

KANA HARADA

celestial garden

march 21 through september 13, 2020



ART MUSEUM OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS | BEAUMONT, TEXAS

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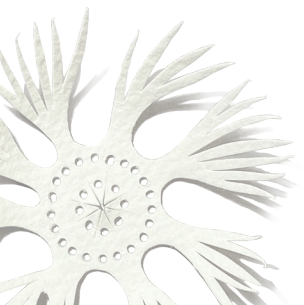
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dedicated to

Joan Amy



Special thanks to:

Karol Howard & George Morton

Amy & Patrick Kelly

Lynn Castle

Mariah Rockefeller

Caitlin Clay

Kayleigh Thompson

George Leonard

Kara Timberlake

And everyone at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas

Suzanne & Ansel Aberly

Eleanor Jane Briant

Kristen Scheble

Talley Dunn Gallery

Sarah Beth Wilson

Kumiko & Keiichi Harada

and

My “godsend”

Makoto ‘Mak’ Takemura



acknowledgements

Lynn P. Castle
Executive Director

Some say that art has healing powers. I'm certain it does. Walking into *Celestial Garden* was like entering an alternate universe. It is peaceful, calm and ethereal as opposed to what was happening in the outside world. Thank you, Kana Harada, for providing this timely sanctuary in a time of critical need. How fortunate we are to have your exhibition here and now.

An exhibition such as this would not be possible without a team of dedicated and passionate people. Kana's husband Makoto "Mak" Takemura was essential in transportation, preparation and in the installation process. Most importantly, he was the photographer for this catalogue. His camera accuracy and precision harmoniously dovetails into that of Kana's artwork. Thanks to Mariah Rockefeller, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections, for working diligently on this exhibition to oversee every detail from inception to fruition. She worked tirelessly with crazy-long days, stretching into endless weeks without rest, to procure loans, design and tweak the exhibition installation and layout. Thanks to Caitlin Clay, Registrar, who made the transportation arrangements and drove a moving truck with George Leonard, Preparator, all over central Texas to bring this fragile artwork, without incident to Beaumont. The insightful interview prepared by Patrick Kelly, Executive Director and Curator of Exhibitions at the Old Jail Art Center in Albany, Texas, gives us greater knowledge and understanding of the workings of this remarkable artist. Kayleigh Thompson, AMSET's graphic artist fully embraced Kana's aesthetic which translated impeccably into the exhibition catalogue. Greatest appreciation goes to the rest of the AMSET staff and Board of Trustees who assist in innumerable ways and are so committed to professionalism and artistic excellence.

We are greatly indebted to galleries and collectors who understand the importance of stewardship. Artwork is to be shared and celebrated and passed on for centuries with reverence. Thank you lenders who temporarily parted with their artwork to share it with the public for this exhibition. Kristen Scheble, Karol Howard & George Morton, Eleanor Jane Briant and Suzanne & Ansel Aberly, you are great stewards. A special thank you to Talley Dunn Gallery who worked closely with AMSET to help track down lenders and initiate contact with Kana's collectors.

This exhibition is generously funded, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Edaren Foundation, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Garth Family Partnership in memory of Mary Jane Garth and Harriet Garth, the City of Beaumont, the Wesley W. Washburn, M.D. and Lulu L. Smith, M.D. Endowment Fund, and the C. Homer and Edith Fuller Chambers Charitable Foundation.



Celestial Garden presents the work of Kana Harada, a Japanese-born artist who now resides in Dallas, Texas. The exhibition encompasses works from private collections as well as those on loan from the artist and Talley Dunn Gallery. The exhibition and catalogue aim to illuminate the artist's recent two and three-dimensional works while sharing her vision of peace and harmony.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of collectors who continuously champion the work of artists they believe in and collect. Karol Howard and George Morton are extraordinary collectors and amazing benefactors to our museum. They emphasized the importance of Kana's work to us and for that we are truly grateful. Through the generosity of private collectors around the state, we are able to present a fantastic exhibition that communicates the imagination and vision of Kana Harada.

