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Kyoto
International
Festival
of
Contemporary
Culture

PARASOPHIA: Kyoto International Festival of
Contemporary Culture 2015

Exhibition framework and first round of artists



PARASOPHIA

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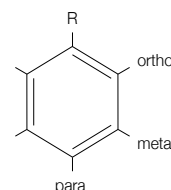


From the Artistic Director

Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015 About the Title

Artistic Director
Shinji Kohmoto

The title of Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015 was conceived based on the following conditions: It must be fitting for a large-scale international exhibition, and it should have the capacity to draw the interest of many different people. It should be slightly mysterious and easy to remember for the Japanese, and it should have the potential to communicate the main idea of Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015 to people of various cultures overseas. This criteria led me to the word “Parasophia.”



“Parasophia” was inspired by the femininity of the word *sophia*, the light ring of the word *para*, the visual image these words suggest, and Kyoto’s position on the world map. It is a coinage derived from the Greek *para* and *sophia*, the latter meaning “wisdom,” and the former being a prefix meaning “beside or adjacent to” or “beyond or distinct from, but analogous to,” as in *paradox*, *parasol*, *parachute*, *paraphrase*, *paranoia*, *parameter*, and so on. In the context of high school Chemistry, the term *para* also indicates a combining form designating the position straight across the hexagonal aromatic compound known as the benzene ring. The four other positions are *ortho* and *meta* (see diagram). *Ortho* generally means “straight” or “upright,” as in *orthodox*, and *meta* suggests something that is “higher” or “beyond.” I prefer *para* to the rigidness of *ortho* and to the sense of hierarchy suggested by *meta*. When I thought of “Parasophia,” the Hagia Sophia—which embodies the wisdom of the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and Islam—came to mind. The Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and Kyoto sit on the eastern and western ends of the Asian continent, in a *para* orientation from one another on the world map. Istanbul is one of the starting points of the Silk Road, while Kyoto is among the end points of this important route. I felt that this geographical relationship between the two cities was extremely symbolic when thinking about Kyoto as a site of international exchange and cultural production.

Additionally, the diagram of the benzene ring brings the history of Kyoto and the transition of its urban structure to mind. The city of Heian-kyō (the present Kyoto) was established in 794 A.D. with a rectangular, grid-based structure. In the 15th century, the civil war known as the Ōnin War transformed Heian-kyō into a narrow hexagon that stretched from north to south. Heian-kyō began to recover its vitality in the middle of the 16th century, and by the late 19th century, the city began to expand to the east and west, resulting in the hexagonal, benzene ring-like shape that Kyoto has today. The structural diagram of the benzene ring is, to me, an image that symbolizes the immortal city of Kyoto, nearly a life form in itself. The manner in which the benzene ring reaches out to form new bonds mirrors the strongly magnetic nature of Kyoto, or its ability to ceaselessly attract and bring widely varied forms of talent and intelligence into the city, a characteristic that is part of the true nature of its history and tradition. Kyoto can be described as a magic circle of sorts that connects the past with the future and is brimming with endless possibilities. The talent and intelligence that form bonds with Kyoto conceive of new ideas and receive inspiration for new creations and expressions from this city, while also adding to the power and potential of Kyoto. “Parasophia” is meant to represent Kyoto’s position as an instrument of intellectual and cultural production, rather than a city that merely consumes.

Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015 will feature approximately forty artists from Japan and abroad. The exhibition will be complex and multilayered in content, drawing the intellectual empathy of specialist art audiences, with a lighthearted air that can be enjoyed by the whole family.

Participating artists

Cai Guo-Qiang

蔡國強

b. 1957 in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China

Based in New York

www.caiguoqiang.com



Installation view of Cai Guo-Qiang: *Da Vincis do Povo* in the street outside Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, 2013. Photo by Joana França

Cai Guo-Qiang is internationally renowned for his dynamic, powerful style, characterized by his signature gunpowder drawings and explosion events. Cai lived in Japan from 1986 to 1995, and studied under Tatsuo Kawaguchi at the University of Tsukuba in Ibaraki. In 1994, he presented the *Project for Heiankyō 1,200th Anniversary: Celebration from Chang'an* in front of the Kyoto City Hall. He then moved to New York the following year, where he has created many works based on various aspects of traditional Chinese culture, such as herbal medicine and feng shui, with his own unique spirit of criticism.

