

TOKAS Project Vol. 3

Tokyo Detroit Berlin

THE FUTURE IS ART
TokyoTokyo
FESTIVAL



— The Art Community Today

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture are carrying out this exhibition as part of the Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL.

Ever since it first opened in 2001, Tokyo Arts and Space (TOKAS) has continued to collaborate with international artists, curators, arts centers, and cultural organizations to produce exhibitions and pioneer related programs. TOKAS Project, which began in 2018, aims to shine a contemplative light on the arts, society, and various other themes from a multicultural perspective. In its third iteration, TOKAS Project Vol. 3 will feature collaboration with artist and XYZcollective director COBRA to introduce the art community of today in Tokyo, Detroit, and Berlin via the exhibition “Tokyo Detroit Berlin.”

Information

Exhibition Title:	TOKAS Project Vol. 3 “Tokyo Detroit Berlin”
Period:	2020/10/10 (Sat) – 11/8 (Sun)
Venue:	Tokyo Arts and Space Hongo (2-4-16 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo)
Open Hours:	11:00 - 19:00 (Last entry 18:30)
Closed:	Mondays
Admission:	Free
Organizer:	Tokyo Arts and Space (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)
Co-planner:	COBRA
Galleries:	Schiefe Zähne (Berlin), What Pipeline (Detroit), XYZcollective (Tokyo), 4649 (Tokyo)
URL:	http://www.tokyoartsandspace.jp/en/

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■ About the Exhibition

Instead of art museums and other such public institutions, the exhibition will focus on independent international exchange within the art community via alternative spaces, artist run spaces, etc. and will introduce the activities of each featured space at the TOKAS Hongo venue. The exhibition will be held in collaboration with COBRA, who participated in "Tokyo Wonder Site (now TOKAS) Residency program 2010" and then opened the XYZcollective artist-run space in Tokyo after experiencing a different kind of art community while abroad. The exhibition will paint a picture of the art community of today in Tokyo, Detroit, and Berlin by featuring art spaces from each city and their resident artists. The exhibition will facilitate exchange and discussion in an attempt to spur new future developments.

■ Related Event

Details will be announced on the TOKAS website.

■ Co-Planner

COBRA

Participated in the Tokyo - Melbourne TWS Exchange Residency Program 2010 and TEAM 15 MIHOKANNO "Hello! MIHOKANNO," TWS Shibuya, 2009, and more.

■ Profile

Born in Chiba in 1981. Lives and works in Tokyo. Graduated with BA in Craft from Tama Art University in 2005.

COBRA participated in the TWS Residency program in 2010, spending three months in Melbourne. In 2011, he opened the XYZcollective artist-run space and acts as representative director. Absurd events are the subject matter of the artist's humorous video creations. Recent exhibitions: "life and limbs" Swiss Institute Contemporary Art New York, 2019, "The Museum" Fig, Tokyo, 2019, "COBRA SOLO SHOW," For Seasons, Zurich, 2019.



Text by COBRA

What needs to be done to allow artists to use their own individual artistic activity to network internationally while living in Japan and give them more opportunities to exhibit, both domestically and abroad, in the near future?

I first learned about artist-run spaces in February 2010. Although I was active as an artist in Tokyo at the time, I was using my home as a studio and basically just going through the motions while cooped up in my room. My only source for information about the international scene was what I found online by searching for “Contemporary Art Daily” and other than that I might go visit familiar galleries or friends’ exhibition when I had a day off from my part-time job. I didn’t know any curators or gallerists. I had zero sense of being a part of the art scene in Tokyo, and I didn’t know anyone involved in the art world within Japan, much less internationally. My guess is that, back then, most of the people who had graduated from an art university and began creating art were in a similar situation. I’m sure there were exceptions, of course.

And then I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to spend three months abroad as an artist-in-residence as part of the Tokyo Wonder Site program. That was in Melbourne, Australia. It was my first time to live somewhere outside of Japan, and I can still remember how incredibly nervous I felt. I remember hoping I would get lucky and end up dating an Australian girl. But my English was poor and I ended up just spending most of my time at the place where I was staying. One day, a Japanese artist who lived there invited me to go to the opening of an exhibition, and I accepted the offer. That turned out to be an incredible opportunity for me. The exhibition was at an artist-run space called HELL GALLERY. The exhibition venue was the garage of a regular house, and there was a band playing live in the next room and they were barbecuing in the courtyard. I think there were at least 100 people there. The whole situation felt magical to me and I was filled with excitement.

After I returned to Japan, I wanted to find out what kind of artists were in the area and who was involved in the art world. I wanted to be a part of the art scene in Tokyo and network with other artists, so I created the XYZcollective. Then, in 2013, I found out about project booths at the NADA MIAMI Art Fair. The booths were tiny and they were meant for newer galleries and non-profit spaces, so the booth fees were cheap. When we found out about the booths, we decided the collective would rent one. After exhibiting at the NADA MIAMI Art Fair, our scope of activity began to expand not only within Japan but internationally, as well.

