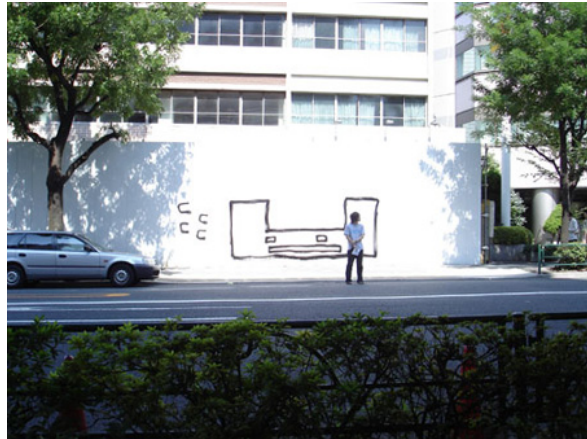


"If I made a tree icon and put a lot of them next to each other, I'd be able to make a forest map!"—It was this little light bulb of an idea that started his map artwork in 2003. He used 16 x 16 pixel, black and white bitmap image data to create a stamp, and imprinted the image onto a wooden panel. In 2004, he began his "Items" series in which he used vector images based on Bezier curves to express stereotypical video game items. It is a work that created a unique item through the composition of black lines. Also in 2004, Murakami began producing street art in earnest, drawing attention from around the world. In his street art, a genre where speed and visibility is important, he brought to life many cute and simply drawn characters. The current "Kid Snz", his trademark character, is based on an original tagging style born from a mixture of stickers and drawings. And "Boco", the main character of his current map piece, has gone through many transformations in order to achieve the speed and visibility necessary for it to become successful as street art.



"Kid Snz" on the street



"Boco" on the street



"Kid Snz" as my trademark



"Boco" on the canvas

In 2006, Murakami began VJing with flash animation material that he had been creating. Blowing life into the character sketches, he is currently searching for a unique VJing-style. In 2008, he discovered a way to merge all of the expressions that he had been creating as one map. He did this by taking the "map data" created in 2003's bitmap image piece, the "item data" from the vector images used in "Items", and the "character data" from sketches used in his street art; by making them all the same size, he was able to form them into sprites. He believes that, by lining them up and comparing them on the same surface, all of the data in his map artwork is an experiment in making the differences stand out between the sole pursuit of black and white composition and the minimal visualization of the concept that forms digital imagery. In recent years Nintendo has stepped away from competing on stunning visual graphics that requires high spec hardware. Instead, the company believed that a game console intuitive for everyone with fresh, new games filled with surprises was what the world needed. With the incredible success of the Nintendo DS and Wii, the company has achieved the greatest growth in its history. Murakami's artwork forgoes the path of complicating the surface by using rich colors, multiple layers and adding effects, and is engaged in a long voyage to discover a never-before-seen "blue ocean".



"Map data" as bitmap image



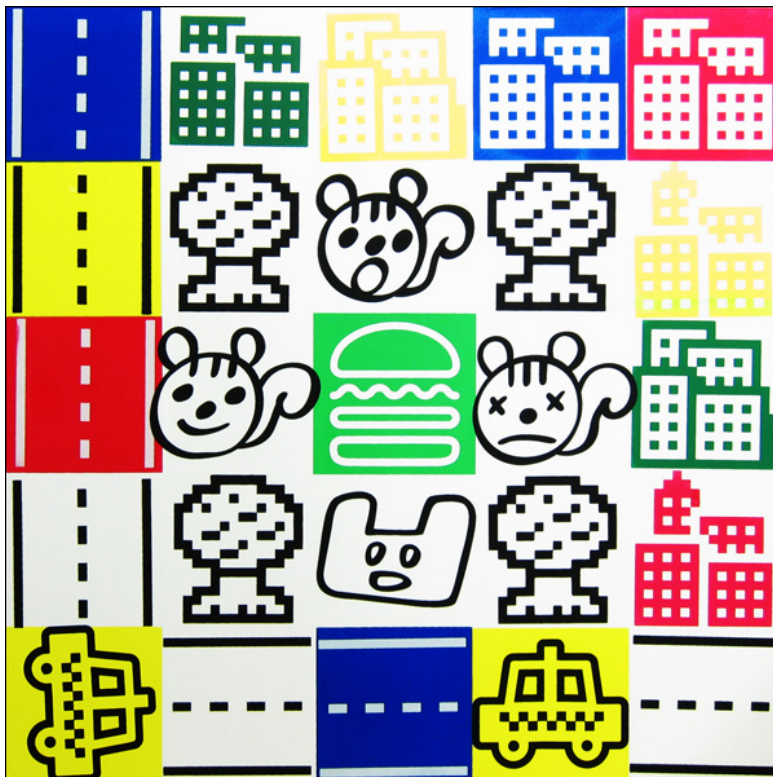
"Item data" as vector image



"Character data" as hand drawing



Central Park (remake), 2012
stamp ink and resin on claybord 36 x 18 in.



