A solo exhibition by Kohei Nawa

Kohei Nawa - TRANS | Cheonan
Kohei Nawa - TRANS | Cheongdam

Period | Wednesday, September 05th – Sunday, November 04th, 2012
Venue | Arario Gallery cheonan, Seoul cheongdam
Opening Reception | 6pm, Wednesday, September 05th, 2012

A solo exhibition by the Japanese artist Kohei Nawa (b. 1975), the first young artist to hold a solo exhibition at Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo in 2011, is opening jointly at Arario Gallery Seoul Cheongdam and Arario Gallery Cheonan. Kohei Nawa-TRANS, the artist’s first large-scale exhibition in Korea, presents over 40 of his representative works from the Pixel series and his recent Trans series.

Kohei Nawa is acclaimed for his PixCell series, which is a word that integrates ‘pixel’, which demonstrates digital image resolution, and the biological ‘cell’. While the subject in each work connotes its own attributes such as weight, smell and color, its essence is lost or distorted through the production process in which glass, crystal and urethane coats covers its surface. PixCell-Deer, the representative work of the PixCell series, is the most celebrated work from the BEADS series that cover taxidermied animals with clear crystal beads. The composite of taxidermied animal and crystal beads is like a completely new organism that entirely deconstructs the initial color, texture and form of the original taxidermied animal and creates a new experience. While the beads in different sizes seem to interfere with the precise reading of the subject, they gain a new function as lens, maximizing color and form, and seducing the viewer. This reminds the viewer that the world which the human senses perceive as the truth is actually ambiguous and uncertain. Through an extensive medium of expression, Kohei Nawa sheds light on the human desire to embrace, cherish and possess the uncertainty.

A part of PixCell Series, PRISM is a sculptural embodiment of motifs collected through the internet. Prism sheets enwraps cell holding an object, and various images appear and disappear according to the actual perspective of the viewer. Through this process, the subject which should remain in the box (cell) loses its sense of realness, lingers as a virtual image, and is reduced of its meaning and
symbolic aspect as its perception and its sense of distance are unified. The viewer starts to feel numbness in sense of touch, and prompts the viewer to reflect on the implications this has for other things that we believe we can see, touch, or feel. Exhibited for the first time through this solo exhibition, Nawa’s recent work TRANS has been produced through cutting-edge sculptural technique using computer and scanner. This process involves a 3D scanning of a person or an object, then applying computer graphics to create work using the scanned data. Applying a computer technique called ‘texture mapping’, Nawa would magnify or diminish the 3D data, or repeat the process of smoothing out the surface. In reference to his TRANS series, Nawa expressed that “the completed form of the model with fluid three-dimensional surface is like a form that is parallel with this world, or a form which any subject or being can have.” In progress since 2012, this new series of work will be exhibited in the form of 9 sculptures juxtaposed in a row in Arario Gallery Seoul Cheongdam.

The large-scale sculpture Manifold signifies many different forms, or pipe structures. An integration of various cells of information, matters and energy, each cell pulls on each other, configuring in space as a sculptural work. Each entity shows a process of evolution, transforming its form for a smooth surface. The sculpture swelling in a threatening way portrays systems in society and nature gradually collapsing due to problems related to information and energy. Measuring 13m in height and 15m in width, Manifold is currently under production in Japan, and will be installed in the outdoor sculpture park in Arario Gallery Cheonan. Manifold is an unparalleled super-scale public art project, with sporadically swelling geometrical shapes of circular forms that overwhelm and awaken the dormant anxiety in the viewer’s subconsciousness. Gradually, however, the work leads the viewer through the experience of overcoming his fears and arriving at a sublime state.

The coherent idea which Nawa tries to express through a series of works using completely different types of various materials, is dangers of environmental system inherent in the massive information society, and the feeling of fear, emptiness and anxiety lurking in human subconsciousness. These ideas manifest into works with atypical and irregular forms suggesting an organic entity of cells, through the integration of biological research and high technology. By creating virtual entities that reveal the structure of contemporary social systems, Nawa’s work sheds light on the issues in contemporary social structure and system.

**Artist Biography**
Kohei Nawa received his BFA, MFA, and Ph.d. in Fine Arts from the Kyoto City University of Art. He is currently the Assistant Professor in Department of Fine Art at Kyoto University, and the director of the platform SANDWISH, a production house for art, design and architecture. Having launched his artistic
career in 1999, Nawa has participated in various group exhibitions including a show at SCAI The Bathhouse in 2004, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand in Switzerland in 2008, The Ueno Royal Museum in 2009, and Saatchi Gallery in London in 2010. His art has been collected by prestigious art galleries in museums around the world, including Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, Mori Art Museum, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Nawa had a solo exhibition in 2009 with funding from Hermès Foundation, and recently finished a successful large-scale solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo. Nawa was named in the list of “50 Next Most Collectible Artists” by the American monthly art magazine Art + Auction in the June issue, 2012.
Image

PixCell-Double_Deer#6, 2012, mixed media, 229.7x190x160cm

Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
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PixCell-Double_Deer#6, 2012, mixed media, 229.7x190x160cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Stroke-Rio, 2012, mixed media, 98.6x30.9x24.5cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Trans-Kids (Bump), 2012, mixed media, 220×126.4×60.8cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Stroke-Yana, 2012, mixed media, 195.8×66.2×72.6cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
AirCell_A_37mmp, 2011, mixed media, 112.1x96.2x59.2cm_photo by Seiji Toyonaga (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
AirCell_A_37mmp, 2011, mixed media, 112.1x96.2x59.2cm, detail
Photo by Seiji Toyonaga (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
PixCell[Ram skull], 2011, mixed media, 29.1x81.3x39.3cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)

