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Yokohama Triennale 2014

**The story of a voyage into the Sea of Oblivion,
told in two introductions and 11 chapters**

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[In front of the Museum]

Introduction: Unmonumental Monuments

A truck in the style of a Gothic cathedral. Everybody's favorite word, "LOVE," twisted and rendered somehow helpless.

Both Wim Delvoye and Gimhongsok have created massive monuments that are stripped of their monumentality. They mischievously undermine the intent of monumental works of art, to dominate spaces and minds with their imposing power, and create unmonumental monuments that stand as magnificent paradoxes.

[Grand Gallery]

Introduction: What Is in the Center of the World?

When someone creates something, a host of other things are forgotten: heaps of materials that went unused, stacks of failed works of art that go unseen, piles of garbage hauled away. As soon as the finished work is reverently displayed in a museum, it is as if these other things never existed. Out of sight, out of mind, they are set adrift on the sea of oblivion.

The history of art exhibited by human beings is just the tip of an iceberg, and a far greater mass of dark matter hulks unseen, the real but forgotten history of art. Let us step out into the oblivion. Let us explore the rubbish bin.

[Yokohama Museum of Art]

Chapter 1: Listening to Silence and Whispers

Silent things go unnoticed and are forgotten. Whispers can only be heard right next to the ear. Yet silence and whispers conceal weight and strength that surpasses those of speeches and blather. That weight and strength becomes what we call art.

Chapter 2: Encountering a Drifting Classroom

The Kamagasaki district of Osaka is home to day laborers whose hands restored Japan during the postwar economic miracle, but the area was forgotten when this growth ground to a halt.

Kamagasaki Art University (nicknamed "Kama Gei") was founded in order to engage, through creative expression, with a community facing myriad issues such as aging residents, healthcare, employment, housing, life and death.

This summer, Kama Gei drifts into Yokohama. What kind of "summer classroom" will grow out of the viewpoints, sensibilities, and stance of the Kamagasaki community? We shall soon find out.

Chapter 3: ART Fahrenheit 451

Obliteration of words and ideas through thought control is a tragedy recurring throughout the history of humankind.

Our goal here is not to critique or protest this. Rather, we are posing questions: Could these tragedies that occurred in the past, or are occurring somewhere today, be a mirror that reflects our own here and now? "What about yourself?" Could they be a hint that we should examine ourselves, and see if we are not guilty of the same crime?

Chapter 4: Laboring in Solitude, Wrestling with the World

Artists start wrestling with the world, or the universe, suddenly and without apparent reason.

This heavy labor, carried out in solitude, is a pure manifestation of the urge to live, but it looks like a meaningless and fruitless effort. In embarking on this voyage into the sea of oblivion, however, the artist is declaring independence, casting off the dogma that demands everything fulfill a purpose. Unbowed by any gales he or she may face, the artist glows with solitary radiance.

This is exactly like the faint glow emanating from a halo hovering above saints' heads, showing us that they are saints, no matter how ragged their clothes may be.

Chapter 5: Impersonal Chronicles (tentative)

(personal notes on Chapter 5)

From the tennis court to a court of law.

And thence to prison.

On a tennis court, two players face each other over the net in the center, watched by a referee. This cast of characters metamorphoses into that of a defendant and plaintiff, facing one another under the eyes of a judge. From the courtroom leads a road that goes directly to jail.

It is a process of transformation that looks simple at first, but taking a step inside, I find myself immediately off kilter and adrift. What I can see are chairs, a fence, and a net: nothing could be more prosaic, and yet these things are invested with no meaning, and the entire structure is so porous as to let anyone slip inside.

It is vast yet as light as air, it makes me feel like floating away while at the same time exerting a bizarrely strong gravitational pull – a contradictory mixture of vertigo, nausea, fear, and undeniably attraction.

Can this be called a work of art? It is a mammoth plastic model of a concept. It is empty, and yet it can strike you as more solid and more real than a genuine ship, tank, or plane.

The space for the name of the author of this construct is left blank. It is not that the name is unwritten, but that the creator is impersonal.

When we talk about the weather, the subject is not "I" or "you" but "it," as in "It is raining." In the same way, what is occurring here is not occurring on the instructions of one specific person.

