



MOTOHIRO TAKEDA
Something To Remember You By

ALISON BRADLEY PROJECTS
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Something To Remember You By

Motohiro Takeda

September 5 – November 2, 2024



ALISON BRADLEY PROJECTS

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“Ultimately, I am cultivating a garden of time or something that encompasses the garden within itself, like a Japanese stone garden or karesansui, which contains the universe within. In our increasingly urban and digital world, I believe there is a pressing need for this kind of artistic practice that strives to connect us with earthly and cosmic timescapes and encourage us to reflect on our existence.”

– Motohiro Takeda

Nights in April, 2024

Cast concrete hand with flowers, found
stone, shou shugi ban wood pedestal,
burnt sheetrock



Nights in April, 2024

A site-specific installation to greet the viewer, *Nights in April* centers a concrete casting of the artist's hand, studded with flowers and artist-produced charcoal. Takeda's signature torched-wall creates a charred portal into the gallery space. The found rock below provides a platform that grounds the installation into the earth, and affirms Takeda's practice as nature-driven: focused on highlighting natural forms and raw materials. The artist's own hand is a powerful symbol and artifact that simultaneously constructs, beckons, and contains the conceptual multitudes of the work. Referencing his near-death experience with an infection leading to toxic shock that nearly cost him his extremities, Takeda commemorates the foggy memories of his hospitalization and healing, foregrounding the limitations of the physical body.





Untitled (Spear), 2024, burned concrete, found stone, steel, 109 x 15 x 23 in.

Untitled (Spear), 2024

The centerpiece of the show, *Untitled (Spear)* is emblematic of the cyclical nature of Takeda's process-based work. The artwork demonstrates the artist's reworking of materials in a closed system, harnessing the metamorphic power of fire to both construct and destroy. His transformation ritual begins with a narrow tree trunk foraged from a forest floor in upstate New York. Takeda ceremoniously creates a mold of the wooden form and casts it in concrete, producing two formally identical objects—one created by man and the other by nature. He then burns the cement facsimile in fire fueled by the original wood, browning the stoney surface until it begins to mimic tree bark. The found stone base, speckled with moss and lichen, grounds the work in the natural world. The emerging sculpture stands as an uncanny memorial to the natural form, ironically destroyed in its creation.





Untitled (Spear), 2024, process images. Courtesy the artist.

Untitled, 2023

Takeda often works by scavenging wood to be blackened and burned through *shou sugi ban* or *yakisugi*, a Japanese wood-burning technique that involves charring wood to weatherproof and preserve it. These *yakisugi* fires—described by the artist as “a dance between chance and control”—simultaneously create and destroy in his practice. The immediate residues of this process are charcoal and ash, adhered together into a spherical sculpture that manifests the fire itself, making tangible the memory of combustion. For the artist, the motif of the sphere represents the ultimate goal of eternity; the preservation of a moment *ad infinitum*. Leaning precariously against the charcoal globe is a found metal part of mysterious origin that Takeda has sculpted into an off-kilter arch. This harvested urban artifact, loaded with evidence of experience and clues to its previous function, creates a stark contrast against the timelessness of the sphere, firmly locating this work within the constructed ecosystems of a post-industrial society.



Untitled, 2023, ash, charcoal, adhesive, found metal, 35 x 34 x 24 in.



Something To Remember You By, 2024

The namesake of the exhibition, *Something To Remember You By* is a striking triptych in charcoal produced by Takeda's yakisugi fires. The title refers to a jazz composition of the same name, which served as the backdrop and soundtrack for Takeda's steady push and pull of charcoal. Simultaneously, the title refers to the residual nature of the artist's work, which harnesses the byproducts of material transformations, both manmade and natural. A worked and reworked surface resembling a mountain range or a forest of trees that consumes the viewer, the monumental canvas work is like nature: complex yet simple. Says the artist, "As with most of my work, this piece has to do with memory, and the desire to hold onto something forever: precious moments, things, people, the time that you've spent somewhere or with someone. While pictures often stand in for memories, so much atmosphere is lost. The impossibility of preserving memories is as certain as the longing to do so."



