

PRESS RELEASE
1 May 2017

REAL LIVES HALF LIVES: FUKUSHIMA

Don't Follow the Wind | Hikaru Fujii

19 May - 15 July, Thursday - Saturday, 12noon - 6pm

Preview: Thursday 18 May 2017, 7pm - 9pm



Image: *Don't Follow The Wind, A Walk in Fukushima, 2016*

Arts Catalyst presents two solo exhibitions by artists that respond to the man-made disaster of the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown, alongside a series of events exploring the profound social, cultural and political impact of Fukushima in Japan.

A Walk in Fukushima - Don't Follow the Wind

A Walk in Fukushima is an immersive 360-degree video, viewed through headsets made by former residents of the Fukushima exclusion zone. The video guides the viewer through an inaccessible exhibition entitled *Don't Follow the Wind*, that has been created inside the radioactive evacuated area surrounding the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

The exhibition was created by the curatorial collective Chim ↑ Pom, Kenji Kubota, Jason Waite, and Eva and Franco Mattes, with participating artists including Ai Weiwei, Aiko Miyanaga, Chim ↑ Pom, Grand Guignol Mirai, Nikolaus Hirsch and Jorge Otero-Pailos, Kota

Takeuchi, Eva and Franco Mattes, Meiro Koizumi, Nobuaki Takekawa, Ahmet Ögüt, Trevor Paglen and Taryn Simon. It opened in March 2015, on the fourth anniversary of Fukushima disaster.

An estimated 24,000 people are not allowed to return to their homes following the disaster, and it may be decades before zones within the Fukushima Prefecture are declared safe from radiation and residency restrictions are lifted.

***Project Fukushima!* - Hikaru Fujii**

Hikaru Fujii's film *Project Fukushima!* follows the preparations for a festival held in Fukushima city five months after the nuclear disaster. The festival, called "Fukushima!" was organised by a group of artists and musicians including Yoshihide Otomo. The film features music and poetry by Yoshihide Otomo, Michiro Endo, Ryoichi Wago alongside people from Fukushima and other regions in Japan. The festival organisers had to address questions including: Would it be ethical to bring people to Fukushima? What would it mean to the people of Fukushima if the festival had to be cancelled due to radiation concerns? The film shows how the lives of people in Fukushima have changed and what the future might look like for the next few generations.

Born in 1976, Hikaru Fujii creates video installations that respond to contemporary social problems. He makes use of extensive research and fieldwork investigating existing systems and structures, based on the idea that art is produced out of the intimate relationship between society and history. His work explores modern education and social systems in Japan and Asia as well as the nature of museums and art museums.

Events Programme

The triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and meltdown energised many people in Japan to become more proactive, vocal and dissenting. Mass anti-nuclear protests were held countrywide in the years following the disaster and smaller scale protests are still widespread. A citizen science movement sprang up in response to the slow release (some claimed withholding) of radiation data, with citizens using their own radiation-measuring devices to reveal and share online the levels of radioactivity. Legal challenges and petitions against nuclear power in Japan point to another tactic used by a citizenry that wishes to reclaim more governance over its environment and safety. Japanese artists have responded with an array of approaches, and have often been at the forefront of dissent and critique.

Real Lives Half Lives: Fukushima continues Arts Catalyst's ongoing inquiry into the planetary commons, in dialogue with the Nuclear Culture research programme, and highlights the role of Arts Catalyst's Centre for Art, Science & Technology as a space for research, thinking and discourse in cross-disciplinary art.

A programme of talks, events and activities will run through May to July, in partnership with **Art Action UK** and **IKLECTIK**. Art Action UK is a collective that explores ways to create opportunities for cultural practitioners to develop strategies that will help those affected by disasters. IKLECTIK is a creative space that showcases contemporary art, experimental music and artistic critical practice.

This programme is supported by the **Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation** and **Arts Council**

England with special thanks to **NPO S-AIR** and **Project Fukushima!**

More information: <http://artscatalyst.org/real-lives-half-lives-fukushima>

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| Interviews and images available on request.

Contact details:

Claudia Lastra, Head of Programme
E: claudia.lastra@artscatalyst.org
T: +44 (0)20 7278 8373

artscatalyst.org

Twitter @TheArtsCatalyst

Facebook /TheArtsCatalyst

Notes to Editors:

1) **Arts Catalyst** commissions artists who critically and experimentally engage with science and technology. It is one of the UK's most distinctive arts organisations, distinguished by ambitious art commissions and its unique take on art-science practice. The organisation is funded by Arts Council England as part of its National Portfolio. Over 23 years, it has commissioned more than 125 UK and international artists' projects, often at pivotal moments in artists' careers, including major projects by Tomas Saraceno, Aleksandra Mir, Agnes Meyer-Brandis, Carey Young, Jan Fabre and the Otolith Group. Arts Catalyst works with artists and scientists to create artworks and generate new ideas exploring science and its role in society and culture: from the nature of air to environmental change, interspecies communication to the future of the moon. It aims to give audiences distinctive, thought-provoking experiences and to play a leading role in the dialogue around interdisciplinary artistic practice. The organisation collaborates with world-class galleries, museums, universities, arts organisations, science institutions and research centres.

2) **Don't Follow The Wind** is a collective of artists and curators working with former residents of the Fukushima exclusion zone in Japan. They have created an exhibition inside the restricted radioactive zone surrounding the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, that will be inaccessible for an undefined period of time. Don't Follow the Wind is a project initiated by the Japanese art collective Chim↑Pom with Eva and Franco Mattes, and developed with curators Kenji Kubota and Jason Waite.

<http://dontfollowthewind.info/>

3) **Hikaru Fujii** is an artist and filmmaker that confronts political and social problems whose roots lie in history. Rather than presenting his research into past events just as it is, he has continued to use his work to attempt reinterpretations of the issues from contemporary perspectives. His film *Project Fukushima!* is a documentary examining the Japanese city and prefecture in the wake of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdowns that hit the region in 2011. The film, directed by Hikaru Fujii, focuses intently on a music and arts festival in the region, roughly five months after the disasters, spearheaded by prominent Japanese musician Otomo Yoshihide. Born in 1976, Hikaru Fujii creates video installations that respond to contemporary social problems. He makes use of extensive research and fieldwork investigating existing systems and structures, based on the idea that art is produced out of the intimate relationship between society and history. His work explores modern education and social systems in Japan and Asia as well as the nature of museums and art museums.

<http://hikarufujii.com/>