

Mai Yamashita + Naoto Kobayashi: The Small Mountain

Reviews

Written by Takeshi HIRATA

Published: July 30 2009



0 ツイート



According to legend, a wish chanted three times while a shooting star is shining comes true. Actually, it is almost impossible to repeat a wish three times during the time a falling star emits light, less than one second, but in the work entitled "When I wish upon a star" (2004) [fig. 1] which was jointly created by Mai Yamashita and Naoto Kobayashi, thirty or more wishes are made on a shooting star. There is some miracle time which has been generated by synchronizing two different lengths of time, one is the lighting time of a falling star and another is the time taken to repeat wishes.

Mai Yamashita and Naoto Kobayashi have been expressing trivial but miraculous and comical time through their joint creations. Their works, including a spoon in a small sand castle,^{*1} traces of human hands and feet on a concrete slab, a form of "∞ (infinity)" created on a grass field, and a miniature sculpture of the Alps made by engraving firewood,^{*2} "exist" silently in the exhibition site. They added one image, such as a video picture or a photograph, to each work with the aim of conveying its process of creation to us. This makes us recognize the "actual occurrence" which happened during the process of creating the work and wonder about the existence of the materials which are now in front of us as parts of the exhibit.

Nevertheless, these images added to their work are not explanatory things associated with the creation. Instead, such recording elements, including pictures or photos, can be



© Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI

fig. 1 "When I wish upon a star" (2004); DV, 02:22min., leaned screen, courtesy of Takuro Someya Contemporary Art, copy right(c) Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI



© Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI

fig. 2 "infinity" (2006); HDV, 04:38 min., courtesy of Takuro Someya Contemporary Art, copy right(c) Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI



Access Ranking

No.1: POSSIBLY TALENTED

No.2: 奈良・町家の芸術祭
HANARART (はならあと)

No.3: Uchu-mingei

No.4: Sweet Emotion

No.5: Shinya Arimoto

No.6: Satoru
AOYAMA+Hirokazu HIRAISHI

No.7: Istituto Italiano di
Cultura di Tokyo

No.8: Yosuke Suzuki

...times, making process of process, can be described as actuality films of art documentaries which are used to show us “how to make art”. They are the same as recording movies, which can also be called “works” just like the films they document. In addition, as a recording of a movie sometimes plays a role as an essay on a quality film, a recording creation jointly made by Yamashita and Kobayashi, which shows us the “actual occurrence” during the process of generating the “work”, can also be considered as an essay on art.

For instance, let me introduce the video work entitled “infinity” (2006) [fig. 2], in which a scene of creating the form of ∞ is depicted. Looking at the film closely, we notice that the ∞ is composed of footprints made by two people who must have walked for an enormous amount of time. Based on the phrase “There is a road after one walks”, this work was created in an attempt to leave behind a symbol, ∞ , on the earth and highlight the truth of the phrase.^{*3}

In addition, there is a work in which we find something like traces of human palms and footprints remaining on a rectangular concrete slab. Its title is the “Turning Forward – Someya-san –” (2009) [fig. 3]. If you look at the film shown with the creation, you can see Takuro Someya, who is the owner of the Takuro Someya Contemporary Art Gallery, to which Yamashita and Kobayashi belong. He is doing forward rolls on a half-dry concrete slab in the video which was taken by two high-speed cameras. This work succeeded in giving us a “realistic” image by conveying its serious and nervous impressions through the documentary film, while the work itself seems, at first glance, to have been created by showing an eccentric performance. In addition, there is a set of drawing works entitled “Live Together” (2009) [fig. 4], in which animate things^{*4} living in our faces are depicted. This work could be regarded only as drawings if we eliminate our prejudices. Nonetheless, through the images which are shown next to the works, we come to “realize” that these creations, which were made from a critical perspective, raise a question about “looking at something”.

