

May, 2011

PRESS RELEASE

Pavilion of Japan
at the 54th International Art Exhibition
— la Biennale di Venezia



la Biennale di Venezia

54. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte


Partecipazioni nazionali

TABAIMO: teleco-soup



The Japan Foundation is proud to announce the artist Tabaimo's representation of Japan at the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. Recognized as one of the country's leading young artists, Tabaimo first received critical acclaim for her multimedia installation *Japanese Kitchen* (1999), which combined surreal, hand-drawn animations with architectural elements in an unblinking examination of contemporary Japanese society. In Venice, "TABAIMO: teleco-soup" will continue that trajectory through an immersive multimedia environment that incorporates the unique characteristics of the Japan Pavilion in the Giardini, completed in 1956 and designed by the architect Takamasa Yoshizaka.

In Japanese the exhibition title, "teleco-soup," connotes the idea of an "inverted" soup, or the inversion of relations between water and sky, fluid and container, self and world. Coined by the artist, this phrase builds upon an intellectual tradition in Japan that grapples with the country's identity as an island state, or what in recent years has come to be known as the "Galapagos Syndrome," originally used to describe the incompatibility between Japanese technology and international markets but now applicable to multiple facets of Japanese society in the age of globalization.



The structure of the exhibition further references a proverb attributed to the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi, “A frog in a well cannot conceive of the ocean,” and an addendum to the Japanese version of the same, “But it knows the height of the sky.” Through the use of a multi-channel animation projection and mirror panels, Tabaimo will transform the interior of the Japan Pavilion into a well and the open space beneath the Pavilion, which is raised on pilotis, into the sky.

The animation begins with images of a minute cell that evolves into a body, and continues with depictions of Tabaimo herself as well as of all the people currently living in Japan and Japanese society as a whole, evoking a continually expanding space. The succession of images will lead to a recognition of the unimaginable breadth of the well – or contemporary Japan – and through the installation’s anti-gravitational orientation will connect to an infinite depth/height in the eternal world of the sky below, visible through an aperture in the floor at the Pavilion center. In this way extending beyond the confines of the Pavilion, the installation will destabilize relations between up and down, interior and exterior, broad and narrow perspectives, and immerse visitors into a bodily experience that asks them to question, Is the world of a frog living in a well really so small? And, how can we negotiate the points of contact between the individual and the communal – how do we negotiate our own Galapagos Syndromes?

The commissioner of the Pavilion of Japan at the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia is Yuka Uematsu, Curator, National Museum of Art, Osaka.

About the artist:

Born in 1975, Tabaimo graduated from Kyoto University of Art and Design in 1999. She received the Grand Prize in the 1999 Kirin Contemporary Awards for her video installation *Japanese Kitchen*, completed as her graduation work that same year. She has had solo shows at numerous Japanese and international institutions including Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery in 2003; the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, and Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art, Paris, in 2006; the Yokohama Museum of Art and the National Museum of Art, Osaka, in 2009/10; and Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, in 2010. She has previously exhibited at Venice in the artistic director’s exhibition curated by Robert Storr in 2007, “Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind: Art in the Present Tense.” In 2010, Asahi Shimbun Publications produced the picture book *Akunin (Villain)*, structured around the artist’s illustrations.

About the commissioner:

Since 2008, Yuka Uematsu is Curator of the National Museum of Art, Osaka. From 1993 to 2008, she was Chief Curator of the Marugame Genichiro-Inukuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Marugame. She has organized exhibitions, written essays on and published catalogues for artists including Pipilotti Rist, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Steve McQueen, Marlene Dumas, Marina Abramovic, Jan Fabre, Yayoi Kusama, Miwa Yanagi, Yoshihiro Suda, Isamu Noguchi, Issey Miyake and many others. She served as the Japanese commissioner at the 13th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh in 2008, and is currently a part-time lecturer at Kyoto University of Art and Design.

Notes to editors:

Title: TABAIMO: teleco-soup

Organizer: The Japan Foundation

Venue: The Japan Pavilion at the Giardini, designed by Takamasa Yoshizaka, completed in 1956

Address: Padiglione Giapponese Giardini della Biennale, Castello 1260, 30122 Venezia

Exhibition period: June 4 - November 27, 2011; Opening hours 10:00-18:00,

Closed on Mondays (excepting June 6 and November 21)

*August 23, closed for maintenance of Japan Pavilion

Preview: June 1 – 3, 2011: Opening hours 10:00-19:00

Official opening of the Pavilion: June 1st, from 15:00 at the Japan Pavilion

Commissioner: Yuka Uematsu

Exhibiting artist: Tabaimo

With Special Support of: Ishibashi Foundation

In Special Cooperation with: NEC Display Solutions, Ltd

Supported by: Kyoto University of Art and Design, Soichiro Fukutake, The Obayashi Foundation, Sumiko Ito

Japan Pavilion official HP: <http://www.jpf.go.jp/venezia-biennale/>

Contact:

The Japan Foundation

(Att: Ms Masako Taira)

venezia@jpf.go.jp

Address in Japan:

(Ms) Miwa Kaneko
The Japan Foundation
Visual Arts Section
4-4-1 Yotsuya
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0004

Address in Italy:

(Ms) Atsuko Sato
The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome
Via Antonio Gramsci 74
00197 Roma

Images for press use:

For press images, please contact
Ms.Taira (venezia@jpf.go.jp).

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Credit lines:

- 1.-4. Tabaimo, “teleco-soup”
still image
2011
video installation(5’27” loop)
©Tabaimo / Courtesy of Gallery Koyanagi and James Cohan Gallery
5. Tabaimo, Self Portrait



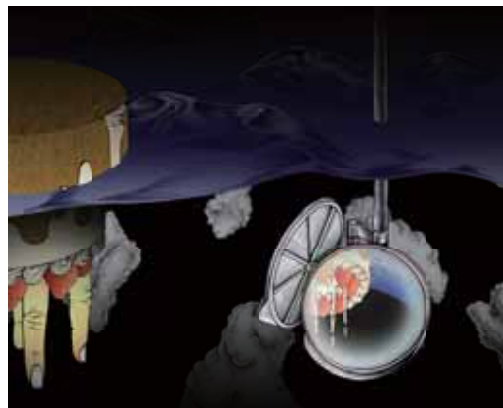
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