



I went to Ongoing for the reception party of a competition we had lost. I went there fired up, wondering what kind of person had beaten our brilliant proposal so decisively, but they turned out to be unexpectedly, incredibly nice, which took the wind out of my sails. On top of making cool work, they were nice too. Ogawa-san asked me, "Show me your work," so I showed him my Instagram, and he said, "Hmm, scary!" I thought, what a lightweight. I became friends with some students from the moving-image department at Musashino Art University, and seeing people seriously specializing in fields they loved made me wonder, why am I making art? It wasn't like I was depressed or anything. I simply, honestly wondered.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
 title: オンゴering
 media: Watercolor on paper
 size: 210 × 297 mm
 year: 2025



On the fifth day of my solo exhibition, Cobra-san suddenly came by. I never thought he would actually come, so I was really scared. Cobra-san was calm the whole time, but I sensed something incredibly sharp behind his gaze. I had been late getting to the gallery that day, so I ended up making him wait for dozens of minutes. Across from Junbichu there was a stylish coffee shop, and we talked there for a little while.

I deeply regretted having come in my sloppy clothes.

While Cobra-san was bombarding me with questions about my work, the baby he had brought in a stroller kept looking at me and smiling. I suddenly wondered what on earth this baby watches at home. Maybe instead of Inai Inai Baa! they show the baby Bruce Nauman videos or something. While I was thinking about that, Cobra-san said he wanted to see the exhibition once more, so I went back to Junbichu. After a while, he appeared again, pushing the stroller. He slowly made one full round of the exhibition, then pointed to the work used for the solo-show DM and said, "I'll buy this." As I flustered over this completely unexpected turn of events, he asked me, "Is there anything else you'd recommend?" At that moment Cobra-san looked incredibly grown-up to me. At the same time, I decided that I too was going to become a smart, sophisticated adult.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
 title: コブラさん
 media: Watercolor on paper
 size: 210 × 297 mm
 year: 2026



I worked at a used bookstore in Jimbocho for only four days. Put another way, I worked four days and then ghosted the job. I know that's awful. My coworker was a man in his late thirties. I'll call him K-san. K-san said he had moved to Tokyo alone from Nara three years earlier. Before that he had apparently worked at a vintage clothing store in Osaka, and just when he was about to open his own shop, he thought, this isn't it, and quit. K-san apparently makes collage works as a hobby and showed them to me. When I asked, "Do you know Shinro Ohtake?" K-san said, "Ohtake, huh... he got there before me." When I tried to discuss my shifts, his expression clouded and he said, "It's hard if you take too much time off when you've just started." I couldn't compromise either, so I ghosted.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 古本屋を飛んだ

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



It's fun to change my makeup or change the kind of clothes I wear. My mother really didn't care about that sort of thing at all, but ever since I was little I liked imitating what I saw and doing my makeup with the few cosmetics we had at home. Recently, maybe because I changed my hair and started wearing flashier clothes, people at work and elsewhere have increasingly asked me, "Are you a gyaru?" I don't really think about it that way myself; I was just wearing what I wanted to wear. But objectively, maybe that's how I look. Long sculpted nails are useful because they work as insulation when I'm holding a hot rice-cooker pot, and I can cut or tear certain things with them too. Lately, though, they've gotten so long that I can't peel open natto sauce packets or the plastic wrapping on cigarette packs anymore.

There is a theory that, ultimately, a gyaru is defined not by appearance but by mindset. Spending freely on hair salons and cosmetics, brushing off criticism, and moving forward believing, "If I'm having fun right now, that's the best" — that live-in-the-present credo seems somehow connected to the spirituality of hippies.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: ギャルとは

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



On my last day in Bali, our driver, Gudi-san, took us to Kuta Beach. Gudi-san introduced us to two surfers. We decided to surf for two hours for 3,000 yen. Even to an amateur like me, the waves that day looked insanelly huge. Both surfers were Balinese, but they spoke fluent English. Sure enough, I got out of the water in less than thirty minutes. The waves came at me like a physical attack. I bought a can of Coke at the Alfamart by the beach and rinsed off at a shower place Gudi-san had told us about that wouldn't rip us off. When I returned to the surfers' tent, the friendly Balinese guy who had taught me gave me his seat. (I really want to remember his name, but I've forgotten it.)

He was one year older than me, which meant he was twenty-three. He didn't look twenty-three. He was several times more put-together than I was, his English was good, and above all he had the ability to survive as a surfer in Bali, this enormous tourist destination. When I said, "You don't look twenty-three," he said, "People think I look older because I'm tanned." He asked, "Aren't you going to ride another wave?" I answered, "No way, I'm seriously too scared," and he laughed and said, "You're always scared."

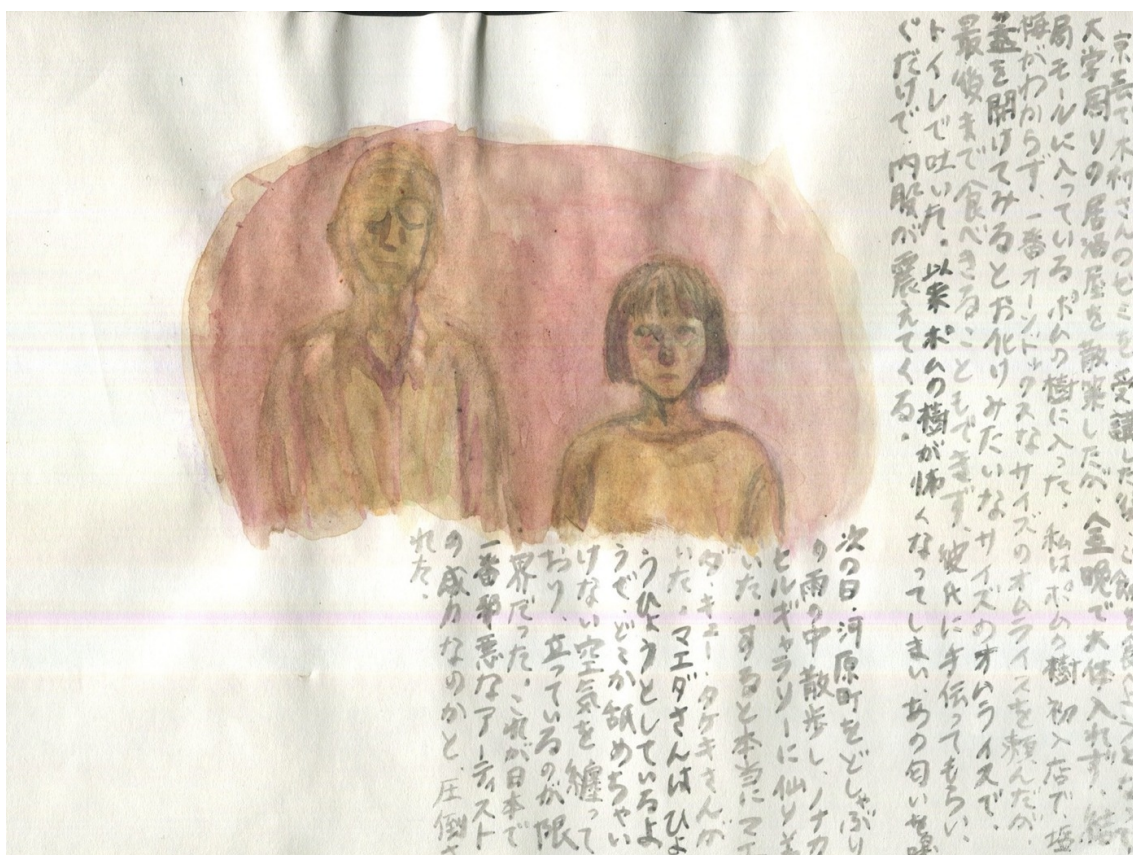
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: クタのサーファー

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



After taking Kimura-san's seminar at Kyoto City University of Arts, we decided to get something to eat. We wandered around the izakaya near the university, but since it was Friday night almost everywhere was full, so in the end we went to the Pomme-no-ki in a mall. It was my first time there, and not knowing the portion sizes, I ordered the most standard-size omurice. But when it arrived, it was a monster-sized omurice. I couldn't finish it, had my boyfriend help me, and threw up in the bathroom. Ever since then I've been afraid of Pomme-no-ki; just smelling that smell makes my insides tremble.

The next day, I walked around Kawaramachi in pouring rain and ended up at Nonaka-Hill Gallery. And there, Maeda Q Takeki-san really was. Maeda-san seemed nonchalant, but he carried an atmosphere that made me feel I absolutely shouldn't underestimate him, and just standing there was about my limit. I was overwhelmed, thinking: is this the power of Japan's most evil artist?

