

# 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

2022.11.22



## Collection Exhibition 2 Sea Lane – Connecting to the Islands

2022.11.3(Thu) -  
2023.3.19(Sun)

Exhibition Title	Collection Exhibition 2 Sea Lane – Connecting to the Islands
Period	November 3 (Thu), 2022 – March 19 (Sun), 2023
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, Gallery 1 to 4 and 13
Closed	Mondays (except January 2 and 9), December 29 to January 1, January 4 and 10
Admission	Adults: ¥450 (¥360) / Students: ¥310 (¥240) / 18 and under: Free / 65 and over: ¥360 *Fees in parentheses are for groups of 20 or more *Admission free for Kanazawa Citizens on Promote the Arts Day (second Saturday of each month). Proof of residency required.
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
With a grant from	Agency for Cultural Affairs' "ARTS for the Future! 2" Program
In Cooperation with	I-O DATA DEVICE, INC. / MAGPAINT JAPAN Co., Ltd.
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**About  
the Exhibition**

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion from the U.S. to Japan, it is with great pleasure that we present Sea Lane - Connecting to the Islands, an exhibition focusing on the characteristically insular nature of the Okinawa region in which we examine contemporary art of the Ryukyu Islands as well as the works of artists from Southeast Asia and Oceania – areas that have historically interacted with Okinawa via the sea. Since ancient times, the sea has been a “wall” that separated one island and the next while also being a “road” between them. At one time, the Ryukyu Kingdom engaged in trade with regions such as present-day Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, making it a waypoint for the flow of civilization and a meeting place for a variety of people and goods. In tracing the marine history of Okinawa and surrounding countries, we find that the islands engaged in abundant exchanges with these regions while on occasion coming up against harsh conditions. The more people moved around, the more apparent the linguistic, ethnic, ancestral, cultural, sexual, and philosophical differences between them became. Under these circumstances, artists took a hard look at the realities they saw and responded accordingly.

In this exhibition, we present works by seven artists from the museum collection and three others who were invited to participate in this project. These contemporary expressions are rooted both in the unique culture of Okinawa, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, and the irrefutable history of the region. Moreover, the works urge us to consider the diversity that has emerged from the islands, the influence of other regions based on the historical context of the sea, and the relationship between the islands, separated as they are by water, and the people who inhabit them.

**Exhibiting artists  
(in alphabetical order)**

Isabel and Alfredo AQUILIZAN, Charles LIM YI YONG, MIYAGI Futoshi, SAKATA Kiyoko, TERUYA Yuken, URA Kyoko, WATSON Judy, YANASE Anri, YEE I-Lann, and Zai Kuning

**Features of  
the Exhibition**

**This exhibition focusing on relationships between Okinawa and places with which it has maritime connections opens in 2022, the 50th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan.**

Okinawa has a long history of trading actively with other parts of Asia, especially Southeast Asia, via the sea, and has flourished as a place where a variety of people and goods come and go. The Okinawan islands also share notable characteristics with the rest of Oceania, where lands and cultures are connected by sea. Sea Lane - Connecting to the Islands explores relationships between Okinawa and its neighbors by showcasing contemporary art emerging from the distinctive cultures of Okinawa, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, and from their histories which must never be forgotten.

**In addition to works from the museum's collection, Charles LIM YI YONG, SAKATA Kiyoko, and URA Kyoko are featured as specially invited artists.**

Charles LIM YI YONG, who was born in Singapore and continues to live and work there, is a former Olympic sailor who now reflects on his country's past in the context of his wealth of knowledge and experience of the marine environment. He exhibits works conveying multiple perspectives on Singapore's society, political situation, biosphere, and environment from multiple perspectives through the lens of the sea.

SAKATA Kiyoko, originally from Niigata Prefecture, moved to Okinawa to attend university

and continues to live and work there. As a non-Okinawan Japanese national who has relocated to Okinawa, she has been questioning her own identity and the significance of creating works in, and disseminating them from, her adopted home prefecture as she pursues her ongoing installation practice. URA Kyoko, born in Naha, Okinawa and a graduate of Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, will exhibit her dyed and woven kimonos and two-dimensional works depicting Okinawan scenes. Charles LIM YI YONG and SAKATA Kiyoko have already participated in an international symposium held by the museum.

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**Works by 10 artists based in Okinawa and in Southeast Asia and Oceania, which are linked to Okinawa by sea, examine relationships forged among islands and their residents.**

Through the works of contemporary artists based in Okinawa and on islands linked to it via the sea, *Sea Lane-Connecting to the Islands* sheds light on diversity that has been fostered on islands and the influence of other regions in historical context, and examines how relationships among different islands and their inhabitants have developed. Ten artists with varying nationalities and bases of activity, including Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia as well as Okinawa, present works of contemporary art relating to islands in this exhibition.

