

# A.I.R.

## *A Hair's Breadth* 間一髪

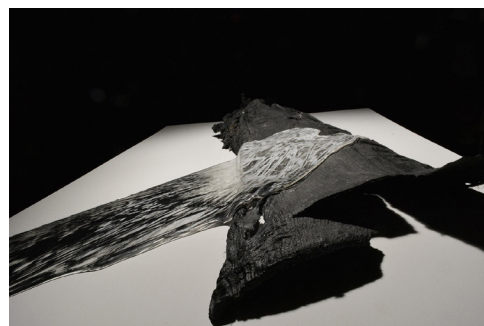
Tomoko Amaki Abe

November 18–December 17, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 18 from 6–8pm

### GALLERY I

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *A Hair's Breadth*, an exhibition of new work by New York Member Tomoko Amaki Abe. Through glass sculpture, works on paper, and video, Abe reflects on the ephemerality of humans and the endurance of nature, while also interrogating the ways in which the fragility of the aging human body might mirror the vulnerability of our natural environment in the face of climate change. This is Abe's second solo exhibition at A.I.R.



Tomoko Amaki Abe, *Hair and Autopart*, 2023, Cast glass, automobile part, 48 x 32 x 4 inches.

In the exhibition, industrial materials intermingle with natural materials. Transient phenomena such as shadows are given a more permanent, material form, while obdurate objects like rocks are recast in delicate glass. Installed at the front of the gallery are works from the *Tracing Shadow* series. These abstract works transform stills from video documentation of shadows cast by trees into Borosilicate glass sculptures, mounted on concrete bases. Abe traced the shadows cast by the glass into the concrete, making it appear as if the spirit of a living thing is emerging from its own shadow. They are illuminated by projections of the original video, which was shot by Abe. On an adjacent table are several sculptures from the *Rocks and Rays* series. These hollow and transparent forms, cast in glass from molds created from rocks that Abe found on the beach near her home, are bisected by colored glass rods, representing the rays of sunshine that Abe observed briefly hitting the rocks before disappearing.

Continuing the synergy between human and nature, *Black to White* is a large branch hung from the ceiling whose material transforms gradually from wood to glass. The color of the glass changes from clear to black, then to white, and in the end the branch melts into a puddle on the floor. Nearby sits the sculpture *Hair and Autopart*, which contains a car fragment—likely from the undercarriage—that had washed up on the beach. Mangled by damage caused by heat or collision, it appears vaguely reminiscent of tree bark or coral reef. Overlaid on top is a long piece of cast glass that has been silkscreen-printed with a magnified image of the artist's hair.

The installation *Future Memory*, which anchors the exhibition, extends this metaphor. Images of Abe's hair and images of volcanic lava are silk-screened onto three glass panels as if large-scale microscope slides, and are then anchored to pedestals that resemble scaffolding. The three images, striated and flowing, appear to be in harmony. And yet, they also bear two contrasting relationships to time. Whereas the strands of white and silver in Abe's hair index her ephemerality, the ropey surfaces of lava demarcate its eternity. Alongside the glass panels, slide images of construction sites in Tokyo in the '90s, as well as videos of lava landscape and a water gate, which were all taken by Abe, are projected onto fabric frames. These images are overlaid to create a complex vision of the world in the span of thirty years. The soundtrack for this piece, titled "Suzuki Swift," was created by Ian Joyce. It is derived from the musical impact of a wind storm on the underside of Joyce's car while parked on a cliff above the sea in Western Ireland.

The cyanotype prints in the *Last Dive* series explore these concerns even further. Images of Abe's hair and volcanic lava are laser cut and collaged on Reeves and Asuka paper. These works were inspired by the artist's experience of diving in the Pacific coral reef with her eighty-four-year-old father, who remarked, "it could be my last dive." For Abe, her father's recognition of his own impermanence echoes the possible impermanence of the coral reef itself. "I was made to realize that it could in fact be the last dive for all of us," she says, acknowledging scientists' predictions that ninety percent of the coral in the world may disappear in the next two decades.

**Tomoko Amaki Abe** lived in Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom, before settling in the greater New York area. Abe graduated with First Class Honours from Bachelor’s program at the Edinburgh College of Art, during which she received an ERASMUS scholarship to study at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, Salamanca, Spain. Her body of work ranges from painting, paper making, ceramics, glass, and most recently mixed media installations, often drawing themes from nature—its decay and regeneration. She has been an artist in residence recipient at Bullseye Glass, New York in 2018, as well as at Urban Glass, New York in 2020. Her work has been featured by publications including *The Brooklyn Rail*, *500 Raku*, *The New York Times*, and *Ceramics Art + Perception*.

A.I.R. Gallery is wheelchair accessible via ramp. There are accessible toilets in the venue. There is comfortable seating with backs. Free tap water is available. The venue is nearest to the F train at York St (0.2 miles) and the A train at High St (0.5 miles). The nearest wheelchair accessible trains is the B, Q, R at Dekalb Av (1.1 miles) and the 2, 3 at Borough Hall (0.8 miles). The roads immediately surrounding the gallery are cobblestone. The nearest accessible parking garage (for an hourly fee) is two blocks away at 100 Jay St. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact [info@airgallery.org](mailto:info@airgallery.org) for more information.



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