

The Santa Monica Museum of Art presents Yutaka Sone and Benjamin Weissman: What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart, a spirited and collaborative exhibition on view from November 21, 2013 to April 5, 2014. Yutaka Sone, a renowned contemporary artist known for his architectural and natural landscapes, and Benjamin Weissman, a prolific writer and visual artist, met atop Mammoth Mountain at the suggestion of their colleague, Paul McCarthy. Since that initial meeting, they have crafted a shared mythology based on their mutual passion for snow and related subjects—skiing, forests and mountains, athletics, alter-egos, and mischief. In addition to a series of jointly-produced paintings and sculptures spanning a five-year period, What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart includes Sone and Weissman’s monumental, animatronic ski mountain, installed in SMMoA’s Main Gallery and complemented by a roving chair lift and whimsical skiing characters.

In the words of Weissman, his collaboration with Sone represents “something hysterical and peaceful colliding in the same moment: the urgency of a ski day, new snow and deep resonant sparkly moments of nature, the simple ecstasy of physical movement, solid snow as a fluid substance, settling on earth and in mind, and dangers lurking—rocks, cliffs, trees, and avalanches, and the pressure and need to never make boring art.” In that spirit, SMMoA boldly debuts the fruits of their long-term partnership and transports a fantastic winterscape to seasonless Los Angeles.

Yutaka Sone and Benjamin Weissman: What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart is about skiing, but its central themes also apply to surfing and all other sports defined by a kinetic relationship to natural forms. Such experiences are both exhilarating and terrifying, and Sone and Weissman’s collaborative projects are no different. Like skiing, their work together is a form of personal and professional thrill-seeking, requiring that they relinquish individual control in favor of a conjoined creative effort. “On the mountain,” Weissman says, “we are deep inside the sensorial-spiritual ineffable and when we are on dry land, in street clothes, working together, we are after something equally ineffable.” For this exhibition, Sone and Weissman have embarked on a particularly risky and rewarding endeavor: to build a mountain in the Museum. Together they bring the rush of outdoor adventures and instinctual creative production to SMMoA, giving viewers a rare opportunity to reflect on otherwise fleeting experiences.

“This exhibition nourishes our collective imagination with Yutaka and Benjamin’s fantastic, impossible, and sublime dreams,” says executive director Elsa Longhauser. “As the complexities of our societies threaten to overwhelm the life of the mind and the spirit, artists like Yutaka and Benjamin help us see the world with new eyes. Their mutual admiration and energy are contagious.”

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