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# YOU-I, YOU-I

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A brief introduction to the work of Teruya Yuken. This introduction was first published on [gensojapan.org](http://gensojapan.org) (now offline).



**Teruya Yuken, 'Notice-Forest: What Victory Tastes Like' (2012) Paper bag, glue.**

What first brought Teruya Yuken's work recognition was his ongoing series "Notice-Forest" (1999- ). Made from the packaging of fast food outlets and luxury goods brands, he created delicate dioramas of trees from and within paper shopping bags. Presented side-on, each open bag has a tree standing inside, seemingly growing towards the gallery spotlights above. Calling to mind the material's original form seems to suggest the series is a resourceful retort to

the excesses of consumer culture, but instead, Yuken's work is best appreciated as a study of origin and displacement, of something uprooted and replanted.

Born in Okinawa, Yuken grew up in close proximity to several US Military facilities. The artist now lives in New York as well and it's the convergence of these two contexts and their shared histories that inform a meaningful interpretation of his work; and of "You-I, You-I" (2008) in particular.



'Teruya Yuken , 'You-I, You-I' (2008). Linen, colour pigment

In “You-I, You-I” (2008) the artist presents a yukata, a summer kimono for men and women, decorated with the traditional Okinawan craft of bingata. Like the paper bags in “Notice-Forest”, this technique suits a graphic, stencil-like sensibility. Retaining these qualities, it’s adorned with flowers, birds and clouds. Yuken’s use of pattern respectfully acknowledges the traditions he is working within too. What is traditionally omitted, however, are the jet fighters, aeroplanes and parachutes. In “You-I, You-I” the artist updates a decorative form to entwine history with craft.



Teruya Yuken , ‘You-I, You-I’ (detail) (2008)