

ROPPONGI HILLS AND MORI ART MUSEUM 15TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

CATASTROPHE AND THE POWER OF ART

OCTOBER 6 [SAT], 2018 - JANUARY 20 [SUN], 2019 MORI ART MUSEUM [53F, ROPPONGI HILLS MORI TOWER]

WHAT ART CAN DO IN CHAOTIC TIMES WHERE THE FUTURE IS UNCERTAIN

Mori Art Museum, Tokyo is pleased to present “Catastrophe and the Power of Art,” an exhibition to commemorate Roppongi Hills and Mori Art Museum 15th Anniversary, from Saturday, October 6, 2018 to Sunday, January 20, 2019.

Recent decades have seen a stream of catastrophes around the world - from 9.11 in 2001 to the global financial crisis of 2008, Japan’s devastating quake and tsunami in 2011, and the list goes on - and many artists have produced works dealing with these tragic events, in an endeavor to inform the wider world of them, and ensure their stories are passed down to future generations. Unlike media coverage, with its emphasis on objectivity, such documenting from a personal perspective presents to us another kind of truth, difficult to discern in the shadow of numerically overwhelming public opinion. Such works may also be designed to expose contradictions and cover-ups in wider society, or express personal loss and grief.

Catastrophe and crisis can drive us to despair, yet it is also true that the energy released as we try to recover can simultaneously spark imagination, and boost creative output. The large cohort of artists from Japan and elsewhere is working for a better society since the 2011 earthquake; attempting to offer new visions, depicting ideals and hopes encompassing wishes for reconstruction and rebirth.

“Catastrophe and the Power of Art” will look at how art deals with the major catastrophes that strike communities, as well as personal tragedies, and the role art can play in our recovery; contemplating - amid today’s mounting crises of war, terrorism, burgeoning refugee numbers, and destruction of the environment - the dynamic “power of art” to turn negative into positive.



Yoko Ono
Add Color Painting (Refugee Boat)
2016
Mixed media installation
Dimensions variable
Installation view: “Yoko Ono: Installations and Performances,” Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2016

PRESS RELEASE

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PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND PROJECTS * In alphabetical order of artists' (sur)names / project titles

Shiva Ahmadi	Horio Sadaharu	Miyamoto Ryuji
Miroslaw Balka	Khaled Hourani	Yoko Ono
Ban Shigeru	Huang Hai-Hsin	Georges Rousse
Chim ↑ Pom	HYOGO AID '95 by ART	Katerina Seda
Thomas Demand	Ikeda Manabu	Wolfgang Staehle
Christoph Draeger	Isaac Julien	Helmut Stallaerts
Fujii Hikaru	Hiwa K	Swoon
Hatakeyama Naoya	Kato Tsubasa	Takeda Shimpei
Mona Hatoum	Oliver Laric	Tanaka Koki
Hirakawa Kota	Eva and Franco Mattes	Gillian Wearing
Thomas Hirschhorn	Miyajima Tatsuo	Yoneda Tomoko among others

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title: "Catastrophe and the Power of Art"

Organizer: Mori Art Museum

Curated by: Kondo Kenichi (Curator, Mori Art Museum)

Exhibition Period: October 6 [Sat], 2018 - January 20 [Sun], 2019

Venue: Mori Art Museum, 53F, Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Open Hours: 10:00-22:00 | Tue: 10:00-17:00 | * Admission 30 minutes before closing. | * Open everyday.

Admission: Adult: ¥1,800 / University/highschool student: ¥1,200 / Child (age 4 up to junior highschool student): ¥600 / Senior (ages 65 and over): ¥1,500 | * All prices include tax. | * Ticket also valid for Tokyo City View observation deck (excludes Sky Deck). | * Additional entrance fee to the Sky Deck is required.

General Inquiries: +81-(0)3-5777-8600 (Hello Dial) www.mori.art.museum/en



Chim ↑ Pom
REAL TIMES
 2011
 HD video installation
 11 min. 11 sec.
 Collection: Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

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FEATURES

■ Reexamining “Power of Art,” 15 Years on

Mori Art Museum, Tokyo in 2003 staged the inaugural exhibition “HAPPINESS: A Survival Guide for Art and Life,” which as the title indicates took as its theme “happiness,” something of importance to us all. Then in 2013, commemorating the Museum’s 10th anniversary, another universal theme had its turn in the spotlight: “love,” in “All You Need Is LOVE: From Chagall to Kusama and Hatsune Miku.” Now, by deliberately setting out to tackle the theme of “catastrophe,” this exhibition marking 15 years of the Mori Art Museum asks what art can do in the face of the mounting challenges of today’s world.

■ A Range of Works that Connect with Communities through Art, to Facilitate Change

One feature of contemporary art is “its potential to improve society,” and one aspect of this attracting particular attention recently, including in Japan, is “socially engaged art” (SEA) where artists stage interventions in communities with the aim of bringing about change in society via their work and practice. Presenting numerous examples of outstanding art with a social message, including audience participatory works by the likes of Yoko Ono and Miyajima Tatsuo, “Catastrophe and the Power of Art” will contemplate the possibilities of art as a force for change.

■ Showcasing Numerous Works Passing down the Memories of 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake So that It “Shall Not Be Forgotten”

The 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake brought dramatic changes to Japanese society, and also had a major impact on Japan’s contemporary art world. Seven years on however, perhaps our experiences and memories of the disaster are beginning to deteriorate, while on the other hand, in some areas recovery is not progressing as well as first envisaged. Presenting works by around ten artists including Chim ↑ Pom, Thomas Demand, and Ikeda Manabu, this exhibition aims to remind people of the experience and reignite discussion.

