

SEITARO YAMAZAKI

PORTFOLIO

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ARTIST STATEMENT

I explore the beauty of ambiguity, transience, and the things that were never depicted, spoken, or formed.

Born and raised in Japan and worked as a designer and artist, I have been strongly influenced by Swiss Style typography, American minimalism, Ambient Music, and Monochrome photographs of 70s and 80s. And as a Japanese, I am also deeply interested in and affected by Japan's traditional views on nature and aesthetics, and studying ink wash painting, *ikebana* (Japanese traditional flower arrangement), and *Kodo* (Japanese incense ceremony) for years. All of them are characterized by extremely restrained, simplified and minimalist composition that makes use of blank spaces.

I love simpleness, ambiguity, and blank spaces.

Since the Middle Ages, the sense of ambiguity, transience, and the quality of being like an illusion or uncertain has been called “幽玄: yugen” and has been highly valued as a form of beauty in Japan.

I have been incorporated this sense of Japanese aesthetics into my minimalist art. In painting, sculpture, installation, and photography, I am trying to capture the fleeting beauty that exists at the boundaries between the world that industrial civilization has torn apart, or beauty of the things that lurk and hide on the border between people's conscious and unconscious minds.



The Womb of the City 2023 / Japanese paper, old wood, board, urethane paint, bamboo, pine, lighting, zabuton / H2100mm W2800mm D4500mm





Cities are perpetually mutable, embracing and absorbing all. Within these cities, how can individuals find their place? Cities are dynamic entities. The urban space of the international metropolis, Tokyo, continuously undergoes changes, proliferating and expanding. The daily lives of urban dwellers consist of fragmented, discontinuous experiences. This work represents an exploration of the accumulation of human experiences in contemporary cities and the quest for a psychological sanctuary. Through the noncontinuous spaces of tranquility at the heart of the urban hustle, this work examines the contradictions and multifaceted nature of the urban environment, while suggesting possibilities for its reconstruction and harmonization. The shoji screen situated at the forefront emanates a vivid warm hue, as if it were passing through the body. In response to changes in the urban environment, its brightness and color shift. The floating metal plates symbolize the unstable and inorganic state of the city, steering the consciousness of the seated audience towards dialogue and introspection, and allowing them to experience the continuity, contradictions, and harmony of urban life. At the core of the installation lies the contrast between the clamor and the silence of the city. This contrast reflects the tension and contradictions experienced by urban dwellers in their daily lives.



“MUSIC FOR THE MARGINS” #01 STEVE REICH / COUNTERPOINT

2021 / Projector, LED panel Program code

H2400mm W8000mm D10000mm



Every piece of music has a melody. Between the grains of sound making the melody, there is an infinite abyss of sound. The world of sound that exists between the grains and cannot be captured in a notation. The infinite world of sound existing between the grains is dynamically visualized by a digital program. The fluid marbling, like a metronome, has a constant velocity, but its scale and color keep changing. The mysterious patterns on the black screen are pieces of visualized music extracted through a specific program. There is no same shape in any music or repetition of any sound. This is a unique piece of sound, a world of sounds that have failed to become sound.



Nameless Portrait

2019

Aluminum, thread, Akoya pearl, organdy

H2800mm W3000mm D3000mm





Pearl farming industry in Omura Bay, Nagasaki Prefecture. In order to stabilize its value and distribute as a uniform industrial product, pearls have been bleached, its sphere polished, and measured in size to determine its rank during the distribution process. However, a pearl is actually the opposite of being uniform; Each is a gift of life born from a mother shell, the Akoya shellfish. The beauty in its uniqueness is similar to that of individual people. It truly embodies the beauty of diversity and individuality. That is, if it derives from natural diversity, instead of industrial uniformity, when brought into society. Within a single atmosphere, this exhibition aims to create time that has not been used during this history. Soft light falls in an atmosphere that is loosely separated from the outside world by organdy. The atmosphere portrays a mother's womb; In it dwells air, presence, sounds, and life, all holding its independent values. The single thread that supports the weight of a pearl expresses the time axis of the life of each pearl. Each thread sways in the natural breeze of its atmosphere and interacts with each other's lives, just like the life of us humans.



