

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

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SEITARO YAMAZAKI - CONTOUR OF YOHAKU

Opening reception: 5th November 2024, 6 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 5th - 17th November 2024

Yohaku, meaning blank space, is defined as a traditional Japanese form of beauty. It has been used in Japanese painting and performing arts (Noh theatre) since 14th century. It is a technique in which bold omissions allow the viewer to imagine far more than what is omitted. For example, in Ukiyoe paintings by Utagawa Hiroshige, tree branches are often depicted hanging from the top of the picture, and the viewer is encouraged to imagine a space extending beyond the picture. In Hasegawa Tohaku's "Pine Trees," there are many empty spaces between the pine tree. By daring to leave nothing painted, Tohaku is trying to create the impression of a vast space in the back of the painting. These techniques were also adopted by Impressionist painters such as Claude Monet.

This technique of expression is now called yohaku in Japan, and yohaku creates a unique beauty with ambiguity and fragility. The Japanese did not even have a name for this aesthetic until they encountered Western art in 19th century, because they were unaware that their own aesthetic was far different from that of the West. Yohaku was originally conceived as a translation of the Western typographic term "margin", but it is now used as an art term.

Indeed, yohaku superficially resembles the vast margins of Swiss-style typography. However, typographic margins are different aesthetic than the Japanese yohaku, since typographic margins are a technique for guiding eyes to the letters.

"I am attempting to extend this concept of yohaku to society through my art. A society before everything was verbalised and ambiguities remained. The sociological function and its beauty," says Seitaro Yamazaki.

About the Artist

Seitaro Yamazaki is a contemporary artist and designer living and working in Tokyo. Earning BA in Sociology from Rikkyo University in 2006 and a successful career as designer, he earned MFA in Architecture from Kyoto University of Arts in 2016. Since then, he has been creating contemporary art works in the fields of sculpture, installation, video, painting, and media art. His works had been exhibited in London, NY, Venice, Washington DC, Nagasaki, Tokyo, etc. He also commissioned artworks by companies such as Mitsubishi Estate. He has been trying to find and show the beauty of ambiguity, transience, and the things that were never depicted, spoken, or formed in his works. Recently he focused on media art using sonographs. He also studied ink wash painting under Tsuchiya Shukou, along the lines of 18th Century Japanese painter Maruyama Okyo, and Ikebana of Obara school under Toru Watarai.

Hošek Contemporary

Established by Petr Hošek in 2016, Hošek Contemporary is a gallery and art residency located on a historical cargo ship next to Fischerinsel in Mitte, Berlin. The gallery focuses primarily on site-specific pieces, performing arts and experimental sound works. During the spring and summer months, the gallery is hosting weekly improvised and experimental music installations, with local and international musicians.

MS Heimatland

Built in 1910 in Fürstenberg an der Oder, MS Heimatland was initially operating under the name Ida and used for transporting coal to Charlottenburg. After the Second World War, the 58-meter long cargo ship was renamed Heimatland, meaning "homeland". Until the 90s, the ship was sailing on Elbe and Havel, moving other boats, sand and chipping. It served for artistic and cultural purposes for the first time in 2002, when German sculptor Christiane Möbus chose it for her Nackte Tatsache Tatsache project. Finally, in March 2018, Heimatland became the main exhibition space and artist residency of Hošek Contemporary. The boat is permanently anchored in the historic port of Berlin.

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