

花

hana

Ellie Omiya
Yuko Murata
Kentaro Kobuke
Kyoko Murase

26.11.2022 ~ 30.01.2023

Nova Contemporary is pleased to present **Hana**, a group exhibition of works by Ellie Omiya, Yuko Murata, Kentaro Kobuke, and Kyoko Murase. This exhibition forms an exchange between the gallery and four Japanese counterparts, Gallery Side 2, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tomio Koyama Gallery, and Maho Kubota Gallery.

Hana pays homage to the flower's persistence throughout Japanese art history. Blooms cascade across gold-leaf screens, unravel scrolled duets of picture and text, and figure prominently in the meticulous patterning of porcelain Aritaware. Floral motifs even form the dedicated genre of kachō-e prints, framing bird and insect imagery. In Japanese culture, flowers speak their own language of hanakotoba: they span excess, innocence, exhilaration and grief. They have the power to evoke sincerity and sympathy, acting as messages in times of celebration and remembrance. Flowers are emotions visually manifested, connoting reflections of the shared.

In present day, the beloved flower endures as an omnipresent trope. The artists on display extend a long history of poetic appraisal, and this selection of works offers a range of botanical imagery. Flowers inhabit each of the chosen works, some sprawling, some still, some worn, and some well-tended. Each arrangement is alive with unique personality, blooming again in sentiment and symbolism. **Hana** offers renewed insight into the practices of its featured artists, and illuminates their representations of natural beauty and simple sensual pleasure.

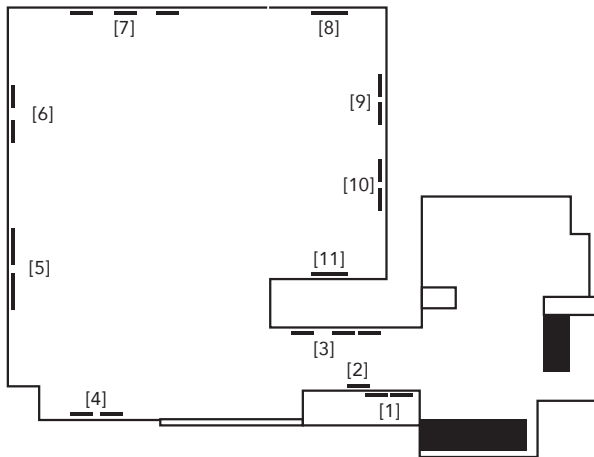
For **Ellie Omiya** (b. 1975), the flower embodies child-like purity. Her glowing buds are innocent yet zealous, silhouetted against glowing ground. Omiya often paints alongside live music, a practice evinced by the joyful cadence of her flowers: shoots of lily-of-the-valley curve across the canvas, and coupled amaryllis buds stretch and sway in sync. Omiya's flowers capture new worlds of renewal, visioning joyful fertility.

For **Yuko Murata** (b. 1973), the flower is a fragment of dislocated fantasy. Drawing from travel brochures and postcards, the artist builds intimate-scaled images of composite memory. Filled with heavy, broad swaths, the works are lushly personal. Yet, a sense of unreachable distance lulls each piece. Stillness subdues Murata's undulating mountains, anchoring her pendulous florets and criss-crossing stems. Tranquility envelops Murata's paintings, embodying the humble ideals of wabi sabi simplicity.

In the curated tableaux of **Kentaro Kobuke** (b. 1975), flowers are balms of solace. Blooms appear unassumingly across his pictorial planes, often as part of meticulously arranged interiors rather than central subjects. He transforms subtle mise-en-scènes into layered explorations of human emotion, creating visual and psychological patchwork of intriguing juxtaposition. The flower becomes a tribute of grief outside the royal Sandringham house, or a companion to loneliness in a tabletop vase. Melancholy and mourning silently seep through Kobuke’s ebullient palette, revealing the artist’s poignant sensitivity.

Constellations of botany burst across **Kyoko Murase’s** (b. 1963) canvases, producing pensive webs of saturation. The artist creates apparitions of the floral, shaping dreamlike images of tactile fluidity. In her signature style, she overlaps blotches of gouache and paint, striating this colour with fine lines of pencil and marker. The resulting atmosphere is one in constant flux, with ethereal remnants of figures and vegetation faintly appearing and dissolving. One becomes completely immersed in Murase’s mystical spatiality, caressed by her tactile swirls of breeze and fern.

FLOOR PLAN



- [1] Yuko Murata, *Autumn Mountains* (2022); *Late Autumn* (2022)
- [2] Kentaro Kobuke, *Calla* (2022)
- [3] [Left to right] Kentaro Kobuke, *Sandringham* (2022); *In Inverness* (2022); *Blue Table* (2022)
- [4] [Top, Left to right] Yuko Murata, *Untitled* (2021); *Untitled* (2021)
[Bottom, Left to right] Yuko Murata, *Untitled* (2019); *Untitled* (2021)
- [5] [Left to right] Ellie Omiya, *Amaryllises for you I* (2021); *Amaryllises for you II* (2021);
- [6] [Left to right] Ellie Omiya, *The new world of amaryllises II* (2021); *The new world of amaryllises I* (2021)
- [7] [Left to right] Ellie Omiya, *The new world of lilies of the valley I* (2021); *The new world of lilies of the valley IV* (2021); *The new world of lilies of the valley II* (2021)
- [8] Kyoko Murase, *Begonia House* (2022)
- [9] [Left to right] Kyoko Murase, *Afternoon Sun* (2012); *Hide and Seek* (2006)
- [10] [Left to right] Kyoko Murase, *Botanical garden* (2014); *Botanical garden* (2014)
- [11] Kyoko Murase, *Süd Park* (2016)