

I Do (Not) Feel Like Dancin'

Takahiro Kudo

« As a gay person, as I would now define myself, I discovered my sexuality relatively late, in my mid- 20s. Although I had been sexually active from an early age, my attraction to men seemed more a father complex than a sexual attraction, due to the lack of male role models in my upbringing.

On the one hand, the sudden realisation of my own unacknowledged sexuality in adulthood gave me a very vivid idea of 'context' and how context affects our perceptions.

On the other hand, I had clearly missed opportunities to develop awareness of my own sexuality, which probably should have happened in adolescence, through a process of trial and error.

As a result, I often feel uncertain about where to place myself in the diversifying scenes of the so-called LGBTQA+ community, although as an individual of this time, I certainly inherit all the relative past of its development, in positive, negative, vivid and subtle ways.

Without exception, we are forced to question the standardisation of our beings in this increasingly diversified society. »

Kudo intimately traces the shape of his redefinable identity as a universal concern for the modern individual, who inherits cultural legacies and is constantly challenged to redefine oneself.



Our tendency to categorise helps us to understand the world.

Kudo sees this nature of ours as a cartography; “an art of map-making”, in order to comprehend our surroundings from specific viewpoints.

In ancient and mediaeval times, local myths and religions filled in the uncharted territory of the map by attributing indescribable phenomena that could not be measured at the time to various mythological and religious figures. With the development of science, the accuracy and reproducibility of the “art of map making” had generally improved, leading to a growing consensus on the existence of universal and standardised principles.

This proved to be a short-lived illusion, as further developments in technology enabled us to communicate individual subjectivities, which unfortunately also led to a proliferation of unreflective arrogance on the matter.

Now we have reached a point where universal and subjective principles coexist, and the “art of map-making” has become diversified and multipolar.

With the new works produced for *I Do (Not) Feel Like Dancin'* Kudo intimately traces the evolving nature of his identity as a universal concern for the modern individual, navigating the complexities of cultural legacy and a constant need to redefine oneself.

I Do (Not) Feel Like Dancin'

/ Artworks

Untitled (The Creation of Adams)

2024

video installation with mirror balls

variable dimensions / 00:04:45

unique

« A world full of secrets to be explored, or a precisely mapped world of many facets. I am not really sure which world I would prefer to live in. I imagine that I will end up constantly moving in between.

As a teenager in Japan, I witnessed the evolution of the film medium from VHS to DVD to the Internet, under the imposed censorship of nudity according to Article 175 of the Japanese Criminal Code. Genital areas were censored into pixel mosaics, imposing secrets we had to live with.

What intrigues me is that although Article 175 itself is problematic, it has opened a new door of eroticism that was yet to be seen in traditional Japanese esthetics, crystallising into a genre that combines a perverse mixture of arousal and disillusionment with the hidden. »

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« Once you go online, whether you're looking for a romantic encounter on a dating app or simply consuming content from the porn industry, you cannot escape being asked to clarify 'what you like'. This is not to say that this categorisation did not exist before the internet.

However, awareness of our own tastes and potential 'labels' we can relate to has been accelerated by the availability of information via the internet and the actual practice of 'labelling' someone, including ourselves.

Categorisations in gay cultures, such as fetish/tribes, reinforce stereotyping in both active and passive ways. As a result, it seems to me that we are often left with the question of "what do I belong to?" while losing confidence in our complexity beyond categories. »

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In the new work, *Untitled (The Creation of Adams)*, Kudo projects online found footage of a gay porn film from the early 1970s, enhanced by AI.

The porn film features the stereotypical characters of a young troublemaker boy and a guiding older man.

Inspired by the censorship of the Japanese porn industry, Kudo places mirror balls that "censor" the video, but also spread the fractured images throughout the space.

Through the fragmented, illusive beauty of the installation, Kudo attempts to free us from the notions of censorship and labelling, and to question their potential consequences, both negative and positive.



Untitled (The Days Before You Came)

2024

sun-bleached wooden plate, UV varnished / 62 x 48 x 3 cm / unique

A reproduction of a book cover; "§175: Schmach des Jahrhunderts (Paragraph 175: Outrage of the Century)" by Kurt Hiller, published in 1922

Paragraph 175 was a provision of the German Criminal Code from 1871 to 1994 that criminalised sexual relations between males. The author Kurt Hiller challenged social taboos and prejudices with his "§175: Schmach des Jahrhunderts," advocating for the abolition of Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code and promoting a self-determined sexual life for all individuals. He urged homosexuals to assert their human rights and fight for equality, rejecting self-pity and emphasising the importance of demanding rights rather than begging for them. The book was later banned by Nazi regime.



