

*Miho Dohi*

*Naotaka Hiro*

*Wataru Tominaga*

April 13 – May 25, 2019

Reception: Saturday, April 13, 6 – 9 pm

Nonaka-Hill is delighted to present the work of three artists in three rooms; Miho Dohi, Naotaka Hiro, and Wataru Tominaga. The occasion marks the first time each artist will be shown at the gallery.



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720 N. Highland Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038 | Tel. 323 450 9409 | [gallery@nonaka-hill.com](mailto:gallery@nonaka-hill.com)

*Large gallery space:* **Miho Dohi**

**Miho Dohi** manipulates familiar basic materials, including fabric, yarn, papier-mâché, and wood, along with metals such as brass, copper and wire, to form new components to be assembled into sculpture. Dohi connects these diverse elements – painted, carved or twisted – while constantly changing direction of her new objects’ center of gravity in a sort of rotational creation. She explains:

*Whenever I spot pieces of wood or metal that grab my interest, I try to put them together.*

*At one point, these objects become so heavy that they inevitably tumble over. They never tumble evenly, and just when it seems to become clear what is inside and what is outside, they turn completely upside down, and all of a sudden, an object appears quite naturally out of that chaos. Once an object has completely collapsed, something that hadn’t existed in me becomes something that is there now.* - Miho Dohi, 2018

Exhibited in gallery’s large space, Dohi’s sculptures (titled *buttai* – Japanese for “*object*”) are cerebral in nature and occupy an unspecified space, inviting diverse interpretation as to their ideal state of rest. Hanging from the ceiling and walls and gathered on a single large table -- a level playing field --, the sculptures retain legible evidence of the tactile explorations which inform Dohi’s decision process; thumb impressions onto thin sheet metal, hand pressure exerted into tight crimps and coils, tight winding of wire, and fraying of weaves. The resulting sculptures, composed of high-contrast materials, verge on the anthropomorphic, but remain abstract sculptures in the round.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

**Miho Dohi** was born in 1974 Nara-prefecture, Japan, and currently lives and works in Kanagawa. Her artistic practice was developed after completion of postgraduate studies at Tokyo Zokei University in 2002. Dohi has shown extensively in and outside of Japan, most recently with solo exhibitions at Lulu (Mexico City, 2017), Shane Campbell Gallery (Chicago, 2017), and HAGIWARA PROJECTS (Tokyo, 2016). This is her first gallery show on the West Coast.



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*Center gallery space:* **Wataru Tominaga**

A fashion and textile designer, also trained in fine art, **Wataru Tominaga** builds his distinctive textiles atop readymade fabrics which have universal, genderless motifs; paisleys, florals, plaids and gingham. The artist manipulates these materials through twisting, pleating and stitching the fabrics before he adds a top layer of graphic information of cut vinyl. This top layer, often minimal rugby stripes or argyle, when untwisted, cracks to reveal the under-layer which is often a maximal pattern. The artist, who considers gender issues, mixes these patterns which have varying associations to masculinity, femininity and gender fluidity. One look by Tominaga may employ several examples of his mixed handmade textiles, challenging the quick comprehension we are accustomed to with most ready-to-wear clothing. Notable also for their vibrant colors, these garments are formed of rectangles with elastic to create body-defying volumes. Tominaga's unisex garments reference Japan's traditional kimono while simultaneously providing an update on the Japanese avant-garde fashions of recent decades.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Wataru Tominaga was born in 1988 in Kumamoto, Japan, and currently lives and works in Kanagawa. Tominaga's extensive educational background includes Chelsea College of Art, MA Fine Art (2016); Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, BA Fashion Print (2015); Bunka Fashion College, Tokyo (2011), University of Art and Design Helsinki (student exchange program, 2009); Musashino Art University, BA Department of Industrial, Interior and Craft Design, Textile pathway (2010). Following completion of his studies, Tominaga won The Grand Jury Première Vision Prize at The 31st International Festival of Fashion and Photography in Hyères (2016) and was the artist in residency at Palais de Tokyo, Le Pavillon Neuflyze OBC, Paris from 2016 – 2017. Most recently, he was named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 – *Asia – The Arts 2018 list*.



