



## Countermeasures Against Awkward Discourses : From the Perspective of Third Wave Feminism

2021.10.16 (Sat.) -  
2022.3.13 (Sun.)

Exhibition Title	Countermeasures Against Awkward Discourses: From the Perspective of Third Wave Feminism
Period	Saturday, October 16, 2021 – Sunday, March 13, 2021
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays) *Ticket sales end 30 minutes before closing
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Galleries 7 to 10, Public Zone
Closed	Mondays (except November 1 and 22, January 3 and 10), November 24, December 29–January 1, January 4, January 11
Number of exhibiting artists	10 (number of works: 25)
Admission	Adults: ¥1,200 (¥1,000) / Students: ¥800 (¥600) 18 and under: ¥400 (¥300) / 65 and over: ¥1,000 *Fees in parentheses are for groups of 20 or more and web tickets *Tickets for this exhibition include admission to the concurrently held “FEMINISMS” (October 16, 2021 – March 13, 2022). *Tickets also include admission (same day only) to “Collection Exhibition 1: Inner Cosmology” (until November 3) and “Collection Exhibition 2: BLUE” (November 20, 2021 – March 13, 2022).
Timed-entry tickets	Web tickets for specific days/times go on sale at 10:00, September 27, 2021 Web tickets for specific days/times are available on museum website ( <a href="https://www.kanazawa21.jp">https://www.kanazawa21.jp</a> )
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
Guest curator	NAGASHIMA Yurie
In cooperation with	DELTA Electronics, Inc.; Slacktide Co., Ltd.
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**About  
the Exhibition**

In this exhibition our guest curator, the artist NAGASHIMA Yurie, looks at works (including her own) produced by ten artists whose careers began in the 1990s, and offers fresh interpretations of these works from a feminist viewpoint.

Nagashima has been producing photographic work and writing since her own art-scene debut in 1993, all the while harboring doubts about the “onnanoko shashin” (girl photography) label sweepingly applied to her and other female photographers of the same generation. Uneasy with the joking images of feminists propagated by the media in the 1980s, the young Nagashima declined to identify as a feminist herself, yet became a consistent challenger of male-centered values. Nagashima sees this kind of attitude, which had the effect of rendering feminist practice among the younger generation virtually invisible, as one version of Japanese third wave feminism, and asserts that elements of it can also be found in the output of artists who declined to be part of any “movement” or pursuit of “solidarity.” This exhibition showcases works selected following dialogue between Nagashima and the nine other artists, based on this observation.

We hope the diverse offerings in “Countermeasures Against Awkward Discourses,” will give viewers a taste of the great breadth of art practice that can emerge in response to the situations that confront us.

**Guest curator’s  
Statement****To those of you who do not see yourselves as feminists**

In my youth, I never thought of myself as a feminist. The feminists I knew from TV were all academics (smart), or activists (strong), and women much older than me. To my mind there was no way someone of my sort—a dropout from an ostensibly academic high school who had avoided competition by going to art school, and not only lacked the relationship-building confidence required for any kind of fellowship or social movement, but was barely comfortable with the very idea of being female and simply struggling through life—could qualify as a feminist. Nor did I actively desire to become one.

Yet when I finally started making works, invariably those works would reference some sociological issue, and especially, the kind of problems addressed by feminism. Still I failed to declare myself a feminist, or refer to my works as feminist art. In the 1990s there were many artists (across many different genres from the visual arts to music and literature) like me, struggling with life and gambling on self-expression for their survival. Among them were those who proudly called themselves feminists, those who didn’t see themselves that way, and those who declared themselves to be definitely not that way. In short, one could say third-wave feminism demonstrated that feminist praxis is not solely the province of “feminists.”

I contacted nine artists that I, the lackluster feminist, arbitrarily viewed as “on the same side” and brought them together with the aim of reinterpreting their respective art practices from a feminist viewpoint. How does a feminist exhibition come about, what kind of people are feminists, what is the relational nature of solidarity, of bonds between associates? I hope you too will enjoy the tentative response to these questions with no right answers clumsily hammered out in our everyday chats, social media exchanges, late-night phone calls and trifling debates.

