

YOSHINORI NIWA

2-24-1, KYOJIMA, SUMIDA-KU, TOKYO, JAPAN

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Yoshinori NIWA

Born 1982 Aichi Prefecture (Japan) based in Tokyo. Graduated from Tama Art University's Department of Moving Images and Performing Arts. Niwa's socially and historically interventionist works, on the street and in other public spaces, experiment with actions and propositions involving mainly impossibility and exchange. From such unproductive physical acts as transferring water with his mouth from a puddle in East Berlin to create a new puddle a

short distance away in West Berlin, in Transferring Puddle A to Puddle B (2004), to putting himself in an unusual situation to undermine the reality of what we see and to expose the emptiness of systems that give an illusion of publicness, as when he walked in the opposite direction to people demonstrating against nuclear power generation after the Great East Japan Earthquake – Walk in the Opposite Direction of a Demonstration Parade (2011) – and Demonstration Proceeds from the Prime Minister's Residence to the Summit of Mt. Fuji (2012), in which he extended a political act to a distant and unrelated spot more commonly associated with tourism. In recent years Niwa has taken an interest in the history of communism and moved on to projects that explore the nature of national history, like attempting to pick up and toss local communist party members in Romania, in Tossing Socialists in the Air in Romania (2010) and Searching for Vladimir Lenin in the Apartments of Moscow (2012), in which he searches the home of an ordinary Russian family for images of Lenin years after the demise of the Soviet Union. Selected group shows are Double Vision: Contemporary Art From Japan (Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Haifa Museum of Art, 2012), Aichi Triennale 2013 (Aichi Arts Center, etc 2013), Roppongi Crossing 2013: OUT OF DOUBT (Mori Art Museum, 2013). He has been nominated for Future Greats 2014 by ArtReview.

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Donating Money to People in Manila Without Notice

2014

Single Channel Video(5'07")

In Metro Manila of Philippines, famous city for pickpocketing, throwing Filipino coins into other's pocket or backpack around the city hall without being noticed by people. Almost like a reverse of pickpocketing, the action of throwing money into people's pocket looks like just walking around the city hall and nothing is happening, because it's like a flash. But if you focus on the moment when he passes others, he drops a few coins into their pocket without being noticed by the individual or the people around. However, if the money is donated without being noticed, can it really be donation?



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Proposing to hold up Karl Marx to the Japanese Communist Party

2013

Two Channel Video Installation (18'02min each), photo print on banner, blackboard, flag, megaphone

Proposing holding up Karl Marx to the Japanese Communist Party's Central Committee at Yoyogi, Tokyo. According to some legislator, this person has seen a photograph of Karl Marx being held up at a Japanese Communist Party convention right after World War II. From this verbal evidence, I question the Japanese Communist Party if it is possible to hold up Marx once again, although they follow their own policy now instead of Marxism-Leninism. By asking the Communist Party to hold up Marx's portrait and throwing a hint of a personality cult which is behind the times, I verify the disparity between the name "Communist Party", a sign that shows their history since formation, and the actual status of the party where they take forward their own policy.



Mori Art Museum 10th Anniversary Exhibition

"Roppongi Crossing 2013: OUT OF DOUBT"

Installation view: Mori Art Museum, 2013/9/21-2014/1/13

Photo: Watanabe Osamu, Photo Courtesy: Mori Art Museum, Collection of Mori Art Museum



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Celebrating Karl Marx's birthday with Japanese Communist Party

2013

Nine Channel Video Installation (12'09min, 13'49min, 17'33min, 10'17min, 4'54min, 5'26min, 4'19min, 3'15min, 13'49min), neon sign, standing signboard, text

Proposing celebrating Karl Marx's birthday to local offices of the Japanese Communist Party. By this proposal, I verify how Karl Marx, who logically built the idea of communism, is accepted by local cities in Japan. In addition, by questioning the difference between "scientific socialism", a principle which the Japanese Communist Party holds presently, and "Marxism", I try to reveal how awkward it is to talk about communism in Japan and at the same time, give thought to how it is difficult to realize a communist society without any blue prints by having each party member make comments on what communism is about.



