

idling garden
Nobuaki Takekawa

15 May – 17 July 2021

Opening reception: Sat, 15 May, from 3 – 6 pm

Ota Fine Arts Shanghai is delighted to present "idling garden", Nobuaki Takekawa's (b.1977, Japan) second solo exhibition in China. Takekawa's cat Olympics themed solo exhibition at Ota Fine Arts Shanghai in 2017 remains fresh and memorable in audiences' minds. This new exhibition aims to demonstrate the depth and breadth of Takekawa's artistic language. By showcasing his creative practice over the past few years, we are privy to his versatility and broad approach in communicating social issues and phenomenon.

With the ongoing global health pandemic, individuals, collectives and society at large are in an "idling state": the accelerator is not stepped on, yet engines are continually running at low speeds. He spent much of his time within the home, allowing himself the time to slow down and observe his otherwise neglected home garden. The garden seems to have its own natural ecological environment, and from time to time, moles can be spotted digging underground and building their nest. In **"A Mole's House That Resembles a Heart"**, moles are featured as the main character, and their nest is depicted in the form of a complex human heart. The heart serves as the main engine, delivering energy to the human body and driving us forward. Despite having met with much obstacles and inertia under the Covid19 pandemic, he continuously awaits and prepares his for engine for a time when he can move forward at accelerating speeds. On the other hand, Takekawa has got to observe his young toddler playing with plants, soil and insects during this time. Watching his toddler interact with the natural garden environment, is like watching a mole rummaging through the complex ecological network. In their own unique way, they are communicating and shaping the garden society around them regardless of what's happening in the real world.



Nobuaki Takekawa, *A Mole's House That Resembles a Heart*, 2021, Acrylic, pastel on paper mounted on wooden board, 130.3 x 97 cm



Nobuaki Takekawa, *Demolition of Rice Pyramid*, 2020, Acrylic on canvas, 159 x 253.4 cm

"Demolition of the Rice Pyramid" was painted by Takekawa during a two-week stay in Singapore in early 2020. Takekawa and Chinese artist, Tang Dixin, made repeated visits to forested areas over several days. As a playful experiment, they placed a pyramid-shaped rice in the forest and observed the changes that occurred. Once, the rice was totally gone the next day. Another time, it was partially eaten, and also became mouldy in the end. The shape of a pyramid tends to resemble the hierarchical structure of influence and status. However, the pyramid-shaped rice is, on the contrary, the reverse process of this: the ants can take the rice home grain by grain.

Intimate visual language is reflected in **"Cat's Water Work Site"**. Cat elements have often appeared in his oeuvre of works, their cute, approachable and friendly image is cleverly used to discuss social topics. Beneath the surface of today's modern cities lie a labyrinth network of underground waterways. Leaking pipes are a common phenomenon, and cats of all types and personality are repairing these pipes. Despite their strenuous efforts, water continues to gush out at every end. In some ways, it is a representation of the continuous gush of social problems faced by all nations and society. Sustainable development comes to the fore in this work and cat plumbers of all types and personality are under the pump.

In late 2019, South Korea announced its decision to abolish the Korean-Japanese "General Security of Military Information Agreement" (GSOMIA). Takekawa and his artist friends noticed that if the letters "GSOMIA" were rearranged, it would form the word "AMIGOS", which meant friends in Spanish. This discovery inspired them to form a Mexican style performance group of the same name that went on to hold its first performance at an outdoor concert in Korea. Thereafter, Takekawa watched several Korean drama series. Inspired by the plots of each series, he went on to create several woodcut prints entitled **"Mexican Ajeossi"**, **"Camellia Flower & Ethnic Costume"**, integrating the unconstrained and playful Mexican vibe with aspects of Hallyu culture.

Ota Fine Arts Shanghai invites you to enter Takekawa's idling garden, one that is built in dialogue with oneself and in community. Social phenomenon and issues are explored in mysterious and rich ways, creating a unique and experiential journey.

About the artist

Nobuaki Takekawa (b.1977) was born in Tokyo, Japan and received his BA in Fine Arts at the Tokyo University of the Arts in 2002. In recent years, Takekawa has participated in Yokohama Triennale 2020 – AFTERGLOW, "Relay to Tokyo – Inheriting and Gathering", Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens Greece, 2020, the Roppongi Crossing 2019: Connexions: Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan, 2019, Our Collections!: Tottori Prefectural Museum, Tottori Prefecture, Japan, 2019, Rebel Without a Cause: The Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan, 2018 and the 9th Vladivostok International Biennale of Visual Arts, State Art Gallery of Primorsky region, Primorsky Krai, Russia. His works are held in public and private collections including the Ford Foundation, U.S.A, The National Museum of Art, Japan and the Collection Lambert, France, etc.

About Ota Fine Arts

Ota Fine Arts was established in 1994 in Tokyo. For over 20 years, the gallery has defined itself as being a pioneer of Japanese contemporary art. Since its inception, Ota Fine Arts has promoted various Japanese artists, including internationally-acclaimed Yayoi Kusama, and has been expanding the variety of its artists and their works. In 2012, Ota Fine Arts opened a gallery space in Gillman Barracks, Singapore, to expand its programmes in the region. One of the main goals of Ota Fine Arts is to support and showcase more regional character, originality and commonality of the Asian cultural belt. The gallery hopes to continue its commitment to East Asian artists, and moreover to organize various collaborations with artists from South Eastern Asia to the Middle East region to convey the new aspect of contemporary art today. The gallery opened a new space in Shanghai in November 2017 to extend its programs further in the region.

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Opening Hours:

Tues - Sun. 11.00 - 18.00
Closed on Mon. & Public
Holidays

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