Something To Remember You By, 2024, charcoal on canvas, 96 x 144 in. Installation view.



Something To Remember You By, 2024, process image. Courtesy the artist.



Untitled (Sphere), 2023, hand-carved wood, cast concrete log, found wood beam with metal hardware, 64 x 15 x 15 in.



Untitled (Sphere), 2023

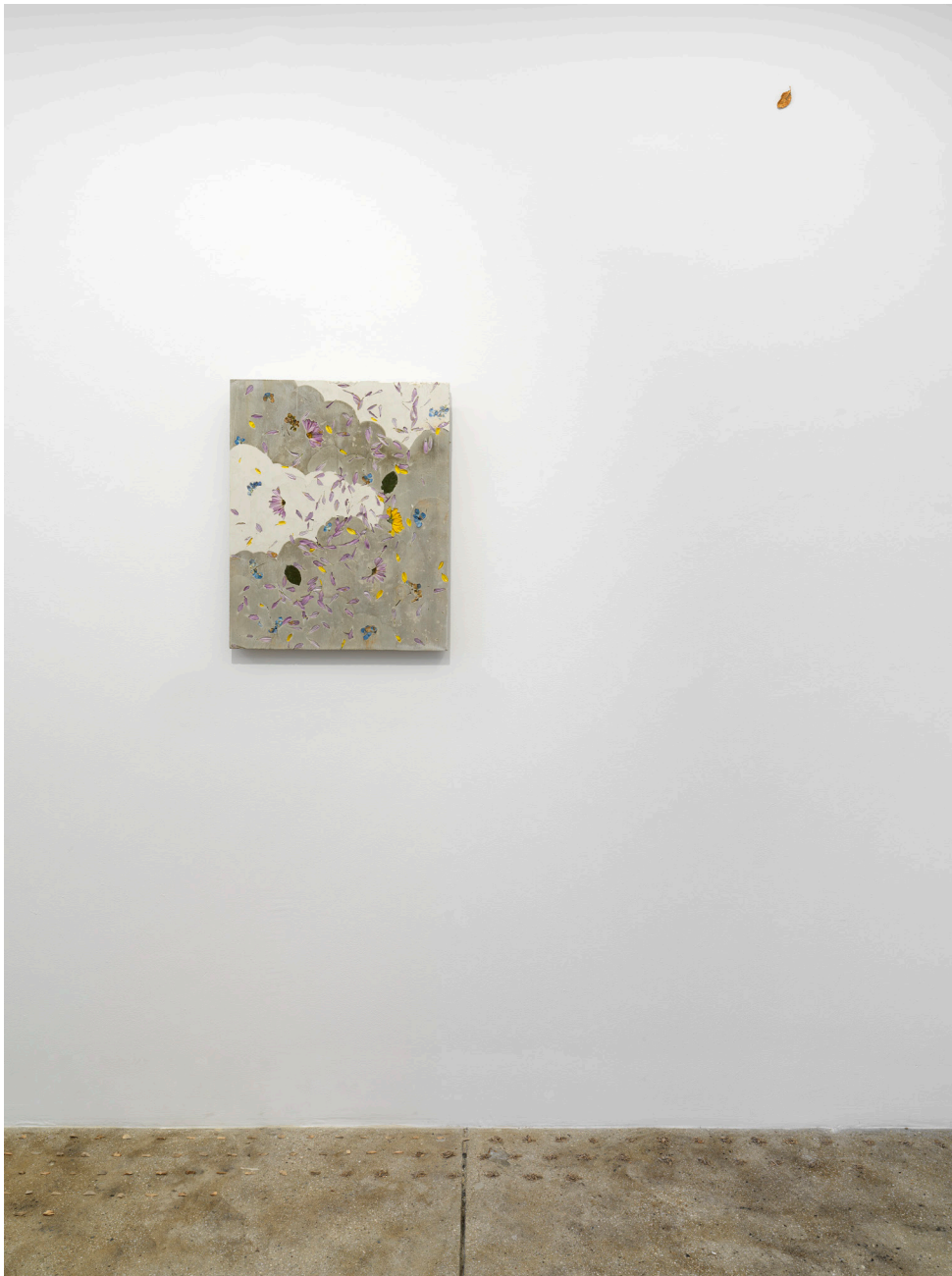
Untitled (Sphere) is a sculptural meditation on wood and grain, and its transformational potential. The wooden base component is a bisection of a boardwalk on Rockaway Beach, wrecked by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Gnarled by the storm, especially visible in the rusted metal hardware to its side, Takeda sawed a segment to act as a platform for the freestanding work, imbued with its own history and experience of the elements. The midsection is the cement casting of a found tree trunk, the product of Takeda's efforts to conserve nature's creation in a more durable medium. The artist hand-carved the spherical form out of the core of the original stump from which the concrete cast was created, saving each piece of bark and wood shaving to compose the streaming floor installation below. Working in concert with both natural and human destruction, *Untitled (Sphere)* is a shrine to the tree's life force, and the many forms and state changes it experiences.

