

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

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SATOSHI MURAKAMI Living Migration

2020.10.17 (Sat) -
2021.3.7 (Sun)

Exhibition Title	SATOSHI MURAKAMI Living Migration
Period	Saturday, October 17, 2020 - Sunday, March 7, 2021
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays; until 17:00 on Jan 2-3)
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Gallery 13, Public Zone, Open Space (outdoors)
Closed	Mondays (except November 23, January 11), November 24, December 29 - January 1, January 12
Admission	Free
Inquiries	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Tel: +81-(0)76-220-2800
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)

Media Contact

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About the Exhibition

Satoshi Murakami (b. 1988) graduated with a degree in architecture from the Musashino Art University in March 2011, the same month as the devastating earthquake and tsunami hit the Tohoku region. The disaster prompted the artist to launch a project titled “Living Migration,” in which he walks around carrying on his back a house he made from styrofoam, changing location continuously. This he has done both in Japan and overseas.

The project was sparked by questions Murakami had surrounding the loss of so many people’s homes to the quake and tsunami, the decline of communities after the disaster, and the fact that despite contracting to rent a house just prior to the quake, he and a group of friends were not immediately able to move in. Exploring an everyday existence in which we live to accumulate more money and possessions than we need, and the social conditions and reasons that differentiate public and private spaces, this project considers how the lifestyles of individuals impact on wider society.

Joining *Living Migration 2015.5–2018.9* acquired by the Museum in 2019, the exhibition will be the first-ever survey of Murakami’s “Living Migration” project in its entirety, from its launch on April 5, 2014 to the present day. The exhibition space, composed of diaries, drawings and photos detailing the people, landscapes and events Murakami met with while traveling with his portable dwelling, and a map showing the route taken by him, gives a sense of actually living the migration alongside the artist, and being right among his thoughts and dilemmas. During the exhibition, the latest work in Murakami’s “Advertising Sign House” project, based on the “Living Migration” project, will be installed in the Museum’s garden.

We anticipate that these works employing unique methods to convey the doubt and unease the artist has sensed in society, and offering a place for discussion, will encourage us to confront what it means to live in Japanese society since the Tohoku quake, reawakening our own powers of thought around many related issues.



June 7, 2015 Buddhist temple in Nagareyama, Chiba
photo: MURAKAMI Satoshi

About the artist

MURAKAMI Satoshi

Born 1988 in Tokyo, where he is currently based. Graduated from Musashino Art University, Department of Architecture, in 2011. Focusing on the relationship between public and private, his art practice contemplates the ways in which the lifestyles of individuals impact on wider society. Recent years have seen him participate in number of exhibitions at art festivals and museums around Japan and abroad, including Culture City of East Asia 2018 Kanazawa: “Altering Home” (Ishikawa) and Takamatsu Contemporary Art Annual vol. 08: “Dissect the Society” (Takamatsu Art Museum, Kagawa).

