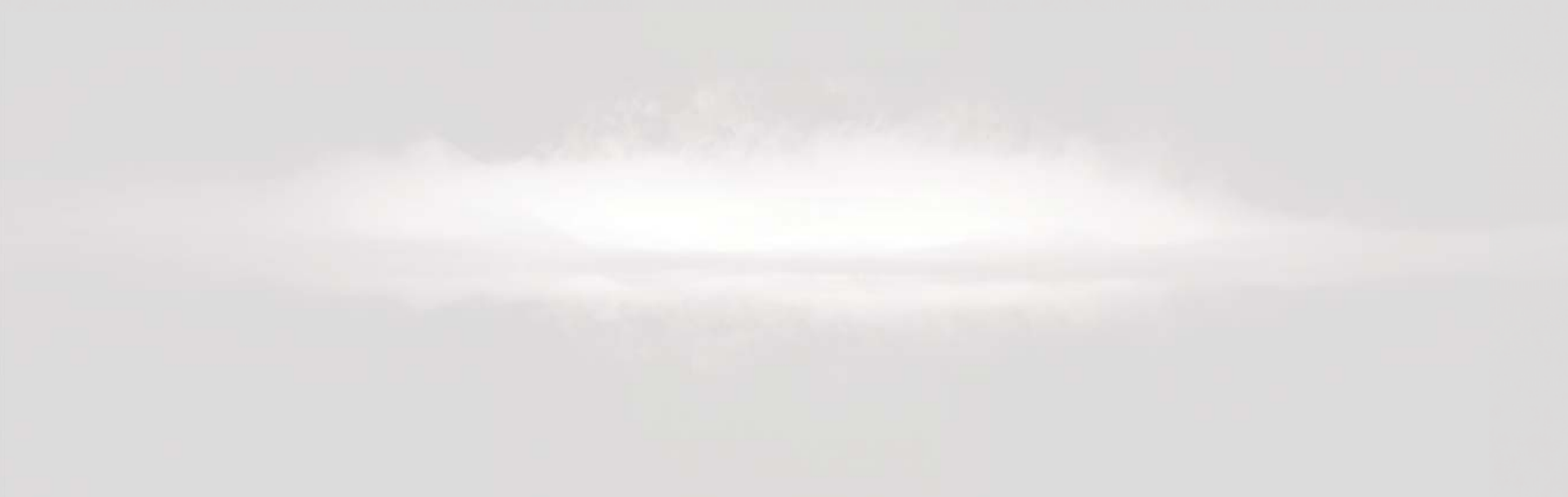


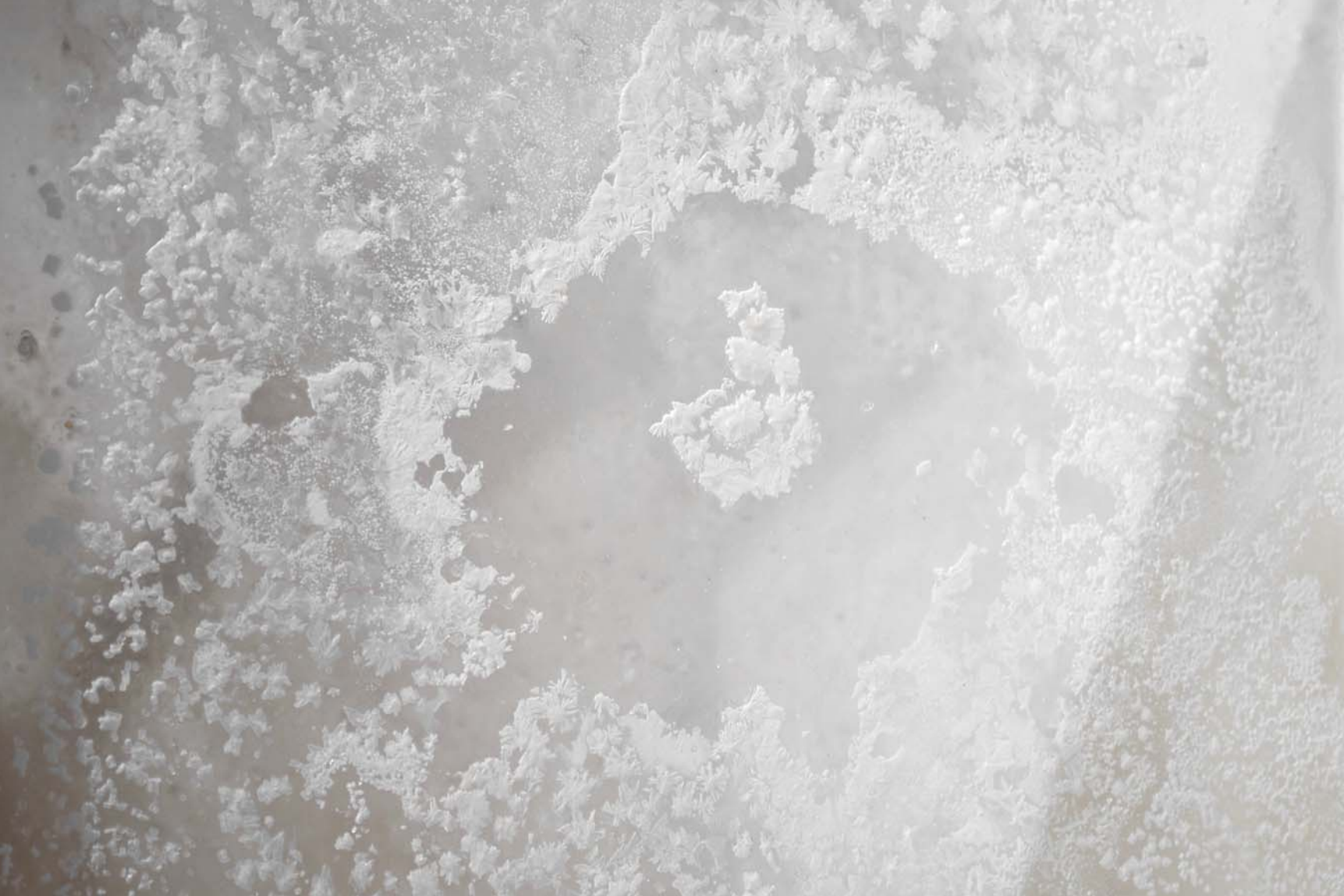
S H I N J I T U R N E R - Y A M A M O T O

S I D E R E A L S I L E N C E



S I D E R E A L S I L E N C E





S I D E R E A L S I L E N C E

(Sideréal: [sī-'dir-ē-əl] of or with respect to the distant stars. Determined by the stars.)

In summer 2012 I worked in the Pacific Northwest wilderness collecting sounds from nature. Walking the canyon ridge, I listened at once to multiple waterfalls, experiencing their merging sounds as the most powerful symphony I had ever heard. Through daily pilgrimages to two waterfalls, I discovered that, at certain moments of the day, rainbows would appear. The majestic sound and the accompanying rainbows' ghostly manifestation acquired a sentient presence, a stillness, which I could not fully comprehend, but rather sensed, as elusive and immediate as a lingering scent. I was no longer listening, but experiencing instead the eternal flow of life.

These occurrences, and others experienced in research trips to Switzerland's glacial waterfalls deep inside mountains, became the direct inspiration and spine of *Sideréal Silence*. I found in these immersive and repetitive sounds of coursing water what began to emerge as musical chords, and culminated in *Sideréal Silence I: Hydraulis, E Minor*. This same dynamic energy of water inspired the earliest hydraulis or organ, attributed to the third-century BC Hellenistic engineer Ctesibius of Alexandria, which used waterfalls to drive the organ's pipes.

