

CHINBIN WESTERN

CHIKAKO YAMASHIRO

チンビン・ウェスタン'

山城 知佳子

Exhibition Notes | Sat 21 August - Sun 21 November 2021

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee, DD1 4DY
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Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

Open Wed - Sun 11:00-18:00
Open late Thu 19:00
Admission free

www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

This project marks Japanese artist Chikako Yamashiro's first presentation of work in Scotland and is guest-curated at DCA by Kirsteen Macdonald. At the centre of this exhibition is the European gallery premiere of Yamashiro's film work, *Chinbin Western: Representation of the Family* (*Kazoku no Hyosho* – チンビン・ウェスタン「家族の表象」).

Introducing Yamashiro's work also requires an introduction to the history of her birthplace – the Japanese prefecture Okinawa, which comprises over 100 islands situated in the East China Sea between Taiwan and Japan. This cultural geography provides the subject, context and setting from which the artist has explored the complex geopolitics of the region through her work with performance, photography and video over recent years.

Okinawa is the largest in this group of islands, previously known as the Ryukyu Kingdom, until it was illegally annexed by Japan's Meiji-era government in 1879. Forced assimilation (positioning Japanese language and culture as superior to indigenous communities) was followed by U.S. administration after WWII, before the islands were officially reinstated as the Okinawan province of Japan in 1972.

Despite local resistance to these successive acts of colonisation, agreements between the Japanese and U.S. governments have led to around 15% of land on the main island being leased to U.S. military bases. Okinawa is approximately 1500km from Tokyo and was the only part of Japan that experienced ground combat during WWII. Between April and June 1945, the Battle of Okinawa resulted in the deaths and mass suicide of around 240,000 Okinawan civilians (at least a quarter of the population), who were martyred to protect the Japanese mainland. This trauma, never fully acknowledged or the subject of reparation by the government, is echoed in the contemporary contradiction that the majority of Okinawans oppose the American military presence on the island. The strategic positioning of U.S. military forces in Okinawa – facing China, North Korea, Vietnam – aided Japan's global economic growth and stability during and after the Cold War, while allowing the government to maintain its non-military constitution.

These historical events, how they are remembered and how they affect contemporary life, have continually influenced Yamashiro's practice. In *Chinbin Western*, Yamashiro riffs off the melodrama and sense of the ominous from the 1960s subgenre of Spaghetti Westerns (alternatively known in Japan as Macaroni Westerns), substituting 'Spaghetti' for 'Chinbin' in the title. Chinbin are an Okinawan brown sugar pancake, served to one of the film's main characters in a bar along with an American bourbon whiskey, juxtaposing different cultural

symbols. Behind such imagery, the soundtrack of the work layers scripted drama, field recordings, *sanshin* music, whispered otherworldly voices and appropriated European operatic arias.

The scenography in *Chinbin Western* documents an ongoing and controversial land reclamation project in Okinawa, underway since 2018, to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps air base from Futenma to Henoko by building a landing strip adjoining a coral coastline of unique biodiversity. Intergenerational anti-war and environmental protesters have long opposed this quarrying and construction work, advocating peace over war, and protection of the natural environment. In the film, Yamashiro incorporates documentary footage of protesters gathered outside the military compound. Such daily protestations are continuously ignored by the policymakers located so far from the sound of these citizens' voices.

The agency of vocal testimony is a feature of the two earlier video works included in the exhibition: *Sinking Voices, Red Breath* (*Shizumu koe, akai iki* – 沈む声、紅い息), and *Choros of the Melodies* (*Korosu no uta* – コロスの唄). Both draw from source material that Yamashiro made with collaborators from a senior citizens' day centre, talking about their experiences of war during the Battles of Saipan and Okinawa and the tragic effect on their lives. In *Sinking Voices, Red Breath*, the microphones used to record their stories are bunched together and dropped into the ocean like a plant-form on the seabed. In an accompanying series of photographs to *Choros of the Melodies* Yamashiro brings her own body into close contact with her collaborators in an attempt to connect to these historical events, as though touch and physical intimacy could deepen her understanding of their lives. Both video works closely connect to the sea, where the water is a repository for lost bodies, words, memories and thoughts. Inhabitants of Okinawan islands have always carried with them legends of the sea, and Yamashiro explores this in conflation with the territorial ownership and militarisation of the world's oceans as battlegrounds, sites of loss and disappearance.