Cai won the Golden Lion at the 48th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale for his installation piece *Venice's Rent Collection Courtyard* in 1999. He also won the 7th Hiroshima Art Prize in 2007, and the 24th Praemium Imperiale for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts (Painting) in 2012.

The artist has spent nearly a decade on his ongoing *Peasant Da Vincis* project, in which he collects pieces such as robots, submarines, and airplanes that cannot fly, made by amateur inventors using materials found in their everyday lives. These creations represent the wildest imaginations of Chinese peasants. Part of this project will form the core of the international exhibition in Kyoto in 2015.

Hoefner/Sachs

Franz Hoefner

b. 1970 in Starnberg, Germany; based in Berlin

Harry Sachs

b. 1974 in Stuttgart, Germany; based in Berlin



Hoefner/Sachs, *Honey Neustadt*, 2006. © Hoefner/Sachs

Hoefner/Sachs is an artist duo from Berlin that turns issues related to urban architecture and housing into projects and performances through artistic means imbued with a sharp, crazy sense of humor. Many of their works call the architectural border between “housing units” as mere shelters and “homes” for long-term inhabitation into question. One example is their *Honey Neustadt* project from 2006, where the artists made 1:20-scale miniature housing units out of Styrofoam beehive frames, modeled after the prefabricated working-class housing developments found in Halle-Neustadt, a commuter town for chemical plant workers built to the west of Halle in the former East Germany from the 1960s to the late 1980s. The artists built a bee colony out of these Styrofoam tower block models as a home for the swarm of a million honeybees that emerged in Berlin at that time. 250 kilograms of honey was collected from *Honey Neustadt*, and was packaged and sold both as products and artworks with the label *Berliner Blüte*, or “Flower of Berlin.”

For *Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015*, Hoefner/Sachs are currently working on plans for a new project involving a long-term stay in Kyoto and a study of the city itself.

Participating artists

Yoshimasa Ishibashi

石橋義正

b. 1968 in Kyoto; based in Kyoto

www.ishi-pro.com



Milocrorze: A Love Story (2011). Directed, written, produced, and edited by Yoshimasa Ishibashi. © Milocrorze Project

Yoshimasa Ishibashi studied filmmaking at the Royal College of Art in London as an exchange student from the Kyoto City University of Arts Graduate School's Concept and Media Planning Course. His films include *I Wanna Drive You Insane* (*Kuruwasetaino*; 1997), which was widely acclaimed for being a "high-quality B-class film," and *Milocrorze: A Love Story* (2011), a feature film starring Takayuki Yamada in three different roles. Outside of Japan and as a director, he is perhaps best known for his surreal comedy sketches featuring "The Fuccons," an American family living in Japan portrayed using distinctive mannequins, which was invited to the 54th Berlin International Film Festival (2004) and has also been broadcast in different countries. Ishibashi is also the leader of the Kyoto-based artist collective Kyupi Kyupi, who bring together art, music, and video in their artworks and performances. Since their participation in the group exhibition *Visions of the Body* (Kyoto, 1999), Kyupi Kyupi have been invited to show their multidisciplinary and extremely vibrant, radical works in museums and international exhibitions around the world. Ishibashi's latest project, *MatchAtria* (a collaboration with the dancer and choreographer Yui Kawaguchi), had its premiere in Berlin in January 2014, and after further performances in Berlin and Barcelona, it will be presented at the Kyoto Art Center in April 2014 for the first time outside of Europe.

Pipilotti Rist

b. 1962 in Grabs, Switzerland; based in Zurich

www.pipilottirist.net



Pipilotti Rist, *Mercy Garden Retour Skin*, 2014. Audio video installation (photograph inspired by Yuji). Courtesy of the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring Augustine.