PixCell[Ram skull], 2011, mixed media, 29.1x81.3x39.3cm, detail
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
PixCell[Stool], 2011, mixed media, 64.6x51.3x51.3cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
PixCell[Stool], 2011, mixed media, 64.6x51.3x51.3cm, detail
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Polygon - Double Yana, 2010, mixed media, 400x270x69cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Polygon- Double Rio A, 2011, mixed media, 370x110x189cm
Photo by Seiji Toyonaga (SANDWİCH GRAPHİC)
Throne, 2011, mixed media, 300x90.5x145.3cm
Photo by Nobutada Omote (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Manifold_Model, 2011, mixed media, 43.9x52.5x41.3cm
Photo by Seiji Toyonaga (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Manifold Model, 2011, mixed media, 43.9x52.5x41.3cm

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Manifold_Model, 2011, mixed media, 43.9x52.5x41.3cm
Photo by Seiji Toyonaga (SANDWICH GRAPHIC)
Manifold_Model, 2011, mixed media, Virtual Installation View at ARARIO Sculpture Garden, Cheonan

Image courtesy of the Artist and Arario Galley
Kohei Nawa  
(b. 1975, Japan)

Associate Professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design  
Director of SANDWICH

Education
- 1994-1998  Kyoto City University of Arts, B.A. Fine Art Sculpture
- 1998-1999  Royal College of Art, Sculpture course, Exchange program
- 1998-2000  Kyoto City University of Arts, M.A. Fine Art Sculpture
- 2000-2003  Kyoto City University of Arts, Ph.D. Fine Art Sculpture

Solo Exhibitions
- 2012  TRANS, ARARIO GALLERY, Cheonan & Seoul cheongdam, Korea (Upcoming)
- 2011  Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 2010  Synthesis, SCAI THE BATHHOUSE, Tokyo, Japan
- 2009  Cell, Vera Munro, Hamburg, Germany
- 2008  L_B_S, Maison Hermes, Tokyo, Japan
- 2008  Miro Foundation, Barcelona, Spain
- 2008  TORSO, Nomart Edition/Project Space, Osaka, Japan
- 2007  Cell, ierimonti gallery, Milan, Italy
- 2006  GUSH, SCAI THE BATHHOUSE, Tokyo, Japan
- 2006  AIR, Nomart Edition / Project Space, Osaka, Japan
- 2005  Show window art direction, Maison Hermès, Tokyo, Japan
- 2005  Drawings, studio J, Osaka, Japan
- 2004  0409 science fiction, INAX GALLERY 2, Tokyo, Japan
- 2004  Catalyst, Nomart Edition / Project Space, Osaka, Japan
- 2003  PixCell, Nomart Edition/Project Space, Osaka, Japan
- 2003  PixCell, Studio J, Osaka, Japan
- 2002  CELL-osmosis, UPLINK GALLERY, Tokyo, Japan
- 2002  CELL, Nomart Edition / Project Space, Osaka, Japan
NAWA Kohei, Kyoto Art Map, Gallery MARONIE, Kyoto, Japan
2001  NAWA Kohei, Art Synapse, Gallery MARONIE, Kyoto, Japan

**Group Exhibitions**

2011  Bye Bye Kitty, Japan Society, New York, USA
2010  Busan Biennale, Busan, Korea
      Great New Wave: Contemporary Art from Japan, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
      Franks-Suss Collection, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
      Bangladesh Biennale, Dhaka, Bangladesh
      CITY2.0, EYE OF GYRE, Tokyo, Japan
2009  VOCA 2009, The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, Japan
      MOT Field of Dreams, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
      Renewal Open Memorial Exhibition -Reborn-, Gallery Nomart, Osaka, Japan
      WORK IN PROGRESS, Kyoto University of Art and Design, Kyoto, Japan
      neoteny japan, The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, Japan
      The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Australia
      First Passage, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka, Japan
      Animamix Biennial-Visual Attract & Attack, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taipei, Taiwan
2008  Vivid Material, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo, Japan
      Great New Wave: Contemporary Art from Japan, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
      SENJIRU - INFUSION, GALERIE KASHYA HILDEBRAND, Zurich, Switzerland
      PARALLEL WORLD an Exhibitions by Hugues Reip, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
      The Echo, ZAIM, Kanagawa, Japan
      Black State, studio J, Osaka, Japan
2007  ArtScope, DaimulerChrysler contemporary, Berlin, Germany
      SHANGHAI ART FAIR, ShanghaiMART, Shanghai, China
      ROPPONGI CROSSING 2007: FUTURE BEATS IN JAPANESE CONTEMPORARY ART, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
2006  Art Scope 2005/2006, Hara Museum, Tokyo, Japan
      Banquet: A Feast for the Senses, Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, USA
      Smooth Sailing for BEARING, NSK Bearing Art Exhibition, spiral, Tokyo, Japan
      Amuse Land 2007: Beautiful Dreamer, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, Sapporo,
Japan
Material: White Book, Nomart Project Space cube & loft, Osaka, Japan

**Award / Grant**

2007  Jury’s Prize of ROPPONGI CROSSING 2007

2006  Art Scope 2005-2006, DaimlerChrysler Foundation in Japan, residency in Berlin, Germany
       Kyoto Cultural award 2006, Kyoto, Japan

2005  The Japan-United States Arts Program, Asian Cultural Council, residency in New York, USA

2004  Sakuya Kono Hana Prize (Art), Osaka, Japan

2003  Selected Artists in Kyoto 2003, highest award, Kyoto, Japan
       Kirin Art Award 2003, encouragement prize, Osaka, Japan
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Visitors
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