This winter for six weeks on the southwest coast of Ireland, working in direct collaboration with the natural elements, I

sought to make visible that eternal flow of life. Painting outdoors on raw cotton canvas with 450-million-year-old Cincinnati Strata fossil dust, turf ash (young fossil material), mica, rainwater, nikawa glue (Japanese animal glue), and tree resin, or working on acetate where crystal formations coalesce in nebula-like imagery, I made works that manifest the strata of time, submission to the elements, and the yielding of artistic control. In these paintings which could have been created nowhere else, the conversation with nature intones layers of sediment and stone, the fall of rain, the path of the wind, and the swath of the haze of the Milky Way.

Through *Sideréal Silence*, I want to bring this sentient presence, the stillness, to viewers. I see myself as a witness, or, as Paul Klee wrote, the "medium" or bridge between the universe and viewers, where personal experience transforms into universal, encouraging viewers to linger in the moment and to experience themselves inside deep time. The Greek root for the word "beauty" is related to the word for calling. As an artist I am bound to continue calling that elusive stillness in this world of tumult.

— Shinji Turner-Yamamoto

Covers: *Sideréal Silence II*, 2016, mist cloud, clear acrylic structure, 14 x 18 x 18 feet approx. dimensions
Left: *Sideréal Silence: Irish Study #47*, 2016, cultured crystals, ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, archival acetate, wooden frame, plexiglass, hinges, 19½ x 33 x 1½ inches

IT’S HARD TO OVERSTATE—and impossible to forget—the impact Shinji Turner-Yamamoto made on art in Cincinnati with his two 2010 concurrent projects, *Disappearances*, a solo exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Center and *Hanging Garden*, an installation at the deconsecrated Holy Cross Church in Mount Adams.

In *Disappearances*, the installation’s expansive beauty belied and transformed the narrow, restricting gallery space in which it was placed. At the end, where the ceiling is at its highest, he created a low, desert-like landscape of white mineral dust that gave the viewer the sense of being in an untrammelled, unoccupied part of the world.

He placed several small pieces of stone—debris from Holy Cross Church—within this wide mound, a reminder that something or someone else who had been there before had possibly disappeared. As we might at any given moment.

Looking back from this spot, the viewer appreciated the asteroid-like stones, Holy Cross Church plaster debris fused with 24-karat gold leaf that Turner-Yamamoto had installed along the walls. They were the stars, the constellation, guiding our path. It was a work of art and a work of nature.

As a CAC exhibition from a then-unfamiliar local artist, *Disappearances* was a major revelation. But it almost seemed like a work in miniature compared to *Hanging Garden*. No one who

saw it has forgotten it—so profound has its impact been on art in Cincinnati that even those who didn’t see it remember it.

The church itself was a metaphor for death—of faith, of cities, of beauty—as it had been decaying into ruin and debris. But Turner-Yamamoto saw it as a site, a symbol, for regeneration—nature meets the built environment and honors it (coexists with it) by changing it.