Aichi Triennale 2013 Installation view: Okazaki-city Matsumoto-cho site

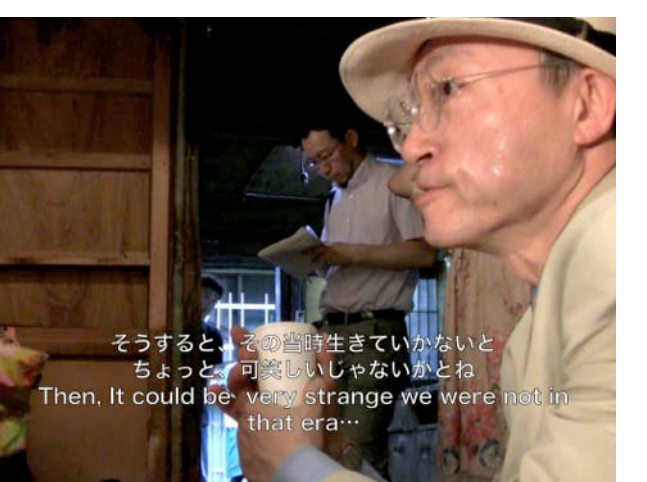
2013/810 - 10/27, Photo: Yoshihiro Kikuyama

Photo Courtesy: The Aichi Triennale Organizing Committee

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Transforming Puddle A to Puddle B

2012

Two Channel Video Installation (11'02min each)

This work transforms a puddle on the street in Shinjuku to Narahamachi, which once was a designated restricted area inside the 20km radius of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant, damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake. All residents of Narahamachi were once enforced to evacuate, but even after the alert being removed after the Summer 2012, few have returned due to radiation fears combined with devastated infrastructures, leaving the streets empty, gathering grass and weeds. Upon questioning how he might confront the reality of such a location not so far from Tokyo, Niwa, while aware that despite any attempt to engage with the place he would be relegated as an outsider, felt the only thing he could do was to transform a puddle. Even though the alert had been removed from the area, the historical fact of this status would never vanish, and would be something that the community would be frequently reminded of while finding its own way towards regeneration. In the presentation of the work a cube-like structure is created from waste cardboard used for carriage, within which a two channel video installation is set. The entrance of the installation is covered, making just a small slit above the floor, which is structured so that the observer must crouch down on the floor just like the artist does, in order to see the work.



Installation view at Tokyo Woder Site

photo: Keizo Kioku

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Marching from the Prime Minister's Office to the Top of Mt. Fuji in Demonstration

2012

Two Channel Video Installation (15'25min each)

Here Niwa, holding a large flag, joins one of the anti-nuclear demonstration held every Friday night in front of the Prime Minister's Office, and then continues his march straight to the top of Mt. Fuji.

As he marches on farther, the protesters gradually disappear, only to be replaced by tourists who surround Niwa as he reaches the top of Mt. Fuji after walking through the night. From the Prime Minister's Office to Mt. Fuji, from protestors to tourists, can it be that there is some correlation between everything we encounter in the world around us? This work is produced with the sense of discomfort felt at the sudden dissipation of unity sensed in a demonstration once the appointed time has come to an end, creating a feeling similar to that walking back after a fireworks display.



Installation view

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Looking for Vladimir Lenin at Moscow Apartments

2012

Three Channel Project Document Video (8'40min each)

Despite the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 there still remain in many homes in Moscow, the images of Vladimir Lenin. Visiting to ordinary homes around Moscow, Niwa searched for portraits, photos, propaganda posters, newspaper articles, flags, badges and many other objects, collecting these materials and exhibiting them in the gallery. Searching homes in a manner which may be likened to the KGB, the dialogue and negotiation with ordinary citizens comes to depict the memory of the former Soviet Union within contemporary Russia. A re-edited version of this video was presented in the group exhibition "Double Vision: Contemporary Art from Japan" (2012) at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art as a three channel multi monitor installation. Support: Moscow Museum of Modern Art, The Japan Foundation

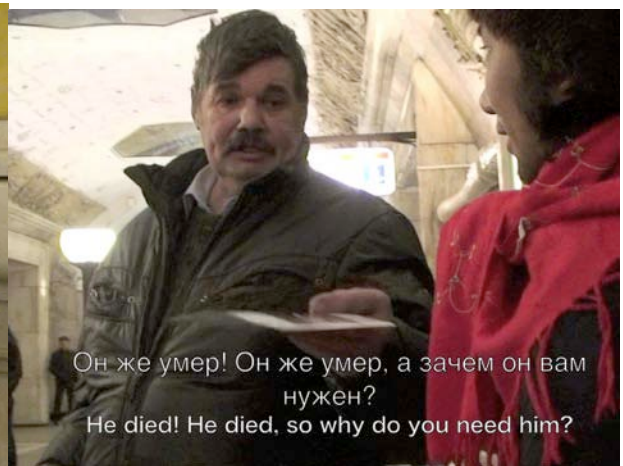


Installation view

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Exchanging between Turkish Lire and Euros in Istanbul Until there is Nothing Left

