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## Gazing into the Dark, Touching the Light

Yasue Kodama, Akane Saijo, Yasuyoshi Botan, Chihiro Yoshioka

闇をまなざし、光にふれる。児玉靖枝・西條茜・牡丹靖佳・吉岡千尋



A consciousness of the light and dark that form the two sides of existence, as well as a kind of “not-getting-across” that is involved therein, underlies the works of four artists Yasue Kodama, Akane Saijo, Yasuyoshi Botan, and Chihiro Yoshioka whose works ARTCOURT Gallery is pleased to present in this exhibition.

Shapes of flowers that seem to almost melt into the sky; overlapping leaves made transparent by sunlight, surfaces of vessels that emit fascinating colors and gloss, and sequences of colors and shapes that foretell a story. Behind them are the things that cannot be seen, empty interiors, fragments that do not correspond with the whole, blanks in one’s memory... Through the beauty of the world of *light* that the eye can see, these artists’ works take a hard look at that world’s reverse, or the phenomena in the *dark* that lurk within the workings of recognition, and try to uncover its contours. These pieces, robed in a mysterious transparency, open up the viewer’s sensibilities to the depths of this world.

We hope you direct your attention towards these four artists’ attempts to dig out the “not-getting-across” that cannot be summed up by language or meaning, existing in the narrow gap between light and dark, and touch the essence of existence, “the other light”, emitted from beyond the light and dark in this world today that, while reacquainting us with the transience of life and the everyday, also forces us to overemphasize polarized values and easy comprehensibility.

[From left] Yasue Kodama, *ambient light - flower*, 2000 | Akane Saijo, *melting point*, 2015 | Yasuyoshi Botan, *Seesaw*, 2020 | Chihiro Yoshioka, *muqarnas 36*, 2020  
 \*All details, Photo: Takeru Koroda

### [Exhibition]

Exhibition Title: **Gazing into the Dark, Touching the Light** 闇をまなざし、光にふれる。

Exhibiting Artists: **Yasue Kodama, Akane Saijo, Yasuyoshi Botan, Chihiro Yoshioka**

Duration: **May 11 (Tue) - July 24 (Sat), 2021** \*By appointment only \*Closed Sun, Mon, and national holidays

Venue: ARTCOURT Gallery OAP ARTCOURT 1F, 1-8-5 Tenmabashi, Kita-ku, Osaka 530-0042

Hours: 11:00am - 6:00pm [Sat -5:00pm] \*Duration and hours may change depending on the spread of COVID-19

\* We will be open to visitors by appointment only due to the official declaration of a state of emergency.

Please contact us [TEL: +81-6-6354-5444, Email: [info@artcourtgallery.com](mailto:info@artcourtgallery.com)] at least a day before you wish to visit. [Open 11:00 - 18:00]

\* The exhibition has been extended to be held on the above dates.

Organized by ARTCOURT Gallery (Yagi Art Management, Inc.) | Sponsored by Mitsubishi Estate Co., Ltd., Mitsubishi Materials Corporation, Mitsubishi Jisho Property Management Co., Ltd.

#### ◆ Related Event: Morning Talk - Online Event (RSVP required / In Japanese Only)

**May 15 (Sat) 10:00 - 10:50am Akane Saijo & Yasuyoshi Botan**

**11:00 - 11:50am Yasue Kodama & Chihiro Yoshioka**

\* If you would like to participate, please RSVP by 5:00pm on May 14 (Fri) by emailing [info@artcourtgallery.com](mailto:info@artcourtgallery.com). We will contact you with the URL and further details on how to view the talk.

\* On the same day from around 1:00pm, we will have the artist editions (Limited, 50 copies) of Chihiro Yoshioka’s monograph *mimesis* (published 2018) that include unique drawings by the artist on display and available for purchase.

For details on the publication ▶ <https://www.artcourtgallery.com/eng/publications/yc-mimesis/>

\*Please contact Michiko Kiyosawa or Yuki Hamada at ARTCOURT Gallery for any inquiries including photographic materials.

