

COMUNICATO STAMPA

KEY HIRAGA'S ROOM

May 7 - July 16

Monday - Friday

11:00 am - 1:00 pm | 2:00 - 6:00 pm

In 1972, the Italian public encountered for the first time the exuberant works of Key Hiraga (Tokyo, 1936 – Hakone, 2000), an eclectic protagonist of the postwar Japanese art scene. In 2015, after nearly half a century, Studio Gariboldi dedicated a retrospective exhibition to him, presenting a selection of works from the series *The Elegant Life of Mr. K*, created between the 1960s and 1970s.

On Thursday, May 7, as part of the project Italy–Japan: Japanese Artists in Milan since 1960, it will be possible to visit The Room of Key Hiraga, a new solo exhibition bringing together dazzling and psychedelic works, conveying the painterly energy and visionary imagination of the artist.

The works on display feature the Paris of the Pigalle district, Hiraga's main source of inspiration. We are in the mid-1960s, and the bustling nightlife of the French capital is translated onto his canvases into ironic and theatrical scenes populated by imaginary figures, enigmatic men, and sensual women. The body lies at the center of a continuous visual game, in which eyes, mouths, and ears transform and mutate, creating an immersive, almost cinematic experience, with some surprises for visitors who encounter the works up close.

Between 1966 and 1967, Key Hiraga joined the ORA group, associated with critic Gérald Gassiot-Talabot, positioning himself within the context of Narrative Figuration, in critical dialogue with both the School of Paris and American Pop Art. It is also during these years that *The Window* (1964) was created, a painting later acquired by the MoMA in New York.

In the 1970s, the artist was also active in Italy, where his works achieved great success. From this period date *The Elegant Life of Mr. H* (1972), now in the collection of the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, and *Night at Clichy Hospital* (1974), held at the National Museum of Art in Osaka and exhibited several times between 1985 and 2007.

A group of watercolors from the 1980s, *Fireworks on the Beach*, *On the Shore II*, and *On the Shore III* (1988), now in the collection of the National Museum of Modern Art (MOMAT) in Tokyo, testify to a further evolution in his artistic research.

Italy–Japan is held under the patronage of the Consulate General of Japan in Milan.
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