

Tenki Hiramatsu

Smell of the Lawn

The title of this exhibition - *Smell of the Lawn* - already suggests something that arrives before an image: a scent, a memory, the invisible trace of a place. In Hiramatsu's paintings, too, recognition comes slowly. Figures, animals, and fragments of landscapes seem to settle onto the surface after the fact, as though they had been waiting inside the paint. A figure observes the hint of a poppy in *Red Flower*; a bird almost sinks into the dim ground of *Life's Stumbles*; in *At That Moment*, a witch-like figure hovers at the edge of a swampy landscape. These images remain suspended just before they become fully legible, in the moment when a story seems possible but has not yet begun.

Hiramatsu's paintings develop through a patient, layered process. He begins without a fixed image, turning first to the surface and how oil moves across it. Patches of color are added, covered, corrected, and reopened, until a motif begins to emerge from the accumulated sediment of the painting. In this sense, the image is not imposed on the surface but found through it: a figure or animal appears as the result of a negotiation between intention, accident, and what the paint itself allows.

There is no firm boundary between Hiramatsu's subjects and their surroundings. His figures often seem to be made of the same atmosphere that contains them, as if they were projections of the space around them, or as if the space itself had briefly taken on a face. In the work that gives the title to the show, *Smell of the Lawn*, a small figure folds into a muted field of brown and green, as if gathering breath before a story can begin. Something mossy, pungent, and damp seems buried underneath the surface, rising less as an image than as a sensation. The paintings do not unfold into narrative so much as hold the conditions for one: a pause, a posture, a glance, an atmosphere. Their melancholy remains quiet and almost understated, tempered by moments of humor and awkwardness that keep the images from becoming theatrical.

Even so, Hiramatsu's work remains close to abstraction. The subject is both a presence and the residue of a search, never fully separable from the painting that produced it. His works ask to be looked at not only as images, but as surfaces that have answered back, resisting, redirecting, and slowly giving form to what was not there at the beginning. Their strength lies in this condition: every figure is at once a subject and the visible trace of the painting's becoming.

kaufmann repetto presents *Smell of the Lawn*, a solo exhibition by Tenki Hiramatsu, at the Milan gallery space.

Tenki Hiramatsu (Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, 1986) lives and works in Berlin. He studied at Nihon University College of Art in Tokyo and later at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Karlsruhe. Recent solo exhibitions include *Sweat and Tears*, Kosaku Kanechika, Tokyo (2026); *Hira Hira*, Super Dakota, Brussels (2025); *Here and Elsewhere*, Barbara Seiler Galerie, Zurich (2024); *Slow Living*, Half Gallery, New York (2024); *Breather*, Sebastian Gladstone, Los Angeles (2024); and *Unendliche Zigarettenpause*, Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe (2023). His work has been included in group exhibitions at Fondation Fernet Branca, Saint-Louis; Kunsthalle Basel; Claas Reiss, London, among others.