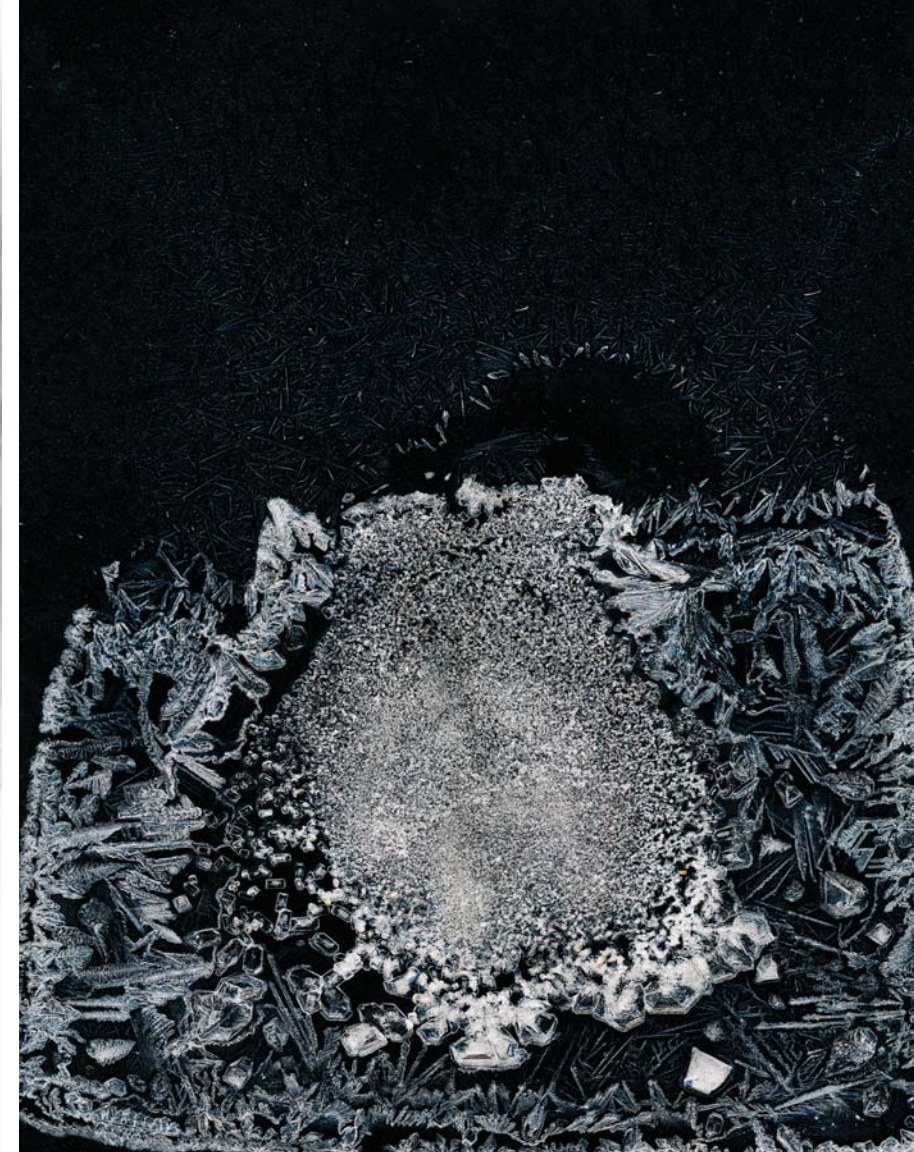
In the center of the church was an upright live birch tree, suspended as if a floating hologram, atop an inverted dead birch. The live tree’s branches scraped the ceiling; the dead one’s grazed the floor. You could see the thin wires holding them in place, but it seemed more like you had walked through some kind of dimension warp into a forest right in the middle of a church.

You couldn’t believe it. How did he find a way to make this place so organic, so connected to a larger ecosystem? And how did he keep that tree alive?

From the audacious, auspicious impact of those two projects, Turner-Yamamoto has continued to create compelling, exceptional work internationally. And he has always kept a hopeful, humanistic place—a mystical place, actually—for nature in his creative process.

While those 2010 projects presented someone new to Cincinnati art audiences, the Japanese-born Turner-Yamamoto had already established a distinguished career before moving

Left: *Sidereal Silence: Waterfall I*, 2016, archival digital print (from pinhole paper negative), acrylic face mount, 67 x 48 inches
Right: *Quintessence: Starless #1*, 2016, archival digital print, acrylic face mount, 58 x 48 inches



Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #12, #13, 2016, ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, raw cotton canvas, 60 x 36 x 1½ inches each

Quintessence #9, 2014, 24-kt. gold leaf, cultured crystals, grown on plaster cast from Irish milky quartz, 7 x 7 x 7 inches

here. Educated at both Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna, Italy, and Japan's Kyoto City University of Arts, he began having solo shows and participating in projects and group exhibitions at least a decade earlier. His work by 2010 had been featured in Japan, Italy, Ireland, India, Mongolia, Finland, and the United States. Most pertinently, he had already started on his grand artistic statement, his *Global Tree Project*, of which *Hanging Garden* was a part.

