

It's Nice That

Shota Nakamura's colourful works are inspired by his love and awareness of environmentalism

Birds, trees, flowers and animals take centre stage in the works of this Japan-born and Berlin-based artist.

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Reminiscent about when he was first introduced to art, Shota Nakamura looks back to a time in school. Here, the Japan-born and Berlin-based artist tells us of a memory where, just after 9/11, his art teacher had questioned the students about the reprisal of the Japanese government. “Most of the time, the art class that I knew was more about drawing ad crafting,” Shota tells It’s Nice That. “But she was the first person who really questioned and expressed her thought.” This was an awakening experience for the 12-year-old aspiring creator, whose thoughts on the art industry were liberated within an instant. “I would say that is the first moment that I discovered art; that helped me to develop the way I am.”

This analytical view on the world is completely transferable within his work. Citing particular topics of neuroscience, feminism, philosophy, poems and music as his main points of reference, Shota will begin his day in a way that makes him “feel right”. As such, he starts by cleaning his studio knuckling down and commencing on some pencil drawings. “I don’t know where I’m going to reaching, I’m just trying to reflect on my emotions or mood with colour and try to draw of discover things that I really want to come across – reflecting and questioning,” he says on the goal of his sketches. The result – which is achieved through an abundance of research and various references – is a medley of vibrant, detailed works that fluctuate between abstract shapes and floral, colourful scenes.

Most imperative is Shota’s interest in nature – a theme that resonates wholly throughout his works. You see trees, flowers, animals and landscapes bellowing through the colourful marks of crayon, a style that he has refined purely from his love of the environment. “I simply find it beautiful,” he adds. “Of course, awareness of environmentalism and an everyday curiosity of science and biology are also a reason, but most importantly, it’s an aesthetic rather than everything else.” Illustrating nature is the

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pinnacle of his artist ethos, and there is simply nothing else he'd rather do: "I try all that I can in order to draw nature," he says, commenting on how he sometimes draws landscapes from observations, as well as recreating the imagery from his memories or interpretations from his research.

Found imagery plays quite a vital role within his process, whereby the artist looks to paintings, photography, tapestries, crafts and films for visual stimulation. His main aim is to scoop out all possibilities for image-making from these sources, to then work and creating something "beyond" it. "It's almost like spreading seeds and cultivating the soil, as if I was a gardener." Shota also finds himself referencing his old sketches to see if there's any decent that he can pick up from the past – if so, he will develop it further and produce some work out of it. "Sometimes I just pick up the images from a catalogue that I have in my bookshelf and add my interpretation by recreating the work," he says, "and that's pretty much how I develop my practice."

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At present, Shota is exhibiting a collection of works in a show titled I am Bird, I am Tree, held in Berlin. Explaining more on his methodology, he adds that the “first event” that occurs within his work is colour. “So my mission for making images is to colour the surface of the blank canvas or paper.” What’s more, for the past two years he has been working on birds as his focus point. “Birds are just bizarre creatures with pattern, marks and colours,” he says, “they are amazing to look at.” These feathery animals inspire his most recent body of work, that sees conceptual drawings of these little creatures come to life on the page. “Birds fly and migrate – I just hope that drawing birds will let my imagination travel through the places that I have never been, that was my initial idea.”

