

SEITARO YAMAZAKI

PORTFOLIO

ARTIST STATEMENT

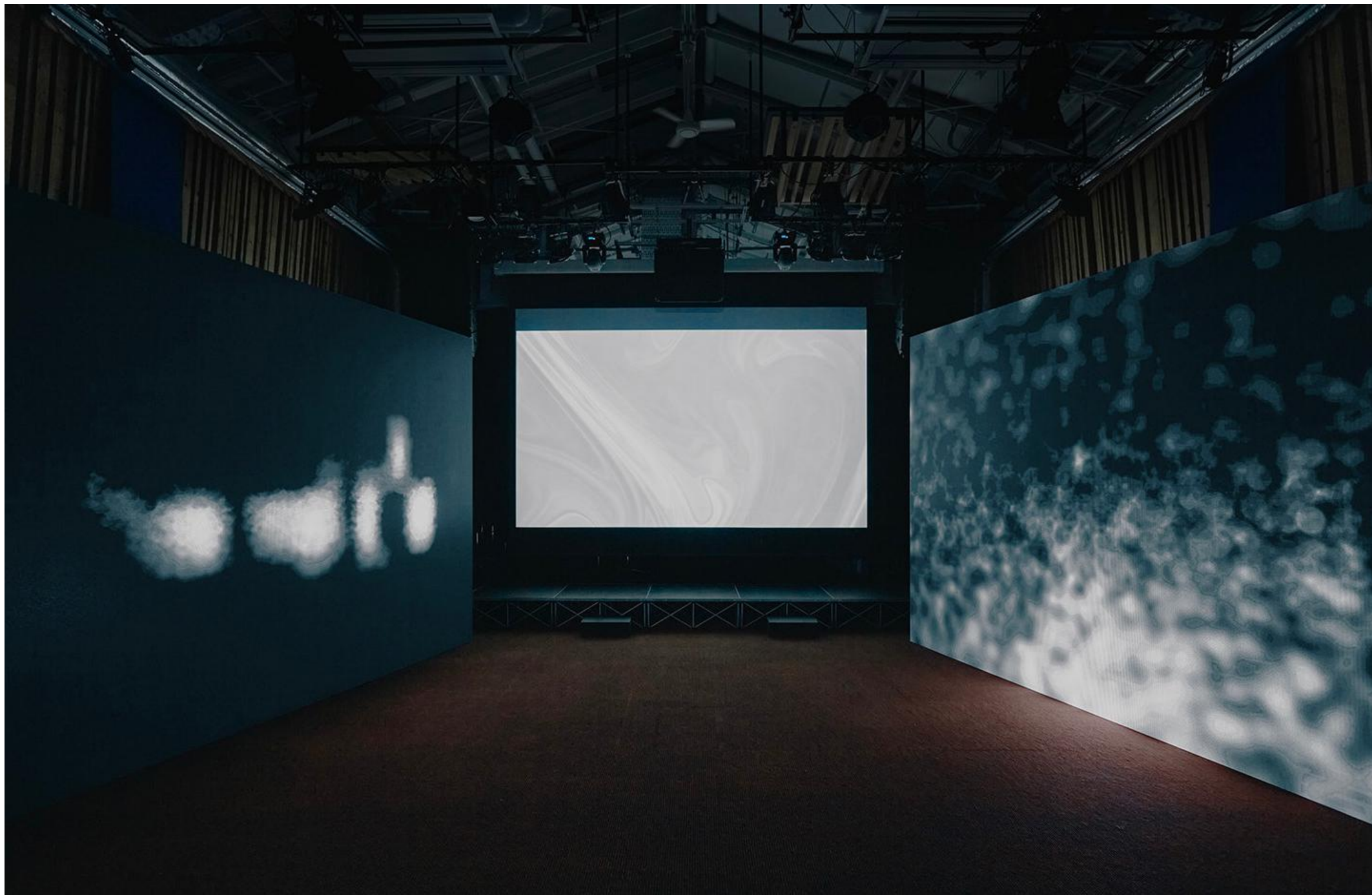
I explore the beauty of ambiguity, transience, and the things that were never depicted, spoken, or formed.

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 minimalistic 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.

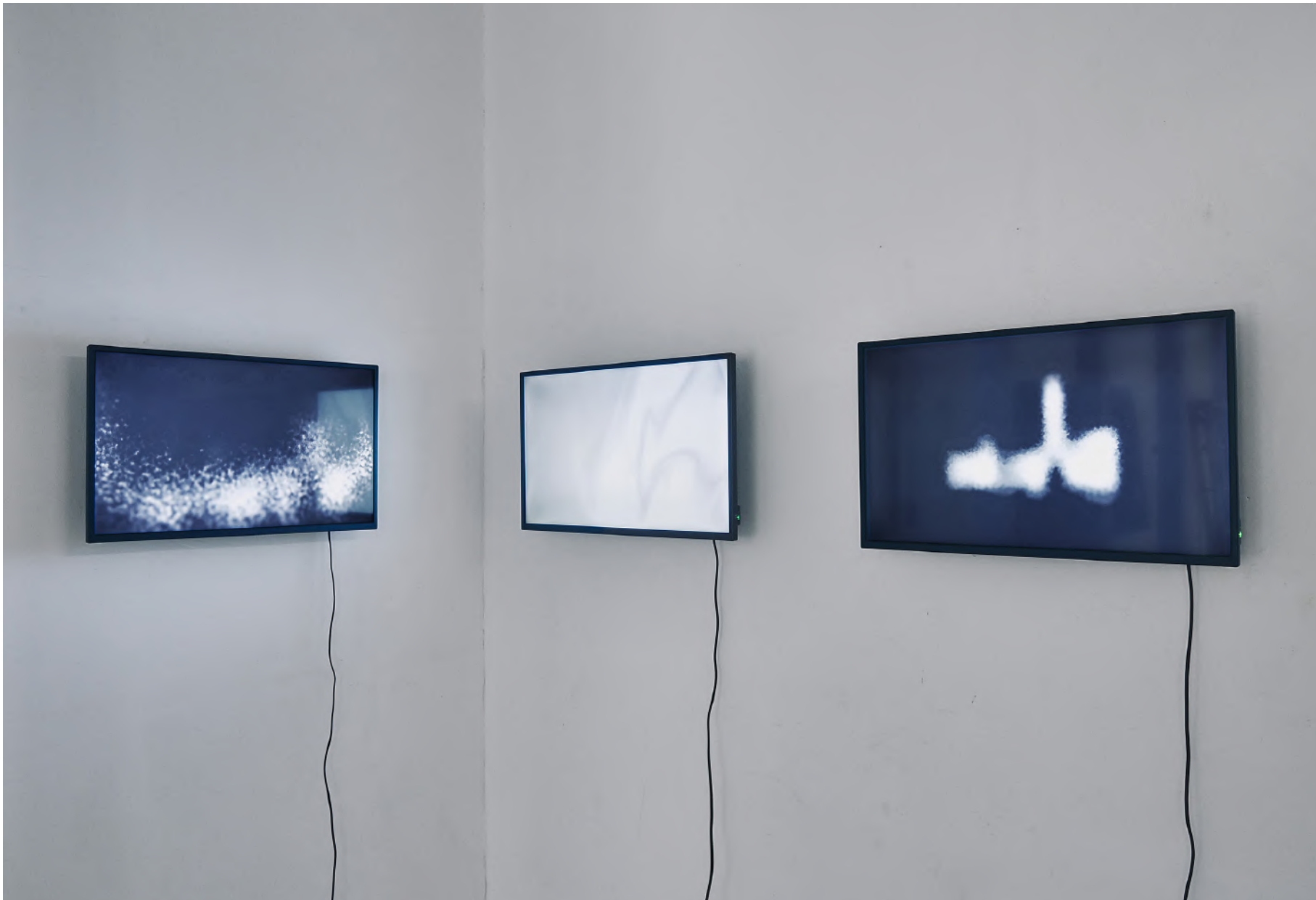
I have been incorporated this sense of Japanese aesthetics into my minimalist art. In painting, sculpture, installation, and photography, I am trying to capture the fleeting beauty that exists at the boundaries between the world that industrial civilization has torn apart, or beauty of the things that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



"MUSIC FOR THE MARGINS" #01 STEVE REICH / COUNTERPOINT

2021 / Projector, LED panel, Program code / H 2400 × W 8000 × D 10000 (mm)





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.