Kana is a true artist who works from her heart. One of the words that I think about when I think about Kana is gratitude. Kana's gratitude is sincere and profound. The gratitude she has shared with me and my colleagues is deeply personal in that it comes from her heart, but it is also universal in the way that one feels connected to her true and constant wish for peace and love. Kana's work is a reflection of the artist herself; it embodies a special "oneness" with the world and a deep gratitude for all that it offers. The spirit of Japan and Mount Fuji are a constant source of inspiration for the artist's work, and an annual destination for her and her husband Makoto "Mak" Takemura. Her work does not rely on artists who have come before her, neither for inspiration nor comprehension. The casual observer of art can encounter one of Kana's suspended cut-foam sculptures and experience a sense of weightlessness, wonder, and awe. Time spent with each work reveals more and more about material, space, form, and color. The evolution of each work continues in the memory and imagination of the viewer, much like a memorable visit with some special place or some special person.

I am grateful to the entire AMSET staff who have all worked so hard on this exhibition and particularly to our Executive Director Lynn Castle who has provided unending excitement, support, knowledge and assistance from the project's inception. I would like to thank our Registrar Caitlin Clay for her dedication to the shipping and installation of the work. Kayleigh Thompson provided much needed and graceful catalogue design in addition to her daily work, and we are proud to have such a polished and beautiful product. I would also like to thank George Leonard, our Building and Grounds Supervisor who is always there to help us with shipping and installations. I am indebted to my colleagues in the education department who have found ways to creatively engage our audience with the exhibition. Additionally, I would like to recognize the assistance of interns Brandi Hamilton, Katherine Leister, Karisma Danas and Karen Pham who provided critical help. My gratitude goes out to Mak Takemura for his friendship and assistance, and to Patrick Kelly whose interview presented in the catalogue will resonate with readers and provide additional context with which to understand the artist behind the beautiful works.

email interview with artist Kana Harada

Patrick Kelly, Executive Director & Curator of Exhibitions at the Old Jail Art Center, Albany, Texas

november – december 2019

A four-year-old Kana Harada proclaimed to her mother, "I was born to draw." Her self-determined course to be an artist has not deviated from that point. Born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, she was exposed to American culture through her Japanese-American relatives and living in Long Island from the age of 10 to 13. Upon her return to Japan in the late 1970s, she had difficulties adjusting at her former Catholic school and found solace in evening classes at an art prep school until she graduated from high school. Though immersed in the art program and excelling in required curriculum, she felt that "going to 'real' art school" was not for her. Her path to be an artist did not deviate but simply took an alternate direction. Since 1995, she and her husband Mak have moved back-and-forth between Dallas and Japan for his work. A "permanent" return in 2002 brought them back to "Texas-size" spaces which enticed her to create sculptural works to fill these vast voids.

PATRICK KELLY: Viewers likely associate your objects as replications of things found in nature. On initial viewing most would consider them precious or beautiful. Your works are that. Yet carefully considered, there is something a little "off" in subtle and interesting ways. I don't see your work as exact facsimiles of things found in nature, but beautifully mutated hybrids composed of flowers, objects, and structures. How do you see what you create...replications of nature, artist-made mutations, or something else entirely?

KANA HARADA: I see my creations as my own "Kana Harada Nature." They are my bonsai and landscapes created with my own flowers, trees, fruits and sky. Instead of playing house, I always feel like I'm playing Mother Nature. What I love the most about nature is the grand playfulness, wonderful surprises, and humor... like the flower that looks like a yellow smiling alien holding a bowl, orchids with monkey faces, or deep-sea creatures that look like little Las Vegas lights to name a few of the extremes. I of course absolutely love the more subtle elegant kinds, too. I always imagine what great fun Mother Nature must have had when initially creating, so I want to create my own version too.

As much as I love everything from flora and fauna to all the stars out there, I in no way have a green thumb, have pets, or know anything about animals. When I was mainly making birdcage-inspired pieces, a lot of people asked me if I had birds. "Nope." I just truly love their existence, the fantasy they paint in my mind, and the diverse forms of birdcages old and new.

It's all in my love and imagination.

PATRICK KELLY: The plant forms and birdcages are the predominate forms that reoccur in your work. But you also reference lanterns and hand-held mirrors—minus the mirrors. Those are related to seeing or vision, but how are they significant to you?

KANA HARADA: The common thread is my celebrating "soul." My lantern/chandelier-like pieces represent a lighthouse, guidepost or beacon of light for the soul. My open-concept birdcages are the "perch" or "throne" for the soul. My plants are always talking about hope, the beauty and the wonders of every life form.