Hanaikada (Flower Boat) series, 2024

Takeda's explorations of life and death, regeneration and decay, fuel the material experimentation of his *Hanaikada (Flower Boat)* series. The artist creates standard canvas-size molds, then arranges compositions of various fresh flowers before encasing them in concrete. As the flowers desiccate and the concrete sets, the petals and leaves create indentations reminiscent of ancient fossils. In pairing such transient plantlife, especially the cherry blossom with its symbolically ephemeral weight, with concrete composed of geological materials formed over millions of years, Takeda instantaneously accesses vastly expanded and collapsed temporalities. Gradually shifting over the course of the exhibition, the delicate blossoms—in radical contrast to the rigid concrete—become small monuments to the fragility of life.



Hanaikada I & II, 2024, concrete, cherry blossoms, 14 x 11 in.



Hanaikada VI, 2024, concrete, daisies, hydrangeas, 26 x 21 in. Installation view.



Trinity, 2024

From Takeda's series of ash paintings, *Trinity* bears resemblance to the technique of photogram, but composed in non-photographic media. Here the artist has captured an image of the cherry blossom, a botanical known for its short-lived springtime blooms. Beginning with a canvas blackened with artist-produced charcoal, Takeda then overlays cherry blossom branches at varied distances to achieve both blurred lines and sharp edges. White ash is delicately distributed over the blooms and branches to capture their silhouette. The resulting image echoes the photogenic drawings of William Henry Fox Talbot, tethering the fleeting present to some of the earliest experiments in photographic history. Like light, the white ash is volatile and difficult to control, but through skillful application, Takeda distills the natural life of the cherry blossom into its shadowy afterimage.

