

ジャパン・シンドローム

**Japan
Syn-
drome**

Art and Politics after Fukushima

HAU

20.-29.5.2014

KULTURSTIFTUNG
DER
BUNDES

何ができるのか？

What to do?

In February 2013 I visited the exhibition “Tadasu Takamine’s Cool Japan” at the Contemporary Art Center in Mito. The title refers to a slogan used by the Japanese government to market their national culture to an international audience. In a countermove, Tadasu Takamine, former member of the legendary performance group Dumb Type, chooses two historical reference points – the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the one side and the nuclear catastrophe at Fukushima on the other – between which to examine widespread constructions of Japanese identity.

His video “Japan Syndrome”, which was shown as part of the exhibition, is a theatrical re-enactment of conversations in shops between customers and clerks about the exposure of food to radioactive rays. It exposed the mechanisms of repression within Japanese society so clearly that we decided to name our festival, which concerns “art and politics after Fukushima”, after this work.

No less poignant was a room with six sculptures, modelled after the statue “The Burgers of Calais” by Auguste Rodin from 1895¹. In his adaptation, Tadasu Takamine pays tribute to certain inhabitants of the city of Mito. Some of them were directly affected by the damage of the earthquake. Others work as activists against the nuclear industry. He fashioned their bodies and facial expressions after the burghers of Calais, who sought to rescue their homeland from destruction in an act of civil courage. The original sculpture, according to Tadasu Takamine, “expresses the figures’ anger at the anxiety and irrationality of their treatment. This position now suddenly connects to the position of Japan since the nuclear accident. The reason my figures are wearing blankets is because of the powerful image I was left with of people standing in the cold winds just after the tsunami. Having lost everything, with only the blankets they could lay their hands on, they can finally start pulling their lives back together.”

The exhibition “Cool Japan” was something like a first spark. It taught me to understand how much the events of March 11, 2011 still marked people’s ordinary lives, even two or three years later. Along with Tadasu

Takamine, other artists such as Toshiki Okada, Akira Takayama, Hikaru Fujii or Tori Kudo are among those to overcome the agony and speechlessness that set in after the disaster, and now openly speak about the “Japan Syndrome”. Many of the myths of the post-war period, which went unquestioned for decades – the faith in unlimited economic growth through cheap energy and the belief in the ability to control nature and technology – can now be described as fragile and as an existential threat to the population.

Taking off from these developments, the festival “Japan Syndrome”, which will run from May 20 to 29 at HAU Hebbel am Ufer, asks how Japanese society and the language of art have changed since the events of March 11, 2011. The spectrum ranges from activist approaches, such as those represented by Tadasu Takamine or Hikaru Fujii, up to the more reserved position of Toshiki Okada. Speaking of his work on “Current Location”, he says that it was here, under the impression of March 11, 2011, that he first came to find a structure with a dramatic plot in the classical sense: “The characters in this play weep, they murder and are murdered.”

The topics addressed within the festival and in this accompanying publication are ostensibly 9,000 kilometres away from the western audience. But it is not by chance that the relationship between autonomy and engagement, which is also the focus of the HAU series “Phantasm and Politics”, is being so passionately debated all over the world in times of a crisis in capitalism. Indeed, more so than for a long time now. What to do? Where can art take us? Can it, and should it make us capable of action?

In a text published in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung just a few days after the catastrophe, and which we republish in full here, the sociologist Harald Welzer drew our attention to the fact that “Fukushima” stands for a fundamental crisis in global energy supply. The price for the “comfort zone”, which affluent societies have set up on the basis of highly dubious economic and ecological decisions, has become too high.

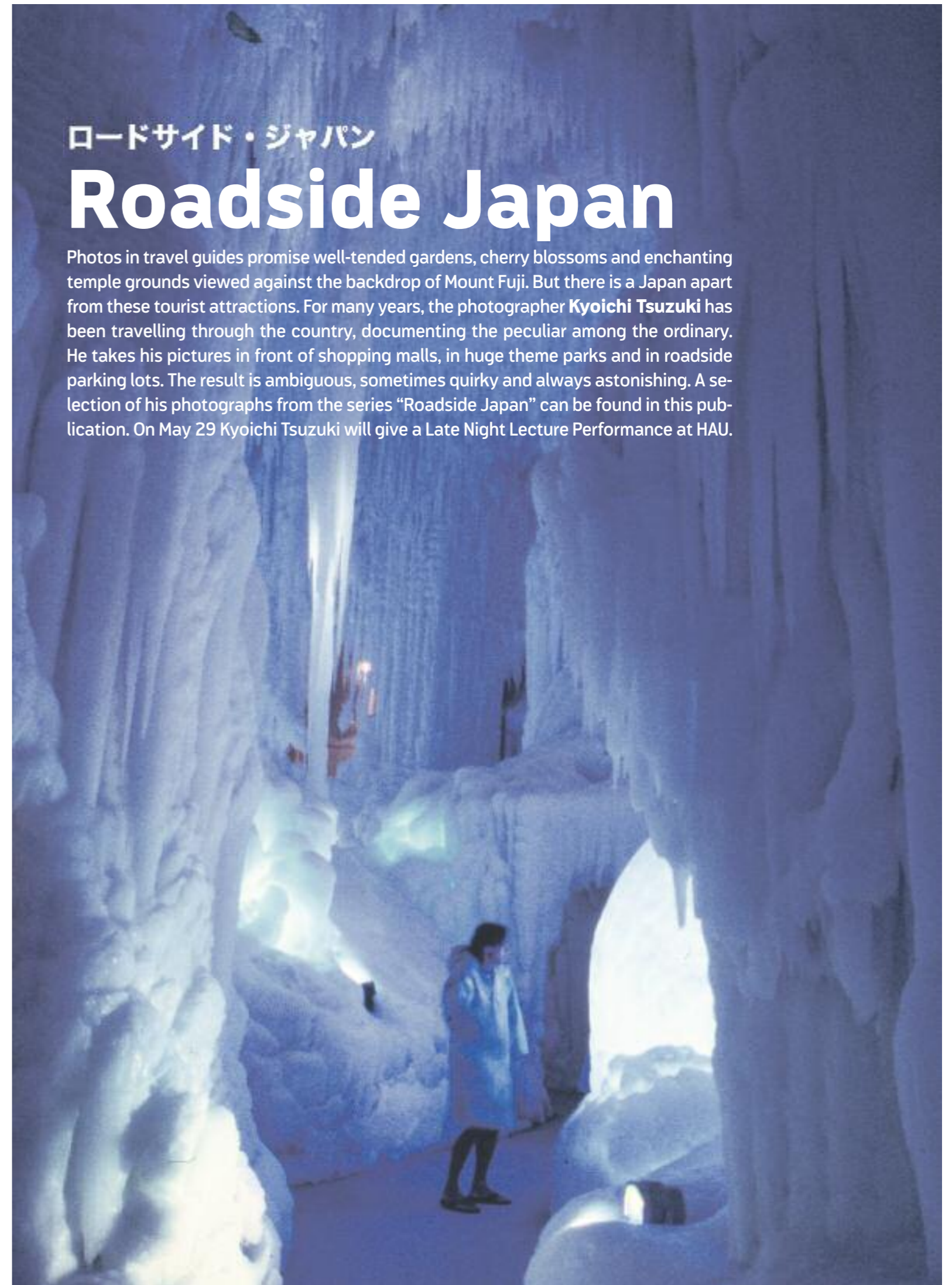
*Annemie Vanackere
und das Team des HAU Hebbel am Ufer*

¹ The famous artwork “Les Bourgeois de Calais” was created in 1895 by Auguste Rodin, commissioned by the city in northern France. It commemorates the attack on Calais by troops of the English crown in 1347, during the Hundred Years War. In order to stave off the threatening capitulation, the plundering and destruction of the city, six of its most respected citizens volunteered to be hostages. Barefoot, wearing only a sackcloth and a rope halter around their necks, they went to King Edward III, who ultimately – after an intervention by the English Queen Philippa of Hainault – spared them their lives.

ロードサイド・ジャパン

Roadside Japan

Photos in travel guides promise well-tended gardens, cherry blossoms and enchanting temple grounds viewed against the backdrop of Mount Fuji. But there is a Japan apart from these tourist attractions. For many years, the photographer **Kyoichi Tsuzuki** has been travelling through the country, documenting the peculiar among the ordinary. He takes his pictures in front of shopping malls, in huge theme parks and in roadside parking lots. The result is ambiguous, sometimes quirky and always astonishing. A selection of his photographs from the series “Roadside Japan” can be found in this publication. On May 29 Kyoichi Tsuzuki will give a Late Night Lecture Performance at HAU.



Project FUKUSHIMA! — A Report

Otomo Yoshihide, a legend in Japan's music scene, grew up in Fukushima and now lives in Tokyo. After March 11, 2011 he took off into the crisis region. Together with locals he founded a radio station and instigated a festival.



I was born in Yokohama in 1959. Originally, my parents and I had no connection or ties to Fukushima. The connection began when we moved there for my father's work in the autumn of 1968, when I was nine (in third grade). I lived in Fukushima until 1978, when I moved to Tokyo at the age of 18 to go to university.

The late '60s were the second half of Japan's rapid economic growth period, when Tokyo manufacturing plants had been expanding all over the country. Looking back now, it occurs to me that the construction of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant (which began in 1966) was part of the same kind of trend. My father worked in a factory that made precision parts for light electrical equipment, so his business had no direct connection with the nuclear plant. I realize now that many of the students at my elementary school had moved to Fukushima from other places.

I wouldn't say there were factions in my school, but it does seem to me that there was a clear division between children who spoke the native Fukushima dialect and the small minority who did not. On top of that, the gap between the Tokyo area and other regions was even more pronounced than it is now – so, naturally, as a transfer student from Yokohama, I felt out of place and had the feeling I was “picked on.” Former elementary school classmates tell me that wasn't the case; they say, “You were like the king of the hill.” But I didn't feel that way myself. I may have felt I couldn't fit in, that I was isolated. I suppose this is a typical story.

When I was in high school, I started cutting classes and hanging out in the jazz and rock cafes that were in Fukushima in those days. There was no internet then, so I was wrapped up in the information I got in the cafes, and started thinking I really wanted to become a musician. From that time on I was extremely restless: I wanted desperately to go to Tokyo. On the pretext of going to university (although I hardly went to classes at all) I moved to Tokyo, and from then on I continued towards my goal of being a musician. I spent over 30 years with hardly a thought about the place called Fukushima.

And then the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake happened there on March 11. Even if it had been just the earthquake and tsunami, I would certainly have felt very upset. But I don't think I would have done the things I did, because Fukushima City, where I lived, was not affected by the tsunami and none of my friends lived right on the coast. What did it was the nuclear power plant.

The plant exploded, people suddenly had no place to live, radiation rained down on many communities, and with all these things happening, something inside me changed. This was an incredibly serious situation.

At the time, the media were not functioning at all. In line with the government's statements – “There is no danger”, “There will be no immediate health effects” – the media said nothing but “Please remain calm”. The meltdowns were covered up. The American media, on the other hand, were saying something completely different:

At the time, the media were not functioning at all.

“Everyone within 80 kilometres of the plant should evacuate.” At the time we had no idea what was true and what wasn't. Only recently have we learned that data from SPEEDI (a network for rapidly forecasting the spread of radiation in emergencies) was provided to the American military. The U.S. “80-kilometre exclusion zone” must have been based on this information. The Japanese government prioritised the United States over its own people, and the media failed to fulfil their essential role of checking and challenging government misinformation.