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### ◆ Akane Saijo 西條茜



*sunya* | Glaze | 40x35x35cm | 2014 Photo: Takeru Koroda



*melting point* | Glaze, resin | 5x50x50cm | 2015 Photo: Takeru Koroda \*Reference work

Mainly working in ceramics, **Saijo Akane** focuses on the fiction that lingers around pottery when handled as a “surface” concealing an empty interior space, while at the same time being a very much substantial (real) medium, possessing a definite shape that can be visually admired for their glossiness or color, and texture that can be ascertained by hand. Moreover, Saijo offers a unique worldview in which she incorporates an axis of time into the spatial existence of the vessel by layering invisible elements such as personal stories or others’ history. Here, she endeavors to deepen her sculptural series of works, which she began in 2012, composed of only the “outer skin” of glaze after the removal of the foundation of clay which equates the work’s body. These works of pottery will expand our perception and understanding, as they act as an ambivalent presence that blends together truth and falsehood, space and time, light and dark, while half-exposing the emptiness hidden inside.

- 1989 Born in Hyogo Prefecture
- 2012 B.A., Fine Art, Kyoto City University of Arts, Ceramic Art Course
- 2013 Exchange Program at the Royal College of Arts, London, UK
- 2014 M.A., Fine Art, Kyoto City University of Arts, Ceramic Art Course
- 2020 Receives Kyoto City Special Bounty Program for Art and Culture

#### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2021 *Tainai Tea Ceremony*, Kyoto Municipal Subway, Daigo Depot, Kyoto
- 2019 *Grace of Taboo*, WACOAL STUDYHALL KYOTO Gallery, Kyoto
- 2018 *Grotta / solitude in the womb*, Dohjida Gallery, Kyoto
- 2017 *Folly*, Art Space Niji, Kyoto [15]
- 2016 *Creeping Mountains*, Gallery shop collage, Dohjida Gallery, Kyoto
- 2015 *Hollow Tool Box*, Gallery Miyagawa, Kyoto

#### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2021 *KYOTO ART LOUNGE Exhibition: Connecting Two Sides*, FUJII DAIMARU Black Storage, Kyoto  
\*Participated as art unit TOBOE  
*Yuka MORI, Akane SAJO duo exhibition “Responses in Flux”*, LOKO Gallery, Tokyo
- 2020 *Bi wo motte yo to nasu*, Takashimaya Department Store, Kyoto
- 2019 *KOGEL as Contemporary Craft: Transcending Boundaries*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
*Kyoto Art for Tomorrow 2019 - Selected Artists in Kyoto*, The Museum of Kyoto [17]
- 2018 *New Mutation*, Kyoto Art Center  
*Naturen Art-On the boundary between nature and human activity*, JARFO Kyo-Bunpaku, Kyoto
- 2017 *Ascending Art Annual Vol. 1 Shapes and Figures*, Spiral Garden, Tokyo  
*Test Case XI*, European Ceramic Workcentre, The Netherlands  
*rithome Akane Saijo + Shima Haruka*, Gallery Kyoto City University of Arts Gallery @KCUA, Kyoto
- 2016 *ROKKO MEETS ART 2016*, Rokkasan Pasture, Hyogo [The Hakone Open-Air Museum Award]
- 2015 *Sign of Happiness*, Antenna Media, Kyoto
- 2014 *Yumiko Ono Akane Saijo Exhibition*, Sakura Gallery, Tokyo  
*Art of Moon*, Tsuki-no-Niwa Gallery, Kyoto [Jury Prize]
- 2013 *DOMO*, Hackney Gallery, London
- 2011 Kyoto City University of Arts Exhibition [Tomimoto Award]

#### Artist Residencies

- 2019 Le Maupas A.I.R., France
- 2017 European Ceramic Workcentre, The Netherlands

**Major Public Collections & Installation Locations** Bank of Kyoto / Shinkenichiku-sha Office



*Sora-no-te* | Glaze, tin | 8x11x3cm | 2020  
Photo: Takeru Koroda \*Reference work



*cape, cave* | Earthenware, glaze | 120x60x140cm | 2014  
Photo: Takuya Oshima \*Reference work

\*Please contact Michiko Kiyosawa or Yuki Hamada at ARTCOURT Gallery for any inquiries including photographic materials.