Yurie Nagashima

**Features of  
the Exhibition****Artist NAGASHIMA Yurie as guest curator**

Welcoming artist Nagashima Yurie as guest curator, “Countermeasures Against Awkward Discourses” explores the possibilities for new, third-wave feminist interpretations of works (including those of Nagashima) produced by ten contemporary artists with careers beginning from the 1990s onward. Since debuting as a photographer in 1993 while still at university, Nagashima has presented a large number of works on themes that include gender, and her own community. In 2020, she also published the topical “*Bokura*“ no “*onnanoko shashin*” kara *watashi-tachi no gārīfoto e,*” (From “our” (male) *onnanoko shashin* to our (female) girly photos”) (Daifuku Shorin, 2020), which examined a female-centered current in Japanese photography that flourished in the 1990s, from her own standpoint as one of those photographers. In this exhibition, Nagashima adopts the same feminist viewpoint in an attempt to bring new interpretive possibilities to the works of ten contemporary artists, including herself.

**Third-wave feminism and artists**

Spreading from the West to Japan in the 1990s via elements of youth culture such as music and fashion, third-wave feminism offered women new ways to express themselves, and actively encouraged them to raise their voices. On the other hand, Nagashima points out (1), as shown by the mid-'90s categorizing of work by young female photographers as literally “girl photography,” the reality was that the male-dominated discourse of influential polemicists erased this, trivializing women’s expression by turning it into something designed for their own pleasure. So what, in the form of works, did women artists of this era who though loathe to openly identify as “feminists,” felt uncomfortable with the position of women in society, do to counter this state of affairs? And do the works of male artists, who have never had cause to ask themselves whether or not they are feminists, have any connection with feminism to begin with? If they do, how could one describe the kind of relationships they have constructed? Nagashima reads into these works artists’ intentions never before vocalized with any force.

(1) Nagashima Yurie, “*Bokura*“ no “*onnanoko shashin*” kara *watashi-tachi no gārīfoto e,*” Daifuku Shorin, 2020)

**A feminist decoding of the diverse backgrounds to the works**

“Countermeasures Against Awkward Discourses” consists of works by ten contemporary artists whose careers began in the 1990s or later, using a range of media for expression from photography to sculpture, video, installation and more. As guest curator Nagashima invited artists who have produced work that could be interpreted as having an affinity with feminism, regardless of whether the artist personally identifies as a feminist, or whether their work is overtly feminist in nature. The group of works selected following in-depth conversations between Nagashima and each artist have as their background not only gender, but an array of complex, diverse elements intimately connected to concepts of feminism, such as family, identity, ethnicity, social norms, traditional values, and customs. The exhibition looks at each of these works from a feminist viewpoint, and considers the kinds of universe that come to light within them.

## Guest curator

**NAGASHIMA Yurie**

Born 1973 in Tokyo. Nagashima made her art-scene debut at an open exhibition while still a student at Musashino Art University, earned her MFA at California Institute of the Arts, then in 2011, embarked on postgraduate studies in humanities at Musashino University, where she delved into the subject of feminism. Her photobook *Pastime Paradise* won her the 26th Kimura Ihei Photography Award in 2001, her short story collection *Senaka no Kioku* the 26th Kodansha Essay Award and nomination for the 23rd Mishima Yukio Prize in 2010, and multiple contributions to the field of photography the 36th Higashikawa Awards, Domestic Photographer Award in 2020. In parallel with her artistic practice, she contributes as a writer to literary magazines and newspapers, and teachers at university. Published in 2020 are “*Bokura*” no “*onnanoko shashin*” *kara watashi-tachi no gārīfoto e*” (From “our” (male) *onnanoko shashin* to our (female) girly photos), and the photobook *Self-Portraits*.

## Exhibiting artists

(in Japanese phonetic order)

IWANE Ai	NAGASHIMA Yurie
KIMURA Yuki	HAN Ishu
KOBAYASHI Kohei	FUJIOKA Aya
SATO Risa	MIYAGI Futoshi
Miyo STEVENS-GANDARA	WATANABE Go

About  
the artists**IWANE Ai**

Born 1975 in Tokyo. Iwane set off solo in 1991 for the US where she led an off-the-grid, self-sustaining life while studying at Petrolia High School. After returning to Japan, she launched her career as a photographer in 1996. Exploring immigrant ties between Hawaii and Fukushima, her debut photocollection, *KIPUKA* (2018, Seigensha), won her both the 44th Kimura Ihei Photography Award and the 44th Ina Nobuo Award in 2019. Most recent photocollection: *A NEW RIVER* (2020, bookshop M).

Here Iwane exhibits *My Cherry*, a slide-show work about her sister who died young; plus *The Ark*, photos from an ongoing series shot by the artist in the US following her move there at a young age. The world that this artist—who has encountered and been accepted at various times during her life by the “family” we cannot choose for ourselves—has accepted by photographing it, is thrown into relief here.