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 京都

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



It has been almost a month since I cleared FFX. Exactly a month ago, Sana-chan made my party as strong as possible and I defeated Sin, the final boss. And yesterday, one month later, the ten-year-old female Shiba Inu at my family home died. After my shift at the painting class, I saw a missed call from my mother. I hurriedly called back and she answered right away. Kanye West's "Ghost Town" was playing in my head. "Mame died," my mother said sadly. In fact, Mame had been unwell since before New Year's and could have gone at any time. I said, "I see. Mom, good job. Mame, good job too." My mother said that the next day she would say goodbye at a temple that also cremates pets. I wondered whether, if our home were still a temple, if Dad hadn't become strange, we could have mourned Mame at home, but I didn't say it.

After I hung up with my mother, I put in my earphones, and the song that happened to come on was the BGM from the Calm Lands in FFX. The title of the song was "Yuna's Decision." It plays when the heroine, Yuna, visits the Calm Lands. Yuna's resolve hardens: even if she loses her own life through the Final Summoning, she will do it for the peace — the Calm — of the world. I suddenly couldn't help overlapping Spira's spiral with Mame's life. I couldn't stop thinking about it.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: FFX

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



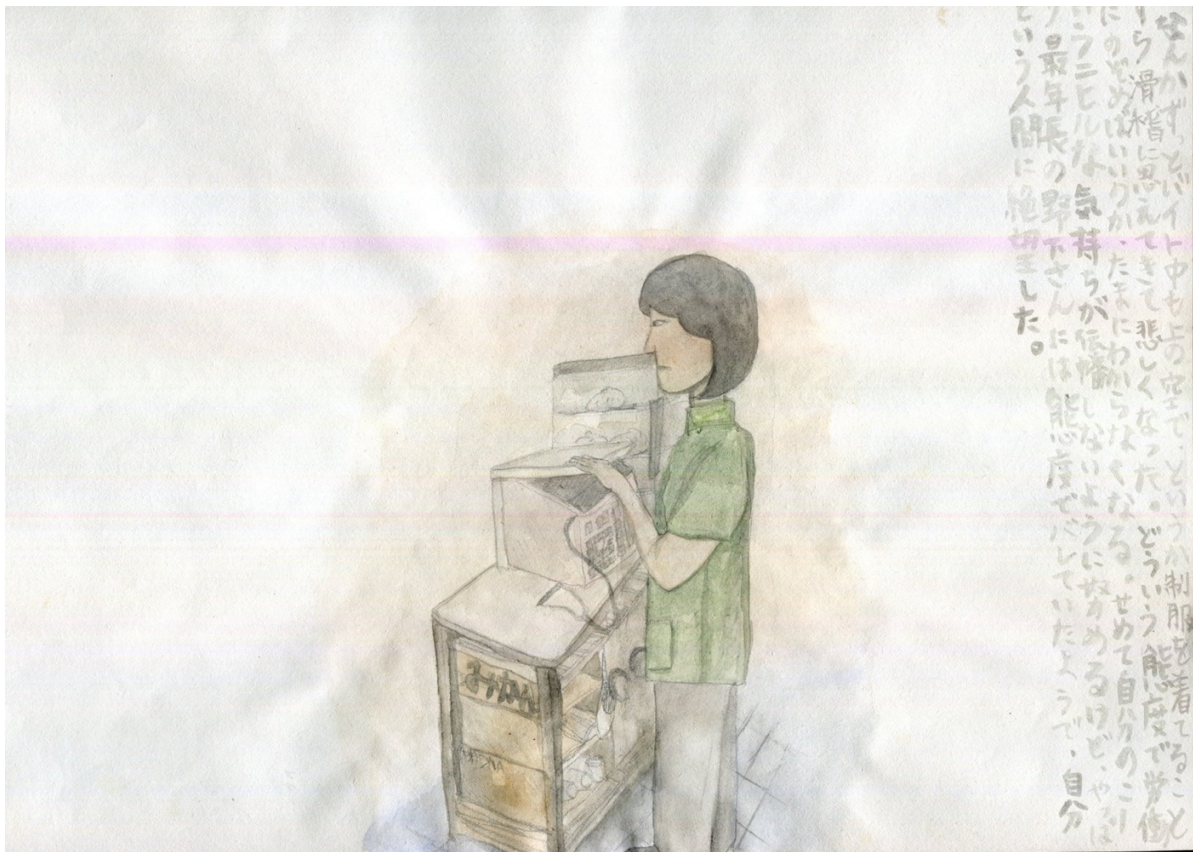
After the meeting, Takamizawa-san gave me a ride toward Harajuku. In the car, Kobayashi-san told me about the history and evolution of gyaru-o. I thought it was amazing how much he knew about all kinds of things. After we got to Harajuku, they took me to the bar where Jeans-san works part-time, and I had a juice. Takamizawa-san smoked a lot of cigarettes.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 4649メンバー
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2026



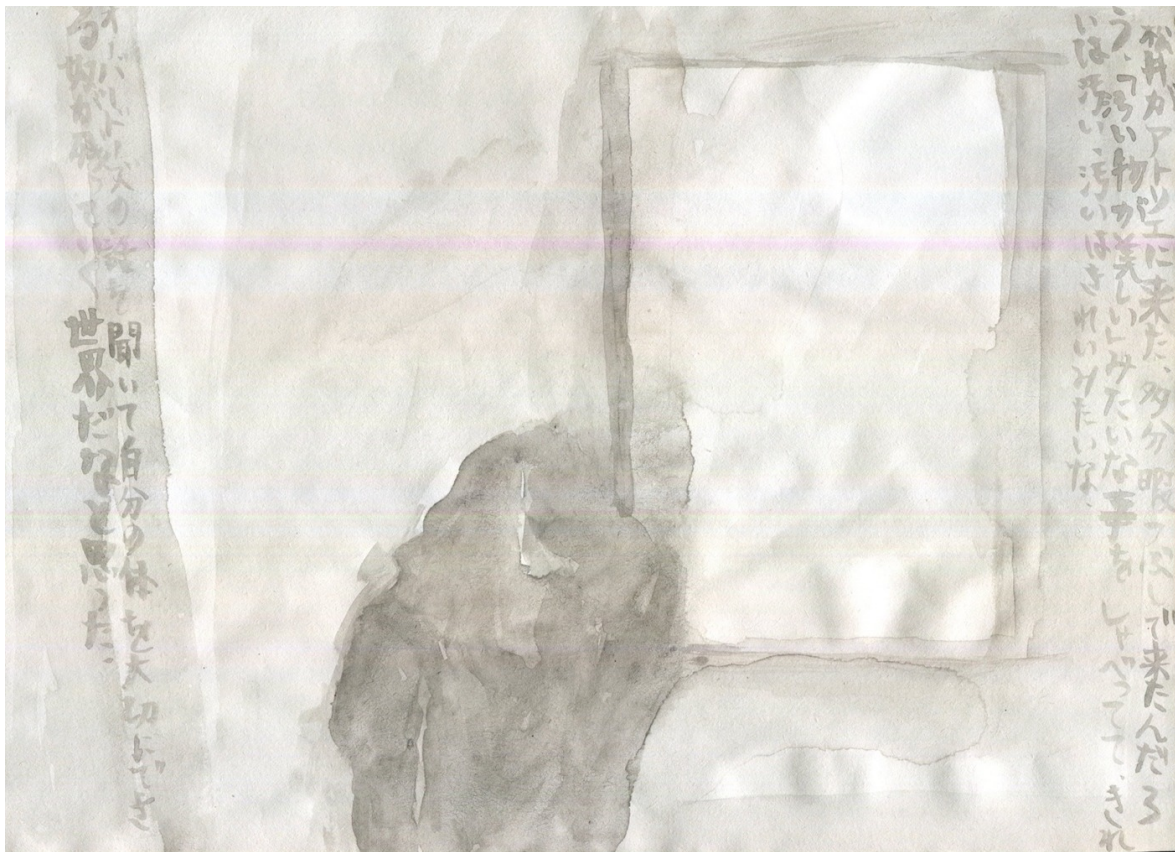
Recently I broke up with the boyfriend I had been with for about five years, since university. About a week after we broke up, almost all of his things were gone, and he had taken the snake we raised together too. He had suddenly caught that snake one day after work. I named the snake Flex. They say that, from a snake's point of view, a human looks like a huge tree.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: ヘビの話
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2026



For some reason I was spaced out the whole time at work. Or rather, even the fact that I was wearing the uniform started to seem ridiculous, and it made me sad. Sometimes I don't know what kind of attitude I'm supposed to have toward labor. I try at least not to let this cynical feeling of mine spread to other people, but apparently Noshita-san, the oldest person there, could tell from my attitude anyway, and I despaired at the kind of person I am.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 嫌んなった
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



Matsui came to the studio. He probably just came to kill time. He was talking about things like “dirty things are beautiful” — beautiful is dirty, dirty is beautiful. Listening to him talk about overdosing, I thought this is a world where the people who can take care of their own bodies are the ones who survive.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 路傍
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



