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Yu Araki

Born in 1982, Ishikawa Prefecture. Initially engaged in music activities as part of a band, came to work as a stylist at a salon in Kamishinjo, after graduating from a beauty school in Osaka. Launched his independent business on June 17th 2020, and opened the hair salon LetrA in Yagi, Kanazawa. The name of the salon is derived from the phrase “Leather Tramp” mentioned in the film *Into the Wild* (2007). From the time the film was released in theaters, he had been intent on using this as the name for his own business. Araki’s expertise lies in proposing styles that maximize people’s personality, through engaging in careful and considerate counseling to gain an understanding of “how they want to look” while determining the total balance of their fashion, skin tone, and overall atmosphere. A food that he dislikes is shiitake mushrooms, and he can still clearly remember memories of throwing up after eating them as a 0 year old baby. He is a father of two children.



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instagram: @letra_araki



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αM Project 2020–2021

約束の凝集 Halfway Happy

Vol. 4

Yu Araki

2021.6.18 FRI — 9.22 WED
13:00–20:00
Closed on Sunday, Monday, Holidays.
Entrance Free
Summer Holidays: 8.1–8.23

Guest Curator Arata Hasegawa

Cooperation :

Yu Araki LetrA CASAMATERA Studio Antani Dario Adduce

- 1

Welcome
2021 | Lambda prints, refrigerator, magnets | 1175×475×560 mm |
Printing: Color Science Labo Co., Ltd
- 2

LetrA
2021 | Zinc iron sheets, lacquer | 150×660×50 mm | Production: ANTWARP
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Halfway Happy (Teeth)
2021 | Postcards, HD video | 100×148 mm, 27’27” |
Equipments: Studio Antani, Photo: Silvana Spada,
Cooperation: Emanuele Cifarelli (POLIFORM srl.), Luca Colacicco (Colacicco Legno)
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Meteorite
2001 | Ball, Mark McGwire’s signature | Ø75 mm | Special thanks: Kate Hunter
- 5

Eclipse
2021 | HD video, screen | 35’48”, 1800×3200 mm |
Special thanks: Hideaki Soma, Koki Muroi
- 6

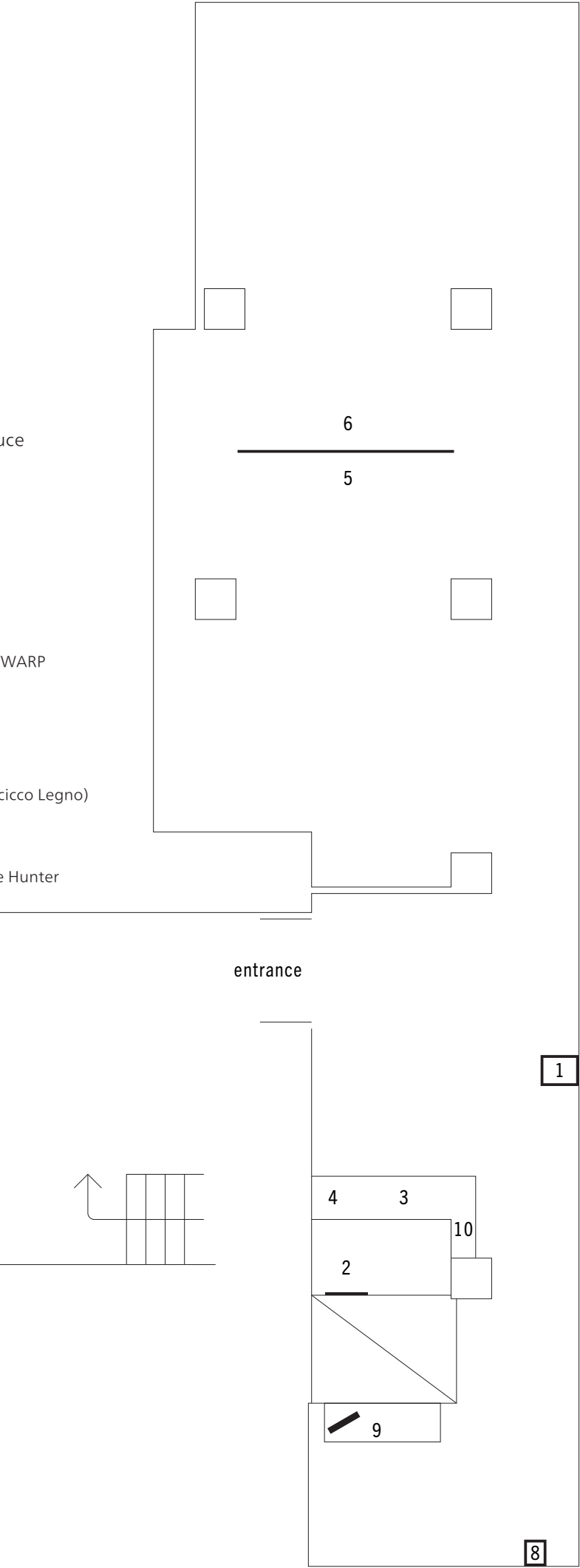
Oneiros' Eye
2021 | HD video, screen | 11’24”, 1800×3200 mm |
Actor: Yu Araki, Shooting and editing: Yuji Oku
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Leather Tramp
2021 | Amplifier, speakers | 46’27” |
Sound: Yu Araki, Recording and editing: Yuji Oku
- 8