■ Works by around 40 Artists/Units from Superstars of the Contemporary Art Firmament to Remarkable Young Artists, and Artists Showing in Japan for the First Time

“Catastrophe and the Power of Art” will present works by an impressive array of artists both Japanese and overseas, ranging from well-established practitioners like Thomas Hirschhorn, Mona Hatoum, Isaac Julien, Hatakeyama Naoya, and Miyamoto Ryuji - all veterans of some of the world’s most prestigious contemporary art festivals, including the Venice Biennale and Documenta - to street art star Swoon as well as up-and-coming talent such as Kato Tsubasa and Hirakawa Kota. Look out also for artists making their Japanese debut, including Hiwa K and Helmut Stallaerts.

■ Launching “Pre-Discussion Series” Prior to the Actual Exhibition

In the belief that when studying the relationship between disaster and contemporary art, it is essential to consider real-life cases, experiences and discourses, five talks collectively dubbed a “Pre-Discussion Series” are run before the show opens. So far, four talks have been held (with the themes “The Possibilities for Art in Disasters,” “Using Photography and Film to Express Catastrophe: Documenting, Artistry, Morals,” “Twenty Some Years after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake: Experiencing and Inheriting” and “Fukushima 2011-2018” respectively), and the fifth talk with the theme of “Art or Activism?” are to be underway in July this year. Discussions involving a range of guest speakers such as experts, specialists, other interested parties and artists will not only be presented at the venue as part of the exhibition, but published in the exhibition catalogue as well. During the exhibition, we also plan to hold a symposium recapping these discussions.

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SECTIONS AND KEY WORKS

[Section I]

Presenting works showing natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis, and man-made disasters such as accidents and war, as well as personal tragedies, Section I will focus on “how art has portrayed catastrophe.” Although all the works in this section deal with disaster, the visual languages they use to do so vary widely from the realist, to the fictional, to the extremely abstract. This section includes works that give visual expression to less visible threats, such as the proliferation of globalized virtual capital in the 21st century - causing the global financial crisis of 2008 - and radiation contamination from the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima. While touching on the capacity of art to blend beauty and humor into the expression of catastrophe, Section I will examine how artists attempt to document and recreate the horrors of disaster as well as fear, and preserve their stories for the future by sharing them with others.



Isaac Julien *PLAYTIME* 2013
3-channel HD video installation, 5.1 surround sound
64 min. 12 sec.
Courtesy: Victoria Miro, London



Takeda Shimpei *Trace # 7, Nihonmatsu Castle* 2012
Gelatin silver print 50.8 x 60 cm
Collection: the amana collection, Tokyo



Miyamoto Ryuji
Kobe 1995 After the Earthquake - Nagata-ku 1995
Gelatin silver print 51 x 61 cm
Collection: Mori Art Museum, Tokyo



Gillian Wearing
From the series "Signs that Say What You Want Them to Say and Not Signs that Say What Someone Else Wants You to Say"
1992-93 C-print on aluminum
44.5 x 29.7 cm
Courtesy: Maureen Paley, London

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[Section 2]

Section 2 will close in on the “power of art” to generate creation from destruction. Catastrophe and tragedy can plunge us into despondency, yet disaster can also undoubtedly serve as a catalyst for artists to make art. The products of their copious imaginations, showing revival, recovery, and a better society, in turn help us to imagine an ideal future.

Unlike medicine, art may provide no fast remedies for disasters. But perhaps it can serve instead as long-term therapy for society. Art can lend its strength in many ways: as a vehicle for messages of hope, or a tool for solidarity in the face of oppression; contributing financially in the form of charity, healing wounded hearts. It will examine potentiality of art by giving particular attention on this “power” that art possesses to take the negative, and turn it into positive.



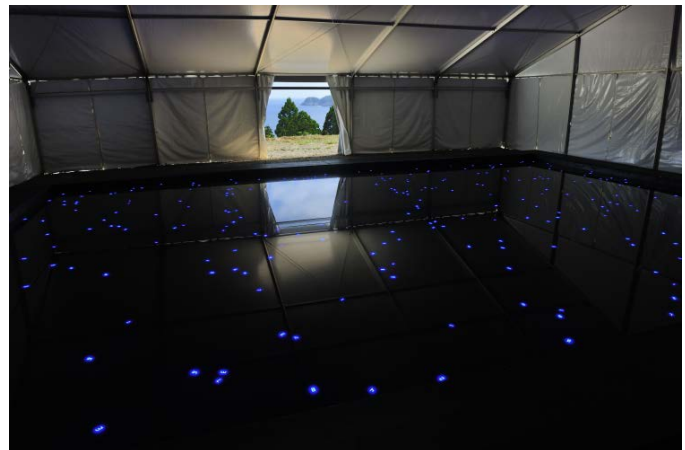
Ikeda Manabu
Rebirth
2013-16
Pen, acrylic ink, transparent watercolor on paper, mounted on board
300 x 400 cm
Collection: Saga Prefectural Art Museum
Digital archive: TOPPAN PRINTING CO., LTD.
Courtesy: Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo / Singapore
* Will be exhibited after end-November 2018



Swoon
Submerged Motherlands
2014
Mixed media installation
Dimension variable
Collection of the artist
Installation view: "Swoon: Submerged Motherlands," Brooklyn Museum, 2014
Photo: Tod Seelie
* Referential image



Kato Tsubasa
The Lighthouses - 11.3 PROJECT
2011
Documentation photograph of the project
Photo: Miyajima Kei
Courtesy: MUJIN-TO Production



Miyajima Tatsuo
Sea of Time - TOHOKU (2017 Ishinomaki)
2017
Waterproof LED, electric wire, integrated circuit, water
910 x 1,270 cm
Collection of the artist
Installation view: "Reborn-Art Festival," Miyagi, Japan, 2017

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