Yamashiro has located a number of her works within sacred groves and sanctuaries known as *Gusuku* and *Utaki*. These have spiritual significance in Okinawa, connecting the living with their deceased family members through rituals, gatherings and anniversaries. Water sources, caves and thickly forested mountains are often *Utaki*. Sometimes places that were originally village burial sites become *Utaki*, and places that were *Utaki* become *Gusuku*. In *Chinbin Western*, an *Utaki* enshrines an ancestor settled in a cave who transforms into a god. This is typical of Okinawan custom in which people and places are conduits for a kind of spiritual energy known as *kami-sama*.

Although Yamashiro's work is rooted in the culture and history of a specific place, her consideration of the agency of the body within a state-controlled environment is a universal concern. The effects of local history are held in, and travel with,

our bodies. As Wesley Ueunten, Professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University has written, ‘diasporic Okinawan identity and culture is the very terrain in which the immorality of global militarisation can be exposed and challenged.’ Likewise, in building her practice from narratives specific to Okinawa, Yamashiro opens a wider lens through which to understand our political agency in the world through transgenerational experience, learning and empathy.

GLOSSARY

Geopolitics: the study of how politics and international relations are affected by the geographical factors of a country or area of the world.

Colonisation: the action or process of taking control of an area or a country that is not your own, especially using force, and settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people that live there.

Reparation: the action of making amends for harm, loss and/or damage to a person or group of people, by providing payment or other assistance to those who have been wronged.

Spaghetti Westerns: a term used to describe a subgenre of Western film produced in Europe between the mid-1960s and late 1970s, epitomised by the film-making style of Italian director Sergio Leone. The term evolved because most of these films were produced and directed by Italians. Spaghetti Westerns often subverted and challenged many of the conventions of traditional U.S. Westerns; partly intentionally and partly due to their different cultural background.

Sanshin music: music written for, and played on, the *sanshin* – an Okinawan three-stringed instrument without frets. *Sanshin* literally means ‘three lines’ and the body of the instrument is typically covered in snake skin.

Biodiversity: this refers to the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria and fungi, as well as the communities they form and the habitats in which they live. While Earth’s biodiversity is so rich that many species have yet to be discovered, many species are being threatened with extinction due to human activities, putting the Earth’s biodiversity at risk.

Diasporic: a diaspora is a group of people who come from a particular nation or continent, or whose ancestors came from it, but who now live in many different parts of the world.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Chikako Yamashiro (b. Okinawa, 1976) graduated with an MA in Environmental Design, Graduate School of Formative Arts from Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts in 2002.

Her recent exhibitions include the group exhibitions *Image Narratives: Literature in Japanese Contemporary Art* at the National Art Centre, Tokyo, in 2019; a new performance *And I Go through You* and exhibition of *Mud Man* for Kyoto Experiment 2018: International Performing Arts Festival, Kyoto Art Centre; *Post Trauma* at Jeju Museum of Art, Korea and *From Generation to Generation: Inherited Memory and Contemporary Art* at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, USA, 2017.

She exhibited in the 2016 Aichi Triennale and the 8th Asian Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia in 2015. Her solo exhibition, *Reframing the land/mind/body-scape*, opened at the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum in August 2021.

Yamashiro was awarded the Tokyo Contemporary Art Award 2020–2022; the Zonta Prize for female filmmakers at the 64th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany in 2018 and the Asian Art Award supported by Warehouse TERRADA in 2017.

ABOUT THE GUEST CURATOR

Kirsteen Macdonald (b. Falkirk, 1972) is a founding member of the curatorial co-operative Chapter Thirteen and recently completed a practice-based PhD at the Glasgow School of Art.

Her recent projects include: *Home Economics*, Pearce Institute for Glasgow International Festival (2021); *What's Love Got To Do With It?*, Galerie Art-Cade, Marseille, France (2018); *Art & Work*, Valand Academy, Gothenburg, Sweden (2018–2019); the discursive platform *Framework* (2011–2015) and peer-learning programme *Curatorial Studio* (2015–2020).

