

Motoi YAMAMOTO www.motoi-works.com

Born in Onomichi, Hiroshima in 1966. Graduated from Kanazawa College of Art in 1995. Currently living in Kanazawa, Ishikawa.

I create installations using salt to evoke cleansing and purification. It takes me anywhere from a few days to multiple weeks to draw these huge patterns on the floor by myself. Furthermore, on the last day of an exhibition, I work together with the viewers to destroy the work and return the salt to the sea. I also produce detailed acrylic and pencil works. In recent years, I have worked very actively on collaborations with companies.



I have presented his works in numerous locations both at home and abroad, including at the MoMA PS1 Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Hermitage State Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Hakone Open-Air Museum, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art Kanazawa, Setouchi Triennale, and via a traveling solo exhibition in the United States.

- 1966 Born in Onomichi, Hiroshima
- 1995 BFA in Painting at Kanazawa College of Art
- 2003 Received Grant from The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Inc.
- 2010 Received Grant from Voyager + AIT Artist Support Program

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

- 2005 "Reinigen" Mitsubishi Estate Art Gallery Artium / Fukuoka, Japan
"To the White in White" Nizayama Forest Art Museum / Toyama, Japan
- 2009 "Sakura" Mikiko Sato Gallery / Hamburg, Germany
"Labyrinth" Grosse Bleichen Bilder / Hamburg, Germany
"Labyrinth" L MD Gallerie / Paris, France
- 2010 "Floating Garden" eN-arts / Kyoto, Japan
"Labyrinth" Jesuitenkirch Sankt Peter / Cologne, Germany
"Floating Garden" Art-O-Rama / Marseille, France
- 2011 "To the White Forest" Hakone Open-Air Museum / Kanagawa, Japan
- 2012 "Return to the Sea" Laband Art Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
"Return to the Sea" Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, Charleston, USA
- 2013 "Floating Garden" Mikiko Sato Gallery, Hamburg, Germany
"Floating Garden" Erunst Barlach Haus, Hamburg, Germany
"Return to the Sea" Monterey Museum of Art and The Mint Museum, Charlotte, USA
"Floating Garden" Setouchi City Museum, Okayama, Japan
"Floating Garden" Inga Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2014 "Return to the Sea" Waber State University and Westminster College, Oregon, USA
"Floating Garden" La Galerie Particulière, Paris, France
- 2015 "Return to the Origin" Pola Museum Annex, Tokyo, Japan
- 2018 "Floating Garden" Ierimonti Gallery / New York, USA
- 2021 "Sakura Shibefuru" Setouchi City Art Museum / Okayama, Japan
"Labyrinth - White Diary" eN-arts / Kyoto, Japan
- 2022 "Strait" galleria PONTE / Kanazawa, Japan

