

Sato Raimu creates life-sized ball-jointed dolls to examine how the human body is constructed and sustained. Trained in sculpture and informed by anatomical research conducted in medical laboratories, Sato approaches the body not as an idealized image, but as a structure—sembled, articulated, and inherently fragile. The doll functions not as metaphor, but as method: a form through which the logic of the body becomes visible.

The figures retain the explicit clarity of doll construction. Joints remain exposed, surfaces are finished without illusion, and narrative or expressive pose is deliberately withheld. Built from stone powder clay and finished with oil paint—not to simulate life, but to mark a moment of completion—the bodies stand upright and motionless. Neither representations nor substitutes for human beings, they persist as unresolved presences, quietly asking what it means for a body to appear, to be held together, and to stand before us.



Arika (Where One Belongs), 2025, Stone powder clay, modeling paste, oil paint, eye-shadow, and hair, 1650 x 450 x 300 mm (65.0 x 17.7 x 11.8 inches)



Geppaku no Shiro (Moonwhite Castle), 2023, Stone powder clay, modeling paste, oil paint, and hair, 1000 x 400 x 300 mm (39.4 x 15.7 x 11.8 inches)



Untitled, 2026, Stone powder clay, modeling paste, oil paint, and hair, 1000 x 250 x 150 mm (39.4 x 9.8 x 5.9 inches)



Tsuki no Mienu Yoru (Night When the Moon Cannot Be Seen), 2024, Stone powder clay, modeling paste, oil paint, eye-shadow, vintage dress, and hair, 800 x 350 x 250 mm (31.5 x 13.8 x 9.8 inches)



Sakura, 2023, Doll: Stone powder clay, modeling paste, gesso, oil paints, hair, glass
Clothing: Fabric, lace, leather, metal, 530 x 250 x 150 mm (20.9 x 9.8 x 5.9 inches)

ARTIST STATEMENT

Sato Raimu engages the human body through the making of dolls. This practice does not originate from metaphor or symbolic representation, but from a sustained inquiry into how a body is constructed, articulated, and maintained. Ball-jointed doll-making was independently acquired as a foundational method, later extended through formal training in figurative sculpture and anatomical research conducted within medical school laboratories. Alongside a number of earlier works produced at a smaller, conventional doll scale, this inquiry culminates in a single life-sized figure, in which the body emerges not as an image to be idealized, but as a structure defined by articulation, exposure, and fragility.

This life-sized work is unequivocally a doll. Spherical joints remain exposed, and the logic of articulation is never concealed. Illusion and lifelikeness are deliberately withheld. What is presented instead is a body whose construction is fully legible—sembled, connected, and sustained through visible points of vulnerability.

The figure adheres precisely to human life-size proportions, without intentional distortion or exaggeration. The difference perceived here arises not from deviation from an ideal, but from the exposure of structure itself. Continuity is interrupted by joints, and articulation remains unresolved, insisting on the body as something assembled rather than inherently whole.

Fragility is understood as a layered condition. One dimension is physical: the susceptibility of joints and connective structures that enable movement while remaining points of weakness. Another is ontological: the instability of the subject that emerges from inhabiting a material body positioned in relation to others and to society. The structure of the ball-jointed doll brings these dimensions into direct contact.

The figure is not posed. It stands upright and motionless. Pose is understood as narrative, and narrative is intentionally withheld. This work does not function as a character or a representation of an individual, but operates closer to an anatomical presentation—a body articulated and fixed in place.

Rather than substituting for the human body or operating as a symbolic stand-in, this life-sized work exists as an "other": exposed, motionless, and unresolved. Through structural clarity rather than illusion, it continues to question what it means for a body to be assembled, to appear, and to remain standing before us.

Making Process

The life-sized figure was developed through a sequential process focused on structural clarity and articulation. The body was first designed and measured to precise human life-size proportions, based on direct anatomical reference. At this stage, internal balance and joint placement were carefully determined to ensure both stability and legibility of articulation.