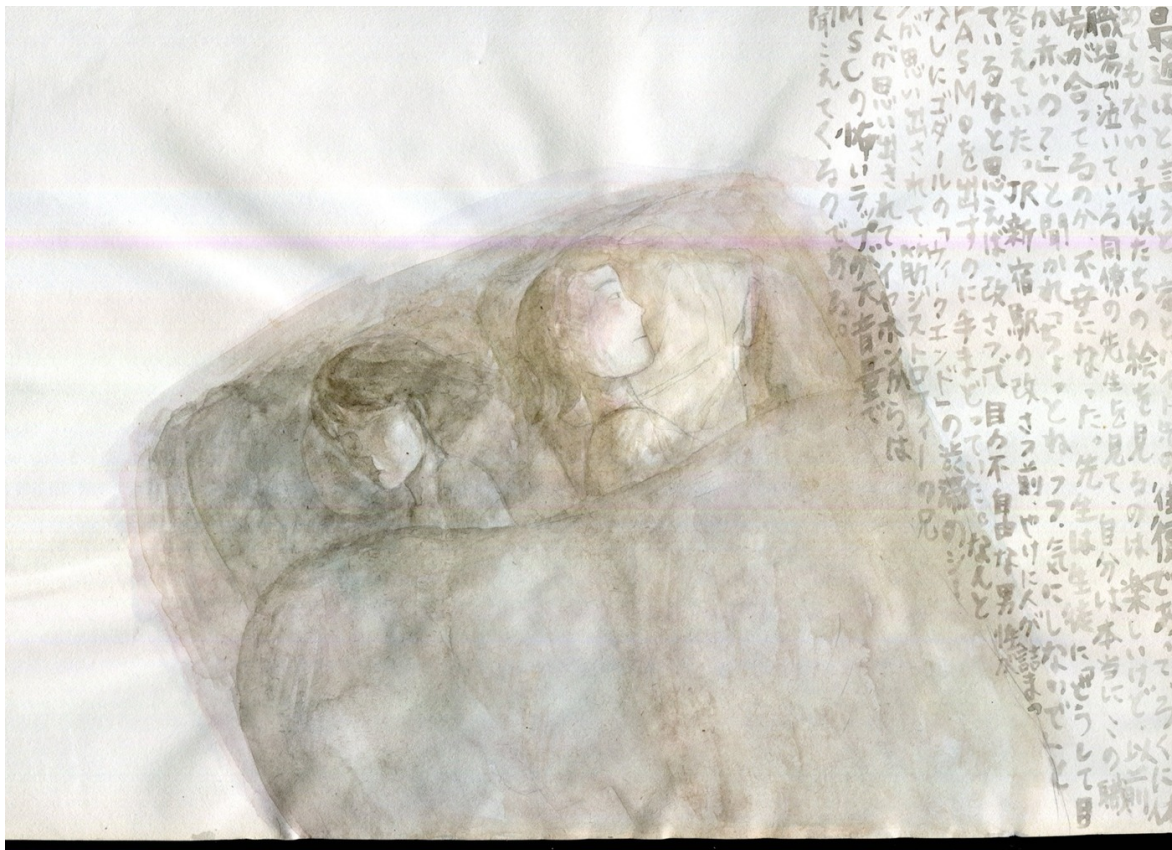
Since my part-time job effectively became five days a week, it has become hard to make time to read manga, which makes me sad. Recently I finally managed to read one whole book on the train. Reading becomes boring when it turns into an obligation, but I'm even more boring when I'm not reading. The most recent thing I read was an anthology of girls' manga selected by Baku Yumemakura that I borrowed from Komine. As you would expect from an anthology, every single piece was at an extremely high level, and it was interesting. Reading manga on the train is fun. Somehow it feels like I reach my destination faster, while at the same time I'm being carried somewhere incredibly far away. When I sit in the end seat, the butt of the person standing right beside me sometimes hits my shoulder. Strange.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
 title: 電車
 media: Watercolor on paper
 size: 210 × 297 mm
 year: 2025



What is this particular excitement in my chest that only karaoke gives me?

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: カラオケ
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



Lately my life has just been going back and forth between home and work, and I haven't really been able to rest. It's fun to look at the children's drawings, but after I once saw a fellow teacher crying at work, I started worrying about whether this workplace is really right for me. A student asked her, "Why are your eyes red?" and she answered, "Oh, it's nothing. haha. Don't worry about it."

In front of the ticket gates at JR Shinjuku Station, I wondered why people were unusually backed up, and then saw that a visually impaired man was having trouble getting his Pasma out. For no particular reason I remembered the traffic-jam scene in Godard's *Weekend*, then I remembered my older brother with muscular dystrophy, while MSC's scary rap blasted loudly through my earphones.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 寝る前に思い出す
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



Makoto Sato's Edward Said was incredible. I wonder if there is another documentary this beautiful.

The Palestinian refugee camp visited by the film crew had, twenty years after the filming, been devastated against the backdrop of an intensified war. Palestinians driven from their homeland, Said struggling with questions of identity, the lives of the people living in the refugee camp.

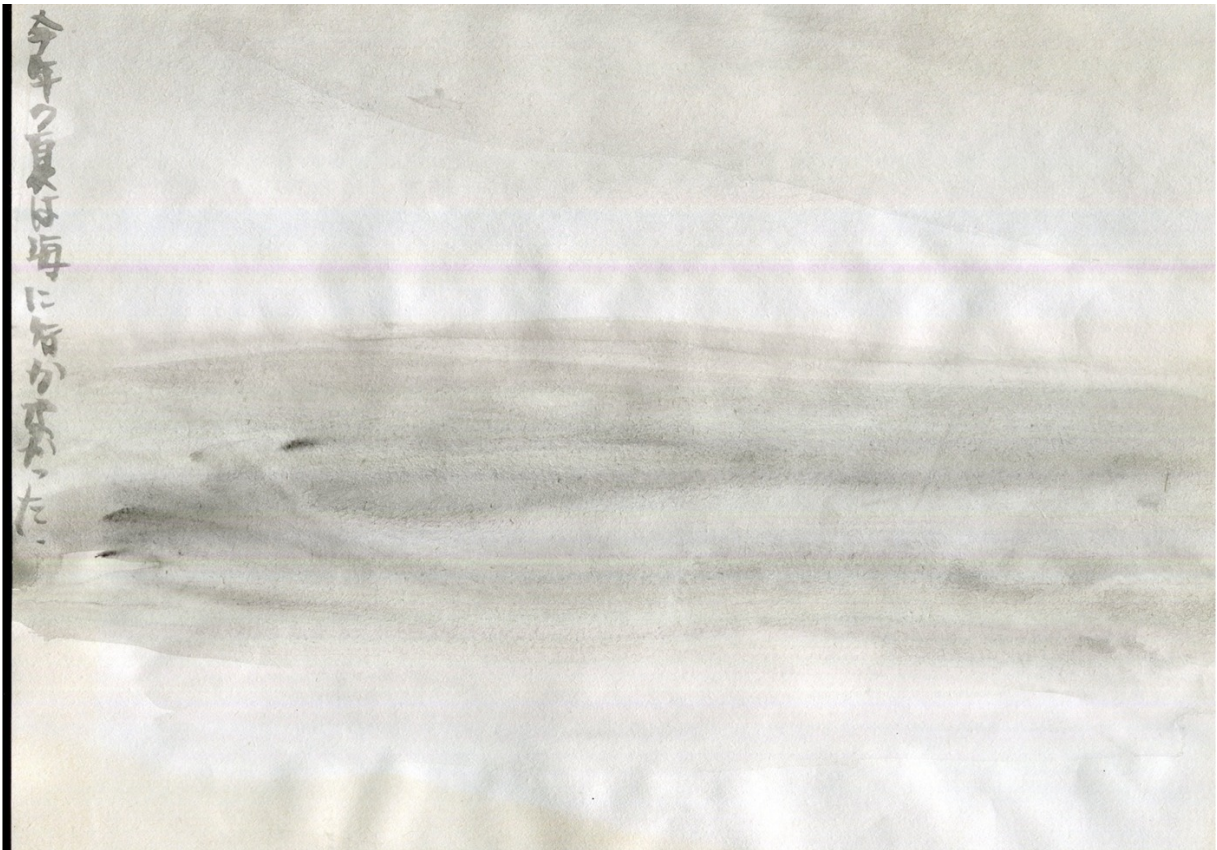
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 無題