In March and April, we and the people of Fukushima were getting a tangled web of contradictory information. We didn't know what to believe, and obtaining the facts was a real struggle. When there is talk of evacuation after an area has been declared safe, people naturally start to suspect some kind of cover-up, and lose trust in the government and academics.

It was reported much later that the radiation levels in several areas of Fukushima at the time were high enough to warrant taking iodine. Levels like these can't lightly be called safe. In March, levels over 20μSv/h were recorded even in Fukushima City. Clearly, this was not normal.

On April 10, on the strength of Twitter messages alone, ten or fifteen thousand people gathered in Koenji, Tokyo. It was the first large-scale anti-nuclear demonstration since the nuclear plant accident, yet there was almost no coverage of it in the Japanese media. It wouldn't be overstating it to say the demonstration was deliberately ignored. When I asked someone in the media, he said, “That's because the people are amateurs.” So of course I answered, “Come on, that's what a demonstration is – amateurs!” To which he replied, “We don't cover something if there's no press release.” But refusing to cover something because there's no press release is fundamental-

On first glance, Fukushima looked almost the same as before the disaster.

ly erroneous. We're not talking about an advertisement magazine. The work of journalists is to cover events and write articles about them on their own, right? I thought, in this country the press is not even doing this basic job.

I don't think there was any intentional information control happening between government and media. It's just a guess, but I think it may have something to do with the fact that the news desks were occupied mainly by members of the generation disillusioned with protest, people who think, “Demonstrations don't change anything anyway.”

The first time I went to Fukushima after the disaster was on April 11. Before going there, in Tokyo, I met Michiro Endo from the band Stalin, which could be called a forerunner of punk rock. Endo is from Nihonmatsu in Fukushima. He's nine years older than me and went to my high school. Michiro told me, “I want to put on a free festival in Fukushima on August 15 called 'Nuclear Power Plants, Fuck You.’” He wanted to know what I thought. Well, I instantly thought it was a great idea to put on a festival with a name like that. Not in favour or against, but just “Fuck you” – only a punk rocker could say it. Brilliant. But I wondered if people in Fukushima would go along with a project that had a name like “Fuck You.” Anyway, we decided to go to Fukushima and hear what people had to say.

So we went. On first glance, Fukushima looked almost the same as before the disaster. The sky was blue, the mountains were the same as ever.

Only the radiation levels were high – between 1 and 2 microsieverts in the centre of Fukushima City. Under the eaves of houses it was easily over 10 microsieverts. But we didn't feel anything. We had no idea how to interpret or think

about this situation.

When we told people, “We're thinking of putting on a festival called 'Nuclear Power Plants, Fuck You,’” everyone's initial reaction seemed to be skepticism. Their honest opinion was that, above all, this was no time for a festival. But as we kept talking, everyone changed their minds and started saying, “Well, maybe we could try putting on a festival.” I wasn't trying to push them into it, believe me. On the other hand, none of them thought the theme should be nuclear power plants. It was the period when the government was talking about evacuating Iitate and everyone worried that Fukushima City may be next. They felt paralysed. We started thinking the theme should be “What will Fukushima do next?”



- and then we thought, no, it should be bigger than that: it should be simply "FUKUSHIMA."

In the same period there were big anti-nuclear protests in other countries. Watching footage of an anti-nuclear demonstration in Germany, I spotted a placard that said "NO MORE FUKUSHIMA." Naturally, I felt the same way - "Of course this kind of accident must never happen again." But to us, Fukushima isn't only the accident at the nuclear plant. It's part of our identity, because we grew up there. When I saw the placard, I also had the feeling my own identity was being negated.

I thought, just the fact of people saying "No more Fukushima" from the outside isn't going to help the residents of Fukushima who suffered most. Very simply, we didn't want to let the name "Fukushima" go on carrying a stigma. So we felt very strongly that we should do something to turn the name Fukushima from the negative word it had become, to a positive word. That was the beginning of Project FUKUSHIMA!

We didn't want to let the name "Fukushima" go on carrying a stigma.

First of all, we had to have a medium for disseminating our own information. The first person who came to mind was Naohiro Ukawa, who runs the internet TV channel DOMMUNE in Tokyo. We told Ukawa about the Koriyama community FM station KOCO Radio, and asked him if he could set up an internet TV station to broadcast information from Fukushima. As a result, the internet TV station DOMMUNE FUKUSHIMA started broadcasting on May 8.

If someone had sent information from Fukushima to Tokyo before the disaster, I doubt that anyone in Tokyo would have had the idea of picking it up. Even after the disaster, almost all information about Fukushima was broadcast from the point of view of Tokyo. But we thought it was essential to have an information line communicating the thoughts and feelings of people in Fukushima directly, without going through Tokyo.

At the same time, we held study meetings on radiation at "School FUKUSHIMA!," started a school of poetry and music, and began transmitting music and video works on the website DIY FUKUSHI-

MA! While we were doing these things on an ongoing basis, we were looking towards our biggest goal - holding an outdoor festival on August 15. The title was Festival FUKUSHIMA! Rather than send a particular message, we wanted to show people the current situation in Fukushima - that in itself would be the main message.

Of course, there would be a debate about whether or not we should invite people to an outdoor event, and that debate would necessitate checking radioactivity levels. If the government wasn't going to check and announce the levels, we could check and announce them ourselves, and have them interpreted with the help of experts. If the media weren't functioning, we would have our own media; and if the government wasn't functioning, we would do the things it wasn't doing. We thought it was important to show this process in detail.

Festival FUKUSHIMA! took place on August 15 at Fukushima City Village of Four Seasons and Azuma Baseball Stadium. Michiro Endo, Otomo Yoshihide, and Ryoichi Wago were the Executive Committee representatives. At the venue, to ensure against the worst-case scenario of cesium coming into direct contact with people's skin or



spreading through the air, many furoshiki (traditional Japanese multi-purpose cloths) gathered from all over Japan were spread over the ground to make a giant furoshiki of 6,000m2. This was also a work of art meant to convey the message that we won't let the cesium from Fukushima spread further. There were over 400 performers and about 13,000 visitors at the festival. Over 250,000 people saw it on U-STREAM.

I think this first festival gave the people of Fukushima hope that "a message can be sent from Fukushima." That wasn't our original objective, but I'd be really happy if that's how it turned out. I think it also turned out to be an opportunity for people out-

side of Fukushima to think about the situation, whether they agreed with our ideas or not.

This project is obviously going to turn into a long-distance run. Even though the government has announced that the nuclear power plant had been successfully contained, there's no real prospect of resolving the situation. Will it take decades? Maybe centuries? Will the situation continue throughout my lifetime and longer?

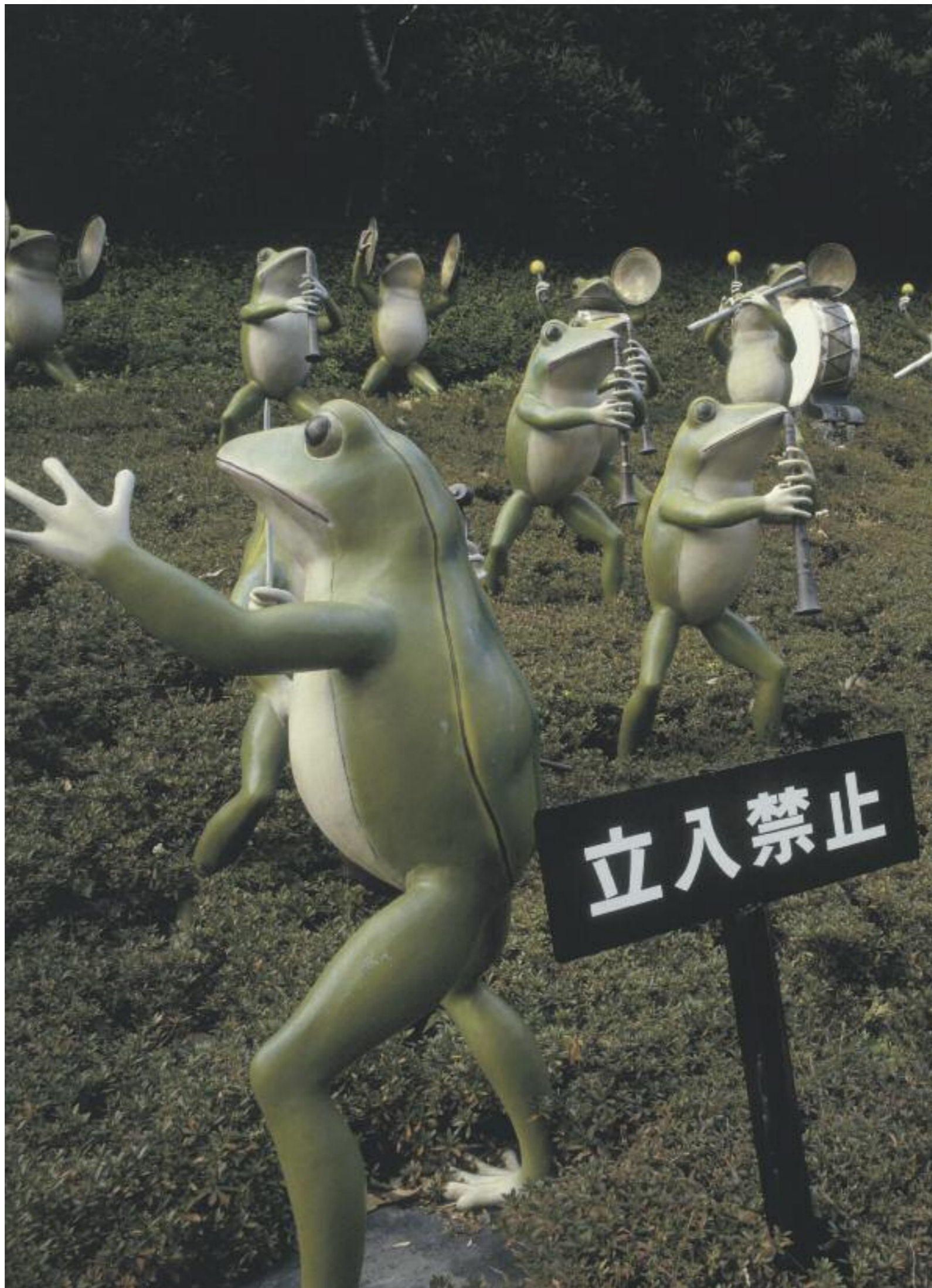
As for Project FUKUSHIMA!, not even I know what will happen in the future. I only know that in order to keep going, we'd like it to be something

flexible and ever-changing, rather than something with a fixed format like a traditional performing art - because the situation itself is ever-changing. And I'd like our thinking to be free and flexible enough that if it gets to a point where we think, "It isn't really worthwhile to keep doing what we're doing," we'll quit immediately and turn it into a different kind of activity.

What's necessary for Fukushima first of all is that it suffers no further damage, and that this kind of accident never happens again. It all comes down to that. And it's no exaggeration to say that turning FUKUSHIMA into a name with a positive sound will depend on what kind of future we can transmit from Fukushima. If Project FUKUSHIMA! has a reason for being, I truly think this is it. And I don't think it's an issue for Fukushima alone. ■

If the government wasn't functioning, we would do the things it wasn't doing.

This is an abridged version of a text that originally appeared on the website "Improvised Music from Japan". www.japanimprov.com



Voice of the People, Voice of the Dead

民衆の声、死者の声

Akira Takayama is one of the first theatre artists in Japan to examine the reasons for and consequences of the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima. In conversation with Christoph Gurk and Matthias Pees, the documentary maker explains the origins of his “Referendum Project”.

Christoph Gurk: Where were you on March 11, 2011?