In this way, the creations jointly made by Yamashita and Kobayashi evoke for us an image of unlimited humor just like that of innocent children, and this is one of their main characteristics. Nonetheless, their persistence in leaving behind their “works” as material objects gives us another image of their creations, which is clearly distinct from humor. In fact, various kinds of performances and project works have been presented since the 90s, but most of them have focused on acting and therefore have not been preserved as material works.

Nevertheless, Yamashita and Kobayashi have created their joint works by pairing material creations and recording works, such as video pictures or photographs, which show their creative processes and methods. Looking at their works, viewers may question “artistic” activities, and can recognize Yamashita and Kobayashi’s will to record the time and instant of producing “works” and the generation and disappearance of events which we often experience in our trivial daily lives.

In other words, we can find the “actual moment of creation” during the process of forming their artworks.^{*5} Through their well-prepared and patient activities, Yamashita and Kobayashi throw out a question to the world about the existence of the materials we see as the exhibits .

© Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI

fig. 3 “Mr. Someya doing a Handspring” (2009); A concrete plate, DV, 01:35min., courtesy of Takuro Someya Contemporary Art, copy right(c) Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI



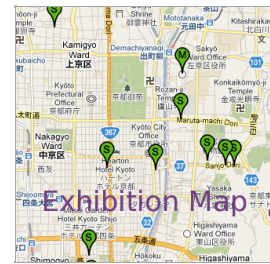
© Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI

fig. 4 “Live Together” (2009); Drawing, DV, 38min., courtesy of Takuro Someya Contemporary Art, copy right(c) Mai YAMASHITA + Naoto KOBAYASHI

No.9: from Machine Art to Media Art

No.10: taguchi fine art, ltd.

Full Search...



Indeed, their message may be given in a whispering voice such as when we chant our wishes on a shooting star, but it would be absolutely true to say that they have asked a question with infinite (∞) answers through this exhibition.

(Translated by Nozomi Nakayama)

Notes

*1

"A Spoon Made From The Land" (video installation, iron spoon, 2009)

*2

"How to make a mountain sculpture" (wood, c-print, 2006)

*3

The "Infinity" was made with the aim of examining the truth of the phrase "There is a road after one walks". A set of works jointly made by Yamashita and Kobayashi has been created for the purpose of putting such an extremely simple and humorous question into a physical form

through an in-depth approach which would not normally be used. They have been trying to express a small miracle, which is generated through their steady efforts and patience to realize such approaches.

*4

I dare not mention the details of these "animate things" since doing so would spoil your viewing experience. I would not wish viewers to look at these drawings only because of their sensationalism. They give you a tip to overcome stereotypes of drawings.

*5

This phrase can be reworded as "their works allow us to see the 'actual occurrence' which happened during the process of forming the world or art".

Related Exhibition

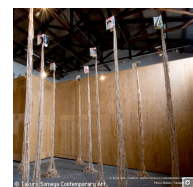
"Mai Yamashita + Naoto Kobayashi: The Small Mountain"

16/May/2009 – 27/Jun/2009

Venue: Takuro Someya Contemporary Art

Last Updated on July 05 2010

Related Articles



Gallery **Takuro Someya Contemporary Art**
updated: Dec 22,2010

Address: Tsukiji KB Bldg. 1F, 1-5-11, Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
Telephone: +81-(0)3-6278-0136
Open: 12:00 – 19:00, closed on Sunday, Monday, and national holidays
Website: <http://tsca.jp>

J.Crew - Hello, World Become a J.Crew Insider for Free Shipping and Duty Free Shopping. [Jcrew.com/HelloWorld](http://Jcrew.com>HelloWorld)

Englisch lernen online In der weltgrößten Onlineschule. Jetzt 1 Monat für nur 1€ statt 39€ Englishtown.com/1-Euro-Spezial

Alaskan Arts Travel guide and info on native art in Ketchikan, AK www.visit-ketchikan.com

AdChoices