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### ◆ Yasuyoshi Botan 牡丹靖佳



*Seesaw* | Oil on canvas | 61x91 cm | 2020



*Tree owl* | Oil on canvas | 61x91cm | 2020

**Yasuyoshi Botan** converts everyday scenes and things into colors, shapes, and brushstrokes that comprise the language of painting, and by creating a sequence of images while conversing with the connections that tie them together, he weaves a pictorial world full of signs and reverberations of “something”. In recent years, Botan directed his attention to the autonomous workings of color itself, and developed his *carpet* series (includes *Seesaw* and *Tree owl*) that, based on rules of repetition and symmetry, reconstructs the fluid world of color that arises in response to the movement of the gaze or the sense of touch that sharpens in the darkness; as well as his series, *a piece of story* (includes *Annunciation*), that affixes motifs directly onto the canvas while still in their delicate state before being translated into a “painting”, by handling the phenomena of the bleeding and dripping of paint as equally valuable as the painted figures. He accumulates these acts of painting, as if chasing after the dim light that gleams inside the eyelids.

1971 Born in Osaka Prefecture  
 1997 Graduated from School of Visual Arts, New York  
 2003 Receives 4th Saison Art Program Education Grant  
 2007 Receives Arts and Culture Grant from the Nomura Foundation  
 2012 Receives grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant

#### Artist Residencies

2015 RUD air, Sweden  
 2013 Deshire AIR, The Netherlands  
 2008 Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Scotland  
 2007 Foundation B.a.d., The Netherlands

#### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2018 *"The World of the Netherlands that can be Seen from One Book: Color, Design, Architecture"*, Hachinohe Book Center Gallery, Aomori  
 2017 *Thaw*, Tokyo Wonder Site Art Cafe, 24/7 coffee & roaster, Tokyo  
 2016 *gone before flower*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
 2014 *parade*, Mizuho Oshiro Gallery, Kagoshima  
 2013 *color palette*, Deshire Air, Amsterdam  
*Unknown Library*, MA2 Gallery, Tokyo [10]  
 2012 *Collection of the Thief*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
 2011 *Conversation between Stupid Leche and Fearful Miedo*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
 2008 *into the forest*, hpgrp GALLERY TOKYO, Tokyo  
 2006 *Plotless Story*, Osaka Contemporary Art Center, Osaka [98]  
*Mukogawa e no Hanashi* (“Stories to the Other Side”), TAP Satellite Gallery, Ibaraki  
 2005 *Bloomfield*, Tokyo Wonder Site Shibuya, Tokyo  
 2004 *Mitate, Takurami, Kochu no Jutchu* (“Allusion, Artifice, Another World in a Jar”), INAX Gallery 2, Tokyo [01]  
 2003 *The human being and Object*, Tokyo Wonder Site Shibuya, Tokyo  
*Sap Education Grant / The 4th Commemorative Exhibition*, Saison Art Program Gallery, Tokyo  
 2002 *Tokyo Wonder Wall 2002*, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo \*Participated as one of the Tokyo Wonder Wall prize-winners