Akira Takayama: At home, in my apartment. The earthquake happened in the afternoon, at 2:46. I was still sleeping, because I'd been awake the whole night before. Just before the quake began, my iPhone rang, the emergency alarm that announced the earthquake. I noticed it, but I couldn't comprehend the situation. My daughter, who was two years old at the time, began running around in panic, holding a small DVD bag in her hand. It was from the video store where we sometimes borrowed animes. I think it was instinctual that she grabbed the bag at that moment and started running around with it. The quake lasted four or five minutes. It just didn't stop. I've never experienced anything like it. The ground was no longer the ground. It felt

like being on a ship. Afterwards there were a number of strong aftershocks, and each one was accompanied by the same emergency alarm from the cell phone or the television. This noise burned itself deep into my memory. Every time it came, my daughter grabbed her bag and took off running. I turned on the television. 20 or 30 minutes after the quake, the tsunami hit the northeastern coast. This was all happening here and now. But I felt very distant from what I could see on the TV screen. I saw the tsunami coming, and I also saw cars still driving there. It was like some sort of bizarre movie.

CG: A surreal event. What I find unsettling is the video footage shot on March 11, 2011 showing people going to the beach to take photos of the approaching tidal wave. As if they were not themselves part of the danger zone. Some-

times it was too late when they noticed that they had to flee. It's probably typical for traumatic events. You don't want it to be true, you don't want to be part of it. So you disassociate the danger from the perception of reality. At the moment of shock, you can't yet give any meaning to the event.

AT: The catastrophe destroyed reality. Afterwards, everybody cancelled all their appointments and all their commitments. For instance, I was at home the whole time watching TV, listening to the radio and checking the news in the internet. It was the only thing I could do, over and over again, like a compulsion. Everything was so far away from me. When I saw the explosions at the nuclear plant, however, I felt a kind of reality. Better yet, the “phantom” of a reality. The radioactivity was there. Only we couldn't

see it. But we'd felt that it was there. It felt like the end of the world.

CG: It took an incredibly long time before the operators of the reactor plant in Fukushima publicly admitted what had happened. The nuclear meltdown was not confirmed for a very long time.

AT: It had happened right at the beginning. Only we didn't know it.

Matthias Pees: The strongest impression for me was that the German news correspondent moved to Kyoto and reported about a possible evacuation of the population from Tokyo – had the radioactivity pressed its way there with the weather conditions. He came to the realization that such a city can't be evacuated.

AT: Many companies considered moving their headquarters to western Japan.

MP: I still remember very well those three weeks after March 11. We were in the middle of preparing your project “Compartiment City Vienna”, which was shown at the Wiener Festwochen in 2011.

AT: Yes, we had to ship the material for the installation to Vienna by container. That was very complicated. All the shops were closed. There was nothing to buy. I also remember that my co-workers tried to get some drinks, including beer.

MP: Yes, because we'd planned on setting up a coin automat in Vienna with cold and hot drinks and soups. Since we wanted to fill the automat with Japanese goods, we had to get the products in Tokyo and ship them to Vienna from there.

I didn't leave my apartment for a month after the quake.
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AT: That was completely absurd. My co-workers drove to a lot of different shops, packing up as much as possible each time.

MP: Panic buying.

AT: But not for ourselves, for Vienna. At the beginning there were also frequent power outages. Normally it's never really dark in Tokyo. Suddenly the light was gone. That created a heightened awareness of danger.

CG: Along with Toshiaki Okada, you were one of the theatre artists to work with the consequences of March 11, 2011 from very early on. Many Japanese people have told me that they needed a bit of time to get some distance to

the events and to be able to articulate anything themselves. At the time, you were in the middle of a work process, so it must have been different for you. How did the perspective on your work change after March 11, 2011.

AT: I didn't leave my apartment for a month after the quake. On my way home, around midnight, I was walking through a nearby park – this was right during cherry blossom time, in April. Although the trees were in full bloom, there was no one there. There is a novella by the Japanese writer Motojiro Kajii: “Under blossoming cheery trees, corpses lie buried.” This suddenly seemed extremely real to me in the park. The magnificent blossoms – and under the ground were lying the dead. I thought that I needed to listen in to their voices, the voices of the dead, by means of theatre. Two or three days later there were gubernatorial elections in Tokyo. Shintaro Ishihara, the incumbent and a supporter of nuclear energy, won with a majority of 70 percent. I had expected that he would get voted out. My friends and people that I know are utterly and completely against Ishihara. But the majority in Tokyo love him. So I was really rattled as to what “our voices” actually are. How can we really figure out the will of the people? In May I was in Vienna to realize “Compartiment City Vienna”. During our stay, we visited the nuclear plant in Zentendorf near Vienna. The history of the reactor plant, which was preventing from going into operation by a national referendum, made me think that I could find an “instrument” in the form of a referendum to make the voices

heard. There has never been a national referendum in Japan. When I got back, the press conference of the Festival/Tokyo took place where I presented by plan. NHK, Japan's public television station, had requested an interview. But when I presented my artistic plan, the crew just went away, without doing the interview. My project obviously ran up against a taboo.

CG: Was that the question of a referendum?

AT: More the question of nuclear energy. Then came the inevitable call from the city hall in Tokyo. I was called in to appear before the director of the cultural department to explain my plans. During the working process I had been noticing more and more that it makes no sense to carry out direct political action in Tokyo, it doesn't have any effect. It simply leads to the

I was called in to appear before the director of the cultural department.
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consequence that you're ignored. I thought a great deal about the question of how theatre can be used as a political instrument. I knew that if I took a direct way, I would lose completely.

CG: Did you resort more to the sphere of fiction in order to address reality – or what counts as reality? In order to be able to say what cannot be said under normal circumstances?

AT: I was very influenced by an essay by Hans-Thies Lehmann, “Erschütterte Ordnung – Das Modell Antigone”. One sentence in particular stuck with me: “The framework of the political is time.” Politics can control people that are living now. But not the dead and those that have not yet been born. When I try to be directly

political, I get too close to this form of reality. What theatre can do is to open up a platform, a field in which politics does not press in. That's why I decided to limit the interviews in the “Referendum Project” to children – to people who cannot yet articulate and perceive their rights.

CG: Where did you conduct these conversations?

AT: In four cities in the prefectures of Fukushima and Tokyo. There were 26 questions, but not all of them were directly related to political issues. The first was: “What would you most like to do right now?” And the last question: “What is your dream?” In evaluating the interviews, I felt that the grammar school students were copying our reality. They weren't answering with what they really wanted to express, but with what they thought they should say. In the form of their statements, something like the spirit of the time after March 11, 2011 became visible. In the last few weeks, in March 2014, we conducted further interviews, this time in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, both cities affected by the atomic bomb. Children there know exactly what answers are expected of them. You can immediately recognise that a certain interview comes from Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

CG: How old were the children?

AT: 12, 13 and 14.

CG: So it's not their parents, but their grandparents who experienced the dropping of the atomic bomb.

AT: Exactly. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki there is an overpowering educational system. Every class is given special lessons on the topic of nuclear energy and the atomic bomb. This is why the students already have an answer ready with regard to the nuclear accident in Fukushima.

MP: The first interviews from Fukushima and Tokyo were shocking, even for those of us that are looking at the events in the region from outside. Why are these children, who live so close to the catastrophe, so unenlightened about the situation? When asked: “What would you do if you were the Prime Minister?” they all answered with pat phrases from television: “I would conjure up a smile on people's faces.”

CG: Where exactly does this influence come from that makes them say that?

AT: I'd like to find that out myself. I watch the interviews regularly. By now there are over 100 of them. Sometimes it depresses me to do so. Especially the videos from Fukushima. The young people there are so atrociously “correct”. Not at all childlike. I would really like to know how the world of adult politics manages to get such control over these children.

MP: Earlier you described your approach more in the sense of avoiding the directly political. I think that your project didn't have this defensive character from the beginning. Wasn't this also a longer process, which led you away from direct political topics and to the question of what the function of art actually is in our society?

AT: At the time I wasn't sure. I noticed that many people find this work very weak. The title “Referendum Project” already takes a strong position, one that invokes associations with activism or also a critical stance toward nuclear power plants. There are many people who came to see the project from the political spectrum in a narrow sense. They were all disappointed. Interviews with children, such a trifle. But I knew that if we continued to carry out this project over a long period – two, three or even ten years – the quantity would alter the quality. That's why I didn't give up. The trip to Nagasaki with our truck took 20 hours. I've never travelled for such a long time. The “Referendum Project” demands

a different way of perceiving time and resources. So far we've been working on it for three years. There are 8 seats in the truck. That is very slow going and not very effective. But after March 11, the perception of time in Japan has altered significantly.

CG: Can you describe it? What are the differences between today, three years after the catastrophe, and the time directly following March 11.

AT: Are you familiar with Linear Motor Cars? They are currently the fastest trains that there are, much faster than the Shinkansen. There was a plan to build a line for them in Japan, but the idea had already been abandoned before the earthquake. After March 11 the project was newly unfurled. This kind of speed is needed now in Japan, now more than ever. The Olympic Games will take place in Tokyo again. The time of the Olympics Games in 1964 was the era of the great boom for the metropolis. Every year new buildings were being built, and the highways and the Shinkansen were inaugurated. This is exactly what the politicians and also the media want to refer back to now. I think we need a kind of deceleration. I call it “Slow Journalism”. At the moment people have the feeling that they have to run so as not to miss their connection. But the “Referendum Project” is very time-consuming, inefficient – and perhaps not even political. We need such an interruption.

CG: Journalism has a meaning in the traditional sense for you. Not as conveying information by the momentum of technology in the internet, where you can create a rumour as fast as lightning, which can then get people excited.

AT: Yes. I would like to compile a digital archive. At the moment it's very laborious to show the interviews, since we need a big truck to do so. But in five years we will have all the collected material available online. That's the last station of our project.

CG: The nostalgia that you just spoke about in relation to the Olympics leads us to the quite basic question of what has actually come of the myths of the post-war period. The legends of endless growth. The belief in the ability to

The “Referendum Project” demands a different way of perceiving time and resources.
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control nature for human use. The economic growth in Japan based on cheap energy produced by nuclear power plants. This was obviously the *conditio sine qua non* that could not be put up for negotiation. The taboo character of this topic was a strong motor for the development of Japanese economy and society. Do you think that this could all have something to do with the historical trauma of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? In the latest version of the “Referendum Project”, which you are now presenting as part of “Japan Syndrome” at HAU Hebbel am Ufer, you indirectly introduced this question, if only by the choice of the cities in which you conducted the interviews this time.

AT: The development of our country after 1945 was designed by the USA. It profited materially from the Vietnam War and the Korean War. The question of why Japan had to be positioned and developed in this way is tied to its geo-strategic location and the existence of the Soviet Union. The USA dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki because they wanted to conquer our country.

CG: Japan was destroyed in order to establish a new order?

AT: We currently have 53 nuclear power plants. The first was imported from the USA – and the second as well. The reactors have made us rich, myself and also others. The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant does not belong to a company in northeastern Japan, but to TEPCO – the Tokyo Electric Power Company. Energy was delivered from there to our cities. This development began with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The dropping of the atomic bombs was a disaster. But at the same time also a “happy moment” for the development of Japan. ■

This conversation was recorded on March 28, 2014 in Frankfurt am Main.



Abolishing the Comfort Zone

フクシマ以後—安全地帯の崩壊

The nuclear catastrophe in Japan should cause us to renounce the promise of endlessly growing prosperity. A plea from **Harald Welzer**, written in the immediate impact of the few days after the melt-down in 2011.