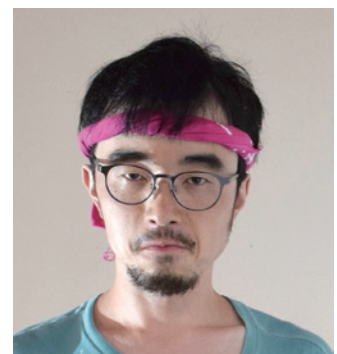


photo: UCHIDA Ryo

**Artist
statement**

When the Tohoku quake struck in March of the year of my graduation, I was with some friends taking possession of the keys for a workspace we had rented in the Hashiba district of Tokyo's Taito Ward. A massive tremor shook the building across the street like jelly, while in the distance, a giant hook dangling from a crane at the site of the Tokyo Skytree, then under construction, began to swing through the air. I remember thinking how dangerously close it seemed to hitting the main body of the Skytree. That night I fled by bicycle to my parents' home in Katsushika Ward, startled to witness as I pedaled water flowing the wrong way up the Sumida River, and hordes of pedestrians crossing the bridge like a migrant caravan. There at home, in the living room with its clean and tidy flooring, my father watched news of the tsunami and nuclear accident. For the next two years I made works at the studio in Hashiba, and organized little art festivals with friends and associates. Life consisted of making art, working part-time, paying the rent. I went about daily life, in order to go about daily life. Only natural I suppose. But at the same time I felt that really, I should be thinking more about the unimagined fragility of the foundations of society on which I stood. And began to wonder if just carrying on as I was, paying rent to live somewhere, as people did, would be sufficient to ensure my survival. It struck me there was something vaguely fraudulent about having such a quotidian existence: in a house with electricity, water and gas, as I produced art. So I embarked on a new initiative, which would start with making my own "way of living." I began by drawing houses around the neighborhood. Snatching time between work and the other stuff of everyday life, I walked around the area, studiously sketching any houses, flats or condominiums that caught my eye, in black pen on white paper. After completing a few dozen of these drawings, I drew a small dwelling for myself. Then I went to a DIY store, purchased some styrofoam panels, and built the tiniest house I could that would still have room for me to sleep, just as I had drawn it. Making the walls and roof from wood and styrofoam, for extra strength I covered it with white packing tape, then painted over the tape in white to smooth it. To finish, I drew on black outlines of the kind I'd been using in all those drawings of houses. In April 2014, I assigned my life the title "Living Migration," leaving the rental in Takamatsu I had been in for less than six months, to take up residence in my styrofoam house, which I carry around on my shoulder, living a migratory life.

**Exhibition
highlights****The largest-ever exhibition of Satoshi Murakami's "Living Migration," documenting the entire project**

"Living Migration" will include all three dwellings built by Murakami to date, journal entries describing the people, scenes and events encountered during his peripatetic wanderings; drawings of the "houses with addresses" of people in each location, photos of land he rented to set up his own styrofoam homes, and a map tracing his entire route to date. A complete document of the project, the exhibition space will allow visitors to truly feel as if they are "living migration" alongside the artist, and experiencing first hand his thoughts and challenges during life on the road.

A project that contemplates the impact of individual lifestyles on society

After witnessing the loss of so many people's homes in the horrific quake and tsunami that hit the Tohoku region in March 2011, and the subsequent decline of communities, Murakami developed an intense interest in what it actually means to own a house, or land. Also questioning the way he and a group of friends were unable to move immediately into the house they had signed a lease for just prior to the disaster, he embarked upon what he refers to as his "Living Migration." The "Living Migration" project explores the everyday activities we pursue in order to accumulate objects, property and so on, and the social conditions and reasons that divide spaces into public and private, and contemplates the ways in which the lifestyles of individuals impact on wider society.

The artist will actually move his registered place of residence to Kanazawa and live as a “migrant”

Satoshi Murakami will “migrate” to Kanazawa in the true sense of the word, registering as a resident from around the end of September when he arrives to prepare for the exhibition, until closing of the exhibition in March. For the duration of the “Living Migration” show he will be in his styrofoam house in the gallery, or the “Advertising Sign House” installed outdoors, interacting with visitors. The artist will also engage actively with local residents, giving talks and running workshops on topics he has engaged with during his migratory existence, such as “food, clothing, shelter,” “community,” and “labor.” These will be held at the Museum, Kanaiwa Studio and other locations, as part of a show in which a museum open to the public, becomes something akin to Murakami’s private space.

“Living Migration” continues with the artist carrying his house on a circuit of the Noto Peninsula, walking from Kanazawa to Suzu

During the exhibition, in mid November to mid December, Murakami will take his styrofoam house on a circuit of the Noto Peninsula, continuing his “Living Migration” project by walking from Kanazawa to Suzu. It will be intriguing to see the people and scenes he encounters along the way, and the new works that emerge from them. The plan is to add these new works to the exhibition, updating the show as they come to hand.



August 30, 2018 Kanazawa, Ishikawa
photo: TAMURA Can

Works in the exhibition [Gallery 13]

Houses

Murakami has already built three houses since launching his “Living Migration” project. The first was used to move around Japan for a year or so from April 2014. Murakami used the second house from May 2015 to September 2018, not only in Japan but also across the sea in Korea, before it reached Kanazawa, where the house was acquired for the Museum’s collection. Having thus forfeited his home, Murakami built a third, which he is currently carrying around. The exhibition brings together all three of these dwellings.



