

Yukata Sone



Across a wide range of media—predominantly sculpture but also painting, drawing, photography, video, and performance—Sone’s work revolves around a tension between realism and perfection. A conceptual framework, paired with a meticulous attention to detail, has characterized his practice since the early 1990s, informing equally his self-contained jungle environments, life-size roller coasters, magnified snowflakes, and staged events. His sculptural works in particular attest to a profound interest in landscapes, whether natural or architectural, and their ability to capture light relates them to genre primarily associated with painting and photography.

Green Jungle, 1999
Dried seaweed, sponge, dried flowers, fabric, glue, tree branch, bark, acrylic paint, metal wire, and clay
36 x 52 x 78 3/4 inches (92 x 132 x 200 cm)

Biography

Across a wide range of media—predominantly sculpture but also painting, drawing, photography, video, and performance—Yutaka Sone’s work revolves around a tension between realism and perfection. A conceptual framework, paired with a meticulous attention to detail, has characterized his practice since the early 1990s, informing equally his self-contained jungle environments, life-size roller coasters, magnified snowflakes, and staged events. His sculptural works in particular attest to a profound interest in landscapes, whether natural or architectural, and their ability to capture light relates them to a genre primarily associated with painting and photography.

Born in 1965 in Shizuoka, Japan, Sone studied fine art and architecture at Tokyo Geijutsu University. In 1999, the artist joined David Zwirner, where he had his first United States solo exhibition that same year, marking the first of five at the gallery in New York. His first solo presentation at David Zwirner in London was on view November 2013 to January 2014.

In 2013, a two-person exhibition of work done in collaboration by Sone and Benjamin Weissman was presented at the Santa Monica Museum of Art in California. Sone’s work was recently the subject of two solo exhibitions in Tokyo: *Perfect Moment* at the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery in 2011 and *Snow* at the Maison Hermès Le Forum in 2010. *Baby Banana Tree*, the artist’s 25-foot tall hand-painted sculpture, was installed in 2009 as a public artwork at the Boone Sculpture Garden at Pasadena City College in Pasadena, California.

Other venues which have hosted important solo exhibitions include Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London (2007); Kunsthalle Bern; Aspen Art Museum, Colorado; The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (all 2006); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2003); and the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota, Japan (2002). The artist represented Japan, along with Motohiko Odani, at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003.

Sone has participated in a number of group exhibitions in the United States and abroad, including *Glasstress 2011*, organized as part of the 54th Venice Biennale at the Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti, Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti (2011). A version of the show traveled to the Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2012). Other major group shows include the 12th Triennale Kleinplastik Fellbach, Fellbach, Germany (2013); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2004); 25th São Paulo Biennial; 13th Biennale of Sydney (both 2002); 7th Istanbul Biennial (2001); 48th Venice Biennale (1999); among others.