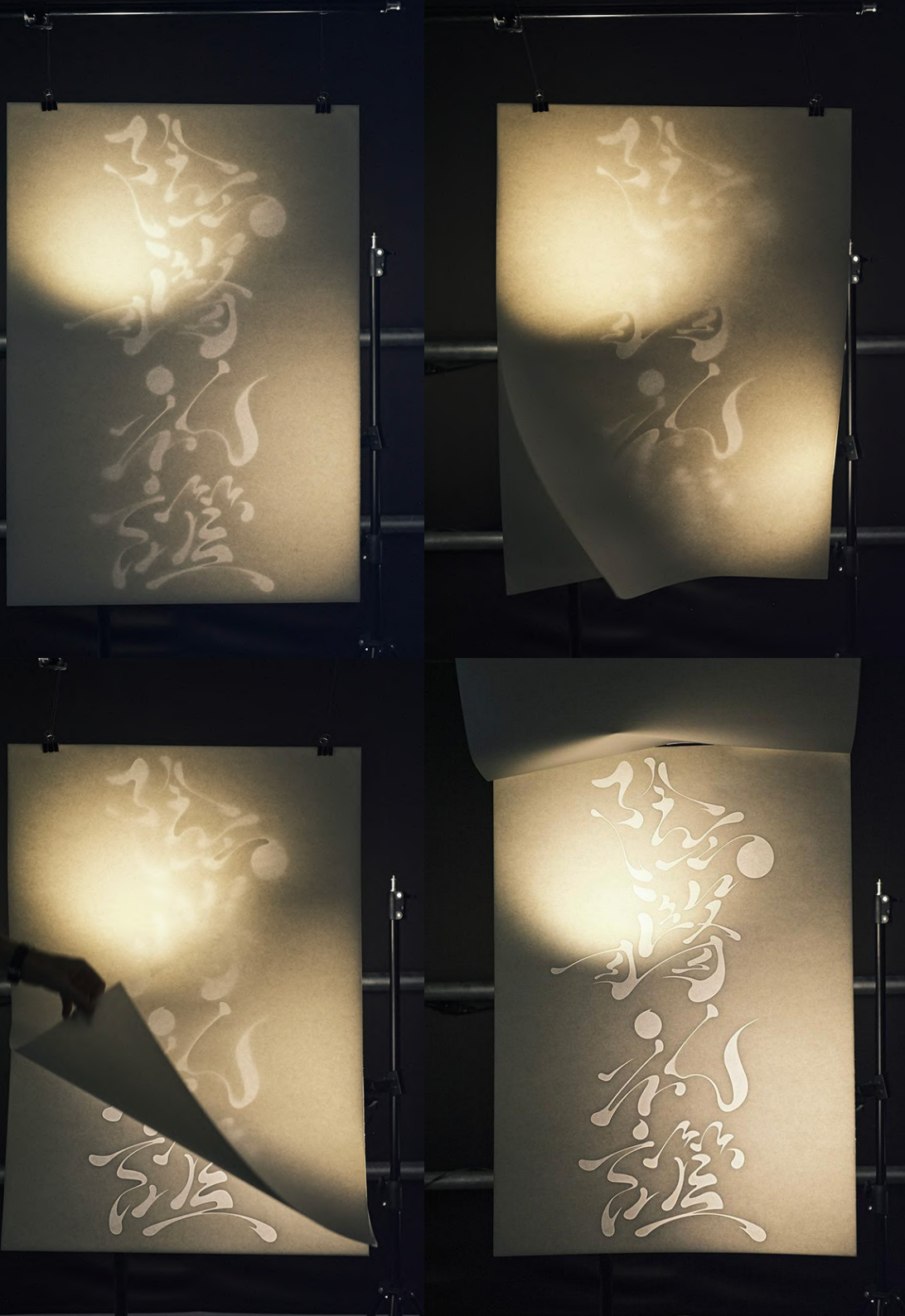
In Praise of Shadows

2018

Mino Japanese Paper, Fragrant Wood, Iron, Glass Lamp, Speaker, Video etc.

H 2000 × W 1500 (mm)





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 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.



Nameless Portrait

2019

Aluminum, Thread, Akoya Pearls, Organdie

H 2800 × W 3000 × D 3000 (mm)







The Womb of the City

2023 / Japanese Paper, Old Wood, Board, Urethane Paint, Bamboo, Pine, Lighting, Cushion / H 2100 × W 2800 × D 4500 (mm)





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.



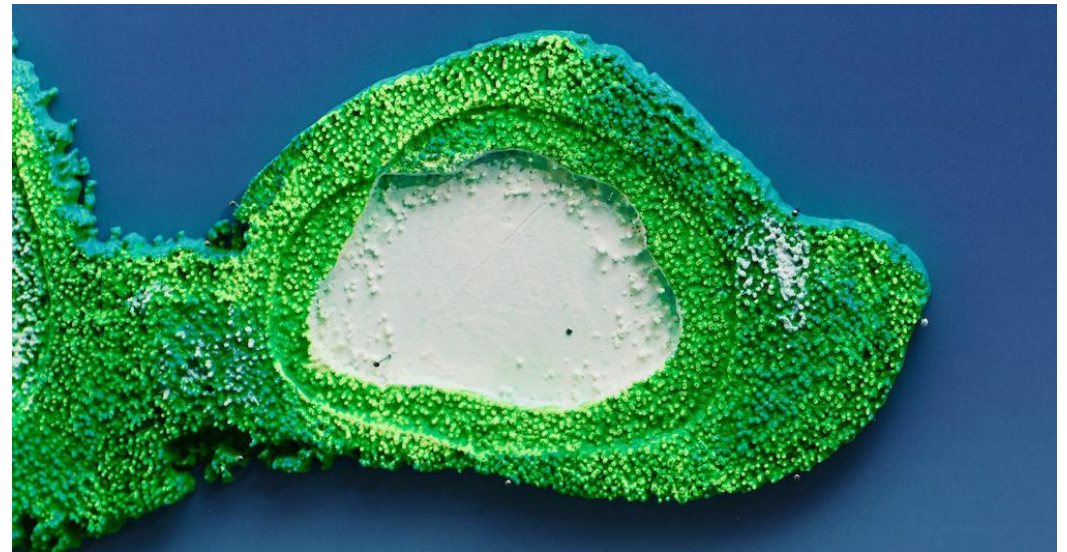
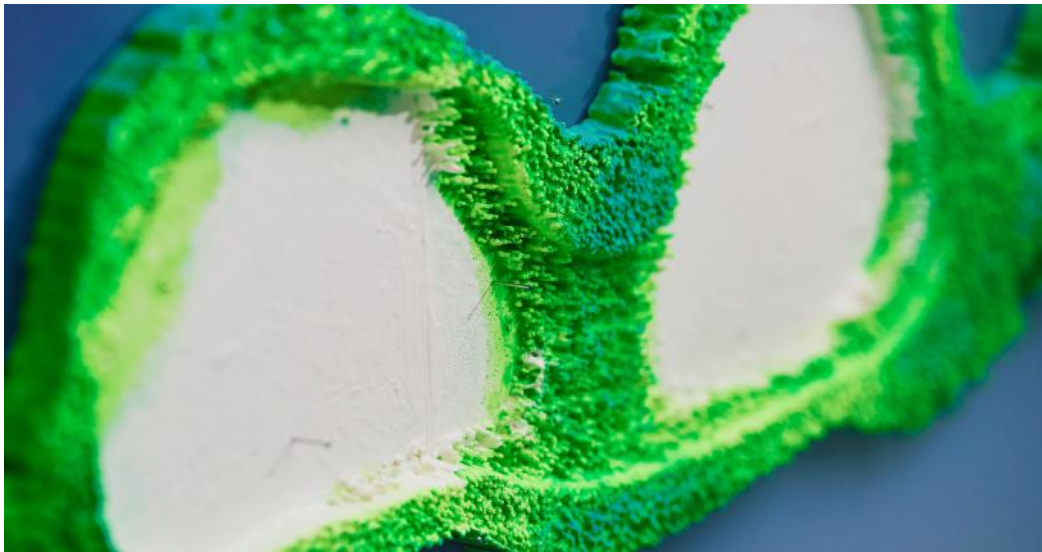
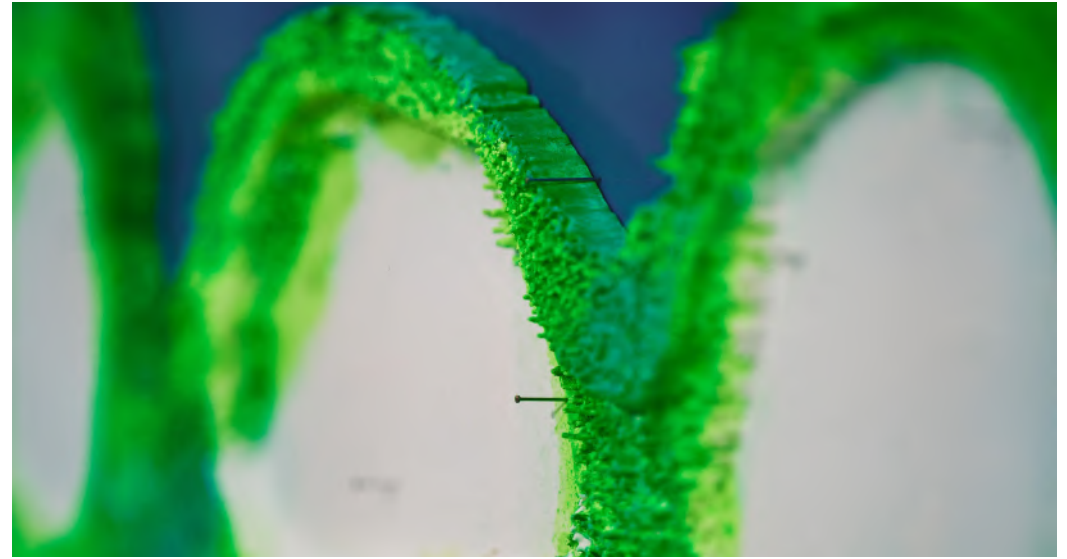
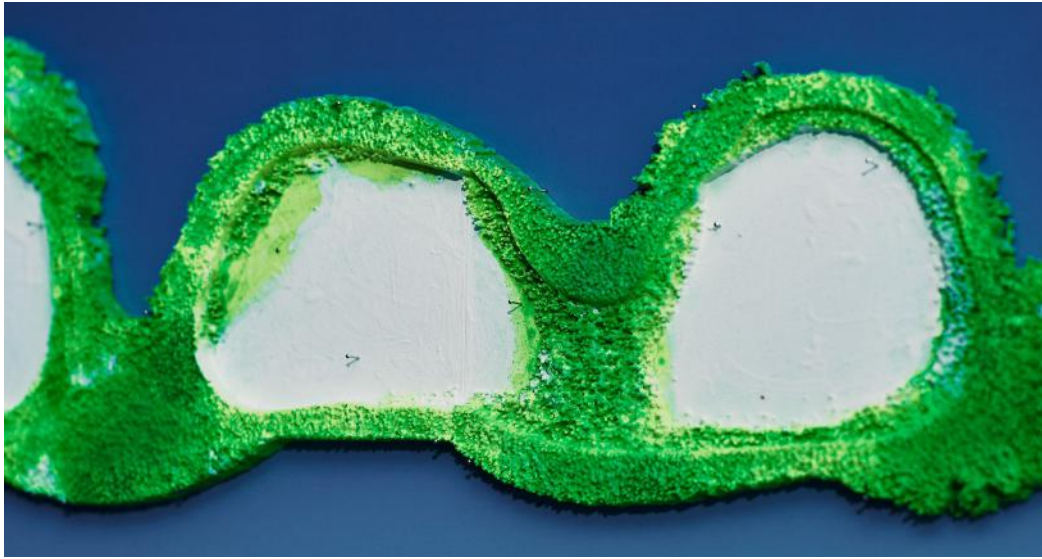
Specimens of the spilled over