Macdonald is Associate Lecturer at Newcastle University and previously worked with GI Festival, Timespan in Helmsdale, Cove Park and the Scottish Arts Council. She was a Lecturer at the Glasgow School of Art (2014–2017) and curator of The Changing Room in Stirling (2001–09).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition is supported by the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, with thanks also to Yumiko Chiba Associates, Tokyo.

Kirsteen Macdonald would like to thank: Chikako Yamashiro; Yumiko Chiba and Kumiko Okumura at Yumiko Chiba Associates; Keiko Okamura; Cicely Farrer and Lucy Byatt at Hospitalfield; Tomoko Kuroiwa; Hirofumi Suda; Anna McLauchlan; Suzanne Dibble; Takuma Sminkey; Amanda Catto; Juliet Dean; Ariki Porteous; Bohan Norwood Porteous; Bill Downie; Eoin Dara and all at Dundee Contemporary Arts.

NEW PUBLICATION

We have published a new chapbook as part of the exhibition. Also titled *Chinbin Western*, it contains new essays on Yamashiro's work by guest curator Kirsteen Macdonald and Keiko Okamura, who is Curator / Head of Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

Copies are available to read in the gallery and Information Space, and to buy in DCA Shop and online, priced £4.

INFORMATION SPACE

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you will find a video interview with the guest curator, alongside the reading materials listed below that have been influential to her thinking.

READING LIST

Naoko Fukada (ed.), *Chikako Yamashiro*, Yumiko Chiba Associates, 2012

Keiko Asanuma (ed.), *Circulating World: The Art of Chikako Yamashiro*, Yumiko Chiba Associates, 2016

Davinder L. Bhowmik (ed.) and Steve Rabson (ed.), *Islands of Protest: Japanese Literature from Okinawa*, 2016

Kyoko Selden (ed.) and Noriko Mizuta (ed.), *More Stories by Japanese Women Writers: An Anthology*, 2011

Susan Sered, *Women of the Sacred Groves: Divine Priestesses of Okinawa*, 1999

Lee Chonghwa (ed.), *Still Hear the Wound. Towards an Asia, Politics and Art to Come*, 2015

Kenichi Kondo (ed.), *MAM Project 018: Yamashiro Chikako*, 2013

Donna J. Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Cthulucene*, 2016

TALKS AND EVENTS

For more information and to book tickets visit www.dca.org.uk

Chinbin Western: Online Screenings

Fri 27 - Sun 29 August

Fri 24 - Sun 26 September

Fri 29 - Sun 31 October

Fri 19 - Sun 21 November

For one weekend every month during the run of Yamashiro's exhibition we are staging an online screening of her film work, *Chinbin Western: Representation of the Family*, on DCA's Vimeo channel. The work will be available to view between 11:00 on a Friday morning until 18:00 on a Sunday evening in August, September, October and November.

In the Evening There is Feeling: Reading Donna Haraway

Thu 23 September, 18:00-19:30

Online via Zoom

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Led by DCA's Head of Exhibitions, Eoin Dara, In the Evening There is Feeling is DCA's reading group. It takes its name from Gertrude Stein's 1914 book *Tender Buttons* and focuses, in an informal and welcoming way, on feminist and queer texts from the worlds of art and literature.

Connecting to Yamashiro's practice which so often explores interconnected landscapes of human, animal and spiritual beings, this session will introduce and discuss an

excerpt from Donna Haraway's 2016 book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*.

In the midst of spiraling ecological devastation, multispecies feminist theorist Donna Haraway offers provocative new ways to reconfigure our relations to the earth and all its inhabitants. In this book, instead of referring to our current epoch as the Anthropocene, she sets out a new concept in what she calls the Chthulucene, as it more aptly and fully describes our epoch as one in which the human and nonhuman are inextricably linked together. This book teaches us to 'stay with the trouble' of living and dying together on a damaged earth, and provides rich new thinking to help us imagine how we might build more liveable futures together.

To join the conversation, **book your place before 17:00 on Wed 22 September**. We will send you digital excerpts of the text and details of the Zoom meeting upon booking.

Curator's Talk: Kirsteen Macdonald on Chikako Yamashiro

Thu 30 September, 18:00-19:00

Online via Zoom

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join our guest curator Kirsteen Macdonald on Zoom for a talk about Yamashiro's exhibition at DCA.