The hand mirrors are the reflection of our soul...discovering, accepting, and celebrating the deep-down divinity and utter beauty in ourselves. Like the forms of birdcages, I love the elegance and the idea of hand mirrors even as a simple "tool." I think they are very intimate and personal. Mirrors are something you look in to see yourself; they reflect not only the surface, but sometimes what's way deep within. I wanted to create different reflections/state of mind with the frames of mirrors, and this is why I left the actual mirrors out.

PATRICK KELLY: Your installation at AMSET includes sculptural pieces and two-dimensional works. Can you briefly describe the inspirations for some of these works?

KANA HARADA: *Yoake Kannon - Goddess of the Dawn* is a piece inspired by the timing of my life when it was literally "dawn" for me. I wanted to celebrate it through my interpretation of a peaceful, glorious saint in Japan. The central element appears as a birdcage, which to me is very much a shrine, with a swing-like "throne" for the free spirit of the goddess. Extended out from this are eight "open arms" with balls of light representing love for humanity and the earth. Each is a smaller birdcage-like shrine with different swing thrones inside.

New Beginning (not included in the AMSET exhibition) is a spiritual portrait of my late mother—her "spaceship" and environment on the other side. The work embodies a very cheerful, colorful, spring-like vision she had been showing me ever since she passed in April 2014. This work has inspired many works since its creation.



New Beginning (detail)

The two-dimensional works *Where We Always Meet* and *Sanctuary* both depict a peace gathering site called the “Fuji Sanctuary” at the foot of Mount Fuji in Japan. It is a beautiful green meadow where people of all walks of life have been praying for peace for every single country around the world in rain or shine for over 30 years.

The spirit is the very essence of my art, and I want to share the serene yet powerful beauty and joy I always experience visually and spiritually at the site.

PATRICK KELLY: I believe you have always lived in very urban areas like Tokyo, Long Island, and now downtown Dallas. So where would you say this “wonder” with nature derives?

KANA HARADA: Maybe it's BECAUSE I've lived in urban areas most of my life. There is a part of me that's always craving nature.

My earliest memory of nature having a huge impact on me was this summer camp I used to go to in upstate New York, the Catskill Mountains. I will never forget the chilly crack-of-dawn morning air and the fresh smell of it all. To think of it now, before this memory were the summers I spent with my family at my aunt's beachfront house near Tokyo. I was a bit scared of the waves, but I absolutely loved everything about it.

PATRICK KELLY: You obviously have an innate spiritual connection to nature even though you may not require or maintain a physical connection. This spirituality is reflected in how you talk about your work and what obviously motivates you in its creation. Given that, how do you conceive and begin to create a work? Do you begin with an idea that you want to express or do you just begin and let the work evolve?