In Praise of Shadows

2018

Mino Japanese paper, fragrant wood,
iron, glass lamp, speaker, etc.

H2000mm W1500mm





In Praise of Shadows is a collection of essays by Junichiro Tanizaki, a Japanese author and essayist, discussing the sensation of beauty that is unique to Japan. In this book, in western countries at a time when there were still no street lights they would make the room as bright as possible and were obsessed with eliminating shadows. However, in Japan they accepted shadows and by using them they created art which appears only in the shadows and Tanizaki states that this is the characteristic of ancient Japanese art. Seitaro Yamazaki created an installation with his ideology as a motif. You can experience the installation with your five senses using light, music, aroma and Japanese paper with typography on it but no ink.

The installation “In the praise of Shadows” is a poster consisting of cut out shapes of a delicate washi paper. Only when the poster is lit from behind, the shapes of the letters will appear. Without the fixating means of printing, these cut out letters float and are able to move half melted in the air. The dimness of the space makes the outlines of the fleeting letters even obscurer, letting the story of these alluring letters emerge.

Furthermore, the typography, music and aroma are all created to express static and dynamic, light and dark, quiet and subdued refinement in “In Praise of Shadows”. With the typography, we ignored legibility on purpose and designed it in an uncertain, vague way, just maintaining its form as character. Furthermore, it was condensed into a form of “In Praise of Shadows” ideology which you can only understand by bodily sensation, escaping from the reading meaning of Kanji. The typeface is based on the stroke of traditional Japanese literature, being aware of soft and powerful motion that seems to melt into space. The character forms projected by penetrating light overflowed with three-dimensional vigor although it was two dimensional and emerged as an even vaguer existence.



What is called beauty always develops from real life. Our ancestors, forced to live in a dark room, found something beautiful in the shadows.

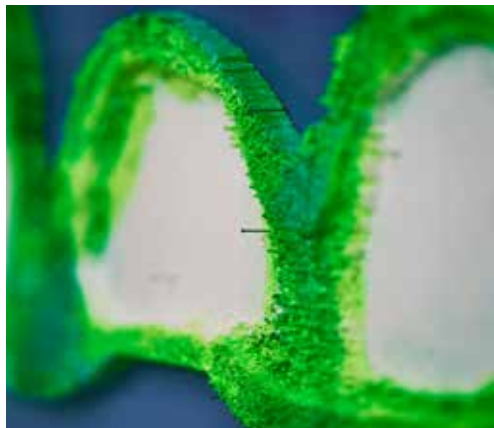
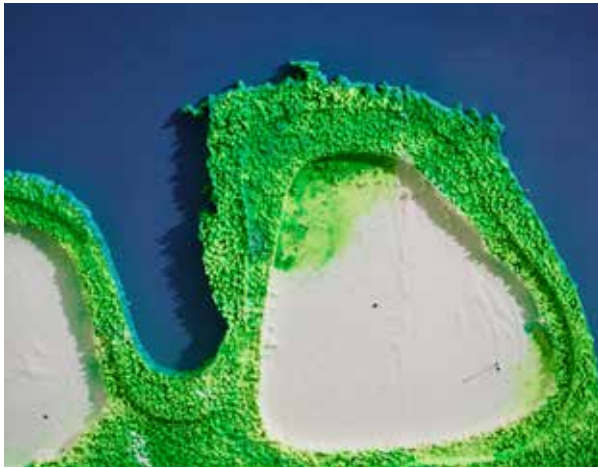
Junichiro Tanizaki, In Praise of Shadows

With music, it is comprised of electronic sound based on musical scale of “*W*” (a traditional Japanese wind instrument) and traditional Japanese musical instrument. At the same time, outside sound and sound of buried earthen jar actually recorded in Japan were incorporated. With sound system using quadral speakers, you can experience a world of deep sound at the venue. Furthermore, during the event, by updating sound in real time using modular synthesizers, you can experience sound fading in the same way as the light fading.

