



Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed: *Objects in bright, contrasting popsicle shades are enlarged, reduced and re-arranged to form colourful collages*

Everyday objects comically repurposed

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WHEN Japanese artist Teppei Kaneuji visited Haw Par Villa last year, he was amazed by the hundreds of statues and dioramas at the unusual theme park. He took several pictures, which he then combined with drawn images of banal objects to construct colourful collages.

He also took pictures of ordinary objects around Singapore and repurposed them by drawing other objects around them, turning them into strange new contractions in some parallel cartoon universe.

Kaneuji, 36, is what some art critics call a “commodity artist”. His works simultaneously celebrate and critique the plethora of unnecessary things that urban dwellers surround themselves with.

The most famous of commodity artists is Jeff Koons, who glorifies our consumerist excesses by creating bright sculptures of balloon poodles and a Michael Jackson sculpture covered in gold. Kaneuji is more interested in the underside of commodity. He toys instead with everyday objects such as bolts, nuts, hinges, used bottles and recycled paper.

“I think of myself as a child, building new toys with these everyday objects, as if they were building blocks for new inventions,” he says.

The 80 works that he



Adding his touch:

Kaneuji (above) puts a little whimsy to ordinary objects that he has found in Singapore (left)

One series of works, however, is entirely devoid of colour. Kaneuji draws the objects on cloth, cuts out their shapes, and turns them into soft toys. He then crams several of them into a box frame, making a fun and fresh statement about our culture of excess.

Kaneuji explains: “More than a decade ago, I graduated from the University of Kyoto, having studied sculpting. Japan was in the economic doldrums, and it didn’t seem right to indulge in raw materials to create the typical sculpture. So I began to put together ordinary objects that I saw around me. And eventually, that evolved into the sort of the art that I do.”

created for a current solo exhibition at STPI certainly exude a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed enthusiasm. Like a boy and his Lego set, he puts objects on top of each other without worrying about what they might look like in the end.

Using the common strategies of commodity artists, these objects are enlarged, reduced and re-arranged so that their utilitarian functions become irrelevant. What distinguishes each object, however, are their bright, contrasting popsicle colours – affirming his delight in making them.

The exhibition is now on until Oct 18 at STPI, 41 Robertson Quay