

Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

Press Release 2011/02/10

Be Alive!—Selections from the Hara Museum Collection

Dates: January 14 (Fri.) – June 12 (Sun.), 2011 *the exhibition period has been extended.



[1]
Yoshitomo Nara,
Eve of Destruction, 2006,
acrylic on canvas

Since opening in December 1979, the Hara Museum has provided the viewing public with opportunities to experience and dialog with the work of artists at the forefront of the contemporary art world and young up-and-coming artists representing the wave of the future.

The current Hara Museum Collection show "Be Alive!" presents a selection of works by artists whose dynamic expression has made them the vanguard of contemporary expression during the first decade of the 21st century. What connects these works here is the sense of immediacy, of life and of spirit evoked by the show's keywords "Be Alive."

The distinguishing feature of the Hara Museum Collection (as noted by Director Toshio Hara) may be its consistent emphasis on the sensitivity and character of the individual. The overriding priority in its exhibition planning and acquisition policy has been the immediate emotional impact at "that moment" when one comes face-to-face with each and every artwork. This priority reflects the freedom that comes with its status as a private museum, unfettered by such issues as the nationality, race and gender of the artist, or by artistic trends based on preexisting values. The basic policy of the Hara Museum has been to "create new values with the artist and viewers" as members of the same era and from the perspective of that era. As the "face" of the museum, the collection communicates this stance very clearly and is the mirror that reflects the museum's past history of more than 30 years.

Featured artists (subject to change after the installation change)

Noe Aoki, Nobuyoshi Araki, Zhang Huan, Izumi Kato, On Kawara, William Kentridge, Hiroharu Mori, Yasumasa Morimura, Yoshitomo Nara, Kohei Nawa, Pipilotti Rist, Tabaimo, Kouichi Tabata, Mickalene Thomas, Miwa Yanagi *Approximately 30 works are displayed.

*Please note that content of Gallery I (works by On Kawara, Hiroharu Mori, Yasumasa Morimura on display) is subject to change after the installation of works by Mickalene Thomas for Mickalene Thomas project (starting from Thursday, February 17).

Exhibition Data

Exhibition title: Be Alive!—Selections from the Hara Museum Collection

Dates: January 14 (Fri.) – June 12 (Sun.), 2011

Organized by: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

***Also on view from February 17 (Thurs.) to June 12 (Sun.):** *Mickalene Thomas--Mama Bush: One of a Kind Two* (Place: Gallery I)

**H A R A
MUSEUM**

Place: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, 4-7-25, Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0001

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Website <http://www.haramuseum.or.jp> Mobile site <http://mobile.haramuseum.or.jp>

<http://www.art-it.asia/u/HaraMuseum/> (blog)

Hours: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm, Wednesdays (except May 4) until 8:00 pm *Last entry 30 min. before closing.

Closed: Mondays (open on March 21), March 22

Admission: General 1,000 yen. Students 700 yen (high school and university) or 500 yen (elementary and junior high). Free for Hara Museum members and students through high school every Saturday during the school term. 100 yen discount per person for groups of 20 or more.

Directions: 5 min. by taxi or 15 min. on foot from JR Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit); or from the same station take the No.96 bus, get off at the first stop (Gotenyama), and walk 3 min./ The BloomBUS! free shuttle bus service is available between Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit) and the Hara Museum every Sunday until June 12, 2011 (Sponsored by: Bloomberg L.P./ Artist: Yasuhiro Suzuki). Please check the Hara Museum website for further details.

NOTE: Please note that BloomBUS! shuttle bus will NOT be in service on Sunday, February 27 due to Tokyo Marathon 2011.

【Images for Publication】

Please include the following credit along with the captions below:

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[2] Miwa Yanagi, *Series of Fairy Tale/ Gretel*, 2004, gelatin silver print

[3] Izumi Kato, *Untitled*, 2006, oil on canvas

[4] Kohei Nawa, *PixCell-Bambi #2*, 2006, mixed media

[5] Tabaimo, *Japanese Kitchen*, 1999, video installation (Long-term loan from the artist)

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*Do not include the above details as contact information in the article for publication.

*Click <http://www.art-it.asia/u/HaraMuseum/> to see the Hara Museum BLOG!

【About the featured artists and their works】

Izumi Kato (b. 1969 in Shimane Prefecture)

Graduated with a BA in oil painting from Musashino Art University, Kato uses human figures as his motif in paintings and sculptures that seem to touch upon the root of life and existence. He participated in the 2007 Venice Biennale. A solo exhibition of his work is currently being held at the Hakone Open-Air Museum (until January 30, 2011). At the Hara Museum, he participated in *Art Scope 2007/2008- Faces of Existence* held in 2008 in which he exhibited the fruits of a three-month residency in Berlin (in 2007) as part of the mécénat activities of the Daimler Foundation in Japan.

Featured works: *Untitled*, 2006 (painting) and other sculptural works that suggest a fusion between human and plant life.

