



Mikhail Karikis: Children of Unquiet (2014). Video (single channel, color, stereo), 15'30". Courtesy the artist.



Taka Atsugi: We're Working So Hard (Dir. Soya Mizuki, 1945). Video (b&w, mono), 18'18". Courtesy the artist, Kinokuniya Company Ltd and Federation of Japanese Films Industry Ltd.



Héctor Zamora: Inconstância Material ("Material Inconstancy," 2012-13). Video (color, stereo), 5'15". Courtesy the artist and Istanbul Biennale.

“1: The Third Entity”

11 October – 1 November 2015

Taka Atsugi, Mikhail Karikis and Héctor Zamora

Curated by Asakusa and Kawakami Laboratory, Kurashiki University of Science and the Arts

Asakusa is delighted to announce its inaugural group exhibition “1: The Third Entity” with artists Taka Atsugi, Mikhail Karikis and Héctor Zamora, presented in video as a medium for documentation and interdisciplinary research practices. Portraying workers’ communities through geo-historical specificity, the exhibited works project how models of solidarity can be viewed through the lenses of gender, age, and eco-political dynamics, concurrently reflecting on contemporary realities of post-industrial society and the era of immaterial production. With a view on social engagement in art that rehearses the future through constructed situations, the exhibition addresses ideas that are central to the conception of future community: collaboration, voluntary participation, lateral powers, public ownership and the third sector, the sharing of knowledge and energy resources.

Lifetime activist for peace and social causes, **Taka Atsugi** was a pioneer in Japanese documentary films, and manifested a clear focus on issues of gender. During wartime, she worked for Photo Chemical Laboratory (later Toho Company Ltd.) as a screenwriter for documentary short films. Her 18-minutes black and white, We’re Working So Hard (Dir. Mizuki Soya, 1945) was filmed at the height of fascist tension, and depicts lives of devoted – and seemingly joyful – female workers at a clothing factory. Appropriating a nationalist lament, “why the devastating loss of Japanese troops in Saipan when *we’re working so hard?*” Atsugi points to this political rhetoric through an extremely onerous workplace. Censored and edited by the Imperial Office, the film displays Atsugi’s vision tainted by a forged narrative, and articulates the emotional meltdown collectively experienced among peer workers – the intention of which remains elusive in a double-binding effect.

Inconstância Material (“Material Inconstancy,” 2012-13) by Mexican-born installation artist **Héctor Zamora**, captures a large-scale event performed as part of the 13th Istanbul Biennale (2013). In the video, 36 professional bricklayers occupying the architecture of a modernist university building, tossed bricks to one another in a continuous loop. Reenacting another typical day of a construction site within a quasi-public education domain, it calls into question the art’s own consumerism and service culture within a distribution circuit. Endless passing of the mundane material through chains of bodily action indicates incredibility of private ownership and politics predicated on such contradiction. While accommodating human error and the sense of alienation, it emphasises the proximity with the audience through the subversive use of modernist symbolism, and the reality of co-working as a resilient and sustainable form of joint liability.

London-based artist and performer, **Mikhail Karikis** investigates the agency of voice as a source of human memory and imagination. Children of Unquiet (2014) takes place within the World’s first geothermal power station built in 1911 at The Devil’s Valley in Tuscany. Once a home to 5,000 workers, the industrial village next to the power station is now deserted due to recent technological automation and subsequent mass unemployment. Central to Karikis’ interdisciplinary project, is a film that orchestrates the children’s take-over of the abandoned village and power station. Reciting lines from Negri & Hardt’s Commonwealth (2011) – on biopolitics and the dual institutional/revolutionary qualities of love – the community of ex-resident children sing in unison the roaring geothermal sounds of geysers and the incessant industrial hum of industrial drones. Voicing out the soundscapes of their childhood and harmonising with the Earth and with human industry, they return to the geological constitution of the commons, embracing the green energy at its core.

With increasing awareness for the lack of social imagination and the domestic tension regarding industrial and energy concerns, the exhibition proposes amongst other questions: How is it possible to effectively address the social issues of the largest common denominator, without a physical body of a community *per se*? What limitations exist to prevent building a moral consensus beyond geo-historical specificity?

“1: The Third Entity” is curated by Asakusa and Kawakami Laboratory, Kurashiki University of Science and the Arts.

