

ZON ITO

BORN 1971, JAPAN; LIVES AND WORKS IN KYOTO, JAPAN

Zon Ito privileges mediums that were peripheral to contemporary art practices during the twentieth century because they were considered too low, too domestic, too precious, too narrative, or too crafty. His embroideries on fabric use the pictorial model to display strange playlets, hallucinated landscapes, and twisted wildlife scenes. The visual vocabulary he uses for these embroideries also appears in the animation films he has conceived with artist Aoki Ryoko (*Psychic Scope*, 2000), in his series of handmade books titled *Scrap Works of Scum* (1999), and in his tiny plaster sculptures *Word-Chain Game Ornaments* (1999). The underrated nature of Ito's practice and his choice of mediums define an aesthetic of quiet subversion that visually echoes the anti-economic globalization that inspired Naomi Klein's "no logo" philosophy, and a rear-guard attitude as opposed to an avant-garde one.

In its content, Ito's art taps into our prenarrative and prelinguistic past. Bypassing the viewer's rational self, his animated work and embroidered tableaux ignore the strictures of logic and reality, meandering across the mind's eye like captured daydreams. Time-based works resolutely ignore the structures of time, repeating certain movements (a puppy running toward the viewer, for example) several times. Disparate elements are juxtaposed (a bird flying over a waterfall over which a bulb of garlic is suspended), yet seem to exist in harmony. Reminiscent of video games from the 1980s, children's television, and dreams, his work exists within the realm of delight. His world of liquid associations gives room for a hypersubjective vision that blends memory, the dream world, and hallucinations. Such an aesthetic is informed both by a literary tradition and by the underground, psychedelic, hippie youth culture that seems to have recently reemerged in music, film, and fashion from a refreshed interest in (if not nostalgia for) the 1970s.

Ito's work was recently exhibited in *Beautiful Life*, Art Tower Mito, Tokyo, Japan (2002), and in the 2001 Yokohama Triennale, Japan. His most recent solo exhibition, *Bura Bura Liquid*, was held at the Kodama Gallery in Osaka in 2001.

—Philippe Vergne