

TOPICA PICTUS

Kenjirō Okazaki
TOPICA PICTUS /
La Cienega

July 17 – August 14, 2021
Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

岡崎乾二郎
TOPICA PICTUS
ラ・シェネガ

La Cienega Boulevard
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Nyame / 空はなんでもみているさ

Asase Ya / 河を産めば畑をうるおすさ

Antaninaomby / Ataokoloinona (*Water a Strange Thing*) 水のヘンテコなもの

Kilimanjaro / Wakonyingo (*Bring negative spirits*) カラッポのたましいを運ぶ

Antonym of abstract is not necessarily tangible or concrete.

It is because something that looks abstract could suddenly feel real.

Mathematics, for example, is perhaps the farthest from being real. However, mathematics is not by any means cut and dry abstraction.

$$11111 \times 11111 = 123454321$$

If it is surprising to see the above equation, it is due to the expression of the number sequence and not the calculation itself.

$$21978 \times 4 = 87912$$

The result of the above calculation makes one sense something tangible, like some live animals marching along. Is it because we find symmetry (mirror image inversion), the universal characteristic for living things, including humans, between the calculation and the result of the calculation? Games such as slot machines and playing cards exist because the numbers that should be inorganic possess the quality of realness.

On the other hand, reproduced images are inherently not real, even if they are visually the same as the original. Somehow, they possess qualities that feel fake and cold. In a card game, that quality would be a poker face. What is missing, whether it is a live being or an actual object, is a response. If you hit an object, it would be hurt, and if you call for it, there will be a reaction. If you make a move on an object, it will respond. This lack of ability to react therefore indicates the object with a void of concreteness. When an

object is squeezed, it should repel and try to go back to its shape. If a ball is hit, it should bounce back. If a tennis racket gives an impression of a real human face, it's probably because there is a sense of it being real.

As with many caricatures, if a series of geometric figures of triangles and rectangles that should look inorganic can feel much more real and organic than a graphically drawn human face, for example, that is perhaps because the particular manipulation and actual forces used when the figure is drawn are simply and clearly perceived. Therefore, it would be possible to use these manipulations and forces that created the figure to incorporate them further to create another shape (similar to a set of playing cards). The famous Whittlevirus figure is concrete, it could be said, not because of the shape of it, but the force that forms its shape in the same way that the forces that form geometric shape = the force that turns the compass.

Kenjiro Okazaki

岡崎乾二郎

Nyame / 空はなんでもみているさ

8 x 6 1/2 x 1 1/4 inches

Asase Ya / 河を産めば畑をうるおすさ

8 x 6 3/8 x 1 1/2 inches

Antaninaomby / *Ataokoloinona*

(*Water a Strange Thing*)

水のヘンテコなもの

7 1/8 x 6 1/2 x 1 3/8 inches

Kilimanjaro / *Wakonyingo*

(*Bring negative spirits*)

カラッポのたましいを運ぶ

7 1/8 x 6 1/2 x 1 1/4 inches

2020

Acrylic on canvas





Nafana Bedu Mask
From the Ivory Coast
Height: 52 inches



David Smith
Circle IV
1962
Steel, painted
85 x 59 3/4 x 15 inches
National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo



Mappa Mundi d'Albi
(Memory of the World)
8th century
10 5/8 x 8 7/8 inches
Manuscript



Francesco di Giorgio Martini
Drawing of Vitruvian Man
from *Trattato di Architettura*
Civile e Militare
ca. 1481–84

Ataokorooinona is the name of the god of Madagascar in Morio Kita's *The Voyage of Dr. Mambo*. It was thought to be Morio Kita's creation, however, it is now known that the myth actually exists.

"The natives of Madagascar recognize a minor deity they call Ataokorooinona. Loosely translated, the name means something like 'Too weird for words,' and a number of my best friends, I'm convinced, have surrendered to this deity's intoxicating afflatus. One friend ran up the wall trying to master ninja skills and ended up crashing and breaking his coccyx. Another attempted suicide by devouring thirty-eight apples. Another one should compliantly give lectures as a scholar, but his desire to lead a life of a spy makes him restless."

—Morio Kita, *The Voyage of Dr. Mambo*

As a matter of fact, Ataokorooinona does not have a specific shape, that makes it somewhat strange. It yields power that demands something to transform into a specific shape. The fact that it possesses the power to influence is concretely specified in the details of the fractured coccyx and 38 apples and manifests in exceedingly concrete manner. Matisse and Picasso were amazed by the seemingly abstract tribal sculptures of Africa in the early 20th century due to the tangible and powerful force exhibited by them. When one feels the irregular and ever-changing landscape physically, and the movement of the wind and the flow of water are guided by a geometrical force transcending this world, Atao Korooinona's influence manifests. Allured by such power, Dr. Mambo set out on a voyage to sea.

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