For the moment, the disaster in Japan has also contaminated the certainty that we live in the best of all conceivable worlds, in a world of endless progress, which has liberated itself from the forces of nature and thus of finitude. The fact that a country almost completely devoid of natural resources can become the third largest economic power in the world no longer seems absurd to us, but has long been taken for granted. At the moment of the disaster it became instantly clear that such a thing is indeed only possible in the short term. Even nuclear energy does not absolve us from the trivial fact that the basis of survival is always the relationship between man and the environment.

It was the dream of modernity to become completely emancipated from nature, but all the artificial stuff, all the plastic, the nuclear waste and the earthquake-proof infrastructure has now taken on the overall condition of a gigantic fall-out in Japan; a negative mass that nonchalantly buries all the efforts of civilisation beneath itself, leaving behind death, illness, devastation, depression and futility.

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Shipwreck with spectators

We don't yet know what will come of it: whether the catastrophe-seasoned Japanese get back up on their feet again or whether millions of them will now be condemned to living in that "zone" which no one can enter or come out of anymore, since everything is contaminated. This scenario has often been imagined in literature and film, and the fact that Japan is an island only makes it easier to translate the nuclear apocalypse into reality. Those spared in other countries and continents can look on and shiver at what's happening there, with no need to fear either increased radioactivity nor the arrival of

dangerously contaminated uninvited guests.

A real dystopia. In the last few days I have often been asked if I think that we have finally got to the point where people will stop believing in the promise of endlessly growing prosperity, will find the price for this promise too high, and turn away to another lifestyle, perhaps one that is not so comfortable and not so reliant on the outside. Unfortunately, I don't think so.

And that is because this was the second major catastrophe, and the first hasn't changed anything either, because the appeal of an economic and social model that offers the incessant increase of happiness through the incessant extension of the consumer zone is so strong that hardly anyone can elude it any more.

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The logic of the regrettable exception

The reliance on nuclear power is only one symptom of a hunger for energy in this social model that is unquenchable in principle; the oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico last year, already forgotten today, is another; all the other disasters brought about by the principle of untenable overuse of resources can't even be enumerated. And the engineers, technicians, economic politicians and boards of energy concerns always give the same message in their breathtaking lack of imagination, that first, all of these things are regrettable exceptions, second, it could never happen here, and third, there's no alternative anyway, because after all we don't want to go back to the Stone Age or do without electricity bla bla bla...

How can all this constantly get said without the majority of the population finally revoking their agreement, not only calling for protest, reversal,

change, but also practising these things? Because with our dominant culture of waste and irresponsibility, we have always already given our assent, when we drive to work every morning in our cars, while away our time at the weekend in wellness oases or squeeze into planes going who knows where, where we do meaningless things on some other part of the planet.

In other words: We are more in agreement with the Grossmanns and the Theysens, the Westwelles and the Merckels of this world than we think we are, even as we express our indignation at them. After all, they are the ones who always make the user surface of everything available, from which we all too happily help ourselves at any time.

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There is no plan B

As citizens, now become users, we are now affected by the circumstance that we are more shocked at the prospect of delivery shortages of the new iPad, because Japan can't deliver the necessary components at the moment, than we are that there are millions of people keeling over. And this shouldn't surprise us, because we have to want to have the new iPad in order for the whole joint to keep running. Reaching the turning point would require us not to want to play along any more, or not to be able to; but if you get out, where in the hell do you end up?

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The perfidy of the capitalist system and all its gains in prosperity, justice, health and security is this: that every aspect of being can be transformed into a product and thus can potentially be made available to everyone, so long as they're lucky enough to be able to purchase them. It can co-opt and level out everything in the global happiness of consumption, but because it makes everything the same, that is, purchasable, it has also caused all alternatives to it to disappear. The really dramatic discovery that Japan is faced with is: There is no plan B, and that's why the Japanese will cling to nuclear energy, just as all other industrial nations will. And they'll do it even more as resources, and thus the scope of action, become scarcer..

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Blueprints for doom

In his book Collapse, Jared Diamond has shown that societies confronted with menacing changes in the conditions of their survival do one thing over all others: step up the strategies that were successful in the past, sometimes over hundreds of years. That is, when fertile ground becomes scarce, we squeeze more and more out of it, ruining it even faster. If oil is getting scarcer, we drill into the deep sea and increase the risks, and if there's not enough energy, we build nuclear power plants in earthquake zones.

Models of social success contain the blueprints for their own demise, and the only thing that's new in all this is that the margin between ascent and implosion is getting increasingly shorter. The western-capitalist form of society and life no longer needs three centuries to achieve fantastic advances in civilisation and then to destroy itself.

A future art of living and surviving can only consist in maintaining the level of progress achieved in civilisation in the areas of education, health, security, equality and constitutionality while radically scaling back on the wrong developments – unsustainable energy use, unlimited mobility, the culture of the chronic availability of everything.

This, however, demands significantly more than bland yammering about the failure of technologies that one believes one needs, or the insincere concern we show when seeing what has happened to others. Precisely the obscene arbitrariness of political decisions, such as those revealed here in this country by the Japanese disaster, should be reason enough not to leave our thoughts or our responsibility toward it to others. The disastrous accident has shown: resources are as finite as are the social models that ignore this simple fact. The comfort zone is now closed. ■

個人的な新鮮



Personal Changes

How can art find a way to speak again after an incalculable disaster? The director and writer **Toshiki Okada** describes how he has developed an almost classical understanding of drama and theatre under the impression of March 11, 2011.

The following is about certain smaller changes that have happened to me recently.

I make theatre. This implies that it's part of my work to think about characters and dramatic action.

Earlier, however, this kind of work didn't suit me at all. Constellations about the question of who love or hates whom immediately struck me as nutty. Utterly artificial and fraudulent. It seemed to be like I was being ridiculous when I went back and forth about what name to give a character. Ridiculous when I realized that I simply couldn't think of any suitable name – although names are completely insignificant. Ridiculous in wanting to bring in a thing called “meaning” as the foundation for the name-giving. Ludicrous.

The theatre that I made from this awareness was necessarily lacking in dramatic quality. In most cases my characters didn't even have names.

What I believed in was not this kind of “construction”, but something more truthful than that. But what is this “more truthful” thing? One definitive element of this, for example, is the presence of the actors, which is really present. The real presence of the actors conveys to the spectators a moment of the unmistakable. You can trust this significantly more than you can trust constructions like dramatic plot or characters. Through the dramatic plot or the characters, the potential that lies hidden in this “real” as such tends to become weaker. Correspondingly, we don't need it. Theatre can also emerge without these elements, or better yet, without them what emerges is a more powerful theatre. This is how I saw things. But this perspective has changed. My current self no longer thinks that it's feeble-minded to develop a dramatic plot. And I now have the serenity to give my characters names.

What triggered this change? I've understood the meaning of characters and dramatic plot. But I'm afraid it doesn't really mean much when I say “understood the meaning”. I'll try to formulate it a different way. I understood the function that characters and a dramatic plot could have. They are tools. And since they are tools, there are methods for using them. That's what I understood. That is, beforehand I hadn't known it. Why hadn't I known it? How could I end up where I am today without this knowledge? I can't say. Hm, actually, I do know, oh, sorry ... that's enough for now.

When an artificial dramatic plot is implanted into reality, this results in the fact that a part of the area that we call reality suddenly becomes foreign, that an enclave is created. This automatically generates an interrelation between reality and drama, for example a relation of mutual resistance.

My interest in the possibilities of drama to affect such a thing, in methods that introduce drama in this way, was piqued. Only now. But from the perspective of the theatre, this is of course something about which people say: Yes, we've known all about that for several thousand years already! That's why I have to say: only now. But until very recently, in fact, I simply didn't know it, there's nothing to be done about that.

This is why my play “Current Location”, which was premiered in April 2012, is a play with a dramatic plot – and this is quite rare for me. To give an example, which is possibly trivial: the characters in this play weep, they murder and are murdered.

I don't actually have to mention that the history of theatre has shifted from plays with dramatic plots to plays that are moving away from dramatic action. My interest at the time, however,

is moving from a theatre without dramatic action to theatre with it. It has reversed into its opposite. I have a problem. I am identified and upheld as someone who clearly makes purely avant-garde theatre. How did I come to this development. That's quite interesting.

What gave me the knowledge that a dramatic plot has the capacity to create a conflictual relationship to reality is – to put it plainly – the experience of the atmosphere in the society after the catastrophe. The disposition of this reality, the disposition of a society that is in no way “in unison” creates the necessity to produce a condition in which we can see, at least to some degree, that it is in fact not unified. The disposition of reality, this situation that doesn't even seem to waver one bit, has to go through some kind of threat here. And: something like this can be achieved by fiction. That became clear to me through the experience. Until then I had peacefully gone about living my life without needing to come to terms with such situations.

My interest in continuing to develop the theatre in its formal aspects has become significantly weaker. What interests me much more now is to transfer the “untimeliness” of the theatre into a contemporary form. Perhaps it seems as if these were not even two different matters. But they are utterly distinct. The search for a theatre that on the one hand reacts to the disposition of current reality and on the other hand applying the power, inherent to the theatre for several millennia, to contemporary society – for me these are two completely different things. ■

Reality has to go through some kind of threat here. Something like this can be achieved by fiction.

I now have the serenity to give my characters names.

Collective Memory

共に思い出す

Countless images have been created after the tsunami, with new ones coming every day. But even in their totality, they can never “represent” what happened. Reflections by the documentary filmmaker Hikaru Fujii.

1

As a result of suffering through one of the world's worst natural disasters and severe accidents, large numbers of people continue to wander about searching for the bodies of deceased family members, while unreliable speculations about radiation cause confusion. During this critical period, I question the direction in which “aesthetics” is headed. Distancing myself far from humanitarian pressure, I documented on video the actions taken by artists in the affected areas. Video as a medium, with its ability to replicate, is used not only to pass on the unique expressions of these artists in the affected areas to the world and the future, but also as a means to critique the actions taken by these artists as shown in the footage. I seek to objectify art, which has continuously evolved under the influence of particular times, locations, communities and individual views, within the context of my own space, time and thought. Regardless of what time period it may be, whether prior to or after 3.11, the one thing I can do is concentrate on questioning art as a fluid entity, as that is something that has yet to be explained.

2

When posed the question “What can art do?” in a critical situation, in which we are exposed to not only a natural disaster and severe accident, but to acts of political, economic and psychological violence, a contemporary art becomes deeply unsettled, in an everyday world that urges “problem solving”. “Festival”, as a form of religious ritual art created during the pre-modern era, was needed as a technique to regenerate, that is, to reconstruct affected areas. However, art from the modern era on, which attempted to separate itself entirely from its societal functions under the call for freedom, was stuck and afflicted. It stood in silence, faced with the decision of whether or not the technique to overcome crises could be included into the plasticity of artistic expression. Even in such circumstances, one artist makes a decision, opening to a relationship with social networks beyond the individual level. Another artist places songs in the lungs of each victim who had swallowed seawater, retaliating with poetic means against a crumbling world struck by the nuclear reactor accident. Yet another artist attempts to continue the pre-3.11 individual and independent art production, carrying the physical sensation of bearing the silence within. I think if there is anything that art can do, it is something along the lines of breaking the silence, utilising numerous means to do so.

3

The recorded footage does not accurately reflect the events that took place in reality; rather it is merely an image that captures the events in the mind of the author. Piling up such footage will never result in a total perception of the actual events. A huge amount of images were generated following 3.11 and will continue to be produced. The footage I recorded will also be placed on a plain along with billions of other videos. Even if we were to gather up all this footage and form a network of collective images, that still would not result in a representation of 3.11.

