

Press Release

Hiraki Sawa flown

7 July – 10 September 2022



Hiraki Sawa Studio, Ridley Road,
Dalston, 2022

Photo: Hiraki Sawa

Parafin is delighted to announce Hiraki Sawa's third exhibition with the gallery. Sawa is known internationally for videos and installations that create powerful psychological situations by interweaving the domestic and the fantastic. Characterised by quietness and introspection, his works create compelling interior worlds and evoke themes of memory and displacement. Often presented in complex installations incorporating objects and drawings, Sawa's works occupy a space that moves between the parallel languages of sculpture, film, drawing and choreography.

Sawa's exhibition is informed by two recent events in his personal life that affected him profoundly. In 2017, Sawa's parents left the house in Kanazawa where he grew up. In 2022, Sawa (along with artists friends and colleagues) was evicted from the studio complex in Ridley Road in East London, where he had worked for many years. Sawa's response to these events has been to create a compelling body of work that suggests time, dislocation and loss. While Sawa works anoetically – eschewing the reading of cognitive meanings into his work – one can nonetheless also see in his works reflections of events such as the ongoing migrant crisis in Europe and the global pandemic.

Within his Ridley Road studio, Sawa had over many years constructed a kind of shed, a studio-within-a-studio, to provide a comfortable, warm and enclosed space within which to work on his animations. Salvaging and reusing the diverse materials from which the shed was built, Sawa has created a group of sculptural structures which evoke the ambience and appearance of his studio and in which film works and new drawings depicting metronomes, record players and stylised clouds of smoke, are displayed. Set on wheels, these surrogate studios suggest both movement and transience.

In Parafin's lower gallery Sawa exhibits an important new film work. */home* (2021) revisits the tropes of *dwelling* (2002), the early work with which Sawa first came to international attention (and which is now in the Arts Council Collection, London, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Detroit Institute of Arts and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, as well as private collections). The empty rooms of Sawa's childhood home are witness to a surreal spectacle, as tiny toy airplanes take off and land and fly from room to room. Sawa says:

'Five years ago I lost my home. My parents sold the house where I was born, the one I grew up in. And although I had left home over 20 years ago, when I closed the door on that house I felt bitter. My room, the kitchen, the entrance hall and the garage, the garden behind the building. I was mentally attached to every part of it. I had always believed I had that place to go back to. Leaving it was like a funeral.'

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In a weird doubling, a second work, */home (absent room)* (2021) projected onto the reverse of the screen displaying */home*, uses exactly the same shots yet reveals the rooms to be completely empty, devoid of the airplanes or any other sign of life. Sawa explains:

‘Eventually I realized that it’s not important for me to be able to see airplanes there or not. More important is for me to feel the existence of airplanes, of dreams or of illusions, mine, those of my father, those of us all. There is something more essential than my cruising airplanes: being able to imagine them. Being able to visualize them, inside of my head, anywhere, in any home. Daily life could be based on the imagination with such hopes or even desires, as intangible or ghostlike as they might be. Our idea of both home and time are grounded in and built on these phantoms...’.

Hiraki Sawa

Hiraki Sawa (born 1977, Ishikawa, Japan) received his BFA from the University of East London and his MFA from the Slade School of Art at University College, London. Sawa has exhibited extensively around the world. Important solo exhibitions include ‘Memoria paralela’, Museo Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (2019), ‘Fragments’, VINCOM Center for Contemporary Art, Hanoi (2018), ‘Fantasmagoria’, Parafin, London (2018), ‘Lineament’, fig-2 at the ICA, London (2015), ‘Under The Box, Beyond The Bounds’, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2014), Dundee Contemporary Arts (2013), Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2013), Chisenhale Gallery, London (2007), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2006), Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, (2006), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (2005) and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2005). Important recent group exhibitions include ‘Noire Lumiere’, How Museum, Shanghai (2020), ‘Anima: Taiwan International Video Art Exhibition’, Taiwan Contemporary Culture Lab, Taipei (2020), ‘Resistance of the Sleepers’, UCCA Dune Art Museum, Beidaihe, China (2020), ‘Out Of The Retina, Into The Brain’, Art Institute of Chicago (2018), ‘Roppongi Crossing’, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2016), the Biennale de Lyon (2013), ‘Mono No Avare: Contemporary Japanese Artists’, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2013), ‘What We See’, National Museum of Art, Osaka (2013), the Sydney Biennial (2010), 6th Asian-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (2009), ‘Automatic Cities: The Architectural Imaginary in Contemporary Art’, The Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2009) and the Yokohama Triennial (2005).

Hiraki Sawa’s works are included in many important public collections internationally, including the Arts Council Collection, London, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Museum of

Fine Arts, Boston, The Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, CAB, Burgos, Spain, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, National Museum of Art, Osaka, Taipei Fine Art Museum, Taiwan, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Aichi, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel, and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.

Parafin

Parafin was launched in September 2014 by Ben Tufnell and Matt Watkins and is located at 18 Woodstock Street, just off New Bond Street. Parafin represents a broad selection of contemporary artists from emerging names to established international figures.

Gallery Artists

Nathan Coley
Nancy Holt
Melanie Manchot
Hiraki Sawa
Fred Sorrell

Hamish Fulton
Tania Kovats
Justin Mortimer
Indrė Šerpytytė
Alison Watt

Tim Head
Hynek Martinec
Aimée Parrott
Melanie Smith
Uwe Wittwer