2011

Performance Document Video (25'10min)

In a tourist area of Istanbul, visiting to a foreign currency exchanger close to the Grand Bazaar, Niwa undertakes to repeatedly exchange between Turkish Lire and Euros until all of his money has gone. While wondering around the area which is dotted with similar foreign exchange stores, Niwa passed his eye not to the many goods on the market, but merely repeated the act of exchange. This is a video document which pursues the meaningless loss of a traveler's single life line, the cash one has in one's wallet. This action points towards the position of Turkey, which has been at the crossroads between Asia and Europe, and the recent recession suffered in Europe by performing economic loss on an individual level.



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Piling Rocks from the Seabed on the Summit of Mount Hakkouda

2011

Project Document Video (24'24min) 3 Photographic Prints 3000x3000mm, Map

Gathering stones from the coast of Aomori and over a number of days carrying these to the summit of Mount Hakkouda, Niwa increases the height of the mountain by 1m. This action may be seen as a resistance to the process of nature by which the river flows from the mountains to the sea and carries with it such stones. Here within the 'man-made' National Park, through the performance of a long trivial labour Niwa calls into question the relationship between man and nature. Furthermore, during the process of passing the rope way bridge and climbing the mountain, upon meeting local people and explaining his efforts to increase the height of the mountain their reaction of opposition to such an act also calls us to reexamine our own awareness towards nature.



photo: SHITAMICHI Motoyuki

Photo courtesies: Aomori Contemporary Art Centre, Aomori Public College

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What's this bag? I heard of it...Stones?
これなんか？今、聞きましたけど…石？

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Purchasing My Own Belongings Again in the Downtown

2011

Video document of performance

7'06 min, 9'34 min, 6'06 min (3ch)

In this work I attempt to purchase the exact same magazines and fruits etc, already bought from one shop, from yet another shop. Here I pursue an escape from the repeated everyday experience of consumerism and possession, and through the discomfort which arises from this action I undertake an intervention into our social structure. Here as we sense an endless loop and at the same time we come to question this as our reality. What is it that we are consuming? What is it that we finally gain?



Installation view



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Walk in the Opposite Direction of a Demonstration Parade

2011

Video document of performance 10'01 min and Photographic print on cloth

In the middle of a political demonstration, I alone walk in the opposite direction. Showing no interest in the protest, walking against the flow of this mass, subject to the expressions and messages of the participants, I attempt to break up the phenomenon of the demo. Furthermore this act of moving against a collective holding a political message may be seen as a form of demonstration in itself.



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Tossing socialists in the air in Romania

2010 Social Intervention Performance Video 29'09min

This work took place in Bucharest, the stage of the 1989 revolution, and gathered together young people who have had no experience of this revolution, to throw socialists in the air in celebratory style, while also negotiating with various politicians and activists. Through the forceful joining of the extinct past and the present time, this work summons up a sentimental feeling towards the unforgettable legacy of communism, along with the direct words of young people.



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make the current situation better?
革命を起こすにどの程度の時間が必要ですか？



Christ was the first communist in the world.
イエス・キリストは世界初の共産主義者だったのです



President of Communist Party.
共産党委員長です



They want masses of idiots.
彼らは、白痴の国民を求めているんだ

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Communicating with thieves

2010

Performance Video 4'54min

Photographic Print 1200 x 1200mm

A large scale illuminated sign was projected on the buildings of various banks across Helsinki after closing times, with the message "Robbers, now is the time to steal!". While making some gesture towards communication with those who are outside of society, this work suggests a correspondence with those who lay dormant in collective group. Those who saw the sign were likely not to interpret it as an act of resistance against capitalist society but rather conceive of it at the level of everyday theft.

