

Press Release

SENJIRU – INFUSION: 8 Young Artists from Kyoto

June 12 – August 16, 2008

Yu KAWAKITA, Nao MATSUMOTO, Saori MIYAKE, Nobuhiro NAKANISHI, Kohei NAWA, Kenji NOHARA, PARAMODEL (Yasuhiko HAYASHI & Yusuke NAKANO), Tomoko SHIOYASU

curated by Kohei Nawa

Galerie Kashya Hildebrand is pleased to present the works of eight young Japanese artists from Kyoto showing for the first time in Switzerland. Curator and Kyoto-based artist Kohei Nawa has put together an exciting group show with artists of his generation offering new ways of expressing and seeing abstraction.

Kohei Nawa describes the exhibited works as a kind of “infusion, transformation of ordinary sensations, desires, and stories, which are filtered by [the artist’s] unique sensitivity.” A common denominator for many of these art works is their inspiration from the artists’ immediate surroundings especially the ephemeral and fleeting aspects of nature and life. Applying various materials and techniques, the artists look for ways of depicting natural phenomena without any romantic pathos, to grasp the invisible, to give form to the ephemeral. The artists address not only questions of perceptions of reality and existence but also of the limits of visual concepts of space and the void.

Taking a deliberate distance from the world of global media and consumer culture the artists of this group show have found and developed their artistic expression in Kyoto, far removed from any trends. This sets them apart from many other well-known contemporary Japanese artists who left for the United States or Europe during the economic crisis in the 1990s.

Some have criticized the generation of artists presented in this show for not being political enough. Instead of producing work with overt socio-political content and statements many of these artists preferred to simply react to what they felt relevant by eliminating politics entirely from their artistic expressions and draw their inspiration from very different sources and themes. This is also reflected in *SENJIRU*, where the works represented captivate and mesmerize the viewer by offering intimate access to seemingly trivial everyday phenomena.

The curator and artist Kohei Nawa and the artists Yu Kawakita, Nao Matsumoto, and Nobuhiro Nakanishi will be present at the opening reception.

Opening Reception: Thursday, 12 June 2008, 6-8 pm

Press release text and images may be downloaded at: <http://www.kashyahildebrand.org/zurich/press/senjiru>

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Yu Kawakita (*1982 in Kyoto, Japan)



Waver III, 2008, ink on panel, 150 x 100 cm

The power and beauty of nature, such as the detail within a leaf's veins, attracts artist Yu Kawakita. There are elements in nature that cannot be expressed in a conventional painting. This is why Kawakita uses water poured onto the painting surface, or its evaporation, as a brush to mold the shape of change, striving to fix into place something that cannot be fully contained.

The process starts by filling the surface with water and pouring in paint, making the paint particles dance. The transformation of the paint particles as they dry varies greatly and depends on the materials and her breath which she uses to move the liquid. The piece is complete when both the water and the artist become still. Kawakita also investigates the movement of water by fixating infinite lines or dots of paint passing through water on a thin soluble membrane resembling a medical wafer. Rather than depicting a subject, this process is about creating an event that takes place on the surface of the work. Kawakita attempts to find a comfortable rhythm that resonates within her and strives to incorporate nature into her artwork.

Nao Matsumoto (*1975 in Hyogo, Japan)



Between Tukyomi and me, 2008, color pencil and oil on paper, 91 x 91 cm

The work of Nao Matsumoto involves a place that is both near and far, and a place that has been neglected. It is a world that can only be grasped as an image. This place does not exist geographically, instead it is a pile of almost forgotten half-hidden objects, impossible to grasp, carefully selected from a multitude of modest items that are difficult to move. Its space is not defined by concepts, theories, definitions, or natural science, but is a polyvalent existence filled with metaphors, stories, poems, dreams, memories, ambiguity and contradiction. It exists on the time axis extending itself from past to present. It is a personal place far removed from the awareness of natural science, where Matsumoto delves into the I of subjectivity and where experiences take on the universe.

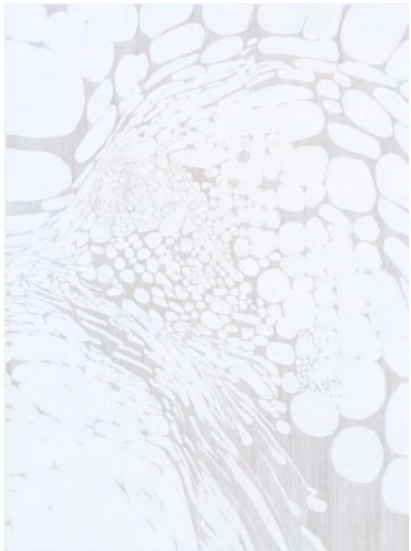
Saori Miyake (*1975 in Fukuoka, Japan)



Staris, 2008, photogram on photographic paper, 56 x 46 cm

Saori Miyake investigates the act of recalling the past and how memory functions. When one tries to recall a memory from the past, Miyake notices that the process of remembering is not immediate. In Miyake's experience, she has flashes of memories which are vague images or traces of what she originally was trying to recall and the memory mixes with current emotions. During this act of recalling, Miyake finds that memory is not the temporally distant and faded past, but can be represented as an image that is newly created with a strong presence. Her artwork reflects this shimmering imagery of our perceptions and emotions hovering with our memories at the bottom of our consciousness.

