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ADVENTURING IN AMERICA

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MEETING POINT
CREATING A CYCLING CROSSROAD

SAVE FERROUS!
STEEL FRAMED ROAD BIKES

BEYOND IMAGINATION
A JAPANESE ARTIST'S VISION



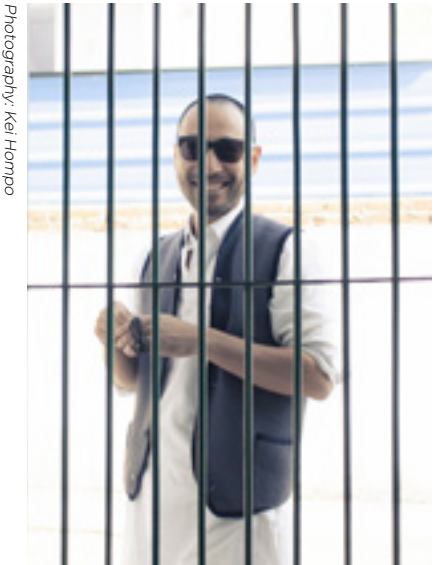
WORDS ELEANOR SCOTT

B E Y O N D I M A G I N A T I O N

KOSUKE MASUDA'S UNIQUE ART DRAWS ON JAPANESE HISTORY
AND THE RICHNESS OF THE WORLD AROUND HIM.



Photography: MASH SF



Photography: Kei Hompo



Photography: MASH SF



(All paintings) Photography: Kei Hompo

ABOVE Whether he's hand-carving bicycle components or producing intricate ink paintings, Kosuke Masuda's artistic process relies on imagination before creation.



ABOVE Kosuke made 30 new ink painting pieces for his San Fransisco exhibition *Between*.
Photography: MASH SF

The first time Kosuke Masuda remembers creating something akin to art was when he began studying calligraphy at six years old. Born into an Esoteric Buddhist temple in Mt. Koya, Japan, he was constantly surrounded by Buddhist paintings and imagery – but it was the simple act of putting ink to paper that initially spawned his interest in creative pursuits. When you look at his engravings, it’s obvious that the intricacies of calligraphy continue to influence Kosuke. The highly detailed dots and lines call to mind Ike no Taiga, a seminal Japanese painter and calligrapher born in 1723. Taiga’s early work offered an inspiring mix of artistic mastery, innovation and freedom of expression that Kosuke’s pieces also evoke. However, for Kosuke, whether he is engraving bicycle parts or practising *sumi-e* (a style of ink painting), his work comes down to visualisation and touch. “I think there is imagination before creation. First you must find something that you think is beautiful – like bicycle parts, paper or anything – then observe it and eventually you will see something,” explains Kosuke. “And when you enjoy a lot of observation and imagination, creation also starts by touching.”

It was this type of imagining that turned his eye to bikes in the first place. Remembering that his brother’s 14-inch road bike sat unused in their warehouse, Kosuke suddenly felt the urge to revive it. “I began to polish it. I observed all the places I had never seen before and polished them all by hand ... that was the beginning,” says Kosuke. Certain pinnacle experiences have influenced the course of Kosuke’s life and story. His training as a Buddhist monk is one, the death of his father another. But for his art, the most important experience may have been meeting jazz musician Mark de Clive-Lowe. The half-Japanese New Zealander took part in an exchange at the temple when Kosuke was 14 years old. They lived together for a year and Mark exposed Kosuke to a “world outside of Japan”. A decade later, Kosuke left for New Zealand to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland. Kosuke’s first show with bike components was in 2005 at the Bicycle Film Festival. In the same year he was introduced to the Director of MASH SF, Mike Martin. Since then, Kosuke has collaborated with



TOP A truly astounding all-over bike engraving on a MASH Steel Frameset in Black Chrome. Photography: MASH SF
BOTTOM A pair of specially commissioned hand-carved Campagnolo Delta brakes. Photography: Kosuke Masuda



ABOVE From pedals, chainsets, cranks and hubs, Kosuke is happy to use every part of a bike for his art. Photography: Saffron Frameworks

MASH SF several times – though his hand-engraved work on the Cinelli x MASH SF drop bars and stem is particularly jaw-dropping. It was Mike who helped to organise Kosuke’s latest show in San Francisco, gaining him sponsorships from bike brand heavyweights like NITTO, MKS, IZUMI, ABUS and ABOVE BIKE. The show, entitled *Between*, included engravings on everything from pedals, chainsets, cranks and hubs, plus an entire MASH Steel Frameset in Black Chrome. “I don’t think that the solo exhibition could have been done without Mike and his family, and also my family. His open-minded and indiscriminate kindness made *Between* a phenomenon in bike culture,” says Kosuke. “Art is not only in the work of art. I think that it is an experience ... between the work and the person who sees it. It seems to be a similar relationship between a bicycle and a person.”

Unsurprisingly, Kosuke’s love of bikes goes far beyond their use as a canvas. He’s an avid cyclist as well, owning four track bikes, two road bikes, one single gear MTB and a Big Dummy longtail cargo bike – though his favourite one to look at is his Colnago Arabesque 1982. But it’s the feeling of riding that really clinches it for him. The joy of speed, freedom and “new discoveries on old roads”. But then, isn’t it the same for all of us?

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kosukemasuda.com



Who? Beccy Blue Bromilow.
Occupation? Owner/maker/designer BB Shoemaker – handmade footwear, dogwear and accessories (@bbshoemaker). And I’m a co-owner of Ensemble Studios – a workshop, retail and gallery space here in Adelaide.
Wearing? Good Studios heap tee, op shop cut off shorts and my own worn-out BB boots.
Your bike? My bike is a remake of the old style Bianchis. I bought it secondhand about four years ago and in this time we have been through a lot together. I won’t get into it, but she has been stolen once for eight hours, I’ve had one broken wrist, a few falls and a couple of embarrassing stories!
Going? Leaving the studio, heading home to sit on the couch and watch *RuPaul’s Drag Race*.
Why ride? Riding is my main mode of transport; it’s fun, cheap and better for the environment. Also, I never got my driver’s licence!
Favourite ride? Riding the Torrens River path down to West Beach is pretty bloody nice. But, I actually just enjoy riding through any eucalyptus trees. There are some around my house and they smell divine.
While riding you...? Normally have some thinking time, also try not to get hit by cars!

Photography: Dillon Seitchik-Reardon