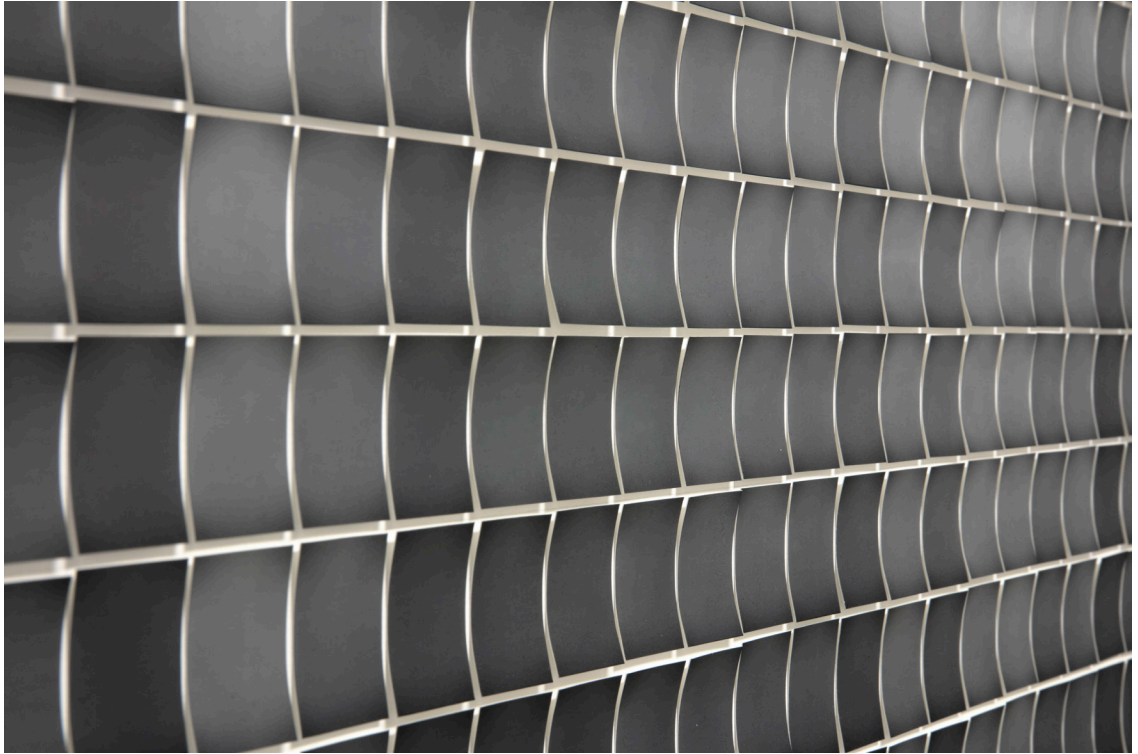


Trinity, 2024, ash and charcoal on canvas, 60 x 48 in.



Trinity, 2024. Installation view.