With regards to aroma, it has been devised based on an image of visual aroma so that the area where the light shines smoke will appear and in the shaded area the smoke will disappear. We have adopted two methods of “*Shoko*” and “*Senko*” as a way to burn incense that gives out smoke. “*Shoko*” is for the visitors to interactively participate in the exhibition and “*Senko*” is used to dramatize the exhibit area. For the aroma of “*Shoko*”, a fragrant wood called “*Kyara*” (in the context of Japanese aroma this is the best of its kind) is used and when the visitors continuously burn the “*Kyara*” which was divided into small pieces light and shadow through aroma and aroma of “*Kyara*” as one wood is reproduced by the visitors. For the aroma of “*Senko*”, agilawood grown in Vietnam which is a perfect match for the aroma of “*Kyara*” is used to produce a mystic space.

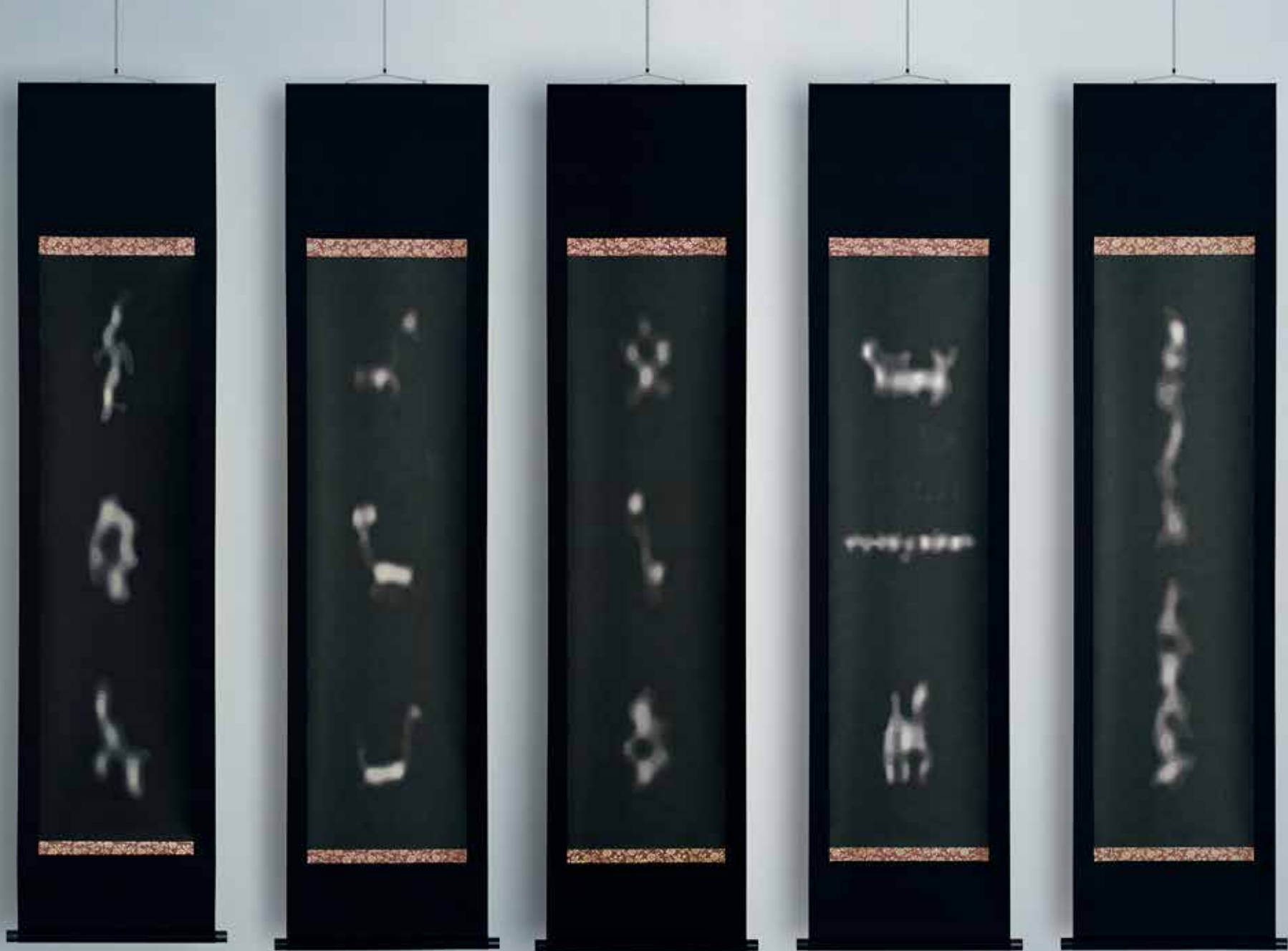


Specimens of the spilled over 2024 / Photographic paper, Pigment, Nylon resin, Medium: Photo Painting / H700mm W1300mm D70mm



This series is a body of work to raise question about validity for artists and critics to use concepts like minority, diversity, marginality, and intersectionality. I have been feeling that there are many instances where the apparent “diversity” and superficial consideration for “marginal”/ “minority” disrupt the deeper understanding and thoughtful engagement with these issues. It seems like we are creating typologies of concepts such as marginal, minorities, and/or diversity, much like crafting insect specimens. Within this series, I employ the extraction of latent shapes nestled within soundscapes through the utilization of spectrograms.

