

Silent Street 160 years jubilee of Japanese German negotiations 2021

Exhibition of works by Japanese and Leipzig artists in Leipzig and Cologne

- 23rd April jubilee celebrations at LIA in cooperation with the Amt für Wirtschaftsförderung, the Mendelssohn Haus Leipzig and the Deutsch-Japanische-Gesellschaft in Sachsen showing works by Japanese artists Aika Furukawa and Nao Toyoda as well as Stefan Guggisberg (Leipzig). The artists will be present.
- 1st May Spinnerei Rundgang at the artist in residency Leipzig (showing recent works by all artists listed down below made during their artist in residency stay and Stefan Guggisberg as well as Aika Furukawa)
- 3rd September at the Japan Foundation in Cologne (focusing on Aika Furukawa and Stefan Guggisberg, in the moment optional with the presentation of the Graphic Art project/ the etching symposia by Leipzig artists Maria and Vlado Ondrej, Stefan Guggisberg and Matthias Weischer in conversation with - Japanese artists Aika Furukawa, Yuki Watanabe, Nao Toyoda, Dawoon Jung, funding not secured yet here)

List of participating artists

Japanese:

Nao Toyoda <https://toyodanaopro-work.jimdofree.com/works/> Aika Furukawa

<https://www.furukawaaika.com>

Dawoon Jung www.downjung.com [2]

German:

Stefan Guggisberg

<http://www.parrotta.de/past/stefan-guggisberg.html>

Maria und Vlado Ondrej

<https://www.radierung-leipzig.de>

1. The Japanese artists will work for a certain period in Leipzig at the artist residency LIA. The April show will open at the Spinnerei Rundgang in LIA. The Leipzig and Japanese artists will be exhibited in a curated exhibition and exhibit recent works.

2. During the spring residency and besides their own work produced in the residency the artists will cooperate in a symposium with the Leipzig artists and each will produce one etching in the workshop for Radierung Maria and Vlado Ondrej at the Spinnerei (this part is not fully secured yet because of lack of funding).

Project Content (Draft) Silent Street at the Japan Foundation Cologne

In 2007 *Between Past and Future* was the first exhibition of Japanese contemporary art as inauguration show and starting point of the international artist in residency programme LIA in Leipzig. Since then over four hundred international artists have taken part in the programme amongst them artists from Japan.

Thanks to the Japan Foundation LIA founder Anna-Louise Rolland could participate in her first professional curatorial journey to Japan in 2019. Besides the richness of Japanese art and culture she gratefully experienced, there was a tiny but unique experience worth to be mentioned.

„Walking in Tokio, we had just passed the lively Shibuya crossing, called one of the world’s busiest crosswalks, and entered into a small street. From one moment to the other all noise and life had been completely taken away to absolute silence in-mid of Tokio. The street of small family houses we entered was empty and quiet“ , says Anna-Louise Rolland

The Street of Silence has been taken as a metaphor for change as the void leaves opportunity for reconciliation. Running an international artist in residency is a continuous process of creating crossroads of different cultures by introducing people of different backgrounds to each other. Residencies change perspectives. A few months after this experience in Tokio Covid-19 silenced the world. However, LIA continued its work while the silence left again space for reconciliation.

The exhibition *Silent Street* would like to shed light on some of these gaze shifts which will and have taken place in LIA. The programme would like to take the 60 year jubilee of diplomatic negotiations between Japan and Germany as occasion to monitor the residencies work with Japanese artists. Past and recent artists from Japan at LIA will be juxtaposed to contemporary Leipzig artists.

Japanese painter Aika Furukawa came to LIA in 2010 and returned 2012. Later she made Leipzig and the Spinnerei her center of vital interest. Japanese Yuki Watanabe and Nao Toyoda will join LIA their first time in spring 2021. Leipzig based artist Maria Ondrej lived and worked in Kyoto for three months during her university years now running the Atelier for Radierung with Vlado Ondrej, a professional workshop for the medium of etching. Stefan Guggisberg studied in Leipzig and stayed ever since. In our first conversations about Japan he mentioned:

„I have this silent desire for Japan ever since childhood, my first encounters being Pokemon and the martial art. There was this sensation of excitement and inquisitiveness, the urge of making contact, an addiction to something still unknown“ , says Stefan Guggisberg.

Stefan Guggisberg mentions Murakami, how the flipper machine starts to become animated in one of his books. He refers to the Shintō religion and its form of animism. The wave returns frequently. It is as vehicle from the real world into the world of spirituality in Stefan Guggisberg’s works. His painting manor deals in a similar way with a form of animism. After creating a painted surface he takes layer of layer off his work. „It is like following the clapping rhythm in a Shintō shrine,“ Stefan Guggisberg says. Different layers get revealed, archetypes seem to appear. Sections in his painting become all of a sudden animated. His painting process is disruptive. First there is a surface and then Guggisberg works different layers out of his paintings, layer by layer revealing archetype after archetype. Animating the unknown. Framing the unknown. „Imagine this is a real image but you can't decipher it, Stefan Guggisberg says.

Aika Furukawa focuses on the uniqueness encountered in every day life. Painting sheets of linen being folded, crumbled and wrinkled in the early morning it is here where she finds variety and life in. She makes the fold a permanent theme in her work. Aika Furukawa paints but takes different formats into account such as installational painting, two dimensional paintings and drawings as well as wall drawings. Coming from the classical education of oil painting, having studied this technique in Japan, she felt the urge to go to Europe and follow up on painting in art history. Aika Furukawa has inhabited the objects of daily life such as ties, suits and bed clothes. It is the always returning reuse of what belongs to our real world and at the same time makes us what we are or rather what we would love to appear like in public when she paints our suits or ties. In the shown series she painted every day through the year. It is a homage to the changing seasons and daily life, its routines. At the same time it is a combination of European oil painting and Japanese calligraphic remains in one piece. While Aika is permanently crossing the street of silence from East to West and West to East.

Anna-Louise Rolland