Deep Search (digested version)
2009 | SD video, CRT monitor | 4’00”
- 9

Collected Moments, Transit Memories
2011 — ongoing | HD video, LCD monitor |
584 files– (230’) | Equipment: ARTISTS’ GUILD
- 10

Lucky Charms
2021 | Curator’s tooth, figure, Moon rock (*faux) |
20×11×10 mm, 10×7×10 mm, 8×8×5 mm





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The neon signboard found at the entrance of the hair salon Letra run by the stylist Yu Araki, has here been reproduced to 40% scale. An order for its production was placed with the same designer who had made the original. Artist Yu Araki stated that if he were to title this solo show, it would be “Makeover.” In truth, the impression of gallery aM had changed altogether, simply by installing this signboard at the entrance. (AH)

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The cave dwellings in the city of Matera in the Basilicata region of Southern Italy are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and are also recognized as a famous filming location. There are numerous caves nestled along the walls of the ancient river canyon overlooking the Sassi (Matera’s Old Town), their openings of which to me had looked like a series of gaping mouths. In the final week of my stay, with the help of my coordinator Dario Adduce and his friends, I decided to temporarily install a set of sponge teeth in the caves, documenting the entire process from the other side of the valley. Since the local people often compared the caves to “eyes”, some had apparently found my interpretation new and refreshing. (YA)

The photograph of the Sassi di Matera is also featured in the poster and flyer for the *Halfway Happy* exhibition series. The Japanese premier of the film *007 / No Time to Die*, which was shot in Matera, was postponed from its original release date (April 10th, 2020) to October 1st, 2021. (AH)

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A pebble suspended in mid-air by a spider’s thread, is seen together with my right hand. In my case, the works I produce are significantly influenced by the things that I am able to encounter, and are shaped by this confluent relation. The title of the work stems from Michelangelo Antonioni’s film *L’eclisse* (1962) and my failing to see the supermoon lunar eclipse on May 26th 2021. If the lamp of the projector, which is a light source, is regarded as the sun, the screen is the moon, and those who view the images always find themselves in the space between the two. (YA)

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The film is a close-up of stylist Yu Araki’s left eye, shot while he was asked to watch various videos of his daily life and surroundings that he had taken with his iPhone. Artist Yu Araki had asked me to get in contact with stylist Yu Araki with whom he shared exactly the same name, and create a video work. The work was installed in the exhibition without the artist having any knowledge of its content ever since placing this request. What is more, despite not knowing the contents (if I may reiterate) of what was originally planned to be a small work, boldly enough, he had suggested presenting it in the main space in pair with *Eclipse* on a double-sided screen. Although being a part of a solo exhibition bearing the artist’s own name, this project had completely been entrusted in the hands of others. The video was filmed by Yuji Oku, I myself had served as coordinator. It was a very valuable opportunity that enabled me to experience the groundlessness of producing a work of art. At the same time I was reassured that I was definitely no artist, and I confirmed my resolve to continue working together with people who cannot help producing things and engaging in thought no matter how groundlessness it may be. As those who have already seen the *Halfway Happy* exhibition series may have noticed, Yuji Oku has also taken part in filming for the exhibitions of Yutaka Sone and Kosuke Nagata, and his presence has indeed become an indispensable part of this venture. He has also given the title for this work. In Greek mythology, Oneiroi were various gods and demigods that ruled over dreams. (AH)

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The work consists of recordings of stylist Yu Araki giving haircuts at Letra, centering on the sounds of his feet as he moves around. A stylist is a job that requires a lot of standing, yet Araki himself says that this doesn’t bother him at all. Several vibrations speakers are installed in the venue. In the film *Into the Wild* (directed by Sean Penn, 2007) the protagonist is referred to as a “Leather Tramp” by a group of hippies that he encounters during his travels, and stylist Yu Araki had decided to use this name when the time would come for him to open his own store. Even in the original novel on which the film is based, “rubber tramps” who own vehicles are mentioned in contrast to “leather tramps” who do not have any means of transport and are thus forced to hitchhike or wander on foot¹. (AH)

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9 Collected Moments, Transit Memories

Collected Moments, which is project I had engaged in since 2011, created an opportunity for me to meet Arata Hasegawa. Since 2015, I have referred to those filmed with my iPhone as *Transit Memories*. As they are played on shuffle, there is a extremely low probability of encountering the same shot and shot combination. (YA)

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10 Lucky Charms

The curator’s wisdom tooth, removed on June 4th 2021. (AH)

The actual doll that was swallowed in the video work *Deep Search (digested version)*. A pebble that was collected near the local where the work *Eclipse* was filmed. (YA)



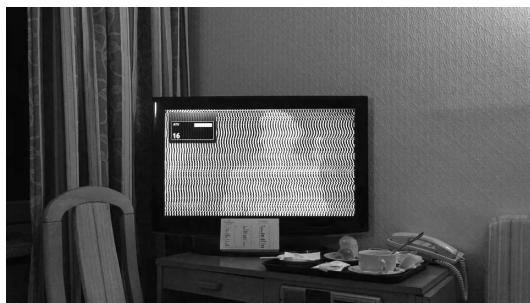
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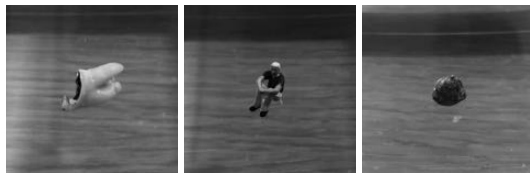
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- 1 Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*, Anchor, 1997
- 2 <http://thethree.net/exhibitions/2111>
Director’s Eye #3 “OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR”
January 10th–March 1st, 2015



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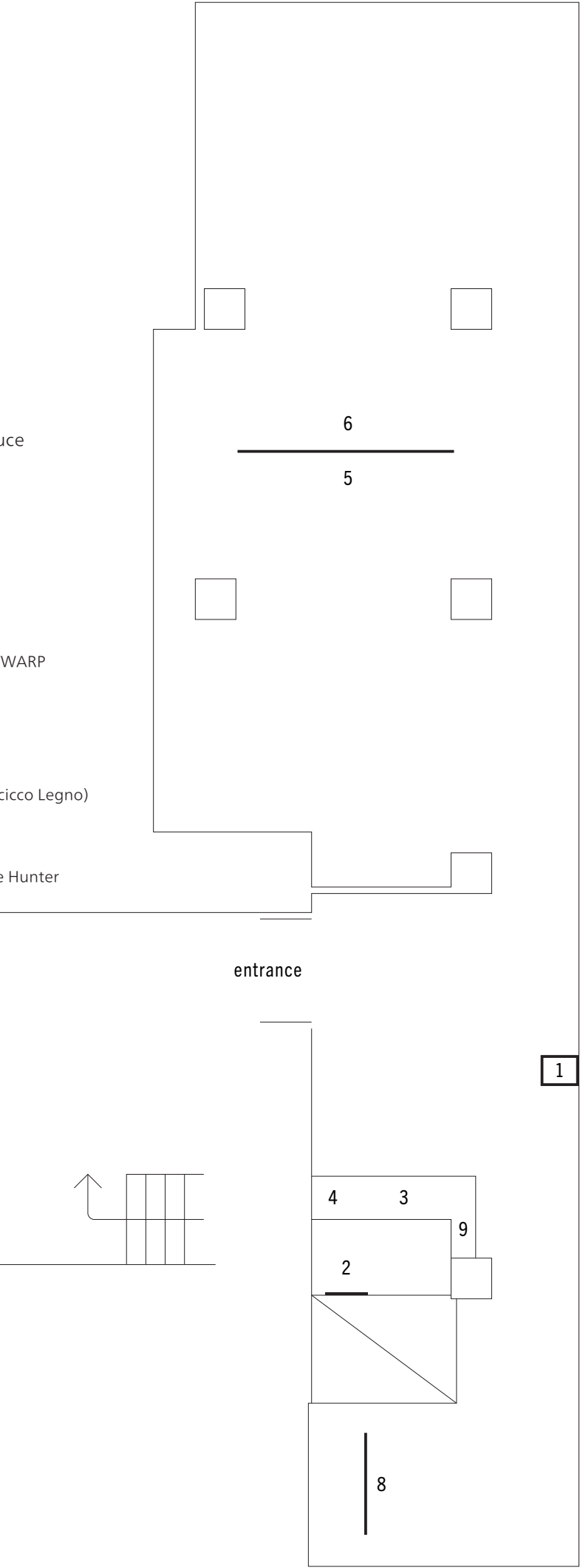
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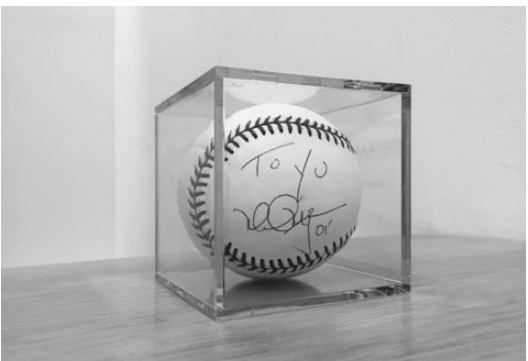
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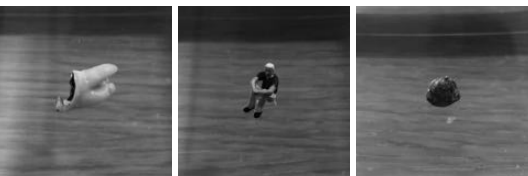
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Installation View (First Period)

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