IWANE Ai, *My Cherry*, 2000  
Collection of the artist  
©Ai Iwane

### KIMURA Yuki

Born 1971 in Kyoto. Kimura earned her MFA at Kyoto City University of Arts in 1996, and is currently based in Kyoto and Berlin. She presents works in installation format on themes including philosophical ideas surrounding images and objects, spacetime, and dimensions. Major group shows including: Artists Space (New York (2019), "New Photography 2015," Museum of Modern Art (New York, 2015), the 30th São Paulo Biennial (2012), and 6th Istanbul Biennial (1999). Among her solo shows are "Inhuman Transformation of New Year's Decoration, Obsolete Conception or 2," CCA Wattis Institute (San Francisco, 2016) and "Untitled," IZU PHOTO MUSEUM (Shizuoka, 2010).

Her *Hides for Existence*, which features parts of her body photographed as self-portraits cut out in various shapes that allude symbolically to sex, could be said to ironically interrogate the commodification and consumption of women as sex objects at an increasingly young age at the time she made it, in 1993. The original set of five has been lost, so the work presented here is a reproduction made for the exhibition.



KIMURA Yuki, *Hides for Existence*, 1993/2021  
Collection of the artist  
©Yuki Kimura, Courtesy of Taka Ishi Gallery

### KOBAYASHI Kohei

Born 1974 in Tokyo. Kobayashi earned his BFA in oil painting at Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music in 1999, and is currently based in Saitama Prefecture. He "interprets" texts he commissions from third parties written as-they-like, crafts "objects" put together by modifying commercial items, and makes videos explaining "how to view" them. In these videos the artist lectures the viewer on how to look at the "object," except that the "teach/be taught" relationship is reversed, resulting in the generation of the "existence" of a new thing.

In *M-U-R-D-E-R-W-E-A-P-O-N*, based on a text by scholar of aesthetics ITO Asa that starts with the premise of "dispersing with the concepts of left and right supported by the body" a new kind of "weapon" emerges from a fumbling conversation. The work draws our attention the fact that all value criteria are arbitrary, and can be dismantled/overtaken in thought.



KOBAYASHI Kohei, *M-U-R-D-E-R-W-E-A-P-O-N*, 2012  
Collection of the artist  
©Kohei Kobayashi, Courtesy of ANOMALY

### SATO Risa

Born 1972 in Tokyo. Sato earned her MFA in design at Tokyo University of the Arts in 1999, and is currently based in Kanagawa Prefecture. She installs, mainly in public spaces, sculptural works made from soft forms and materials, occasionally becoming part of the work herself and generating bodily communication. Major group shows include Yokohama Triennale 2020 "Afterglow," Srishti Interim 2019, Festival of Ideas (Bangalore), and "Port Journey: Yokohama-Melbourne," Zou-No-Hana Terrace (Yokohama, 2013). She was the grand prize recipient of the Philip Morris Art Award 2000 and URBANART #7 in 1998.



SATO Risa, *Mmes. K*, 2011  
Collection of the artist  
©Risa Sato

Koganecho in Yokohama, close to where Sato is based, was once an *aosen* (Blue Line) entertainment district, and *Mmes. K* symbolizes the women who made their living as prostitutes there. This massive soft sculpture made by Sato entirely with her own hands, born out of frank engagement with "being alone," will bring its solitary yet forceful presence to the Public Zone.

### Miyo STEVENS-GANDARA

Born 1973. Received her BFA from California College of the Arts, and MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Based in Los Angeles, Stevens-Gandara works in a variety of media including photography, drawing, embroidery, and printmaking in art practice that explores issues of ancestry, migration, feminism, cultural identity, and environmental degradation.

In this exhibition Stevens-Gandara presents work associated with her own roots as a fourth-generation Japanese, and her determination to etch on the works memories of the lives of Japanese immigrants; lives lived amid a multiplicity of oppression, is evident in the print and embroidery works based on photographs closely connected to her family history.



Miyo STEVENS-GANDARA, *GAMAN*, 2018  
Collection of the artist  
©Miyo Stevens-Gandara

### NAGASHIMA Yurie

Born 1973 in Tokyo. Nagashima made her art-scene debut at an open exhibition while still a student at Musashino Art University, earned her MFA at California Institute of the Arts, then in 2011, embarked on postgraduate studies in humanities at Musashino University, where she delved into the subject of feminism. Her photobook *Pastime Paradise* won her the 26th Kimura Ihei Photography Award in 2001, her short story collection *Senaka no Kioku* the 26th Kodansha Essay Award and nomination for the 23rd Mishima Yukio Prize in 2010,

and multiple contributions to the field of photography the 36th Higashikawa Awards, Domestic Photographer Award in 2020. In parallel with her artistic practice, she contributes as a writer to literary magazines and newspapers, and teachers at university. Published in 2020 are "*Bokura "no "onnanoko shashin" kara watashi-tachi no gārīfoto e*" (From "our" (male) *onnanoko shashin* to our (female) girly photos), and the photobook *Self-Portraits*.

