

Opening September 16
Soh Souen, *Your Body is the Shoreline*



√K Contemporary is proud to announce the opening of emerging artist, Soh Souen's solo exhibition, *Your Body is the Shoreline*.

On view from September 16 (Sat) through to October 14 (Sat), the exhibition centers itself upon the ideas examined within recent performances by the artist. Presenting a comprehensive range of works, from installations to paintings that regard ideas of identity and the relationship between the body and self, the exhibition will offer an extensive insight into the artist's evolving body of work.

Several performances will be held during the course of the exhibition. On the opening day, September 16 (Sat), a performance with Sara Milio, the Italian, Amsterdam, and Bali-based artist and Soh Souen's remote-based project collaborator since 2021, will be held. Furthermore, every day from September 22 to October 12 from 3 pm to 7 pm, the artist will perform *Eggsercise*, whereby the artist continually supports an egg, a symbol of life, with his body. A performance that enacts the fragility of life through the body, *Eggsercise* brings us to question ideas regarding the nature of life, the body, and notions on what defines the boundaries between the self, others, and the world.

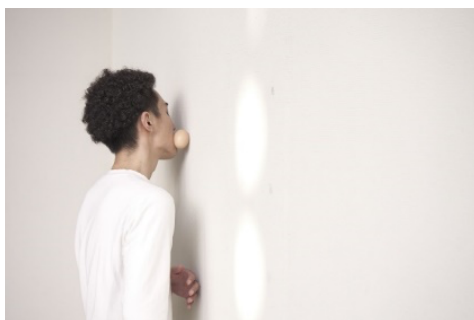
The artist's installation work, *Bellybutton and Breathing*, a work composed of 15 navels displayed across 15 screens with sounds of various breathing, will also be on view on the B1F. Raw and intimate, these sounds, which were seldom held during the isolation period, had a particular impact during this unprecedented time. With a desire to promote self-reflection and reconsider their place within the present, we urge viewers to please take this opportunity to experience the artist's works.

Further highlights include a 2F display of the artist's iconic paintings themed around the body. From *Why do I have two*

hands, eyes, and nipples on my both sides? to *A Whole Painting Filled with Holes* and *Bleaching*, a piece that traces the artist's silhouette with bleach, the exhibition will feature works centered around the concepts regarding the body and its physicality.

From performances to installations and paintings, *Your Body is the Shoreline* will offer a comprehensive spectrum of the emerging artist's works.

■ **Performance | Eggsercise on View Every Day from September 22**



Eggsercise, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (2022)

One of the many highlights of *Your Body is the Shoreline* are its performances.

On September 16 (Sat), the opening day of the exhibition, Soh Souen and Italian, Amsterdam, and Bali-based artist, Sara Milio will perform *The Egg*. Furthermore, from September 22 (Friday) until the final day of the exhibition, October 14 (Sat), Soh Souen will perform *Eggsercise*, for 4 consecutive hours every day from 3 pm to 7 pm until the end of the exhibition. An

inaugural challenge for the artist, these consecutive performances open new doors to novel experiences for, both, the artist and viewers alike. Visitors are encouraged to take this chance to experience the unique tension that arises from these acts that juxtapose the fragility of an egg with a body.

<< Sara Milio | Visual Artist >>

Sara Milio (1996) is an interdisciplinary artist born in Rome, Italy. She is prominently working with the mediums of performance, video and installation. Since receiving her BA in Fine Arts from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in 2019, she has been holding her studio practice and exhibiting in Amsterdam and has recently shifted her base between there and Bali, Indonesia where she was raised.

Instagram | https://www.instagram.com/sara_milio/

Performance Dates | September 16 (Sat), 3 pm - 《The Egg》 by Sara Milio and Soh Souen

September 22 (Fri) to October 14 (Sat), 3 pm to 7 pm 《Eggsercise》 by Soh Souen

■ **Paintings | An Exhibition of Works Featuring Approx. 10 Paintings on the Body**

The exhibition will feature a series of paintings that explore ideas regarding the body.

Although the boundary between self and other appears evident, there is no particular form that physically defines this difference. Nevertheless, the “body” is commonly perceived as its own, “individual” form. If there is no true boundary



A Whole Painting Filled with Holes (2023)
Oil on cotton, 162 x 130 cm



Bleaching #3, (2023)
Bleach, black cloth, 221x182 cm



Why do I have two hands, eyes, and nipples on my both sides? (2023)
Pastel on cotton, 194x162 cm

that defines this perceived difference, then what is the 'body' in which the 'self' exists?

These are the questions Soh Souen addresses in his paintings.

(On view from 3 pm to 7pm)

■ **Installation | *Bellybutton and Breathing***

The installation, *Bellybutton and Breathing* will be on display on the basement floor of the gallery. A symbol of maternal birth and the primal origin of the self, the navel remains as a scar and vessel for breathing. An exploration of the relationship between the "outer world" and the self, the work presents the various navels and breaths of 15 people through a network of monitors spread across the exhibition space.