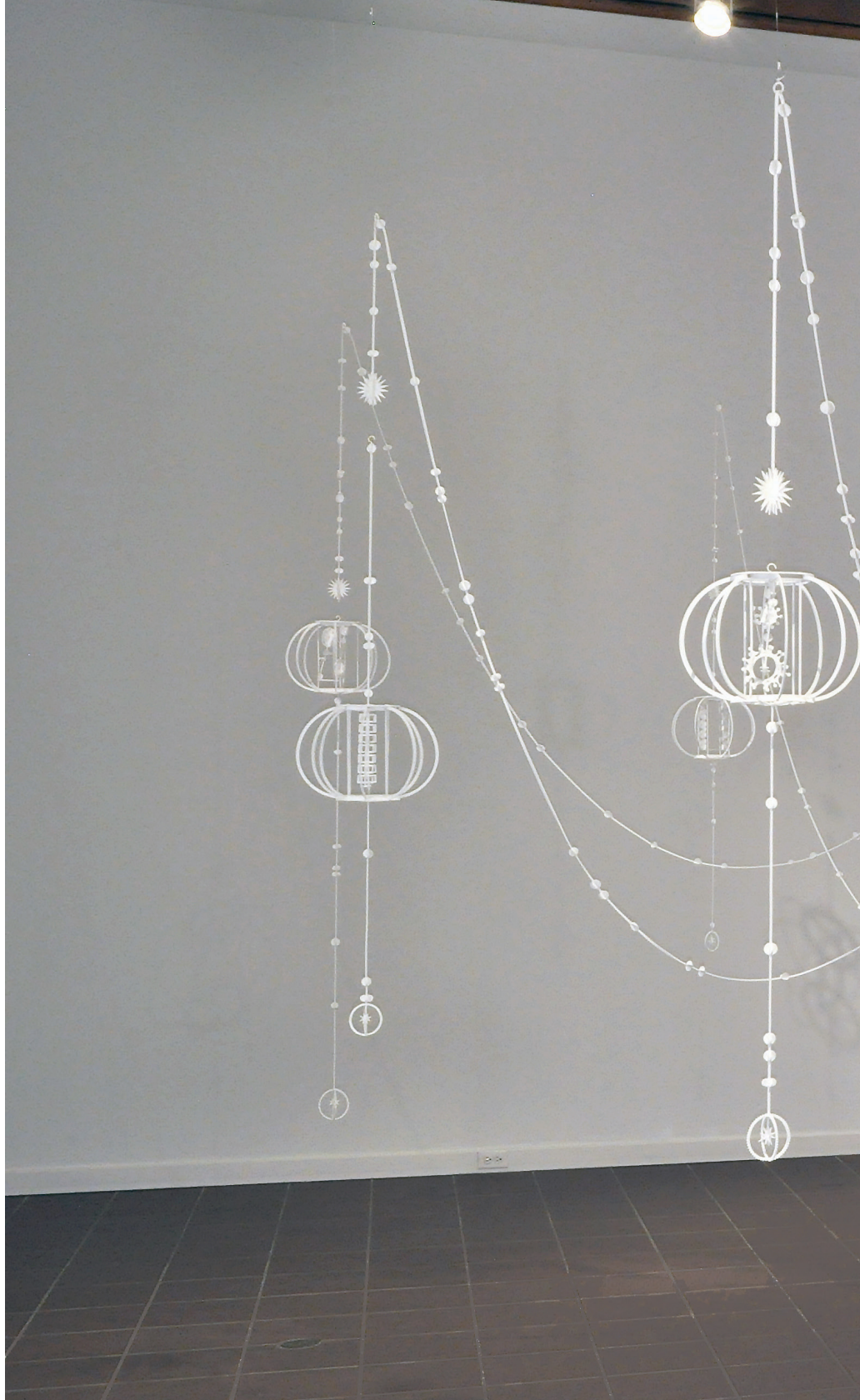
KANA HARADA: It's both. I usually start with what I want to say or share about what I'm experiencing and what makes my heart dance. This sometimes comes with a very clear vision of the finished work or a part of it. But even when I just start with lines that simply feel good on a piece of paper, or shapes that feel absolutely great cutting, I let my scissors, brush strokes, placement of a circle, the length of my leaves, or the vibe of the driftwood tell me where to go next and discover what I was meant to express. Either way, the process itself pushes ME to evolve, and I truly love it.