Produced in a residency at HIAP production residency programme, Helsinki, Supported by HIAP



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Going to San Francisco to dispose of my garbage

2006

Performance Video 17'33min

Taking Japan's rubbish to America. Taking my household rubbish I boarded a plane to America and disposed of the waste at San Francisco's rubbish depot. Crossing international borders while dealing with a local issue, this work offers a critique upon the relation between America and Japan, which socially and politically seem to have such affinity. The waste produced day by day: where does it come from and where does it go?



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Transforming puddle A to puddle B

2004

Performance Video 10'53min(2004) 18'42min(2007)

In the place where the Berlin wall once stood, I carried water in my mouth from one puddle to another. As a Japanese artist with no experience of the cold war or the Berlin wall, I was forced to question how I might approach these issues, and felt only the ability to move water from the former East Berlin to the former West Berlin. While earnestly questioning what relation, I, as a Japanese national, can have with the repeated conflict between East and West I faced the historical memory of the Berlin wall.



Reviews



「デモ行進を逆走する」2011年 パフォーマンスのドキュメント
ビデオ ©Yoshinori Niwa Courtesy of Ai Kowada Gallery

批評的でトリッキーな作品を制作してきた。本作でもその裏返す（＝逆走する）手法は継承されているが、変わりゆく本作の意味と共に生きること、社会の文脈が変わっても時代に呼応した新たな意味を醸成し、観る者に訴えかける作品を作るアーティストになっ

丹羽良徳は、「デモ行進を逆走する」が本人の手を離れて新たな意味を持ち始めることに戸惑いと緊張を感じている。本作はそのタイトルが示すとおり、原発反対デモを逆走する丹羽本人のパフォーマンスを撮影したビデオ作品である。作品が制作された東日本大震災3ヶ月後の時点と現在の原発再稼働反対のデモとは、状況が異なっている。デモに参加してもしなくても、安全な暮らしの希求や、民意が反映されない政治に対するフラストレーションを抱え、変わった日常と変わらない日常に引き裂かれながら、人々の考えや意見の差はますます広がっている。本作はそうした一元化され得ない、この一年の状況の変化と共にあり、それに呼応して以前とは違う様相を呈して見える。ビデオのなかで丹羽は振り返らない。私たちが見るのは彼の背中と、デモの参加者や周囲の様子である。鑑賞者はその都度、自分の立ち位置を画面に投影するがゆえに、作品を観てざわざわした心持を覚える。使い古された言葉であるが、時代を映す鏡という言葉はまさに本作に相応しい。丹羽はこれまでも、社会的認識の抜け穴を裏返してみせるような批評的でトリッキーな作品を制作してきた。本作でもその裏返す（＝逆走する）手法は継承されているが、変わりゆく本作の意味と共に生きること、社会の文脈が変わっても時代に呼応した新たな意味を醸成し、観る者に訴えかける作品を作るアーティストになっ

時代を映す批評的でトリッキーな作品

推薦者

飯田志保子

インディペンデント・キュレーター

丹羽良徳

にわ・よしのり

82年愛知県生まれ。多摩美大卒。12年 Double vision: Contemporary Art From Japan (Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Haifa Museum of Art) など、展覧会多数。



写真：藤原基之

取り扱い画廊 / AI KOWADA GALLERY
作品購入の目安 / 価格帯 = 10万円前後

information
グループ展 (開催中) - 12/16 - Haifa Museum of Art, グループ展 (開催中) - 8/26 - 元山山ヒルサイドテラス, 個展 (10/13 - 11/17) - AI KOWADA GALLERY, 公開制作発表 (11/13 - 17) - GALLERY TERRA TOKYO

Critical and tricky works that reflect the times

Shihoko Iida / independent curator

Yoshinori Niwa expresses his confusion and nervousness for the situation of his work "Walk in the Opposite Direction of a Demonstration Parade" starting to have new meanings, out of his hands. As the title shows, it is a video document of Niwa's performance of walking from front to back in the opposite direction through the center of the anti-nuclear demonstration parade. The circumstances are quite different, comparing the time when the work was created, three months after the 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake, and the present demonstrations against nuclear plants' restart. Whether or not you attend the demonstration, a gap of people's thoughts and opinions is widening, and they are being torn by changed and unchanged lives with hopes for safe livelihood and frustration for politics that doesn't reflect public opinion. This video document exists together with change of situations within this year that cannot be unified, and in response, seems to present an aspect that is not same as before. In the video, Niwa never looks back. What we see is his back, demonstration participants and the surrounding atmosphere. The viewers of the video feel uneasy every time they see the video, because they project themselves into the screen. As the cliché goes, this work deserves to be called as a mirror reflecting the times. Niwa has been creating critical and tricky works that try to turn over loopholes for social recognition and he uses that method of turning over (=walking in the opposite direction) in this work too. By living with these changing meanings of this work, I believe he will be an artist that brings about new meaning that reflects times, even if the social context changes, and surely create works that move the viewers.

