

Wasserman Projects to Open Two Solo Exhibitions on September 27

New Works by New York-based Artist Summer Wheat And Japan-based Artist Hirosuke Yabe

**Public Opening Reception, September 27, from 6:00 - 9:00 PM
On View through December 21**

On September 27, Wasserman Projects will open two concurrent solo presentations of works by New York City-based artist Summer Wheat and Yokohama, Japan-based artist Hirosuke Yabe. Both artists are driven by an engagement with the breadth of human expression and experience, creating a dynamic synergy between their discrete presentations. While Wheat is most widely recognized for her brightly-colored, tactile paintings, her practice embraces a range of media, including drawing, sculpture, and installation. Her self-titled exhibition at Wasserman Projects will include new and recent works that capture the full spectrum of her formal approaches. Yabe, alternatively, focuses on wooden sculpture, which he produces in a range of scales, from the intimate to the monumental, through a Japanese hatching technique, called nata. For his self-titled show at Wasserman Projects, he will create several large-scale structures, on the exterior and interior of which smaller sculptural works will also be presented. In both artists' works the everyday is elevated, serving as a platform through which to consider the human condition and that which we hold important and dear. In particular, for these upcoming presentations, the artists are engaging with ideas of consumerism. The exhibitions will remain on view through December 21, 2019.

“The presentation of Wheat and Yabe’s work captures beautifully our vision to show a spectrum of perspectives and formal approaches, and to highlight at the same time the fluidity and connection between artists working across the globe. With Wheat and Yabe, we have an incredible diversity in materiality and technique, but there is also a deep relationship in their desire to understand human emotion, psychology, and life experience,” said Alison Wong, Director of Wasserman Projects. “It’s exciting to bring these two artists into the same space, and to examine how their work reveals itself in layers, from a kind of elemental aesthetic on the surface to the deeply embedded narrative to the intricacy of the creative processes employed.”

Summer Wheat

Wheat’s presentation at Wasserman Projects follows her critically-acclaimed exhibition at Shulamit Nazarian in Los Angeles in 2018. Critics and peers have responded in particular to the incredible tactility of Wheat’s paintings, which she produces through a singular process in which she pushes thick acrylic paint through segments of aluminum mesh. Wheat has likened the textural effects of this process to a kind of pixilation, which gives a fine emphasis to every color, line, and gesture. At the same time, these works appear in ways woven onto the surface, and indeed Wheat has cited tapestry traditions through time as important sources of inspiration.

Born in Oklahoma City, Wheat was drawn early to craft aesthetics and techniques as well as to Native American motifs and approaches, in particular the emphasis on exploring the connections between humanity, animal life, and the environment. In her own practice, she has often melded the boundaries

between traditionally understood fine art and craft by drawing on formal approaches from across a range of disciplines. Wheat's work also contains a rich narrative quality, and she often combines myths, cultural symbols, global histories, and images of quotidian life to examine and elevate human experience, focusing in particular on revealing the critical, but often undervalued, work and creative contributions of women.

For her exhibition at Wasserman Projects, Wheat has taken inspiration from Detroit's economic downfall and rebirth. Symbols of excess and consumption pervade the collection of featured paintings and drawings. The exhibition also includes eight porcelain piggy banks, which were produced in Detroit, as well as three mosaic benches—a new medium for Wheat that has allowed her to translate her drawings into three dimensions through the use of colorful stones. Wheat worked with artisans in Detroit to create the benches as well. Together, the artworks in this upcoming show highlight the intricacy of Wheat's creative processes and dynamic use of color and pattern. This presentation will be followed by a solo exhibition of Wheat's work at the Kemper Museum of Art in Kansas City, MO.

Hirosuke Yabe

Yabe (b. 1973) creates his sculptures from logwood as well as recycled and discarded wood, taken from demolished Japanese houses that are often more than 100 years old. Inspired in part by the symbolism of African masks and the spirit with which they are imbued, his own work often melds abstract geometric forms with figurative references to human emotion and psychology. The resulting pieces appear in moments as people, animals, anthropomorphic creatures, and even monsters. For Yabe, each one serves as a metaphor for the human condition, as he examines the existential questions of what it is to be human.

For his exhibition at Wasserman Projects, Yabe has created two large-scale structures from locally found, salvaged, and reclaimed wood. These works are inspired in part by a wider concept developed by Yabe, called "The Faithful Dogman." In aspects human and in others animal-like, the Dogman serves as a metaphor for the constant sense of wanting and unabated consumerism that pervades both Eastern and Western cultures. One of the structures in the upcoming exhibition fully embodies the idea of the Dogman, and features the carved drooling faces and symbols of the character. The second structure, while not a direct representation of the narrative, also includes faces on the exterior and interior that communicate related emotions and experiences. A smaller Dogman sculpture is also featured in the show. All of the works are produced through the nata hatching technique for which Yabe has come to be known and embrace the aesthetics of traditional crafts.

Wasserman Projects worked with Popp's Packing, a Detroit-based, artist-run nonprofit, to host Yabe in Detroit, allowing him the opportunity to both develop the installation onsite and engage more actively with the local community. The exhibition at Wasserman Projects marks Yabe's second solo show in the United States, following his debut presentation at Cindy Rucker Gallery in New York City in 2018. The works in the show are the largest and most ornate that Yabe has presented in the U.S.

ABOUT WASSERMAN PROJECTS

Wasserman Projects is a flexible and constantly evolving program of art, design and music, that brings together artists of all disciplines. Our mission is to promote the work of outstanding practitioners based locally and around the globe by hosting exhibitions, conversations and supporting creativity wherever we

can be useful. Through collaborations and programming that generates interest, curiosity and commerce, our goal is to become one of the many threads in the vibrant fabric that is Detroit.

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