibata's bold and vibrant mixed media works depicting abstract portraits of Amabie, a mythical Japanese spirit/creature often mentioned in Japanese folklore since the late Edo Period (mid-1800s) who is believed to have the power to cure plagues. Shibata recently started creating these works in response to the current trend on social media, a.k.a. the *#amabiechallenge*, that has been calling on illustrators to draw Amabie in a superstitious effort to protect people from Covid-19. The artists hope that these Amabie images and objects can serve as talismans to ward off sickness and protect passersby from harm.

Aska Irie (b. 1980, Tokyo, Japan) creates fantastic landscapes filled with characters and creatures of her imagination where childhood and adulthood collide into a singular continuum. With a voracious curiosity and a prolific desire for the creative act, her body of work includes ink and color pencil drawings, acrylic painting, whimsical mixed media works, and her signature bead panels and canvases. Despite their playful appearance, Irie's works contain deeper allegories relating to current events, personal struggle, notions of paradise, eroticism, the natural world, geometry, and urban life whose hidden meanings reveal themselves over time. Irie completed her undergraduate coursework at the National School of Painting, Sculpture, and Printmaking (La Esmeralda) in Mexico City. She has exhibited her work at La Estacion Gallery, Chihuahua Mexico, MUCA Roma, Mexico City, Gallery Lara, Tokyo and JAUS, Los Angeles. Residencies include 18th Street Arts Center and AirLite Kochi, Kochi, Japan.

Tomoaki Shibata (b. 1981, Tokyo, Japan) works in a variety of media with a strong emphasis in painting. His highly expressive and visceral images reflect upon his life experiences and thoughts and destroy boundaries between high and low art. Although educated at one of Japan's most prestigious art universities, his work is perhaps influenced more by manga and Japanese traditional and contemporary illustration filtered through his unique, emotive and guttural mode of expression. Shibata received his BFA from Musashino Art University, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA after having received a Japanese national grant from the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 2015 for emerging artists. In 2018, Shibata collaborated with artist Loren Philip to produce the exhibition YEAR ONE curated by Peter Frank at Castelli Art Space.

JAUS opened its doors in September 2009 and continues its mission towards delivering curatorial projects with an ample range of themes, genres, and media by artists from around the world in diverse stages of their careers. Recent projects include Skulpturengarten at The Reef in 2018; Shiri Mordechay at Satellite Art Fair, NYC in 2019; and GL Mutante at QiPO Fair Mexico City in 2020. JAUS was named among "25 Artist-run Spaces To Check Out" in LA Weekly (2012) and "Best Secret Gallery on The Westside" also in LA Weekly's annual "Best Of" issue (2011). Additionally, JAUS has been featured in LA Times, Hyperallergic, Artillery, Visual Art Source, Art & Cake, and Art Lies among other notable publications.