

Foreword

The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo houses a collection of approximately 5,500 works, which span the modern and contemporary eras with a focus on postwar art. *The MOT Collection* exhibition strives to convey the appeal of contemporary art by introducing works from the collection based on a variety of perspectives in each edition.

In this edition, titled *Journals Vol. 2*, we present an anthology-style exhibit made up of works created on a daily basis by a diverse range of artists dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, which has transformed our way of life; the Olympics, a global-scale event; and scenes from ordinary life.

The exhibition features Chim ↑ Pom's *May, 2020, Tokyo (Okubo Station)–Drawing a Blueprint*—, set in Tokyo during the COVID-19 state of emergency (on display until the end of January 2022), and Oscar OIWA's "Quarantine Series," a group of prints based on digital drawings that the artist made in New York, and his large-scale work *Zeus: The God of Olympia*, which depicts three cities related to the Olympics. It also contains a special display of work by KOU Kana [Yoshida Kana], and approximately 100 pieces by artists such as SHIOMI Mieko [Chieko], Nam Jun PAIK, and others associated with Fluxus; MISHIMA Kimiyo; KWAK Duck Jun; Christian BOLTANSKI; and Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL, which shed light on our society, everyday life, and the state of memory. We hope you will enjoy this exhibition, presented across two floors of the museum.

In closing, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of those who have honored us with their unstinting cooperation in realizing this exhibition.

1 Chim ↑ Pom

Chim ↑ Pom was formed in 2005 by USHIRP Ryuta, Ellie, HAYASHI Yasutaka, OKADA Masataka, INAOKA Motomu, and MIZUNO Toshinori. Starting with *SUPER RAT* (2006), a work dealing with rats living in Shibuya, the group has created a succession of project-based works that address actual events, including disasters, civil strife, and urban life, while directly intervening with them to shed light on various aspects of society and history.

This work, *May, 2020, Tokyo (Okubo Station) – Drawing a Blueprint*, evokes a diverse range of subjects, such as the experience of the coronavirus pandemic, which began last year, the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games, the transformation of our daily lives, and the general sense of oblivion.

The work was made outside after people had disappeared from the streets following the first state of emergency declared by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on April 7, 2020 (the order was rescinded on May 25).

Chim ↑ Pom installed a billboard coated with cyanotype sensitizer, and left it outside for the duration of the state of emergency, creating a large photograph of the light and air in the city.

The term "blueprint" in the title suggests the technique used to make the work while also signifying a mental picture of our "vision of the future." On March 26, it was announced that the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games would be postponed. Thus, the work captures the singular and unparalleled moment in time in which these monumental events were temporarily reduced to blueprints.

Fraught with problems, the events were later held without any spectators under the same banner of "2020." By audaciously quoting the widely known slogan "TOKYO 2020," the work visually incorporates a variety of intentions and contexts along with the atmosphere of the period. It functions both as a portrait of present-day "Tokyo," and a historical picture or monument with the form of a painting.

2 Oscar OIWA

Oscar OIWA (1965-) was born in São Paulo, Brazil, to Japanese parents. Moving to Japan in 1991 after studying architecture at university, he started his career as an artist, and since 2002 has continued to live and work in New York. While relocating his practice from São Paulo to Tokyo, and then to New York, OIWA observed various relationships between cities and people from a perspective that captures matters and events on a global scale, boldly addressing their history and future through his work. Conflicting elements such as light and darkness, static and dynamic, nature and man-made coalesce within the picture plane by means of skillful composition and rich brush strokes that breathe life into cities, enabling them to emerge like some organic creature of sorts.

Zeus: the God of Olympia was produced in 2019 for an exhibition on the theme of "festivals for cities and sports" held at the Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris. Depicting the each of the Olympic host cities of Rio, Tokyo, and Paris as an amalgam of the artist's personal memories and symbolic motifs, the work itself can be transformed into a scrolling landscape or portrait depending on the way in which the three pieces are arranged. The cloud motif that extends throughout the work is inspired by Japanese picture scrolls, and can be likened to global-scale circulation and interactions between people that widely take place across the globe. In this work, such bands of clouds are dynamically depicted as if straddling multiple places and moments in time.

On the other hand, it is well known that such seamless exchanges have been a contributing factor in pandemics since ancient times. Presented on the wall opposite, is a series of works that the artist had produced in a manner of a diary of sorts, during a period in which he had been forced into a life of self-isolation as he was unable to go to his studio in New York due to lockdown measures imposed in light of the city's high rate of infection cases. This series of works that at once depict an actual city where people have disappeared from the streets and a "imaginary journey" while drawing reference to history and real-life events, could indeed be regarded as day-by-day traces of the artist's volitions, and a remarkable documentary that overlaps with the lives of each viewer. The appearance and conditions of the world comes to emerge between the two works.