As Turner-Yamamoto himself wrote in 2009: "The *Global Tree Project* began when I encountered a large uprooted oak in a forest. It lay as if sleeping on a gently sloping grass-covered hill. When I returned a few days later, the tree had disappeared. In place of its roots remained a scar, a mound of raw earth. I envisioned a new tree growing on this mound.

"Like Inanna-Ishtar, goddess of Sumerian myth, I wanted to pluck this uprooted tree and bring it to my sacred garden. I wanted the tree to lie and sleep, envisioning a new world like the dream of the world that emerges from the Indian god Vishnu's navel in the form of a lotus flower.

"As historian of religion Mircea Eliade wrote, if the plant and we come from the same uterus, we are twins. We didn't die from the separation, as do some conjoined twins, but, somehow we need to be together. In my *Global Tree Project*, I try to heal our wound from this separation, and reopen our connection with nature to be whole, and to have a new vision through it."

And that brings us to the profound multimedia exhibition at the Weston Art Gallery this spring, *Sidereal Silence*. It isn't technically part of his ongoing *Global Tree Project*, but at this point everything he does is interconnected because of his heightened awareness of our place in nature and, to push one step beyond earth, the cosmos, itself.

Actually, there is quite an interesting, circuitous connection between *Sidereal Silence* and *Global Tree Project*. As Bonnie Speeg—a community volunteer who worked on *Hanging Garden* explains in an unpublished essay, the Mount Adams site of 2010's *Hanging Garden* was chosen in the 19th century by astronomer Ormsby McKnight Mitchel for the Cincinnati Observatory. And Mitchel published a journal, *The Sidereal Messenger*, to spread his enthusiasm for astronomy.

In this exhibition, Turner-Yamamoto gets at his emerging great theme—how our close relationship with nature fuels our awe of the universe—by incorporating natural elements from around the world into his work. If that means he travels globally to better understand the "nature" of his work, so be it. To him, it is a privilege that life affords. It is also a privilege, it should be proudly noted, that the National Endowment for the Arts supported this exhibition with a generous grant.

The Weston's lower-level galleries contain a suite of *Irish Study* paintings that are, to an essential extent, collaborations





Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #16, 2016, ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, raw cotton canvas, 60 x 36 x 1½ inches



Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #5, 2015, ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, tree resin, unstretched raw cotton canvas, 86 x 54 inches

Also in these galleries are pieces from his *Quintessence* series, in which cultured crystals are affixed to walls to serve as a constellation (a recurring theme) of bright but unpredictably shaped shining stars. For these, materials used include circa 350-million-year-old late Devonian petrified wood fragment from *Callixylon newberryi* (the earliest tree), 24-karat gold leaf, fossil dust, plaster cast from Irish milky quartz—such amazing consideration goes into his choices.

In the Weston's atrium-like upstairs gallery, Turner-Yamamoto debuts two large multimedia pieces that have the capacity to stun with their ambition and careful—but not too careful—conceptualism.

Sidereal Silence II has some of the magical thinking, some of the alchemy, of *Hanging Garden*. Using horticultural mist makers, Turner-Yamamoto produces a cloud that slowly rolls atop and over a clear acrylic ledge, slipping below into dark, mysterious quarters. Like a cleansing fog come to envelop us and help us start over—one wishes it could have spread to cover the whole gallery, the whole city.

Sidereal Silence III, is ephemeral, in a sense, as waterfall imagery is contained within a looping, approximately-30-minute two-channel video. To make these videos, the artist traveled to waterfalls in the Pacific Northwest and Switzerland. In the

with the landscape. Actually created near Kerry, Ireland, these disclose Turner-Yamamoto's painterly decisions and painstaking craftsmanship but also leave room for nature's fortuitous input.

