

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **RANDO ASO**

**INNERSPACE**

**Nonaka-Hill Los Angeles**

**September 13—October 25, 2025**

**NonakaHill**

**For Immediate Release****RANDO ASO****Innerspace****September 13—October 25, 2025****Opening Reception: Saturday, September 13, 6-8 pm**

Nonaka Hill is delighted to present *Innerspace* a solo exhibition of ceramics by Rando Aso. In his first presentation in the United States, Aso focuses on his signature unglazed earthenware (*doki*), otherwise known as *yakishime* and *kokutou*, depending on the firing method employed. Both “paint” his surfaces with black, lending his ceramics resemblances to charred wood or Oaxacan black clay. Looking to earthenware by the Jōmon, traditional pottery, and late 20th century minimalist sculpture, Aso mines a rich territory between them. In the process, he highlights the clay body’s relationship to fire, ritual, and metaphysics in a select range of forms that totter between functional and non-functional sculpture.

At the heart of Aso’s exploration is space, which, for him, includes everything internal and external to human experience—even ideas and perceptions inaccessible to the mind. This has led him to the unknown as it is represented by negative space and darkness, physical worlds we cannot see. In his *Intimate Space* series, he created iterations of *tamatebako*, a refined box (*tama* = “jewel, ball, bullet, or soul;” *tabako* = “portable box”) designed to house intimate objects. Traditionally, *tamatebako* have been used as a metaphor for tampering with forbidden knowledge, akin to the myth of Pandora’s Box; but Ando has redescribed it as less a morally charged container than a metaphysical one that is complete in its closed state. Even as his boxes come in two parts, Aso has built them without internal voids, removing the literal and figurative symbolism of the vessel; instead, he invites the viewer to ‘enter’ them through feeling and contemplation.

Aso foregrounds spatial awareness more acutely in his *Sphere and Space* series, in which he pairs a discrete sphere with a much larger sculptural counterpart with a matching spherical indentation. Suggesting various levels of space, from the atomic to the microscopic to the celestial, and how their spatial relationships are inherently tentative, he paradoxically creates a constant state of visual and emotional tension. This carries into his *Sphere of the Earth* series, in which Aso has created iterations of an otherwise perfect sphere whose surface has been indented and marked. The internal space (air) becomes sculpted in tandem, resulting in external bulges or other subtle physical shifts that succinctly articulate Aso’s conceptualization of the human body meeting with clay.

Similarly in his wall works, each entitled *Vestige*; *Light in the Shade*; and *Trace*, all 2024, Aso removes the human body out of the equation and highlights the interaction between fire, water, and soil. Each work contains a grid of tiles, each representing the unique traces left by fire as it had driven water out of the soil. In his *Landscape and Stone* series Aso reinserts his body into the interplay of nature's elements by imagining, through extra-sensory means, and then sculpted accordingly, how rocks from Lake Balaton in Hungary were “held” and created by the volcanic activity of the land’s past.

Born in 1983 and raised in Nara Prefecture, Japan, Aso began his engagement with ceramics at the Kanazawa College of Art where he graduated in 2009. It was there he discovered open pit firing, which led him to apprehend his own feel for ceramics, a form of synesthesia in which tactility can be sensed while looking but not touching an object. Open firing was a method by which he could feel clay become pottery and make contact, through the sensations in his body, with the vast history of the medium and the geologic activity that gave rise to its materials. Currently living and working in Gifu, Japan, Aso continues to expand his repertoire of methods in working with earthenware, which in his view, best stimulates one's senses and imagination in her reconnection with nature, embodying the pursuit with elegance and economy.

Nonaka-Hill was founded in 2018 in Los Angeles by Rodney and Takayoshi Nonaka-Hill.

Recognizing that art exhibition spaces of any scale and economy will, over time, provide a community with a matrix of new and long-lasting memories, Nonaka-Hill has endeavored to keep “Japan” as a connective presence in each of its exhibitions to date. Working with emerging artists, established artists, and artist estates from Japan and its diaspora, alongside non-Japanese artists, the gallery team has enjoyed the erratic shifts in self-education, exhibition presentation, and public storytelling.

**Los Angeles**

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