(On view from 11 am to 7 pm)



Bellybutton and Breathing (Reference Image)

■ **Artist Statement**

Your Body is the Shoreline

Why are our bodies shaped this way?

Why do we live in such a fragile body?

What does it mean to use our body to protect something important to us?

Who am "I" and my "body" in the first place?

These questions form the roots of my work.

This exhibition consists of works that address the things and phenomena that signify life, such as the navel respiration and eggs. Starting with questions on what is regarded as the "self" and the "body", I would like to reflect upon the idea of "life" through the bodies of artists and viewers.

In today's society, there is an assumption that "individuality" is established through the "physical" self, as such, the notion of physicality as defined by the self (i.e. gender, class, etc) has become a commonly held idea.

While this idea may appear progressive, the premise that "I am my body" as implied by the word, "myself", gives the illusion that we hold complete control over the self, when it is, in truth, comprised of incalculable otherness. By drawing a line between "the self" and "the other", the delineation of the self can bring rise to loneliness, divides, and conflict.

Whilst paying homage to the aforementioned history of human revolution, this exhibition uses the body, a concept that is, both, far yet near to us, to explore, examine, and unravel the various wounds and dilemmas that life brings.

Soh Souen

■ **Artist | Soh Souen**



Soh Souen is most recognized for his paintings, installations, and performances that utilize the body as a way to explore the various phenomena of life. From his joint project with Italian (Amsterdam and Bali-based) artist, Sara Milio, which began during COVID-19, to his performance with Agathe Naito's work at Ginza Hermès Forum, the artist has been widely active, internationally, in a range of fields. Major exhibitions include "WINDS OF ARTIST IN RESIDENCE 2022 Tracing the Boundaries – Stone, Breathing, and Land Reclamation" (Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan), "It's Been Breaking, Still Breaking (Yet Not Broken)" (rin art association, Gunma, Japan), "FATHOM - Chiharu Shiota, Sumi Kanazawa and Soh Souen" (Kyoto Seika University Terra-S, Kyoto, Japan, scheduled to open November 2023) and more. In 2022, the artist took part in Fukuoka Asia Art Museum's residency program by invitation.

1995 Born in Fukuoka, Japan

2019 Graduated from College of Art, Kyoto Seika University

Website | <https://soh-souen.com/>

■ **On the Exhibition**

For the occasion of Soh Souen's solo exhibition, we, √K Contemporary, will host an experimental exhibition. Starting September 22nd, the artist will perform every day, connecting his acts with the gallery, space, and viewers. While these performances will offer a unique opportunity to experience the innate empathy and warmth of the artist's oeuvre, these fundamentally ephemeral acts pose a challenge to pre-existing ideas regarding the work of art.

Neither a social statement nor a liberation movement against psychological oppression, Soh Souen's expression carries a quiet appeal that explores ideas regarding the boundaries between the ego and non-ego. During a time when human emotions and desires have become so chaotic and oversaturated, the line between the conscious and unconscious has grown ambiguous and our perception of life has come to be lawless. Living in such a time, our genuine interest in Soh Sohen's ideas has brought us to his works and led us to this exhibition.

On this occasion, audiences will witness and share the moment as Sou Souen fills and weaves the gap between the self and the "other" in our gallery space. If we apply this artistic experience in ordinary life and have the opportunity to understand its benevolence, then we maybe we can see the world with new eyes.

Ichiko Kashima (Director, √K Contemporary)

■ **Exhibition Information**

Exhibition Title | *Your Body is the Shoreline*

Exhibiting Artist | Soh Souen

Schedule | September 16 (Saturday) to October 14 (Saturday), 2023 *Closed Sundays and Mondays

1F & 2F: Performance & Paintings 3 pm to 7 pm

B1F: Installation 11 am to 7 pm

* Please note that the exhibition times vary from the operating hours of the gallery

* Performances will not be held on September 19 to 21

Venue | √K Contemporary (6 Minamicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo)

Organizer | √K Contemporary

Exhibition HP | https://root-k.jp/exhibitions_en/soh-souen-your-body-is-the-shoreline

■ About √K Contemporary



√ With an ethos guided by its experience with traditional Japanese art, √K Contemporary presents art from the early 20th century to the present. Driven by a desire to innovate, the gallery organizes exhibitions and events that aim to provoke, stimulate, and inspire new thinking. In conserving its acts, the gallery hopes to place and pave its way toward the future art scene. Designed with these ideas in mind, the 300 sqm gallery was envisioned as a “gallery from outer space”, where works are presented with new values and viewed with new eyes.

Official Website: <https://root-k.jp/en>

TW: @rk_contemporary | FB: @rootkcontemporary | IG: @rk_contemporary

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