Artists:

Taka Atsugi (1907, Isesaki -1998, Yokosuka, Japan) was a documentary screenwriter and a social activist for women's movement and peace front. After the disbandment of the Proletarian Film League of Japan (Prokino, 1930-34), she translated to Japanese Paul Rotha's Documentary Film (1935), a comprehensive film history and theory guide, to be published in 1937. At Photo Chemical Laboratory (P.C.L.), her main role was screenwriting for documentary shorts, and produced amongst others Record of a Kindergarten Teacher (Dir. Mizuki Soya, 1942); and Factory Change-over (Dir. Kenjiro Morinaga, 1944). She spent her lifetime involved with left-wing causes, with her films manifesting a particular focus on issues of gender, geopolitical conflicts and social injustice. Her 1975 documentary We Keep Watching – Nuclear Base in Yokosuka (Dir. Hideo Arai, 1975) won The Gold Dove at DOK Leipzig (then International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film), and Prize of The Soviet Peace Committee, Moscow International Film Festival (both in 1975). Atsugi graduated from The Department of English Literature, The Faculty of Humanities, Japan Women's University, Tokyo.

Mikhail Karikis (b. 1975, Thessaloniki, Greece) is a sound/visual artist and a performer who explores the properties of sound and its relations to human experience and collective memory. Through collaborative acts of imagining, recalling and in particular voicing and hearing, the artist withdraws social and geo-political contexts and gives shapes to people's lives and professional identities using the voice as a 'sculptural material.' In 2014 Karikis's work was shown in 2014 alone at "Listening," Hayward Gallery, London; "Mediacity Seoul," Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul; 19th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney; "Assembly," Tate Britain, London; and "Inside," Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Other notable exhibitions include; Aichi Triennale, Nagoya, 2013; Manifesta 9, Genk, 2013; and Danish Pavilion at 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2011. In 2015, he was shortlisted for the Daiwa Foundation Art Prize, London and is selected for the current edition of the British Art Show, the survey exhibition of leading contemporary art from the UK. Karikis studied architecture at the Bartlett School, and completed his MA and PhD at the Slade School of Art (UCL), London. He lives and works in London.

Héctor Zamora (b. 1974, Mexico City, Mexico) is an installation artist known for his playful intervention in public spaces instigating the visitors with ready-made objects in expanding plurality. His work often articulates the physical characteristics of a specific urban environment or a cityscape to subvert mundane situations in direct views and access by local communities. Zamora has participated in

numerous exhibitions worldwide including "Resisting the Present: Mexico 2000/2012," Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France, 2012; "Art Unlimited," Messe Basel, Basel, 2012; "32° Panorama da arte Brasileria," São Paulo, 2011; Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool and Aichi Triennale, Nagoya, 2010; 53rd Venice Biennial, Italy, 2009; 27th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil; 9th Havana Biennial, Cuba, 2006; Busan Biennale, Seoul; and "Eco: Arte Mexicano Contemporáneo," Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2005. Zamora holds a BFA in graphic design from Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco, Mexico City. He currently lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

Curators:

Kawakami Laboratory at Kurashiki University of Science and the Arts, Okayama, organizes exhibition series "Education, Education and Education (EEE)." EEE encourages the students to assimilate artists' practices and to engage the artists' critical discourses as the impetuses to analyse how each established artist develop their ideas into artworks through exhibitions. Its past collaborators are Professor John Baldessari, Ryan Gander, Yoshua Okon and Whitney McVeigh. EEE has been supported by the Japanese Ministry of Culture since 2013.

Asakusa is a 40-square-meter exhibition venue for contemporary art programmes committed to advancing curatorial collaborations and practices. "The Third Entity" with Taka Atsugi, Mikhail Karikis and Héctor Zamora marks the 1st edition of its programme. The second edition is scheduled from 8 November 2015 with British artist, Oliver Beer, co-curated by Asakusa and Matthieu Lelièvre (Associate curator, Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, Paris) coinciding the artist's solo exhibition at Aoyama | Meguro, Tokyo supported by The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, London.

Exhibition Facts:

Open: Saturday to Monday 12:00 - 19:00
and all other days by appointment only.
Location: 1-6-16 Nishi-Asakusa, Taito, Tokyo

For press info and images: Koichiro Osaka
+81 (0)90 8346 3232 / osaka@asakusa-o.com