2024

Medium: Photo Painting

Photographic Paper, Pigment, Nylon Resin, Insect Pin

H 700 × W 1300 × D 70 (mm)



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.





Osaka Station

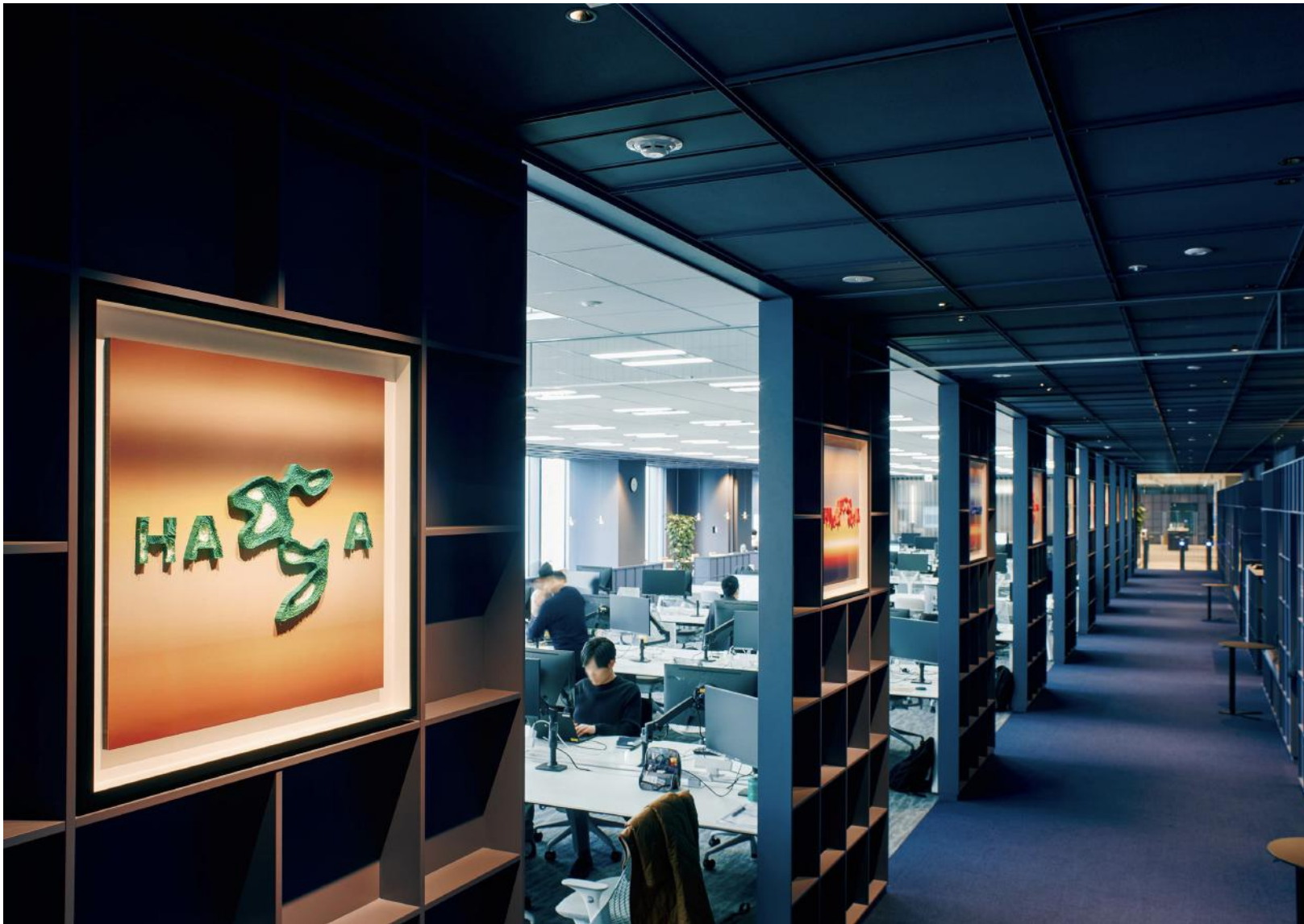


Kanazawa Station

Specimen of the Spilled Over

"Osaka Station", "Kanazawa Station", "Tsuruga Station", "Kyoto Station",
 "Yonago Station", "Wakayama Station", "Sannomiya Station", "Okayama Station",
 "Hiroshima Station", "Hakata Station"

2024 / Medium: Photo Painting, Photographic Paper, Pigment, Nylon Resin, Insect Pin / H 785 × W 785 × D 70(mm)



This work was produced in 2024 as a commission for JR West. Specimen of the Spilled Over is a mixed-media series combining photography with colored 3D-printed sculptures. From among the sonograms of soundscapes collected in various places, I extracted forms that drift along the boundary between distinct sounds and noise, then 3D-printed and colored them. These sculptures are pinned onto photographs taken at the corresponding locations, expressing a presence that exists in these places before it becomes language.