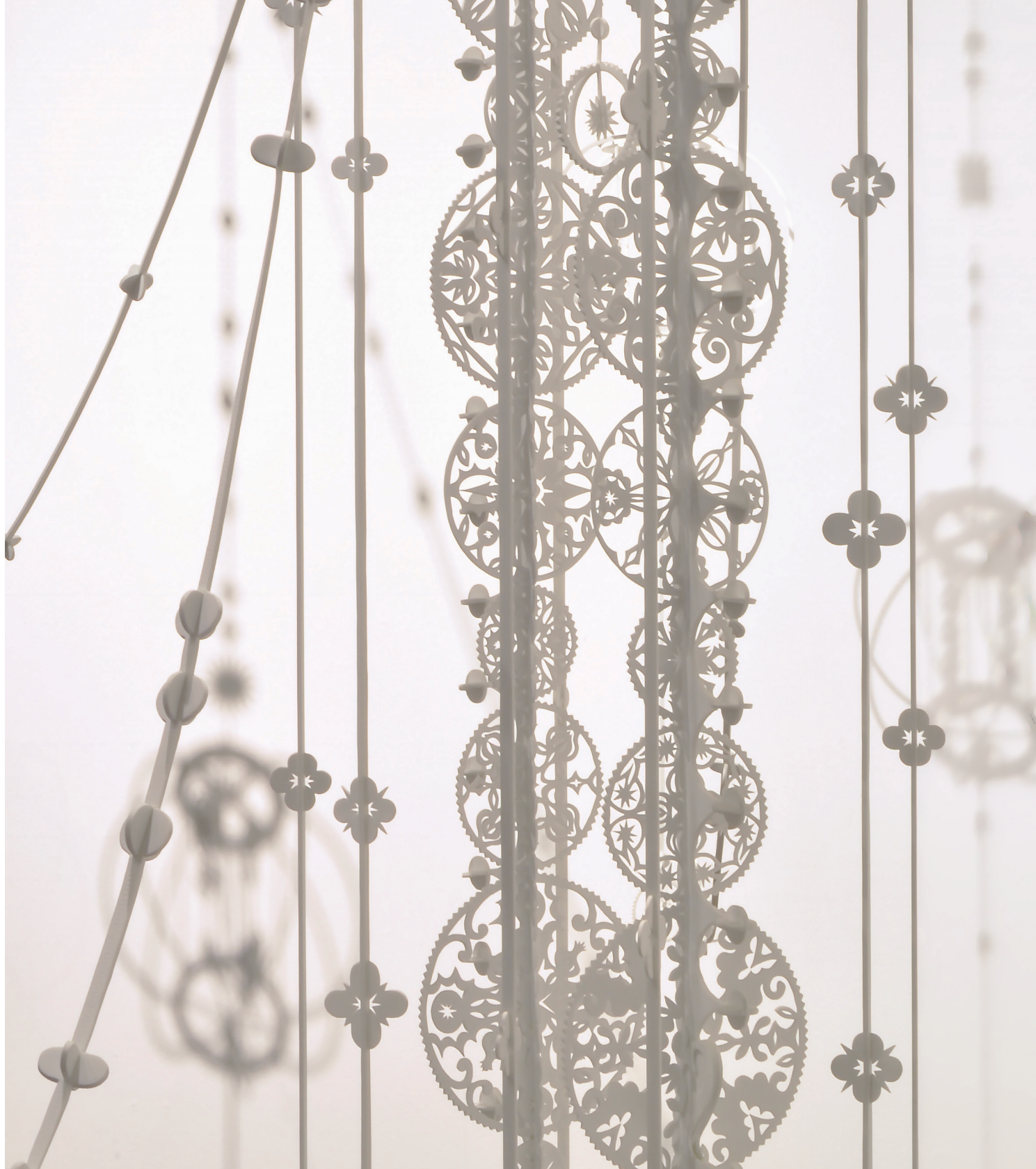
Opposite: *New Beginning*, 2015, foam sheet and mixed media, 41 x 58 x 44 in.
Private collection, Abilene, Texas
Installation Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas 2015



Yoake Kannon - Goddess of the Dawn







Yoake Kannon - Goddess of the Dawn (detail)

