

TOKAS Project Vol. 6

Swaying Calmly, Gazing Quietly



2023/10/7 (Sat.)–11/12 (Sun.)

Tokyo Arts and Space Hongo

—Exhibition Commemorating the Partnership Between TOKAS and the Province of Quebec, with Theme of Cities and Culture

Since its opening in 2001, Tokyo Arts and Space (TOKAS) has collaborated with overseas artists and curators, art centers, cultural institutions, and other parties to put on exhibitions and related programs. TOKAS Project was launched in 2018 as a program to explore various themes, such as art and society, from multicultural viewpoints. The upcoming exhibition commemorates both the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Délégation générale du Québec à Tokyo (Quebec Government Office in Tokyo), and the fifth anniversary of full-fledged interaction between TOKAS and the province of Quebec. We are pleased to present this international exchange-based exhibition centered on Quebec-based artists who have participated in TOKAS residency programs.

The relationship between TOKAS and the province of Quebec dates back to 2015, and TOKAS has hosted creators based in Quebec every year since then. In 2017 an official agreement was established, and reciprocal exchanges have continued, with one creator or group being dispatched from Quebec to Tokyo and vice versa annually. By fiscal 2023, a total of 16 Quebec-based artists or groups had participated in a TOKAS residency, and five Japanese creators had taken part in residency programs at Centre Clark in Montreal. This exhibition showcases works by four of these artists or groups, each exploring the transformation of cities and the resulting adaptation of culture and environment.

Information

Exhibition Title: TOKAS Project Vol. 6 “Swaying Calmly, Gazing Quietly”

Artists: **Jean-Maxime DUFRESNE & Virginie LAGANIÈRE, Michel HUNEALT, KOKUBUN Yuko, Jen REIMER & Max STEIN**

Dates: 2023/10/7 (Sat.)–11/12 (Sun.)

Venue: Tokyo Arts and Space Hongo (2-4-16 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo)

Hours: 11:00–19:00 (Last entry 18:30)

Closed: Mondays (Except 10/9), 10/10 (Tue.)

Admission: Free

Organizer: Tokyo Arts and Space, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture

Cooperation: Délégation générale du Québec à Tokyo, Conseil des Arts et des lettres du Québec, Centre Clark

Website: <https://www.tokyoartsandspace.jp/en/>

< Press Contact >

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■ About the Exhibition

This exhibition presents works by four artists or groups: Jean-Maxime Dufresne & Virginie Laganière, Jen Reimer & Max Stein, Michel Huneault, and Kokubun Yuko. Kokubun took part in a residency program in Quebec in 2022, and the others participated in TOKAS residency programs between 2017 and 2019.

The time the Quebec-based artists spent in Tokyo coincided with the runup to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, a period of major changes for the city and Japanese society as a whole. Each of them explored different aspects of this shift – the psychological struggles of individuals adapting to urbanized working environments, scenes that usually go unnoticed and unperceived due to familiarity but become visible when viewed from a somewhat detached vantage point, other scenes of the construction of massive breakwaters that seemingly symbolize a departure from nature, the subtleties of people's emotions – quietly observing and gathering material from which they developed their works.

Kokubun Yuko traveled to Quebec after a two-year postponement due to the COVID pandemic. She carried out a project based on the stages of Cirque du Soleil, the globally acclaimed Quebec-based performing arts company renowned for nonverbal communication-oriented acts such as circus performances and acrobatics, translating emotions and experiences shared through physical expression into two-dimensional works using theatrical interpretations. She aimed to fuse the tension and tranquility of highly constrained movements and the vitality of the ensuing moments, developing new and deepened spatiotemporal dimensions.

Over the past five to ten years, we have all faced events that drastically disrupted both individual mentalities and society as a whole. Particularly, the locked-down period beginning in 2020 when the world came to a standstill highlighted the ways in which culture and environment imprinted on the body can subtly fluctuate and manifest as a state of cognitive dissonance. Today, as the reopened world goes about its business as if nothing had happened, these works created by capturing and intertwining space, time, sound, emotion, and landscape may offer fresh awareness of what has fundamentally changed and what remains unchanged.

■ Related Event

Artists Talk

Date: 2023/10/7 (Sat.) 15:00 – 16:30

Participants (scheduled): Jean-Maxime DUFRESNE & Virginie LAGANIÈRE, Michel HUNEULT, KOKUBUN Yuko, Jen REIMER & Max STEIN

Please see the TOKAS website for details.

■ About Centre Clark

Partner institution for the Exchange Residency Program of TOKAS, Centre Clark is an artist-run center dedicated to the presentation and production of contemporary art, situated in the Mile End area, center of the art scene since the 80s. Having two exhibition spaces, an audio listening station, a library and Atelier Clark, a woodworking shop, the only one of its kind in Montreal, as well as artist studios and design offices in the building, Centre Clark functions as a hub in the local art community.

Creators / Press Images

*Please contact the PR section for more images.

