

大竹茂夫  
Shigeo Otake



策展人  
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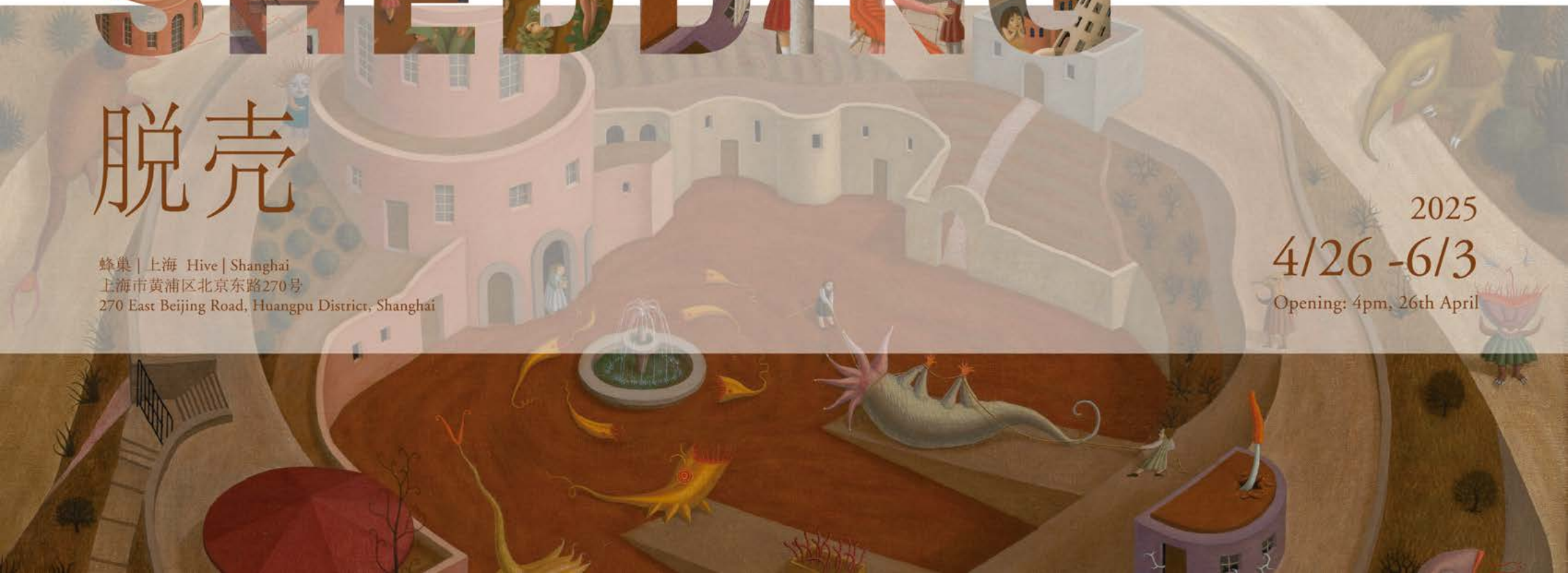


脱壳

蜂巢 | 上海 Hive | Shanghai  
上海市黄浦区北京东路270号  
270 East Beijing Road, Huangpu District, Shanghai

2025  
4/26 - 6/3

Opening: 4pm, 26th April





“Shedding” refers both to a biological process of transformation and to the artist’s creative gesture of gradually peeling away old structures to generate new forms in the intersection between ruins and memory. Otake’s early fascination with insects, his immersion in spiritual Christian experiences, and a sense of uncanny from Shōwa-era Japanese culture intertwine to form the ecological structure of his painterly language. From the 1970s to 1980s, his travels and studies of human civilizations across Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia directly shaped the multilayered spatio-temporal logic and symbolic system in his paintings.