media: Watercolor on paper

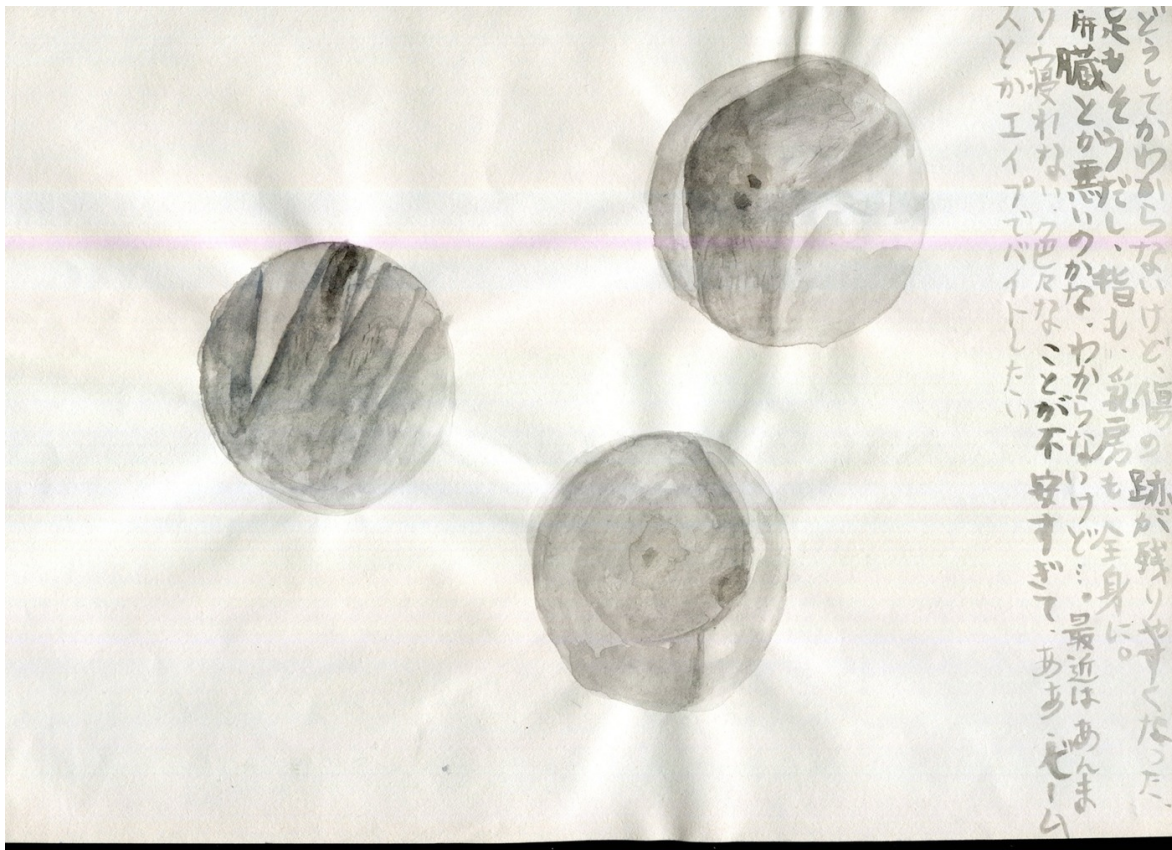
size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



I didn't go to the sea this summer.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 海
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



I don't know why, but scars seem to remain on my body more easily now. On my legs, my fingers, my breasts — all over.
Maybe something is wrong with my liver, I don't know... Lately I haven't been sleeping much. I'm too anxious about all kinds of things. Ah, I want to work at BEAMS
or A Bathing Ape or somewhere.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 体の節々
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



I was really pathetic today, so I'm writing it down here.

The Timeex worker scheduled from 6 to 11 p.m. still hadn't shown up when the shift was supposed to start, so I called the contact number. As expected, it went unanswered, and I realized they had probably canceled at the last minute. But we were short-staffed, so for the moment I called the manager. Contrary to what I expected, the manager was in a bad mood, and I got intimidated, so I asked Rion-chan, the gyaru employee, for help. Rion-chan calmly posted an additional standard job listing and, without panicking, efficiently handled the work in my place. Through the security camera I watched her looking far tougher and more capable than me. Rion-chan is the same age as me. She has a thirty-year-old boyfriend. Her false eyelashes, blinking rapidly, reflected her anxiety. I regretted that I couldn't respond flexibly to the situation. Is this what society is like?

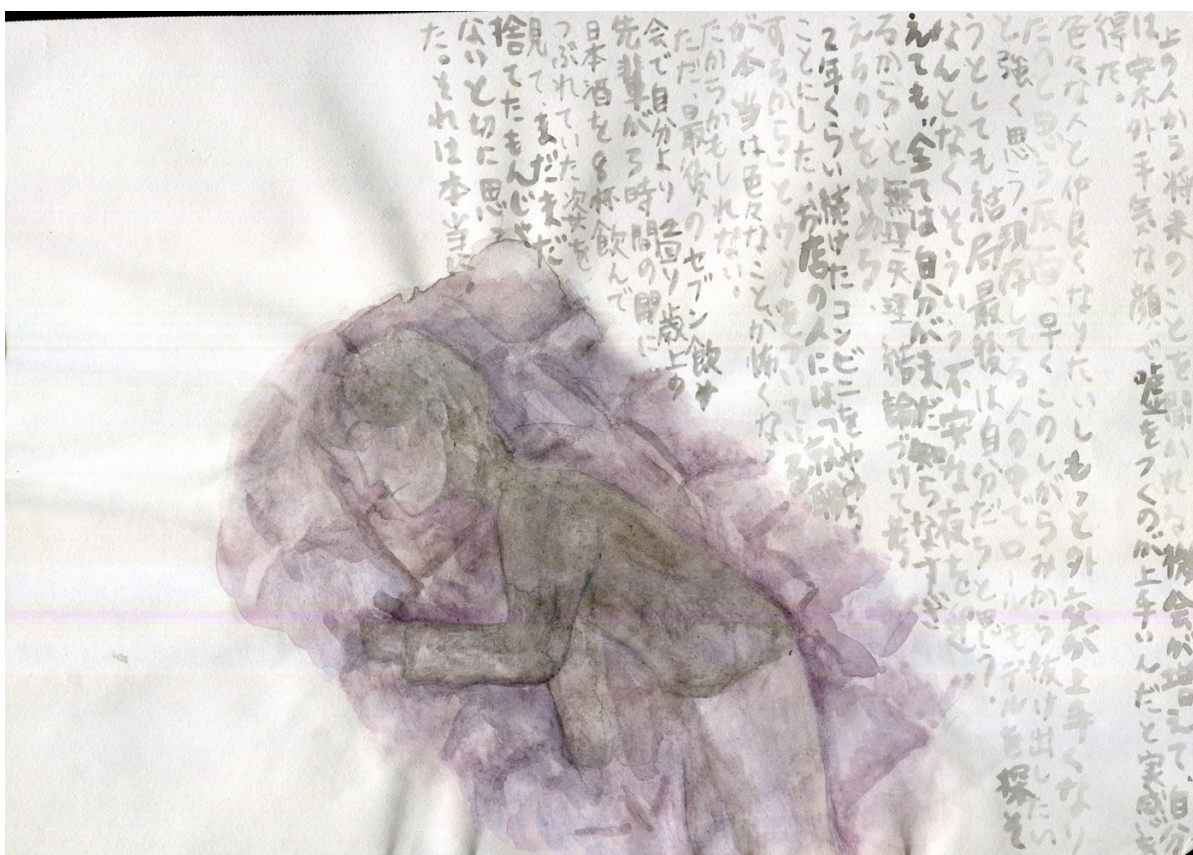
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: りおんちゃん

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



I've been getting more chances to be asked by people above me about my future, and I realized that I'm surprisingly good at lying with a perfectly calm face. I want to become friends with all kinds of people and get better at dealing with people, but at the same time I strongly want to get out of all these entanglements as soon as possible. Even when I try to find a role model among people who are alive now, in the end I think: ultimately it has to be me. Even when I find myself facing an anxious night like that, I force myself to conclude, "It's only because there's still too much I don't know," and stop thinking. I decided to quit the convenience store where I had worked for about two years. I told the people there that I was leaving because I had found a full-time job, but really maybe it was because I had become scared of all kinds of things. Still, at the final Seven-Eleven drinking party, I watched a senior coworker about twenty-four years older than me drink eight glasses of sake in three hours and collapse, and I sincerely thought things weren't so bad after all. Truly.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
 title: 出潤らしのように
 media: Watercolor on paper
 size: 210 × 297 mm
 year: 2025



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When I straighten my hair with a flat iron, I feel like I'm pushing myself inward. Forcing heat onto my tightly curling hair. I only realize how scary that sounds after writing it down. My curly hair comes from my mother. When I look at photographs of my mother when she was young, I'm shocked by how much she looks like me. And for some reason even the face of the dog she kept looks like us, which is funny. (Apparently the dog my mother had ran away on a stormy night.) But actually, whether my hair is straight or curly, it's interesting, like having two personalities. I can change my image casually, so I don't entirely dislike it.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 髪をストレートアイロンで挟むとき

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



When I'm jostled around in the crowds at Shinjuku Station, my eyes get tired because I can't settle on where to look. Over here, over there — exhausting. I can't help looking at people's faces.

o

It's strange that even though I stare at people's faces like that, when I draw them I end up drawing them in the same pattern every time. Shinji Nagashima is pretty repetitive too. Also, why isn't there a single bird in Shinjuku?

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 駅にて

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



I think we've had enough of NENE and Chanmina.