3 KAWARA On

Recognized internationally as a pioneer of conceptual art, KAWARA On began producing his "Date paintings" (*Today* series) from January 4th 1966, one and a half years after he had settled in New York.

These "Date Paintings" were produced according to a strict set of self-devised rules that consisted of selecting the canvas from eight fixed sizes and painting it in solid colors of either dark grey, red, or blue, using sans serif font to document the date of production in the language and grammatical conventions of the country in which the painting was executed*, and discarding the work if he was unable to complete the painting on the day it was started. In this way, Kawara produced nearly 3,000 "Date Paintings" over the course of about half a century until the year before his death in 2014. The completed date paintings were often placed in a cardboard box custom-made for the painting, lined with a clipping from a local newspaper from the city he was staying during its time of production, with its date of publication corresponding to the day on which the work was created. Such are indeed seemingly anonymous, inorganic paintings comprised of extremely simple elements. However, this series of works that result from the tautological act of depicting the date of production in the language of the country in which Kawara was staying at the time, is a record of survival that serves as an indication of both the time and place where the artist had certainly been present.

In the work *One Hundred Years Calendar*, which consists of rows of dates spanning one hundred years of the 20th century, every day in the artist's life is marked over the numeral with a yellow dot. Every day a "Date Painting" was completed is marked with a green dot, and red dots note when more than one painting was made. The "Date Paintings" that Kawahara continued to produce in his daily life regardless of the times, social conditions, and changes in living circumstances, along with the calendar that is a testament to this, enable us viewers to extend our gaze to the long passage of time that goes far beyond the actions, life, and death of an individual.

*However, in countries like Japan that does not use the Roman alphabet, the international auxiliary language of Esperanto was used.

4 Fluxus

Fluxus is an avant-garde art movement that encompasses a wide range of genres, including music, poetry, art, film, and performance, and extends throughout the world in places such as the U.S., Europe, and Japan. The group, whose name means flow, wave, change, and purge among other things, was formed in the early 1960s by the Lithuanian American George MACIUNAS (1931-1978), and evolved a diverse range of activities designed to break down the wall between art and daily life.

Fluxus' "events," which lay at the center of the group's practice, are rooted in the "performance" (poetically imaginative and humorous interpretations) of "scores" – a set of instructions explaining how to carry out a casual act in simple words. The artists would bring their scores to each other and perform them at places such as Maciunas and Ay-O's (1931-) New York lofts. With an all-consuming passion,

Maciunas also attached self-designed labels to plastic cases that he bought in a nearby wholesale district, and produced cards with scores printed on them, kits that contained objects, and printed matter. In this way, he set out to widely distribute Fluxus' work in the form of multiples.

In SHIOMI Mieko [Chieko] (1938-) developed a series called *Spatial Poem*, which was designed to expand the event format. For this first piece, based on the concept of using the world to create a word collage, Shiomi sent invitations to artists listed in the Fluxus address book, requesting that they perform an event by "writ[ing] a word (or words) on the enclosed card and place it somewhere," and notify her about what they had done. Shiomi compiled a record of the events, conducted in the artists' everyday life, on a map of the world, and sent it back to the participants. The work created links between people all over the world, recalling our present-day style of globe-spanning communication. In this section, we introduce some early films by Nam June PAIK (1932-2006), who was involved with the group from its inception, along with other works by Fluxus artists, who adopted myriad approaches of creatively reexamining ordinary things.

5 MISIMA Kimiyo, KWAK Duck Jun

The painter MISIMA Kimiyo (1932-) emerged in the 1950s around the time of the so-called "Informel whirlwind." Around 1960, after a period of abstract painting, Mishima began making collage works using newspapers, magazines, and advertisements that she brought back from overseas or received from friends. The abstract collages combined planes of color and brushstrokes executed in acrylic paint with a host of fragmented information on large canvases. In some cases, Mishima also used waste materials laded with personal memories, such as a blanket that her brother-in-law had brought back from the army and a scorched mosquito net. In 1966, she adopted a silkscreen technique to copy pictures and articles from sources such as the U.S. magazine *Life* onto the canvas.

The word "information" was constantly being invoked during Japan's period of high economic growth, which saw an acceleration in the spread of TV and the popularity of weekly magazines. At the beginning of the '70s, Mishima was inspired to make a new form of sculpture by using silkscreen printing to copy run-of-the-mill printed matter onto a ceramic material, which easily broke when dropped. These "information fossils" took the form of printed matter, which had become ordinary garbage, such as casually consumed comic books and balled up sheets of newspaper. With a carefree sense of humor and irony, Mishima set out to express the "fear that was buried within this flood of information."

