

**Carlos Rolón's first solo exhibition in Japan in 15 years, 'Future Reminisce', unravels the multi-layered history of his past in order to aspire to the future.**



Carlos Rolón *100 Years*, 2021

From July 30<sup>th</sup> (Fri) to September 4<sup>th</sup> (Sat), 2021, KOTARO NUKAGA is pleased to present 'Future Reminisce', a solo exhibition by Puerto Rican-American artist Carlos Rolón. This exhibition marks fifteen years since the artist's first solo exhibition in Japan in 2006, and two years since his participation in KOTARO NUKAGA, Tennoz's 2019 group show.

Carlos Rolón (born in Chicago, Illinois, 1970) is known for his multi-disciplinary practice that employs craft, ritual, beauty, spirituality, and history, and explores how they work within the lexicon of the art world. Rolón's childhood home was filled with ornate, faux-luxurious décor, and hand-crafted tables and chairs made by his father in the '70s. The blue-collar baroque aesthetic of his upbringing and surroundings reflected the cultural influence brought over by his parents and his extended family from the island. Their homes— filled with patterned tiles, delicate faux porcelain, collected tchotchkes, Venetian and floral wallpaper, and gilded-framed mirrors— brimmed with hopes and aspirations for a better life in the U.S., while juxtaposed against a backdrop of a deep-rooted past.

The artist has used this to explore history that directly deals with questions of inclusion, aspiration, cultural identity, cultivated settings, and their relationship to post-colonial spaces. Rolón takes these social barriers and transforms vantage points based on his experience, producing a hybrid language of paintings, sculpture, social practice, and site-specific installations. In his approach to the white cube of galleries and museums, the artist has created interactive installations such as *Imperial Nail Salon (My Parent's Living Room)* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, which offered manicures in a near-exact life size recreation of the childhood living

room his mother used as a bootleg hair and nail salon to supplement extra income. Rolón's two-dimensional pieces, on the other hand, have featured sculptural mirror, tile works, and tropical flora paintings embellished with 24kt gold leaf, a nostalgic homage to the floral wallpapers in his childhood home, but also a sober commentary on the history of his parent's native Island of Puerto Rico, where the Spanish Inquisition destroyed much of the natural foliage, vegetation, and land for the excavation of gold. In this way, he acknowledges the complex history that shapes the identity of immigrants and emigrants such as his parents and the many that came before them, reinventing them into images of beauty and rebirth with diverse materials that communicate rich symbolism and offer opportunities for self-reflection.

The current exhibition will feature a new body of works in which Rolón continues these conversations with new mediums. Following the first introduction of his tile works and their acquisition by the Museo de Arte Ponce in Puerto Rico and the New Orleans Museum of Art, Rolón has expanded on the series, referencing multi-layered stories in his new tile pieces. A visual hybrid comes to life in works that suggest rupture, tension, destruction, decay, and beauty, moving beyond national or ethnic identities to speak in more international terms, using various repurposed, new and handmade tiles reminiscent of Caribbean homes while also invoking the deep and layered history of the material. Many of the tiles featured in these works, some dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, have carried the footprints of hundreds of people; women, men, children, of all colors, nationalities, and ages. Historical craft-based techniques originating from the North African Moorish culture, which have impacted craft-making as it migrated via slavery to the new world, are represented in these objects. In contrast to these ancient tiles, the artist has also included cheap factory-made tiles available on the mass market. This may seem like a juxtaposition, yet these mass-produced items were likely made by the very working-class people of the diaspora that Rolón aims to give a voice, the ones that have the least access to art. In combining these elements, the artist simultaneously recreates the comforting nostalgia of his humble origins while also giving a nod to the history of migration.