Pipilotti Rist entered the field of media art after studying at the Institute of Applied Arts in Vienna and the Basel School of Design and working in stage design for music groups. Especially in her earlier works, Rist uses the clichés imposed on women by our male-dominated society to expose their stereotypes and to affirm the negative aspects of femininity, creating works that provide strong encouragement for women. These works culminated in her video installation *Ever is Over All*, for which she was awarded the Premio 2000 Prize at the 47th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale (the work was shown for the first time in Japan in the *Visions of the Body* exhibition in 1999 at the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto). Many of her recent works are large video installations that include furniture and daily objects as actual components, and her interest in exploring the principle of visual perception through abstract and decorative means and her focus on rich colors have grown sharper than ever over the years. Rist has stated in many interviews that "[she is] merely giving color back to the world, coming close to reality" (ART iT, 2009). In Japan, the Hara Museum of Art in Tokyo presented a solo exhibition of Rist's work in 2007 (*Pipilotti Rist: Karakara*, 2007–08), and her first feature film, *Pepperminta*, had its Asian premiere at the International Festival of Arts and Media Yokohama 2009.

Participating artists

William Kentridge

b. 1955 in Johannesburg, South Africa
Based in Johannesburg



William Kentridge, *NO, IT IS*, 2012. Photo by Cathy Carver, courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. © William Kentridge

William Kentridge has won recognition around the world with his 'drawings in motion,' or hand-drawn animated films made by photographing drawings frame by frame. He is active in many fields, directing puppet theaters, operas, and other productions, acting, writing, and more. In recent years, Kentridge has been making more works that involve many collaborators and other participants, but the animations made with vast amounts of thought and handwork in his studio and the artist's own physical way of thinking remain the basis of his works. The artist contemplates the situation of his homeland, South Africa, with his own studio as his starting point. With the knowledge and technical history of modern Europe as his guide, Kentridge examines universal problems faced by mankind and transforms them into visual art.

Kentridge also has strong ties with the city of Kyoto, with a history including a major solo exhibition that opened at the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto in 2009 and traveled to two other cities in 2010, and the 2010 Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy, of which he is the youngest laureate to date. His epic video installation commissioned for Documenta 13, *The Refusal of Time* (2012), was shown for the first time in Asia from February to March 2014 as a prelude to *Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015*.

Susan Philipsz

b. 1965 in Glasgow; based in Berlin
www.susanphilipszyouarenotalone.com



Susan Philipsz, *Study for Strings*, 2012. Installation view at Kassel Hauptbahnhof, Kassel. Photo by Eoghan McTigue, courtesy of the artist, Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York. © Susan Philipsz

Susan Philipsz's early works use her own voice, singing folk songs and pop songs, as their only source of sound (or instrument), coming from a simple composition of speakers. Her works are often installed in public places, such as bus stops, underneath bridges, and in supermarkets, where ambient sound is prominent. The songs selected according to the location of the works frequently embody specific sociopolitical messages, but Philipsz's gentle voice does not merely convey the message of the songs' lyrics but also strongly evokes the audience's own personal memories and emotions, and brings forth recognition of the memories of the place where they are listening to each work. Although her works are commonly described as sound installations, they can also be described as sculptures that use sound as a medium for articulating time and space.

Philipsz has participated in Manifesta 3 (2000), the Skulptur Projekte in Münster (2007), and Documenta 13 (2012). She was awarded the Turner Prize in 2010, and an OBE in 2014.

Participating artists

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

b. 1965 in Strasbourg, France
Based in Paris and Rio de Janeiro
www.dgf5.com



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *M.2062 (Scarlett)*, Sept. 6, 2013. Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015 Open Research Program. Photo by Tadashi Hayashi, courtesy of Parasophia Office. © Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

In the late 1980s, after studying at the École du Magasin of the National Center of Contemporary Art in Grenoble, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster began creating a series of installations that she refers to as her “Rooms.” These works combine elements such as video, light, sound, and furniture to stimulate the viewer’s memories through their senses, and transform rooms into spaces with rich narratives that can almost be described as books in room form. Important aspects of her work include interactive relationships with their viewers, the relationship between the physical and psychological elements that result from the process of creating situational works, and especially the participation of others in these situational works themselves. For these reasons, her works have been described as “relational art.”

More recently, Gonzalez-Foerster has been creating performances and films that present deep, tranquil contemplations of the complexly interwoven relationship between images and fiction in cinema, text, books, and language. Her lecture/performance *M.2062 (Scarlett)*, presented as Open Research Program 03 in September 2013, can be described as a study for *Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015*.