I collected the soundscapes of ten major terminal stations that represent JR West—such as Osaka Station, Kanazawa Station, Kyoto Station, and Hakata Station—and combined them with a custom typeface designed for JR West, which was then 3D-printed. Each of these stations has its own unique linguistic intonation, the sound of winds blowing in from mountains, rivers, and seas, and a distinctive urban atmosphere. It is not only the word that denotes the city's name but also these alluring, site-specific soundscapes that form part of the city's identity.



Tsuruga Station



Kyoto Station



Yonago Station



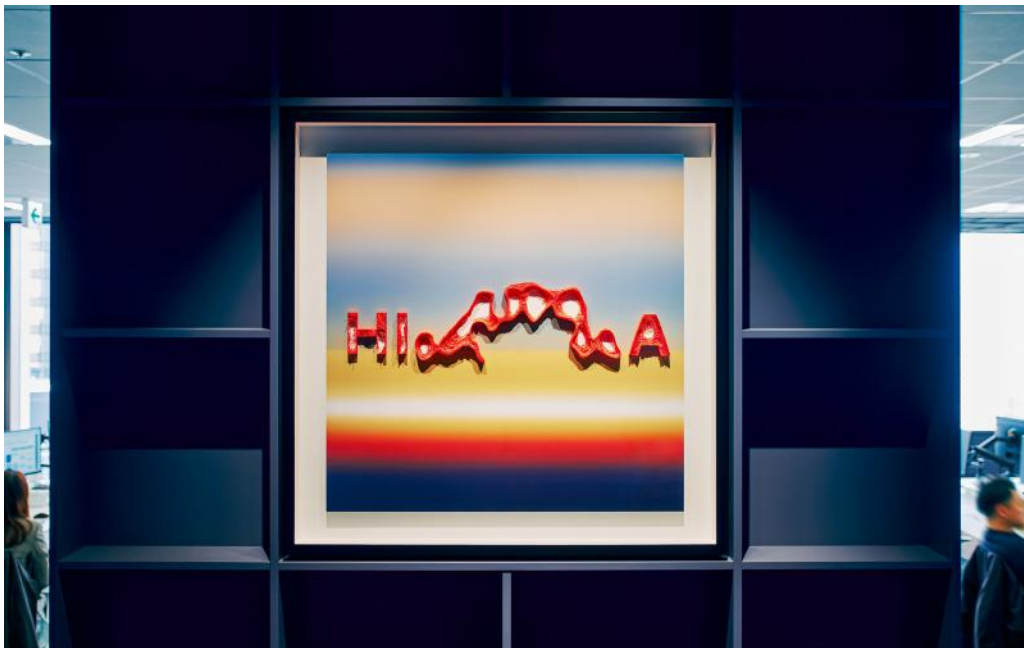
Wakayama Station



Sannomiya Station



Okayama Station



Hiroshima Station



Hakata Station

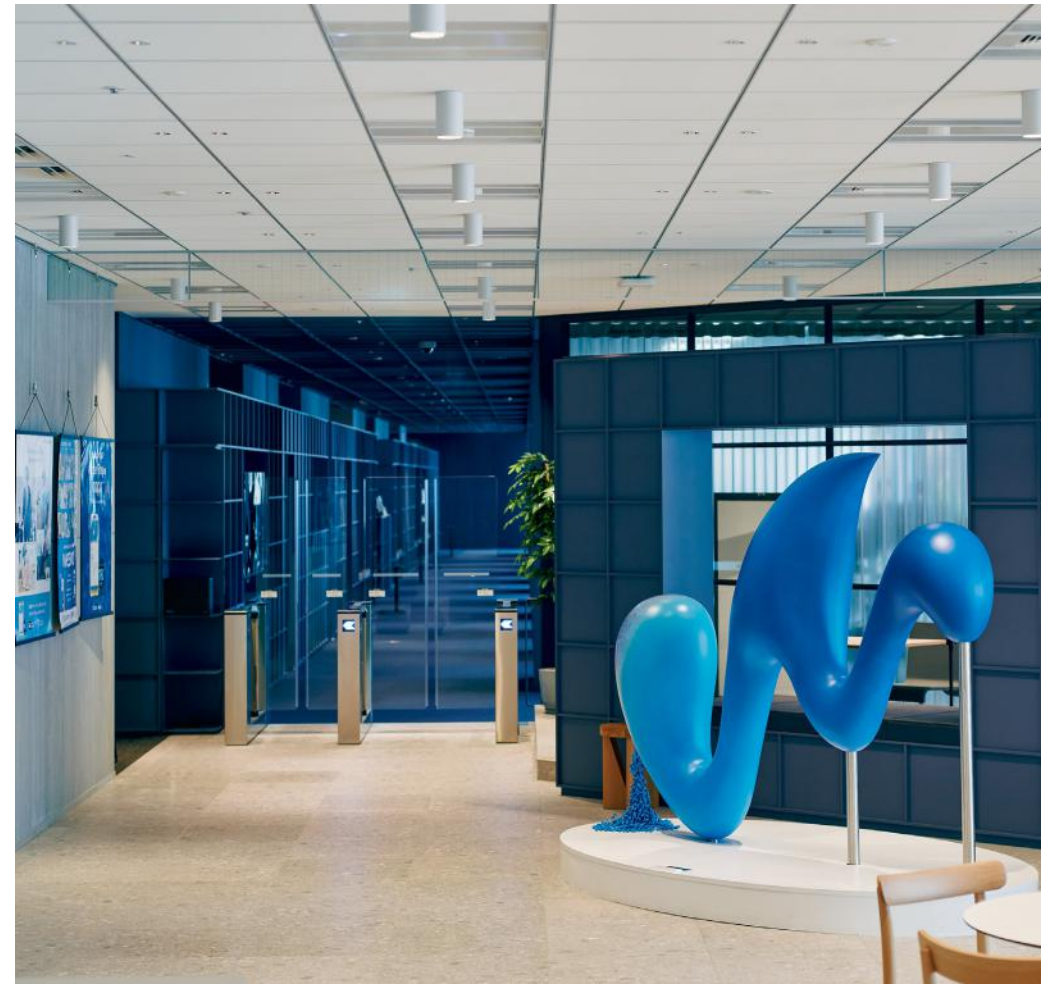


We All Wesmo!