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**Specially Invited  
Artist Profiles**

**LIM YI YONG Charles**

Charles LIM YI YONG was born in 1973 in Singapore, where he lives and works. An athlete who has competed in sailing events including the Olympics, LIM YI YONG has a wealth of knowledge and experience of the sea and marine environment. Based on these, in 2005 he began exhibiting works from the series SEASTATE, an examination of Singapore's society, political situation, biosphere, and environment from multiple perspectives through the lens of the sea. An ongoing project, SEA STATE has been featured in many international exhibitions, culminating in a comprehensive presentation in the Singapore Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.



Photo by Toni Cuhadi.  
courtesy of STPI – Creative Workshop &  
Gallery, Singapore

**SAKATA Kiyoko**

SAKATA Kiyoko was born in Niigata in 1972, and lives and works in Okinawa. She is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Crafts at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts. Sakata has presented installations that question the nature of the everyday, with materials including furniture, daily items, and natural objects, and a unifying theme of “a collective of those whose positions are uncertain.”

Recent major exhibitions include *Sugar and Salt*, SoolSool Center, Seoul, South Korea (2021); *Oscillating Vessels*, Hotel Anteroom Naha (Gallery 9.5 Naha), Okinawa (2020); and *Present Passing: South by Southeast*, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong (2019).



## URA Kyoko

URA Kyoko was born in 1975 in Okinawa, where she lives and works. She is a professor at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts. While incorporating traditional Okinawan dyeing techniques, she pursues new approaches to the *bingata* (lit. “red pattern”) stenciled dyeing technique with their own unique perspective and methods, and is working to connect the traditional and the contemporary. Recent major exhibitions include *After the Reversion*, Sakima Art Museum, Okinawa (2022); *The Future Shape of Textiles in Takarazuka 2021*, Takarazuka Arts Center, Hyogo (2021), and *The Allure of Line: Katazome Stencil Dyeing*, Somé Seiryukan, Kyoto (2021).



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## Exhibition Layout

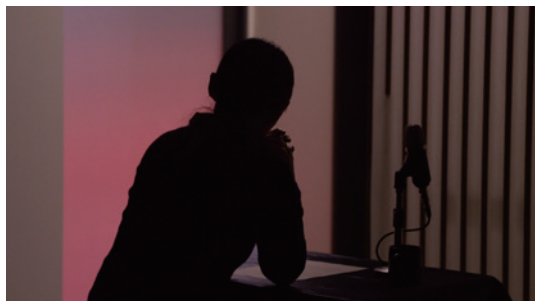
### Separation and Connection

Gallery 1

While some aspects of culture and history have been preserved because they are separated by the sea, these separations can also result in things becoming distant objects of longing. Based on his personal experiences and memories, MIYAGI Futoshi has been focusing on the themes of Okinawa and sexual minorities, and exploring the possibilities of love between Okinawan men and American men. The works presented here are centered around a romance by a female author, in which women who have experienced separation from their loved ones due to war each document their circumstances and thoughts in their diaries. Drawing on people’s life stories of simultaneously seeking freedom and experiencing adversity while transcending racial and cultural differences, this is a beautiful and lyrical tale in which each nationality and identity intersect and connect to a larger narrative. MIYAGI illuminates “separations” and “relations” that exist in society today, such as those based on nationality, race, language, age, sexuality, and community.

#### 【Major Exhibit】

MIYAGI Futoshi, *How Many Nights*, 2017



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MIYAGI Futoshi, *How Many Nights*, 2017

## The Quest for Abundance

Okinawa has been the source of many migrant workers since around the time of World War II. On departure, these migrant workers received a grand send-off from relatives and villagers, who would tell them “*Mokiti kuu yo---*!” (Okinawan dialect for “Go and make some money!”) In the area around the apartment in New York where artist TERUYA Yuken formerly lived, immigrants from various countries had formed their own tight-knit communities. His work *Earn lots of money. No need to write any letters, just send home the money first 2008* features a video in which handmade paper boats flying small national flags, floating in water pouring out of a street-side fire hydrant, evoke images of people who set out for a new land, the United States of America, in search of prosperity. With not only journeys to other nations but also minor movements between communities becoming more frequent, ever-accelerating global migration is even more complex and fluid today than it was when the work was first exhibited in the early years of this century.

### 【Major Exhibit】

TERUYA Yuken, *Earn lots of money. No need to write any letters, just send home the money first 2008*, 2008

Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

photo: KIOKU Keizo



TERUYA Yuken,  
*Earn lots of money. No need to write any letters,  
just send home the money first 2008*, 2008  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of  
Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
photo: KIOKU Keizo

## Ethnicity and Land History

Despite having their own abundant nature and complex cultures, many islands in the Asia-Pacific region have a history of forcible colonization by great powers and imperialist nations. WATSON Judy is a descendant of the indigenous Waanyi people of northern Australia and has been profoundly influenced by the history of her ancestors, who were displaced and had their culture destroyed. YEE I-Lann's mother is from New Zealand and her father is Sino-Kadazan (part Chinese and part indigenous people of Sabah, Malaysia), and while delving into her own ethnic roots, she evokes the rich and diverse history of Southeast Asia for the viewer. Born and raised in Okinawa, TERUYA Yuken and URA Kyoko use traditional dyeing techniques dating back to the Ryukyu Kingdom era (1429-1879) to reflect on the future of Okinawa while drawing on their own Okinawan identity.