The reason why we still create images, regardless of how the authors many position their activities, is so as not to forget 3.11. Each individual image, produced in a different space, time and thought, connects with another, together forming links beyond the authors' intentions. This combination and accumulation of images becomes our memory, that is, a collective body of knowledge. While avoiding any kind of apperception, the image becomes the elementary particle from which history is constructed, taking part in affecting the future.

This text first appeared in Japanese in 2012 as part of a series of essays on the homepage of the publisher Hakusuisha. www.hakusuisha.co.jp/essay/special.html

The original text comes from the exhibition catalogue “Artists and the Disaster – Documentation in Progress” (2012) at the Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito (Japan).

ジ ヤ パ ン ド ロ ー ム





恐怖を克服するための遊戯

Playing as a Way of Overcoming Horror

Director Takuya Murakawa belongs to a younger generation of artists who are bringing new life to the theatre, bring extreme precision to the question of what the theatre is, and what it could be – or not. A laudation by **Hans-Thies Lehmann**.

There are certain evenings at the theatre that are different because they change something, when you get a sense that something special is going on. These are almost never the large-scale spectacles of popular taste, those that may be quite entertaining as “live shows” but that don’t leave behind any deep traces inside us. The experience of the special, the “exception”, is more often had in small, almost intimate moments, in which the possibilities of theatre are exhausted, and the theatre becomes an encounter in which I as a spectator simultaneously become a participant.

With directors like Akira Takayama or Takuya Murakawa, theatre comes – and this is the basis of my interest in them – from the awareness of crisis, catastrophe and engagement. Paradoxically we recognise the necessity of this art form precisely when it itself is radically called into question, as it is in these works. The theatre here does without the show elements, without representation, becoming a communally experienced event. This alone does not yet override our isolation and separation, but it does provide a space for the desire to override it.

Art, as Walter Benjamin defined it, is the creation of a demand which could be fully satisfied only later. In particular the art of the theatre is virtually never only an aesthetic occasion. This is why it is interesting when it puts its aesthetic autonomy on the line, allowing life and the “scream of the world” (Heiner Müller) to penetrate into its innermost part. Theatre can always be the moment of a promise – even if, in the end, it is never really kept: the community, the “cohesion” of the human species in the face of adversity, be it illness, decline, natural catastrophes, and also the destruction caused by human beings themselves.

Takuya Murakawa is a young artist and documentary filmmaker from the area of Kansai, who asks very precisely what theatre is and what it can be. In an interview he talks about how impressed he was by the children who were victims of the earthquake and tsunami, and who had overcome trauma in a game: One calls out “Earthquake!” and everyone dashes under a table; another calls out “The tsunami’s coming!” and everybody jumps up on tables and chairs.

For Murakawa, theatre is a practice of playing at overcoming horror. At the same time it’s a practice that thematises our solidarity, our humanity. When I was a jury member of

the “Festival/Tokyo” in 2011 I was able to experience “Zeitgeber”. In one hour Shuzo Kudo, who is not a professional actor but a real caretaker for the disabled, shows us his work with a person who is practically completely paralysed.

On a nearly empty stage there are only two folding chairs, a microphone, a stereo system at the front edge. Only: the disabled person isn’t there. The director appears and asks if a woman from the audience would be so kind as to join the performance on stage. He assures us that you don’t have to do anything, and only one time do you have to say one simple sentence. In fact, after a brief hesitation, a young woman decides to take on the “role” of the disabled person. All she has to do is express some great wish, which she can choose herself, at two or three points. One might harbour a fear that we would now experience a didactic and moralising play, a “moving” documentary, like those that television provides at every moment. What happened was nothing like that at all.

The performance elevated itself far above documenting. Kudo shows everything in complete objectivity and austerity. The actions, even the “embarrassing” ones, helping at the toilet, cleaning the patient, etc., were simply demonstrated with a radically unpretentious calm. At the same time the whole procedure was and remained – theatre. Didn’t transform into some political-moral appeal. The theatre spoke by showing – and by falling silent. The language, or lack of it, was a strong moment. The caretaker goes through the alphabet over and over again, until the disabled person, by moving her eyelids – the only thing she can do – confirms the sign, thus confirming her desire for a particular food, letter by letter.

The curiously German title “Zeitgeber” came true. The theatre showed the giving of time to others, and not some work with a production goal, nor some “immaterial work”, like that recently thematised in Marxist analyses, but work as a vital human activity, the aim of which is contained within itself as a confirmation of the human being with and for others. An implicitly political “aesthetics”, a living critique of capitalist forms of living. Murakawa will go on imagining theatre in such a way that it is no longer just theatre, making use indeed of the singular possibility of the theatre to recognise our everyday lives, and especially our lack of true language, at a distance. ■

The text was first published in the magazine of the Festival/Tokyo “TOKYO/SCENE #3” (October 2012).

当事者とは何か？

What is a Concerned Party?

How can people, even if they themselves were not there at the time, construct a relationship to catastrophic events? The visual artist Tadasu Takamine on the requirements of a partisan art, in solidarity with the victims.

Simone de Beauvoir famously wrote that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” In other words, the process by which one’s individual self-consciousness emerges is profoundly influenced by an awareness of the larger collective. This notion, it seems to me, is gradually taking on a larger significance in contemporary Japan. Having become all too familiar with the idea that “one is not born, but rather becomes, Japanese”, there are many things that have never really entered our consciousness – perhaps because they have been skilfully manipulated and doctored in a way that hinders us from paying them too much attention. Now, at long last, we find ourselves in a situation where we are actually confronted with the experience

How can art respond to a catastrophe of this scale?

of these things. What are we made up of, and how are our selves and identities created? This seems to be the question that has emerged, like a plume of smoke, in the wake of March 11.

The invitation for a solo show at Art Tower Mito came about four months after the Great East Japan Earthquake. From the very beginning I thought this exhibition would be a challenge: because of Mito, the place itself, but also due to the timing. How can art respond to a catastrophe of this scale, and to the social developments and problems that go along with it? Politics, information, science, the body – it was jam packed with every kind of artistic topic.

Protests had already started taking place in various places. Some people were immediately roused to act. Many went directly to the affected areas as volunteers. I wondered what kind of power art could possess in this context. The extent of the impact on the environment, on people’s lives, was changing every day, even every hour. I really wanted to help, and strongly felt that it was particularly now that we needed a radical shift in our way of thinking.

I think there are two kinds of people: those who value quality more, and those who value quantity more. Creative expression, not only in art, basically deals with quality, with details. Issues regarding the nuclear reactors, like politics, are a question of quantity (numbers), so if you want to deal with these in art you need to use an activist methodology. But how best to reach a

quantifiable result, albeit by artistic means?

Art in contemporary society is often expected to be new. On the other hand, just because it’s novel doesn’t mean it’s good; one must consider how it reaches people’s hearts and minds. Simply writing the word “Peace” on a wall cannot be called artistic expression. Yet, there were many artists who responded immediately to the earthquake. I think those responses were by and large impulsive.

Art is fundamentally based on communication; even if it seems as though you are cooped up alone in a room to produce art, you are already in dialogue with nature, with other people, with yourself. What does such a dialogue elicit? “Connection”, I think. Self and other, past and present, “things” and people. Such behaviour is usually not considered particularly useful, but following such a disaster, I intuitively felt this could be useful in a way that goes beyond the question of people’s material conditions. This is precisely because art is that which is capable of questioning quality. Rather than being an attitude of doing whatever works, as long as I survive, no matter about others – art is a matter of working at the question of what it means to be alive, what makes it worth being alive.

Physical distance and psychological distance are completely separate things, so the distance one feels one has from the nuclear reactors is different for everybody. I happened to be out of Japan when the

earthquake occurred, but I wonder how much I would I have felt myself to be one of those directly concerned had I been there. When I was asked about it in England, I answered, “Nature doesn’t recognize the concept of national borders. I think it would be wrong to see this as a domestic issue for Japan, or to believe that all Japanese will feel the same way about it.” So it upset me when, in the face of this situation, there soon emerged a distinction between the concerned and the unconcerned, the impli-

cated and the unimplicated. In fact, I object to the very idea that anyone could consider him- or herself “unconcerned” with any aspect of the situation. When one’s own body is injured, one indeed forms a kind of “concerned-party consciousness.” That consciousness becomes weaker as the injury heals, however one probably continues to act based on the memory that “I once felt this way.” At times, concerned-ness, so to speak, is a useful phrase, allowing one to feel that others “just

don’t understand,” as though we hold an emotional blackbox within, used to allow the concerned – those who have been directly involved – special privileges. But this also produces a complex in those who are told they don’t understand.

The performance collective Dumb Type, of which I was a member, discussed the topic of concerned-ness at length in the work S/N (1992). It was a matter of imagining how to remove the barrier surrounding HIV, in a group consisting of Teiji Furuhashi, who was infected with HIV, and we other members, who were not. Although there shouldn’t be any barriers, why

It would be wrong to see this as a domestic issue for Japan.

do we feel they exist?

The above issue of concerned-ness remains somewhat confused and has been left unresolved. However, creative expression is ascertaining the distance between subject and self, a process in which it is impossible not to form some kind of interconnection. As a result, for creative expression the question of “what constitutes a concerned party” is fundamental. When a temporary relation to the subject becomes a means of creative expression it produces “responsibility with which one is directly related.” Hence it’s impossible that creative expression is unrelated to such “responsibility.”

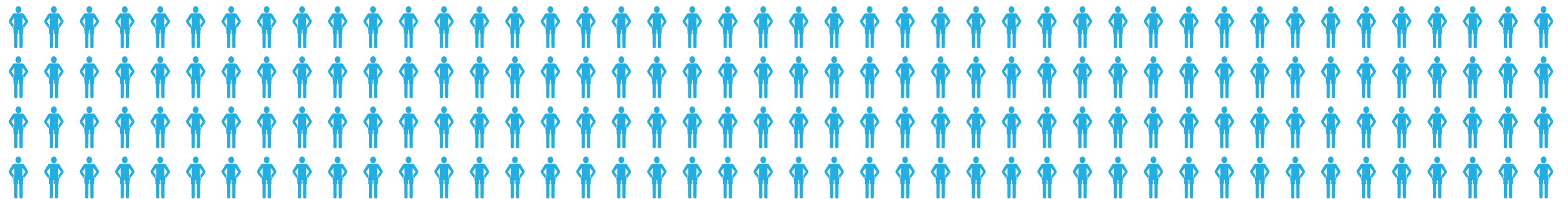
While trying to determine the distance between

myself and the nuclear reactors, all kinds of previously concealed information and a dumbfounding network of collusion surrounding the reactors continued to be exposed. Although I didn’t want to believe it, we had been repeatedly lied to and deceived. Those who had even perpetrated lies of a criminal nature simply feigned ignorance and were going about their comfortable, carefree lives. Can this be called a constitutionally governed country? It was astonishing to see Japan reveal

its true colours. The connecting thread that clung to me, reeling me in ever closer to the nuclear reactor, was the outline that is Japan.

I started to think about making an installation to share our anger. In order to link together people who possessed this definite anger, I aimed to turn myself into a go-between. ■

Those who had even perpetrated lies of a criminal nature simply feigned ignorance.





Successful Failure

成功した失敗

He often recruits new band members through newspaper ads. Pros don't stand a chance – musicians who have mastered their instruments need not apply. When Tori Kudo walks on stage with his ensemble, anything can happen. By Markus Schneider.