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12/02/26

丹羽良徳 個展「共同体の搜索、もしくはその逃亡劇」: artscapeレビュー/プレビュー | 美術館...

毎月1日、15日更新の美術館・アート情報をお伝えするWebマガジン

東日本大震災で被災された皆様には心からお見舞い申し上げます。皆様のご安全と一日も早い復興を心よりお祈り申し上げます

DNP Museum Information Japan
artscapereview
Run by DNP Art Communications

ホーム フォーカス レポート&レビュー 展覧会情報 スタディ 辞典/著書情報 ミュージアムデータベース プレゼント

artscapeレビュー/プレビュー

丹羽良徳 個展「共同体の搜索、もしくはその逃亡劇」
2011年09月01日号

会期: 2011/07/23~2011/09/24
AI KOWADA GALLERY [東京都]

パフォーマンス・アーティスト、丹羽良徳の個展。路上や街中で行なわれるパフォーマンスを記録した映像作品を2点発表した。ひとつは、自分で持ち込んだ雑誌を書店で買い求めるパフォーマンスで、もうひとつはこの4月に新宿で開催された脱原発デモの隊列の真ん中を逆行するパフォーマンス。前者が資本主義を、後者が政治運動を、それぞれ参照項として想定していることはまちがいない。一見すると、ナンセンスな笑いをねらった身体表現にすぎないように見えるかもしれないが、双方に過剰しているのは芸術的な自己表現があくまで一方的なものだという強い信念だ。資本主義にかぎらずあらゆる経済活動は交換を原則としているが、丹羽が実行しているのは一方的な贈与であり、それが何かしらの見返りを暗に要求するわけではないという点で、反経済的・反交換的な表現である。政治運動にしても、あらゆる集団的な示威行動はその目的が達成されるために行動するという目的性によって成立しているが、集団歩行に逆行する丹羽の身体は合理的な目的を持っているように見えない。そこに山があるから登るように、そこに流れがあるから逆らっているような印象を覚える点では、きわめて動物的な身体表現だとさえいえる。丹羽が身体で切り開いているのは、他者や外部とのコミュニケーションにもとづく(指示表出としての)芸術ではなく、自分自身との対話や沈黙から生まれる(自己表出としての)芸術である。社会であれ他者であれ、何かのための芸術が横行するいま、丹羽の一方的な表現は心強い。

2011/07/28 (木) (福住廉)

2011年09月01日号の artscapeレビュー/プレビュー

- 堂島リバービエンナーレ 2011「Ecosophia—アートと建築」
- 田口行弘
- 山田はるか ヘルタースケルター respect for OK!
- 日本のアニメーション美術の創造者: 山本二三展
- 高田竹弥 作品展「小さな窓から」
- 丹羽良徳 個展「共同体の搜索、もしくはその逃亡劇」
- アトミックサイト
- 『大鹿村騒動記』
- サーペンタイン・ギャラリー・パヴイリオン2011
- プレビュー: 「女と銃と荒野の精羅」
- 『イグジット・スルー・ザ・ギフトショップ』
- ミケランジェロ・ピストレット 「The Mirror of Judgement」
- 土田ヒロミ写真展「ヒロシマ・コレ」

artscapereview/Preview

Solo exhibition of Yoshinori Niwa "Searching community, or their escape drama"

From July 23 to September 24, 2011

AI KOWADA GALLERY (Tokyo)