The 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake not only destroyed the landscapes of Otake’s childhood but also disrupted the visual order and ideals once infused into his work. In an instant, his homeland became rubble. The earthquake’s overwhelming force—what Timothy Morton terms a “hyperobject”—infiltrated the artist’s body, emotions, and imagination, lingered ghost-like across space, language, and human gestures. It was in the aftermath of this disaster that Otake’s optimistic depictions of city-states and fortresses, once aligned with Japan’s bubble economy, collapsed into landscapes of ruins and relics of human civilization.

Within these fractured terrains, time becomes disordered and meaning unravels. Fissures act as vessels for coexisting with history—silent yet full of tension. With meticulous brushwork and mimetic structures, Otake entwines microscopic life, historical remains, urban ruins, and theological symbols, rendering ruins as sites where life can be renegotiated. For the artist, ruins are never ornamental nods to the past or romantic reveries; rather, they mark the arrival of a new sacredness. This divinity from “below” subtly hints at the light of Messianic grace.

Wandering through the spatial web Otake constructs, viewers encounter a labyrinth of spirit, interwoven with multiple layers of imagery. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, Otake completed his over four decades of life and work in Kyoto and returned to his hometown of Kobe. To him, Kobe is more than a real-world city; in its post-quake rupture and rebirth, it has become a heterotopic constellation of spaces—gathered fragments of history, emotional undercurrents, and echoes of personal memory. In his recent Kobe-related works, Otake not only reveals the heterogeneity of space but also imbues them with profound meditations on ultimate concerns.

Coexisting with all that remains unspoken, the artist investigates, from the depths of time and space, the entanglements of history and civilization, species and ecology, theology and reason. Like an ascetic, Otake penetrates the surface of things through delicate strokes and symbolic structures, touching the essence and foundations of existence. He weaves perceptual diagrams that nest within one another, mirroring each other. Shedding responds to how we dwell in an alienated world, and how we seek spiritual redemption amid rupture and disorder. In this inward and expansive space, Otake continues to construct strange coordinates—reflecting his profound gaze into the realm of suffering and his persistent questioning of how we might dwell within it.







Blind Alley  
1995  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
130.3×162.1cm



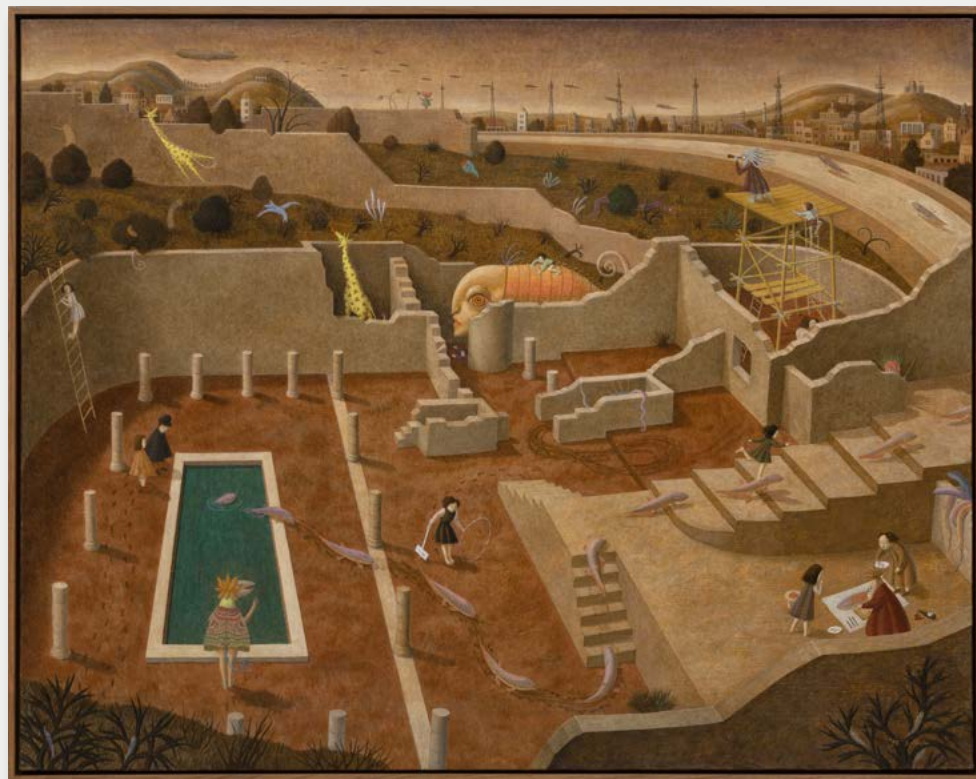












Lungfish in Ruins  
1995  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
90.9×116.7cm

