These concealed patterns are then subject to a substantial amplification process, resulting in their enlargement. Ultimately, these augmented forms are rendered tangibly by means of 3D printing technology. These printed shapes are then coated with fluorescent paint and fixed onto the background image using insect specimen pins. The extracted shapes symbolize the ambiguity that lie at the boundary between words, difficult to express in language. Applying fluorescent paint to them serves as a metaphor for reducing the infinite nuances of the original subject into vibrant unicolor.





“8 million traces” is microscopic photo series about religious perspectives of Japanese people in 21st century. This project aims to reconsider the relationship between place, space, and spirituality in the 21st century Tokyo, while citing the framework of historical spiritual understanding in Japanese archipelago.



From ancient times to the present day, various belief systems have existed throughout the Japanese archipelago. The fundamental concept of those belief systems is that all elements of nature and some aged artifacts can potentially house divine spirits. These countless spirits existing in Japanese archipelago in this way are collectively referred to as the “Yaoyorozu (8 million gods)”. The title of the series is derived from this concept and symbolizing the multitude of spiritual traces present in the land. The concept of the “eight million gods” is also important as the basis for contemporary Japanese popular culture. For example, it can be observed in the works of Hayao Miyazaki’s films such as “Princess Mononoke,” and “Spirited Away,” as well as in comic works like “Demon Slayer,” and “Jujutsu Kaisen.”