William Kentridge (b. 1955 in South Africa)

After studying politics in Johannesburg, Kentridge studied mime and theatre at the L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Kentridge uses animation for his artistic expression. He shoots drawings done in charcoal and pastel one frame at a time, joining them to make a moving image. His works have a poetic sensibility but deal with social and emotional issues like the history of apartheid in his home country and have exerted an influence over a great many young artists. Kentridge participated in the 1999 Venice Biennale, 2001 Yokohama Triennale and several other international exhibitions. From 2009 to 2010, he held solo exhibitions at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto. He currently has a solo exhibition traveling throughout the world, including The Museum of Modern Art in New York (until 2011). In 2010, he was awarded the 26th Annual Kyoto Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Arts and Philosophy.

Featured work: *Memo*, 1993

This video work, which combines drawings with video imagery, was included in the artist's solo exhibitions in Tokyo and Kyoto. It is the first public display of the work at the Hara Museum in Tokyo.

Tabaimo (b. 1975 in Hyogo Prefecture)

Tabaimo graduated from the Department of Information Design at the Kyoto University of Art and Design. Her animation-based installations deal with various social issues in contemporary society. She has participated in several international art exhibitions, such as the 2001 Yokohama Triennale. In 2006, she held the solo exhibition *YOROYORON Tabaimo* at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2010, she held solo exhibitions at the Yokohama Museum of Art and the National Museum of Art, Osaka. She has been chosen to represent Japan at the 2011 Venice Biennale.

Featured work: *Japanese Kitchen*, 1999 (Long-term loan from the artist)

This was the artist's graduation project which propelled the artist into the public eye. In this work, she incorporates colors that are reminiscent of the ukiyo-e prints of Hokusai, imbuing the feeling of dis-ease that lies beneath Japanese daily life and the social ills within contemporary Japanese society with a sense of nostalgia. It is the first appearance of this work in Tokyo since her last solo exhibition at the museum.

Yoshitomo Nara (b. 1959 in Aomori Prefecture)

After graduating from Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music with M.F.A. in oil painting, Nara went to study at Kunstakademie Dusseldorf in Germany. Here, in response to the solitude and anxieties of expatriate life, he looked inward and developed a distinctive drawing style that took as its motifs the innocence, fragility and cunning toughness of children. In 2001, he had a solo exhibition at the Yokohama Museum of Art, which traveled to several venues within Japan. In 2003, he held a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, which traveled within the U.S.A. His exhibition *From the Depth of My Drawer* was launched at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art in 2004 and traveled to several venues within Japan and then to Seoul, Korea. He has held numerous solo exhibitions and participated in many international exhibitions, including the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in 2009. In 2010, he made ceramic works using the Shigaraki style of pottery.

Featured works:

Eve of Destruction, 2006

This work was one of several that were featured in a large-scale solo exhibition in Hirosaki, Aomori Prefecture. The title, which comes from an antiwar song during the Viet Nam War, conveys a strong sentiment against war, which continues to plague the planet.

My Drawing Room (August 2004-/ in cooperation with graf)

This work, a permanent installation at the Hara Museum, is a life-size reproduction of the artist's studio which is planned to be altered periodically over the years. A Christmas version was on view for a limited time in 2010.

Kohei Nawa (b. 1975 in Osaka Prefecture)

Nawa did a Ph.D. course at the Kyoto City University of Arts. During that period, he also studied sculpture at the Royal College of Art as an exchange student. Interested in the "skin" of sculpture, he creates objects using glass beads and prisms which probe the nature of reality. Other works made with diverse materials deal with the relationship between the observer, the object and the space. He won the Grand Prize at the Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh in 2010. At the Hara Museum, he participated in *Art Scope 2005/2006—Interface Complex* in 2006, exhibiting the results of his residency in Berlin of approximately three months.

Featured work: *PixCell-Bambi #2*, 2006

This work questions the reality of "things" in an information age flooded with digital media. Numerous glass beads form the shape of a young deer. Upon closer inspection, one sees a stuffed animal inside.

Miwa Yanagi (born in Hyogo Prefecture)

Yanagi completed postgraduate studies at Kyoto City University of Arts. In 1993, she held her first solo exhibition in Kyoto, and from 1996, she began to show in exhibitions abroad. Yanagi has been making works on the theme of women using photography and video as her media. Yanagi first attracted attention with her *Elevator Girls* series, which featured women in uniform as symbols of contemporary urban and consumer culture. She then made her *My Grandmothers* series, consisting of photographs of young models, altered through special effects makeup and CG to reflect their image of themselves as ideal grandmothers 50 years in the future. This was followed by the *Granddaughters* series of videos taken of elderly women relating memories of their grandmothers. These works have made Yanagi one of the most well-known artists currently active within the Japanese art scene. In 2004, she held a solo exhibition at the Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art (Kagawa Prefecture). In 2005, her solo exhibition *The Incredible Tale of the Innocent Old Lady and the Heartless Young Girl* was held at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2009, she held a large-scale solo exhibition at the National Museum of Art, Osaka. In the same year, she represented Japan at the 2009 Venice Biennale.

Featured works: A selection of 6 works (featured during her solo exhibition at the Hara Museum) on the theme of young girls and elderly women, including *Series of Fairy Tale/ Erendira*, 2004 (photo) and *Suna Onna*, 2005 (video).