

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For all inquiries, please contact Irene Fung: irene@hainesgallery.com
www.hainesgallery.com

KOTA EZAWA

National Anthem

November 7 - December 14, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, November 8, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm



Stills from Kota Ezawa, *National Anthem*, 2018
Single-channel video with color, sound
1 minute 38 seconds

Haines Gallery proudly presents ***National Anthem***, a new solo exhibition by Oakland-based multimedia artist **Kota Ezawa** featuring his critically acclaimed series of the same title.

Throughout his career, Ezawa has appropriated well-known images from the news, art history, and popular culture, recreating them in his signature reductive style and translating them into light boxes, animated videos, and works on paper. *National Anthem*, the artist's most recent project is a stirring and timely body of work that offers a powerful meditation on protest, patriotism, solidarity, and hope, depicting professional NFL athletes "taking a knee" during the national anthem to protest police brutality and the oppression of people of color. First exhibited at the 2019 Whitney Biennial, the series makes its West Coast debut at Haines Gallery this November.

At the center of *National Anthem* is Ezawa's eponymous video, which draws from broadcast footage of NFL games. The two-minute video features scenes of quiet protest over an orchestral version of the Star Spangled Banner—from the watershed moment when former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick took a knee in protest for the first time, on September 1, 2016; to players standing with arms linked in solidarity; to the empty Tennessee Titans sideline bench, vacated when the team elected not to participate in the national anthem. In her review of the Biennial for *4Columns*, Aruna D'Souza writes, "By rendering these images in paint, allowing the camera to linger on them, and projecting them on a massive wall, Ezawa removes them from the unthinking speed of social media outrage and lets us dwell on the implications of the action and the reverence of the gesture."

To produce the work, Ezawa painted more than 200 individual frames to achieve the animation's dappled, subtly moving appearance. In dialogue with the video, a selection of these original watercolors—delicate and meticulously executed—will be exhibited alongside a suite of related light boxes. In an interview with the Whitney Museum of American Art, Ezawa explained, "If you stage a protest on such a large platform in front of millions of people, it can only be because you care about the place or the country that you are supposed to represent in this moment."

Kota Ezawa was born in 1969 in Cologne, Germany, and currently resides between Oakland, CA and Berlin. His work has been exhibited in and collected by major institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.



Kota Ezawa, *National Anthem (Buffalo Bills)*, 2019
Duratrans transparency and lightbox
22 x 30 inches