The list of materials used reads like a journal kept during a scientific expedition to the center of the earth. *Irish Study #39*, for instance, uses 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, mica, rainwater, (Japanese traditional) nikawa glue, tree resin, and Fabriano paper.

It is representative of the others in the *Irish Study* series, whose overall impact is like capturing and framing—without harming—a slice of the outdoors and shaping it in such a way that it becomes an art object yet keeps intact its original purpose.



Sidereal Silence III, 2016, 2-channel video, 00:26:58 (loop), (2) 54 x 31½ inch screens

Northwest, he heard the sounds of multiple waterfalls as one and witnessed rainbows. It was cathartic; it was epiphanous.

Viewing the videos, you feel being in the outdoors, a place sometimes soothing and sometimes freezing but always pure. Occasionally, crystals appear on the screen—he resourcefully filmed those with a mobile phone from his car windshield in Cincinnati.

The accompanying sound work, *Sidereal Silence I* that penetrates the entire exhibition space, is not background white noise—it isn’t meant to be conventionally soothing. As you spend time with it, the sound becomes musical.

The videos reward active visual engagement. There are slight differences in the two “mirrored” images that prevent the work from being too artificially neat and perfect. One video unfolds in real time; the other is a little slower. In one, the camera slowly fogs up.

On a personal note, I often go to a waterfall in North Carolina called Dry Falls, where it’s possible to stand behind the strong, roaring water, feeling the spray and looking through the falls. Something that is moving so fast, so powerfully, suddenly can seem to be standing still, suspended. You then see it in a different way; you see how nature can transcend any given time and place and become infinite.

Sidereal Silence III achieves that same effect.

It is a rare person who can look at the constellations and the fossil dust simultaneously and see what they have in common. Shinji Turner-Yamamoto can do it, and translate that into art. His is a singular talent. ❖

Here are some points of departure and a chance to see for ourselves as gravity is defied then defined within an intelligent and sharply constructed set of proportions so as to loose, in fans of ashen color so close to music, our fraught hold on the future, to hear how the present holds us, how becoming these patterns are, to arrive where activity stops.

— Bill Renschler

S H I N J I T U R N E R - Y A M A M O T O / S I D E R E A L S I L E N C E

April 8–June 5, 2016 / Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery / Exhibition Checklist