Untitled (Yes Sir, I Can Boogie)

2024

sun-bleached wooden plate, UV varnished / 30 x 37 x 3 cm / unique

A reproduction of a photograph taken at the Eldorado, Berlin's most famous queer nightclub in the 1920–30s.

The Eldorado was a famous nightclub in Berlin before the Nazi era and World War II, known for its diverse clientele, including members of the LGBTQ+ community. The cabaret welcomed individuals of all sexual orientations, and "cross-dressing" was allowed on the premises. Wealthy spectators were encouraged to come and watch as people dressed in the opposite gender's clothing. The club's queer history was often obscured due to criminalization during the Nazi period, but it resurfaced in literature and entertainment, most notably in Christopher Isherwood's novels and the Broadway musical and film adaptation of *Cabaret*.

As the gay liberation movement and LGBTQ+ rights movement gained momentum, historians and activists worked to reconstruct Eldorado's significance in queer history. Today, Eldorado remains a key part of the narrative of LGBTQ+ history.

« *Blinkers* » series

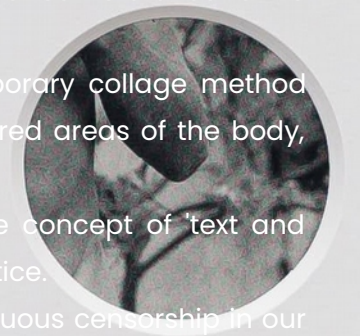


The use of holes to partially obscure and reveal the male body here is a direct reference to the Mizutama collage that inspired Kudo to start the *Blinkers* series.

The Mizutama Collage is a rather banal, often pornographic contemporary collage method known in Japan, which uses extra layers with holes to hide textile-covered areas of the body, therefore virtually conjuring up a naked body in the mind.

Kudo considers this the simplest visualisation method to play with the concept of 'text and context', and therefore often refers to it as a series of drawings in his practice.

The series can also be seen as a way of drawing attention to the ambiguous censorship in our daily lives as both a casual and serious affair, where filtering is carried out consciously and unconsciously, but may cause unintended consequences.





Untitled (Lovers)

2018

mount on newspaper

128 x 84 x 3 cm

unique



Untitled (Living on My Own)

