



Naoko Tosa

TOSA RIMPA:



The Places You Will Never Visit

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Naoko Tosa's second solo exhibition at Ikkan Art Gallery, *TOSA RIMPA: The Places You Will Never Visit*, follows her projection mapping exercise at the Kyoto National Museum, breathing new life into the historical Rimpa school of Japanese painting. It presents Tosa's reimagining and reinterpretations of traditional Japanese culture and imagery through six new video works. With her characteristic use of media and video, Tosa further expands on the notion of creative destruction, as both a thing of beauty and an ominous force. Nature remains a central motif in her video works, its hidden beauty often threshed out by its destruction. Against sharp vicissitudes of colors and textures, beginnings and ends intermingle in swift elegiac motions where flowers are ruined and restored, broken down before they are reconstructed again. Contrary to common belief, Tosa's visuals are not digitally rendered. The various elements and phenomena depicted are all real and composed at her studio with the videos shot using an ultra-high speed camera.

Utsuroi refers to the everyday motions of change, commonly understood alongside the changing of the seasons. A row of summer irises lies solitary in the opening still of this video work, a quiet nod to esteemed Rimpa painter Korin Ogata's *Iris*. Pierced in continuous gestures, the flowers gradually break away, its initial fullness splintering into fragments. Tosa likens this to the inexorable nature of changing seasons, where summer withers into fall which in turn fades into winter.



Omokage, which can be understood as vestige or face, unravels in a fashion much similar to *Utsuroi*. The flowers take center stage, remaining frozen, moving only when it is punctured. In the wake of nature's destruction, Tosa draws out unseen aspects of its beauty, suggesting also a possible transcendence from the linearity of birth and death, creation and destruction.



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With *Tears of Flower*, there is more a sense of birth than destruction. The component and the whole come together in a curious amalgam of kaleidoscopic visuals. Multiple petals are conjoined in swirl-like patterns, looking much like flowers reborn with composite parts. Interlaced with clear droplets of water, notably the 'tears', this work also details Tosa's attempt to capture the invisible workings of a human's mind. Using flowers as a surrogate for humans, she articulates these obscured thoughts and feelings through abstract forms.

The Places You Will Never Visit exudes a similar sense of the surreal. These images appear to you as they would in a dream. Flowers coalesce rhythmically against a blanket of pitch black, expanding and contracting, they close and open like portals to distant worlds.

In *Stardust*, a web of flowers is stitched together in fluid motions, creating symmetrical images with strange resonances. The same lattice-like imagery is delivered with a slight twist in *Blowup Dragon*. Pools of viscous gold bounce between varying states, shifting textures and forms seamlessly. They are molded and manipulated to emulate flower impressions. Corresponding kaleidoscopic patterns appear heavily in this work as well, reinforcing its significance to Tosa's new body of work, as a means of revealing beauty in the diverse manifestations and representations of nature.

Naoko Tosa is an internationally renowned Japanese media artist, born in 1961 in Fukuoka, Japan. After receiving a PhD for Art and Technology Research from the University of Tokyo, she was a fellow at the Centre for Advanced Visual Studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from 2002 to 2004 and is currently a professor at Kyoto University. Tosa's practice covers a wide range of areas from sculpture, visual art, video art, to digital art. Tosa has exhibited her artworks at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the New York Metropolitan Art Museum and Japan Creative Center at Singapore among many locations worldwide. In 2013, she had her solo exhibition, *Sound of Ikebana*, at the ArtScience Museum, Singapore, followed by a projection mapping exercise on the museum's facade in January 2014. She was recently involved in the *Rimpa School 400th Anniversary Projection Mapping, 21st Century Legend of Wind God & Thunder God*, March 2015 at the Kyoto National Museum, Japan. Tosa will also be exhibiting in the Kobe Biennale 2015. In 2012, Naoko Tosa was asked to create a digital artwork for Yeosu Marine Expo in Korea. In the EXPO Digital Gallery with a LED screen measuring 250 metres by 30 metres, she exhibited a digital artwork called "Four God Fag" symbolizing the idea of Asian traditional four gods connecting Asia. The work was honored by Expo 2012 Committee.

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