

Yoshitomo Saito

1000 Prayers

July 21 - August 27, 2011

Haines Gallery and the artist will be donating a portion of the proceeds from this exhibition to Give2Asia – a Bay Area organization that identifies and funds local Japanese organizations conducting relief efforts – as a small token of our compassion for the losses suffered by the people of Japan.

<http://give2asia.org/japantsunami-2011>

Haines Gallery is pleased to present Yoshitomo Saito's *1000 Prayers*. In his ninth solo exhibition at Haines, the artist presents a selection of new sculptural works in bronze, drawing from natural materials found in the Colorado landscape near Saito's home. He produces these unique works himself, completing the laborious, technically daunting process of bronze casting alone in his studio foundry.

The title piece, *1000 Prayers*, was produced over a ten-month period between 2010 and 2011, and includes 1000 bronze pinecones hand-cast by the artist and installed on the wall. The title alludes to the poignant timing of this piece's production, when Japan was struck by a series of catastrophic earthquakes and tsunamis. Saito explains, "the whole process became a form of prayer in my studio. The more I thought about what I was doing, the more it started to resemble the Japanese cultural habit of folding 1000 origami paper cranes as a means of recovering from deep wounds, healing broken hearts and inspiring hope for the future."

Saito's Japanese heritage and connection to his current location in the American West are often conceptually and formally woven into his process. In *Colorado Loop #3*, he creates simple, interlocking rings from bronze branches, each welded spontaneously without a precise outcome in mind. This gestural action is reminiscent of Japanese Enso painters in their efforts to perfect a one-stroke circle as well as lasso rope tricks so em-

blematic of cowboys.

Born in Japan, Saito began his artistic practice as a glassblower. In the 1980s, he traveled to the Bay Area where he hoped to expand his practice in the vein of the American Glass Studio Movement: "I was quite taken with the attitude and

freedom of expression and wanted to learn something from Americans," he recalls.

While a graduate student at the California College of Arts and Crafts, Saito began to work with bronze, a material that has sustained his interest since. Trained in the lost wax – or investment mold – process, Saito has cast from objects as varied as pillows, stretched canvas and cardboard, though

historically his most consistent subjects are



Detail from *1000 Prayers*, 2010-2011, Individually cast bronze, 1000 parts, Dimensions Variable

materials from the landscape.

Yoshitomo Saito's work is held in the following public collections: Hawaii State Foundation of Cultures and Arts, Honolulu, Hawaii; de Young Museum, San Francisco; California College of the Arts, Oakland/San Francisco; and The Oakland Museum of California. He has exhibited internationally and received numerous awards and grants.

Artist Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Cheryl Haines and her wonderful crew at Haines Gallery as well as to Mike Macarella and Jill Hadley Hooper of Ironton Studios in Denver Colorado for their generosity and heartfelt support.