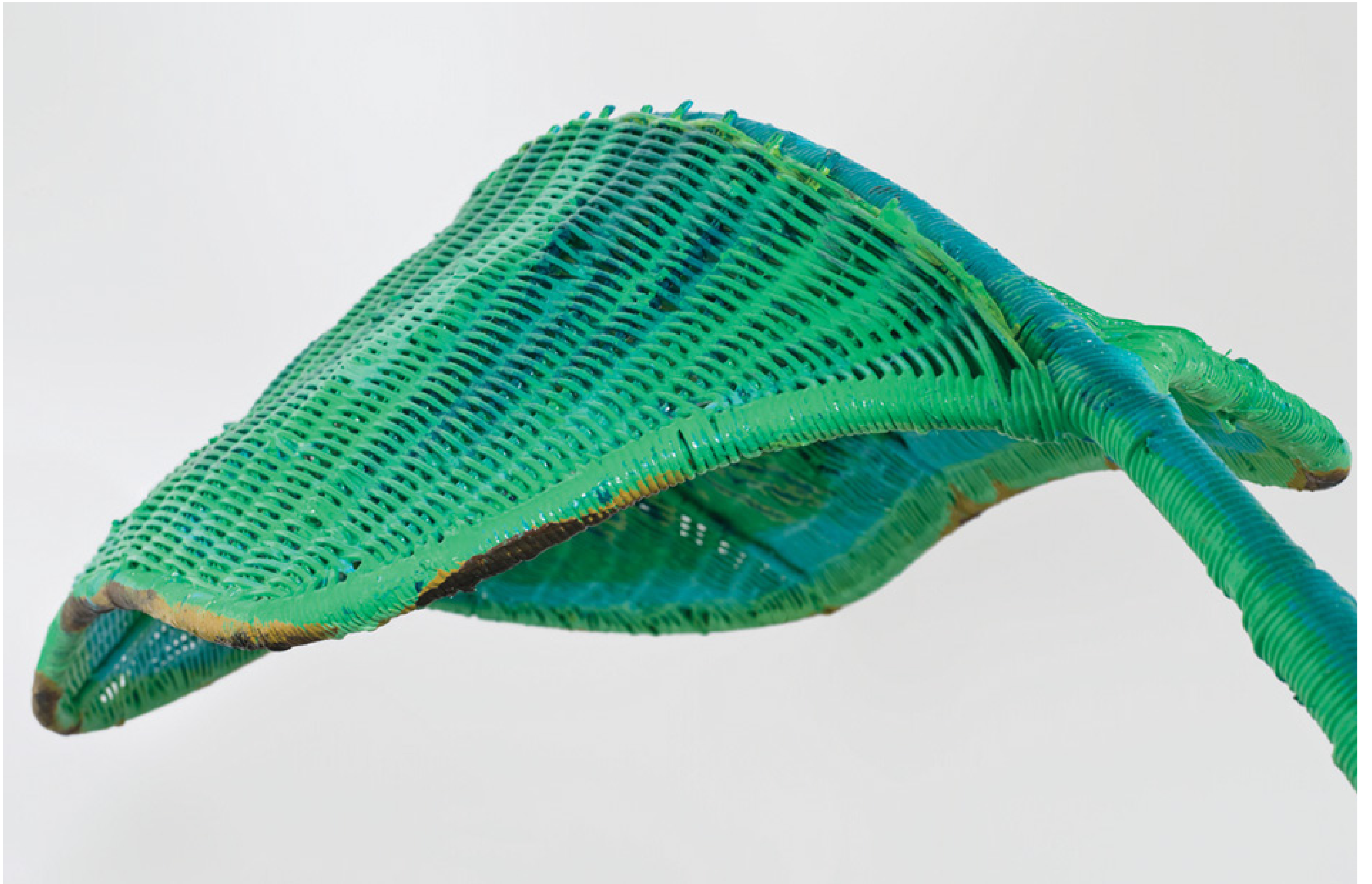
Work by the artist is held in international museum collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; High Museum, Atlanta, Georgia; Kunsthalle Bern; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Gallery, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. He lives and works in Los Angeles.