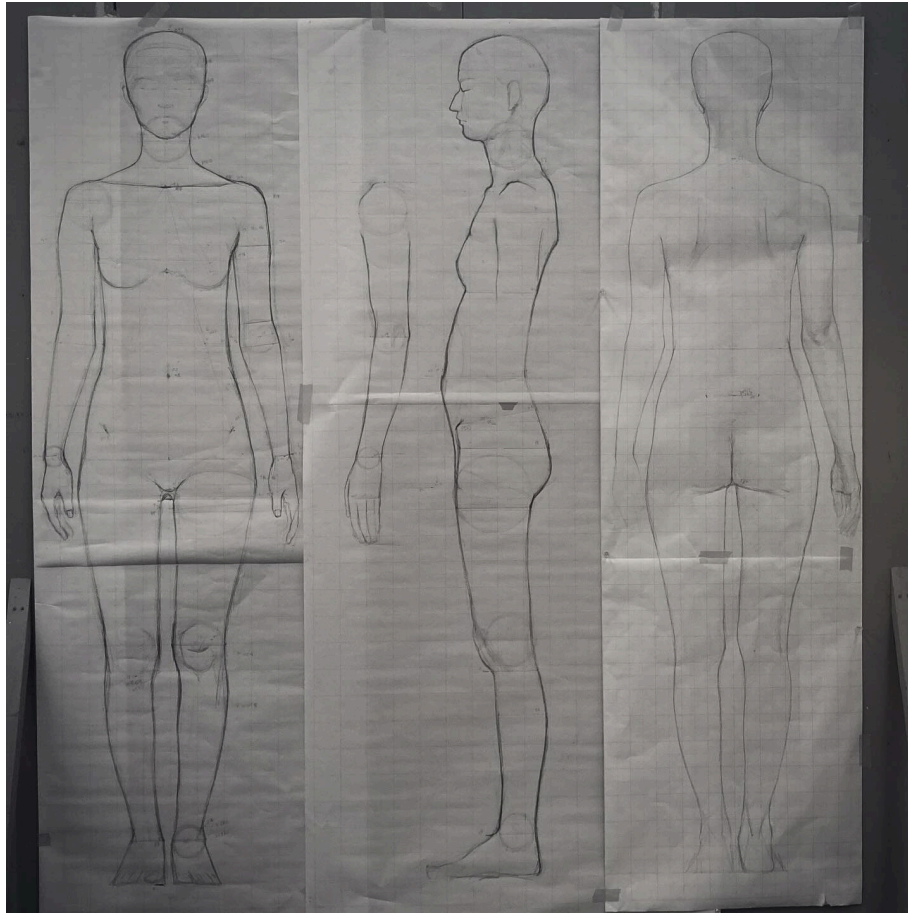
The figure was constructed using stone powder clay as a structural material. Once cured, the surface became rigid and non-absorbent, forming a stable substrate. This material choice allows the structure of the body to remain fixed and exposed, rather than softened through surface treatment.

After curing, the surface was painted with oil paint. Color was applied not to simulate flesh or vitality, but to register the body at a specific moment of completion. The painted surface functions as a trace of presence rather than an illusionistic layer.

Human hair was processed into banded components and fixed to the head, following established doll-making traditions. No painterly intervention or rendering was applied; instead, attachment and insertion are emphasized as integral parts of the body's construction.

Spherical joints remain visible and functional throughout the work. Articulation is never concealed, and no attempt is made to integrate joints seamlessly into the body.

The completed figure was assembled, balanced, and fixed in an upright, standing position. No pose was assigned. The process concludes with the body remaining assembled, articulated, and present.



Measurement and Structure Life-size schematics derived from direct human measurement, establishing proportional and structural parameters prior to assembly.



Components and Articulation Individual elements—spherical joints, upper arms, lower legs—arranged prior to assembly, exposing the logic of articulation.

Surface in Process Partial coloration of the head. Surrounding components remain unassembled, situating surface treatment within an incomplete body.

BIOGRAPHY

Sato Raimu works between anatomical doll-making and the tradition of creative dolls, using the figure as a sculptural site for questioning embodiment and perception. In works conceived as dolls, proportions are deliberately altered — approximately six-head figures with emphasized heads — while anatomically accurate, life-sized figures precisely replicate the artist's own nine-head proportions. This oscillation between distortion and exact replication produces a dissonance that the human body alone cannot generate. From 2023, Sato has been affiliated with the Department of Anatomy at Juntendo University School of Medicine as a Special Research Student, and participates in Anatomy Tutorials, a collective dedicated to the education and dissemination of artistic anatomy. Born in 2000 in Shizuoka, Japan.

CV

Education

2023 BFA, Sculpture, Tokyo Zokei University

2025 MFA, Fine Arts, Tokyo Zokei University

Solo Exhibitions

2025 *Still Life with Innocence*, aaploit, Tokyo

Group Exhibitions (Selected)

2024 *Anatomical Room*, Gallery Le Vant, Tokyo

Ma Awai: Three-Person Creative Doll Exhibition, Kichijoji Gallery, Tokyo

2023 *In View*, Gallery Ichō no Ki, Tokyo

Haikara: Modern Boy & Modern Girl Exhibition, Fujino Art Museum, Hyogo

Things Born and Fade Away, gallery hydrangea, Tokyo

2022 *Dreams That Goldfish See 2022*, Colmekissa, Kanagawa

Fantasizing, Colmekissa, Kanagawa

2021 *For You, ...and for Me*, Colmekissa, Kanagawa

Dreams That Goldfish See, Colmekissa, Kanagawa

My Sanctuary in My Room, Colmekissa, Kanagawa

2020 *Dreaming Girls*, Mi Amore Gallery, Tokyo

Awards

2025 Tokyo No.1 Doll — Grand Prize

Art Fairs

2025 Incheon Art Show 2025, Incheon, South Korea (aaploit)

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