
Toru Otani

Biography

Toru Otani uses the back side of sandpapers, empty cigarette packages and vintage maps as a canvas and guide for his interventions. The objects, such as prewar textbooks, used notes and postcards, which become the foundation for his works are often sourced in internet auctions. Attracted to enigmatic marks and images such as human hand, the sun, eyeballs, etc., Otani uses colored pencils to erase the excess elements and information which might identify the marks' meaning. Otani says this process reminds him of "the feeling of seeing an abandoned billboard for a brief moment while driving down a national road, but somehow you cannot get it out of your head". For Otani, an artwork is something like this; it's hard not to look at and think about, even though you don't understand the importance of its existence.

Born in Kanagawa, Japan, 1988

Lives and works in Tokyo

2015 MFA, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo

2013 BFA, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2024 *En*, Shūrinkan, Kanazawa

2023 *Hypnosis*, XYZ Collective, Tokyo

2022 *Toru Otani*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles

2020 *spctrum*, imlabor, Tokyo

2017 *planet*, Kodama Gallery, Tokyo

2015 *Casablanca*, Kodama Gallery, Kyoto

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025 *Art Week Tokyo*, XYZ Collective / 4649, Tokyo

2024 *Sandstorm*, Galerie Lulla / Roche Projects, Los Angeles

2023 *Anything Can Pass Before the Eyes of a Person*, Derosia, New York

2023 *Cool Invitations 10*, XYZ Collective, Tokyo

2022 *Tomoko Obana and Toru Otani*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles

2022 *ONSEN CONFIDENTIAL — Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga at XYZcollective and 4649*, XYZ Collective / 4649, Tokyo

2022 *Cool Invitations 9*, XYZ Collective, Tokyo

2021 *Busy Work at Home*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles

2020 *Mutation Station*, imlabor, Tokyo

2019 *Speculation ↔ Real*, Kodama Gallery, Tokyo

2018 *Use*, Kodama Gallery, Tokyo

2017 *Mud, Tokyo and Swimming*, Park Tower Hall Gallery 1, Tokyo

2016 *Landscape Space*, Kodama Gallery, Tokyo

2015 *Chain Reaction*, Kodama Gallery, Tokyo

2014 *After Appropriation*, Kodama Gallery, Tokyo