A work of art is work done by one specific "I," but if I accept that this "I" does not belong to me as an individual but is instead the product of chance, formed by countless others, the weight of history, the babble of words, a profusion of mathematical formulas, probabilities, and information... then the individuality I claim with my specific name becomes null and void.

This mammoth plastic model of a concept was created by nobody, or could have been created by anybody. Perhaps we are all accomplices.

Chapter 6: Monologues by *Enfants Terribles*

The price for becoming an adult is giving up our childhood memories. Some people, however, treasure these memories too strongly and remain stuck at the gateway, refusing to pay the fee to enter the adult world. Artists are the classic example. They are children who did not grow up. They are on a journey back to the source from which we all sprang, but forgotten about when we became adults. The *enfants terribles* tempt us to take part in the thrilling ordeal of their solo performances.

Chapter 7: Vanishing into the Light

If we forget something completely, we can no longer talk about it, see it, or know it. That is why we feel almost reverential toward oblivion, as it is that which is out of reach, forever beyond our grasp. However, while we may not be able to grasp oblivion itself, we can see it in the shadows of what was once there, and in the enchanting rays of light cast by that which has vanished.

[Surrounding Area]

Chapter 8: A Drifting Journey / A Sea Reflecting Fleeting Images

The theater of Takayama Akira is theater that denies conventional theater. The essential elements of theater, such as a hall and a stage, or a distinction between the roles of actors and an audience, are thoroughly restructured, becoming nameless flotsam to be gathered and rearranged at will.

What is it that drives Takayama to such lengths? It is a sense of crisis directed toward the usual expectations placed on theater, assumptions that it will sweep the audience along together on an inexorable wave of celebratory emotion.

When the entire enthusiastic audience is rejoicing as one, intoxicated by the created drama, Takayama silently withdraws, taking the helm of a cooler and more critical enthusiasm and steering it out on to the sea of oblivion.

Toyoda Hitoshi presents his photographs in slideshows using reversal film, rejecting the usual process of turning images into solid objects by printing them on paper. They appear only to disappear, and disappear only to appear, a story told in accumulated fragments of light. Images as light, flashing on and off again, beckon us to drift further out to sea, leaving us stranded in the midst of a profound silence.

[Yokohama Museum of Art / Shinko Pier Exhibition Hall]

Chapter 9: Performing “Fahrenheit 451” (tentative)

Chapter 10: The Days After Deluge (tentative)

All sorts of floating objects drift in from all directions, coming together for a time in the same place, and eventually drifting apart in every direction again. This exhibition, and indeed all our human endeavors, can be seen as such chance meetings and partings of flotsam and jetsam on the sea.

The Sapporo International Art Festival, the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, and the Yokohama Triennale are all unfolding at around the same time, a chance encounter resulting in fluid exchanges. Viewers may find themselves not being sure which international art festival they are seeing, but without a doubt this opening of airways will let in fresh breezes and provide a much broader view.

[Shinko Pier Exhibition Hall]

Chapter 11: Drifting in a Sea of Oblivion

After seeing everything, the voyagers (viewers) at last come face to face with the boundless sea of oblivion.

Silence, whispers, death (and life), nothingness, chaos, reversion, light... the sea is too deep and wide for memories or information to penetrate.

The voyagers are adrift on this sea of oblivion. At the same time they are each embarking on their own voyage of discovery, each moving toward his or her own destination.

MORIMURA Yasumasa

Born 1951 in Osaka (Japan). Lives and works there.



In 1985, he exhibited a photographic self-portrait replicating a painted self-portrait by Van Gogh. Since then he has consistently produced photographic and video self-portraits, reproducing historic works of art or impersonating actresses of cinema's golden age, famous 20th-century figures, and others. Recent major solo exhibitions include *Rembrandt Room Revisited* (2013) at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art; *Velasquez: Las Meninas Renacen de Noche* (In Praise of Velásquez: Handmaidens Reborn in the Night) (2013) at the Shiseido Gallery; and *Theater of the Self* (2013-14) at the Andy Warhol Museum. Morimura has received many awards, including the Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts in 2007, the 52nd Mainichi Art Award in 2011 and the Medal with Purple Ribbon (Artistic Excellence) in autumn 2011.

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