I'm reading Osamu Tezuka's *Ode to Kirihiito*, which I borrowed from a younger student. The protagonist contracts a terrifying disease called "Monmow disease," which deforms the face and skeleton, causes hair to grow all over the body like a dog, and makes the sufferer crave raw meat. He was originally a doctor, and there is a scene where he helps a weakened elder in a village. In the end, however, the village's young people turn against him because of his "face." Although the operation succeeds, he and the village elder are attacked by guerrillas, and the elder ultimately dies. The protagonist curses his own "face": because of a face like this, even a life he could have saved ended up being lost.

I couldn't help thinking about the current Israel-Palestine situation while reading this scene. Trump's way of doing things in America makes me angry, and so does that Netanyahu guy in Israel. It's bad when the people at the top of countries are all irresponsible. Israelis and Palestinians alike are judged and excluded according to the faces and blood they were born with, regardless of individual will. Nothing comes from that. Can't it be resolved? I want to believe that isn't true. If Japan wants a peaceful resolution, it should make its position more concrete and clear. Anger keeps simmering up inside me. On my way to university I saw a Tama Art student smoking while walking and wanted to punch them. Idiot!!

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 無題

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025

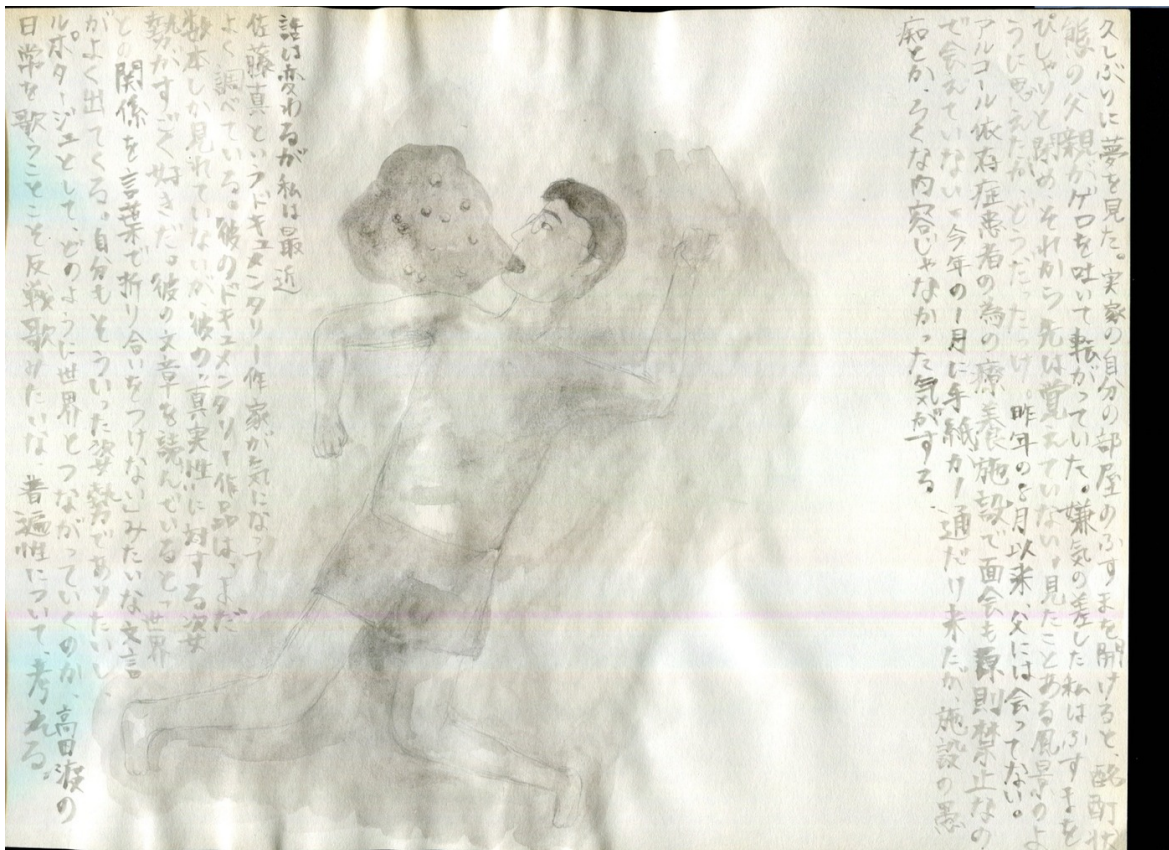


I feel like my brain is sharper on days when I go to work. Or rather, I get more work done. Maybe without realizing it I become more conscious of the fact that time is finite.

I'm always thinking that I want to make drawings with the kind of character you find in the work of Shinichi Abe or Kon Sato, and this time I feel like I did a little better.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: スパイラルジェットイ
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025





I had a dream for the first time in a while. When I opened the sliding door to my room at my family home, my father was lying there drunk, vomiting. Disgusted, I slammed the door shut. I don't remember what happened after that. It felt like a scene I had seen before, but was it? I haven't seen my father since August last year.

He is in a treatment facility for people with alcohol dependence, where visits are prohibited in principle, so I haven't been able to see him. I received a single letter from him in January this year, but I think it was mostly complaints about the facility and not much else.

Changing the subject, lately I've become interested in the documentary filmmaker Makoto Sato and have been researching him a lot. I've only seen a few of his

documentaries so far, but I really like his attitude toward "truthfulness." When I read his writing, phrases like "not settling one's relationship with the world through

words" come up often. I want to maintain that kind of attitude too, and I think about how reportage connects with the world, and about universality — like the idea

that Wataru Takada's singing about everyday life is itself an antiwar song.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: シーケンス

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



The day after New Year's Day this year — January 2 — I was working, as usual. At the time I hadn't yet been hired at my current workplace, so I was booking tons of shifts through Timee, intending to conquer every convenience store in the neighborhood. On that January 2 shift, I worked with an unusually friendly woman.

Apparently she had a company job and worked part-time on the side. She said, "If I don't work, I start going crazy." When I asked what she used all that money for, she said, "Savings." I remember that.

The reason I suddenly remembered her was that she drank an extraordinary amount of water. During a four-hour shift, she emptied a two-liter bottle. When I said,

"You drink a ton of water," she said, "I drink sooo much."

Hashimoto in June is humid and hot. Every day is murderously hot. I suddenly wonder whether that woman is still taking in an extraordinary amount of water.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: お父さんが夢に出てきた(最悪の状況で)

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



Before my shift, the manager called me over.

"Usami-chan, we got a complaint from a customer about you."

"What?"

"They said you weren't friendly, you had no energy, and you didn't ask whether they needed chopsticks. Be careful."

"I'm sorry."

It was the first complaint I'd ever gotten. I was really sad. But just barely, anger won out. Actually, I was just really fucking angry. During the delivery I complained to Iwamoto-san, my coworker.

"I got my first complaint."

"Ah, don't worry about it."

He said that, but I was still insanely irritated. Why? Why do I have to have my name known one-sidedly by someone while I have to bow my head? And why do I have to be complained at by someone in that anonymous position? Why do I have to apologize? Why do I have to work the night shift? Idiot, I thought.

I was furious. On my break I chain-smoked like crazy.

Suddenly I thought about my mother, who works nights in Aichi now. I thought about what she had said to me on the phone:

"There are people in the world who piss you off, but there's no point staying angry. The time you spend thinking about them is a waste."

Yeah, but it still pisses me off, normally. No matter how friendly you are in customer service, most of them don't even say "thank you." You even get old guys

asking for your contact information.

What the hell am I supposed to do?

♪

My name known because of my name tag

You, with the privilege to file a complaint

Customer-service attitude — my own indulgence?