Miwa Yanagi

やなぎみわ

b. 1967 in Kobe, Japan; based in Kyoto
www.yanagimiwa.net



Miwa Yanagi Theater Project, *1924 Machine Man*, 2012.

Miwa Yanagi came into the limelight around the middle of the 1990s with works about women living in contemporary Japanese society, such as her series of photographs of “elevator girls,” or young women in uniform who operate elevators in Japanese department stores. One of her earliest works was a performance featuring elevator girls, and the theatrical aspect of her photographs and video pieces always remained a key element of her works. In recent years, Yanagi’s attention has been focused on theater, starting with her *1924* trilogy (2011–12) of plays about the Tsukiji Shogekijo, or Japan’s first modern theater. Her play about an anonymous voice as a medium, *Zero Hour: Tokyo Rose’s Last Tape* (Kanagawa Arts Theatre, Aichi Arts Center [Aichi Triennale 2013]), will be performed in the United States in January and February, 2015. Yanagi is currently making a Taiwanese-style stage truck for her newest theatrical piece, which dramatizes Kenji Nakagami’s novel *Nichirin no tsubasa* [The Wing of the Sun] (1984), for Yokohama Triennale 2014. The artist will then bring the moving stage truck to Kyoto, where the play will be staged for *Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015*. This project will be particularly innovative not only for the stage truck but also for spanning two international exhibitions in a row.

(all information as of April 4, 2014)

Open Research Program

The Artistic Director and his curatorial team have been conducting part of their research for *Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015* publicly, in the form of lectures and other events in the Open Research Program (ORP). Since being founded on May 27, the Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture Organizing Committee has presented events featuring artists, academics, an architect, a writer, and more, delivering lectures, dialogues, and a lecture/performance in front of full audiences. Brief reports on the Open Research Programs presented thus far are available on *Parasophia's* website. More extensive records for selected Open Research Programs will be made available as issues of the *Parasophia Chronicle*.

2013

- JUN 21** **ORP 01 [Lecture] Akira Mizuta Lippit**
“Like Cats and Dogs—Cinema and Catastrophe”
 Annex Hall, The Museum of Kyoto
- JUL 27** **ORP 02 [Report] Koki Tanaka & Mika Kuraya**
“abstract speaking—participating in the Venice Biennale”
 Doshisha University, Kyoto
- SEP 6** **ORP 03 [Lecture/Performance]**
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster “M.2062 (Scarlett)”
 Annex Hall, The Museum of Kyoto
- OCT 14** **ORP 04 [Dialogue] Cai Guo-Qiang in Conversation**
with Akira Asada
 Kyoto University of Art and Design
- OCT 25** **ORP 05 [Lecture] Kazuyo Sejima**
 flowing KARASUMA, Kyoto



Akira Mizuta Lippit, “Like Cats and Dogs—Cinema and Catastrophe.” Photo by Takahiro Mitsukawa



Koki Tanaka & Mika Kuraya, “abstract speaking—participating in the Venice Biennale.” Photo by Takahiro Mitsukawa

2014

- FEB 16** **ORP 06/Prelude: Access Program [Narrative Generation]**
Toh EnJoe “For The Refusal of Time”
 Former Rissei Elementary School, Kyoto
- APR 4** **ORP 07 [Lecture] Chris Dercon “Art + Architecture**
for the XXI Century: Tate Modern”
A collaborative project by Parasophia & Future Beauty
 The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
- APR 20** **ORP 08 [Lecture] Susan Philipsz “You Are Not Alone”**
 Sunday, April 20, 2014 7:00–8:30PM
 Multi-purpose hall, West Wing 1F, Kyoto Art Center
 Free admission (no reservation required)
 100 seats available
 English with consecutive interpretation into Japanese
- APR 29** **ORP 09 [Lecture] Pipilotti Rist**
 Tuesday (holiday), April 29, 2014 7:00–8:30PM
 1F Lobby, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
 Free admission (no reservation required)
 150 seats available
 English with consecutive interpretation into Japanese



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *M.2062 (Scarlett)*.
 Photo by Tadashi Hayashi



Cai Guo-Qiang in Conversation with Akira Asada

Technical support

One of the most important characteristics of *Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015* is the dialogue between artists and the city of Kyoto. The artists invited to participate in *Parasophia* will come to Kyoto in advance of the exhibition to conduct research in the city as an important part of their process of creating new works. In this process, participating artists will be offered the support of two contemporary art workshops that can be described as reservoirs of new and old technology knowledge and as platforms for the collaboration of different talents, both being appropriate descriptions for the city of Kyoto itself. The two workshops are Ultra Factory, a workshop led by contemporary artist Kenji Yanobe, located within the Kyoto University of Art and Design, and Sandwich, a workshop near Uji River that can also be described as a collective of artists and other creators, led by sculptor Kohei Nawa.