The sense of being cut off while in Japan that I had felt in 2010 had more or less faded, but with the expanded scope of activity and broadening of our horizons to the international scene, that sense of isolation returned. So now I’m searching for a way to address that. I think what the art scene in Japan is lacking is the import and export of curation. It’s true that such curation is happening at art museums and international exhibitions, but it’s incredibly limited when it comes to anything on a smaller scale. For me, the XYZcollective is an experimental attempt to provide a platform for importing and exporting curation at smaller spaces and on the individual level as a way of expanding our scope of activity. It’s my hope that this experiment will help broaden the stage for more and more Japanese artists and create more opportunities for international artists and spaces to exhibit here in Japan too.

This exhibition will feature two galleries from abroad which are already in the international spotlight. One is Schiefe Zähne from Berlin, and the other is What Pipeline from Detroit. Berlin is home to even more active artists than Tokyo, with many thriving commercial galleries and alternative spaces. Among those galleries, Schiefe Zähne has garnered a great deal of attention. What Pipeline is a gallery which has already made a name for itself in Detroit, and despite their young ages, the two co-directors have already managed to create an exhibition program featuring well-known artists from around the world. Both of these galleries have held numerous innovative exhibitions, and by including them in this project, visitors will be able to get an idea of the art scene in Europe and the US, as well as here in Tokyo via the activities of the XYZ collective and 4649, making it a true international exchange exhibition.

■ Galleries *Please contact PR for more images.

Schiefe Zähne (Berlin)

Director: Hannes SCHMIDT

Schiefe Zähne is an art space located on the ground level of a former workshop behind a residential building in Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. The program focuses primarily on solo and two-person exhibitions with a central interest in discursive potential and enthusiasm for experiments as parameters for artistic activities. Schiefe Zähne, which means “crooked teeth” in German, is a program that includes a socio-political dimension. In a reality increasingly focused on optimization, Schiefe Zähne considers it important to formulate an exhibition program that asserts the space beyond motivations like visibility and success.

URL: <http://www.schiefe-zaehne.com/>



1. "BUG OUT" Installation view

Artists: Stuart MIDDLETON, Richard SIDES and Angharad WILLIAMS with 3fragments, Iris BAUER, Theo BURT, 2018. Photo: Hannes SCHMIDT

What Pipeline (Detroit)

Directors: Daniel SPERRY, Alivia ZIVICH

What Pipeline is an artist-run gallery, founded in Detroit in 2013, bringing new perspectives in contemporary art to Detroit. What Pipeline has presented artists and collectives from Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Frankfurt, Berlin, London, Sao Paolo, Norway and New York, while introducing Detroit artists to audiences outside of the city through off-site curatorial projects. What Pipeline received the Artadia NADA NYC 2014 Artist Award and is also a two-time recipient of Knight Foundation Detroit Arts Challenge awards.

URL: <http://whatpipeline.com/>



2. Michael E. SMITH, Installation view at What Pipeline.

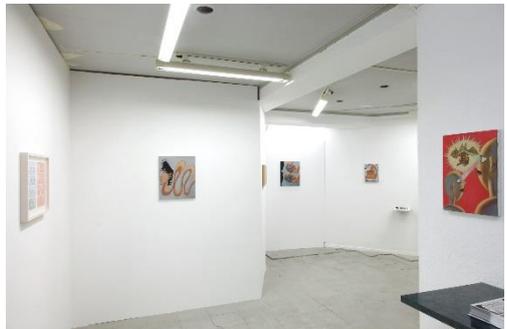
Courtesy the artist and What Pipeline

XYZcollective (Tokyo)

Directors: COBRA, MIYAGI Futoshi

In 2011, XYZcollective co-directors COBRA, Matsubara Soshiro (Artist), and Hattori Madoka (Editor) began operating the XYZcollective artist-run space in a warehouse they remodeled in Setagaya, Tokyo. In 2013, the collective exhibited at NADA Miami Beach, marking the beginning of its interaction with international galleries and project spaces. In recent years, the collective has been actively building a network based on the relationships formed during those interactions and organizing international exchange exhibitions, etc. Currently based in Sugamo, Tokyo, the collective has welcomed a new co-director, Miyagi Futoshi, who also participated in the TWS Residency program.

URL: <http://xyzcollective.org/>



3. HORI Nanami, Installation view at XYZcollective, 2019. ©XYZcollective and Artist

4649 (Tokyo)

Directors: KOBAYASHI Yuhei, SHIMIZU Shogo, and TAKAMIZAWA Yuu

4649 is a curatorial project by Kobayashi Yuhei, Shimizu Shogo, and Takamizawa Yuu. In addition to introducing the international art scene via exhibitions, the project is also working to exhibit young artists from Tokyo at art fairs and galleries overseas. 4649 also engages in curation, publication, etc. based on the three members' own research and interests as artists. Since 2018, the project has jointly operated an artist-run space, also called 4649, in Sugamo, Tokyo together with the XYZcollective.

URL: <http://www.4-6-4-9.jp/>



4. MURATA Fuyumi, Installation view at 4649, 2019.

**TOKAS Project Vol. 3 “Tokyo Detroit Berlin”
Application Form for Image Data**

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