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*Smaller gallery space: Naotaka Hiro*

**Naotaka Hiro's** practice is rooted in the unknown, exploring the body – specifically his own – in an attempt to better understand our physical form. His artworks cannot be defined by their finished appearance, but are better understood as objects resulting from prescribed performative processes, which the artist refers to as “sessions”. Usually 3 hours in length and regulated with a timer, the Hiro typically finishes a work in 8 or 9 physically demanding sessions. To produce the canvas works on view, Hiro used rope and grommets in two opposite ways; to control the canvas in “*Untitled (Two Legs Vertical)*” and to control himself in “*Untitled (Crawl)*”. For “*Untitled (Two Legs Vertical)*”, the artist put the ropes over his neck to shape the unprimed canvas around him into a bag-like form, standing with his legs through each hole. In this position, Hiro sprayed fabric dye in the first session to large areas of the canvas. In following sessions, the artist returned to the same contorted position and, keeping his body in contact with the canvas, painted the canvas against his chest, knees, arms, hand and head. Testing the limits of his reach, he drew finer movements with oil sticks. For the *Untitled (Crawl)*, 2016, the artist used the rope connected in the center of the canvas to control himself as he crawled clockwise continuously a few hundred times. Tied at the neck, waist and wrist, the artist became a human compass, making the circular marks with oil-stick in hand.

Not limited to canvas, Hiro draws, creates video, and sculpts. The sculpture, *Fan (with Upper Body)* is a life cast of the artist's upper body in motion. Hiro laid his body face down, from knee to the top of his head, in a pool of wet plaster and pivoted clockwise from his knees in a circular motion, from the bottom left edge to the right side edge. The artist considers this sculpture as a type of drawing.

Hiro is creating these works without intention to make a representational picture of himself, but to overcome, as he puts it, “*the dilemma of the unknowability of my body*”. Hiro's works straddle diverse classifications; painting and/or sculpture, figuration and/or abstraction, self-portrait and self-negation, performance and/or object, enticing viewers with new angles from which to consider corporeality.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Naotaka Hiro was born in 1972 in Osaka, Japan, and currently lives and works in Pasadena, California. He completed studies at California Institute of the Arts (MFA, 2000) and the University of California, Los Angeles (BA, 1997), and Universitas Gadjadara in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (1996). Hiro regularly joins artist talks and lecture panels at universities and institutions in the United States and abroad, including Pomona College Museum of Art and Casa Vecina in Mexico City. His works have been included in museum exhibitions around the world, such as Made in LA at Hammer Museum (2018) and Hiropon Show at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (2001), as well as galleries including Misako & Rosen (Tokyo), Shane Campbell Gallery (Chicago), Brennan & Griffin (New York), and The Box (Los Angeles). He was most recently named by W Magazine as one of the 6 rising artists to watch in 2019.



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With special thanks to Hagiwara Projects, Tokyo and The Box, Los Angeles.

**Nonaka-Hill** is a contemporary art gallery in Los Angeles with a focus on Japan, founded in 2018 by Rodney and Taka Nonaka-Hill.

Rodney was a partner at Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles and previously worked with Jay Gorney Modern Art in New York. Taka has worked as an art director in the Japanese fashion industry.

Designed by architect Linda Taalman, the gallery is located inside a strip mall, featuring a floor to ceiling glass storefront facade, breaking away from “white cube” gallery design. Above the front entrance, the gallery has maintained the original Best Cleaners signage of the former tenants. Inside, two main exhibition spaces are divided by a central corridor which resembles a traditional Japanese tokonoma area. The gallery’s rear viewing room displays additional artworks and ikebana.

Nonaka-Hill works in close partnership with Tokyo’s *Taka Ishii Gallery* and collaborates with other international galleries. Since opening, Nonaka-Hill has presented a roster of notable artists from modern and contemporary Japan, many for the first time on the West Coast, including Kimiyo Mishima, Shomei Tomatsu, Kazuo Kadoyama, Kansuke Yamamoto, Kentaro Kawabata, Toshio Matsumoto and Tadaaki Kuwayama.

Nonaka-Hill’s Hollywood neighborhood is home to several of L.A.’s distinguished design and art galleries, including *Regan Projects*, *Tanya Bonakdar*, *Various Small Fires*, *Diane Rosenstein*, *Jeffrey Deitch*, *Michael Kohn*, *David Kordansky*, *Kayne Griffin Corcoran*. Nonaka-Hill’s mini-mall includes restaurants *Petit Trois* and *Trois Mec*, and is located opposite of the *Osteria Mozza* at the intersection of Melrose & Highland.

The gallery welcomes the public from Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 8 p.m. Parking is available..