2024

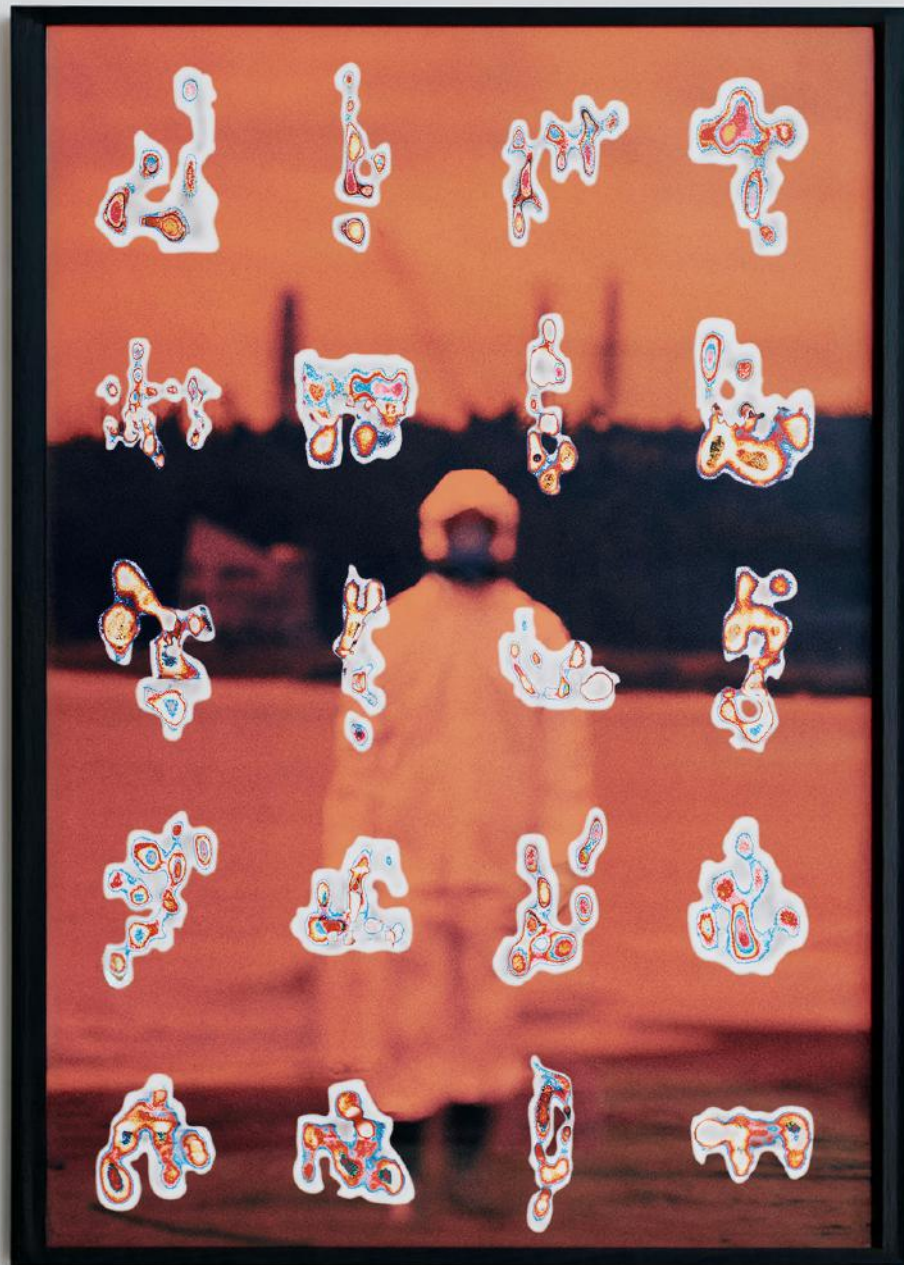
Aluminum, FRP, Transparent Resin

H 1800 × W 2400 × D 1500 (mm)



This piece is a large-scale sculpture that reimagines the logo I designed for Wesmo!, a payment and wallet service. Wesmo! is offered by JR West, a major railway company, and is built on a strong commitment to creating a future of digital payments that leaves no one behind.

The sculpture seamlessly integrates three distinct materials—aluminum, FRP, and transparent resin. A portion of the large logo sculpture appears torn open, revealing countless smaller logos emerging from within. This symbolizes how each individual in Western Japan plays a vital role in this service and how, despite being made of different materials, they come together as one cohesive society.

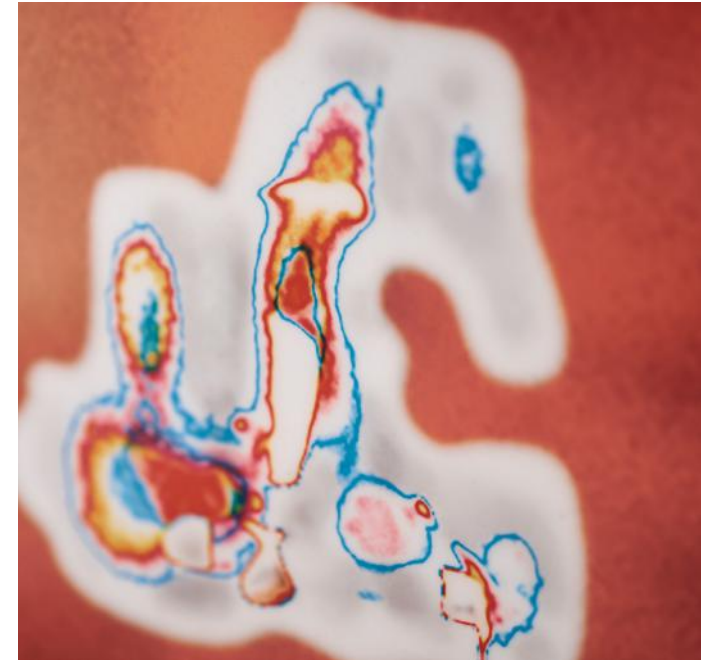


The Voice within the Voice "Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear disaster of March 11, 2011"

2025

Solvent inkjet print

H 1030 × W 688 (mm)



This work was created for the "Marginal Art Fair Fukushima Hirono" held in Hirono town, an area affected by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, in January 2025, as a response to the work "Fragmented Dreams" (2021) by Ukrainian artist Maria Proshkowska .

Proshkowska's work uses Soviet-era film found in the area affected by the Chernobyl nuclear accident to photograph the mosaic tiles "Blacksmiths of the Present" created by Ukrainian artists Halyna Zubchenko and Hryhorii Pryshedko between 1972 and 1974 and installed at the Institute for Nuclear Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

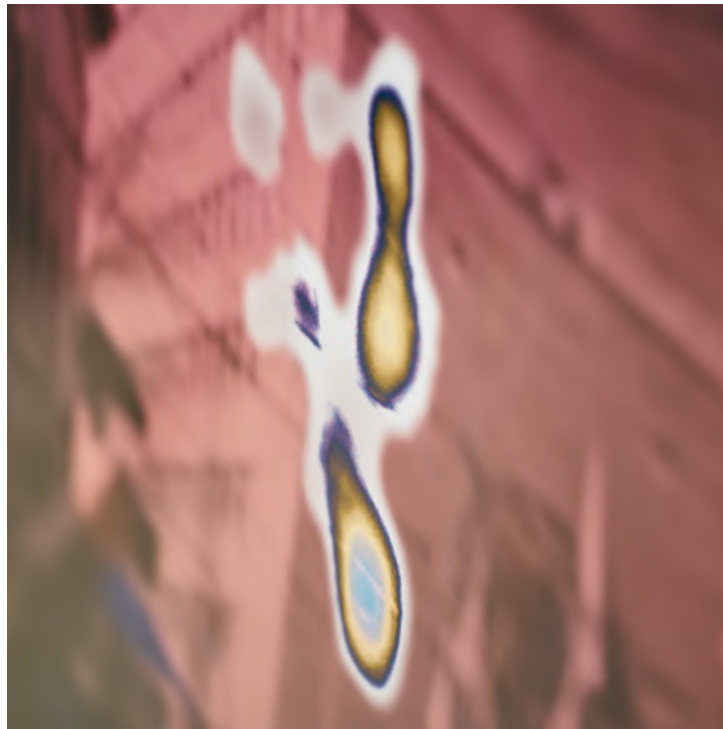
I was so impressed by her work that I created this as part of the series "The Voice within the voice," which uses sonographic figures extracted from the audio tracks of news footage.

The background of sonographic figures is a photograph of a worker at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident site. On top of that, I placed 20 mysterious shapes that I had collected from the sonographs of the audio track of the news footage reporting on the accident. These shapes are not letters or words, but they are the embodiment of the inexpressible feelings of those affected by the nuclear disaster, and the atmosphere at the site of accident that was left out of the news video.



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

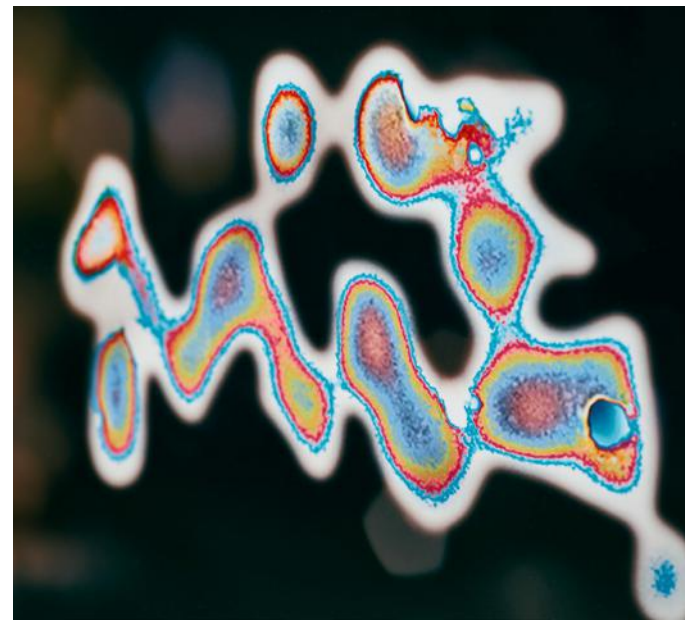
2024 / Solvent inkjet print / H 1260 × W 1950 × D 44 (mm)



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 / Solvent inkjet print / H 1950 x W 1170 x D 44 (mm)



A BOUQUET OF DIVERSITY

2024

Stone, Wood, Cast aluminum, Resin

H 2070 × W 2350 × D 2350 (mm)



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.