These tile works are complimented by the artist's new graphite landscape renderings. The photos referenced in these drawings were taken approximately 100 years ago by the Historical Division of the United States Farm Security Administration as part of a nationwide propaganda project, in which they interviewed and photographed people and scenes throughout the American landscape. While calming and inoffensive at first glance, these photos of Puerto Rico were actually part of this government marketing plan, and were taken to showcase the island's "prosperity" due to American backing. In recreating these century-old photos, Rolón looks back on the troubled history of his ancestry, and upon this symbol of suppression, he attempts to redraw a vision of beauty, resilience, and optimism.

### **EXHIBITION DETAILS**

Carlos Rolón, 'Future Reminisce'

July 30 (Fri) – September 4 (Sat), 2021

11:00–18:00 (Tue-Sat)

\*Closed on Sun, Mon and Public Holidays

\*Schedule and contents are subject to change at the request of the national and local governments.

### **VENUE**

KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi

Piramide Bldg. 2F, 6-6-9 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032 Japan

3 minutes walk from Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line and the Toei Subway Oedo Line Exit 1 or 3 of Roppongi station

## **ARTIST PROFILE**



Carlos Rolón has held solo exhibitions at the Dallas Contemporary, Texas; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom; Cummer Museum, Jacksonville, Florida; Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Museo de Arte de Ponce, San Juan, Puerto Rico; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis. His work has also been exhibited in group shows nationally and internationally. He is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award for Painting and Sculpture and is included in the following public collections: Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach; Brooklyn Museum, New York; City of Chicago Public Art Collection, Illinois; Daegu Art Museum, South Korea; Museo del Barrio, New York; Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico; Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana. He was selected as the representative of the

Ukrainian Pavilion in the 52nd Venice Biennale, 2007, and recently held a large solo exhibition at the New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana.

## **WORKS**



*Untitled (Lost Paradise II), 2018*

## **REFERENCE IMAGES**



*Imperial Nail Salon (My Parents' Living Room) Installation View from 'Homebodies', MCA Chicago, 2013*



*Outside In* Installation View from New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, 2018



*Tropicalizia* Installation View, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 2017

**SOPHNET. x Carlos Rolón 'Future Reminisce'**

From July 30, 2021 (Fri), KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi will be releasing limited edition T-shirts and plates in collaboration with SOPHNET. and Carlos Rolón. This release is a commemorative collaboration born from a decades-old friendship between SOPH. founder Hirofumi Kiyonaga and the artist. The merchandise will be available in limited quantities at SOPH.shops worldwide, SOPH.ONLINE STORE, Isetan Men's Shinjuku, and KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi.

Availability and sales methods will vary by store. Please contact each store for details.

**CARLOS ROLÓN | SOPHNET.**  
KOTARO NUKAGA

## PRODUCT DETAILS

NO.	ITEM	NAME	SIZE	PRICE(TAX INCL.)
1		SOPHNET. x Carlos Rolón 'Future Reminisce' 100 Years T-shirt	S、 M、 L、 LL	¥6,600
2		SOPHNET. x Carlos Rolón 'Future Reminisce' Multi-colored Tondo T-shirt	S、 M、 L、 LL	¥6,600
3		SOPHNET. x Carlos Rolón 'Future Reminisce' Detailed Multi-colored Tondo Plate	diam 24cm	¥4,950
4		SOPHNET. x Carlos Rolón 'Future Reminisce' Blue and White Porcelain Tondo Plate	diam 24cm	¥4,950

For further details regarding merchandise purchase, please see the following:

SOPH Contact Page: <https://www.soph.net/shop/contact/contact.aspx>

KOTARO NUKAGA: <https://www.kotaronukaga.com/en/contact-en/>

### **PRESS CONTACT**

For more information, please contact us at the following:

Press contact: Eiko Okuyama

EMAIL: [info@kotaronukaga.com](mailto:info@kotaronukaga.com) URL: [www.kotaronukaga.com](http://www.kotaronukaga.com)

ROPPONGI: TEL +81(0)3 6721 1180 / FAX +81(0)3 6721 1181