Shimon Kamada
鎌田士主

魅 Phantom (’s) Presence 惑

13.06 — 29.08.2026

PODIUM

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13 June - 29 August 2026

PODIUM is proud to present "Phantom('s) Presence", Rotterdam-based Japanese artist **Shimon Kamada**'s first solo presentation with the gallery and in his career. In this new body of work, Kamada draws from his photo archives that span his childhood and teenage years in his hometown in Japan, conjuring realms where these images drift, overlap, and intertwine like fragmented memories. From hometown streets and domestic settings to scenes of natural sublimity and surreal dreamscapes; the artist bathes each composition in skewed light, melancholic shadows, and psychological tension to render a series of enigmatic narratives, revealing the fragile and elusive nature of remembrance. The exhibition opens on 13 June (Saturday) from 2 to 7 PM and is on view until 29 August (Saturday).

The exhibition title unfolds along a dual register. On one hand, memories return as spectral traces, resurfacing as phantoms that linger within the present. On the other hand, it references the phenomenon of the phantom limb, where absence is paradoxically experienced as presence, blurring the boundary between reality and fantasy. Together, these ideas probe the unstable and illusionary nature of memory as something both fleeting and insistently felt. Additionally, to underscore the plasticity and influx nature of memories, the exhibition will not remain a static presentation, instead it will be restructured mid-way during its exhibition period.

About Shimon Kamada

Shimon Kamada (b. 1997, Japan; lives and works in Rotterdam) channels personal memory and subconscious reveries into his evocative oil paintings. Drawing from his sentimental photo archives, Kamada constructs layered compositions that fuse figuration with abstraction, exploring the fragility of time, the inevitability of loss, and the elusiveness of memory. His canvases, marked by skewed light, uncanny shadows, and dystopian atmospheres, evoke a haunting suspension that unsettles viewers and surfaces latent trauma. Through complex narrative stratifications, Kamada invites multiple, often ambiguous interpretations, transforming intimate recollections into universal meditations on nostalgia, alienation, and the porous boundary between reality and dream. His practice extends to woodcut prints and the reworking of secondhand canvases, emphasising the process and accumulation of memory's layers.

Kamada won the Ron Mandos Residency Award (2020) and worked at Brutus Lab in Rotterdam (2021) as an artist-in-residence. He has participated in group exhibitions including PODIUM, Hong Kong (2025); Van Nelle Fabriek, Rotterdam (2024), Enari Gallery, Amsterdam (2023), ARWE Gallery, Gouda (2022), Wilford X, Temse (2022), Felix Solo Gallery, Nijmegen (2021), Atelier of AVL Mundo, Rotterdam (2021), Het HEM, Zaandam (2020), among others.