Restricted Area  
2013  
Tempera and oil on board  
40.9x53cm





脱壳  
Shedding

大竹茂夫  
Shigeo Orake







Vegetable Garden  
2006  
Tempera and oil on board  
90.9×116.7cm









The Four-Fingered Man C  
1982  
Fresco strappo (transferred to panel)  
33.5x53cm











The Witcher  
1991  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
65.2x91cm







Grylli Day  
2008  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
60.6x72.7cm









Cherubim's Disguise  
2020  
Tempera and oil on board  
22x27.3cm











Waterfront  
1990  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
45.5x53cm









Barbel Steed  
1990  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
53x72.7cm











Night of High Tide  
1999  
Tempera and oil on board  
27.3x40.9cm







The Unknown Life History of Bamboo Fungus

1995

Tempera and oil on board

40.9x60.6cm











Resort  
2001  
Tempera and oil on board  
53×72.7cm













Contented Place  
1991  
Tempera and oil on canvas  
91×116.7cm















Don't Make a Fuss in My Dream  
2022  
Tempera and oil on board  
80.3×116.7 cm









The Demon on the Fifty Steps  
2022  
Tempera and oil on board  
27.3x19cm







Back of the Foreigners' Mansion  
2024  
Tempera and oil on board  
19×27.3cm





'24 S. Otake









The Crossroads of the Six Realms  
2024  
Tempera and oil on board  
27.3x22cm







Surely the Demon's House  
2025  
Tempera and oil on board  
27.3x22cm



'25 S. Otake







The Eye of the Tracker  
2025  
Water-soluble alkyd resin paint on paper  
24x27cm



The House Full of Windows  
2025  
Water-soluble alkyd resin paint on paper  
24x27cm













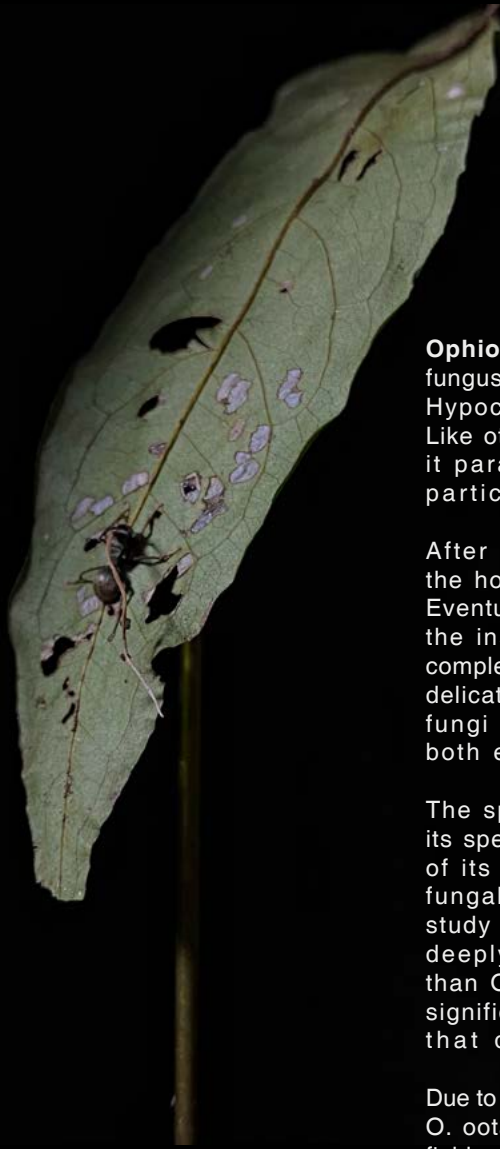


*Ophiocordyceps ootakii*



*Cordyceps zhejiangensis*





**Ophiocordyceps ootakii** is an entomopathogenic fungus belonging to the phylum Ascomycota, order Hypocreales, and family Ophiocordycipitaceae. Like other members of the genus *Ophiocordyceps*, it parasitizes the larvae or pupae of insects, particularly moths of the family Noctuidae.

