

ARTFORUM

Hiraki Sawa

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

533 West 26th Street

February 17–March 26

Hiraki Sawa's second solo show at this gallery is a multimedia meditation on temporality and texture. Sawa introduces these motifs in "Wax," 2010–11, a series of twenty-four drawings in the gallery's front room. These delicate pencil renderings of intricately mottled orbs, precise sections of which have been copiously erased, represent the waning and waxing phases of the lunar cycle. A composite portrait of time and a study of form and texture, this series sets the tone for the exhibition's title piece: a complex and dreamy video-sound installation in the next room.

O, 2009, is an immersive sensorial experience centered around three large freestanding video screens. The triptych's flanking panels evoke the past by demonstrating physical evidence of time in natural and domestic settings. On the left, Sawa focuses his camera on desert geology—deep crevasses and ancient rock formations. The right panel features a dilapidated house where peeling wallpaper, cracked plaster, and remnants of a past life are haunted by the artist's signature digitized silhouettes of birds, trees, and Ferris wheels. The central screen, in marked contrast, follows a flock of birds midflight in a majestic vision of life, motion, and the yet unknown.

O's sound track (a collaboration with musical ensemble Organ Octet) comprises soothing organ music punctuated by errant clatters and clangs. The noises relate to—and seem to emanate from—ten wall-mounted monitors showing video loops of solitary objects (lightbulb, mug, pitcher, and the like) gyrating like wobbly tops that never fall. In fact, the audio plays through five spinning mini-speakers strategically placed throughout the room. The echoing and undulating audio overlays are the perfect complement to Sawa's visualization of time—wherein chronology is irrelevant, and past, present, and future coexist.



Hiraki Sawa, *O*, 2009, multichannel video and sound installation, dimensions variable.

— Mara Hoberman