Customer-service attitude — taking an even stance

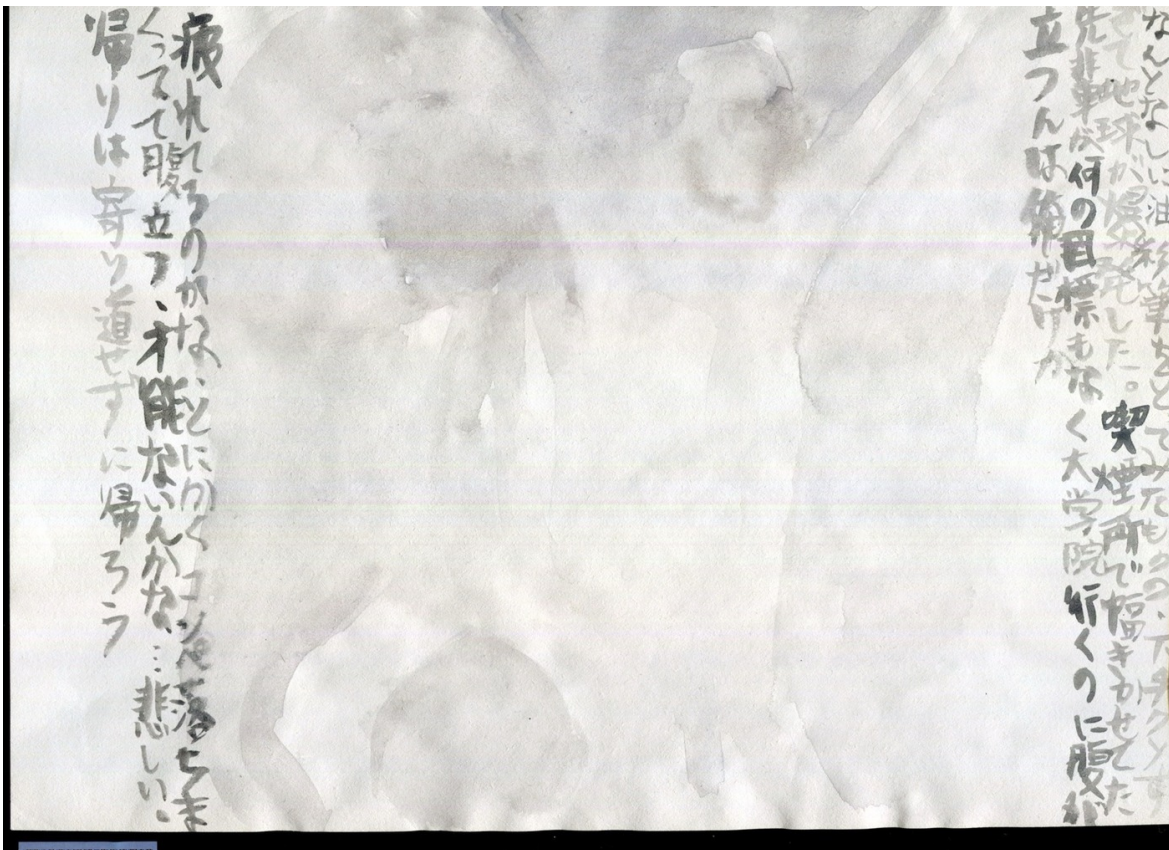
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 無題

media: Watercolor on paper

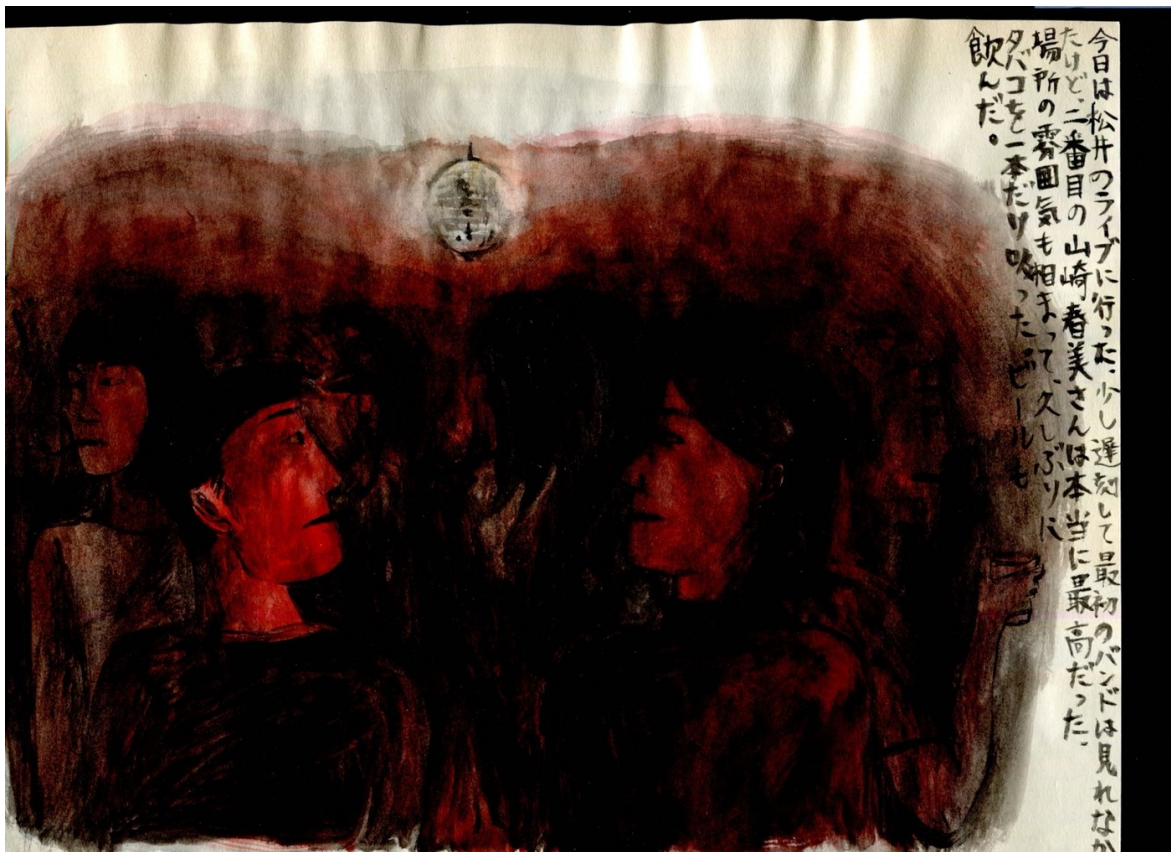
size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2024



For no particular reason I picked up an oil-painting brush, but I was so bad at it that the Earth exploded. Am I the only one pissed off that the seniors who used to dominate the smoking area are going to graduate school with no particular goal? Maybe I'm tired. Anyway, I keep losing competitions and it pisses me off. Maybe I have no talent... sad. I'll go straight home without stopping anywhere.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 先輩へ
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



Today I went to Matsui's live show. I was a little late and missed the first band, but the second act, Harumi Yamazaki, was truly amazing. Together with the atmosphere of the place, it made me smoke a cigarette for the first time in a while. I drank a beer too.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 松井のライブ
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



Sana-chan is feeling down. On the way to university, I kept wondering what I should say to her. I want her to feel better soon, but I can't just casually say, "Hang in there." So: silence, Sana-chan mutters something negative, I nod, silence.
I was thinking of Yosui Inoue's song "East to West." In the chorus, Inoue sings, "So hang in there, everyone, hang in there." I think that's irresponsible. But I also think he gets away with it because he's Yosui Inoue.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 東へ西へ
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



Sana-chan's younger sister, Kiri-chan, is like a Japanese Lauryn Hill. She recently came back from Canada, and before I knew it she had more tattoos. Kiri-chan did my makeup. My face changed so much, seriously!! I can't believe it can change this much.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: ローリン・ヒル
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



d

I watched Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives, a film directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. It was an incredibly good film. I thought I had never seen a film like it. I once read an interview in which Wendelien van Oldenborgh said, "It is also true that the more deeply you pursue the histories and backgrounds rooted in an artist's personal subjectivity, the better the work can become." It was exactly that kind of film. A film in which something I had never seen before seemed to emerge, going beyond even the personal.

The atmosphere of the work is different, but I felt something in common with Chantal Akerman's films: the personal spoken through fiction.

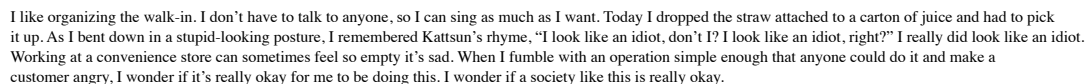
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 影

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



artist:	宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title:	無題
media:	Watercolor on paper
size:	210 × 297 mm
year:	2025



When I shoot video, I get strangely preoccupied with the transitions that connect one scene to another. Like the SE between sets at a live show, or the DJ — those parts strangely stay in my ears, to the point that I become absorbed in listening to them.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: タイミーさん
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



9:45 p.m. Arrive at work. Two old guys are drinking right next to where I park my bike. Energetic. The manager says, "Submit your shifts early, okay? And why don't you stop smoking cigarettes? You smell." Sorry.

The date changes. 2 a.m. Finally, break time. I go outside to smoke and make eye contact with those same two idiot old men. They're still here, I think, without paying much attention, and go back to work.

Then the two old men come to the register and ask, "Can we have some water?"

"Um, we sell water in bottles, so please buy one."

"Then what about those cups over there?"

"Those are for coffee and things, so they cost money."

"What? How does that make sense?"

"Sorry. That's the rule."

"No way they cost money. They're free, aren't they? You've got them right there. Maybe you just don't know enough."

"Sorry."

After a short silence, the old man in the red jacket says with a half-smile, "Miss, at first I thought you were ugly, but you're kind of cute. Your makeup's coming off, though." "But yeah, your head's definitely messed up," says the old man in the cap, looking me in the eyes and circling a finger beside his head. Why do I have to get beaten down this completely? Do they look down on me this much because I'm a woman? If it's going to be like this, I wish I'd been born a man.