#### Selected Group Exhibitions

2019 *Small Infinity*, MA2 Gallery, Tokyo  
 2018 *15 Years*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
 2017 *heART ~Shun Wa Kei Mei~*, InterContinental Osaka (20F Lobby), Osaka  
*Collection 1 Emerging Images*, Itami City Museum of Art, Hyogo  
 2016 *WEWANTOSEE*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art (People's Gallery B), Kanazawa  
 2015 *INCIDENTS 2015*, former sake brewery of Hachinohe Shuzou, Aomori  
 2013 *The 24th Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava*, Bratislava (Toured to five museums in Japan in '14-'15)  
 2011 *Art in an Office*, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi  
 2010 *Tokyo Wonder Wall 2000-2009*, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo  
*Kazuma Kōike + Yasuyoshi Botan “A silent moment at Veronica Island”*, hpgrp Gallery Tokyo  
 2009 *Yuki Hayashi, Yasuyoshi Botan, Chisato Yamano: migratory - lost in the world-*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
 2006 *Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award Ceremony*, Tokyo  
 2005 *iimawashi: Contemporary Art from Japan*, Edinburgh International Festival Fringe, Merz Gallery, Edinburgh  
 2003 *sukima the bathhouse*, SCAI the Bathhouse, Tokyo / Command N, Tokyo  
 2002 *The 5th Exhibition of the Taro Okamoto Memorial Award for Contemporary Art*, Taro Okamoto Museum of Art, Kanagawa



*Annunciation* | Oil, colored pencil on canvas | 65.5x60.5cm | 2021

\*Please contact Michiko Kiyosawa or Yuki Hamada at ARTCOURT Gallery for any inquiries including photographic materials.

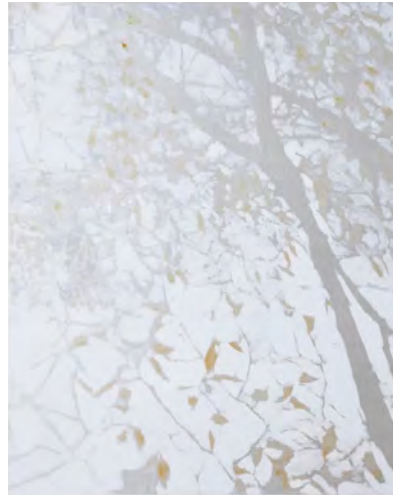
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### ◆ Chihiro Yoshioka 吉岡千尋



[left] *muqarnas 26* | Oil, beeswax, metal powder, tempera and chalk ground on canvas | 27.5x41.3cm | 2020

[right] *muqarnas 36* | Oil, beeswax, metal powder, tempera and chalk ground on canvas | 91x72.8 cm | 2020

**Chihiro Yoshioka** mainly paints the sights she has seen in the everyday or on her travels, from roses blooming in a garden or the clothing of saints in icons. She produces paintings based on an approach of using a foundational grid in order to reproduce the appearance and texture of the impression of things she has perceived herself, as is onto the canvas. The gap between reality and perception as well as the blanks in one's memory that arise through this process, are translated into modest gestures of abbreviating and supplementing, or are left to the silver ground that emits an ambiguous light while the shadows of its surroundings are also cast onto it. By doing so, Yoshioka brings together the elements not entirely within one's perception on the work's surface, like the limitless vastness of space and the spirituality that resides within the accumulation of time and actions, then creates a pictorial space where light and darkness intersect. This exhibition will feature new pieces from her *muqarnas* series, started in 2014, in which she paints autumn leaves shining in the sky, alongside works created with the *strappo* technique that feature the deep blue starry skies depicted on chapel ceilings as their motif. Yoshioka casts her questions at the phases of painting that furtively transform between the act of painting and the act of seeing.

1981 Born in Kyoto Prefecture  
2004 B.A., Fine Art, Kyoto City University of Arts, Oil Painting Course  
2006 M.A., Fine Art, Kyoto City University of Arts, Oil Painting Course

#### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2019 *OPEN HOUSE OSAKA 2019 x Contemporary art living with cities*, Yasui Architects & Engineers, Inc., Osaka  
2018 *Chihiro Yoshioka at ART OSAKA 2018* [ARTCOURT Gallery], Hotel Granvia Osaka  
2017 *mimesis*, Art Space Niji, Kyoto ['16, '14, '13, '10]  
*sub rosa*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
2012 *skannata*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
2008 *Chihiro Yoshioka Exhibition*, O Gallery eyes, Osaka ['07]  
2007 *Chihiro Yoshioka Exhibition*, O Gallery up.s, Tokyo