Macdonald will discuss Yamashiro's work within a broad context and explore some of the specific aspects

of Okinawan culture that resonate within the films selected for the exhibition.

Drawing from conversations with curator Keiko Okamura in Tokyo, more recent developments in Yamashiro's practice will be shared, along with an insight into the many conversations between Dundee, Glasgow, Tokyo and Okinawa that have taken place throughout the planning of this exhibition in our gallery.

CINEMA SCREENING

Chikako Yamashiro Triple Bill at DCA Cinema: *The Beginning of Creation: Abduction / A Child; A Woman of the Butcher Shop; Mud Man*

Wed 17 November

Cinema

Please see website for times and further details

During the last week of the exhibition, join us for a triple bill of short films by Yamashiro in DCA cinema. This programme brings together three works by the artist that create a poetic and visceral response to the notion of inheriting memories and history based within the islands of Okinawa, Japan.

The Beginning of Creation (2015) features Takao Kawaguchi, a dancer and former member of the Kyoto-based Dumb Type collective, re-enacting a legendary performance by the late Butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno (1906-2010).

A Woman of the Butcher Shop (2016) locates its cast in an ambiguous, lawless geographic zone between an American military base and civic land, before moving the drama into Okinawa's symbolically-significant limestone caves.

Mud Man (2017) won the Zonta Prize for female filmmakers at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany in 2018 and an expanded installation won the Asian Art Award in 2019. Filmed on location on Jeju Island, South Korea and Okinawa, the film begins with clumps of mud falling from the sky like bird droppings, moving through archival war footage and an impressionistic contemporary soundscape. It ends with a scene of uplifting unity and peace.

These screenings will be introduced by guest curator Kirsteen Macdonald.

The Beginning of Creation: Abduction / A Child, 2015, 18 minutes

A Woman of the Butcher Shop, 2016, 27 minutes 30 seconds

Mud Man, 2017, 26 minutes

English subtitles
Advisory rating 12+

CREATE SPACE

Create Space

Sat 4 September, 11:00-18:00

Then Wed - Sun, 11:00-18:00

Free, drop in

Please respect our room capacity guidance and wear your mask. Children must be accompanied at all times.

Our new Create Space is inspired by the exhibitions in our galleries, and offers a range of fun activities that link to the artists' ideas – image-making, what we don't notice, things that help us look, and making up stories will all feature.

Create Space is located between Gallery 1 and the Information Space. Although designed with families and younger children in mind, we hope that visitors of all ages will enjoy spending some time there.

From Wed 25 – Sun 29 August, you can also see ST/ART@DCA Summer Prints, a vibrant display of print work made during nine weeks of our Summer partnership project with Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust.

ST/ART@DCA works with adults who are isolated by long term health conditions bringing small groups together to learn new print skills and engage with DCA programmes.

Discovery Film Festival 2021

Sat 23 October – Sun 7 November

Various prices for film screenings

Suitable for all ages

Details at www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/

Don't miss our annual international film festival showing the best films from around the world for young audiences from Shorts for Tinies, Shorts for Wee and Middle ones, to animated and live action features.

During Discovery Film Festival our Create Space will have film related activities for you to do as well!

NEW: See Think Make Do Monday Makes and Activities Online

Free

Suitable for 0-3s, and 4+ ages

Available at: www.dca.org.uk/about/dca-learning

Beat the autumn blues and spend time making together as a family with our online activities. Monday Makes are step by step photo-guides or videos created by artists on our team and inspired by the exhibition themes or techniques used by the artist. Our Art Activity Sheets are quicker, fun ideas and templates to copy or download and make at home.

Our online library of 'makes' and ideas is simply bursting with over 50 things to see, think, make and do.

#DCAmakes

GALLERY 2

Mary McIntyre: Places We Think We Know

Gallery 2

Sat 21 August – Sun 21 November

Running concurrently in Gallery 2, this exhibition marks the first major solo presentation in Scotland by Irish artist Mary McIntyre, debuting a new body of work commissioned for DCA.