Sculpture of 8 million traces

2024

3D-printed nylon resin with a gold vapor-deposited finish

H 290 × W 120 × D 120 (mm)



This piece is part of my long-running series "8 million traces." In this series, I make field recordings of sounds in various places, analyze them using an application called a sonograph to separate out different frequency bands, and then extract the mysterious shapes that drift through each sonic landscape—turning them into art. These shapes serve as metaphors for the spirits (chi-rei) of each place. In this particular work, I took one of the shapes generated by the sonograph and used 3D-CAD software to rotate and "lift" it upward. It evokes the image of an earth spirit rising from the ground and spiraling up into the sky.



Fossils from the future "Nike AIR JORDAN I"

2021

Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H 140 × W 300 × D 300 (mm)



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.



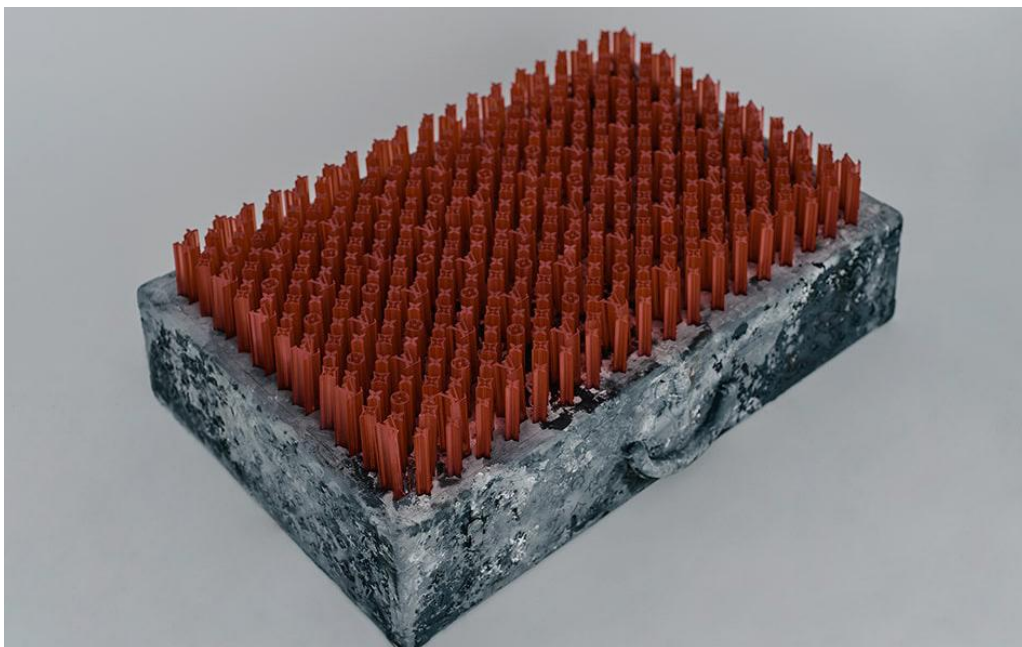
Fossils from the future "CHANEL No°5"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment / H 120 x W 70 x D 60 (mm)



Fossils from the future "SUPREME"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment / H 130 x W 270 x D 550 (mm)



Fossils from the future "LOUIS VUITTON"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment / H 250 x W 730 x D 480 (mm)



Fossils from the future "HERMES"

2022 / Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment / H 460 x W 420 x D 320 (mm)



Fossils from the future "STARBUCKS COFFEE"

2022

Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H 220 x W 100 x D 150 (mm)



Fossils from the future "LEICA M10"

2022

Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H 80 x W 140 x D 100 (mm)



Fossils from the future "Lay's"

2022

Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment

H 300 x W 300 x D 250 (mm)

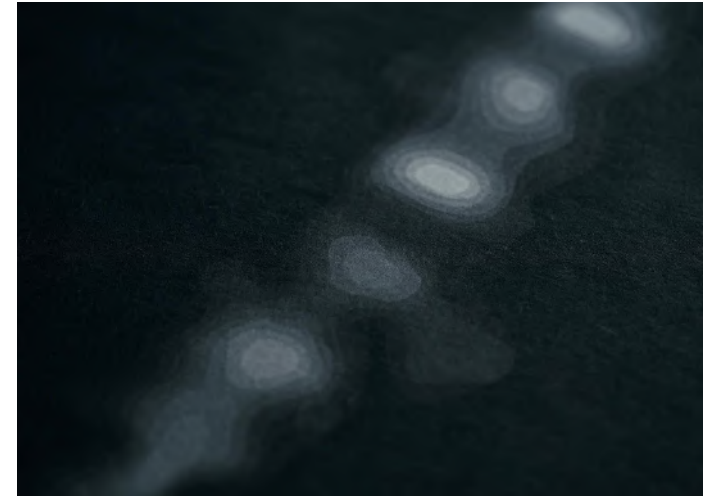
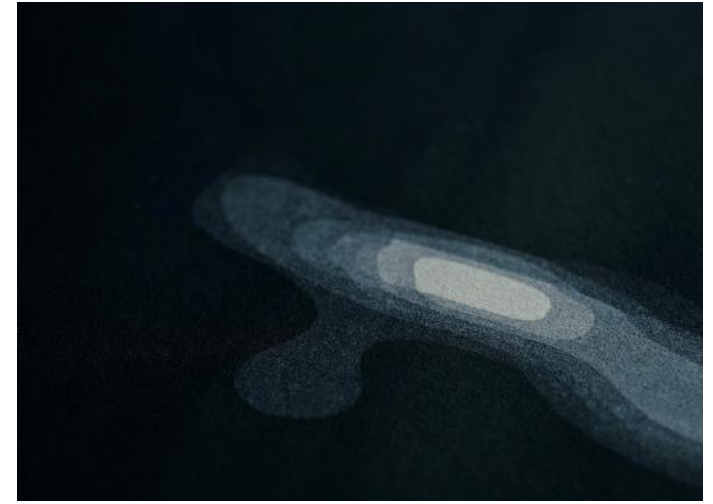
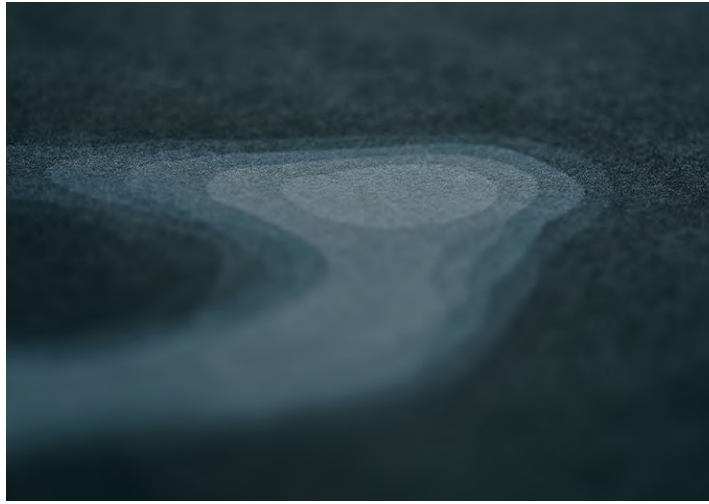
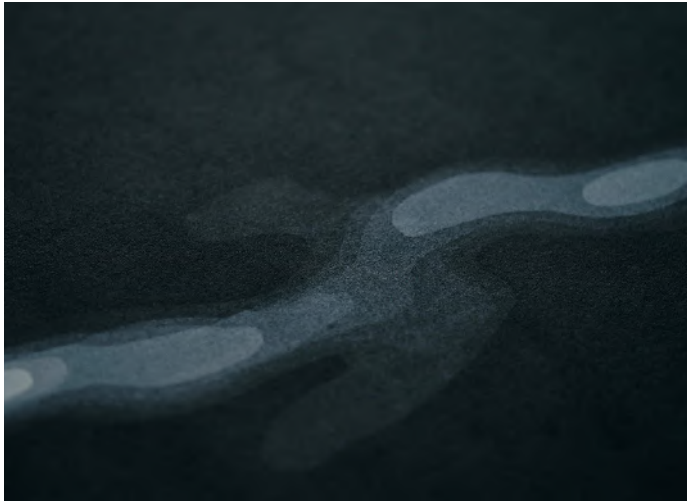


8 million traces

2023

Hanging scroll mount, Japanese paper, Pigment print

H 1960 × W 460 (mm)



"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."