The Jungle I Have Always Wanted







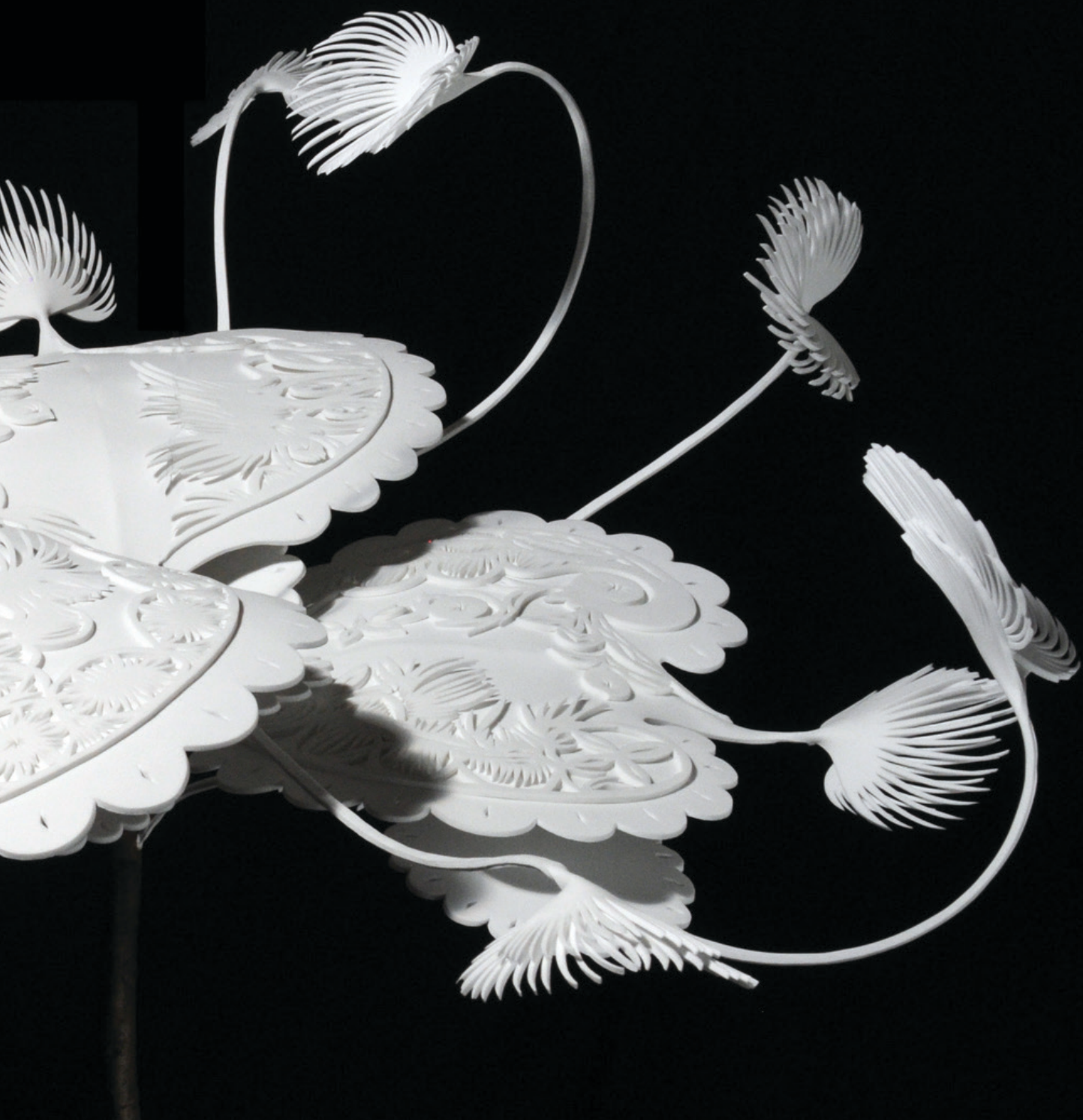




Dance With Me







Cotton Candy Tree







Cotton Candy Tree (detail)