Nobuhiro Nakanishi (*1976 in Fukuoka, Japan)



Stripe drawing – Exhalation, 2007, pencil on paper, 153 x 114 cm

Nobuhiro Nakanishi uses a variety of materials and techniques in creating artwork, such as drawings, three-dimensional sculptures, installations, and projections. What they share is Nakanishi's interests in gaps and empty space and the impact they have on the viewer. In Nakanishi's *Stripe Drawing*, an interface is created by accumulating an infinite number of lines drawn in pencil. Stripes gather to give rise to a picture, and the creation of this picture gives rise to the appearance of empty space. As the viewer changes focus, the picture and the empty space switch places, or as Nakanishi would explain, the viewer is able to capture the empty space within the picture. In his work, *Layer Drawing #001-081*, stacks of 24 slides were photographed at regular intervals of moments in time. Shapes arise from the stacking, suggesting that the boundary-free existence of time can be contained. Nakanishi strives to expose what we constantly feel around us but are unable to see or touch.

Kohei Nawa (*1975 in Osaka, Japan)



PixCell-Deer no. 5, 2007, mixed media

In terms of our vision, the world is a continuum of surfaces, and what we perceive with our eyes and hands is covered with various layers or skins. We perceive and recognize things through their epidermis. Therefore, the quality of the epidermis is critical in determining whether we feel that something is real or not. The epidermis is the interface between sensitivity and material, and images are born from the exchange between sensitivity and material.

The relationship between the senses of sight and touch becomes the focal point of Kohei Nawa's work. It can be seen as a kind of intervention or manipulation of reality. The *BEADS* series takes an object and replaces its presence with a "shell of light" by covering the object's surface with glass beads. The texture and colors of the object are captured and dissected into an infinite number of small chambers (=cells) and presented as an assembly of the image's components (=elements), or in other words, an entirely new vision of the image's cells (*PixCells*).

Kenji Nohara (*1975 in Osaka, Japan)



Shooting Skin, 2008, pen and gouache on paper, 22 x 27 cm

As expressed by the terms *signifier* and *signified*, common language structure and common codes used in society enable us to communicate. But we cannot deny the existence of the incomprehensible noise that falls out of the realm of these shared meanings. Kenji Nohara is curious about what happens to this noise. When an object or scene from everyday life grabs his attention and becomes his subject, Nohara wonders why and how these scenes impact him. Nohara's work focuses on the extent to which he can incorporate matters external to his self-consciousness into the image. To draw is the endless journey to seek and discover what is unknown.

Paramodel (*1971/76 in Osaka, Japan)



An Attractive Car, 2008, pencil, colored pencil, acrylic on pine laminate lumber, 45 x 60 x 2 cm

Paramodel is an art unit founded in 2001, consisting of Yasuhiko Hayashi and Yusuke Nakano. They attempt to create models of paradise, picturesque scenery, or paradoxes, using items from everyday life. Through the production process of creating or playing with models or dioramas, the simple act of "playing" plunges into the realm of the poetic, the unknown, the aesthetic, and the mysterious. Their quest is to discover the point of entry into this realm.

In this current painting, they use the format of *euma*, paintings unique to the Japanese culture. *Euma* is the common tradition of drawing images of prayers or wishes on wooden boards as offerings at Japanese temples and shrines. These boards, as representations of the prayers or wishes, carry the mystery of the potential fulfillment, which could be a permanent process that could never be complete, a dream abandoned to eternity. By adding drawings of bird's-eye images reminiscent of never-ending network links such as sewage pipes, electric cables, network circuits and integrated circuits, Paramodel creates a poetic interpretation alluding to the nature of connection, infinity and mystery.

Tomoko Shioyasu (*1981 in Osaka, Japan)



Fluid, 2008, paper, 46 x 65 cm

With nature as a model of time, Tomoko Shioyasu strives to personify the rhythm of nature by repeatedly chiseling into paper the accumulation of water, oxygen, cell reproduction, and other units in nature. Her works are created by repeating delicate, manual tasks like cutting and dissolving synthetic paper using utility knives and soldering irons. By repeatedly metamorphosing shape and form, both the rhythm of nature and the memory of life exist and flow within these works. She is also conscious of the enormous energy of the invisible and the *chi*-like steadiness in nature and attempts to incorporate the surrounding light and air into her artwork.