♪

While we're talking, the morning sun rises

No common ground with the sexual-harassment old men

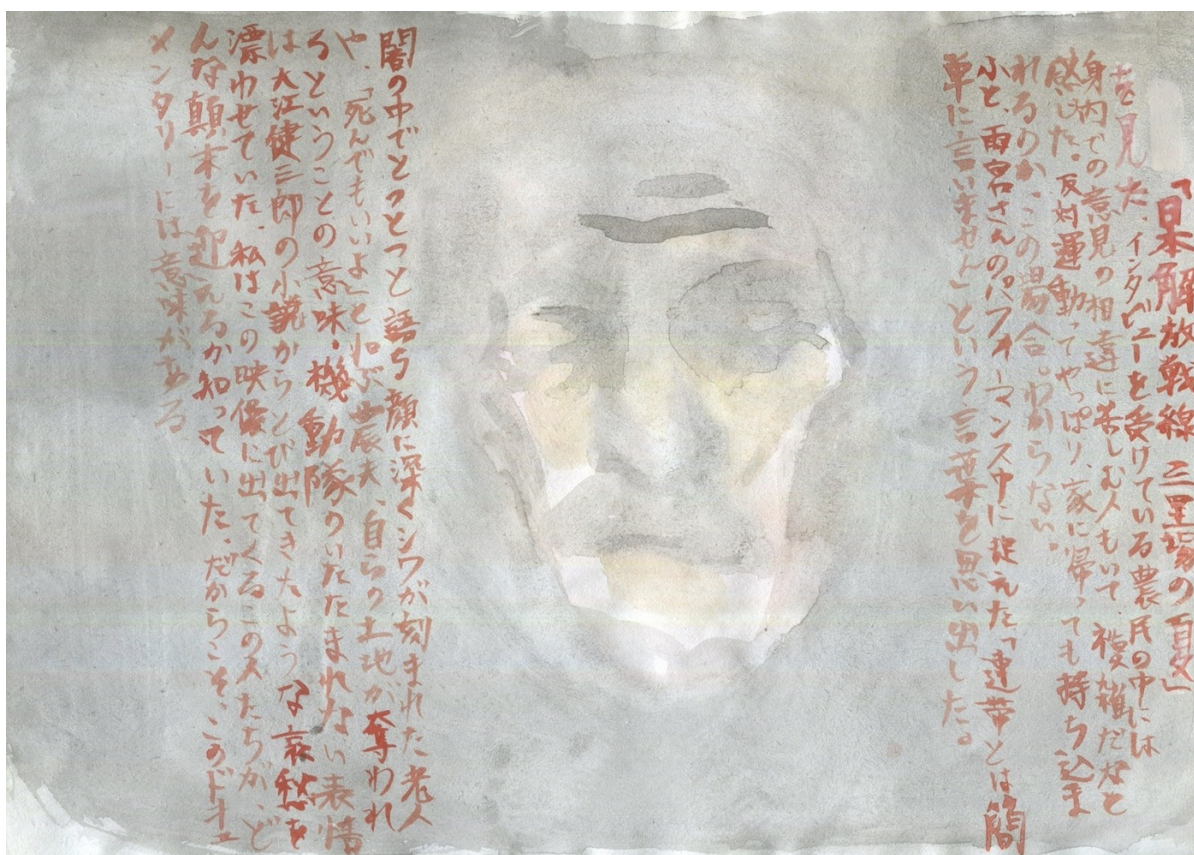
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: コンビニ夜勤

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2024



I watched The Japanese Liberation Front: Summer in Sanrizuka. Some of the farmers being interviewed were suffering from disagreements within their own families, and I felt how complicated it was. Does an opposition movement follow you home too, in a case like this? I don't know.

Suddenly I remembered a phrase I caught during Amemiya-san's performance: "I won't casually say 'solidarity.'"

An old man with deep wrinkles speaking haltingly in the darkness; a farmer shouting, "I don't care if I die"; the meaning of having one's own land taken away. The unbearable expressions on the riot police carried a melancholy that seemed to have stepped straight out of a Kenzaburo Oe novel. I knew what fate awaited the people appearing in this footage. That is precisely why this documentary has meaning.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 無題

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



After closing, the store is noisy. Love talk and stocking shelves, gossip and placing orders.

Once my shifts started overlapping with Kobayashi-san's, we began talking a lot. Sometimes Kobayashi-san's tattoos are visible. When I asked, "Do you have a lot of them?" he showed me photographs of where they were. A vividly colored snail tattoo — intense....

Ishiyama-san, who started recently, graduated from the sculpture department at Joshibi. Apparently she keeps making work alongside her job after graduating. I've started feeling happy whenever I find someone who still makes work after graduation.

Anyway, 2Pac's "Life Goes On" is such a good song. Lately — or rather, after work — I get an irresistible urge to listen to it.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 小林さん

media: Watercolor on paper

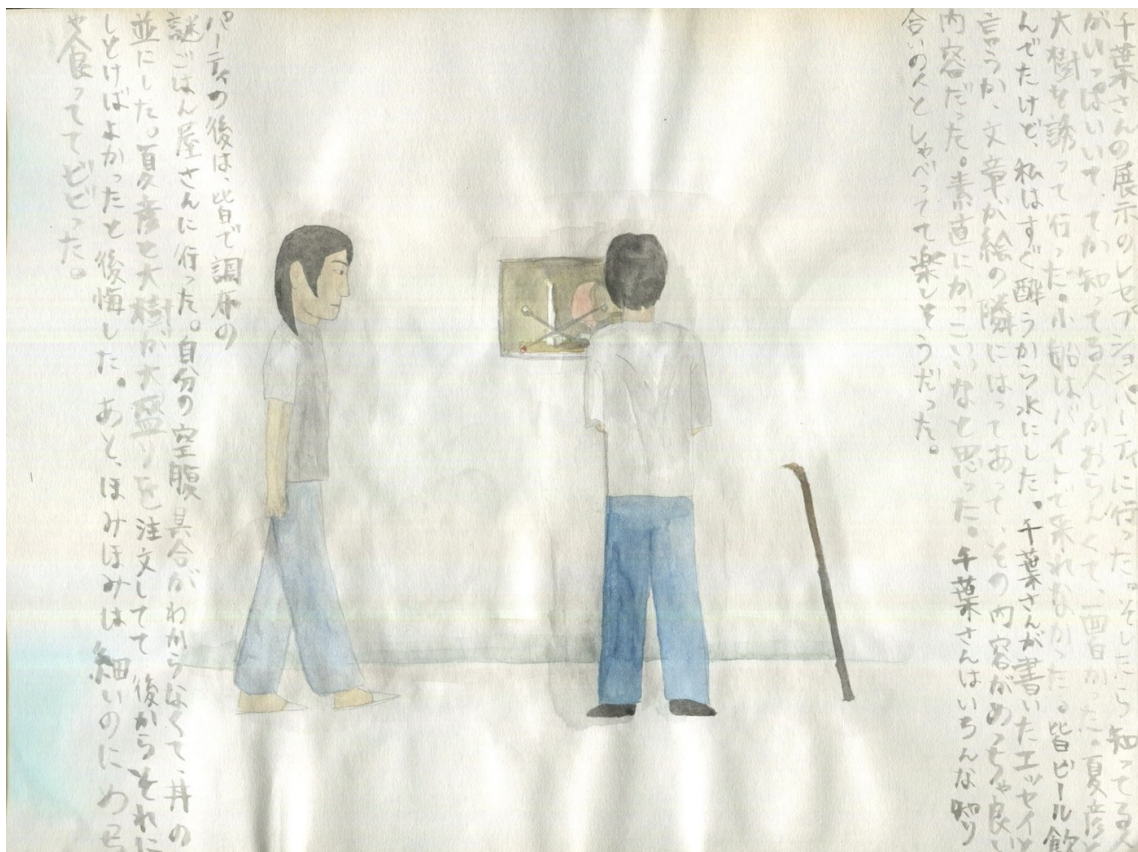
size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



After looking at war paintings in the contemporary art seminar, I went back to the studio and sat down at my desk to paint. Suddenly my own paintings looked unbearably stupid to me, so I painted over everything.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: 現代美術ゼミ
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025



I went to the reception party for Chiba-san's exhibition. There were tons of people I knew — actually, it was funny because it felt like there was nobody there I didn't know. I invited Natsuhiko and Daiki. Kobune couldn't come because he had work. Everyone was drinking beer, but I get drunk right away, so I had water. There was an essay, or some piece of writing, by Chiba-san posted next to the paintings, and what it said was really good. I simply thought it was cool. Chiba-san looked like he was having fun talking with all kinds of people he knew.

After the party, we all went to some mysterious restaurant in Chofu. I couldn't tell how hungry I was, so I ordered the regular-size rice bowl. Natsuhiko and Daiki ordered large ones, and afterward I regretted not doing the same. Also, Homihomi is so skinny but ate a ridiculous amount, which shocked me.