"I'm a bit like a coffee filter", explained Tori Kudo in an interview about his work a few years ago. "Many sounds come in to my body, they percolate down and become sounds in my music". This self-description seems very apt listening to his numerous releases and to Tori Kudo's appearances with this ensemble Maher Shalal Hash Baz. Familiar, melancholy harmonies and melodies constantly flow, drip and trickle vaguely through often extremely short pieces, adding up to curiously tender, hunched-hopeful songs. Tori Kudo sings with a loose, jittery voice, his wife Reiko with a clear, distanced-traditional tone, guitars clang and twang in brittle, psychedelic colours to rickety percussion, a wobbly euphonium takes the lead in a group of

Tori Kudo is considered a naïvist, and is now one of the éminences grises of the Japanese underground.

cheerfully out-of-tune, tottering, hooting wind instruments, perhaps mixing in the extraneous noise of a virtuoso on the hair dryer or field recordings. The form of the songs does not emerge through formal cohesion, but free wheeling concentration. The pieces are reminiscent – usually all at once – of free jazz, pop ballads, psychedelic and Japanese folk and rock. These styles communicate with one another in the music in rather opaque ways. Due to the light and simple manner of his ensemble, Tori Kudo is considered a naïvist. But the pianist, guitarist and singer, born in Tokyo in 1959, has been

active in the Japanese underground since the late '70s, and is now one of its éminences grises. According to the jazz musician Bill Wells, who occasionally plays with Maher Shalal Hash Baz, he is one of the most underrated pianists in the world. This, of course, is also due to the fact that the Japanese underground as a whole reaches our western realm only sporadically and in the form of individual artists, even in our highly networked times. A kind of primal scene was formed at the end of the '70s centred on the small Tokyo café and live music club Minor. This, for example, is where the extreme guitarist Keiji Haino started, with whom Tori Kudo occasionally plays, and also the semi-legendary High Rise, which specialised in free-form stoner rock. Its musicians in turn were in various constellations of bands with Tori Kudo

and Maher Shalal Hash Baz, all of whom belonged to the hard core of the scene.

The inspiration for these very diverse concepts comes from the do-it-yourself philosophy of punk and the New York No Wave. One of Tori Kudo's early bands, along with Worst Noise and Noise, was also Tokyo Suicide, which was an homage-turned-band to the minimalist electropunk of Alan Vega and Marin Rev. At any rate, the underground in Tokyo, according to the Japan specialist Alan Cummings in the off-music magazine The Wire, got along without the demarcation manoeuvres of western subcultures. The protagonists of the scene saw no contradiction in rock riffs, free jazz and prog rock motifs. Tori Kudo's concept consisted primarily in a "theory of error", which assumes a rejection of professional structures and strategies. "We couldn't play anywhere else but in 'Minor'", he remembers. "The sounds we created there had absolutely no musical potential. We were always starting from somewhere below the proper starting point for music. Normally that would be zero, but at Minor somehow we always seemed to be starting from minus. If playing three notes of a scale would be 0.01, no one at Minor ever got that far."

In 2012 the Kudos could even be heard on a single by the electropoppers Hot Chip.

His earlier excitement for a politics of resistance had obviously waned, for Tori Kudo has presumably recently joined the Jehovah's Witnesses. But he explains the biblical citations and allegories in his songs and his florid interviews with reference to the grip on narrative that this material offers. The name Maher Shalal Hash Baz, also taken from the Bible, just sounds great with Japanese pronunciation.

Already at 14 Tori Kudo was appearing professionally in hotel bars with cocktail jazz musicians. Even then he is supposed to have been always

improvising. In his solo concerts, which he gives on piano, he brings together the cascading ideas of Cecil Taylor, oddly plausible today, with the more bluesy-catchy motifs of the Ahmad Jamal school. In some projects he also unconditionally falls into abstract noise contexts, for instance with Keiji Haino, Otomo Yoshihide or Rick Potts, the latter of which is a member of the Los Angeles Free Music Society. As an empathetically melodious accompanist, he can be heard on the fragile solo albums of his wife, Reiko Kudo.

His "relative" fame in western pop culture at the time – in 2012 the Kudos could even be heard on a single by the electropoppers Hot Chip – is due to Stephen Pastel. The head of the sixties revival group The Pastels founded his independent label Geographic in part to release the music of Maher Shalal Hash Baz. At the beginning of the last decade, the Kudos even lived briefly in Scotland, where they created some works with Bill Wells as well as a few studio albums, and Tori Kudo put together the compilation "A Summer to Another Summer" with Stephen Pastel.

That was an enormously laborious task, since on the one hand the back catalogue of Maher Shalal Hash Baz consisted primarily of numerous cassettes, singles, and albums in extremely small runs. On the other

hand, the 81 songs on the legendary, quickly out-of-print triple album "Return Visit to Rock Mass" do epitomize the impatient creative power of Tori Kudo. Recently he packed together a cool 177 titles onto the work "C'est la Dernière Chanson". Very often it consists of just seconds-long sketches, beginnings, ideas that nonetheless work

themselves into a unique unified image. To this day, Tori Kudo prefers non-professional musicians for Maher Shalal Hash Baz. At live appearances he spontaneously invites people from the audience onstage. In such contexts, he sees himself more as a director of a theatre group, instructing actors in their roles. "Even if I know I've made a mistake", says Tori Kudo, "I've arrived at some sort of conclusion." His music can thus perhaps also be explained as a situationist choreography. The listener is precisely not drawn into the spell of the music by a fixed, formulated centre. Its singularly humane magic unfolds from the reverse movement. The frail beauty of Tori Kudo's art lies in the fact that in the musicians' attempt to make music, they end up time and again in grandiose and dignified failure. ■

In their attempt to make music, they end up time and again in grandiose and dignified failure.



THEATRE

Toshiki Okada / chelfitsch
Current Location

THEATRE

Japanese with German and English supertitles
20.5., 20:00, 21.5., 19:00 / HAU2

In the spring of 2012, the atmospherically dense conversation play was one of the first works to react artistically to the catastrophe of March 11, 2011. Seven women live in a place called “Village”. One day clouds start to loom. A rumour circulates that they carry a menacing curse. An old woman appears in the local library and provokes an uproar by exclaiming that under no circumstances should people let themselves get wet in the rain. The protagonists go through a process of understanding that is painful and conflictual. Should they believe what people are saying? Is it better to leave the place where they are?

“Current Location” marks a new phase in Okada's dramatic work. Unlike the primarily movement oriented productions of the past, the director quite consciousness introduces a fictional plot and dramatic characters here. A small-town cosmos emerges, shot through with science fiction elements and an apocalyptic tone.

Production: chelfitsch in collaboration with precog (Tokyo). Co-production: Doosan Art Center (Seoul). Commissioned by KAAAT (Kanagawa Arts Theater, Yokohama) 2012.

Takuya Murakawa
Zeitgeber

THEATRE

Japanese with German and English supertitles
22.–24.5., 19:00 / HAU3 / European premiere

24.5. followed by: Takuya Murakawa and Hans-Thies Lehmann in conversation / German and Japanese with German translation

What links the severely disabled with their caretakers? The play “Zeitgeber” presents routine activities in a highly matter-of-fact way, without emotional involvement: changing clothes, taking meals, washing the body, daily conversation. Mr. Fujii, the severely disabled main character, only communicates with his surroundings by moving his eyelids. His caretaker uses a strictly regulated system of speaking to ask the patient about his wishes and thoughts. The arduous interaction between the two protagonists points to the fundamental possibility and impossibility of communication. It is also about the power structures between the “disabled” and the “non-disabled”. The instability of the dividing line between fiction and “reality” in the theatre becomes clearly visible. This performance at HAU Hebbel am Ufer marks the first performance of one of Takuya Murakawa's works in Europe.

Production: Takuya Murakawa. Cooperation: Biwakei Studio.

Toshiki Okada / chelfitsch
Super Premium Soft Double
Vanilla Rich

THEATRE

Japanese with German and English supertitles
28.–29.5., 20:00 / HAU2

Toshiki Okada's current play is set in a 24-hour convenience store called “Smile Factory”. In this brightly lit, always freshly scrubbed modern paradise, air-conditioned to a pleasant temperature, a web of relationships between personnel and customers starts to unravel, marked by everyday rituals. Abe and Sakamoto, the night clerks, indulge in wild speculations over the question of when the branch manager last had sex with his wife. As a gesture of quiet resistance, Abe falsifies the customers' age statistics now and then. Every week on Tuesday and Friday, the new products go on sale to great excitement. Will the ice cream flavour “Super Premium Soft Double Vanilla Rich” fulfil expectations and turn out to be the hot ticket of the summer? To music by Johann Sebastian Bach, the performers interact using stuttering and constantly repeating words and gestures. Even more so than in “Hot Pepper, Air-Conditioner, and the Farewell Speech”, the performance seeks out a dialogue with the movements of the music.

Production: chelfitsch in collaboration with precog (Tokyo). Co-production: Theater der Welt 2014 (Mannheim), KAAAT (Kanagawa Arts Theater, Yokohama), LFT – London International Festival of Theatre, Maria Matos Teatro Municipal (Lisbon), CULTURESAPES (Basel), Kaserne Basel, House on Fire with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union. Funded by the Arts Council Tokyo.

MUSIC

Tori Kudo
& Maher Shalal Hash Baz
Concert

MUSIC

21.5., 21:00 / HAU1

There's a lot more music to be discovered in Japan than Noise and J-Pop. The singer, guitarist and songwriter Tori Kudo is an avowed naïvist and anti-nuclear activist. For his band Maher Shalal Hash Baz he constantly seeks out different musicians to interpret his wonderful melodies, for preference with no knowledge of their instruments. When he and his ensemble walk on stage, anything can happen. For the concert in HAU1, Tori Kudo is travelling in from Japan with 7 musicians. But he just might recruit a few more in Berlin at the last moment.

Sangatsu
Concert

MUSIC

27.5., 20:00 / HAU1

Sangatsu are known for their soundtracks to Toshiki Okada's plays. With the collaboration of prominent colleagues such as Jim O'Rourke, the seven-person ensemble also produces delicate post-rock outside the theatrical context, influenced by the conception of time in Zen. Their soundscapes often change, without transitions, between loud, harsh passages and gentle, lyrical ones. The compositional textures are interrupted over and over again by breaks in which complete silence reigns.

Supported by the Japan Foundation.

DIALOGUE/FILM

Hikaru Fujii
PROJECT FUKUSHIMA!

FILM

Documentary film, Japan 2012, 90 min. / Germany /
Admission free, donations requested for the NPO “Project Fukushima!”
22.5., 20:30 / HAU1

“PROJECT FUKUSHIMA!” was instigated by musicians Yoshihide Otomo and Michiro Endo, as well as the poet Ryoichi Wago, all born or residing in Fukushima. The initiative is a network for trying out new social forms with artistic activities as their basis. It reflects on problems that confront the region after the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The project was begun in May 2011. In August of that same year came the first “FESTIVAL FUKUSHIMA!” which attracted more than 10,000 visitors. The activities of the network also include the internet broadcast station “DOMMUNE FUKUSHIMA!”, the “SCHOOL FUKUSHIMA!”, a place for further education, as well as the fund-raising initiative “DIY FUKUSHIMA!” This is meant to provide a financial basis for the long-term continuation of artistic activities. Filmmaker Hikaru Fujii accompanied the activities and discussions during the preparations for the “FESTIVAL FUKUSHIMA!” with his camera over a period of seven months. The documentary film precisely and unpretentiously observes the different attitudes of the participants, also illuminating the areas of conflict between the protagonists.