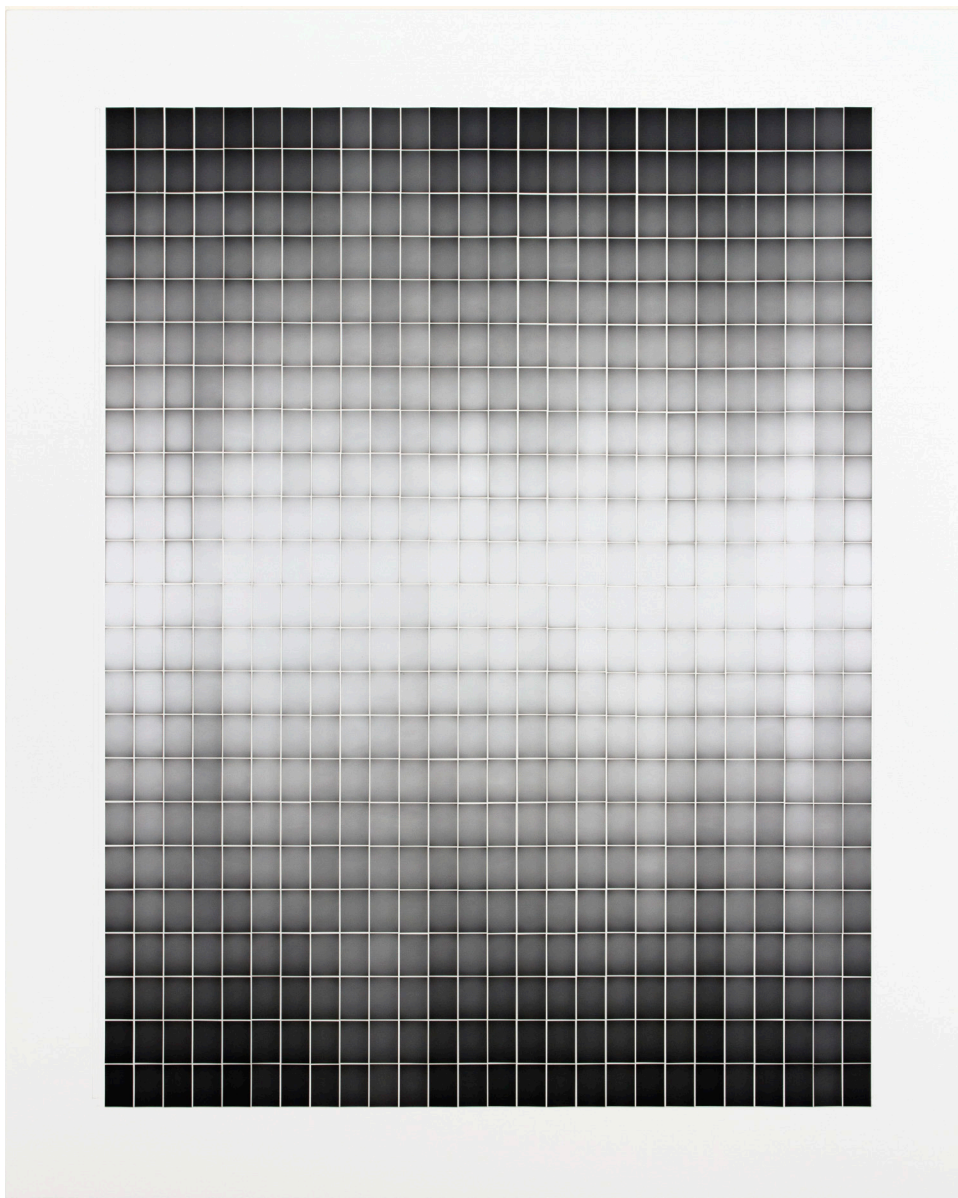




Somewhere in the Garden, detail view. Courtesy the artist.

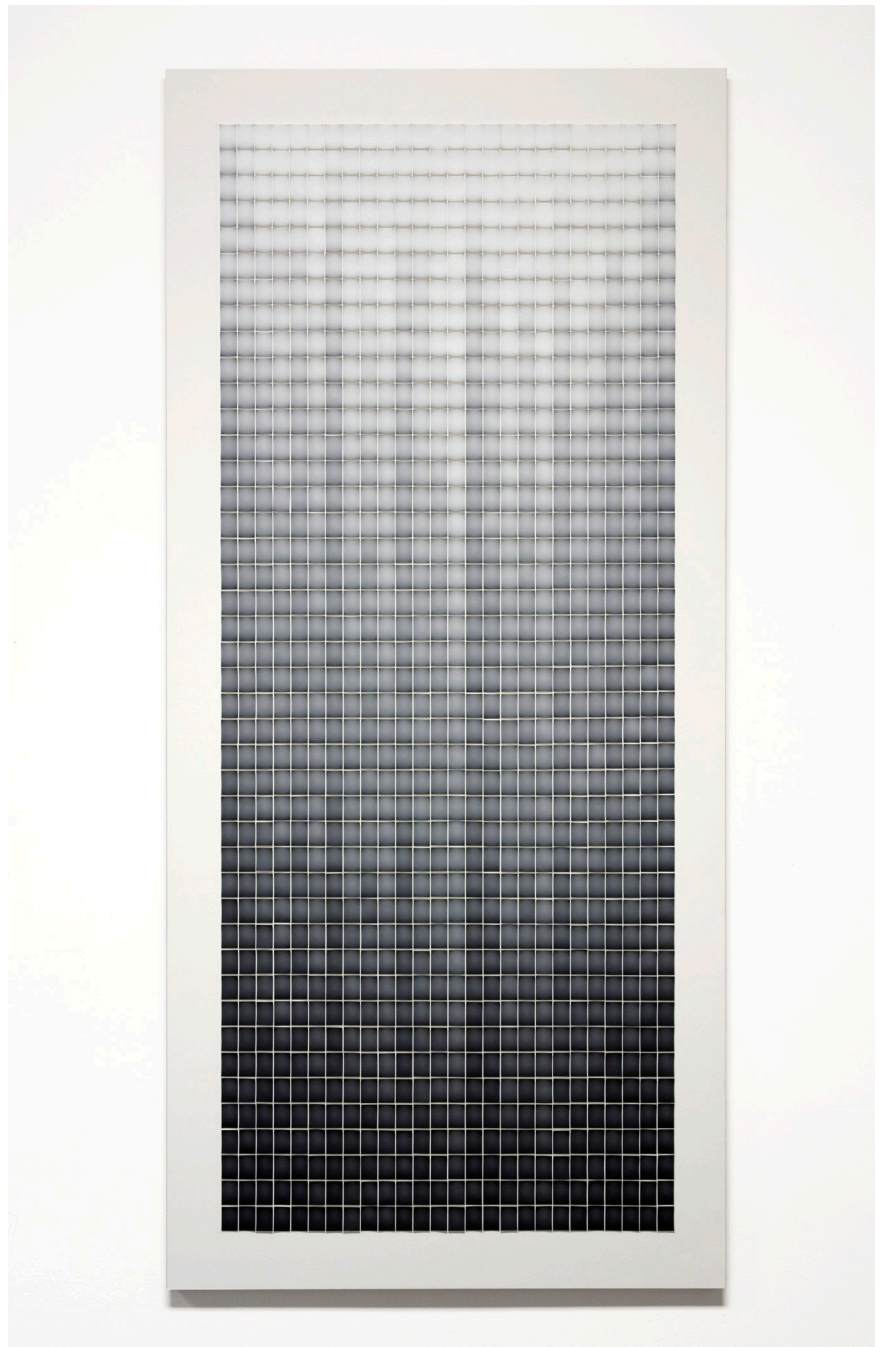
Somewhere in the Garden series, 2021–2022