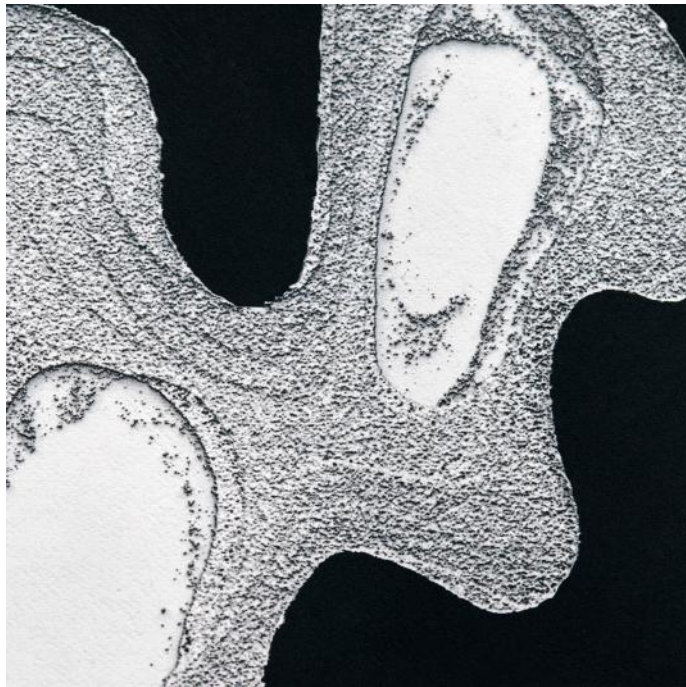
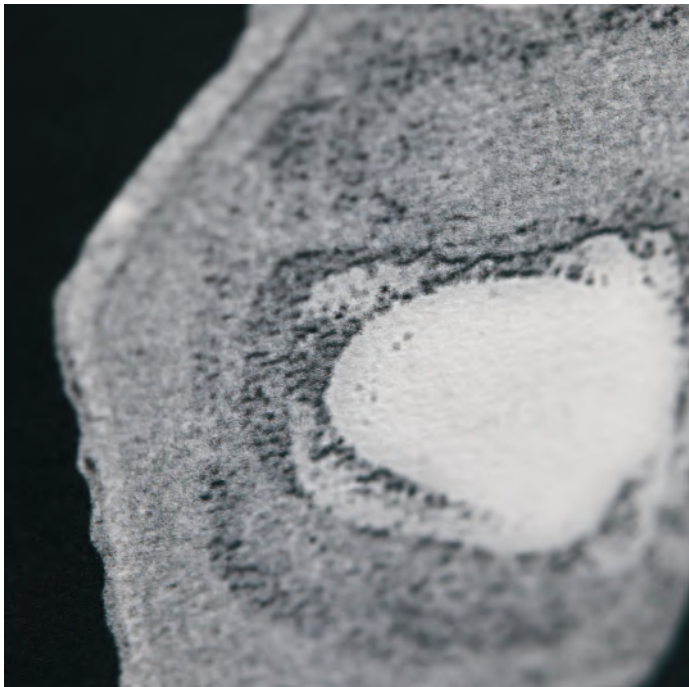
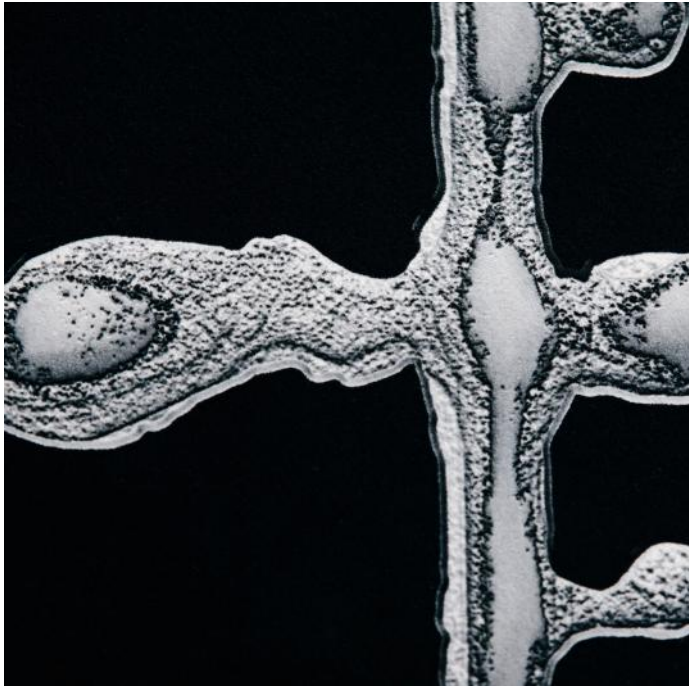


8 million traces

2023

Japanese paper, Pigment print

H 525 × W 405 × D 30 (mm)





8 million traces

2024

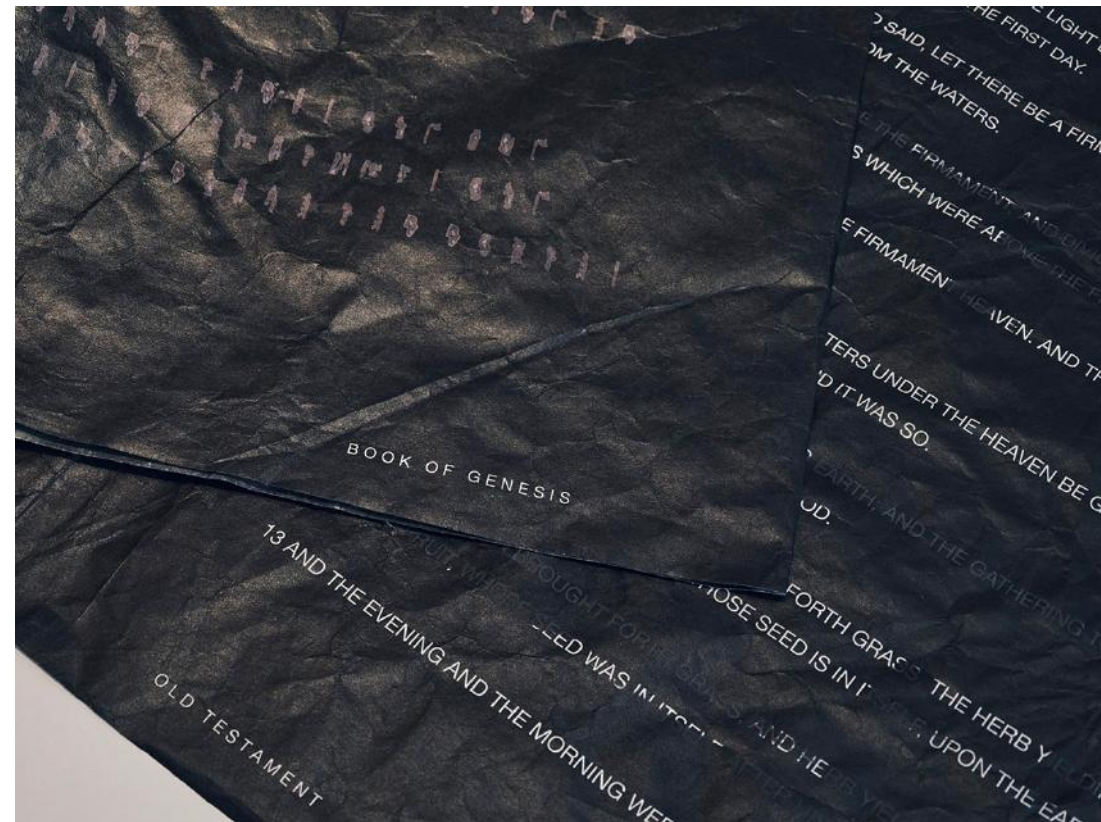
Japanese paper, Inkjet print
H 30000 × W 360 (mm)

Pictures © Mari Vass





Stories Not Used
"OLD TESTAMENT" BOOK OF GENESIS
2024 / Mixed media / H 1050 × W 815 (mm)



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

"Sonnets 18" William Shakespear

-Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?-

2024 / Mixed media / H 440 × W 565 × D 25 (mm)



Stories Not Used

"Epic of Gilgamesh" SUMERIAN

-ALL THAT THEY DO IS BUT WIND-

2024 / Mixed media / H 440 × W 565 × D 25 (mm)

