

UP CLOSE



Installation view of MIKA TAJIMA's *Pranayama (Monolith, E, Rose Quartz)*, 2020, rose quartz, cast bronze jet nozzles, 91.4×55.9×63.5 cm, at "Regulation," Simon Lee Gallery, London, 2021. Courtesy the artist and Simon Lee Gallery, London/Hong Kong.

MIKA

TAJIMA

Many adherents to new age spiritual practices believe the metaphysical properties of crystal stones can balance one's body, mind, and spirit, or attract luck and abundance. In fact quartz is piezoelectric, allowing it to create electrical charge in digital devices such as electric-guitar amplifiers and microphones. Addressing both the mystical and physical energies of the mineral, Mika Tajima incorporated rose quartz for the first time into her ongoing series *Pranayama* (2017-). Named after the ancient practice of breath regulation (*prana* means "life energy" and *yama* "control") often seen in yoga, the series features Jacuzzi jets embedded in marble stones and walnut wood to illustrate the changes in air pressure, questioning how both natural and artificial environments impact our energy flows. Through these works, Tajima has explored the invisible forces created by interactions between the human body and different types of materials.

For her latest solo exhibition, Tajima moved a one-meter-tall, 590-kilogram monolith of rose quartz—a popular stone that is believed to attract love and popularity—into London's Simon Lee Gallery, which immediately commanded the audience's attention. With tints of pink and orange running through its natural form, the stone is pierced through with bronze Jacuzzi jet nozzles installed on its surface. Each hole controls the release of air, and the act of perforation, as well as the placement of the nozzles, alludes to acupuncture pressure points in ancient Asian medical practice, as if the stone itself is a living organism with its own life force. In a time when browsing jpegs online has become the new normal, Tajima's rose quartz *Pranayama* sculpture invites the audience to place their hands above the holes, to feel its energetic vibrations in person, and to fully experience both the presence of art and physicality of the stone.

PAMELA WONG