Composed of hand-cut contact prints created from in-camera exposures using expired 35 millimeter film and a 24 millimeter lens, the works were conceptualized during a time when the artist first became a father. By exposing each frame in the film strip to image light on a blank wall in durations of differing exposure times, these etudes in gray scale are meticulously arranged in either consecutive vertical or horizontal orientation, creating auras or emanations that suggest other dimensions of space and time. The resultant gridded pieces consider memories that could have been, or photographic images that cannot be captured.



Somewhere in the Garden I, 2022
Gelatin silver prints on museum board
40 1/2 x 32 1/2 in.

Somewhere in the Garden II, 2022
Gelatin silver prints, archival board,
sintra, on wood panel
72 x 32 in.





The exhibition also features selected ephemera from Takeda's studio, including small sculptural works by the artist as well as found objects. Inspirational to his work, the found artifacts include burnt and petrified wood, hand-blown glass vessels, antique film slides of far-flung places, and dried flowers interspersed with covert bronze botanical castings. Two unique ceramic works exemplify his experimentation across vast media: one colored with matte cyanotype chemicals, and the other a glazed bouquet of finger-print impressions as flowers. A pair of worn sneakers is the artist's homage to the person he was before his hospitalization. Due to chronic pain, the sneakers can no longer be worn and now reference his close experience with death, his miraculous recovery, and the resurgent, life-giving quality of his practice.



Selected small works and studio materials, 2021–2024, Installation view.

List of Artworks

Nights in April, 2024

Cast concrete hand with flowers, found stone,
shou sugi ban wood pedestal, burnt sheetrock
Dimensions variable

Untitled (Spear), 2024

Burned concrete, found rock, steel
109 x 15 x 23 in.

Untitled (Sphere), 2023

Hand-carved wood, cast concrete log, and found
wood beam with metal hardware
15 x 15 x 64 in.

Untitled, 2023

Ash, charcoal, adhesive, found metal part
35 x 34 x 24 in.

Something To Remember You By, 2024

Charcoal on canvas
96 x 144 in. (triptych dimension)
96 x 48 in. (panel dimension)

Hanaikada I, 2024

Concrete, cherry blossoms
14 x 11 in.

Hanaikada II, 2024

Concrete, cherry blossoms
14 x 11 in.

Hanaikada III, 2024

Concrete, daisies, hydrangeas
14 x 11 in.

Hanaikada IV, 2024

Concrete, daisies, hydrangeas
14 x 11 in.

Hanaikada V, 2024

Concrete, daisies, hydrangeas
26 x 21 in.

Trinity, 2024

Ash and charcoal on canvas
60 x 48 in.

Somewhere in the Garden 01, 2022

Unique gelatin silver contact prints from expired
35mm film on museum board
40 1/2 x 32 1/2 in.

Somewhere in the Garden 02, 2022

Unique gelatin silver contact prints from expired
35mm film on museum board, sintra, wood panel
72 x 32 in.

Somewhere in the Garden 03, 2022

Unique gelatin silver contact prints from expired
35mm film on museum board
32 x 20 in.

Untitled, 2022

Cyanotype on porcelain
3 1/4 x 5 x 2 in.