Solo exhibition of the performance artist, Yoshinori Niwa. He presented two video works of recorded performances on the streets and in the city. One is a performance of buying the magazines he brought into a bookstore himself, and another is walking from front to back in the opposite direction through the center of an anti-nuclear demonstration parade held at Shinjuku in April 2011. It is no doubt that he referenced capitalism for the former work, and political action for the latter. At first, his works might be seen as a body expression aimed for nonsense laughter. However, at a fundamental level, his works are connected to his strong belief that an artistic self-expression is completely one-sided. Not just capitalism, but any economic activity adopts exchange for its principal. But what Niwa carries out is anti-economic and anti-exchange expression, in terms of practicing an one-sided donation and not requesting any reward for it. As for political action, any demonstration consists in purposiveness, that is to say, acting in order to achieve the purpose. However, Niwa's body that walks in the opposite direction of the parade doesn't seem to have any rational purpose. As if climbing a mountain because it was there, you get an impression that he goes against the flow because it was there. From that point of view, it can be even said that it is a quite animal-like physical expression. What Niwa breaks through with his body is art as a "self-expression" which comes from mental dialogue and silence, not as an "indicative expression" based on communication with others. These days, art tend to exist for something, like society and others. On the other hand, Niwa's one-sided expression is encouraging.

July 28, 2011

Ren Fukuzumi

YOSHINORI NIWA

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Ёсинори Ниwa. В московских квартирах разыскивается Владимир Ленин. 2012. Видео.

Приближаемся к очередной шедевральной видеoinсталляции. Ёсинори Ниwa тоже будоражит память дедушки Ленина со всем бесстрашием социального интервента. Ёсинори приехал в Москву заранее и провел много часов с видеокамерой и переводчицей в московском метро, чтобы найти людей, которые расскажут ему что-то о Ленине, потому что Ленин все еще жив в памяти многих. Сверкая золотыми зубами, пожилые жители нашего города рассказывают о том, как они жили, когда Ленин был «наше все», неизбежно натываясь в потоке своей речи на стишок «Когда был Ленин маленький с кудрявой головой» и безумно улыбаясь при этом. Но Ниwa идет и дальше — он собирает с сотню атрибутов Советского Союза с изображением Ленина, бюсты всех размеров, почетные грамоты, плакаты, открытки и развешивает их возле экрана в форме пирамиды (или мавзолея, что, по сути, одно и то же). Меня почему-то очень растрогал этот маленький музей Ленина. История о том, что мы не умеем или не можем смотреть в прошлое без содрогания ужаса. А надо. Пусть даже с помощью японских интервентов. Спасибо, товарищ Ниwa, за работу «В московских квартирах разыскивается Владимир Ленин».

Let's get close to the next masterpiece video installation. Yoshinori Niwa thrills the memory of grandpa Lenin with all the bravery of social interventionist. Yoshinori came to Moscow in advance and spent many hours with a camera and an interpreter in Moscow metro to find people who would tell him something about Lenin, because Lenin is still alive in memory of many people. Flashing their golden teeth, elderly persons of our city tells about their life when Lenin still was "our everything", using quotations of children rhyme "when Lenin was a little child with curly hair" and smiling a bit crazy. But Niwa goes foreword - he collects more than hundred objects related to Lenin made in Soviet era, like bust statues, diplomas, posters, postcards. And hang it on the wall near the projection, in a form of pyramid (or mausoleum, which is actually the same kind of thing). Don't know why, but I was actually touched by this little museum of Lenin. The story is about that we can not look at our past without being shuddered with horror. But we should look at it. Even with the help of Japanese interventionists. Thank you, comrade Niwa, for your work "Looking for Vladimir Lenin in Moscow apartments".
(the interview Russia, 2012)

着ぐるみの熊と動物園の熊は どちらが本物か

「複合回路 vol.3 丹羽良徳」展
aMプロジェクト2010

木村絵理子 評

丹羽良徳とは、「真の」という行為からは距離をおいたアーティストではなかったか。そのような思いを抱いて訪れたaMプロジェクトaMには、動物を切り取ったかのように見えてくっきりとした笑顔を覗かせていた。ギョウリイの中央には、動物園に使われる巨大な木製水筒に文房具で描く「本物の水が溢々と流る」と、それらの動物に描き加えるように、タリーニングラビでもらったハンガリーが大量に描き込まれている。現には水の音が降り、壁に投影された映像からは風の音や話し声も聞こえてくる。丹羽は今回、どうやら作品が成立する場、展示という行為そのものを素材としたようだ。