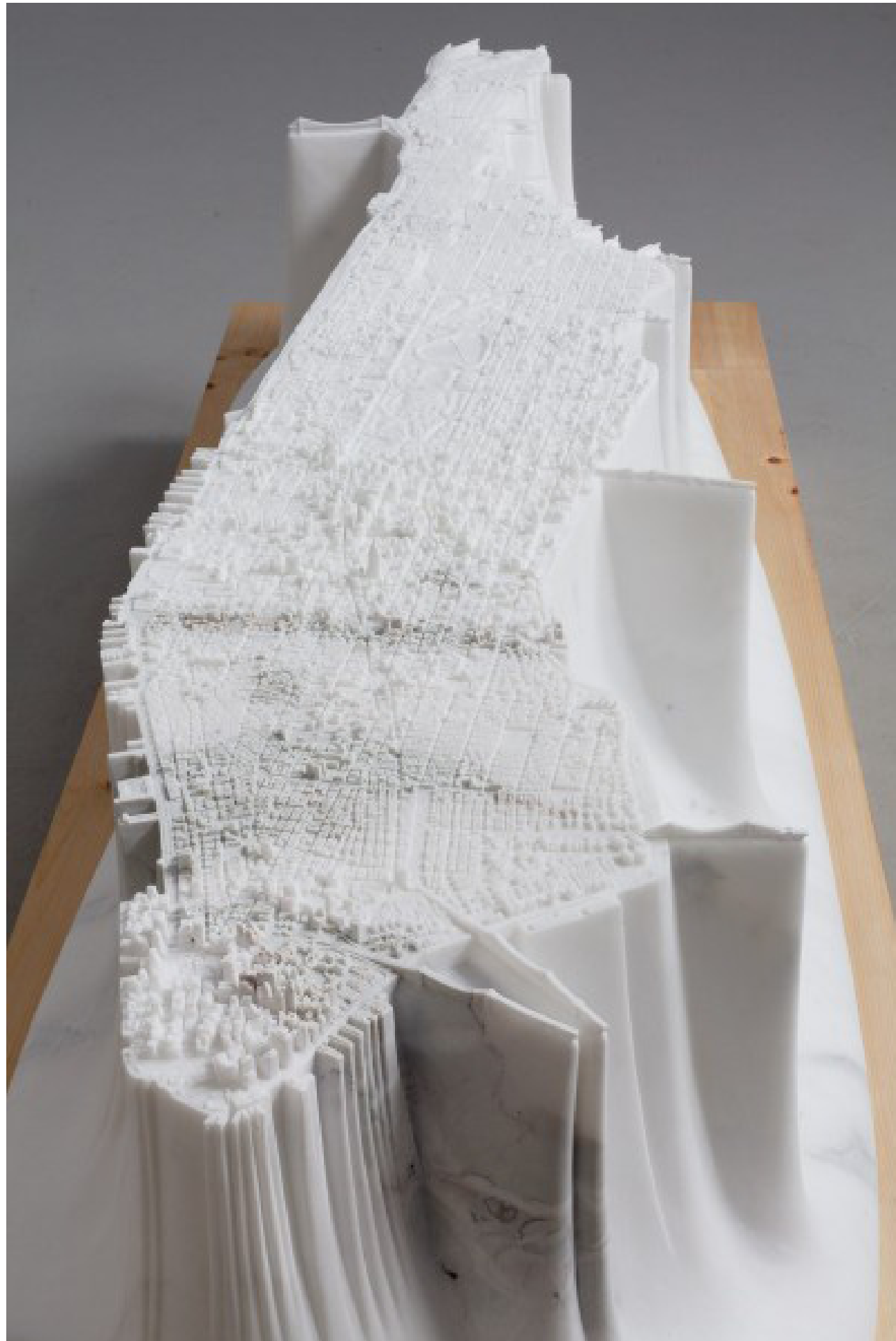


The dialogue between natural and artificial structures in Sone's work is intensified with his synthetic trees. Made from rattan woven around a metal armature, these sculptures are meticulously crafted; leaves and stems have been painted with acrylic paint and include naturally occurring flaws in their pigmentation. From a distance, they look like their living counterparts (most often banana and Traveler's Palm trees), and individually as well as collectively, they appear like self-contained environments.

Tropical Composition/Traveler's Palm #1, 2011
Rattan, metal armature, and paint
143 x 165 x 24 inches (363.2 x 419.1 x 61 cm)







Little Manhattan, a two-and-a-half ton marble sculpture, may from a distance appear to present a large, weightless sheet of drapery. yet upon closer inspection, it reveals a detailed, intricately carved model of the island of Manhattan. Avenue by avenue, block by block, building by building. Sone, aided by photographic reproductions, imagery from Google Earth, and several helicopter rides, has rendered the densely populated borough to scale, showing the paths through central Park, the bridges to the east and west, and the many piers along the two rivers. The artist's adept handling of his medium recalls the classical sculptures of antiquity and offers a commemorative portrait of the ever changing island-- a physical replica of its present formation and diverse architectural landscape.

Whether architectural or natural, landscapes predominate in Sone's works. The overall shape of the island can be seen to best a subtle visual resemblance to the physical form of a snow leopard, an animal which features widely throughout the artist's works. Interested in the contrast between man made and natural, Sone frequently refers to the reclusive mountain cat as a metaphor for both solitude and distinction.

