

MCCABE FINE ART

Yoshitomo Nara: A Selection of 90's Paintings and Works on Paper
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McCabe Fine Art is pleased to present a selection of early works by Yoshitomo Nara. Influenced by both Japanese manga and American comic books, Nara is best known for his cartoonish paintings and sculptures of children and dogs. In addition to revealing primitive versions of several of these now-iconic characters—including devilish babies, floppy-eared puppies, and lonely children—the eleven drawings and two paintings brought together here, show Nara working in a surprising loose and raw style. Dating primarily from student days at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf (1989-1993), these works describe an important nascent stage in Nara's artistic development.

More energetic and spontaneous than his mature work, Nara's early drawings are also more overtly narrative. Featuring colorful combinations of acrylic, pen, and colored pencil, the drawings often combine multiple figures, text, and scenic elements within a single composition. Scenes such as a man swimming, airplanes flying above a city, and a boy visiting several dogs, are annotated with roughly scrawled captions or thought bubbles. Rendered unceremoniously and economically (frequently on sheets of lined notebook paper), these deceptively childlike renderings represent the unfiltered reflections of an artist on the brink of establishing his mature style. As proof, two paintings made just a few years after the drawings (*There Is No Place Like Home*, 1995, and *Links Rum*, 1999), show Nara already moving towards the stark compositions focused on individual characters with few or no narrative clues that characterize his later, much celebrated, works. The sleepy-eyed white dog in *Links Rum* is a particularly important harbinger of what has become one of Nara's most important signature characters.