

WORLD SCULPTURE NEWS

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Tony Twigg * Jong Oh * Crossing Time:
Highlights From The Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Collection * Reviews

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"The Fragile Sculptural Experience," *World Sculpture News*, Winter 2016

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are displayed alongside a large-scale digital painting by Albert Oehlen and manipulated camera-less photography by Thomas Ruff. The dot-com boom—the late 1990s to early 2000s—are examined through international artists' works and collectives.

Works by Nam June Paik include *Internet Dream* (1994), a video-wall of 52 monitors displaying electronically processed images, and *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (1984). On New Year's Day 1984, Paik broadcast live and pre-recorded material from artists including John Cage and The Thompson Twins from a series of satellite-linked television studios in New York, West Germany, South Korea, and Paris's Pompidou Centre to an estimated audience of 25 million viewers worldwide. Paik saw the event as a counter response to George Orwell's dystopian vision of 1984.

The birth of the World Wide Web in 1989 provided a breeding ground for early user-based net art, with innovators such as Moscow-born Olla Lialina adopted it as a medium, following earlier practices in performance and video. In *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War* (1996) she presents a love story enacted via an interactive black and white browser screen.

The emergence of net art is explored through a curated selection of interactive browser-based works from the Rhizome archive, a leading digital arts organization founded online in 1996 by artist Mark Tribe, and affiliated with the New Museum in New York since 2003. In 1999, Rhizome created a collection of born-digital artworks, which has grown to include over 2,000. In recent years, it has developed a preservation program around this archive.

One of the first-ever major interactive art installations, *Lorna* (1979–1982) by Lynn Herschman Leeson presents a fictional female character

who stays indoors all day watching TV and anticipated virtual avatars.

Experiments from the 1960s to the 1970s pushed the boundaries of technology. Artists such as Manfred Mohr, Vera Molnar, Frieder Nake, and Stan VanDerBeek adopted computer programs to create abstract and geometrical works while Roy Ascott, Allan Kaprow, Gary Hill, and Nam June Paik used various new media to connect across multiple sites globally.

The exhibition concludes with artifacts from the formation of *Experiments in Art and Technology* (E.A.T.) in New York in 1966, which saw performances over nine evenings from artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, and Yvonne Rainer working together with Bell Laboratories's engineers on one of the first major collaborations between the industrial technology sector and the arts.

Omar Kholeif, with Emily Butler, Mahera and Mohammad Abu Ghazaleh curator, Whitechapel Gallery, and Séamus McCormack, assistant curator, curated the show.

A fully illustrated catalogue (£29.99) edited by Omar Kholeif, with contributions by Iwona Blazwick, Omar Kholeif, Ed Halter, Erika

Balsom, Sarah Perks, Judith Barry, Nam June Paik, Lynn Herschman Leeson, Séamus McCormack, Jonas Lund, and Ulla Wiggen, accompanies the exhibition.

Whitechapel Gallery is at 77-82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Tel: (44-20) 7522 7888. E-mail: info@whitechapelgallery.org. Website: whitechapelgallery.org. Adult admission is £13.50 (including Gift Aid donation) or £11.95 (without Gift Aid).

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THE UNITED STATES

A Fragile Sculptural Experience

Albertz Benda will present *Motohiko Odani: Depth of the Body*, a solo exhibition of recent works by the Japanese artist, from May 5 through June 18, 2016, at 515 West 26th Street, New York. Motohiko Odani was born and raised in Kyoto, Japan. This exhibition marks the artist's first gallery show outside Asia and will feature his complex mixed-media pieces that transcend the static limitations of sculpture and address the relationship between the spiritual and physical.

Odani's works are com-

prised of complex layers of meaning that defy a singular interpretation, as the artist draws inspiration from various sources including horror and sci-fi films, Japanese folklore, Buddhism, and Futurism. His skillful handling of unorthodox materials and his ability to extract beauty from the grotesque has won him acclaim both in Japan and abroad. In 2003, at the age of 31, he was selected as one of the two artists to represent Japan at the Venice Biennale, and in 2010 the Mori Art Museum devoted their entire space to *Phantom Limb*, a retrospective of his work.

In *Depth of the Body*, Odani challenges the viewer by revealing the illusory nature of the senses and blurring the dichotomies of organic and artificial, perception and reality. The genesis of the show is in part inspired by recent events; the 2011 Fukushima disaster, with both natural and man-made causes, shattered confidence in institutions that had previously seemed infallible in Japan. The exhibition presents four series: *New Born*, *Cosmic Traveler of Blindness*, *Skeleton*, and *Terminal Impact*, each occupying a room in the gallery.

In *New Born*, a sculptural series begun in 2007, Odani makes imaginary creatures from bones, alluding to life that existed prior to humans or that may exist beyond this earth. The resulting forms,



Above left: Motohiko Odani, *Terminal Impact* (featuring Mari Katayama "tools"), 2014, video installation. Sound: Nao Nishihara. Photograph by Nobutada Omata. Courtesy of Albertz Benda, New York and Yamamoto Gendai, Tokyo. **Above right:** Motohiko Odani, process photo for *Terminal Impact*, 2014. Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Albertz Benda.



