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Tomoshibi: Glass Works by Kazuki Takizawa

MAY 9, 2021 – SEPTEMBER 12, 2021



Kazuki Takizawa, *Stopper Driven* (detail), 2020.
Blown glass and water, 3 x 5 x 7 feet. Image
courtesy of the artist and Craft Contemporary.
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

LOS ANGELES — Winged sentries guide the way ahead when, suddenly, the path gives way to a dark forest. Lost among the wilderness, the darkness is blinding. Yet just as the crushing weight of the darkness feels unbearable, a field of flowers appears. Set against the velvety blackness of the background, the flowers glisten like jewels. All around, glimmers of light catch in the most unexpected places: in the swirling pattern of the pebbles, in the shimmer of the air. A blue bird sits perched on a trunk, while steady drips of water ring in the distance. What seemed to be a sinister landscape before is transformed into one bursting with light, and life.

Kazuki Takizawa's first solo museum exhibition *Tomoshibi: Glass Works by Kazuki Takizawa* masterfully weaves the artist's glassblowing prowess together with a personal reflection of his inner journey, creating a theatrical narrative exhibition. Here, the gallery space acts as a stage for Takizawa's sculptures, utilizing light as both a visual and symbolic device.

For Takizawa, the forest alludes to his circuitous personal path with mental illness. The metaphor not only describes the deep obscurity of depression, but also acts as a reminder that through the darkness shine *tomoshibi*, or little lights, that guide the way forward. The artist writes, "The exhibition explores the deepest and darkest parts of myself through my struggles with bipolar



disorder in an attempt to find the moments of light that live there.” Indeed, the darkness only serves to render the light brighter, in an interdependent ouroboros that mirrors the duality of elation and despair.

The works featured in the exhibition represent a form of *tomoshibi* for the artist, with each series exploring a different facet of his ongoing relationship to mental health. They range from somber to celebratory—drops of water fill a vessel in vain, only to be drained through the cracks of the surface in *Breaking the Silence III*, while the colorful flower-like shapes of *Stopper-Driven* rise from the ground like a mystical garden. The series *Pebbles*, each “pebble” embellished with its own intricate pattern as if evoking different experiences, creates a display of collective memory. Elsewhere, the curlicue forms of the hanging installation *Brainstorm* evoke the contortions of language and spiraling thought.

Glass, as a medium that speaks inherently of duality—at once transparent and opaque, fluid and structured, delicate and durable—captures the artist’s inner sentiments perfectly. Takizawa draws from traditional Venetian glassblowing techniques, visible in the *murrine* and *cane* decorations adorning his works, and infuses them with unorthodox glass color patterning and a contemporary approach reflecting his Japanese heritage. However, Takizawa goes beyond bringing a new approach to the technical capabilities of glass to explore its storytelling properties as well. For him, glass—a medium barely visible itself—provides a visual manifestation of mental illness, an issue routinely treated as invisible and, moreover, stigmatized. By creating an immersive journey, *Tomoshibi: Glass Works by Kazuki Takizawa* encapsulates the experience of mental illness and recovery, encouraging light to be shed on an oft-hidden subject.

Kazuki Takizawa (b. 1986, Hong Kong) received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Glass from the University of Hawaii in 2010, in addition to studying under renowned glass artists such as Cathy Chase, David Chatt, and Richard Royal at the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington. In addition to his role as an artist, Takizawa has also taught widely across the country and participated in artist residencies including The Works in Newark, Ohio, and Salem State University in Salem, Massachusetts. His work has been shown in several group and solo exhibitions across the U.S., notably his 2017 solo exhibition *Catharsis Contained* at the Craft in America Center, Los Angeles, and is represented by A Gallery in Palm Springs, California and Duncan McClellan Gallery in St. Petersburg, Florida.

PROGRAMS

Gallery Talk: Tomoshibi with Kazuki Takizawa and Holly Jerger

Date TBD

Kazuki Takizawa joins Exhibitions Curator Holly Jerger for a walkthrough of the artist’s first solo museum exhibition. Meet the artist and learn more about the history, processes, and ideas behind his delicate glass works. All programs will be recorded and available digitally for the public to view at home.



CREDITS

Tomoshibi: Glass Works by Kazuki Takizawa has been organized by Craft Contemporary Exhibitions Curator Holly Jerger. This exhibition is supported in part by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture and a grant from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Additional support provided by the Glass Alliance of Los Angeles. All works are shown courtesy of the artist and Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles.

Craft Contemporary

Located on Los Angeles' historic Miracle Mile since 1965, Craft Contemporary reveals the potential of craft to educate, captivate, provoke, and empower. With a focus on contemporary art made from craft media and processes, Craft Contemporary presents dynamic exhibitions by established and emerging artists and designers who are often underrepresented in larger art institutions. Through a robust roster of regular programs and events, Craft Contemporary offers creative opportunities for the public to participate in hands-on workshops led by professional artists. Craft Contemporary cultivates an environment for people in Los Angeles to deepen their relationship to art, creativity, and one another. For more information, visit www.craftcontemporary.org.

LOCATION: 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

ADMISSION: FREE every Sunday

REGULARLY: \$9 for adults; \$7 for students, teachers, seniors; free for Craft Contemporary members

HOURS: (through the month of May) Thursday - Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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