たまたまの水を自分の口で吸って別な水まで水を自分に移して移して（水たまりの水を水たまりに移して移して）（2010）ベルリンでのパフォーマンスのときに、自身の身体を使ったパフォーマンスの間にフィンランド語と英語で「記述の時間だ」とを意味する文字を映し出す（「記述と時間」）（2010）のうろたえハブニングラビとは動物園の動物で成立して来た、こうした作品をギョウリイに展示するには、当然、記述映像そのものを必要ない。そのとき、「記述」や「本物」としての作品には、此の行為がギョウリイセンスである

るほどに、ある種の神化とも言うべき意味の要素が生じ、このジレンマは、ホワイトキューブの外で活動してきたアーティストの多く、例えはハイレド・セント・ジョン、ゴッティン・マツコウラ、あるいはヨゼフ・ボイスや、美術展やギョウリイで期しようとする際には「真の」ということをめぐる複雑な交錯である。

丹羽は今回、ギョウリイでの動物園という逃げ場の無い状況で、その子猫を維持する方法で描いて見せた。展示された動物と点と過去のいくつかの映像は、いずれも「本物」や「真実」という行為を作っている。ギョウリイの入口に飾られた映像作品「熊が熊に会いに動物園に行く」は、着ぐるみの熊に近づいて動物園にいる本物の熊（ただし野生ではない）へ会いに行く過程を描いたものだが、ここでは「真実」や「本物」に対する意識をかくとされる、狭い熊

去された鳥の籠をギョウリイの天幕で組み立てる。熊籠などを清潔なことを演出し、熊籠から出て来られる動物ハンガリーによる鳥の籠を買い付け、それをギョウリイ内に移動し、もう一度木と木をみ直す過程をさらした映像とインスタレーションによる作品だ。ここで丹羽は、彼の「作」やハンガリー製の鳥の籠が生み出される。しかし「熊籠」や「熊籠」も、それらの存在が許される。しかし本来の意味を失う。「ギョウリイ」空間を対峙して見せ、うろたえ風へと鑑賞者を誘ってゆく。「鳥の籠」の成立条件は何ぞ？ aMの本物とは一体何なのか？ 丹羽の作品は、我々に、そして自分自身に向けられた問いの問いの問いの問いかけのようである。



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BT Review

Which is true, bear costume or bear in the zoo?
aM project 2010 “Complex Circuit vol.3 Yoshinori Niwa—The Poetics of Activism”

Yoshinori Niwa. Wasn't he an artist who took distance from the act of "exhibiting"? With that in my mind, I visited gallery aM, a space full of uncomfortably warm and wet air as if cut away from the streets. In the center of the gallery, two roadside trees in huge pots grow lushly and almost reaching to the ceiling. A volume of wire hangers from the dry cleaners are weaved as if building a bridge between the two trees. Leaves spread on the floor, and I hear the sound of wind and people talking from the video projected on the wall. Niwa seems to take the act of exhibiting itself, a place where the works are established, as his material this time.

His works have been existing in a space completely opposite to what we call a gallery. For instance, he did a performance using his own body such as "Transferring puddle A to puddle B" (in Berlin, 2004), where he sucks the water of a puddle and then spits into another to transfer it, and a happening-like project such as "Communicating with thief" (in Helsinki, 2010), where he projects the letters "It's time for the thief!" in Finnish and English onto a wall of the bank building in the city at night. In order to exhibit these works in a gallery, it is natural to use videos and objects as traces of the performances. At that moment, for those works which mean "records" and "traces", the more nonsense the original performances are, the more they change their meaning in a way that you could call it

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deification. This dilemma often comes up as a fundamental question concerning “exhibiting”, when one tries to exhibit many of the artists who work outside of the white cube, such as High Red Center, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Joseph Beuys, in a museum or gallery.

Under the circumstance of putting on his solo exhibition in a gallery, Niwa betrayed that dilemma by his own unique way. The two new videos and some previous ones exhibited involve an action of "transferring" or "replacing". The video work exhibited at the entrance, "A Bear goes to the zoo to see bears", is a recorded process of the artist in bear costume creeping in the park towards a real (but not wild) bear in a zoo under the blazing sun. Here, the viewer's awareness for what is “true” is disturbed. Following "Re-weaving crow's nest at gallery ceiling" is installation and video work which records the process of obtaining crow's nests made of wire hangers, removed from the streets to prevent a causing of blackout, and then transferring and reweaving them in the gallery. In this work, Niwa contrasts the “streets” where his “works” and the crow's nests made of hangers are made—but also removed—and the “gallery” where their existence is allowed—but also lose its fundamental meaning—, and with that contrast, he invites the viewers to a deeper confusion. What is the condition to exist as a “crow's nest”? What is the condition to exist as art? What is an exhibition? What does true mean? Niwa's works seem to ask limitless questions that have no answer for us and also for himself.