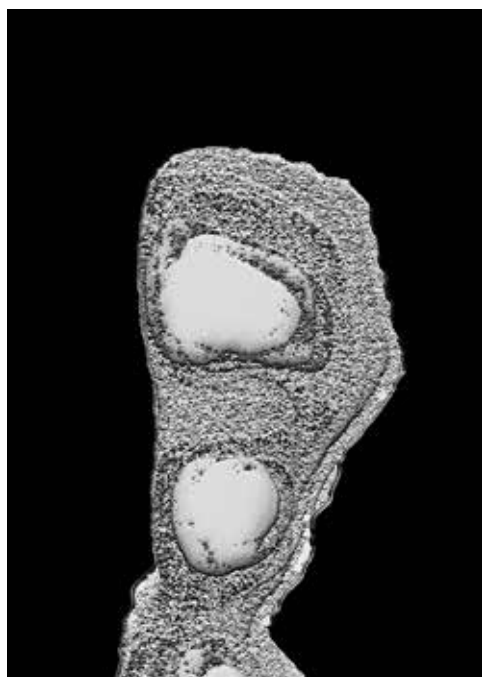
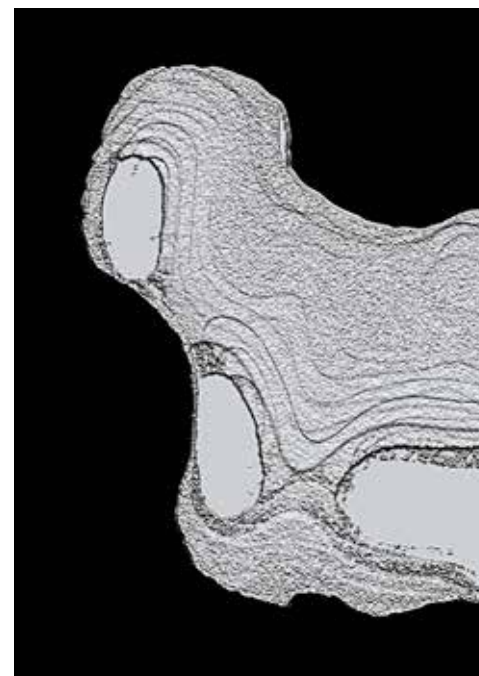
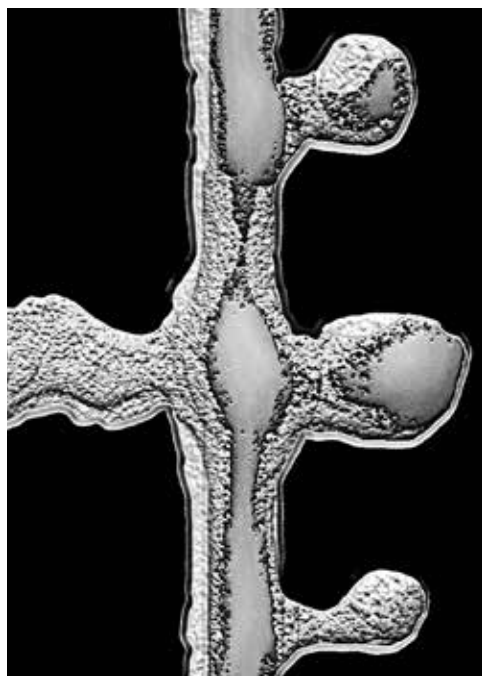