*Self-Portrait* presented in this exhibition is the work that marked Nagashima's debut in 1993. Consisting of a series of photographs featuring everyday scenes in her family home, recreated with all family members naked, it was made as a means of opposing the contemporary trend for "hair nude" photographs showing pubic hair.



NAGASHIMA Yurie,  
*Self-Portrait (Brother #32A)* From the series *Self-Portrait*, 1993  
Collection of the artist  
©Yurie Nagashima

### HAN Ishu

Born 1987 in Shanghai. Han earned his MFA in Intermedia Art in 2012 at Tokyo University of the Arts. His practice utilizes various media to explore aspects of sameness and otherness mediated by communities and individuals. Major group shows include "Sights and Sounds: Highlights," The Jewish Museum (New York, 2016), "Apple Cycle/Cosmic Seed," Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art (Aomori, 2021) and MOT Annual 2021: "A sea, a living room, and a skull," Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. He was the grand prix winner of the Nissan Art Award 2020 competition.

*Untitled* is a self-portrait inspired by the customs that once existed in the Chinese village where Han's grandmother was born and raised. Recreating using his nude self the custom of hiding a bride's face, Han vividly throws into disarray the gender imbalance that lies in the act of "concealing."



HAN Ishu, *Untitled*, 2006  
Collection of the artist  
©Ishu Han, Courtesy of ANOMALY

### FUJIOKA Aya

Born 1972 in Hiroshima Prefecture. Fujioka graduated in photography from Nihon University College of Art in 1994. In 2008, she traveled to New York for studies supported by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Returning to Japan in 2012, she is now based in Hiroshima. Her *Here Goes River* series, capturing present-day Hiroshima more than 70 years after the war, won her the Ina Nobuo Award in 2017, and the Kimura Ihei Photography Award and Tadahiko Hayashi Award in 2018. Major solo exhibitions include “I don’t sleep,” Akaaka (Tokyo, 2009); “Here Goes River,” Nikon Salon (Tokyo, 2016), and “flowers of destiny,” Fugensha (Tokyo, 2021).

This exhibition presents the portraits of a woman Fujioka has now been photographing for over twenty years, and her series on the “castle” visible from everywhere in her hometown. Refusing to become fixed images, her subjects are captured from multiple angles and distances, as riddles that appear repeatedly with different looks.



FUJIOKA Aya, *I don't sleep*, 2009  
Collection of the artist  
©Aya Fujioka

### MIYAGI Futoshi

Born 1981 in Okinawa. Miyagi earned his BA in art from the City College of New York in 2006, and is currently based in Tokyo, where he presents works in a variety of formats including video, objects, photographs and text, on themes such as nationality, race, and identity. Recent exhibitions include: “Where We Now Stand—In Order to Map the Future” 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Ishikawa, 2020) and “Assemblebridge Nagoya” Nagoya Port Area (Aichi, 2020). He published his first novel, *Distant* (Kawade- Shobo Shinsha) in 2019.

*1970 and Other Works* is an installation taking as its motif the occupation of the Tokyo Tower in 1970 before Okinawa was returned to Japan, the power relationships gendered in the repressive structures of each place—US and Japan, US and Okinawa, Okinawa and Tokyo—elucidated through Miyagi’s personal story.



MIYAGI Futoshi, *1970 and Other Works*, 2007-2016  
Private Collection  
photo: TAKAHASHI Kenji

**WATANABE Go**

Born 1975 in Hyogo Prefecture.

Watanabe earned his MFA in oil painting at Aichi University of the Arts in 2002. He uses 3DCG to make animations that exhibit movements and changes that defy the laws of light and matter. The inconsistent state of things and behavior of light brought by his works disturb the world we take for granted, and quietly ask exactly what it is we are seeing. Major group exhibitions include Aichi

Triennale 2013 (Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art) and “Logical Emotion: Contemporary Art from Japan” touring Switzerland, Poland and Germany (2014–15).

In *jumbled mountain* the motif is a “mountain” of freshly laundered clothing belonging to the artist and his family. This object symbolizing roles in the artist’s household possesses a distinctive presence amid the light of one day when the order of the clothing was randomly switched around.



WATANABE Go, *jumbled mountain*, 2016  
Collection of the artist  
©Go Watanabe, Courtesy of ANOMALY

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**Related event**

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