

Nonaka-Hill is pleased to present “the garden”, an exhibition of recent paintings by Hiroshi Sugito (b. 1970). The presentation marks the artist’s first solo exhibition with Nonaka-Hill and his ninth solo exhibition in Los Angeles. For the occasion, the artist has incorporated Japanese garden paintings by legendary artist, Zenzaburo Kojima.

Over decades, Hiroshi Sugito has been renowned for atmospheric paintings which evolve from Nihon-ga, the Japanese-style painting traditions in which he first trained. Spaces and objects were depicted in conflicting scales, often causing a viewer to question their own vantage point, or perhaps vantage points. While European early Modern painters drew inspiration from the flatness of traditional Japanese imagery to create masterpieces of Western Painting, it was Cubism which problematized questions of vantage point(s). Such painter’s problems and pursuits are the genesis of Sugito’s modest scaled paintings which utilize decorative vintage frames as tools in his process of composing his images, advancing from the emphasis on “line” which is intrinsic with Nihon-ga to incorporate shadow which is a hallmark of Yō-ga, or Western painting.

By adding and removing the frame, or frames, while composing the painting, Sugito contemplates not only the pictorial concerns that he shares with artists of all generations, but also the many other dynamics of how painting may exist in culture. For this exhibition, Sugito removed the ornate frames which had been added to Zenzaburo Kojima’s paintings of Japanese gardens, presenting them in the Modern unframed style. In contrast, Sugito’s paintings are shown in the vintage frames which were intrinsic to his process of finding his painting image.

Hiroshi Sugito was born in 1970 in Aichi prefecture, Japan. He graduated from the Department of Japanese Painting, Faculty of Arts, Aichi Prefectural College of Arts in 1992. He is currently Associate Professor of the Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts. He has exhibited extensively both in Japan and internationally since the 1990s.

His major solo exhibitions include “FOCUS” (Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, USA, 2006), “prime and foundation” (Miyagi Museum of Art, Miyagi, Japan, 2015), “frame and refrain” (Musée Bernard Buffet, Shizuoka, Japan, 2015), “particles and release” (Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan, 2016), and “Hiroshi Sugito module or lacuna” (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 2017). He has also held eight solo exhibitions at Marc Foxx Gallery in Los Angeles.

His Significant group exhibitions include “Winter Garden: The Exploration of the Micropop Imagination in Contemporary Japanese Art” (curated by Midori Matsui, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan, 2009; traveled to Japanisches Kulturinstitut, Cologne, Germany, 2009 / The Japan Foundation, Tronto, Tronto, Canada, 2010 / Galeri’a Arnold Belkin, Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City, Mexico, 2011), “Garden of painting – Japanese Art of the 00s” (The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan, 2010), and “Logical Emotion – Contemporary Art from Japan” (Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland,

2014; traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow MOCAK, Krakow, Poland, 2015 /
Kunstmuseum Moritzburg Halle (Saale), Halle, Germany, 2015) among many others.