Work List

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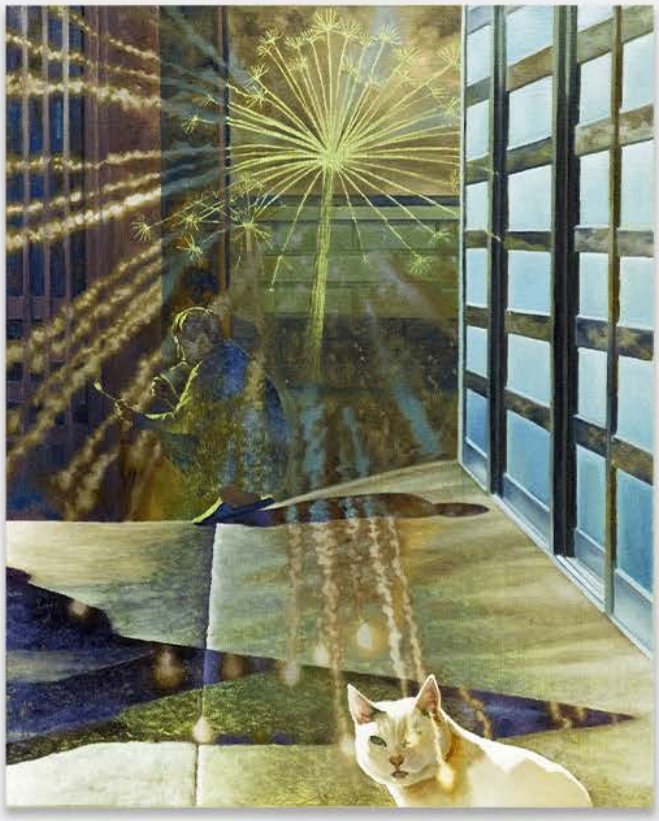
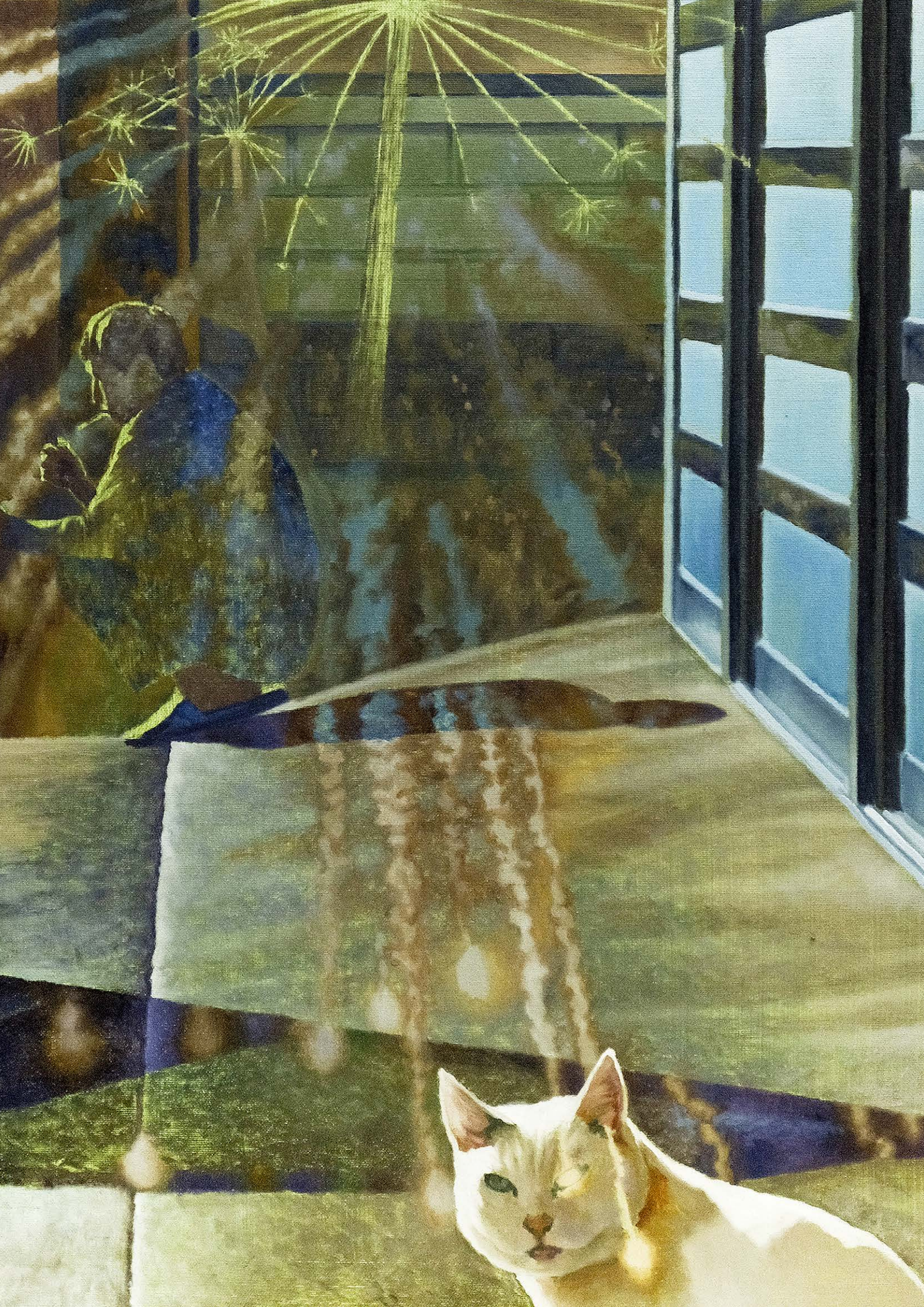
Shimon Kamada
A Found Sparkler
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
120 x 150 cm | 47.2 x 59.1 in