Director: Hikaru Fujii; Musical score: Yoshihide Otomo; Producer: Jun Numada; Production: PROJECT FUKUSHIMA! Production Committee; Funded by: GBFund, ARTS NPO AID

Ende der Komfortzone? Kunst
und Politik nach Fukushima
With Chiaki Soma, Hiromi Maruoka,
Akira Takayama, Steffi Richter
Moderation: Stefanie Carp

DIALOGUE

German and Japanese with simultaneous translation / Admission free
25.5., 20:00 / HAU2

What can theatre mean after Fukushima? Has Japanese society become more open after the catastrophe, or more closed? Does the relationship between art and politics in times of global crisis capitalism need to be re-adjusted? On this panel, moderated by dramaturge Stefanie Carp, are two of the leading theatre curators in Japan. Chiaki Soma was artistic director of “Festival/Tokyo” for six years. Hiromi Maruoka presides over the NPO Japan Center Pacific Basin Arts Communication and is head of two important festivals of performing arts, the “TPAM” in Yokohama and “Sound Live Tokyo”. Director Akira Takayama has been invited to “Japan Syndrome” with a new instalment of his “Referendum Project”. Steffi Richter is professor of Japanese Studies at the East Asia Institute at the University of Leipzig. She researches and teaches on the intellectual and cultural history of modern Japan as well as current everyday and popular cultures. She is an expert on the organised resistance to nuclear energy, both in Japan and in Germany.

Hikaru Fujii
Asahiza

FILM

Documentary film, Japan 2013, 74 min.
Japanese with English subtitles

Preview: 23.05., 20:30 / HAU1

Followed by: Hikaru Fujii and Akira Takayama in conversation
Moderation: Steffi Richter

“Asahiza”, a cinema and a former kabuki theatre in the city of Minamisoma, 23 kilometres from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, is a prime example of the economic and political development of Japan in the post-war period. It was marked by a sharp differential between city and country, by the desolation of the province in contrast to economic concentration in the metropolitan areas of Tokyo and Osaka, and by a loss in the purpose of the inner city due to the construction of oversized shopping malls outside the city.

The Asahiza, built in 1923, had its heyday starting in the '50s. It was the place where many future married couples spent their first date or where children saw the latest anime hits. Due to a massive drop in visitors, the cinema was closed in 1991. Since then it has only sporadically been used for screenings by the “Asahiza Appreciation Club”. The building is thus meant to be preserved from further deterioration, perhaps even making it possible to re-open it in the long term.

The quietly staged film portrait by Hikaru Fujii listens in to the memories of the inhabitants of Minamisoma about “their” cinema, thus narrating a story of the second half of the 20th century in the Japanese province on the basis of very personal experiences. The new reality in Fukushima as a result of the nuclear accident only appears extremely sparingly, with great reserve. But in this way, as a gap, an inversion, the presence of the catastrophe becomes even stronger. It instigates a reflection on the media representation of reality after March 11, 2011 and the performance of the “concerned”.

Director: Hikaru Fujii. Production: ASAHIZA Production Committee / Bunkanashigotohito Consortium / Association Community Cinema Center / Merger Company tecolLC / NPO 20th Century Archive Sendai / Limited Private Company Contents Project / Japan Film Commission) / Asahiza Appreciation Club Distribution: Association Community Cinema Center.

Phänomen Manga – Japanische Comics und 3.11 With Jaqueline Berndt and Steffi Richter

DIALOGUE

German with Japanese translation
24.5., 20:30 / HAU2

It is a well-known cliché that it is largely taboo in Japan to express feelings directly. The sediments of events that are difficult to cope with and wishes that deviate from the norm are carefully locked up and packed away in the products of the culture industry. In this context, it is above all manga in which Japanese culture compresses its experience of collective trauma, which already existed long before atomic bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, into images of the apocalypse. How have themes and aesthetic codes changed in manga since March 11, 2011? This question will be addressed by Jacqueline Berndt, one of the leading international experts on the genre, using selected visual materials. She has lived in Japan for more than 20 years, and has made her mark on the topic through a wide variety of research projects. Since 2009 she has been professor of comic theory at the manga faculty of Kyoto Seika University, as well as vice-director of the International Manga Research Center, housed at the Kyoto International Manga Museum. Her partner for the evening is Steffi Richter, professor of Japanese studies at the University of Leipzig.

Late Night Lecture Performance With Kyoichi Tsuzuki

DIALOGUE

English
29.5., 22:00 / HAU1

Kyoichi Tsuzuki is an internationally recognised photographer and journalist, who tracks down the chasms in the everyday lives of his countrymen with the cool eye of an ethnologist, but also with obsessive energy. His objects of interest include the homes of fetishistic fashion victims, who hoard and pile up innumerable copies of the same piece of clothing; love hotels and sex museums located on lonely country roads and at the periphery of big cities; or bored youth in the provinces who use their parents' cars to put on nightly honking concerts over great distances without ever seeing each other. In an extremely entertaining slide show lecture, Kyoichi Tsuzuki pursues the thesis that it is here that the hidden face of Japan can be seen, and not in the domain of presumably good taste or in the products of the globalised art market.

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani I Live in Fear – Record of a Living Being After March 11

FILM DIALOGUE

Germany, Japan 2014, 29 min.
Japanese with English subtitles

26.5., 20:00 / HAU1
Followed by: Toshiki Okada, Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani in conversation / Moderation: Elke Buhr
German and Japanese with Japanese translation

For this recent work by the artist duo, which was commissioned by the Aichi Triennale in 2013, Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani invited actors, people who had had to leave their home as a result of the nuclear accident and inhabitants of the prefecture of Aichi to a screening of Akira Kurosawa's 1955 film classic "I Live in Fear". The intention was to re-evaluate Kurosawa's film, which thematises the fear of the nuclear threat in Japan after nuclear weapons testing, such as had taken place one year before at Bikini Atoll. After the film screening there was a discussion and improvisation workshop, recorded in this documentary film. Fear and insecurities – not least a result of the confusing state of information after the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant – come to the fore here. The director Toshiki Okada was also among the participants. He relocated to the island of Kysushu in western Japan after the catastrophe in order to get as far away as possible from the zone affected by the ruins of the nuclear power plant.

Akira Kurosawa Ikimono no kiroku / I Live in Fear

FILM

Fiction film, Japan 1955, 103 min.
Japanese with German subtitles

26.5., 22:00 / HAU1

Foundry owner Kiichi Nakajima is plagued by anxiety attacks because he believes that a nuclear catastrophe is imminent. To escape it, he wants to sell his factory and immigrate to Brazil with his family. But the family is unsympathetic to his fears, and instead tries to have him legally ruled incompetent. In the blazing heat of summer, Kiichi's trial tests the nerves of everyone involved. The backdrop of the film is the USA's atomic bomb testing on Bikini Atoll in the spring of 1954, which had also exposed a Japanese fishing boat to radiation and had cost one sailor his life. In light of the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki only a few years beforehand, the Japanese public reacted indignantly to the tests. They triggered an anti-nuclear movement in Japan, which later grew into one of the largest protest movements of the post-war period.

SALON 3.11

During the festival "Japan Syndrome" the "Salon 3.11" will open its doors in regular shifts, providing spectators with the opportunity to talk informally with the central figures of the festival in an intimate atmosphere. It all gets started with a talk between Stéphane Bauer, director of the Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien and curator of the exhibition "Distant Observations: Fukushima in Berlin" (March 2011) and the filmmaker Hikaru Fujii. The Leipzig-based Japan scholar Steffi Richter, who edited the award-winning "Lesebuch Fukushima" last year, speaks with Tadasu Takamine. Members of the band Sangatsu discuss the lines of connection between post-rock and Zen Buddhism with Christoph Gurk. Journalist Peter Laudenbach interviews Toshiki Okada about his experiences as an exile to western Japan. In addition there are two open air events, at which the artist Yukihiro Taguchi hosts an "Open House" on the embattled grounds of the Cuvrybrache in Kreuzberg and another action in front of HAU2.

Sachiko Hara Hiroshima Salon

25.5., 18:00 / HAU1

German and Japanese

Since 2009, actor Sachiko Hara has regularly been hosting salons with alternating guests, all of which circle about topics related to her homeland Japan. The aesthetics vary between performance, lecture and anime freak show. The initial impulse for the salon was the fact that Sachiko Hara's former place of residence – Hannover – is the sister city of Hiroshima. This provided her with the opportunity to do some very personal research on the connecting lines between Germany and Japan. Hara's first salon in Berlin will concern the large-scale nuclear catastrophes in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their effects, which can still be felt today.

Salon 3.11 / Overview

Admission free except for on 25.5.

22.5., 17:30 / HAU1

Hikaru Fujii and Stéphane Bauer in conversation
German and Japanese with German translation

23.5., 17:30 / HAU1

Tadasu Takamine and Steffi Richter in conversation
German and Japanese with German translation

24.5., 15:00 / Cuvry-Brache*

Open House: "Dis-Cuvry – Confronting Comfort #1"
with Yukihiro Taguchi, Chiara Ciccarello and Lutz Henke
* Meeting point Schlesische Straße / Cuvrystraße

25.5., 18:00 / HAU1

Sachiko Hara: Hiroshima Salon
German and Japanese

26.5., 17:30 / HAU1

Atsuhiko Koizumi (Sangatsu) and Christoph Gurk in conversation
German and Japanese with German translation

27.5., ab 18:00 / HAU2 (Open Air)

Open House: "Confronting Comfort #2"
with Yukihiro Taguchi, Chiara Ciccarello and Lutz Henke

28.5., 17:30 / HAU1

Kyoichi Tsuzuki and Christoph Gurk in conversation
English

29.5., 17:30 / HAU1

Peter Laudenbach and Toshiki Okada in conversation
German and Japanese with German translation

INSTALLATION

Tadasu Takamine Japan Syndrome – Berlin Version #3

Japanese with English surtitles

21.–29.5., daily from 18:00 / Opening: 20.5., 19:00 / HAU2

Tadasu Takamine's performative video and Installation "Japan Syndrome" is a commentary on the current, still vastly complicated situation in Japan after the earthquake and nuclear accident on March 11, 2011. The consequences of this event for the affected regions and Japan as a whole are as difficult to see as they are to measure, but they reach deep into the everyday ordinary lives of the people. Takamine, former member of the legendary performance group Dumb Type, researches questions of contemporary bio-politics, often involving his own corporality and his personal biography. The 3-channel video "Japan Syndrome" presents theatrical re-enactments of scenes that played out every day in food shops in Kyoto, Yamaguchi and Mito. They demonstrate what happens when people in Japan begin to ask questions. The customers asking into the origins and radioactive exposure of the products are met by the alternate reassurance and silence of the clerks. Takamine thus mirrors the strategies of deception and denial of danger that marked not only official governmental politics, but also the media and the interpersonal sphere after the catastrophe in Japan. In Berlin, "Japan Syndrome" is being shown in combination with Takamine's photo installation "Nuclear Family". It combines Takamine's family history with a chronology of nuclear tests carried out all over the world.

"Japan Syndrome" is presented here for the first time in Germany. The work was part of the solo exhibition "Tadasu Takamine's Cool Japan" at Art Tower Mito 2012, curated by Mizuki Takahashi. Thanks to: Casco - Office for Art, Design and Theory (Utrecht).

