

S H I N J I T U R N E R - Y A M A M O T O

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D I S A P P E A R A N C E S - a n e t e r n a l j o u r n e y

a large-scale site-specific installation created with fossils: coral, gypsum, burnt limestone, and rainwater

statement

When we drive, heat our homes, or cook, we burn oil, coal, or gas, fossils created by the decay of plants and animals 350 million years ago. A curiosity about minerals and fossils has long informed my work. While an art student in Kyoto, I collected them in abandoned mines, mountains, and rivers. They fascinated me for their beauty, but also for the perfect relationship between them and their matrixes — the solid matter in which a fossil or crystal is embedded. Taking them from matrixes was completely different from collecting stones on the beach or from a river bank. I needed tools to remove them from these rock masses. Seeing smoky crystals in a small hole at the corner of an enormous rock, they moved me; their holistic beauty seemed sacred, untouchable.

I returned thinking I would take one crystal, which meant destroying innumerable small crystals. With each blow, they disappeared, transformed into white powder. The change was like the scattering of our ashes, a profound vanishing of beauty. The taboo I felt in the beginning evaporated. This ultimate material, powder and dust, which seemed eternally in the process of vanishing, became the singular material in my paintings, sculpture, and installations.

In *DISAPPEARANCES - an eternal journey* I worked with fossil materials - CORAL (400 million years old), LIMESTONE (fossil rock in which the shells of sea dwellers are cemented in a solid mass, the CONCRETE floor of the exhibition space created from burnt limestone), GYPSUM (made by ancient lake and sea water) - to create a landscape, an artistic ritual exploring a poetic reunion with nature, revealing the interconnectedness of all life. In their seemingly random encounters, I seek something beyond the accidental, the hidden. When we are conscious about the existence of these infinite connections, we emerge from our anthropocentric view of life and move into a holistic view. In doing so, we are freed from the limitations of death.

biography

Born in Osaka, Japan, SHINJI TURNER-YAMAMOTO's site-specific installations worldwide include Ireland, Finland, Italy, Japan, India, Mongolia, and USA. His Global Tree Project is an international art initiative that opens and affirms connections between audiences and the natural world. He studied at the Kyoto City University of Arts, and, sponsored by the Italian government, at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Bologna, where he lived for eleven years. Recent projects: MONGOLIA 360°: Int'l Land Art Biennial; HANGING GARDEN, Holy Cross Church; DISAPPEARANCES, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. He is working with Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest on a forthcoming project with lightning struck trees. A monograph will be published by Damiani in fall 2012. Recent publications: Orientations, DIAOSU, My Green City (Gestalten), and CSPA - The Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts (Los Angeles). Prizes: 2011 ArtPrize International Juried Award; Gold Leaf Award, International Society of Arboriculture; UNESCO-ASCHBERG Bursaries for Artists; Pépinières Européennes pour Jeunes Artistes; first prize, Targetti Light Art Collection.