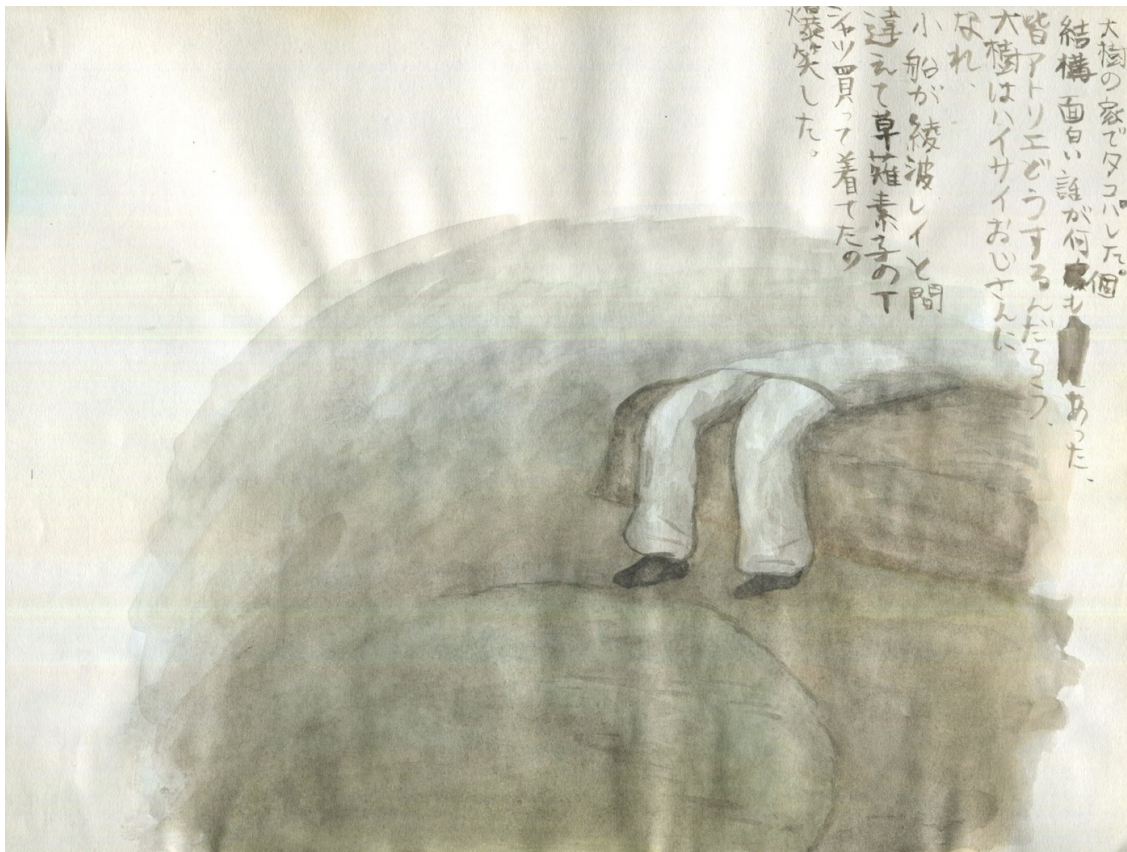
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 千葉さんの個展

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



We had a takoyaki party at Daiki's house. There were quite a few really funny stories. I wonder what everyone is going to do about their studios. Daiki, become a haisai ojisan.

I laughed so hard because Kobune bought and wore a T-shirt with Motoko Kusanagi on it, thinking she was Rei Ayanami.

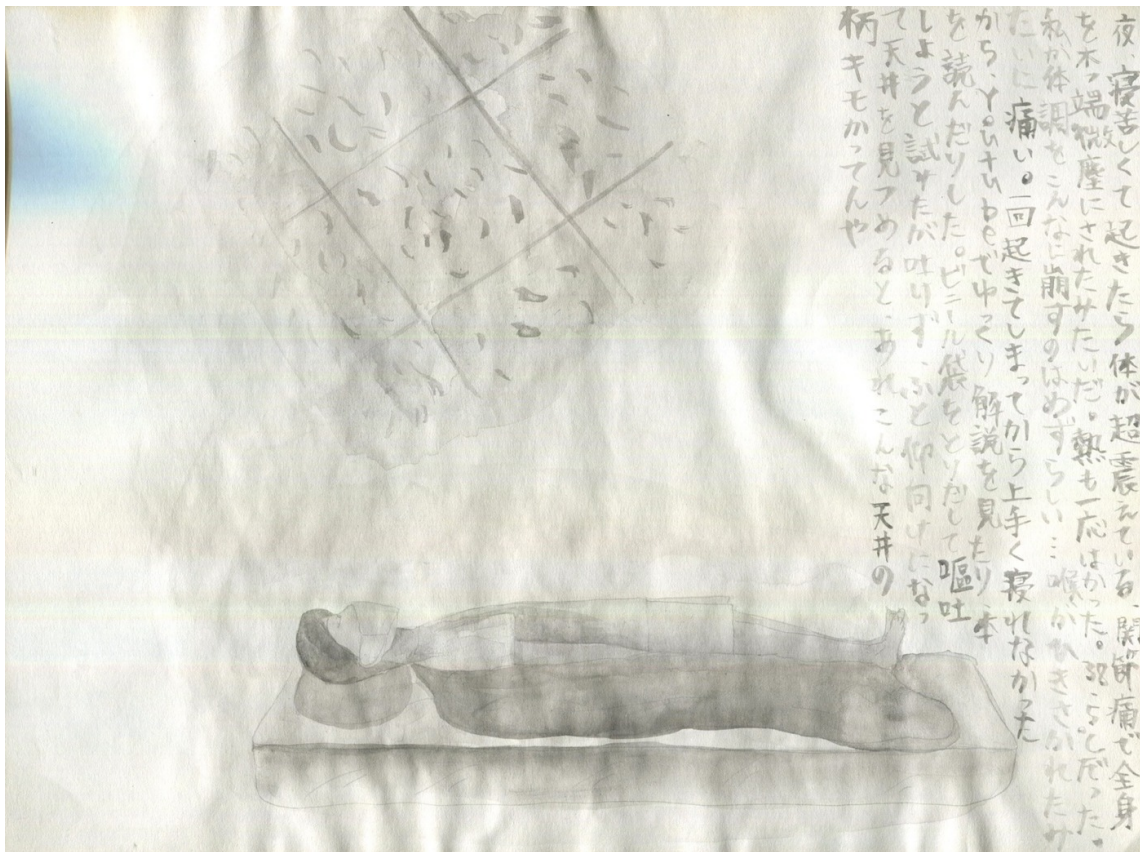
artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 小船の家でタコバ

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



At night I woke up because I couldn't sleep comfortably, and my whole body was shaking like crazy. The joint pain felt like my entire body had been blown to pieces. I took my temperature just in case. It was 38.5°C. It's rare for me to get this sick.... My throat hurts like it's been ripped apart. Once I woke up, I couldn't get back to sleep properly, so I watched slow-paced explanatory videos on YouTube and read a book. I took out a plastic bag and tried to vomit, but couldn't. Then I happened to lie on my back and stare at the ceiling and thought, wait, was the pattern on this ceiling always this gross?

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 風邪ひいた

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2025



At our class, a ninety-minute lesson has to include drawing with crayons, painting with paints, and handing the child back to the parent — including explaining the work. Of course, children get fussy and conversations with parents run long, so things don't always go according to schedule. At times like that, the time-saving tool is a hair dryer. You blast the watercolor paint with it to shorten the drying time.

The professional teachers press tissues directly onto the students' works and things like that. At first I hesitated, thinking, "How rough...." But before I knew it, I had gotten used to it. Sometimes that made me sad, but then I tell myself, well, the students are making these drawings for entrance exams too.... Sigh.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 絵画教室

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



I had a strange dream. In the studio, right beside the door, Masaya Chiba was sitting with his knees drawn up to his chest. What the hell is he doing? I thought, and asked, "What are you doing?" He replied, "Everyone's work is amazing. Everyone is amazing...." Huh? I thought. I didn't really understand. Without adding anything else, Masaya Chiba just kept sitting there with his knees hugged to his chest.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 千葉さん

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2024



I went to a tempura place in Nakano called Sumitomo. To give the conclusion first, it was an amazing restaurant. The batter was crisp, and inside there was burdock root and fish-paste stuff — delicious.

The atmosphere was really good too. Two taciturn older guys ran the place. A photograph of the previous owner by the sink — so cool. The gesture of one of the guys lifting a big oil can and pouring more oil into the fryer was beautiful.

Apparently Nakano is going to change a lot because of redevelopment this year. But I hope places like this remain.

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami

title: 中野の天ぷら屋

media: Watercolor on paper

size: 210 × 297 mm

year: 2026



When I blankly scroll through Instagram, everything from kisses to selfies, model snapshots, memes, and all sorts of miscellaneous posts — images — flood the same screen. I find it strange.

For example, suppose there were boys and girls who had been raised being told that it was perfectly normal for humans to eat shit. At what point would they be made to realize that this was abnormal?

artist: 宇佐美遇 Ai Usami
title: インスタグラム
media: Watercolor on paper
size: 210 × 297 mm
year: 2025