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITION

- 2000 "Installation" Garden of the Sculptures / Veracruz, Mexico
- 2003 "The First Steps; Emerging Artist from Japan" MoMA PS1 / New York, U.S.A.
"Mutated Zen: The Art of Surviving" The Nunnury / London, UK
"respiri" Galleria Vittorio Emanuele / Milan, Italy
- 2004 "Gwangju Biennale 2004 -Eco Metro Project-" / Gwangju, Korea
"The Encounters in the 21st Century : Polyphony - Emerging Resonances"
21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa / Ishikawa, Japan
- 2005 "hoch hinaus" Kunstmuseum Thun / Thun, Switzerland
"Rising Sun, Melting Moon" The Israel Museum / Jerusalem
- 2006 "C.A.R.K.2006" Ishikawa International Salon / Ishikawa & Patras, Greece
"Force of Nature" Davidson College / NC & HICA, Charleston / SC, U.S.A.
- 2007 "Artist in Residence, Onomichi" Izumi's House / Hiroshima, Japan
- 2008 "Brack, Whrite and Gray" MA2 Gallery / Tokyo, Japan
"Text of Life" Ashikaga Museum of Art / Tochigi, Japan
- 2009 "Togo Murano x Motoi Yamamoto" Kanazawa Artgummi / Ishikawa, Japan
"Hundred Stories about Love" 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa /
Ishikawa, Japan
- 2010 "MOT Annual 2010" Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo / Tokyo, Japan
- 2011 "Reliefs" Fondation espace _ecureuil pour l'art contemporain / Toulouse, France
"City Net-Asia 2011" / Seoul Museum of Art
- 2012 "Making Mends" Bellevue Arts Museum / Bellevue, U.S.A.
- 2013 "Mono no Aware -The Beauty of Things-" / The Hermitage State Museum, Saint Petersburg
"Narrow Road to the Interior" / Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona, U.S.A.
"Two Billion Light-Years of Solitude" / Kanazawa Art Gummi, Ishikawa
"Peace Meets Art! " / Hiroshima Prefectural Museum, Hiroshima
"The 6th Internationnal Contemporary Art Biennale of Melle", France
"Fieldwork from Periphery" / Galerie Aube, Kyoto University of Art and Design, Kyoto
- 2014 "La Nuit Blanche" / Hôtel de Ville de Paris, France
- 2015 "Salone del Giappone" / Palazzo delle Stelline, Milan
- 2016 "UNIVERS' sel" / Aigues-Mortes, France"
"Roppongi Art Night 2016" / Roppongi, Tokyo, Japan
"Setouchi Triennnale 2016" / Takamijima, Kagawa, Japan
"Biwako Biennnale 2016" / Omi-hachiman, Shiga, Japan
- 2017 "Takamijima-Kyoto: On the Far Side of Daily Life" / Gallery Fleur, Kyoto Seika University
"A Coorridor of Art through the Mountain and Seas" / Momo-shima, Hiroshima, Japan
- 2018 "Altering Home" Gencyan-House and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa
/ Ishikawa, Japan
- 2020 "Fantasy Galaxy" The Ginza Space, Tokyo, Japan
"Shikansuiyo -Art of the one hundred year forest" Meiji Shrine Museum / Tokyo, Japan
- 2021 "Oku-Noto Triennial 2020+" Ishikawa, Japan
- 2022 "Wall Art Project 2045 Nine Hopes" Orizuru Tower / Hiroshima, Japan

STATEMENT / Motoi Yamamoto

Main Concept

The mainspring of my work derived from the death of my sister at a young age and I have been creating artwork so that memories with loved ones won't fade. And, my wife passed away with breast cancer, leaving our little daughter behind, now I am living in memories with her as a family. Finding out about the illness, staying in the hospital, recurrence of cancer, taking care of her at home, and her death. Sadness from a life that existed in my life suddenly disappearing. Reality that I will never see her again. I have put all these struggles into shape as if I was writing a journal entry. My work is represented by large-scale labyrinths and patterns of swirls drawn on floor surface with salt, and one recurring theme for all works is my thoughts for the loved ones who passed away as well as my strong desire to hold on to the memories with them. Even the dearest memories fade with time, but I refuse that to happen. Creating artwork to me is an attempt to weave these uncertain memories to resist letting go of all the memories from the past.

Installation Works

Salt - Salt has been an essential part of human lives worldwide. Especially in Japan, salt is a sacred substance used for funerals. I have been using salt for my installation for nearly 25 years since my sister passed away due to malignant tumor in 1994. In order to accept her death, I tried to experience how death is received in Japanese society by using various materials for my artwork, and I chose salt as the main material when I created a piece of artwork with a theme of funeral. This was because in Japan, people use salt after a funeral in order to purify their spirits from the impurity of death. I am also strongly attracted to salt not only because of its cultural and historical background, but also its translucent colors as well as the ocean where it came from as the birth place of all life. I then began to think that the salt I'm using for my artwork might have been in the ocean at one point, supporting our lives, holding the 'memories of life' within itself.