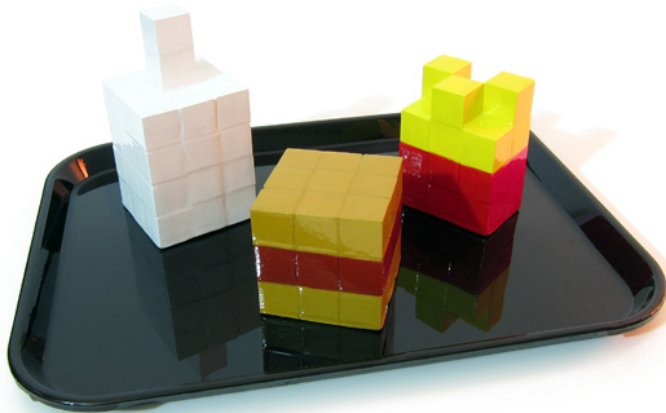
Shake Shack - Madison Square Park, 2011
acrylic and resin on wood panel 24 x 24 in.

3D-8BIT

A three-dimensional art piece that looks as if it were made out of blocks, "3D-8Bit" was born from the idea that you could translate the pixilated bumpiness of 8-Bit imagery into a three-dimensional form. In Japan in 2005, a joint marketing campaign between Pepsi and Nintendo gained recognition for its production of a 3D-8Bit version of *Super Mario Bros.* Following this, a number of products were sold. In 2009, a game entitled *3D Dot Game Heroes* was launched in which the entire fantasy RPG world was recreated in the three-dimensional style of 3D-8Bit. The following year, the game was launched overseas as well. In 2010, a short film by Patrick Jean, *Pixels*, received much attention on the web for its use of the 3D-8Bit style instantly propelling the look onto a global stage. The transformation of Nintendo's many classic 8-Bit characters into 3D-8Bit form in 2005 was a Japanese evolution of the 8-Bit format. As an artist that has continued to utilize 8-Bit games as a motif in his artwork, Murakami felt compelled to create his own 3D-8Bit artwork, and in 2009, he completed "Fruits Bowl". Using a 3D rendering software to create a complete blueprint, he built the piece out of small wooden blocks. He chose a fruit and bowl, an image often used in still life oil paintings around the world, as his motif. Utilizing a stereotypical image from Western art as a motif, Murakami seeks to show that this 3D-8Bit style is not just an expression of a part of video game culture, but holds a universal power.

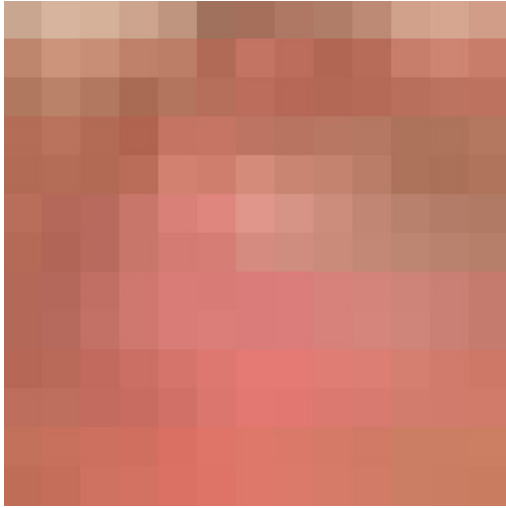


Puppy (study), 2011
wood block, glue, acrylic, varnish, collar and leash 7.5 x 9 x 4.5 in.



Happy Meal, 2011
wood blocks, glue, acrylic, resin, screw and plastic tray 5.5 x 13.5 x 10.5 in., ed. 5

NIPPLE



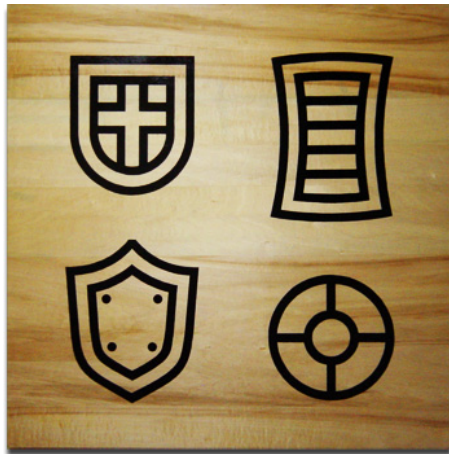
Kim Kardashian, 2011
inkjet print, face-mounted on acrylic 24 x 24 in.

ITEM

Since 2004, Murakami has been using swords and shields as an early style tagging in his street art. This series originated in this tagging. Transforming the drawings into vector images with Illustrator, the series pursued composition utilizing only black lines.



Swords, 2004
acrylic and varnish on wood 36 x 36 in.



Shields, 2004
acrylic and varnish on wood 36 x 36 in.