

Plans for TOKYO 2019

Guest Curator: Tomoko Yabumae (Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo)

vol. 5 中島晴矢 Haruya Nakajima

Sniff Tokyo, and Dance



Immerse Yourself and Resist the City – The Works of Haruya Nakajima Tomoko Yabumae

Haruya Nakajima's solo exhibition marks the final installment of Plans for TOKYO 2019," a series of exhibitions that brings focus to the city of Tokyo in the eve of the upcoming Olympic games. Nakajima is an expresser whose multifaceted activities are penetrated by the sole intention of ensuring alternative territories within society. Having attended art school while studying modern Japanese literature at university, he was involved in establishing the share house "SHIBUHOUSE," and continues to expand the scope of his practice not only as an artist working with a wide variety of media including video and plastic arts, but also as an individual possessing multiple personas from an MC of a hip-hop unit, to an actor, writer, and curator. Nakajima, who is based in Tokyo, has engaged in the activation of alternative spaces and communities, which have become increasingly important within society in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

As attributed to the earliest impressionable landscape of his childhood being a new town development situated in Tokyo's suburbs, one of the characteristics of Nakajima's work is the way in which he physically intervenes with the seemingly inorganic city to depict its various nuances and subtleties. In his representative work, *Vale Tudo in New Town*, Nakajima himself is dressed as a masked wrestler, constantly traveling from one of Japan's leading suburban landscapes to another such as the likes of Tama New Town and Senri New Town, where he takes part in a series of dangerous and unruly fights. Spectators look on at these haphazard fights taking place on the concrete pavement, and sooner or later the foreground and background is inverted. What emerges as a result is a scene that appears unreal and reminiscent of a theater set of sorts, while passersby going to and fro so as not to take notice of the abnormal situation unfolding before their eyes, are transformed into protagonists. A mentality in which reality is impeached by a fictional narrative that is not "violence" but is "the performing (and filming) of martial arts," comes to manifest as something that permeates the entire new town.

Another characteristic of Nakajima's work that one hopes to bring attention to, is how in many cases they involve people who are absorbed in their own actions. Examples of such work presented in this exhibition is his new series *Shuttle RUN for 2021* (2019) in which he constantly runs around the New National Stadium, as well as *Tokyo Sniff* (2019) where he can be seen breaking a sculptural form that appears to look like the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, sniffing its powdered fragments that are spread across the blueprints of architect Kenzo Tange's "A Plan for Tokyo 1960." These repetitive movements certainly bring about internal changes to the bodies of the persons involved, however, we as viewers are unable to share these experiences. Even in the work *TOKYO CLEAN UP AND DANCE!* (2019) which in itself is a brilliant parody of 1964 avant-garde art group Hi Red Center, the people who silently engage in cleaning are only tracing the mere surfaces of Tokyo as it continues its development (in addition, *Close Window* (2019) –a taped-down window in a building awaiting its demolition, due to its closed nature and invisibility, comes to appear like a metaphor of such people). It is to be noted how these unshareable changes that occur within individuals are made to appear in contrast to and as a criticism against the spectacular changes of cities –the ghosts of modernity– that are driven by great force. Upon the cornerstone that serves as the key to this exhibition are the words "Under Reconstruction," referenced from an eponymous novel by the author Ogai Mori. What is depicted in this story is the psychological distance between two former lovers against the backdrop of the city of Tokyo that still finds itself "Under Reconstruction." These inner movements of the individual that remain unshared with others may perhaps be rephrased as a form of deep emotion or even spontaneity. The metaphor "get high and dance," which legally deviates from Tokyo's current context, or the self-inflicted death of a prostitute depicted in *Tokyo Suicide Girl Returns* (2019), encourages us to sharply question the extremes of voluntary personal choice. Resist the singular experience of the community symbolically illustrated in the *Jewel Voice Broadcast (EED-Empty Emperor Donut-* (2019)), close your ears and your eyes, and simply "sniff Tokyo, and dance." This exhibition is a record by which Haruya Nakajima channels his entire spirit to engrave within a corner or Tokyo a truly free and individual territory that is unimpeachable by others.

●Haruya Nakajima

Born in Kanagawa, 1989. Graduated from Department of Japanese literature, Faculty of literature, Hosei university. Completed Bigakko.

As an independent, Nakajima develops cross-disciplinary activities such as art, music, performance and criticism while interacting with various places and people.

Selected solo exhibitions : "Vale Tudo in New Town" (TAV GALLERY / Tokyo 2019), "AZABU SHOYO – To ramble about Azabu –" (SNOW Contemporary / Tokyo 2017), "Penelope's Border" (TAV GALLERY / Tokyo 2015), "High-Low, Left-Right, Now Here" (Maruki Gallery For The Hiroshima Panels / Saitama 2014) , "GACHINKO – New Town, Pro Wrestling, Hip Hop –" (Nao Nakamura / Tokyo 2014)

Selected curation : "SURVIBIA!!" (NEWTOWN2018 / Tokyo 2018) Selected group exhibitions : "Transforming Surroundings Suburb, Apartment complex" (Yashio apartment complex meeting place / Tokyo 2018), "First year of MEI-AN (light and dark)" (space dike /Tokyo 2018), "New Flat Field" (NEWTOWN / Tokyo 2017), "ground under" (SEZON ART GALLERY / Tokyo 2017)

Album : "From Insect Cage" (Stag Beat / 2016), Selected text : "Art Ramble" (Ohta Publishing) etc.



Haruya Nakajima
《Shuttle RUN for 2020》2017
video | 7'46"



Haruya Nakajima
《Vale Tudo in New Town》2014
video | 24' 21"



Haruya Nakajima
《AZABU SHOYO – To ramble about Azabu –》2017
video | 18' 40"