After first creating a unique style of painting by applying layers of whitewash and plaster to sheets of plywood in the late '60s, KWAK Duck Jun (1937-) developed a diverse body of works, including photographs, prints, performances, and films. In 1974, the artist began the "President Kwak" series, in which he combined a picture of his own face with that of the new American president, whose face adorned the cover of *Time* magazine every four years. This forged a link between a president, who inevitably displayed a triumphant smile while bathing in the attention of the world's media, and a powerless artist without any authority who held his tongue with a deadpan expression, while inwardly containing the absurd experience of losing his nationality following the enactment of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952 despite having been born Japanese in Kyoto. Yet, the profile of Kwak's face, discretely visible on the left side of the pictures, clearly proved the existence of the artist who had created this torn self-portrait.

6 KOU Kana [YOSHIDA Kana]

The works of KOU Kana [YOSHIDA Kana] (1975-2020) are deeply engraved with the artist's physical memories. Climbing mountains, walking the earth, and crossing lakes, Kou was guided by a desire to learn more about the world, from familiar to faraway places. She traveled to natural areas both in Japan and abroad, including Yakushima, Borneo, Yosemite, and the Norwegian fjords. Kou also occasionally made her way through places that contained an element of danger, accentuating her awareness of infinite nature and her finite self, and changing her outlook when faced with the fear of physical limitation. Kou referred to this as an expansion of a "beautiful limit," and created works, in which she seems to have digested the meaning of these experiences. Although Kou was known for vivid and detailed landscapes made with crayon, her works are not direct reproductions of the nature she saw. Rather, they are based on her actual experiences, and the product of interpreting and editing the things that she sensed.

Kou created *A Secret of Hanasuwa Island* during an approximately six-year stay in Shodoshima that began in 2011. The installation captures a seascape of the titular small island off the coastline in the form of an inverted cone. Kou spent many days diving in the sea, and after encountering the fertile subaquatic world, which is unimaginable from the land, she deftly depicted the emotional tremors and wonder she felt from the perspective of looking up from the bottom of the ocean.

An example of Kou's singular technique, in which she converted three dimensions into two, and then changed them into three dimensions, can be also found in *No dimensional limit anymore*, a work that samples the Shodoshima landscape. Gradually, Kou's interest moved far beyond the subject of dimensions, and came to encompass the origins of the entire universe, natural science, and physics. "What is a landscape? What is a space? What is nature? What is the universe?" These fundamental questions, which she pursued throughout her life, continue to echo through her work after her death, stimulating our sensibilities and laying out landscapes of still unseen worlds, and time and space before our very eyes.

7 OTA Saburo

In the mid-1980s, OTA Saburo (1950-) began making works in which he used preexisting stamps and postmarks as proof of his own existence while also creating stamp-shaped and other types of works that dealt with subjects such as memories of time and place.

The *Seed Project*, which Ota started in 1991, juxtaposes the natural process of seed dispersal with the postal system. Whether they are scattered by the wind in a tuft of hair, shoot off on their own, or are carried through spines that adhere to animals and people, seeds are designed to reach their destination even farther than being transported by the powers of nature. Ota collects seeds day after day from places such as a park in Nerima-ku, which he visited with small children; foreign cities where his work was being shown; Tsuyama, Okayama Prefecture, where he moved in 1994; Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, where he traveled in 2012, the year after the area was devastated by a tsunami in the Great East Japan Earthquake; and Kiba Park, which he visited prior to this exhibition. Ota then carefully arranges and seals the seeds inside the small stamp format that we use on a daily basis, and adds the name of the plant the seeds came from, and the date and place where he found them.

In the *Seed Project*, the last two digits of the year in which Ota collected the seed are written in the upper left above the stamp's denomination. In *Post War*, a series Ota began in 1994, he inscribed the number of years that have passed from the end of World War II to the time that he made the work. Meanwhile, in *Post War Mugonkan*, Ota uses self-portraits and family pictures that are housed in the Mugonkan ("Museum of Silence," located in Ueda, Nagano Prefecture) as his motifs. The original works were collected by the writer KUBOSHIMA Seiichi and the painter NOMIYAMA Gyoji as they walked around visiting the bereaved families of art students who were killed in the war. In one piece, Ota converted a self-portrait by NOMURA Manpei into a stamp-size monochrome picture. Nomura attended the Tokyo School of Fine Arts at the same time as Nomiya before dying in 1943 from a disease he contracted on the battlefield in mainland China. Ota creates these pieces in the hope that as many people as possible will have an opportunity to see these posthumous works when they are displayed in a gallery or museum.

When we gaze intently at the small images of seeds, which have discretely fallen to the ground in a variety of places, and the young artists, who lost their lives in the war, arranged in the form of stamps, and straining to hear the sound of their silent voices that have been lost in the passage of time, we are confronted with a multilayered time and space akin to the sprouting of a plant.