Adventure





xoxo



Odyssey







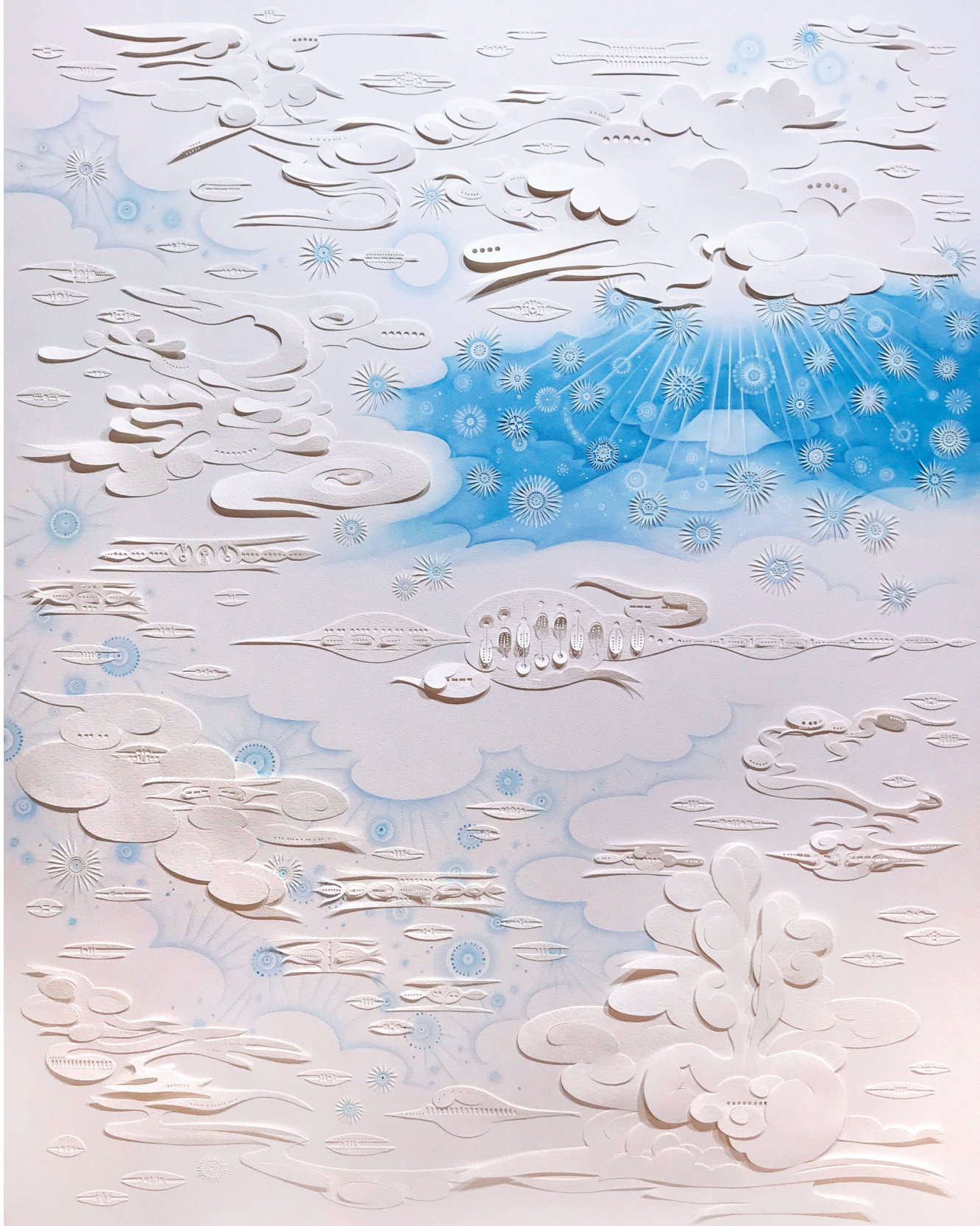




Cheer



Sanctuary



exhibition checklist

Yoake Kannon - Goddess of the Dawn

2006

foam sheet and mixed media

108 x 32 x 32 in. (center piece); 108 x 124 x 124 in. (installed)

(pp 14-16)

The Jungle I Have Always Wanted

2016

cut foam sheet on matte acrylic painted canvas

40 x 30 in.

(p 19)

Portrait

2009

foam sheet and mixed media

52 x 33 x 12 in.

(pp 20-21)

Happy Place

2019

cut paper and mixed media

47 x 33 x 40 in.

(pp 22-23)

Dance With Me

2011

foam sheet and mixed media

41 x 32 x 27 in.

Loan courtesy of Suzanne and Ansel Aberly, Dallas, Texas

(pp 25-27)

Cotton Candy Tree

2012

foam sheet and mixed media

42 x 33 x 33 in.

(pp 29-31)

Adventure

2016

cut paper on watercolor

19 ½ x 19 ½ in.

Loan courtesy of Eleanor Jane Briant

(p 33)

xoxo

2018

cut paper on watercolor

10 ¾ x 10 ¾ in.

(p 34)



Odyssey

2017

cut paper on watercolor

9 x 22 ¼ in.

(pp 36-37)

Where We Always Meet

2017

cut paper on watercolor

36 x 28 ½ in.

Loan courtesy of Karol Howard & George Morton

(pp 38-39)

Cheer

2015

foam sheet and mixed media

12 ½ x 22 x 12 in.

Loan courtesy of Kristen Scheble, Dallas, Texas

(pp 40-41, 43 & cover)

Sanctuary

2017

cut paper on watercolor

46 x 36 in.

