

Palestinian-Israeli conflict—the humiliation of daily strip searches endured by Palestinian men—the sculpture’s anonymity and lack of color universalizes it into a counter-monument of sorts.

An installation—titled *Action 136: Put this in your record: I am Present!*, after Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish’s 1964 poem “Identity Card”—of three slides of media images showing other blindfolded and bound men, digitally manipulated so that the figures appear eerily alone, accompanied the sculpture. Projected on a wall inside the warehouse’s locked former office—a freestanding two-room enclosure within the larger structure—these images could be viewed only through a large window, with the sculpture looming behind us reflected, spookily, in the glass. If, following Emmanuel Levinas, the origin of ethics is the face-to-face encounter, then how, as viewers and witnesses, can we ever achieve ethical or even empathetic access to these humiliated men, robbed of the dignity of their sight? Despite our desires otherwise, we remain implicated in their oppression. Hovering ominously in our field of vision like some hooded angel of death, the sculpture seemed to emphasize this, demanding retribution for the countless others like him.

—Murtaza Vali

TOKYO

Hiraki Sawa

OPERA CITY ART GALLERY

Hiraki Sawa’s semiretrospective “Under the Box, Beyond the Clouds” featured twenty video works, ranging from his signature piece *Dwelling*, 2002, in which toy-size passenger planes take off and land elegantly inside a gray East London flat, to new installations that expand into spatial dimensions. Also, along the corridor leading into the darkened exhibition area, miniature plaster sculptures from 2013–14—casts of an ammonite, a metronome, and a broken teacup, for instance—and drawings for the design of the exhibition itself, also 2013–14, offered clues as to what to expect.

Lineament, 2012, is a two-channel video based on an episode from the life of a friend who lost his memory after waking up from a short nap. Sawa’s recurrent themes of time, memory, and nostalgia culminate in this piece as it unfolds as a meditation on amnesia, expressed poetically with, among other devices, black string unthreading from the edge of a rotating LP record and dispersing into architectural spaces—the recorded memory dissolving into thin air. Here and in other recent works—*Within*, 2010, *Sleeping Machine I*, 2011, and *Did I?*, 2011—Sawa works mostly in black and white, with a consciously antiquated mise-en-scène and slow-paced movements that give his works a unique fairy-tale quality. In stark contrast to the wall-size screens of *Lineament*, a small wooden wall nearby housed more intimate works (*Within*, *Eight Minutes*, 2005, and *Ages*, 2006); the playful shift in scale was effective, almost dizzying, as if one had walked into a tiny hut deserted by dwarfs.

The large-scale installation *Lenticular*, 2013, was inspired by Sawa’s meeting with a self-taught astronomer at Mills Observatory in Dundee, Scotland. On a

Hiraki Sawa, *Lenticular*, 2013, mixed-media assemblage with color video and sound (by Bun), 8 minutes 30 seconds.