Jean-Maxime DUFRESNE & Virginie LAGANIÈRE

Participant in Research Residency Program in 2018

Dufresne and Laganière explore societal transformations encompassing architecture, nature, urban life and technological innovation, with a deep concern for the human psyche. In Tokyo, they conducted research on themes such as psychological struggles related to work environments, escapism in form of evasion of moral burdens arising from a social pressure to conform, the suspension of productive time and the place of affects and wellbeing. Blurring the lines between documentary and fiction, their installation comprises photography, video and sound works that foster open-ended interpretations of social futures and their uncertainties.



1. *Fukuro*, 2018, Photography

[Profile] Jean-Maxime DUFRESNE: Born in France. Graduated with an MA in Communications, Experimental Media, from UQAM in 2006. Virginie LAGANIÈRE: Born in Canada. Graduated with an MA in Visual and Media Arts, from UQAM in 2006. Both live and work in Montreal. Recent exhibitions and residencies: "Brutalisme parallèle," VU / L'Œil de Poisson, Quebec City, Canada, 2023, "Là où je me terre," ISELP, Brussels, 2023, "Radiant Mountain," Foreman Art Gallery, Sherbrooke, Canada, and Principal Residency Program of La Becque, La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland, 2022.

Grant: the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Canada Council for the Arts

Michel HUNEULT

Participant in Institutional Recommendation Program in 2017 and 2022

Michel Huneault, a documentary photographer and visual artist, has been visiting the Tohoku region regularly since his first visit to Japan in 2012. He has documented the progress of recovery following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami and the evolving landscape in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as exploring the ways in which human civilization is shaped by its relationship to nature. In parallel to his activities in Tohoku, Huneault has undertaken projects concerning nature and the contemporary world in other Japanese cities unaffected by the tsunami. The works in this exhibition both reflect the progress of his research and showcase its artistic outcomes. At the same time, they invite viewers to question the nature and function of documentation and its role in journalism.

[Profile] Born in 1976 in Repentigny, Canada. Lives and works in Montreal. Graduated with an MA in Latin American Studies and Graduate Certificate in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, UC Berkeley, 2004. Recent exhibitions: "Péninsule," Rimouski Museum, Rimouski, Canada, 2023, "Incipit Covid-19," McCord Museum, Montreal, 2022-23, "Vertige: 10 news walls of Tohoku," Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montreal, 2022.



2. *Vertige: 10 new walls of Tohoku*, 2020, Vertical single channel 4K video

Grant: the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Canada Council for the Arts

KOKUBUN Yuko

Participant in Exchange Residency Program (Quebec) in 2022

With the concept of “Earth Theater,” Kokubun Yuko explores concepts of society, life, and space-time, as well as internal shifts within the human mind and body, which she translates into two-dimensional works using theatrical interpretations. Kokubun creates collages with imagery derived from various sources to convey flexibility that emerges in response to established patterns, as embodied by the environment, culture, and tradition that constrain our lives. Focusing on the mechanics of balance, a key element of circus performance, Kokubun presents a series of works characterized by shifts in the supporting base and center of gravity. While individuals strive for equilibrium, the balance between society and individual becomes disrupted and intertwined, and the two-dimensional and spatial works presented here convey a unique perspective on this reality.

[Profile] Born in Chiba in 1982. Lives and works in Tokyo. Graduated with an MA from Tokyo University of the Arts in 2010. Recent exhibitions: “Soft Coercion,” TS4312, Tokyo, 2022, “VOCA 2020,” The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, 2020.

Grant: The Asahi Shimbun Foundation



3. *Something passes by that splits us apart.*, 2022, Collage, pen, pencil, acrylic on paper

Jen REIMER & Max STEIN

Participant in Exchange Residency Program (Quebec) in 2019

Jen Reimer and Max Stein are sound and media artists who explore the resonances of urban sonic environments and the embodied experience of sound and space through site-specific performances, installations, and spatial recordings.

In this exhibition they present *Sounding the City*, an ongoing project initiated in 2015. This project involves recording sounds emanating from specific locations and their surrounding environments. The sounds are then reproduced through installations that focus our attention on these auditory environments, drawing our gaze towards characteristics of urban environments that escape unnoticed. In 2019, they documented the tones, textures and rhythms of industrial areas and riverbanks in Sumida, Tokyo. For this exhibition, they revisit the same locations to re-record these sounds and explore them anew.



4. *Arakawa River - Higashisumida*, 2019, Sound installation

[Profile] Jen Reimer: Born in Canada. Max Stein: Born in the United States. Both work in Montréal & Los Angeles. Recent activities: “Reservoir Lyren,” Sonic Topologies Festival, Zurich, 2022, “Sounding the City,” Tokyo Arts and Space Residency, 2019 / Tsonami Arte Sonoro, Valparaíso, Chile, 2018, “Estufa Fria,” Lisboa Soa, Lisbon, 2017.

Grant: the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec

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