8 million traces

2023

Japanese Paper, archival pigment print

H525mm W405mm D30mm

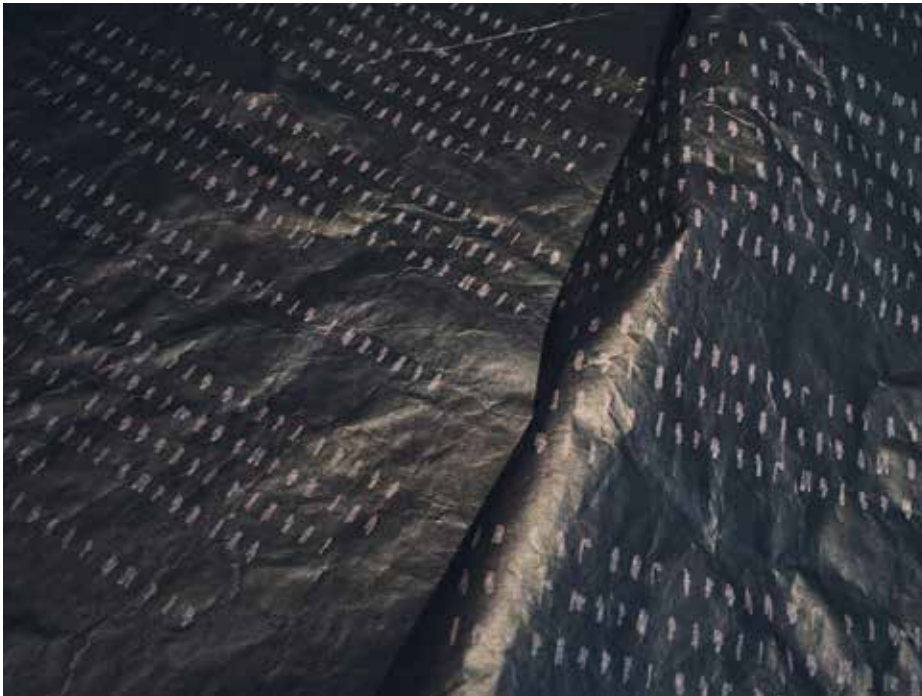




Stories Not Used

"OLD TESTAMENT" BOOK OF GENESIS

2024 / Mixed media / H1050mm W815mm



The series, titled “Stories Not Used,” focuses on what has fallen out of the various historical narratives and what has drifted around these words but has not been recorded in words.

I started my career as a graphic designer and was heavily influenced by Swiss-style typography. Therefore, I have been thinking about how to make the typeface itself a contemporary work of art, rather than using it as part of a contemporary work of art.

The typeface designs of Nicolas Jenson and Claude Garamond, as well as Giambattista Bodoni, Jan Tschichold, Max Miedinger and Eduard Hoffmann, are all fruits of the highest human creativity, each based on a specific aesthetic sense and design philosophy. However, only typeface designers can interact with those ideas, and most people are unaware that there is an clear idea behind each typeface.

Also, human communication is a combination of sounds, gestures, and facial expressions, but letters only record sounds. However, most of human histories have been recorded by letters. There must have been a vast amount of information that was lost before it became a written language.



Fortunately, today there are many font editors that allow us to create our own fonts. We also have sophisticated digital recorders, sonograph software, and image editing software. I decided to create a font set using those tools, and from the sounds that surround the clearly audible words, but which have fallen out of the words. This is a metaphor for the fact that there are always unwritten voices around the voices that have been recorded in written form. At the same time, the font set itself has the possibility of becoming a contemporary work of art.

This is the work about what has spilled out of the words used to tell History. Letters on the screen are figures extracted from sonographs of the alphabet read aloud, just before and after the letters are pronounced. Shapes similar to the letters corresponding to the sound are extracted and entered into font editor to create a font set. This set has no kerning and all letters have square margins. This work uses this set to write out the beginning of the book of Genesis in the Old Testament.



Stories Not Used "עֲרֵא תָאָּן מִיִּמְשָׁה תָאָּ מִיִּלְלָא אֶרֶב תִּשְׁאֶרֶב" / WYC1382 -In The Bigynnyng God Made Of Nouyt Heuene And Erthe.- 2024 / Mixed media / H440mm W562mm D60mm

Stories Not Used "Sonnets 18" William Shakespear -Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?-, "Epic of Gilgamesh" SUMERIAN -ALL THAT THEY DO IS BUT WIND- 2024 / Mixed media / H440mm W565mm D25mm



-Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? -
from "Sonnets 18" William Shakespear



- ALL THAT THEY DO IS BUT WIND -
from "Epic of Gilgamesh" SUMERIAN



-In The Bigynnyng God Made Of Nouyt Heuene And Erthe.-
from "תַּאֲזוּת מִן הַמַּלְאָכִים / WYC1382"



The Voice within the Voice "Sandra Oh speaks at anti-Asian hate rally in Oakland / The Pitt News