A Found Sparkler (2026) invites the viewer into Kamada's intimate hometown where the roots of his nostalgia take hold—centering on Japan's traditional incense-stick sparkler *senko-hanabi* (線香花火), as an emblem of the transient nature of bygone halcyon days. Like celebratory fireworks contained within a delicate, miniature form, these sparklers resemble the explosion of a singularity into vast universes, only to perish again into a quiet nothingness. The Japanese word *senko*, meaning not only 'incense' but also 'flash' (閃光), highlights this ephemeral brilliance that neither one's perception or memory can preserve against the fleeting, irreversible flow of time. Typically lit during summer gatherings with significant others, the sparkler here is instead held by a solitary teenager who is seemingly fading into an apparition and melting into the fragmented hometown surroundings. Memories of childhood, home, and belonging—once deepest wellsprings of his longing, grow evermore obscure and alienating, until only a faint residue of summer warmth lingers, flickering softly before the sparkler goes out.

Shimon Kamada
Fireworks in Daylight
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
80 x 65 cm | 31.5 x 25.6 in

Fireworks in Daylight (2026) stages a quiet domestic moment unsettled by a flash of reverie. A man pauses to light a cigarette within a conventional Japanese home, his crouching posture suggesting a brief withdrawal from the demands of the day; a cat gazes directly at the viewer, heightening the scene's stillness and subtle uncanniness. Against this domestic setting, Kamada paints a surreal dandelion reimagined as a burst of fireworks, its radiating form suggesting both celebration and transience. Like seeds carried by the wind, it evokes the way feelings drift and shift, impossible to hold in place, while also recalling memories that flicker briefly before the man's eyes as he smokes—momentary, luminous, and already slipping away. In this vein, the work registers a temporary release of tension, a fleeting suspension from the pressures of daily life, where ordinary routine gives way to a brief and fragile sense of relief.





Shimon Kamada
Ripples on the Mirror
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
65 x 80 cm | 25.6 x 31.5 in

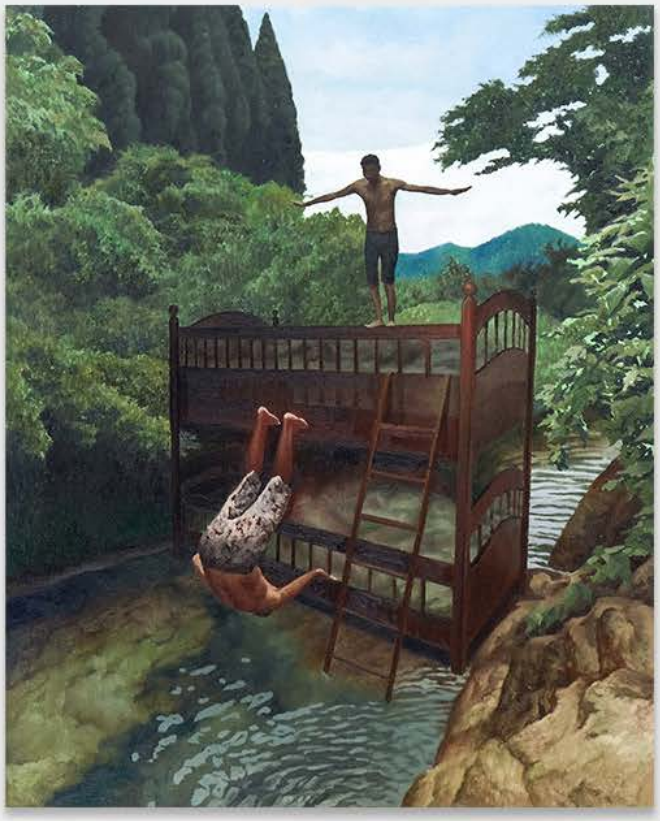
Ripples on the Mirror (2026) extends Kamada's ongoing inquiry into memory as a mutable and unstable terrain, transforming a quiet, seemingly pastoral scene into a meditation on emotional disturbance and the fragility of time. Here, the lake's reflective stillness and the softened woodland palette evoke the suspended atmosphere that often characterises his paintings, where serenity is never complete, and stillness always remains provisional. The figure skipping stones across the water activates this calm surface, setting off ripples that stand as an allegory for memory itself: an event that appears fleeting, yet continues to reverberate through the psyche long after its initial impact. The work also develops Kamada's interest in the tension between figuration and abstraction. As the image recedes into mist and reflection, the scene becomes less a literal place than an emotional register, where the boundary between outer landscape and inner state grows increasingly porous. What emerges is central to Kamada's practice: the idea that memory is not a repository of fixed images, but a restless process of recurrence, distortion, and affective echo.