ULTRA FACTORY (Kyoto University of Art and Design)

京都造形芸術大学ウルトラファクトリー

Founded in 2008 in Sakyo-ku, Kyoto

Director: Kenji Yanobe

www.ultrafactory.jp

Ultra Factory was founded in June 2008 at the Kyoto University of Art and Design (KUAD) as a metal, wood, and resin workshop that is capable of creating a wide range of three-dimensional objects, from micromachines to giant robots. The workshop is open to all students at KUAD and functions as both a sculpture workshop and a place for hands-on learning. Under the direction of contemporary artist Kenji Yanobe, Ultra Factory has invited foremost artists and designers in Japan for their practical project-based seminar, "Ultra Project." The artists directing the "Ultra Project" courses, including Yanobe, Kyoto Takahashi, Kohei Nawa, Aiko Miyanaga, and Miwa Yanagi, are all active on an international level, and as a workshop that supports the creation of their artworks, Ultra Factory has become an integral presence in the Japanese art scene. Since 2010, Ultra Factory's annual art award for KUAD students and graduates, the "Ultra Award," has also been bringing young up-and-coming artists into the art world.



Inside Ultra Factory

SANDWICH

Founded in 2009 in Fushimi-ku, Kyoto

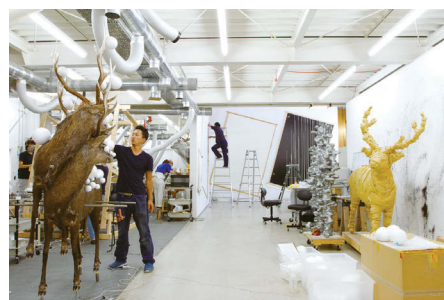
Director: Kohei Nawa

www.sandwich-cpca.net

Sandwich is a "Creative Platform for Contemporary Art" that began with the renovation of a former sandwich factory in Fushimi-ku, Kyoto in 2009. Under the direction of sculptor Kohei Nawa, artists, architects, designers, students, and other creators from different fields and age groups engage in flexible and stimulating collaborations.

In addition to contemporary artworks, projects include music videos and concert stage sets, collaborations with fashion brands, photographers, dancers, and more. They also run a residency program, among many other projects and programs in various fields.

In 2013, Sandwich began working with architects Yoshitaka Lee, Yuichi Kodai and others as a formally registered architectural office. They are also working in partnership with Zurich-based Blue Architects, with whom they are collaborating on various projects around the world.



Top: Sandwich exterior. Photo by Nobutada Omote.
Bottom: Sandwich interior. Courtesy of Sandwich



Information

Title	Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture 2015
Dates	Saturday, March 7–Sunday, May 10, 2015
Venues	Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, The Museum of Kyoto, and other locations in Kyoto
Artistic Director	Shinji Kohmoto (former Chief Curator, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto)
Presented by	Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture Organizing Committee, Kyoto Association of Corporate Executives (Kyoto Keizai Doyukai), Kyoto Prefecture, Kyoto City
With the cooperation of	Kyoto City University of Arts, Kyoto Institute of Technology, Kyoto Saga University of Arts, Kyoto Seika University, Kyoto University of Art and Design, Seian University of Art and Design
Funded in part by a grant from	Asahi Group Arts Foundation, The Asahi Shimbun Foundation, The Kao Foundation for Arts and Sciences, Nissha Foundation for Printing Culture and Technology, Nomura Foundation, Pola Art Foundation, Supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan in the fiscal 2014
Under the auspices of	The Japan Foundation
Approved by	Association for Corporate Support of the Arts, Japan

(information as of April 4, 2014)

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