2024 / H1260mm W1950mm D44mm



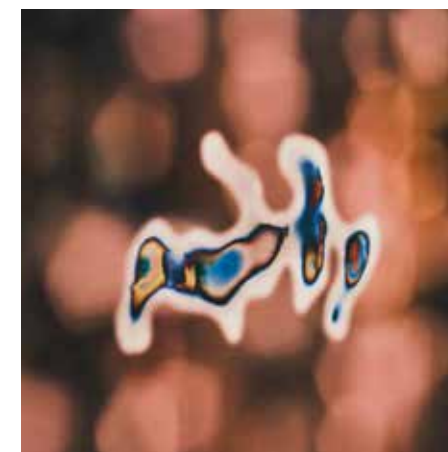
In this work, I examined the relationship between the voices of people speaking in various news videos and the things behind those voices.

Overlaid on the captured video images are various figures extracted from the sonographs of the audio tracks in these videos. Sonograph is a graph that breaks down sound into frequency bands and expresses the strength and weakness of the sound volume in each frequency band in terms of shading. It is a device for graphing human voices, animal noises, and the sounds of musical instruments, but in this work, I am extracting a graph of something that exists between voices, in other words, in the boundary region between voices and noise.



As a Japanese artist, I have been attempting to redefine “yohaku,” one of the traditional domains of beauty in Japan, in the contemporary art world. Unlike the Western concept of “negative space,” “yohaku” refers to a space where something exists but is left without form.

In this work, what appears on the captured images is something between the voices of the characters. They may be things that they did not dare to put into words. Or perhaps they are things that could not be put into words. So, to say, “yohaku” of their voices.



The Voice within the Voice "People shouting from their windows during the lockdown in Shanghai / From Patrick Madrid's post on X"

2024 / H1950mm W1170mm D44mm



A BOUQUET OF DIVERSITY

2024

Stone, Wood, Cast aluminum, Resin

H2070mm W2350mm D2350mm



In this work I want to express the beauty, discomfort and importance of people from diverse backgrounds living together in one city and accepting each other's differences. Stone, wood, and cast aluminum – these three materials have been through different flows of time and will undergo distinct aging processes in the future. By combining these materials, I aim to represent the peace derived from human evolution and multicultural coexistence, symbolizing the harmony acquired through time.

The distinctive atmosphere that emerges around the artwork will function similarly to the chasitsu in the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. It will serve as a place where everyone becomes equal beyond their positions, a space where individuals become equally valued.



Fossils from the future "NIKE AIR JORDAN I"

2021 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H140mm W300mm D300mm



How will our consumption look when seen from the perspective of people in the future with different values?

The inspiration for this piece started from that simple question. Within the lifestyle of the artist, who grew up in the midst of Tokyo street culture, Nike sneakers were a constant and absolute iconic presence. This piece is a sneaker sculpted in sand. The Nike Air Jordan 1 is made of sand and the logo mark is in acrylic. The symbol of consumption is detached from the functional material, and the two elements are crafted from differing materials and given a different sense of time. The concept is deconstructed and rebuilt from two materials in different times. We have icon preferences, these icons are a part of our lives, and we consume them. In this sense, the work is like a letter from the future to all of us living in the world right now.



Fossils from the future "CHANEL No°5"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H120mm W70mm D60mm

Fossils from the future "SUPREME"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H130mm W270mm D550mm



Fossils from the future "STARBUCKS COFFEE"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H200mm W100mm D150mm



Fossils from the future "LEICA M10"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