Shimon Kamada
Sleeping Light
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm | 19.7 x 23.6 in

Sleeping Light (2026) centres on children asleep in a bed that seems to spill beyond the frame, as though the scene remains suspended in the tenderness of a fleeting snapshot. A bedside lamp casts a warm amber glow, cradling the children within a fragile sphere of light. Yet this ordinary source of illumination gradually takes on a more unsettled presence, like a revolving lantern scattering kaleidoscopic reflections across the room. These fragments of radiance seem to detach from the lamp itself, transforming into moths that rest quietly upon the duvet. Just as the moth's ephemeral, weeks-long lifespan, the innocent and naive childhood endures only briefly for years before being buried beneath the harsh reality of adulthood. Yet, through the rare flickers of dazzle, the viewer's inner child stirs once more, reminding one to return to this tender, pure, and carefree cradle from a distant nostalgia.

Shimon Kamada
The Top Bunk
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
80 x 65 cm | 31.5 x 25.6 in

In *The Top Bunk* (2026), Kamada renders a tender daydream that revisits the warmth of his loveable childhood memories shared with his brother. Here, the familiar double bunk bed is reimagined as an aged wooden bridge, stretching across a valley and towering over the river below. Arms flung wide, the pair then leaps briskly from its edge. Their lively and carefree gestures—even somersaulting like a seasoned diving athlete—radiate a youthful energy that juxtaposes with the tranquil clarity of the summer stream. By reliving his teenage escapades with his brother as adventures in the wild, Kamada reveals the vast possibilities of dreams, inviting the viewer to also plunge into one's inner mindscape and rediscover the tender, cherished memories that perpetuate within.



Shimon Kamada
Before the Car Light Came
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
65 x 80 cm | 25.6 x 31.5 in

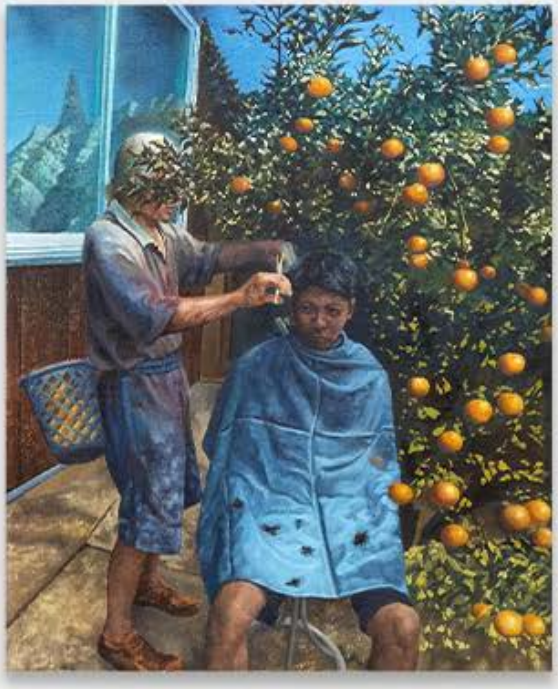
Before the Car Light Came (2026) captures an endearing moment between Kamada and his brother. Perching atop a tree, the pair turns away from the viewers, captivated by a glaring source of illumination from a far distance. Echoing a tender episode of watching the sunrise, Kamada depicts an indigo midnight sky, an intense radiance emulating that of a headlamp, snow-laden branches and roads, and an uneasy air of emptiness. This evocative setting foregrounds their brotherhood—that amidst a somber, cold night, they remain unbothered, keeping each other company in quiet stillness above the cityscape. For Kamada, even as the past grows unfamiliar, unrecognizable, and forgotten, their bonding still perseveres in his memory—a kinship that transcends words and gestures, enduring where everything else goes adrift.