Yukihiro Taguchi Confronting Comfort #2

Open House 20.–29.5. / HAU2 (Open Air)

One year ago, Yukihiro Taguchi moved out of his apartment and into "Cuvrybrache", located in Kreuzberg not far from the Oberbaum Bridge. In the dead of winter he, along with the architect Chiara Ciccarello, built the first truly stable "pioneer's hut" from discarded items in Berlin, on the increasingly ideologically embattled open space, which has become emblematic for recent Berlin history, for political conflicts and social fears, but also for the cultural allure of the city. Artistic work and daily life, public and private, withdrawal and defiance meld in the social sculpture of the elective Berliners from Japan. The experience of simplicity in the middle of the city, an "end of the everyday", heating with wood and mostly doing without electricity, leads Taguchi time and again to a band of community (kizuna), which – misused as a political tool – quickly also turns into shackles of their own. In a public installation in front of HAU2 and in his house, Yukihiro Taguchi, together with Chiara Ciccarello and the curator and cultural scholar Lutz Henke, invite us to eat, discuss, and think about disaster and solidarity, memory and historical caesura or catastrophe tourism as a strategy. Is there more to the connection between Berlin after the Wall and Japan after Fukushima than meets the eye?

PARCOURS 3.11

21.5.–29.5. daily from 17:00

Opening: 21.5, 18:00 / HAU1 / Admission free

"Parcours 3.11" transforms the theatre hall, the foyer, and the passageways of HAU1 into a cosmos of various film and installation projects, all related to March 11, 2011 and its visible and invisible consequences on the lives of people in Japan. In his long-term archive "Referendum Project", Akira Takayama interviews young people from various regions in Japan, Hikaru Fujii acts as a film ethnologist, documenting reactions to the catastrophe by artists and cultural initiatives. Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani portray people who were compelled to leave their homes due to radioactive contamination. Hikaru Suzuki causes the beloved anime character Doraemon to disappear on film.

Akira Takayama Referendum Project (2011/2014)

Japanese with English surtitles

Inspired by a visit to the Zwentendorf Nuclear Power Plant near Vienna, which was prohibited from operating by a referendum in 1978, Akira Takayama came on the idea of making the idea of the "referendum" the basis for a long-term project. In Japan, where there has never been a referendum, it remains possible only in the mode of fiction – as an artistic action.

The project documents and collects "voices", which themselves have never been heard in any actual public poll. Over several trips to various regions in Japan, Takayama has interviewed more than 100 students since 2011, based on a questionnaire that circles around the everyday routines and future wishes of the young people. The answers of the 12 to 14-year-olds attest, on the one hand, to bold ingenuity, but they also reflect – in part in a thoroughly depressing way – the detached pat phrases of the world of adults. For the Berlin version of the installation the archive was extended with conversations held by the director and documentary filmmaker in March 2014 with youngsters from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With this decision, Akira Takayama spans the arc from the dropping of the atomic bombs at the end of the Second World War and the trauma unleashed by them to the nuclear catastrophe at Fukushima.

Production: Festival/Tokyo, Port B. Co-production: Wiener Festwochen. With support from The Japan Foundation, The Saison Foundation, Association for Corporate Support of the Arts (KMK), GBF and The Northeast Japan Earthquake Restoration Fund.

Hikaru Fujii 3.11. Art Documentation

Video documentation, 2011–ongoing

Japanese with English surtitles

Only three weeks after the catastrophe on March 11, 2011, filmmaker Hikaru Fujii had already begun working on his "3.11 Art Documentation". Over a period of about one year he repeatedly travelled for several weeks at a time into the disaster area, where he turned his camera – in desolate cultural centres, schools or emergency shelters – on the concepts and strategies that different figures from art and culture used to react to the catastrophe. The activities documented are extremely heterogenous: commemorative events, clean-up work by a group of volunteers in an apartment building damaged by the tsunami, a brass band's first rehearsal after the catastrophe. Positioned between commemoration, analysis and incitement to concrete action, Fujii's video archive poses pressing questions about the function of art and its documentation on film

Camera, Schnitt: Hikaru Fujii; Partner: Sendai Mediatheque; Funded by: ARTS NPO AID

Hikaru Suzuki Mr. S & Doraemon

Video, 2012, 15 min. / Japanese with German subtitles

The two-part video work combines a self-documentation by the artist and director on the day after the catastrophe of March 11, 2011 with scenes of the beloved Japanese anime classic "Doraemon". Hikaru Suzuki filmed the screen of his computer, where he was following the events in the disaster region. From then on, he recorded scenes from his ordinary life every day. This created a chronology of his "window to the world", which he then edited in reverse order. The result is a disturbing meditation on the "course of history". In the second part, he meticulously cut the main character out of 106 episodes of the anime film. All that remains is the place where the title character lives – Doraemon himself is permanently absent. Suzuki underscores the scenes of the abandoned house with audio material from news programs on March 12, 2011.

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani Contaminated Home

Installation, 2014

The photos from the series "Contaminated Home" show private shots of a family from the Fukushima prefecture, who abandoned their home, only 23 kilometres from the damaged nuclear power plant, in the first days after the earthquake and moved to Kyoto. Since leaving in March 2011, the protagonists go back once a month for a few days, test the radioactivity and compare it to the official measurements. The photo series and the accompanying interview material document these visits to the "sweet home" in the woods. This pseudo-idyll makes the threat of contamination appear all the more unreal.

Courtesy of the artist and of Galerie Eigen+Art, Leipzig/Berlin.

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani Spirits Closing Their Eyes

Installation, 2013, 72 min.

Japanese with English surtitles

A film about life in Japan after March 11, 2011. Not about the visible damages caused by the earthquake and tsunami, nor about the reconstruction and cheer-up activities, but about nondescript and often invisible changes. The documentary focuses on the current physical and psychological state of emergency, which oscillates between actual threat and subtle changes in everyday habits. Berlin artists Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani held extensive conversations with people from various regions in Japan. We see refugees who have left their homes after the reactor disaster; families in Tokyo who have got used to dealing with a Geiger counter on a daily basis; students who organise a referendum against nuclear power; researchers who develop cheap radiation gauges from recycled plastic bottles; or artists who put on a festival in contaminated Fukushima. "Spirits Closing Their Eyes" combines these conversations with footage that depicts the situations and moods of a country. In addition, the work contains a series of short film portraits. All the interview partners look into the camera for one minute and think about the future, which for most of them is still uncertain.

Courtesy of the artist and of Galerie Eigen+Art, Leipzig/Berlin.

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani PET Bottle Shield

Installation, 2014

The subject of the installation is a teacher from the Fukushima prefecture who discovers that PET bottles filled with water can block radioactive waves. Beforehand, the grammar school was confronted with the situation that the level of radiation in the schoolyard was about 10 to 30 times as high as in the classrooms. The fact that used fuel rods from the nuclear power plant were stored in tubs of water made the teacher think that perhaps water had the ability to minimise radioactivity. An experiment carried out in the school with a water tank confirmed the expected effect. Following this, the teacher started an appeal to the parents. 1600 PET bottles were collected, filled with water and distributed in the school yard. An example of communal – and symbolic – self-help, at a time when the authorities remained largely inactive due to a lack of standards and the confusing state of information.

Courtesy of the artist and of Galerie Eigen+Art, Leipzig/Berlin.



20.5.

20.-29.5. / HAU2 (Open Air)

Yukihiro Taguchi

Open House: "Confronting Comfort #2"

19:00 / HAU2 / Opening / 21.-29.5., daily from 18:00

Tadasu Takamine

Japan Syndrome – Berlin Version #3

Japanese with English subtitles / admission free

20:00 / HAU2

Toshiki Okada / chelfitsch

Current Location

Japanese with German and English supertitles

21.5.

19:00 / HAU2

Toshiki Okada / chelfitsch

Current Location

Japanese with German and English supertitles

21:00 / HAU1

Tori Kudo & Maher Shalal Hash Baz

Concert

18:00 / HAU1 / Opening / 22.-29.5., daily from 17:00 / admission free

Parcours / Salon 3.11

Installations, conversations, films

Parcours 3.11

Akira Takayama: Referendum Project

(2011/2014)

Hikaru Fujii: 3.11 Art Documentation

(2011-ongoing)

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani:

Spirits Closing Their Eyes (2013)

PET Bottle Shield (2014)

Contaminated Home (2014)

Hikaru Suzuki: Mr. S & Doraemon (2012)

22.5.

17:30 / HAU1

Salon 3.11 / Hikaru Fujii und Stéphane Bauer in conversation

German and Japanese with German translation

Admission free

19:00 / HAU3

Takuya Murakawa

Zeitgeber / Premiere (Europe)

Japanese with German and English supertitles

20:30 / HAU1

Hikaru Fujii

PROJECT FUKUSHIMA!

Documentary film, Japan 2012, 90 min.

Japanese with English subtitles

Admission free, donations requested for the NPO "Project Fukushima!"

23.5.

17:30 / HAU1

Salon 3.11 / Tadasu Takamine and Steffi Richter in conversation

German and Japanese with German translation

Admission free

19:00 / HAU3

Takuya Murakawa

Zeitgeber

Japanese with German and English supertitles

20:30 / HAU1

Hikaru Fujii

Asahiza

Documentary film, Japan 2013, 74 min. / preview

Japanese with English subtitles

Followed by:

Converstaion with Hikaru Fujii and Akira Takayama

Moderation: Steffi Richter

German and Japanese with German translation

24.5.

15:00 /

Cuvry-Brache*

19:00 / HAU3

Followed by:

20:30 / HAU2

25.5.

18:00 / HAU1

20:00 / HAU2

26.5.

17:30 / HAU1

20:00 / HAU1

Followed by:

27.5.

from 18:00 / HAU2

(Open Air)

20:00 / HAU1

28.5.

17:30 / HAU1

20:00 / HAU2

29.5.

17:30 / HAU1

20:00 / HAU2

22:00 / HAU1

Salon 3.11 / Open House: "Dis-Cuvry – Confronting Comfort #1" / With Yukihiro

Taguchi, Chiara Ciccarello and Lutz Henke

** Meeting point: Schlesiische Str. / corner of Cuvrystr. / Admission free*

Takuya Murakawa

Zeitgeber

Japanese with German and English supertitles

Takuya Murakawa and

Hans-Thies Lehmann in conversation

German and Japanese with German translation

Phänomen Manga – Japanische Comics und

3.11 / With Jaqueline Berndt and Steffi Richter

German with Japanese translation

Salon 3.11 / Sachiko Hara

Hiroshima Salon / *German and Japanese*

Ende der Komfortzone?

Kunst und Politik nach Fukushima

With Chiaki Soma, Hiromi Maruoka, Akira Takayama, Steffi Richter / Moderation: Stefanie Carp

German and Japanese with simultaneous translation / Admission free

Salon 3.11 / Atsuhiko Koizumi (Sangatsu) and Christoph Gürk in conversation

German and Japanese with German translation / Admission free

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani

I live in Fear – After March 11

Germany, Japan 2014, 29 min.

Toshiki Okada, Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani in conversation / Moderation: Elke Buhr

German and Japanese with German translation

Akira Kurosawa

Ikimono no kiroku / I live in Fear

Japan 1955, 103 min. / Japanese with German subtitles

Salon 3.11 / Open House: "Confronting Comfort #2" / Mit Yukihiro Taguchi,

Chiara Ciccarello and Lutz Henke

Admission free

Sangatsu / Concert

Salon 3.11 / Kyoichi Tsuzuki and Christoph Gürk in conversation

English / Admission free

Toshiki Okada / chelfitsch

Super Premium Soft Double Vanilla Rich

Japanese with German and English supertitles

Salon 3.11 / Toshiki Okada and Peter Laudenbach in conversation

German and Japanese with German translation / Admission free

Toshiki Okada / chelfitsch

Super Premium Soft Double Vanilla Rich

Japanese with German and English supertitles

Late Night Lecture Performance

with Kyoichi Tsuzuki

English



想定外

www.hebbel-am-ufer.de

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