Souvenir, 2023

Cherry blossoms in concrete, steel
5 1/4 x 4 1/4 x 2 in.

Untitled, 2022

Glazed ceramic
6 1/2 x 6 x 5 1/2 in.

Untitled, 2021

Expired film, acrylic
10 1/2 x 4 x 5 in.



Press Release

Alison Bradley Projects is thrilled to announce *Motohiro Takeda: Something To Remember You By*, the artist's debut solo exhibition in New York City. On view from September 5th, the exhibition runs until November 2nd, with an artist reception on September 12th from 6:00 - 8:00pm.

The work of Motohiro Takeda (b. 1982, Hamamatsu, Japan) deny the speed, spectacle, and excess of contemporary life by presenting an encounter with the by-products of material changes, destructions, renewed forms and substances. For the solo presentation *Something To Remember You By*, Takeda creates an environment where viewers experience a renewed relationship with the passage of time, arriving at a place slowed to stillness. The visitor will encounter Takeda's masterful range of objects; imbued with a timeless quality and created through his variety of techniques, and sensitivity to materials. He offers us a concept of relationality—between viewer, object, and space.

In the words of the artist: “Ultimately, I am cultivating a garden of time or something that encompasses the garden within itself, like a Japanese stone garden or karesansui, which contains the universe within. In our increasingly urban and digital world, I believe there is a pressing need for this kind of artistic practice that strives to connect us with earthly and cosmic timescapes and encourage us to reflect on our existence.”

Emblematic of Takeda's practice is his use of raw materials, namely found wood, stone, and concrete, activated by fire. A central work of the show, *Untitled (Spear)*, demonstrates Takeda's reworking of materials in a cyclical closed system, harnessing the metamorphic power of fire to both construct and destroy. His transformation ritual begins with a narrow tree trunk foraged from a forest floor in upstate New York. Takeda ceremoniously creates a mold of the wooden form and casts it in concrete, producing two formally identical objects—one created by man and the other by nature. The artist then burns the cement facsimile in fire fueled by the original wood, browning the stoney surface until it begins to mimic tree bark. The emerging sculpture stands as an uncanny memorial to the natural form, ironically destroyed in its creation.

Takeda blackens his works through *shou sugi ban* or *yakisugi*, a Japanese wood-burning technique that involves charring wood to weatherproof and preserve it. Through burning—what the artist describes as “a dance between chance and control”—Takeda also creates his own charcoal, which is used on canvas works and often as an ashy wall treatment.

The monumental canvas triptych *Something To Remember You By*, from which the show takes its name, captures a jagged mountainscape of push-and-pull gestures with his self-produced charcoal. By applying his own measured hand over the wild and chaotic energies of open fire, Takeda forges a unique relationship with natural processes and material transformations.

The works on display exemplify Takeda's signature visual language, and its focus on dualities: chaos and order, reason and emotion, life and death, resurgence and decay, time and space, human and environment. In his *Hanaikada (Flower Boat)* series, the artist suspends delicate cherry blossoms in concrete, the extreme contrast of materials highlighting the ephemeral nature of the blooms.

Takeda's photographic works, conceptualized in early fatherhood, are created through a unique process using expired film to image light, then contact printed on gelatin silver paper. These gridded pieces consider memories that could have been, or photographic images that cannot be captured.

Something To Remember You By references the nature of transformation, creating works conceived by the destruction of matter and their reconstitution. Takeda's works attune the viewer to the minute alchemical processes and resurgent cycles of life. In a city brimming with energy and ever-constant motion, Takeda's quiet practice and the metamorphic quality of his objects inspire reflection.

Curated by Claire Foussard and Sofia Thieu D'Amico

Artist Biography

Motohiro Takeda (b. 1982) uses sculpture, ceramics, and photography to explore the impermanent nature of life. He investigates the transient core of time and memory and the space between man and nature in his work and create installations to contemplate on mortality.