Eriko Kimura (Curator of Yokohama Museum of Art)

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Transforming the Water Cycle

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011 has **serious problems with containing radioactive water**, (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-23779561>) and preventing it from entering the biosphere. Artist Niwa Yoshinori (<http://www.niwa-staff.org/>) has made another gentler intervention in transforming the water cycle.

At the power plant, it seems that the vast amount of water pumped into the melting reactor cores has raised ground water levels; **now water is flowing off the land** (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23807453>) through the contaminated site, over the safety barrier and into the Pacific Ocean. 400 tonnes of water used daily to cool the reactors is stored in pale blue tanks spreading out behind the site, and some of these are leaking too. The latest proposal is to create a frozen underground **ice wall** (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23940214>) to attempt to contain water on the site, a cryogenic radiation container to interrupt the flow of the water cycle.

In the light of this unfolding story, Niwa Yoshinori's performance 'Transforming Puddle A to Puddle B' 2012, (2 channel video installation, 11mins) is particularly resonant. The film of the performance is on display at the **500m Gallery** (<http://500m.jp/>) in Sapporo as part of an exhibition about traveling and traveling art.

In the performance, Niwa Yishinori kneels by a busy road and leans his face down towards the tarmac, using his mouth to suck up dirty water from a puddle he then spits the liquid into a plastic container, and continues until the puddle is drained and the container is nearly full. The artist then travels to a rather overgrown and quieter location and pours the water onto a pavement to create a new puddle. The physical labour involved is an act of endurance, penance even. The contact between body and road repulses passers by the 500m Gallery. Drinking water from the street is unhygienic in any city, an activity of animals, the desperate or insane. But here the artist is calm and considered, and his performance is filmed by an accomplice. Perhaps it is the planned rationalism of the act that is so uncomfortable for the viewer?

Contact between body and the potential contamination of the environment has added poignancy in post-Fukushima Japan. It's important to read the accompanying text to know that Yishinori's puddle is

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transported from a street in Shinjuku, the commercial center of Tokyo, to the town of Narahamachi, which was once designated as a restricted area within the 20km radius of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant. The residents of Narahamachi were forced to evacuate, but even after the alert was removed in the summer 2012, few have returned. There are still fears of radiation combined with a devastated infrastructure, leaving the streets empty, gathering grass and weeds.

Yishinori takes uncontaminated water from Tokyo to the affected area of Narahamachi. This is a reversal of the general method of clean-up. The artwork takes on a cleansing act by diluting the site in contrast to the government plan to redistribute contaminated debris across the islands of Japan.

If the artist wanted to make an explicit political point, he might have taken radioactive water from the contamination zone to create a puddle at the door of TEPCO in Tokyo. Instead, we are confronted with a more personal, intimate act: one that inserts his body within the hydro-cycle, heightening awareness through a simple but powerful gesture.

The artwork makes a slight intervention in the **water cycle** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_cycle) – the flow of water from rain, running down mountains, gathering in streams and rivers that flow to the sea where it evaporates forming clouds which are blown towards the land. When the clouds hit the land, moisture condenses and droplets of rain fall back to earth. Here, Yishinori performs the dependency of human life on the hydro-cycle: A process of consumption and excretion, where water is used to hydrate and cool the body, before being released, warm, back into the biosphere.

The film is in two parts that create a continuous flow. The first channel shows the artist collecting the water, the second follows him on the journey to the final resting place for the puddle. Each film is a loop where each part of the water cycle is trapped in its own micro-climate. In busy Tokyo a pedestrian stops to give the artist a bottle of clean drinking water, but the process of collecting the puddle continues. It is only when the puddle is dry, that the second film releases the water into the quiet streets of Narahamachi.

This symmetry is mapped in the continuity of the water cycle: what goes up must come down. But at the Fukushima Power Plant, the water cycle has gained a new momentum, flowing through molten reactor cores before mixing with the Pacific Ocean. The water has been activated in a new way, not simply warmed by the human body, it now vibrates with energy as it continues its hydrological journey as part of the life-cycle of the earth.

- Dr Ele Carpenter

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