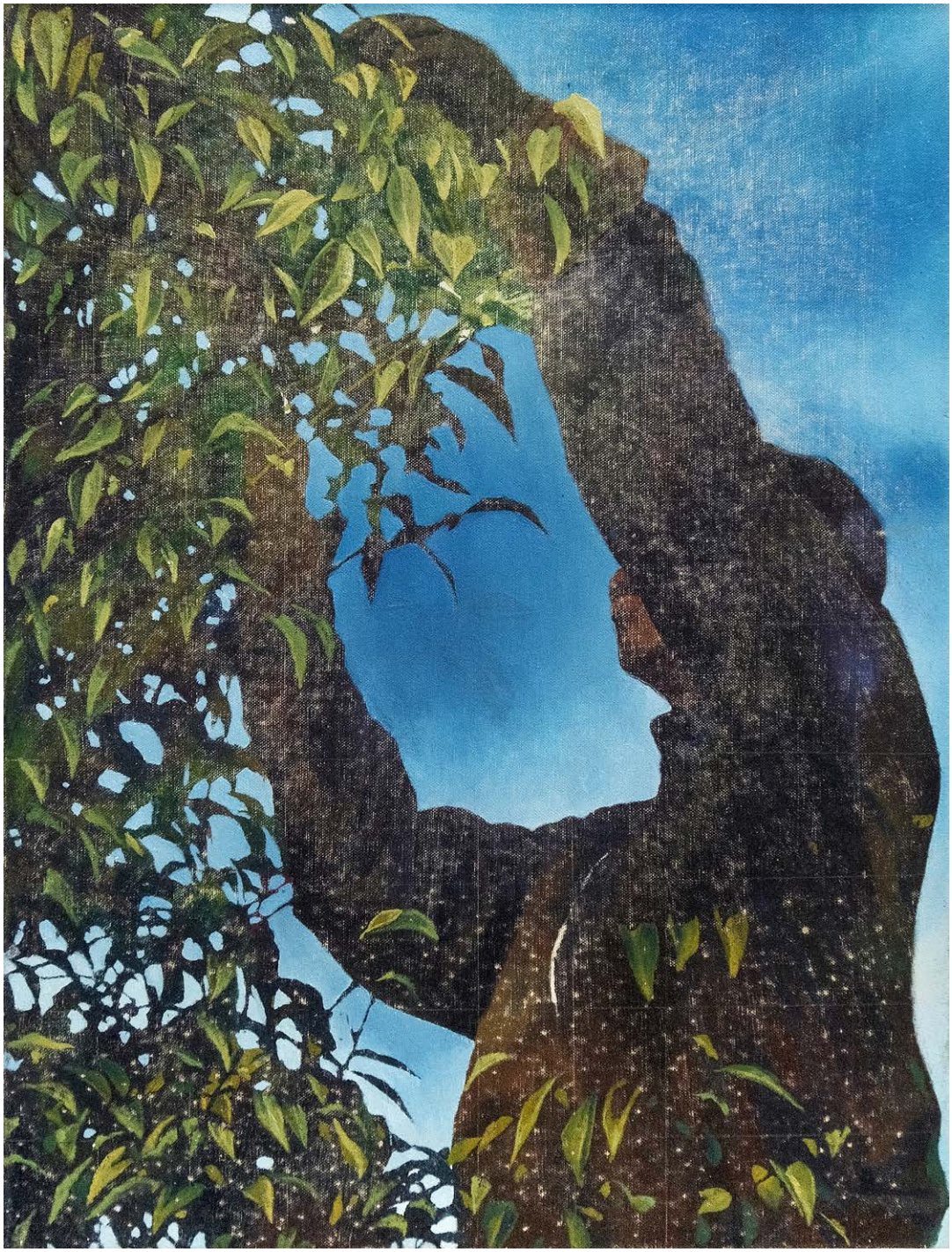
Shimon Kamada
Harvest Season
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
55 x 45 cm | 21.7 x 17.7 cm

In *Harvest Season* (2026), Kamada's grandfather leisurely trimmed the artist's hair under the dappled shade of a flourishing mandarin tree. Ripening from September through March, mandarins are a familiar presence in Japanese households, enjoyed when family members gather around the heated kotatsu table to share their everyday moments. Here, 'harvesting' connotes beyond the picking of these mandarins into the waist-hung basket, to also include the soft fall of hair strands shaved from the young Kamada—two gestures that, while seemingly unrelated, reveal grandfather's unyielding love and devotion to the family.