Takeda is a 2024 AIM fellow at the Bronx Museum. He was awarded the Tierney Fellowship in 2008. He participated in the Artist in Residency program at Baxter St. CCNY in 2011 and at Woodstock Center for Photography in 2015. His work has been exhibited in various venues, including Fredric Snitzer Gallery (Miami), island gallery (New York), Arsenal Contemporary (New York), Storage Gallery (New York), Ibasho Gallery (Antwerp, Belgium), Unseen Photo Festival in Amsterdam, Photo London, Photo España, among others.

He received his BFA in photography from Parsons School of Design | The New School in 2008 and his MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University in 2023. He was born in Hamamatsu, Japan, and currently lives and works in Brooklyn.



Motohiro Takeda, *Clear Sky*, 2022. Courtesy Benjamin Salesses.



CV

Solo Exhibitions

- 2024 *Motohiro Takeda: Something To Remember You By*, Alison Bradley Projcets, New York, NY
2017 *Motohiro Takeda*, Ibasho Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
2010 *River*, Mapamundistas 2010, Pamplona, Spain

Group Exhibitions & Art Fairs

- 2024 *The Moon is Just the Sun at Night*, Jack Barret, New York, NY
Theater of Energies, Arsenal Contemporary, New York, NY
leftobers, Island Gallery, New York, NY
The Sun was Eaten, A.I. Gallery, London, England
- 2023 *Press Release (Cycle V)*, Storage Gallery, New York, NY
in median res, the Blanc, New York, NY
Stand-outs, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2022 *noumena*, ChaShaMa, New York, NY
Otherwise, Half Gallery, New York, NY
Clear Sky, Clear Sky outdoor exhibition, Coxsackie, NY
- 2020 *Wabi Sabi*, Ibasho Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2018 Photo London, London, England
Aipad Photography Show, New York, NY
- 2017 Aipad Photography Show, New York, NY
- 2016 *Contemporary Japanese Photography*, Tblisi Photo Festival, Tblisi, Georgia
- 2015 Unseen Photo Festival, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Center Forward, The Center for Fine Art Photography, Fort Collins, CO
- 2014 *Open*, Juried by Shane Lavalette, The Center for Fine Art Photography, Fort Collins, CO
- 2013 Pinhole Photography Exhibition, Ray Photo Center, San Francisco, CA
Pure, Gallery Tanto Tempo, Kobe, Japan

- 2012 3rd Annual Photography Exhibition, Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA
Beyond one lens & over hundred eyes, hpgrp gallery, New York, NY
Photography Now 2012, The Center for Photography at Woodstock, Kingston, NY
- 2011 Darkroom Residency Exhibition, Camera Club of New York, New York NY
 Juried Membership Exhibition, Houston Center for Photography, Houston, TX
We are one, New York Institute of Technology, New York, NY
Here and There, hpgrp gallery, New York, NY
Photo Espana Descubrimientos PHE, Bilbao Arte, Bilbao, Spain
- 2010 *Photo Espana Descubrimientos PHE*, El Punto Del Carmen, Valencia, Spain
Photo Espana Descubrimientos PHE, Centro de las artes, Sevilla, Spain
 New York Photo Festival, Brooklyn, NY
- 2009 Tierney Fellowship Exhibition, New York, NY
 New York Photo Festival, Brooklyn, NY
- 2008 Thesis exhibition, Parsons School of Design | The New School, New York, NY

Awards & Residencies

- 2024 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Arts Center Residency [Governor's Island, NY]
 The Bronx Museum AIM Fellowship [Bronx, NY]
- 2015 Woodstock A-I-R Residency [Center for Photography at Woodstock, Kingston, NY]
 INFOCUS Sidney Zuber Photography Award [Society for Photographic Education, Phoenix, AZ]
- 2013 Review Santa Fe [CENTER, Santa Fe, NM]
- 2012 Director's Purchase Prize [The Center for Photography at Woodstock, Kingston, NY]
- 2011 Baxter St Residency [Camera Club of New York, New York, NY]
- 2008 Tierney Fellowship [Market Photo Workshop & Tierney Family Foundation]

Education

- 2023 Master of Fine Arts, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2008 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Parsons School of Design | The New School, New York, NY

**Texts by Sophia Thieu D'Amico & Claire Foussard
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Courtesy of Alison Bradley Projects

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