	<p><i>Sidereal Silence I: Hydraulis, E Minor, 2016</i> 4.1 + 2.1 + 2.1 channel surround sound installation 00:29:30 + 00:26:58 + 00:22:02 (loop)</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence II, 2016</i> Mist cloud, clear acrylic structure 14 x 18 x 18 feet approx. dimensions</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence III, 2016</i> 2-channel video 00:26:58 (loop) (2) 54 x 31½ inch screens</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence IV, 2016</i> Bronze leaf, cultured crystal on ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil fragments 6 x 6 x 6 inches (object), installation 148 inches from floor</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #39, 2015</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, Fabriano paper 36 x 28 inches</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #12, #13, #14, #16, #17, 2016</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, raw cotton canvas (5) 60 x 36 x 1½ inches each</p>	<p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #2, #9, #10, 2016</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, raw cotton canvas, gold leaf (3) 72 x 50 x 1½ inches each</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #5, #6, #7, 2016</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, raw cotton canvas (3) 70 x 48 x 1½ inches each</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Waterfall I, II, 2016</i> Archival digital print (from pinhole paper negative), acrylic face mount (2) 67 x 48 inches each</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #35, 2015</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, Arches paper 14 x 10 inches</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #36, 2015</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, soot, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, Arches paper (diptych) 14 x 10 inches each paper</p>	<p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #37, #38, 2015</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, egg, nikawa glue, tree resin, Arches paper (2) 23½ x 17½ inches paper each</p> <p><i>Quintessence #9, 2014</i> 24-kt. gold leaf, cultured crystals grown on plaster cast from Irish milky quartz 7 x 7 x 7 inches</p> <p><i>Quintessence: Callixylon Newberryi, 2016</i> Ca. 350-million-year-old late Devonian petrified wood fragment from <i>Callixylon newberryi</i> (the earliest tree), cultured crystals 8½ x 4 x 4 inches</p> <p><i>Quintessence: Starless #1, #2, 2016</i> Archival digital print, acrylic face mount (2) 58 x 48 inches each</p> <p><i>Quintessence #7, 2013</i> 24-kt. gold leaf, cultured crystals grown on plaster cast from Irish milky quartz 5 x 6½ x 4½ inches</p> <p><i>Quintessence Constellaria, 2016</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil fragment, cultured crystals 5 x 4 x 3 inches</p>	<p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #3, #4, 2015</i> Ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, raw unstretched cotton canvas (#3) 88 x 54 inches, (#4) 86 x 54 inches</p> <p><i>Quintessence #6, 2013</i> Cultured crystals grown on plaster cast from Irish milky quartz 5½ x 5½ x 6 inches</p> <p><i>Pentimenti: Steinbruch Ostermundigen, 2016</i> Ostermundigen sandstone fragment, cultured crystals 4½ x 4 x 1½ inches</p> <p><i>Sidereal Silence: Irish Study #40, #41, #42, #43, #44, #45, #46, #47, 2016</i> Cultured crystals, ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil dust, turf ash, calcium carbonate, magnesium silicate, mica, rainwater, nikawa glue, tree resin, archival acetate, wooden frame, plexiglass, hinges (8 diptych sets) 19½ x 33 x 1½ inches each</p>	<p><i>Sidereal Silence: Constellaria, 2016</i> Cultured crystals grown on ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician fossil fragments, 24-kt. gold leaf, silver leaf, bronze leaf, and tin leaf 10 feet x 20 feet x 5 inches overall installation</p> <p><i>Montem Sacrum I, II, III, IV, V, VI, 2003</i> Henna, tempera, watercolor, slate, 24-kt. gold leaf, tree resin, mica, nikawa glue, Krishna's eyes on paper (6) 6 x 9 inches paper each</p> <p><i>Pentimenti: Mojácar la Vieja I, 2016</i> Moorish archaeological ceramic fragments, gesso, clay, 24-kt. gold and silver leaf 3 x 6 x 5 inches</p> <p><i>Pentimenti: Mojácar la Vieja II, 2016</i> Moorish archaeological ceramic fragments, cultured crystals 4 x 8½ x 5½ inches</p> <p><i>Quintessence #8, 2014</i> Cultured crystals, ca. 450-million-year-old Ordovician horn coral (<i>Streptelasma</i>) 4 x 5½ x 4½ inches</p> <p><i>Pentimenti: Vortex, 2016</i> Ca. 270-million-year-old sandstone fragment, 24-kt. gold leaf 2½ x 3 x 1½ inches</p>	<p><i>SHINJI TURNER-YAMAMOTO</i> is a Japanese born US-based artist known for paintings, sculptures, and installations employing elemental materials such as trees, fossils, and minerals, creating profound viewer connections with nature. He works with identifiable imagery to encourage humanity to encounter the essential in nature and time in new and unexpected ways and is committed to using historic and natural elements in his work as meditations on the environment.</p> <p>His <i>Global Tree Project</i> explores a poetic reunion with nature, making visible bonds and similarities between plant life and humanity, emphasizing ecological wisdom and the interconnectedness of all life. <i>Shinji Turner-Yamamoto: Global Tree Project</i> published by Damiani, fall 2012, documents eleven projects worldwide realized in a ruined folly on a cliff overlooking the Celtic Sea, an eighth-century Kiyomizu Temple Sutra Hall, a garden in New Delhi, the Mongolian Gobi Desert, and abandoned architectural landmarks in the American Midwest.</p> <p>He studied at Kyoto City University of Arts, and, sponsored by the Italian government, at Accademia di Belle Arti, Bologna, where he lived for eleven years. His recent projects are <i>About Trees</i>, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland, and <i>Sidereal Silence</i>, a 2016 solo exhibition for the Alice F. and</p> <p>Harris K. Weston Art Gallery in the Aronoff Center for the Arts selected by the National Endowment for the Arts to receive an "Art Works/Visual Arts" category grant. His work has also been the subject of solo shows at Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy; Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH; and the Ippaku-tei Teahouse, Embassy of Japan, Washington, DC. Recent and current projects include a commissioned site-specific <i>Global Tree Project: ISTANBUL</i> installation in the historic ruin of an abandoned Jewish orphanage, Istanbul, Turkey; MONGOLIA 360°: Land Art Biennial; <i>Hanging Garden</i>, Deconsecrated Holy Cross Church, Cincinnati, OH; <i>Disappearances: An Eternal Journey</i>, SiTE:LAB at an abandoned industrial building, Grand Rapids, MI, which received the 2011 ArtPrize International Juried Award. Upcoming projects/exhibitions are a residency at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH, for an interdisciplinary collaborative project with the faculties of Ecology, Anthropology, Ecopsychology, Geology, Fine Arts; SAPAR Contemporary, New York, NY.</p> <p>He lives and works in Cincinnati, OH, USA.</p> <p>www.globaltreeproject.org</p> <p>writer for <i>The Cincinnati Enquirer</i> (1988–89); <i>The Denver Post</i> (1989–2003); and <i>CityBeat</i> (2008–present), an arts and entertainment weekly publication. He has published arts-related feature articles in major newspapers, magazines, and online publications that include: <i>The Los Angeles Times</i>, <i>Variety</i>, <i>The Dallas Morning News</i>, <i>The Boston Globe</i>, <i>The New York Times</i>, and <i>Cincinnati Magazine</i>.</p> <p><i>BILL RENSCHLER</i> is a painter, writer, and framer <i>par excellence</i> residing in Cincinnati, OH.</p>	
--	--	--	---	--	---	--	--