(pp 6, 45)



Snapshot of artist Kana Harada's tools.

biography

Born in Tokyo, Japan - 1962

Ochanomizu School of Fine Arts, Tokyo, Japan - 1979-1981

Lives and works in Dallas, Texas

Selected Solo Exhibitions and Projects

- 2020 *Celestial Garden*, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, Texas
- 2018 *Sanctuary*, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2015 *New Beginning*, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2013 *Anything You Want*, Cell Series, Old Jail Art Center, Albany, Texas
- 2011 *Tears of Light*, Koelsch Gallery, Houston, Texas
ARTHOUSTON, Koelsch Gallery, Houston, Texas
- 2010 *Heaven!!*, Promo-arte Project Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
The Way Home, McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas, Texas
- 2009 *KODAMA - Spirit of the Trees*, Mighty Fine Arts Gallery, Dallas, Texas
Dawn, Fort Worth Community Art Center, Fort Worth, Texas
- 2008 *Kana Harada*, Kinzelman Art Consulting - Artist Program, Gensler Architecture, Houston, Texas
- 2006 *Amaoto... Sound of Heaven*, UALR Gallery, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Arkansas
Amaoto... Sound of Heaven, Mighty Fine Arts Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2004 *Mix!*, The Dallas Center for Contemporary Art, Dallas, Texas
- 2000 *Hello Gorgeous!!*, Hillside Terrace, Tokyo, Japan

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2017 *Commanding Space: Women Sculptors of Texas*, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas
THIS IS NOW, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2015 *Supernatural Realistic*, East/West Galleries, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas
Destination Unknown, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2014 *The MAC @ 20, Part Two*, The McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas, Texas
Eastern Illumination: Japanese Masterworks and American Art Inspired by Japanese Tradition, San Angelo Museum of Art, San Angelo, Texas
In Six Weeks, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2013 *Back Room*, Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2012 *Line in the Sand*, Gaddis Geeslin Gallery, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas
Kana Harada and Ruben Nieto, The Gallery at the University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas
- 2010 *Shoreline*, Valley House Gallery, Dallas, Texas

- Drawing In*, CADD Art-Lab Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2009 Texas Biennial 2009, Austin, Texas
- 2008 *Texas Collects Asia, Contemporary Asian Art and Japanese Folk Art Exhibition*, The Trammell & Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art Museum, Dallas, Texas
- 2007 *Show#11*, curated by Titus O'Brien, and/or Gallery, Dallas, Texas
Intersections: Asia / America, curated by Mari Omori, Montgomery College, Conroe, Texas
(f)light x 8, Koelsch Gallery, Marfa, Texas
Between Reality and Illusion, curated by Karol Howard and George Morton, Marty Walker Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- 2006 *Two Person Exhibition*, Koelsch Gallery, Houston, Texas
Black White (& Gray), The Gallery at the University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas
Crossroads: Asia/America, Galveston Arts Center, Galveston, Texas
- 2005 *23rd Annual Exhibition, Art In The Metroplex*, Moudy Art Gallery, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas
Shade, Koelsch Gallery, Houston, Texas
- 2004 *Cedar Open Studios*, Change Chamber Studios, Dallas, Texas
- 2002 *Japan Art Alliance*, Westwood Gallery, SoHo, New York, New York
- 1985 *Japan Expressionist Exhibition*, Tokyo, Japan
- 1982 *8e'me Exposition Beau-Soleil Art Exhibition*, Tokyo, Japan

Related Honors and Activities

- 2014-18 Dallas Art Fair
- 2012 *Meet The Artist* event, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas
- 2012 Dallas Art Fair
- 2011 Houston Fine Art Fair
- 2005 Beth Lea and John L. Clardy Memorial Award at 23rd Annual Exhibition, *Art in The Metroplex*, Moudy Art Gallery, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas

Exhibition Bibliography, Articles and Reviews

Celestial Garden, exhibition catalog including an artist's interview with Patrick Kelly, Executive Director and Curator of Exhibitions, Old Jail Art Center, Albany, Texas. Published by the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, Texas, 2020.

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Levinson, Peggy. "Down in the Valley." *D Magazine*, March 2012.

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Mitchell, Charles Dee. "Airborne." *Dallas Morning News*, February 14, 2009.

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"Hello Gorgeous!!." *ART TOP #173*, 1999.

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PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Crow Museum of Asian Art, Dallas, Texas
Old Jail Art Center, Albany, Texas





Wishing
infinite beauty,
infinite imagination,
and
infinite peace of mind
to every single one of us,
sharing this precious planet.

May Peace Prevail on Earth.

With ALL my heart,
xoxo
Kana