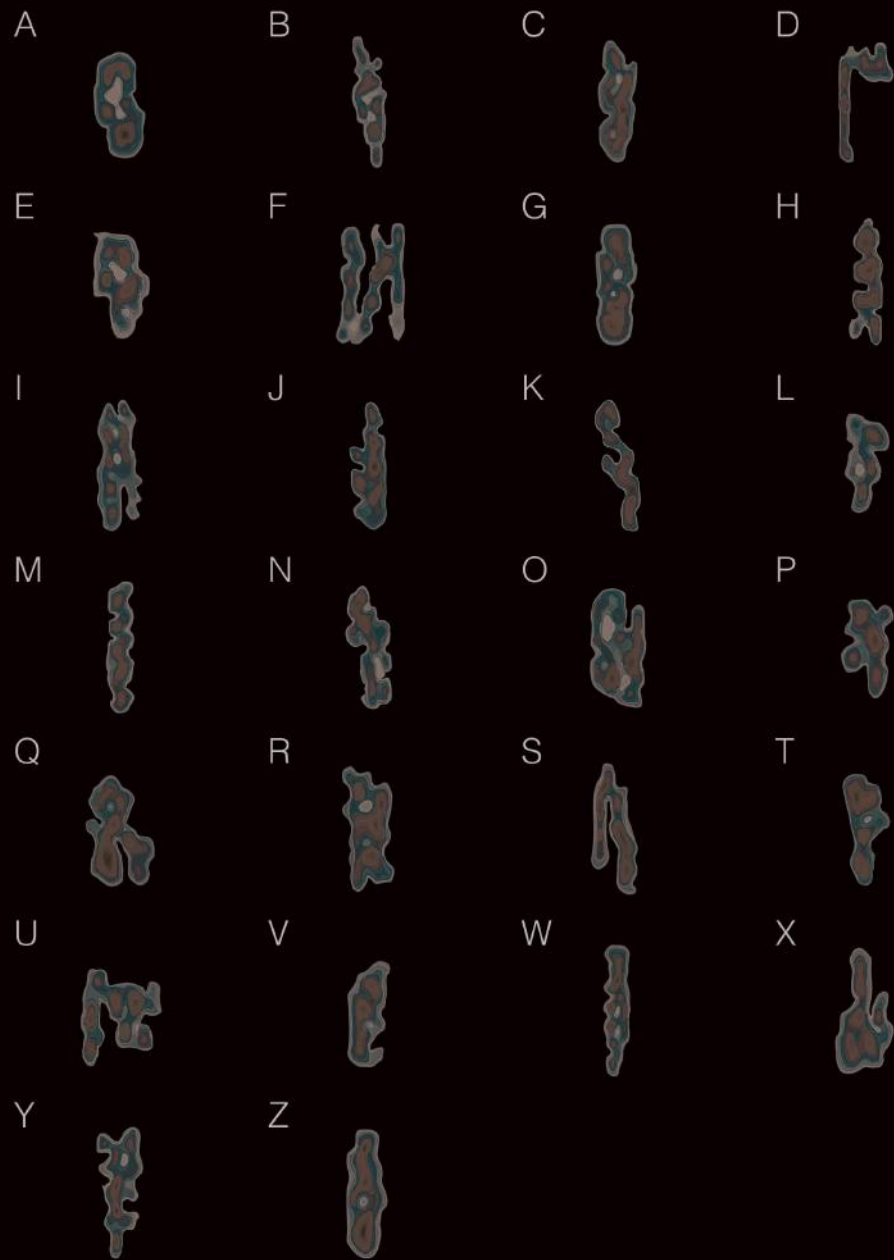


Stories Not Used

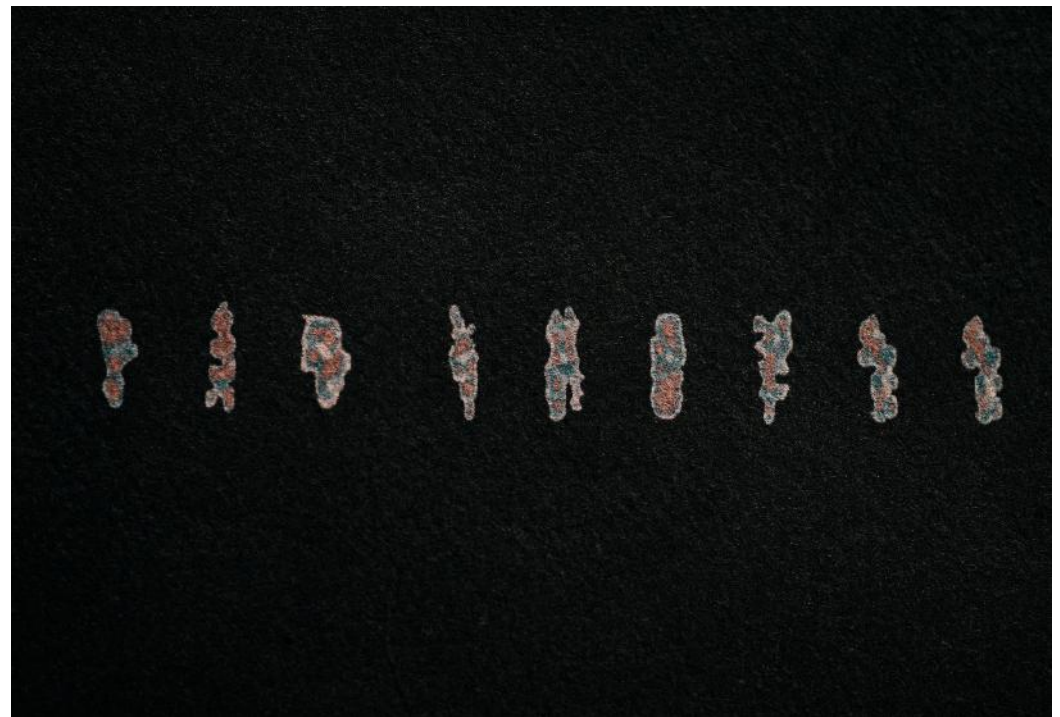
"בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ" / WYC1382"

-In The Bigynnyng God Made Of Nouyt Heuene And Erthe.-

2024 / Mixed media / H 440 × W 565 × D 25 (mm)



Font Set "Stories Not Used"





Crystallization of Worthless Time

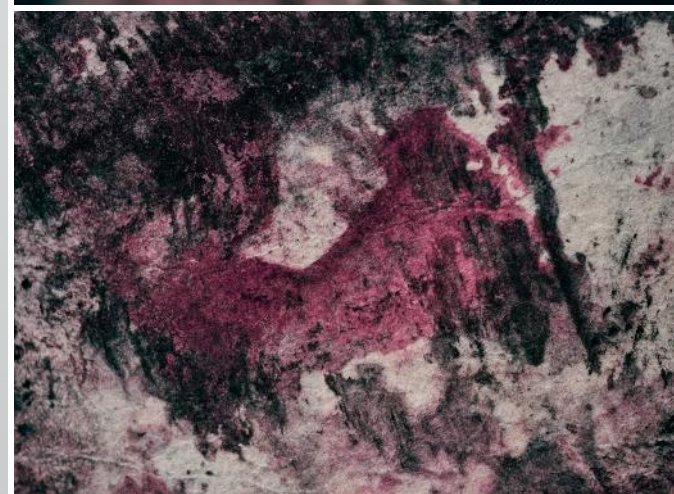
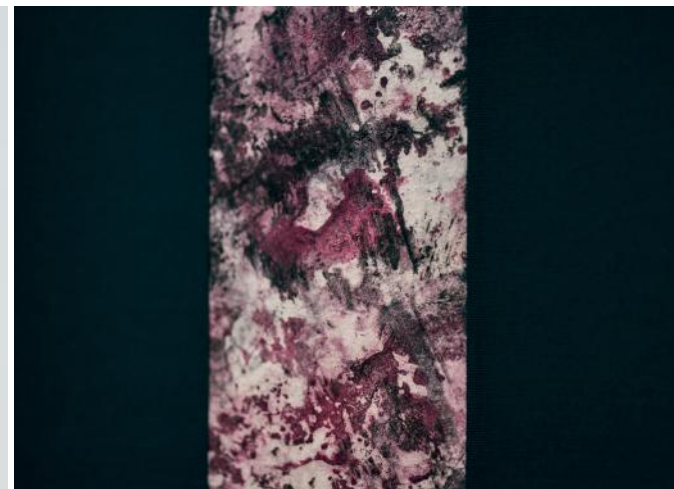
2021

Resin, Wax, Pigment, Lacquer, Gold powder

H 240 × W 240 × D 50 (mm)

“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.



Study

2025

Pigment

H 1600 × W 295 (mm)



CURATORIAL WORKS / Director

Marginal Art Fair Fukushima Hirono 2025

January 25-26, 2025

Futatsunuma General Park of Hirono town, Futaba County, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan

