

Press Release

From White Space Art Asia

White Space Art Asia presents *Dialectics: Mono No Aware*, a joint exhibition with H-art Beat Gallery, Kawata Gallery, Kobayashi Gallery, Kogure Gallery, Shukado Gallery and YOD.

Singapore based White Space Art Asia presents a Japanese art exhibition featuring a selection of carefully curated artworks from different parts of Japan that aspires to evoke a profound sense of *mono no aware* and spotlights our experience of this phenomenon.

Dialectics: Mono No Aware 物の哀れ

“The flower is marvellous because it blooms, and singular because it falls”.

– Zeami Motokiyo (c.1363-c.1443)

Mono no aware, a core concept in Japanese aesthetics, is defined as the pathos of things. When applied specifically to the arts, it refers to a heightened sensitivity to beauty and its ephemerality. The word ‘*aware*’ was first coined during the Heian period of Japan (794-1185) as a means to express a spontaneous feeling and has hence also been translated as “the ‘*ah-ness*’ of things”. It demonstrates how Japanese art affects us in such an indescribable manner that a new concept is constructed around it.

White Space Art Asia, along with 6 other Japanese galleries (H-art Beat Gallery, Kawata Gallery, Kobayashi Gallery, Kogure Gallery, Shukado Gallery and YOD) will be collaborating on our inaugural Japanese art exhibition in an endeavour to foster a deeper understanding and more profound appreciation for the lyric sensitivity to *mono no aware*. The subtleties and layers of meaning in *mono no aware* defies simple translation. To help the viewer interpret and experience this idea, the exhibition will be presented as a dialectic discourse held in 2 parts – ‘*Thesis & Antithesis*’ and ‘*Synthesis*’. In ‘*Thesis & Antithesis*’, we will tell the story of how Japanese art simultaneously captures the eternity of beauty yet at the same time, speaks to how nothing lasts forever. In the second part of the exhibition, ‘*Synthesis*’, our curation will attempt to integrate these ideas and show how fragility and the sadness of passing is an integral part of the ideology on *mono no aware*.

Mono no aware offers an emotional experience so powerful yet obscure to us. It can be said that our lives are simply a collection of changing seasons, the perpetual rhythms of life and death where flowers bloom and wither, tides ebb and flow and the moon waxes and wanes without fail. In fact, in a complete submission of the brevity of life, the Japanese do not admire an eternally blossoming flower. The dense foliage of summer is cherished because of the barren branches of winter. We hope to convey, through this exhibition, these sentiments of grace and acceptance to the impermanence of life.

There will be guided tours at various timings throughout the course of the exhibition to bring the viewers through an interactive journey. Additionally, there will be a Sake Tasting session presented by SAKEMARU, a Japanese crafts workshop conducted by artist Saya Yamaguchi as well as a Japanese tea ceremony.