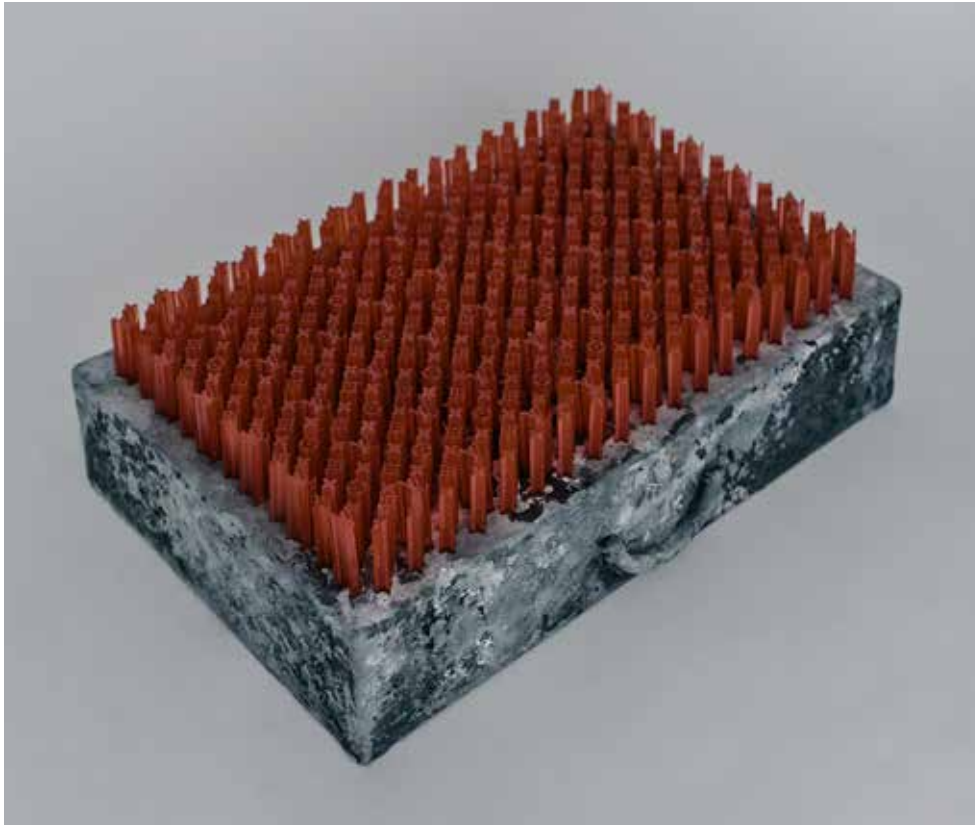
H80mm W140mm D100mm



Fossils from the future "Lay's"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H300mm W300mm D250mm



Fossils from the future "Louis vuitton"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H250mm W730mm D480mm



Fossils from the future "HERMES"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H460mm W420mm D320mm



UNIT FOR Y-AXIS

2019

Canvas, Paper, Japanese paper, Sumi, Pigment, Driftwood, Gom, Wood, Lotus
canvas with driftwood H725mm W910mm D38mm
canvas with piece of wood H1140mm W725mm D55mm

In the X, Y, and Z axes that make up this world, Y-axis exist from gravity. If we release the Y-axis from the gravity, then what kind of recognition will be born? What kind of relationship and tale will create on three equivalent and balanced axes? A composition for doubting the Y axis backed by absolute trust such as the sea, the ground, and stars. I re-evaluated these three axes, as an absolute concept in this relative world.



Crystallization of worthless time

2021

resin, wax, pigment

H240mm W240mm D50mm

“Kintsugi” is a technique used in Japan for repairing broken vessels. Lacquer and metal are used to join breaks in vessels and fill up chipped places. Vessels are a crystallization of functional beauty that draw close to our lives. “Kintsugi” connects our feelings for those vessels with the future. It is nothing other than wrapping time called feelings around something which has value, so to speak, and making that thing even more valuable. The concept termed “wabi-sabi”, which is peculiar to Japan, and is similar to, yet different from, Western modernism. The big factor encompassed by this minimal beauty is time. The basis of this work is a panel made while mixing resin, wax, and pigment, which are materials which have different time axes – that is, different congealing points and melting points. The panel’s broken lines, full of unpredictability, are displayed and repaired using “kintsugi”. Breaking a mere worthless thing which does not involve time in our lives, and on the other hand, affirming that temporality only, and connecting it with the future. This is an endeavor which uses time to give value to something which at first glance has no value, and it is a crystallization of worthless time.