COMMERCIAL STREET
430 Shiratakikamishiyubetsu
Engaru, Mombetsu District
Hokkaido 099-0123

Sena Sasaki
Midway through its fall
October 1 - December 23, 2026

Entry Hallway

Mask #3, 2026
Tissue box, copper, ammonium
28 x 35 cm

Room 1

Palindrome (Gunte), 2026
Cement, Japanese cotton gloves and wood
70 x 20 x 141 cm

Room 2

I hear nothing but the sound of scissors on my head, 2021 - 2025
Six channel video installation, 30:00 minutes, looped
dimensions variable

Main room

No.9 (1-6), 2026
Steel and bluetooth speakers
25 x 29 x 90 each, overall dimensions variable

False Polaris #10, 2026
Cement and Wood
45 x 50 x 265 cm

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Opening on October 1st and concluding at the end of December, Commercial Street will present *Midway through its fall,* an exhibition by Sena Sasaki in Hokkaido. Taking place in Shirataki, Engaru, at Seibikan, a former agricultural office of the Hokkaido Home School's Second Farm, rebuilt in 1935, the exhibition marks the first time the building will be open to the public since its closure.

The Hokkaido Home School was a residential educational institution founded by educator and social reformer Kosuke Tomeoka. Closely connected to agricultural settlement and regional development in rural Hokkaido, its philosophy emphasized education through communal living, physical labor, agriculture, and life in nature. Students and staff worked together on farming and land cultivation, while the institution collaborated closely with surrounding farming communities. Seibikan formed part of the school's Second Farm in Shirataki, where education, agriculture, and community-building were deeply interconnected.

Bringing together new and existing works, *Midway through its fall* is Sena Sasaki's most comprehensive exhibition to date and the first time the artist has shown in Hokkaido. The exhibition includes new sound works and sculptures, recent video work, and flat works. Sasaki's works make evident the unstable relationship between personal memory and collective history, and the mechanics through which meaning is transformed by time, material, and context.

Sasaki's practice grapples with the faint past, collective myth and memory through repetition and variation: reframing existing structures through reenactment, disturbing and abstracting symbols of power, and bringing them into contact with the intimacy of personal memory and experience. Exhibiting his work in Hokkaido gives specificity of place to the elusive histories he has been mining. Seibikan holds traces of a past to which neither the artist nor the viewer has direct access, while the landscape surrounding it carries another, more intimate history for Sasaki, one remembered from childhood and encountered again in the present. The place becomes material.

The exhibition brings these ideas together through works that attempt to understand the origins of the out of reach. Familiar images, sounds, and architectural forms are repeated and transformed, displaced from their original contexts until the meanings they appear to contain become unstable. The mismatch between Sasaki's personal history and the history of Seibikan becomes another point of departure: histories occupying the same place without necessarily belonging to one another. What appears familiar or fixed becomes increasingly elusive over time, an origin that can be approached but never fully recovered.

Mask #3 introduces us to the exhibition. Part of a new body of work made from typical Japanese tissue boxes, the object is coated and pinned to the wall with vinyl pins made from records melted during World War II. These objects emote from nothing; emotive containers made from a splayed package. A familiar undoing projects an intermediary connection, a mismatch.

Key to the exhibition is *No.9 (1-6),* a new sound installation consisting of six steel monolith-like sculptures, each taking a different form derived from geometric variations of the arc of wooden beams traced from a demolished house in Sasaki's hometown of Maruseppu. The beams carry an architectural memory of a place that no longer exists, their forms displaced and transformed into steel.

The sound material comes from a recording of a short passage from *Ode to Joy*, performed by a six-year-old child in Hokkaido. Slowed down and returned to the condition of pure sound, it emanates from each sculpture one at a time, one note at a time, and is arranged spatially within Seibikan. Taken apart, stretched, and transformed, the melody fails to retain its original form. Although each sculpture carries the same material, its resonance changes according to the form that contains it. A single source produces multiple realities. The familiar melody becomes increasingly unrecognizable, leaving the listener with the impression of something remembered but no longer fully identifiable or recoverable.

Also on view is a multi-channel video work titled *I hear nothing but the sound of scissors on my head*. White space from steam emerging from a volcano in Hokkaido and Sasaki's own breath on a cold night forms a field of white noise punctuated by collected subtitles from films, silently describing an array of wordless sounds such as silence, human laughter, sighing, and animal expressions. Scattered and played in a sequenced rhythm, one monitor at a time, the work becomes an expanded silent score. Sound is displaced into language, while the images offer no fixed relationship to the words that appear across them. The work moves between presence and absence, where reading becomes a form of listening to something that cannot be heard.

Sasaki's *False Polaris* sculpture will be installed from floor to ceiling. A star, recalling Sasaki's ongoing daily North Star paintings, is cast in concrete and propped up by wooden construction beams, limp and wedged into the space. Given a physical body through materials that stand in opposition to its symbolic meaning, the star becomes distorted by the expectations and desires projected onto it. Even in its deformation, it is held high, forced into elevation. The image of hope is given material form, while the impossibility of fulfilling its promise is made physically present.

As if speared from above, a new work from the *Palindrome (Gunte)* series sits on the table. The work is made with *gunte*, a Japanese cotton work glove invented during the late Edo period (1844–1860), whose name translates literally as "military glove." Once again, the accumulation of the invisible is made animate.

Across the works presented at Seibikan, repetition produces difference. Sound changes according to the sculptural forms that contain it; architectural forms are displaced into steel; the North Star, an image of orientation and stability, is given a distorted physical body in concrete and construction beams. Attempts to recover an origin reveal instead the instability of meaning, as memory, time, and context continually transform the relationship between an image and what it represents.

Sasaki's practice emerges from this misalignment: between personal and collective memory, between an image and the expectations placed upon it, and between the desire for historical coherence and the impossibility of fully attaining it. Rather than resolving these distances, the works remain within them, testing the strain of maintaining presence and consciousness as cultural meaning erodes, multiplies, and changes over time.

Sena Sasaki (b. 1990, Tokyo) is based in Hokkaido.
Upcoming exhibitions include Petrine, Paris (2027). Recent exhibitions include Petrine, Düsseldorf (2025); Petrine, Paris (2024); Bel Ami, and Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2021).

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