

Tristan Hoare

Kaori Tatebayashi

Still Life

EXHIBITION
10TH NOV - 15TH DEC 2023
TUES - SAT, 11AM - 6PM

TRISTAN HOARE
6 FITZROY SQUARE
LONDON W1T 5DX

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Tristan Hoare is delighted to present *Still Life*, a solo exhibition of Kaori Tatebayashi's ceramics and our second collaboration in Fitzroy Square. In *Still Life*, Tatebayashi steps away from the floral 'cultivated' garden, presented to audiences in *The Walled Garden* in April 2020, into a botanical vision focusing on wild plants which will reclaim the gallery's Georgian rooms, immersing viewers in a still-life installation.

Ceramics and the natural world have consistently been Tatebayashi's passion. Modelling by hand and using a metal knife she made in art school, Tatebayashi sculpts unglazed white stoneware plants with startling precision. Her work combines the academic observation of scientific specimens with the feel and movement of an artist responding to the natural world. She only works from life, never from memory or photographs, creating portraits of plants and flowers gathered in her studio. Tatebayashi fires her ceramics unglazed, accentuating the plant's natural forms.

The theme of this exhibition arose from the Tatebayashi's deepening involvement with gardening, a passion of over 10 years, which revealed another side of nature: while beautiful and apparently gentle, nature has huge power. "When you're gardening, you think you're in control," Tatebayashi observes, "but soon you realise you're the one who is controlled and ruled by the garden. The soil, the plants, the weather, the microcosm itself decide what grows in your garden, not you."

Still Life presents a life-size immersive tableau in which audiences will become part of Tatebayashi's ceramic installation. Weeds and ivy burst from the shadows and crawl across the walls of the gallery towards the light, reclaiming what appears to be a dilapidated house. Ceramic fruit on pewter platters, a ceramic loaf of bread and a slice of a ceramic melon are laid out on an abandoned dining table in the middle of the second room; the presence of humans is felt through their absence. "I'm trying to take back control, to preserve time by stopping the clock on flora and fauna" comments the artist. Moments of their fleeting lives are captured within clay, echoing the French for 'still life' - 'nature morte' - 'dead nature.' Clay ends its organic life in the firing process and what remains - the ceramic - is a memory of the object whose shape it now takes on.

Tatebayashi's love of nature remains unchanged, but the vision is wilder. The exhibition explores nature's unstoppable power against anything man-made, celebrating its ability to regenerate and rebound. Often overlooked and unloved, weeds, shrubs and a giant wall of ivy take centre stage, showcasing their remarkable vitality in a world which focuses on perfect flower heads and cultivated gardens. These are modelled from plants found in her garden, never from shops, which, according to the artist, appear over cultivated, too perfect. Imperfections are what she looks for; "imperfections are part of life."

Still Life celebrates nature as 'the ultimate artist' in Tatebayashi's words. The plants choose her and in turn she captures and organises them in her *Still Life*, taking back control for a brief moment. The exhibition will run from 10th November to 15th December 2023.

About the Artist

Kaori Tatebayashi (b.1972) is a Japanese ceramicist, living and working in London for over 20 years. Born in Arita, the home of Imari porcelain, Tatebayashi grew up in a family trading pottery and was surrounded by beautiful ceramics since her childhood, a material also used for tableware and function. Tatebayashi began working in clay herself at Kyoto City University of Art, where she specialised in making functional wares, such as teapots. While studying for her Masters, Tatebayashi's interests expanded into sculpture and she received a scholarship to study at London's Royal College of Art as an exchange student. Tatebayashi returned to Japan in 1997 to complete her MA but returned to London in 2001, where she has been living ever since.

While studying ceramics in Kyoto and London, Tatebayashi explored what else this familiar material could be and what it meant to her. Its paradoxical nature fascinated her, simultaneously having a sense of fragility and permanence. A passionate gardener like her grandfather, Tatebayashi's fascination with plants and horticulture has increasingly influenced her work in recent years, resulting in botanical ceramics which not only describe how they look, but also how they feel.

About the Gallery

Founded in 2009, **Tristan Hoare** is a multi-layered gallery focusing on young and established artists working in a variety of mediums. African photography, glass, textile art, painting and drawing are all areas of interest, as well as a developing passion for ceramics.

Each year we curate an ambitious exhibition with an overarching theme. *Geometrica* (2018), *Botanica* (2019), *Folds* (2021), *The Conference of the Birds* (2022) and *Paper* (2023) enabled us to collaborate with multiple artists and galleries, combining work from BC to the present day. Exhibitions are executed with the intention of telling a story and connecting with both seasoned collectors and people less familiar with the art world.

The gallery is located in a Grade I listed Georgian townhouse in Fitzroy Square.



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