This catalogue was produced on the occasion of the exhibition *Shinji Turner-Yamamoto: Sidereal Silence* at the Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery in the Aronoff Center for the Arts from April 8-June 5, 2016.

© 2016 Weston Art Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio, the artist, the authors

Editor: Judith Turner-Yamamoto

Managing Editor: Kelly E. O'Donnell, Assistant Director, Weston Art Gallery

Photography: Shinji Turner-Yamamoto

Design: Scott Bruno, b graphic design

Exhibition Sponsors: Dinsmore and Shohl LLP, Barbara and Gates Moss,
National Endowment for the Arts,
Dee and Tom Stegman



ART WORKS.

National
Endowment
for the Arts
arts.gov

Exhibition Co-Sponsor: Elizabeth Stone

The artist received additional support from the
Cill Rialaig Project and the Chenven Foundation.



Alice F. and Harris K.
WESTON ART GALLERY

Aronoff Center for the Arts / 650 Walnut Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

513.977.4165 / WestonArtGallery@CincinnatiArts.org

www.westonartgallery.com/

Since opening in 1995, the Cincinnati Arts Association's Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery has established a reputation for innovative programming, award-winning publications, and museum-quality exhibitions. A catalyst for and integral member of the Cincinnati arts community, the Weston Art Gallery's mission is to present and support the visual arts of the Tri-state region through exhibitions and special programs. Its objectives are to foster an awareness and appreciation of the visual arts among area residents and to support the development of professional and emerging artists of the region.

2015-16 Season Sponsor: Dee and Tom Stegman



The Alpaugh Foundation
The LaBoiteaux Family Foundation
Judith Titchener