Verso of *Harvest Season* (2026)

On the back of the canvas, Kamada creates a woodblock print depicting another plant of Chinese lantern fruit thrives—a symbol of 'life within death', with the fruit's skeleton-like husk enclosing and protecting its flesh within. Kamada's grandmother then sits tranquilly at its side, as dusk falls upon the scene to bathe them both in golden, nostalgic hues. The verso thus becomes an elegy: a memorial for the irretrievable past and a lament for loved ones who now reside only in memory. Drawing from two of his most respected and cherished figures, the artist reminds the viewer to treasure not just the present moments, but also the fleeting memories that so often slip away before one notices.





Shimon Kamada
Abandoned Citrus
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
60 x 40 cm | 23.6 x 15.7 in

Building on the mandarin's associations with family, care, and seasonal abundance, *Abandoned Citrus* (2026) introduces a more subdued and introspective register. Here, Kamada's brother appears as a bearer of the harvest, yet his presence is partially obscured—his contours deliberately sanded away, as if eroded by time. The once-lush mandarin tree is now stripped bare, its ripened fruits similarly effaced. What remains is not the harvest itself, but its absence: the quiet dissolution of labour, care, and shared experience.

The title signals a shift from intimacy to distance. Abandonment here does not simply suggest neglect, but points to the fragile condition of memory—how even the most vivid and emotionally charged moments can be left behind, slipping beyond reach despite one's desire to hold onto them. Like the phenomenon of the phantom limb, only a residual sensation lingers: an abstract imprint of what once was. The image of the hometown mandarins, once so tangible, begins to blur and dissolve, resisting full recollection. This sense of fading is echoed on the reverse of the canvas, where Kamada reprises the same woodblock composition but in a pale teal palette. The change in colour subtly registers a temporal and emotional shift, suggesting the gradual desaturation of memory over time. Together, these two works trace a movement from presence to absence, from abundance to erosion—revealing memory not as a stable archive, but as something continually reshaped, softened, and, at times, quietly abandoned.

Verso of *Abandoned Citrus* (2026)

Shimon Kamada
Dusk Tree
2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas
120 x 100 cm | 47.2 x 39.4 in

In *Dusk Tree* (2026), Kamada returns to his childhood self, climbing a snow-laden tree as dusk begins to fall. Drawn to what once felt like a place of refuge, the young boy ascends instinctively, seeking the comfort of a familiar safe haven. Yet the tree, now stripped of its leaves and covered in snow, no longer offers the shelter it once did. Exposed and fragile, it stands as a quiet reminder that this space of protection has altered, no longer capable of shielding him from the world beyond. Unaware of this shift, the child continues to play among the towering branches, where danger dissolves into wonder, unfazed by height or the absence of supervision. Here, reality begins to loosen its hold, dissolving like thawing snow, as Kamada's longing for his carefree childhood expands into a fantasy unbound by fear or consequence. At the same time, a subtle tension emerges between innocence and the inevitable recognition of change—the moment when one must descend and confront what lies beyond the imagined refuge. Though only a spectral trace of a self long gone, the child remains etched within the artist's inner world: a phantom suspended between memory and imagination, between what once was and what can no longer be reclaimed.

Shimon Kamada
A Fever at Night
2025
Acrylic and oil on canvas
40 x 50 cm | 15.7 x 19.7 cm

Across two paintings, Kamada orchestrates a duet that interplays and reconstructs the same fragment of memory. In *A Fever at Night* (2025), layers of sedimented snow pervade the composition, soaking up the dreary darkness of the silent night. At its corner, a single lantern reveals the profile of a boy buried deep underneath the snowscape, whose face tightens against the biting cold, fighting for a source of warmth from the otherwise thick blankets of ice. Meanwhile, ropes and poles emerge around his body, forming the *yukitsuri* (雪吊り) structures to shield trees from the winter snow. Such uncanny surroundings signal that what the viewer witnesses is the boy's fever dream, where he has forfeited control of his body and surrendered to the subconscious. Here, his distress permeates into the dismal and ominous ambience, while his psychotic state catalyses the otherwise surreal imagery. Within this inner realm, heightened sensations and emotions swell beyond reason, overtaking reality itself to fabricate the lingering fever dream.