#### Selected Group Exhibitions

2020 *Manabu Yokota: Kyoto City University of Arts Retirement Exhibition "Tsunagu, Tsunagaru"*, Kyoto City University of Arts Gallery @KCUA, Kyoto  
2019 *KYOTO OPEN STUDIO x10*, UZUICHI Studio, Kyoto  
2018 *15 Years*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
2017 *The Garden of the Mind—The Finale*, Art Space Niji, Kyoto  
*FACE 2017 Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Art Award Exhibition*, Seiji Togo Memorial Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Museum of Art, Tokyo  
*heART ~Shun Wa Kei Mei~*, InterContinental Osaka (20F Lobby), Osaka  
2015 *Smell of Musk*, TALION GALLERY, Tokyo  
*Selected Artists in Kyoto Celebrating 400 Years of the Rimpa*, The Museum of Kyoto  
2014 *ACG eyes 6: Chihiro Yoshioka, Yukino Miyata, Miro Kasama – Stratigraphy in Two Dimensions*, ARTCOURT Gallery, Osaka  
*Selected Artists in Kyoto The Way of Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015*, The Museum of Kyoto [Kyoto Shimbun Prize]  
2013 *2013 TSCA Rough Consensus*, Hotel Anteroom, Kyoto  
*KYOTO STUDIO*, Kyoto City University of Arts Art Gallery @KCUA, Kyoto  
2009 *VOCAL 2009: The Vision of Contemporary Art*, The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo  
2005 *Kyoten 2005*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto (awarded from the mayor)

#### Artist Residencies

2011-2012 Sakaidani Elementary School, Kyoto

#### Major Public Collections & Installation Locations

Park Hyatt Kyoto / The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho / Yasui Architects & Engineers, Inc. Head Office, Osaka Office / Kyoto Second Red Cross Hospital / Kojinkai Social Medical Corporation Hokkaido Ohno Memorial Hospital / Bank of Kyoto / Kyoto City University of Arts University Art Museum



*MIMESIS I - 2*

Oil, beeswax, metal powder, chalk ground on canvas | 162x130.3cm | 2016

\*Reference work



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### ◆ Yasue Kodama 児玉靖枝



[left] *ambient light - flower*  
Oil on canvas | 100x100cm | 2000

[right] *asile - white splash 11*  
Oil on canvas | 130.3x130.3 cm | 2020  
© yasue kodama/O gallery eyes  
\*Reference work

From delicate still lifes in the 1980s, to abstraction in the 90s, then reaching her style of painting that crossed the borderline between abstraction and realism after the end of the 90s, **Yasue Kodama** has been consistently searching for the essence of what it means for things to exist, and as a reflection of that, has been trying to capture “the self that is here, right now” as well as the gaze towards a world that encompasses her subject. This exhibition will feature her *ambient light* series, from around 2000 when Kodama began to reincorporate figurative motifs from the outside world into her abstract pictorial spaces, and the *asile - white splash* series, currently in progress in which the artist reaches another turning point in her work after nearly 20 years. The former is a group of works in which the image, or in other words, the light, melts into and emerges out of the darkness, in a multi-layered structure made of the material that is paint. These works may have planted the seeds for Kodama’s representative way of painting where, in the midst of this flickering of light, a hint of some unknowable presence becomes another light, inviting the viewer’s gaze into the depths. The latter series, *asile - white splash*, in which Kodama paints scenes of great plum trees in full bloom after being uprooted by a storm, gives the impression that the light living within the layers of paint is spilling over into the foreground. This series can be said to capture the artist’s expression of her own firm attitude that confronts the flora that freely express the essence of life hidden within itself, and trying to touch the exposed manifestation of that existence, namely “the other light”, through the act of painting.