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resembling delicate structures frozen in tight spirals, are both primeval and alien, demonstrating the power of natural evolution and the impact of sudden events to cause physical transformation.

Cosmic Traveler of Blindness, a never-before-seen video installation, follows a sightless woman as she drifts through an underwater abyss, tracing the contours of sculptures cast from her own face, hands, and feet, "the mere shadow of the body parts," as the artist explains. Here the artist is referencing the complex neurological processes behind sight and touch, and perhaps alluding to the decline for many people in old age.

Skeleton, originally shown at the 2003 Venice Biennale and re-imagined for this presentation, captures a precarious moment frozen in time as the piece resists gravity as if imbued with primordial, supernatural power. The vertical form resembles a stalactite or megalith, while the presence of aluminum streaks and bubbles give the impression of a science experiment gone awry. This fusion of organic and synthetic qualities simultaneously celebrates the harsh beauty of ancient forms and the imposing power of growth.

Odani blurs the division between humans and machines in his multi-screen installation, *Terminal Impact*. The videos follow artist Mari Katayama as she performs mundane tasks with the aid of complex apparatus and shadowy figures known as *kuroko*, or traditional kabuki stagehands. This immersive installation acts as a "video sculpture," a unique intermingling of film and physical objects that envelops the viewer in the skewed world Odani has created.

Opened in Fall 2015, Albrecht Benda is a new gallery partnership between Thorsten Albrecht and Marc Benda that will feature emerging and established artists.

GERMANY

Photography & Glass Sculptures

Continuing its series of thematic exhibitions, the Alexander Tutsek-Stiftung is showing contemporary photographs and sculptures through June 24, 2016. Entitled *Life Is Not a Beach*, the exhibition addresses the dark side of life. One example is the oppressive world of drug addicts. The photographer Matthieu Gafsou documents this in his 30 photographs in an authentic and poetically sensible manner.

The 20 sculptures, the

second focus of the exhibition, were made of glass and mixed media. In their diverse works, internationally renowned artists (including Philip Baldwin & Monica Guggisberg, Mona Hatoum, Silvia Levenson, Janusz Walentynowicz) and young artists take a profound look at people's general fears as well as their inner and outer conflicts.

In the hands of the artists the material glass—so familiar to us from our everyday life—transforms into a multi-layered, sometimes unexpected, medium. With its complexities and capacity to provide insight into various levels, glass is predestined to emphatically

present the dark side of life.

The dark blue glass sea measuring one meter (Maria Lugossy) and an ossified seated figure (Janusz Walentynowicz) abstract the deep valley of depression. Viewers address their fear of dangerous diseases in HIV and Ebola glass viruses (Luke Jerram). A young fox dressed in girls' clothes dramatically illustrates the emotional as well as bodily damages children and adolescents may suffer (Silvia Levenson). An installation of bottle halves measuring 2.5 meters emphatically points up the hopelessness of trying to solve problems with addictive substances (Mona Hatoum). The work of a Japanese artist (Shige Fujishiro) draws attention to the problem of street people with an artful caricature of a Chanel shopping bag made of glass beads.

The photographs come from the project *Only God Can Judge Me* by the Swiss photographer Matthieu Gafsou. He took photographs in Lausanne's drug scene for more than a year. By using various formal approaches, he prosaically and, at the same time, emphatically documented the life of addicts.

His dignified portraits of longtime drug abusers with their sharp-featured faces stirring personalize a social problem. With still lifes he captured their contradictory living environment. Hard documentary close-ups of drug packets, drug paraphernalia, aseptic drug-consumption rooms, surveillance cameras, etc., provide a direct impression of the addicts' daily struggle for survival. By contrast, Gafsou's poetic photographs of the scene's nocturnal showplaces allow viewers to intuit the desirable sides of the high.

Matthieu Gafsou (b.1981) studied photography at the School of Applied Arts in Vevey and graduated from the University of Lausanne with a master's degree. His photographs have been shown in



Philip Baldwin & Monica Guggisberg, *First Memories*, 2010, blown glass, cut, 40 x 139 x 35 cm. Photograph: Gaëtane Fiona Girard. © Gaëtane Fiona Girard. Courtesy of Alexander Tutsek-Stiftung, Munich.



Above left: Janusz Walentynowicz, *Black Box*, 2013, kiln-cast glass, 49 x 36 x 36 cm. Photograph: Janusz Walentynowicz. © Janusz Walentynowicz. Image: Courtesy of Alexander Tutsek-Stiftung, Munich. Above right: Silvia Levenson, *Baby Fox*, 2011, kiln-cast glass, fabric, fiberglass, 100 x 42 x 32 cm. Photograph: Marco Del Comune. © Marco Del Comune. Image: Courtesy of Bullseye Projects.