September 21, 2017
The driveway of a farmhouse in Asomura, Kumamoto
photo: MURAKAMI Satoshi

Drawings

Drawings of houses and other buildings made by Murakami during his migrations. Murakami draws the “houses with addresses” lived in by people in each location he visits, to help him maintain, via his own migratory lifestyle, an objective view of the usual, so-called settled way of living itself.



May 23, 2016 Kurashiki, Okayama
photo: MURAKAMI Satoshi

Diaries

Diaries penned alongside the drawings during the artist's life on the road. Entries from several years' worth of carrying his styrofoam house around, meeting people and pondering things in different locations, are displayed with drawings from the same days.

Site photos

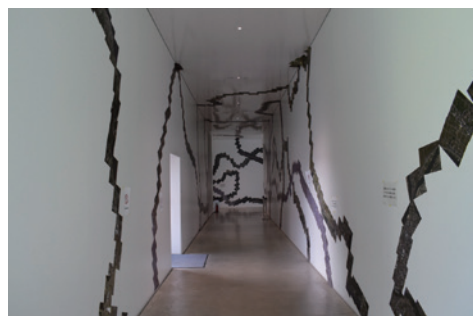
To sleep on the ground requires a plot of ground. Without it, one may be accused of illegal occupation, a criminal offense, by the “landowner,” so it is necessary to rent a site. Negotiating to rent sites in temple and shrine precincts, the yards of private homes, shopping center carparks, art museums, and under the eaves of shops, Murakami is able to sleep there and thus live in his styrofoam house. The photos of sites here show the artist's house on land rented in this manner.



June 24, 2015
Under the eaves of the Yamana guesthouse in Nakosomachi,
Iwaki, Fukushima
photo: MURAKAMI Satoshi

Map of artist's walking route

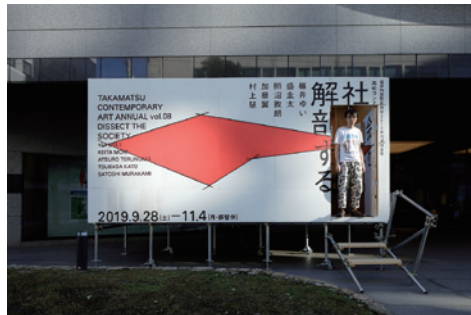
The route taken by Murakami is traced using Google Earth, printed and joined together. The landscapes and seasonal changes shown on Google Earth are close to what Murakami actually experienced during his travels. Tracing this walking route will give viewers a partial glimpse into Murakami's migratory existence.



7,8.
Installation views of the “Living Migration” exhibition (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, 2020)

**Works in the
exhibition
Open Space
(outdoors)**
Advertising Sign House

“Advertising Sign House” has its origins in the “Living Migration” project. The idea stems from Murakami being asked how he makes a living amid his migrations, and from his unease with the movement of money in the form of advertising revenue embedded in the everyday. The exterior serves as a billboard for the exhibition, while inside Murakami has made a private space where he passes the time reading, writing and resting, thus including the structures of revenue and consumption in a single work. The sign is installed in the yard of the Museum, with Murakami spending occasional time in this “Advertising Sign House.”



Advertising Sign House: Takamatsu, 2019 exterior
photo: KIOKU Keizo



Advertising Sign House: Takamatsu, 2019 interior
photo: KIOKU Keizo

**Artist's location
schedule**

During October and early November Murakami will stay in Kanazawa and run talks and workshops. From mid November to mid December he will undertake a “Living Migration” from Kanazawa to the Noto Peninsula.

From December to March he will stay at Kanaiwa Residence and run workshops and talk events.

Related events
Talks

Having been confronted with indispensable elements of life such as food, clothing and shelter; community, and labor during his life on the road, the artist began to question these elements as he went about his daily routine, and will provide a forum at the exhibition for discussing what he has observed.

*Details will be posted on the Museum's website as they become available.

Workshops

During the exhibition Murakami is planning a workshop that will involve gathering fallen leaves within the Museum grounds and using them to make a “hotbed.” Murakami will also be staying in the Kanaiwa area, where he plans to run workshops for local people.

*Details will be posted on the Museum's website as they become available.

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