Shimon Kamada
The Snow Suspension
2025
Acrylic and oil on canvas
60 x 45 cm | 23.6 x 17.7 cm

In Yasunari Kawabata's Snow Country, the protagonist journeys repeatedly to a remote, otherworldly snowy town, yet its image remains in constant flux, shaped by his shifting perceptions and sentiments. This mutable quality of experience resonates with Kamada's *The Snow Suspension* (2025). As the past recedes into fragments, imagination begins to seep in and reshape memory. Rather than melancholic or desolate imagery, fever here becomes a condition of celebration—much like the Japanese word *netsu* (熱), which carries the dual sense of both 'fever' and 'passion'.

In this dreamscape, carp-shaped windsocks associated with Children's Day in Japan sway across the azure sky, while the moon and stars scatter their light like fireworks over the snow-covered shrubs below. The boy is no longer alone, but accompanied by celestial and surreal figures that illuminate his rest. In Kamada's hands, the snowy town and the fevered tale are likewise transformed with each act of recollection, gently shaped by nostalgia and a longing for distant childhood.

Verso of *The Snow Suspension* (2025)

Shimon Kamada
A New Recruit
2025
Acrylic and oil on canvas
40 x 50 cm | 15.7 x 19.7 cm

A New Recruit (2025) depicts an inebriated salaryman asleep in public, a familiar sight in urban Japan. As the title suggests, this slumped figure—a new hire worn down by exhaustion—allows his dreams and fantasies to spill into reality, his subconscious unfurling into a scene filled with sakura. The cherry blossoms fall like snow, transforming the image into a *sakura fubuki* (櫻吹雪), or 'cherry blossom snowstorm'. Through this shifting vision, the work evokes a distinctly Japanese sense of impermanence, mirroring the fragile and temporary position of youth at the threshold of corporate life. It stages the ephemerality of initiation and the quiet resignation that accompanies entry into the world of the *shakaijin* (社会人)—a working adult who has entered society through employment—holding in tension the beauty of the blossoms and the futility of the role they come to symbolise.

Shimon Kamada

Born in 1997, Japan; lives and works in Rotterdam, Netherlands

Education

2016-2020 Bachelor of Fine Art at The University of the Arts, Utrecht, Netherlands
2018-2019 Exchange Programme at The Academy of Fine Arts, Prague, Czech Republic

Solo Exhibitions

2026 Phantom(‘s) Presence, PODIUM, Hong Kong

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025 Ballet with the Devil, PODIUM, Hong Kong
2024 Best of Graduates Legacy, Van Nelle Fabriek, Rotterdam
2023 Teach Me to Remember, Enari Gallery, Amsterdam
2022 Painting is Present, ARWE Gallery, Gouda, Netherlands
360 Kunst°, Wilford X, Temse, Belgium
2021 Recycle/Wecycle, Felix Solo Gallery, Nijmegen, Netherlands
Final presentation of RM Residency, Atelier of AVL Mundo, Rotterdam
Exhibition of StartPoint Prize, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam
Droomwereld, Galerie Pouloeuff, Naarden, Netherlands
Flashbacks of Your Adolescence, EXboot, Utrecht
ALL INN exhibition, Het HEM, Zaandam, Netherlands
2020 Best of Graduates 2020, Gallery Ron Mandos, Amsterdam
Exhibition of StartPoint Prize, Galerie HYB4, Prague
Exposure HKU Fine Art 2020, Pastoe Fabriek, Utrecht
FOMA Fear Of Missing Art, Broese, Utrecht

Art Fairs

2026 Art Rotterdam, Diez Gallery, Rotterdam
2025 This Art Fair, Door Open Space, Amsterdam

Awards and Residencies

2021 AVL Mundo, Rotterdam
2020 Ron Mandos Residency Award
StartPoint Prize (nominated)
Dooyewaard Stipendium Prize (nominated)