Ideas of interior space (both physical and psychological) have long reverberated throughout McIntyre's practice, and in this new body of work at DCA she presents a viewer with images of quiet interiors; rooms which at first appear to be empty and unremarkable. Upon closer inspection, however, they slowly reveal a rich tapestry of traces and associations – frayed and discoloured carpet tiles, stained walls, makeshift partitions, and disturbed dust and detritus all speak of previous occupation by unknown inhabitants.

Accompanying these works, the artist has constructed a series of installations that intersect the gallery in different ways to create bespoke environments from which to consider each image. With every step taken through the space, a viewer becomes aware of their own body moving towards the photograph in order to view it, and the experience of looking at the artwork is intensified in a multi-sensory way by the colours, textures, objects, words and sounds that McIntyre has chosen to surround the image with.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Visitor Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

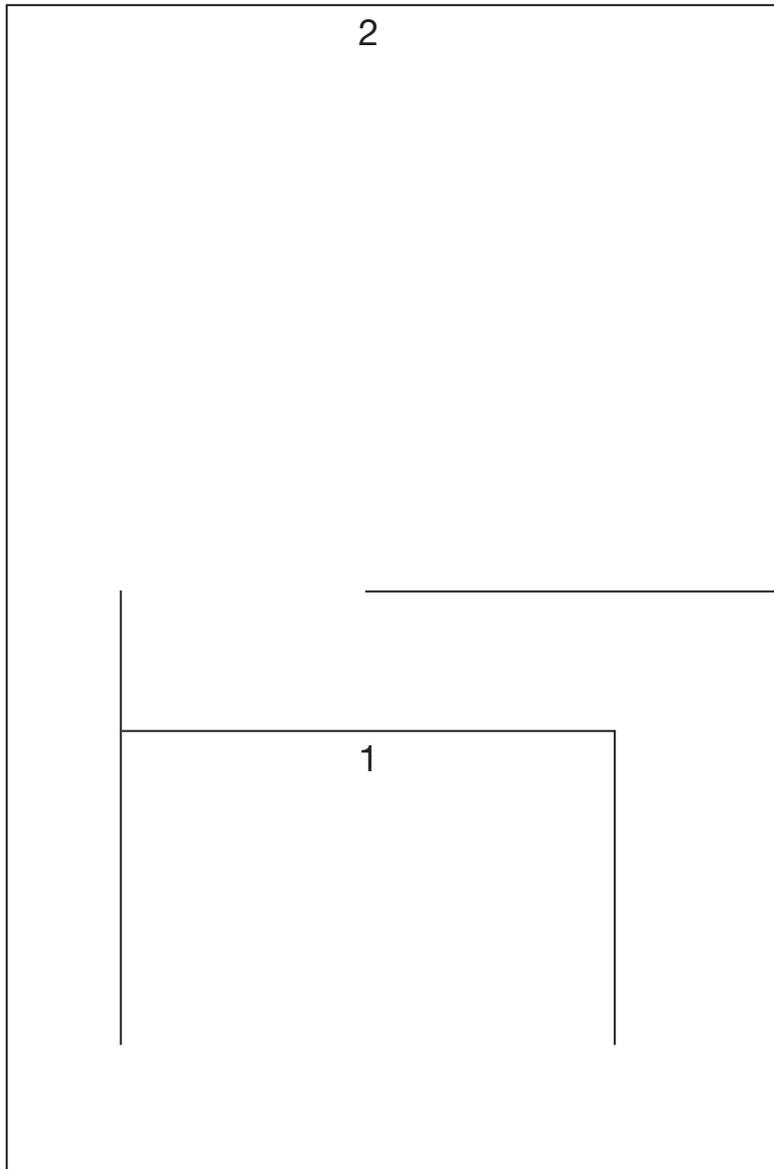
LARGE PRINT, AUDIO & BRAILLE

Large print, audio and Braille versions of this leaflet are available, please ask a Visitor Assistant for more information.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN



1.
沈む声、紅い息
Sinking Voices, Red Breath
video, 2010
6 minutes 22 seconds

コロスの唄
Choros of the Melodies
video, 2012
9 minutes 12 seconds

2.
チンビン・ウェスタン
「家族の表象」
*Chinbin Western:
Representation of the Family*
video, 2019
35 minutes

All works courtesy of the
artist and Yumiko Chiba
Associates, Tokyo

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