

## Kohei Nawa: *Aether*

September 16 – October 22, 2022  
540 West 25th Street  
New York



Kohei Nawa, *Black Field #8*, 2022 ©Kohei Nawa, courtesy Pace Gallery. Photo by Nobutada OMOTE | Sandwich.

New York – Pace is pleased to present an exhibition of new and recent work by Kohei Nawa at its 540 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street gallery in New York. Titled *Aether* and on view from September 16 to October 22, the exhibition—featuring sculptures, paintings, and mixed media works—marks Nawa’s first solo presentation with Pace in New York.

Through his multidisciplinary practice, Nawa explores scientific and digital phenomena, focusing on the perceptual possibilities of his works. The title of his latest exhibition with Pace has multiple associations: the air and sky, the universes beyond the Earth, and the Greek mythological deity Aether. Enactments of ethereality and weightlessness are central to the works in the presentation, which achieve these ends by way of their varied material makeups and sensory effects. Coursing through the exhibition is a rejection of binaries between human and non-human beings and living and non-living entities.

Among the highlights of *Aether* is Nawa’s new sculpture *Trans-Sacred Deer (p/gn\_cloud)* (2022), which originated from 3D modeling system data and was constructed using traditional techniques and materials such as woodcarving, lacquer, and platinum leaf. The shinroku deer depicted in the work references the Kasuga Shinroku Shari Zushi sculpture, which has been an enduring source of inspiration for Nawa and is believed to have been created between Japan’s Kamakura period and Northern and Southern Dynasties period.

*PixCell-Bambi#24 (Aurora)* (2021), from Nawa’s PixCell sculpture series, figures prominently in the exhibition. The work features transparent spheres, or cells, covering its surface. These cells transform and distort viewers’ perceptions of the form beneath—a visual phenomenon that speaks to the impact of digital technologies on individuals’ relationships to the physical world.

Works from the artist’s Rhythm series reflect the aesthetic concerns of his PixCell sculptures. These pieces, a selection of which are included in *Aether*, feature combinations of variously sized wood spheres covered in velvet. The placements of these spheres across two-dimensional planes suggest otherworldly movement and energy.

The exhibition also includes *Ether#83* (2022), a mixed media sculpture based on 3D modeling of a highly viscous liquid in various stages of descent. Informed by photographs of droplets in motion and the artist's in-person observations of poured liquids, the columnar sculpture features a sequence of undulating, variously shaped protrusions, serving as a visual exploration of the effects of gravity and anti-gravity.

A work from Nawa's new Fountain sculpture series will be presented in *Aether*. This mixed media sculpture depicts layered, bountiful tableaux of plants, flowers, fungi, and other biomorphic, organic forms. Coated with micro-beads, the sculpture is produced using hand-drawn sketches and 3D programming. This work is presented in conversation with Nawa's new three-dimensional, velvet-coated, figurative sculpture *Trans-A and Trans-E* (2022), which upends conventional modes of portraiture in its merging of human and extraterrestrial characteristics.

*Aether* will also feature a selection of Nawa's Blue Seed works, for which the artist uses UV lasers to irradiate the surfaces of translucent panels, producing generative images of cross sections of plant seeds and ovules. The blue hues of these works are reflected in the abstract painting *Moment#147* (2020), which is created using airbrush and ink.

Paintings from the artist's Black Field series comprise a mixture of black oil paint on wooden panel. Applied in thick layers, the paint will gradually oxidize and harden over the course of the exhibition's run, yielding new textures and formations as chemical interactions take place. Drawings from Nawa's new Plotter series, also on view in *Aether*, feature lines created by an autonomous, programmed device with ballpoint and thin brush pens. Subtle differences between each of these abstract works reflect the unpredictable results of machine-based systems.

Nawa's ongoing solo exhibition at the Towada Art Center in Japan coincides with his solo presentation with Pace in New York. The artist's *VESSEL* performance, a collaboration with choreographer Damien Jalet, will be staged at the Torinodanza Festival in Turin, Italy, in September 2022 and at La Filature in Mulhouse, France, in January 2023.

**Kohei Nawa** (b. 1975, Osaka, Japan) is a multidisciplinary artist whose diverse practice explores the perception of virtual and physical space and probes the borders between nature and artificiality. He examines relationships between the individual and the whole, illustrating how parts aggregate together, like cells, to create complex and dynamic structures. His work spans painting, drawing, sculpture, and installation, as well as various facets of design and collaborative projects through his Kyoto-based studio, SANDWICH. Nawa's use of synthetic compounds underscores a recurring theme wherein materials such as polyurethane foam, translucent beads, ink, paint, glue, and silicone oil become devices that prompt an awareness of our mediated environment.

**Pace** is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

The gallery has also spearheaded explorations into the intersection of art and technology through its new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists cultivating advanced studio practices. As part of its commitment to technologically engaged artists within and beyond its program, Pace launched a hub for its web3 activity, Pace Verso, in November 2021.



Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide, including a European foothold in London and Geneva, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace’s long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which operated from 2016 to 2022. Pace’s engagement with Silicon Valley’s technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. Pace’s satellite exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach present continued programming on a seasonal basis.




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