Like with most of Sone's works, Little Manhattan developed over a lengthy period of time, with plans dating back to the late 1990s. Several scaled drawings and maquettes for a "marble Manhattan" exist from this time. In addition to Manhattan, the artist has also transformed the island cities of Hong Kong and Venice into marble. (respectively Hong Kong Island (Chinese), 1998, and Venezia, 2013)

Little Manhattan, 2007-2009

Marble

21 3/4 x 104 3/8 x 33 1/2 inches (55 x 265 x 85 cm)





Venezia is the third in a series of marble sculptures by the artist depicting island cities in their entirety. Also introducing Hong Kong Island (Chinese) (1996) and Little Manhattan (2007-2009). The Italian city was carved in hands-on collaboration with marble artisans in a village in southwest China, where Sone keeps a studio. In addition to a few site visits, Sone relied on the internet application Google Earth for topographical information. Like a three-dimensional, all white map, the sculpture details the myriad canals that intersect the historical district, the famous Piazza San Marco, and the train tracks near the bridge to the mainland, whose streamlined appearance forms a visual contrast to the complex, swirly layout of the city.

Venezia, 2013

Marble

18 1/4 x 69 1/9 x 49 1/9 inches (46x176.8x124.8 cm)





Hong Kong Island (Chinese) is one of three island cities transformed by their entirety into large blocks of marble. Viewers can walk around the model of the mountainous island, which was returned to China. Observing minute topographical details. Skyscrapers, complexes, stadiums, and parks within the urban centers are reproduced, as are the hills in the middle of the island and the strait that separated it from the mainland.

Hong Kong Island (Chinese), 1998
Marble
25 1/4 x 47 x 31 1/2 inches (65.1 x 119.4 x 80cm)

Yutaka Sone & Benjamin Weissman: What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart

Yutaka Sone, known for his masterful sculptures of architectural and natural landscapes, and Benjamin Weissman, a prolific writer and visual artist, initially met atop Mammoth Mountain at the suggestion of their colleague, Paul McCarthy. Since that first meeting, they have crafted a shared mythology based on their mutual passion for snow and related subjects—skiing, forests and mountains, athletics, alter-egos, and mischief. For *What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart*, Sone and Weissman have built a monumental, animatronic ski mountain, complete with roving chair lifts and whimsical skiing characters. Their mountain, installed in the Museum's Main Gallery, is complemented by a series of jointly-produced paintings and sculptures, as well as videos and performances. SMMoA boldly debuts the fruits of this long-term partnership and transports a fantastic winterscape to seasonless Los Angeles.

What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart is about skiing, but its central themes apply to surfing and all other sports defined by a kinetic relationship to natural forms. Such experiences are at once exhilarating and terrifying, and Sone and Weissman's artistic collaboration is no different. Like skiing, their work together is a form of personal and professional thrill-seeking, which requires that they relinquish individual control in favor of a conjoined creative effort. For this installation, Sone and Weissman have embarked on a particularly risky and rewarding endeavor: to build a mountain in the Museum. Together they bring the rush of outdoor adventures and instinctual creative production to SMMoA, giving visitors a rare opportunity to reflect on otherwise fleeting experiences.



THERE WAS BIG, WONKY SNOWFLAKE-SNOW CAREENING DOWNWARD. FLAKES SO BLOATED AND DRUNK THAT EACH SNOWFLAKE HAD ITS OWN BIB AND BARBEQUE TONGS AND SPATULA AND PARACHUTE AND SPECIAL SPOTLIGHT AND VANITY MIRROR AND FEATHER BOA. THERE WAS SILKY SHINY SNOW AND BLUE SNOW LIKE IT CAME FROM THE SKIM MILK GOD AND CHOCOLATE CHIP SPECKLED SNOW AMONG THE BOULDERS AND CHUTES.

Yutaka Sone & Benjamin Weissman: What Every Snowflake Knows in Its Heart



Yutaka Sone and Benjamin Weissman,

Tuck with Loose Straps, 2007,
Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 inches,
Courtesy of the artists



Yutaka Sone and Benjamin
Weissman,

Gold Rush, 2005
Acrylic on canvas
22 x 28 inches (55.9 x 71.1 cm)



Yutaka Sone and Benjamin Weissman
One Day After the Opening (3), 2007
Acrylic on canvas
24 1/8 x 18 inches (61.3 x 45.7 cm)



Yutaka Sone and Benjamin Weissman
Cat Skier, 2013
Mixed media
27 x 20 x 30 inches



Yutaka Sone and Benjamin
Weissman,

Installation view