1961 Born in Hyogo Prefecture  
1984 B.A., Fine Art, Kyoto City University of Arts, Oil Painting Course  
1986 M.A., Fine Art, Kyoto City University of Arts, Painting Course

#### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2020 Gallery 21yo-j, Tokyo [’12]  
O Gallery eyes, Osaka [’18, ’16, ’13, ’11, ’09, ’07, ’05]  
Tor Road Gallery, Hyogo [’19-’14, ’12, ’10-’08, ’06-’02, ’00-’98, ’94, ’86]  
2018 MEM, Tokyo [’16, ’14, ’11]  
2015 Art Space Niji, Kyoto [’10, ’09, ’05, ’89, ’86]  
2014 *Deep Rhyme – the note of water*, Gallery Circulo, Saga  
2008 Gallery 21+yo, Tokyo [’94, ’92]  
2003 *sora / ao (“sky / blue”)*, CASO (Contemporary Art Space Osaka), Osaka  
2002 *hana iro* (“flower color”), Saison Art Program Gallery, Tokyo  
2000 *blue in blue*, Gallery KURANUKI, Osaka  
1997 Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo  
1996 Ishiyacho Gallery, Kyoto [’93, ’92, ’90]  
1995 Skydoor Art Place Aoyama, Tokyo  
1994 Art Site, Fukui

#### Awards

2010 Received The Fumiko Kametaka Sekiso-sha for Award for Outstanding Female Painters  
2005 Received Hyogo Arts Promotion Prize  
1999 Received 17th Kyoto Culture Prize Promotion Prize  
1993 Received Second Grand Prize, ’93 Artists of Next Generation  
1991 Received Grand Prize, ’91 Artists of Next Generation  
1986 Received Graduate School Award and Kayo Award at Annual Exhibition 1986 Kyoto City University of Arts

#### Selected Group Exhibitions

2020 *Staring: Miwa Kawai, Yasue Kodama, Hisako Masuda, Satoko Watanabe*, The Tokushima Modern Art Museum  
2019 *Observation: Artists Confronting the Wonder of Looking Intently*, Gunma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi  
2018 *Monet's Legacy: Beyond the Impressionism*, Nagoya City Art Museum, Aichi / Yokohama Museum of Art, Kanagawa  
2014 *Quintet: Five-Star Artists*, Seiji Togo Memorial Sompō Japan Museum of Art, Tokyo  
2013 *Playback Artist Talks*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo  
2012 *New Incubation 4 Yurameki Tokeyuku: Yasue Kodama & Tetsuji Nakanishi*, Kyoto Art Center  
2010 *Primary Field II*, The Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama, Kanagawa  
2009 *Kobe Biennale 2009 Guest Artists Exhibition: LINK – Flexible Deviation*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art  
2007 *Dialogues – Painters' Views on the Museum Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art Shiga  
2005 *Tsubaki-kai 2005*, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo [’04-’01]  
2002 *Theatre of Our Lives*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art  
2001 *The Very Last*, Galerie Gabriele Rivet, Cologne, Germany  
2000 *Kyoto Prefectural Culture Awards Exhibition*, The Museum of Kyoto  
1999 *An Overview Contemporary Japanese Painting*, Tokyo Station Gallery  
1998 *The Vision of Contemporary Art: New Artists of Two Dimensions (VOCA '98)*, The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo [’97, ’96, ’94]  
1996 *Japanese Contemporary Art: At the Water's Edge – Susumu Koshimizu & Yasue Kodama*, Yokohama Portside Gallery, Kanagawa  
1994 *Light and Shadow: The Sense of Ephemerality*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art  
1993 *Two persons exhibition: Naofumi Maruyama and Yasue Kodama*, Gallery KURANUKI, Osaka  
1990 *Artists in Hyogo*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art

#### Public Collections

Oita Prefectural Art Museum / The Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama / The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo / Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art / The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama / Busan Museum of Art / Kyoto Prefecture / Shiseido Art House / Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery