

The Japan Pavilion Exhibition at the 58th International Exhibition–La Biennale di Venezia (2019) “Motoyuki Shitamichi + Taro Yasuno + Toshiaki Ishikura + Fuminori Nousaku” have been selected to represent Japan

The Japan Foundation is proud to organize the Japan Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, to be held in Venice, Italy from Saturday, May 11 to Sunday, November 24, 2019. We are delighted to announce the outline of the exhibition. We also plan to hold a homecoming exhibition of the Japan Pavilion show at the Bridgestone Museum of Art (currently under construction) in spring 2020. For further information, please contact us as indicated below.

■OVERVIEW

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| 【Title】 | Cosmo-Eggs |
| 【Organizer/Commissioner】 | The Japan Foundation |
| 【Artists】 | Motoyuki Shitamichi Artist Taro Yasuno Composer Toshiaki Ishikura Anthropologist / Associate Professor, Akita University of Art Fuminori Nousaku Architect / Associate Professor, Tokyo Denki University |
| 【Curator】 | Hiroyuki Hattori Curator/ Associate Professor, Akita University of Art |

■CURATOR’S STATEMENT

Since the Industrial Revolution, we humans have expanded the theater of urban life across the Earth with extraordinary vigor, having a major impact on the environment and driving various plants and animals to the brink of extinction. At the same time, given that the Earth has a diameter of around 12,700 km and is some 4.6 billion years old, the existence of humans is an insignificant blip. The aim of the exhibition is to create a space where people can turn their thoughts to and ponder the question of how we can live together with plants and animals and the land within this spatiotemporal environment. Can we as people living in Japan, a country plagued by natural and manmade disasters, question anew the very existence of humans in the Earth’s ecosystem, reconsider the coexistence of humans and nonhumans and our growth-oriented society whose limits are beginning to be exposed, and present new ways of living?

The exhibition takes as its starting point the “tsunami stones” artist Motoyuki Shitamichi came across in the Yaeyama Islands in Okinawa in 2015 and has been researching and photographing for several years. These stones are natural rocks that retain memories of disasters, but they have also become the subject of local religious beliefs, elements of mythology and folklore, colonies for migratory birds and homes for

insects, creating unique landscapes in which nature and culture are comingled. Shitamichi likens tsunami stones, which look like meteorites or giant eggs, to public squares or monuments. While Shitamichi's artwork "*Tsunami Stone*" is central to the exhibition, by expanding on the comparison with a public square and working together with a composer, an anthropologist and an architect, the artist will create a variety of physical experiences in a single, unified space, with music and speech echoing through an otherwise quiet, tranquil visual world. This is an attempt not by a single artist representing his country but by a collective of specialists with different occupational abilities to create an experiential place to imagine and think about the fundamental issues of today.

■ ABOUT ARTISTS

◆ Motoyuki Shitamichi

Born 1978 in Okayama, Shitamichi earned his BFA in painting from Musashino Art University in 2001. He mounted solo exhibitions at the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art Library in 2015 and Kurobe City Art Museum in 2016, and has participated in international and group exhibitions including Gwangju Biennale 2012 (Korea), Asian Art Biennial 2013 (Taiwan), Aichi Triennale 2013 (Japan), Okayama Art Summit 2016 (Japan), and *ESCAPE from the SEA* (Malaysia, 2017). He was a recipient of the Noon Award for Emerging Artist at Gwangju Biennale 2012 and the Photo City Sagami-hara Award for Emerging Professional Photographer in 2015.

◆ Taro Yasuno

Born 1979 in Tokyo, Yasuno earned his BMus in Composition at Tokyo College of Music in 2002, and MA from the Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences in 2004. He was a research assistant from 2008 to 2010 in the Department of Musical Creativity and the Environment at Tokyo University of the Arts, and currently the part-time lecturer at Nihon University College of Art and Tokyo Zokei University. He held the solo exhibition / concert *Dance Macabre* (Kyoto Art Center, Japan, 2014) and *The Mausoleum II* (BankART, Japan, 2017). He has participated in group exhibitions and festivals including *Tokyo Story* (Tokyo Wonder Site, Japan, 2015), *Zombie Opera "Dance Macabre"* (Festival/Tokyo 15, Japan), *Our Masters: Tatsumi Hijikata / glossolalia* (Asia Culture Center, Korea, 2016) and *Radio Azja* (Teatr Powszechny, Poland, 2017). He took first place in the 7th JFC Composing Competition in 2013 and was the recipient of the Genichiro Takahashi Prize at Art Award In the CUBE 2017 and honorable mention at the KDCC2018.

◆ Toshiaki Ishikura

Born 1974 in Tokyo, Ishikura completed his credit requirements for the doctoral program at Chuo University Graduate School of Policy Studies in 2010, thereafter leaving the school. He was a research assistant from 2009 to 2011 in the Institute for Art Anthropology at Tama Art University; has been a researcher at the Institut pour la Science Sauvage at Meiji University since 2011; and from 2013 to 2016 was a full-time lecturer at Akita University of Art, where he has been an associate professor since 2017. His co-authoring

publications include *Yasei meguri: Rettō shinwa o meguru 12 no tabi (A tour of the wild: 12 journeys revolving around myths of the archipelago)* (photographs by Masaru Tatsuki; Tankosha 2015) and *Lexicon: Contemporary Anthropology* (co-editor Katsumi Okuno; Ibunsha, 2018), among others.

◆Fuminori Nousaku

Born 1982 in Toyama, Nousaku earned his Dr.Eng. at the Tokyo Institute of Technology Department of Architecture and Building Engineering in 2012. He worked with Njiric+Arhitekti (Croatia) in 2008, and established Fuminori Nousaku Architects in 2010. He was as an assistant professor at Tokyo Institute of Technology from 2012 to 2018, and has been an associate professor at Tokyo Denki University since 2018. Noted works include *Guest House in Takaoka* (Japan, 2015), *Bamboo Theater* (the Philippines, 2017) and *Holes in the House* (Japan, 2017–). He was awarded the SD Review 2013 Kajima Prize, Special Mention for the Japan Pavilion at the 15th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition in 2016, and shortlisted for SD Review 2017.

■ ABOUT CURATOR

◆Hiroyuki Hattori

Born 1978 in Aichi, Hattori earned his MArch from Waseda University in 2006. He was curator at the Aomori Contemporary Art Centre at Aomori Public University from 2009 to 2016, and has been an associate professor at Akita University of Art since 2017. Hattori explores the relationship between art and public space through exhibitions, research and projects carried out mainly in Asia. Recent curatorial projects include *Media/Art Kitchen* (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, 2013–14), Aichi Triennale 2016 (Japan), *ESCAPE from the SEA* (Malaysia, 2017), and *Going Away Closer* (Cuba, 2018).

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- La Biennale di Venezia

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From “*Tsunami Stone*”,
Motoyuki Shitamichi (2015)



From “*Tsunami Stone*”,
Motoyuki Shitamichi (2015)



From “*New Stone Tools*”,
Motoyuki Shitamichi (2016)



Taro Yasuo “*The Mausoleum II*”,
The Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu (2017年)
Photo: Ikeda Yasunori



Exhibition image “*Cosmo-Eggs*”
Produced by Fuminori Nousaku Architects



Exhibition image “*Cosmo-Eggs*”
Produced by Fuminori Nousaku Architects



Exhibition image “*Cosmo-Eggs*”
Produced by Fuminori Nousaku Architects



Hiroyuki Hattori
Photo: Kuniya Oyamada



A scene from a production camp of the collective