Information

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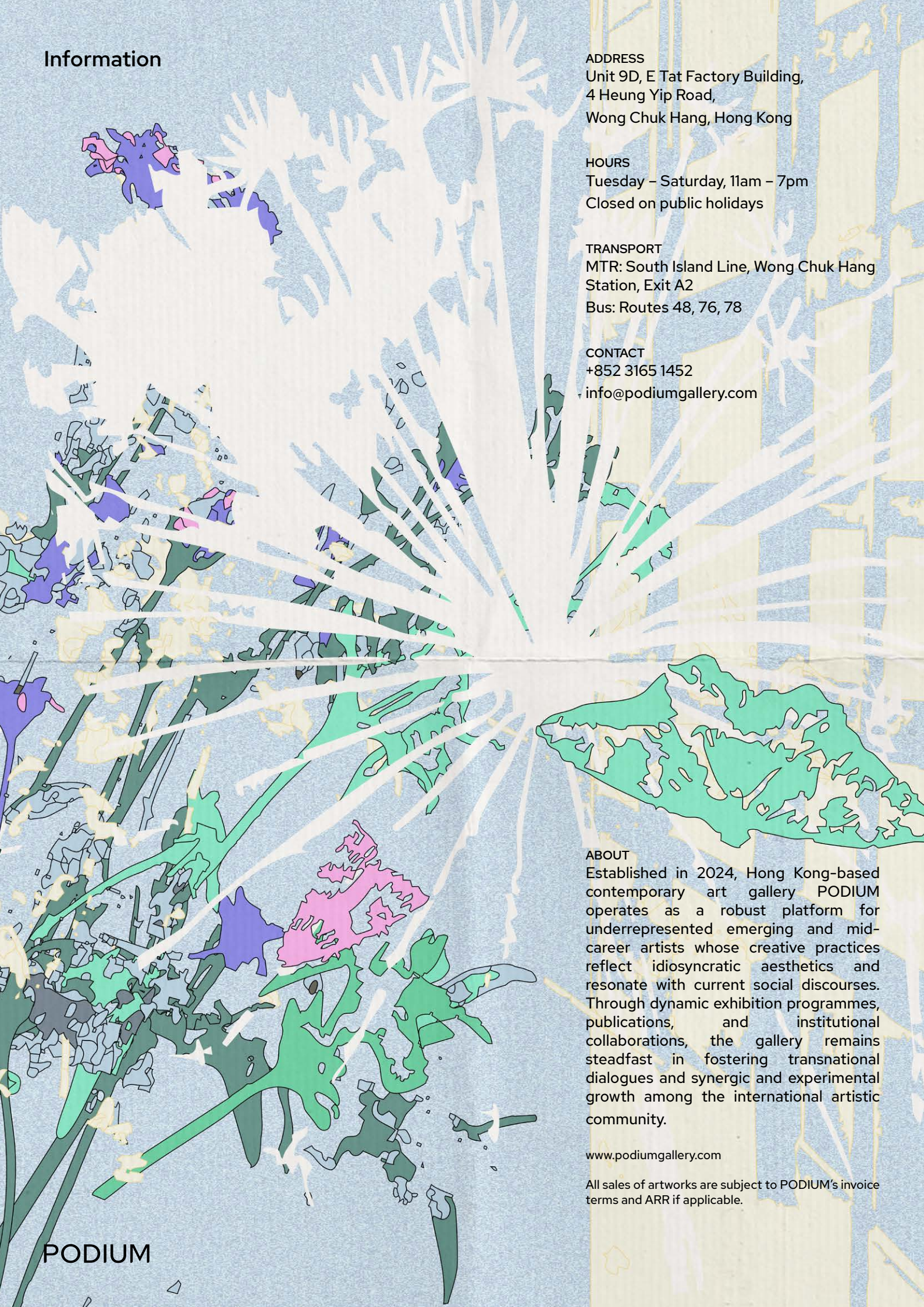

ABOUT
Established in 2024, Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery PODIUM operates as a robust platform for underrepresented emerging and mid-career artists whose creative practices reflect idiosyncratic aesthetics and resonate with current social discourses. Through dynamic exhibition programmes, publications, and institutional collaborations, the gallery remains steadfast in fostering transnational dialogues and synergic and experimental growth among the international artistic community.

www.podiumgallery.com

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