8 One Day

In this section, we present Sam TAYLOR-JOHNSON's (née TAYLOR-WOOD) (1967-) *Crying Men*. As the title suggests, the work depicts men crying. These include a man who grows misty-eyed as he presses his hand over his mouth, another man who wipes his tears on the sleeve of his shirt, and still another man who hangs his head as he struggles to suppress his emotions. As a number of familiar faces attest, all of the men are actors. TAYLOR-JOHNSON commissioned the actors to give a crying performance, and used the men as the subject of her work. Once we realize that the men are actors, we begin to imagine and suspect a variety of things regarding their expressions, emotions, and actions. How would we react to the work if the men were unknown? And how would we feel if women, or actresses, were crying instead of men?

Now also known as a film director, TAYLOR-JOHNSON first received attention as one of the YBAs (Young British Artists), who swept the art world in the '90s. Making large-format photographs and video works with her close friends and actors in a host of formats, including classical religious pictures, famous masterpieces, movies, and operas, the artist deftly expressed the contemporary state of mind and human relations amid a mixture of fact and fiction. Similarly, in this work, the artist considers a mental state in which people lose their self-awareness, but at the same time are constantly checking on themselves. The subject is presented in a frank manner devoid of fictional qualities. TAYLOR-JOHNSON started out with the intention of observing and documenting the methodology that an actor uses to cry in a situation without any background narrative. But over the course of the three years that it took to make the work, she gradually came to realize that it was more like a highly charged collaboration with the actors than an act of observation.

While designed to look as if "something happened one day," the work, which conveys the complex act of crying through the actors' performances, invites a variety of interpretations as it wavers between truth and fact, and sheds light on the fictive aspect of our emotions. In the end, whose emotions are these anyway?

9 At Night

This section focuses on works that are imbued with a personal atmosphere that evokes a sense of intimacy in the viewer.

KOBAYASHI Masato (1957-) is an artist who has carved out a unique world of painting in which the images and the space are continuously regenerated. In many of his works, the models are inseparably blended and integrated into the paintings. When we explore the roots of these painted "incarnations," we discover that the personal losses the artist experienced inspired him to create. In addition, we realize that Kobayashi's radical experiments are based on entrusting the seeds of loss to his paintings, and that his artistic quest is indivisible from his life. *Flash*, for example, is part of a series of drawings that the artist made through the nights which are related to a nude painting he made while living in Ghent, Belgium. The work depicts a woman lying with her back turned and twinkling stars amid a scattering of colored fragments with undefined shapes. The artist's vision of ceaselessly chasing what he calls the "star model" has recurred over and over in a trajectory of sparkling crayons and conté crayons.

Marlene DUMAS' (1953-) vision is manifested as water or "breath." Born to a Dutch family in South Africa, Dumas began painting in the '80s, repeatedly depicting faces and nudes quoted from a variety of images, including photographs and classical paintings. *Twisted* is a work that focuses on the theme of pubescent boys. Dumas' paintings often deal with the problem of the individual and the group, and in this work she brings to life the temporary sense of discomfort and instability that a child experiences in the process of becoming an individual with blurred watercolors.

An artist's endless pursuit of recurring motifs and visions calls to mind their ideas and their original creative impulse. This clearly conveys the timeless quality of art, which on the one hand a personal matter but at the same time something that is shared by others.

10 The Whereabouts of Memory

Keeping a journal is in part a way of counteracting forgetfulness. Artists make use of various methods to avoid forgetting and reclaim memory.

Throughout his life, which recently came to a close, Christian BOLTANSKI (1944-2021) was concerned with history, memory, and the representation of death as they related to World War II. With the preservation and traces of the past at the center of his work, Boltanski transformed the death of his French Jewish father into something that evoked the Holocaust. His work *Photo Album of the Family D. 1939-1964*, based on a friend's family photo album, focuses on a 25-year period that begins slightly before the war. Along with the sense of loss, the numerous cautionary scenes make the artist's memories resonate us while also making us realize the extent to which memory is a collective promise. The artist's stated intent was to reproduce the emotions created by things that are beyond our understanding. While searching through repositories of images and memories, Boltanski assembled archives with a critical perspective, and made installations that functioned as a device for restoring memory.

To the rear of this work, in which a multitude of faces rise to the surface, you will find *Emerald*, a video installation by Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL (1970-), who is also known as a film director.

The installation deals with the theme of an old hotel called the Morakot (Emerald) located in central Bangkok in the artist's homeland of Thailand. The voices of those who once visited the hotel overlap with recitations of poems as fragments of memory dance through the room in a scattering of light, drifting and piling up like ghosts.

Texts: 1, 2, 8, 9, 10(CHINZEI Yoshimi) / 3, 4, 5, 7 (MIZUTA Yuko) / 6 (MORI Chika / Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum)
Translation: 1, 4-10(Christopher Stephens) / 2, 3 (Benger Kei)