



Transient Strata
Shingo Tanaka Solo Exhibition

2026.09.04 (fri.) - 09.27 (sun.)
open on fri., sat., and sun. 12:00-18:00
appointments are available on weekdays
free admission

How do we perceive the structure of objects? We gauge the thickness and depth of an object from the shades of light and dark, and infer its material and hardness from its texture. The brain constructs an image from the various pieces of information gathered by the sensory organs, constantly refining our perception. So, when that information is stripped away, what do we perceive in the object that remains?

“exposed fringe”, the new series presented here, consists of photographic works created by layering burnt paper and capturing it in a state of ‘overexposure’. The details and shadows of the burnt remnants dissolve into the dazzling light, leaving only the undulating fringes created by the fire on the image. In an image that has lost its depth, the layered fragments emerge as a single line. When we recognise this transitional line as a boundary, we discover a new depth of space beyond the depth that should have vanished.

We can let our imagination run wild even from a single line. At the same time, our perception of the world shifts easily depending on the information we receive.

The works in this exhibition—“exposed fringe”, “trans” and “transtructure”—all explore the workings of fluctuating perception amidst the back-and-forth between layering and combustion.

Shingo Tanaka

Shingo Tanaka has consistently explored fire, flame, and combustion through diverse perspectives and multidisciplinary approaches. Throughout his creative practice, he has regarded combustion not as an act of disappearance, but as a generative phenomenon through which new structures emerge.

In his early works, Tanaka created drawings using soot and scorch marks left behind by burned paper, as well as sculptural works in which layered sheets of paper collapsed through combustion to acquire new forms (<https://shingotanaka.net/>). In these works, fire functioned not merely as a medium of expression, but as a natural force acting upon matter beyond the artist's intention. By incorporating the passage of time—during which the material undergoes continuous transformation—Tanaka presents a unique approach that reveals a process where creation and dissolution intertwine, rather than a static, finished form.

In recent years, Tanaka's focus has shifted from the phenomenon of combustion itself to the perceptual mechanisms through which we experience it.

The new series ***exposed fringe***, presented for the first time in this exhibition, consists of photographs made by stacking layers of burned paper and capturing them under extreme overexposure. Information that would ordinarily allow us to perceive thickness, texture, and shadow is erased by excessive light, leaving only the intricate burned edges engraved by fire to emerge on the image's surface. In this sense, the series proposes a striking inversion: ***extinguishing fire with light***.

We perceive depth through shadow, hardness through texture, and space through contour. But what happens when these visual cues are removed? How does perception reconstruct the object before us? Although ***exposed fringe*** employs photography—a fundamentally two-dimensional medium—it paradoxically invites the viewer to generate spatial experience internally, allowing space itself to emerge within perception.

As suggested by the exhibition title, ***Transient Strata***, the “strata” in Tanaka's work are never fixed deposits. Rather, they are layers generated through an ongoing cycle of stacking paper, burning it, allowing it to collapse, and layering it once again—repeated passages between ***human-made objects*** and ***natural phenomena*** (human-made objects ⇌ natural phenomena ⇌ human-made objects). The ***exposed fringe*** series marks the culmination of this process, capturing these transient strata through the camera and transforming them into photographic works.

In addition to the new exposed fringe series, the exhibition will also present new works from Tanaka's ***trans*** and ***transtructure*** series. Oscillating between accumulation and disappearance, construction and collapse, these bodies of work quietly unsettle the foundations of perception that we so often take for granted.

Naomi Rowe | eN arts