After infection, the fungus proliferates within the host, gradually replacing its internal tissues. Eventually, a fruiting body (stroma) emerges from the insect's exoskeleton, releasing spores and completing its life cycle. This process exemplifies a delicate and complex mode of symbiosis between fungi and insects—an image often invoked in both ecological theory and cultural reflection.

The species was first discovered in Japan, and its specific epithet, “ootakii,” was chosen in honor of its discoverer, Shigeo Otake—an artist and fungal researcher—whose contributions to the study of fungal ecology and biodiversity remain deeply influential. Though less widely known than *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, *O. ootakii* offers significant insight into the intricate relationships that define temperate forest ecosystems.

Due to its distinctive morphology and parasitic elegance, *O. ootakii* has increasingly attracted interest in the fields of visual art and speculative ecology. It is often referenced as a symbol of symbiosis, transformation, and posthuman ecological imagination.



**Cordyceps zhejiangensis** is an entomopathogenic fungus classified under the order Hypocreales, typically within the families Clavicipitaceae or Ophiocordycipitaceae, depending on recent phylogenetic revisions.

The species was first discovered in Zhejiang Province, China, and its specific epithet “zhejiangensis” refers directly to this geographic origin. It parasitizes the larvae of Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies), eventually producing a small, club-shaped or rod-like fruiting body that emerges from the insect host.

While morphologically similar to the more widely known *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, *C. zhejiangensis* differs in host range, distribution, and biochemical composition. It has been studied for its potential medicinal properties and is also considered valuable in ecological conservation efforts regarding native fungal biodiversity in southern China.













The Kobe 50 Steps, located near the artist's Christian elementary school, was a place the artist frequently played as a child. It still exists today.

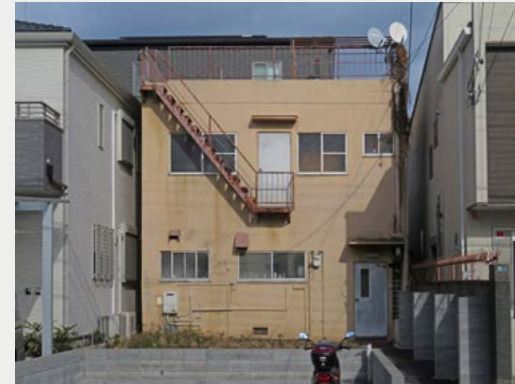


The Kobe Marine Observatory, Japan's first station to monitor the ocean, was destroyed in the 1995 Hanshin earthquake.



Artist's 1985 visit to Herodium in Israel.

The Kobe Juvenile Detention Center was linked to a 1997 serial murder case by a 14-year-old, which led to changes in Japan's criminal responsibility



The prototype for *Surely the Demon's House*.

A tunnel entrance in Kyoto serves as the spatial prototype for several of the artist's works.



The prototype for *The House Full of Windows*.



The Kobe Kitano Ijinkan, shown in a photo from around 50 years ago, no longer exists. After restoration, it has become a popular tourist destination.



# Shigeo Otake

Born in 1955 in Kobe, Japan  
Lives and works in Kobe, Japan

## Education

1979 - 1981     MFA, Kyoto City University of Arts, Japan  
1974 - 1979     BFA, Kyoto City University of Arts, Japan

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025     Shedding, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China  
2024     The Sylvan Diaries, ADZ Gallery, Lisbon, Portugal  
2023     Undefined Spectacle, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China  
Fungitopia, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2024     The Secret History, Gladstone Gallery, New York, US  
Burning Your Boats, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China