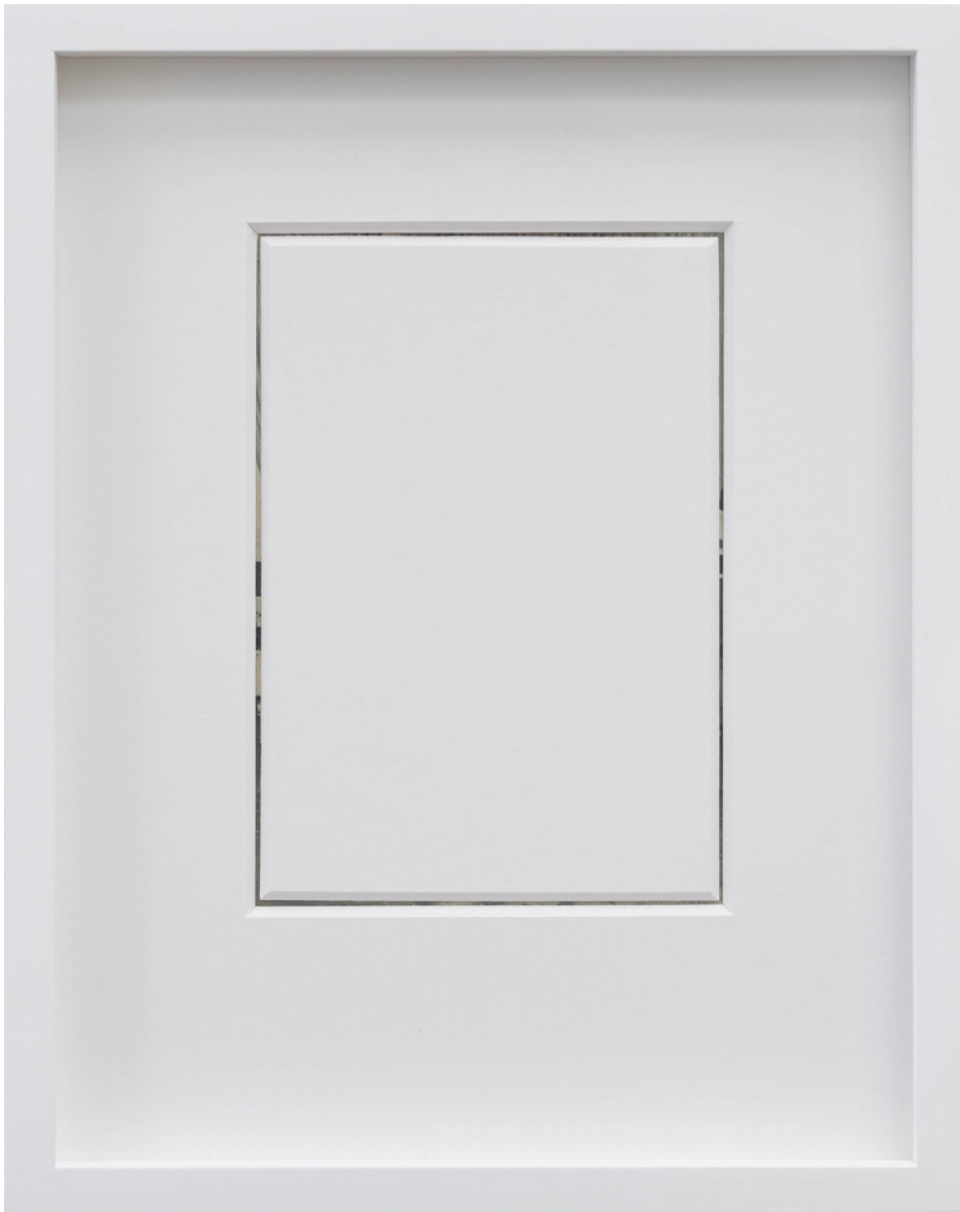
2024

mount on magazine page

48 x 37 x 3 cm

unique

A page from a German gay magazine; EUROS number 3, 1991



Untitled (The Way We Were)

2024

mount on book page

27 x 21 x 3 cm

unique

Rectangular line / 2 dancing children

DE: Tanzübungen mit geistig behinderten Kindern aus dem Ulmenhof Berlin-Wilhelmshagen

ENG: Dance exercises with mentally disabled children from Ulmenhof Berlin-Wilhelmshagen



Untitled (Make-up Shadow)

2024

mount on postcard

27 x 21 x 3 cm

unique

Postcard of a sculpture: Disc Thrower, by Ridolfo Schado, 1921



Untitled (Maneater)

2024

mount on postcard

27 x 20 x 3 cm

unique

Postcard of a sculpture: Colossal Head of a Youth, by an unknown artist, 2nd century B.C.

Takahiro Kudo

Born in 1984 in Japan

Lives and works in Berlin

Takahiro Kudo was born and raised in Osaka, where a normative upbringing strongly influenced his personality, which he describes as standardized. Following a bachelor's degree and, prior to that, a master's degree at Kanazawa's College, he became involved in the medical field, studying at the Department of Orthopedics and Prosthetics, where he interned in an epithesis workshop for two years. His aim then was to improve the precision of his general practice, and he only later developed projects involving artificial skin. However, this medical aspect changed the way he approached his diagnosis work. In 2010, after obtaining a Master's degree in Fine Arts at Kanazawa's College of Arts, he moved to Ghent, Belgium, where he pursued a second Master's degree at K.A.S.K, and began new projects. As a standardized individual, he places at the heart of his practice the analysis of the world and the notion of restriction, both in the real and theoretical sense.

His works have won awards at the eervolle vermelding, Input/Output 2013 and were nominated for the Grote Prijs Ernst Albert 2014.

His recent exhibitions in Brussels include *Les Marcel*, at Botanique in 2023, *Tomber en Amour* at Maison des Arts de Schaerbeek and *From Translating to Transcending* at Société in 2020, *Où va l'Esprit* at Été 78 in 2019, *Private Choices* at La Centrale in 2017-2018.

His work is part of various collections in Japan (Kanazawa Museum, Museum of XXIst Century), Europe (Collection Veys-Verhavert, R. Patt, etc.) and the United States, and is regularly exhibited in Paris, Brussels and Japan.

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19 September > 19 October 2024

Thursday > Saturday / 1 > 6 pm