Salt Lines - I draw all the lines by myself when I work on installation. I never erase or re-draw the lines. We all live in a real world where life cannot be undone or rewind. Lines I draw reflect myself who is alive in this moment. When the lines are not perfect, I would only add lines to modify it. Through accepting every occurrence, relationship between me and the installation is to be constructed. This is what I impose on myself.



Labyrinth

Drawing a labyrinth with salt is like following a trace of my memory. Memories seem to change and vanish as time goes by. However, what I sought for was the way in which I could touch a precious moment in my memories which cannot be attained through pictures or writings. What I look for at the end of the act of drawing could be a feeling of touching a precious memory. During the course of drawing, I cannot tell if it will reach the essential point till its very end because lines are curved or cut against my intention. It depends not only on my psychological or physical condition, but also on the condition of the floor or the level of humidity. I always silently follow the trace, that is controlled as well as uncontrolled from the start point after I have completed it.



Floating Garden

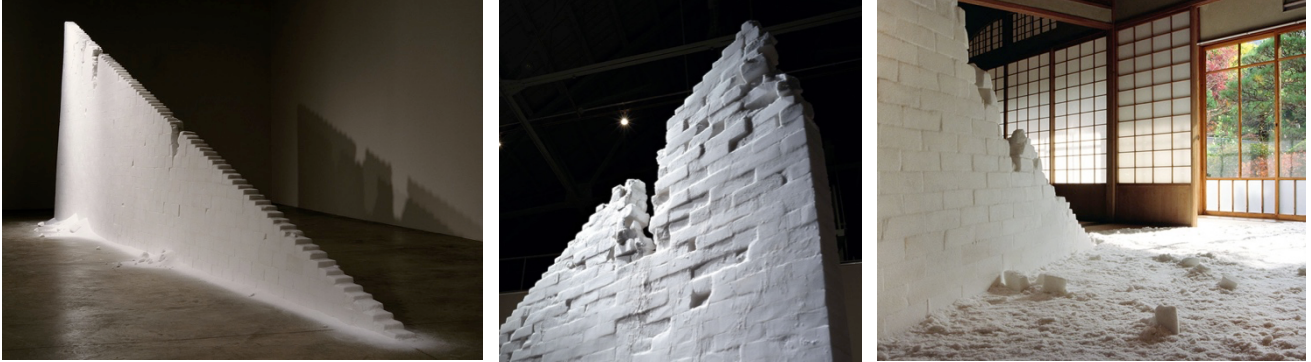
The series of works with swirling lines named “Floating Garden” is similar to lacework, an act of slowly rediscovering pieces of memories tucked quietly in the drawers in my mind, and weaving them together. I draw countless tiny cells (bubble-like patterns) with salt or paint and these cells symbolize pieces of memories and fragments of small daily events that I and my wife and my sister shared.

Swirl - I have been drawing swirls and labyrinths (patterns with lines that intertwine like a maze). Such patterns have been used as symbols to represent rebirth. Swirls symbolize life and death, resurrection, and rebirth showing a strong vitality and eternity mainly in East Asia. Labyrinths symbolize almost exactly the same aspects in the West, originated from Scotland and Greece.



Utsusemi

The stairs which broke off - The work expresses "sentiment to the dead younger sister" and "the conflict that I want to meet again, but cannot encounter". The title "Utsu-semi" has two directly opposed meaning. This word was used by an archaic word long ago. The original meaning is "this world", "life" or "now human being who lives". However, the words is including an opposite meaning now. The meaning is "a cast-off shell of the cicadas" or "Emptiness".



Return to the Sea, project

In the project, salt used for installation work will be returned to the sea by the hands of people who agree with the concept. On the last day of exhibition, audience breaks the salt work by hand, collect salt, and release it back to the sea.



Official Site

<https://www.motoi-works.com/en>

Short Documentary (3' 50" / 2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9748PYJDGSk&t=8s>

Concept Interview (12' 46" / 2012)

<http://vimeo.com/42177795#>

Making (8' 42" / 2012)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=eLIJuQSOJis