### 【Major Exhibit】

WATSON Judy, *great artesian basin springs, the gulf (jiwil, wanami)*, 2019

YEE I-Lann, *The Orang Besar Series – Empires of Privateers and Their Glorious Ventures*, 2010

URA Kyoko, *The Sea*, 2018

TERUYA Yuken, *Parade from far far away*, 2015



WATSON Judy,  
*great artesian basin springs, the gulf*  
*(jiwil, wanami)*, 2019



YEE I-Lann, *The Orang Besar Series –*  
*Empires of Privateers and Their Glorious Ventures*,  
2010



URA Kyoko, *The Sea*, 2018



TERUYA Yuken,  
*Parade from far far away*, 2015  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
Photo: KIOKU Keizo



Gallery 3

### Roots and Routes

In light of his own seafaring lifestyle since childhood, Zai Kuning takes a strong interest in the past and present lives of seafaring peoples. History and narratives related to his own roots and routes (origins and destinations) are themes which he continues to explore, and in the context of present-day society in which migration has become the norm, these are indispensable points to address when discussing the process of modernization in Asia, as it overlaps significantly with issues relating to unique cultures and identities that are vanishing due to globalization. Singapore is known today as a highly urbanized nation, but its territory is made up of more than 60 islands, and languages spoken include Malay, Tamil, Chinese, Cantonese, and English, contributing to the maintenance of its cultural diversity as a place where various ethnic groups intermingle. However, its history has been neglected amid rapid modernization, and there seem to be few if any remnants of the past or collective memories, including of how the country was formed. ZAI shines a light into the shared darkness of humanity as well as on lost cultures and identities, and deals introspectively with universal human themes such as slaughter and death.



Zai Kuning,  
*Rocking the boat in the dead of the night*, 2015  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
Photo: KIOKU Keizo

**[Major Exhibit]** Zai Kuning, *Rocking the boat in the dead of the night*, 2015

Corridor Connecting Galleries 3 and 4

### Interested and Non-interested Parties / Assailants and Non-Assailants

Underlying any examination of the issue of US bases in Okinawa, there are always relationships between related and unrelated parties and between perpetrators and non-perpetrators. In YANASE Anri's video piece *Kein Licht. (No Light) - From the place where I am standing now*, YANASE herself recites from *Kein Licht (No Light)*, a play written by Elfriede Jelinek (b. 1946 in Austria) in the wake of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami and subsequent nuclear accident, while walking in front of the gate for a helipad construction site in Takae, Okinawa. To verify the identity of the "we" appearing in the text, Yanase superimposed relationships between related and unrelated parties, perpetrators and non-perpetrators, which were questioned after the 2011 earthquake, with the Okinawa base issue, and chose Takae as a place to grapple with realities that cannot be ignored. In Okinawa, where events are unfolding in real time, the text connects vividly to things occurring on the ground, extending the theme of the play set in Fukushima to Okinawa. YANASE's work does not stop at the issues of Fukushima and Okinawa, but inquires into events happening everywhere in the world today.



YANASE Anri,  
*Kein Licht. (No Light) - From the place where I am standing now*,  
2016-2017

**[Major Exhibit]**

YANASE Anri, *Kein Licht. (No Light)*  
- *From the place where I am standing now*,  
2016-2017

## Mobility and Community

Alfredo & Isabel AQUILIZAN launched a project on the theme of “home” after they moved from their home city of Manila to Brisbane in 2006. *Passage: Another Country* symbolically represents the lives of people whose houses were submerged on the bottom of a dammed lake, reflecting present-day society’s prioritization of economic efficiency. Their work looks critically at how capitalism’s pursuit of growth, often framed as development and progress, has impacted cultures, customs, and values.

SAKATA Kiyoko was born in Niigata and moved to Okinawa to attend university. Her works, which combine various everyday materials, natural objects, and photographic images, take as their starting point the conflict she feels while traveling back and forth between Japan and Okinawa, as well as realities she experiences in day-to-day life. In her new work incorporating seashells and feathers of migratory birds, the artist reflects on the difficulty of entering a community from outside and the necessity of community for survival, informed by her own relocation to the island of Okinawa.

### 【Major Exhibit】

Isabel and Alfredo AQUILIZAN, *Passage: Project Another Country*, 2014

SAKATA Kiyoko, *Hair Brush No.11*, 2017



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Isabel and Alfredo AQUILIZAN,  
*Passage: Project Another Country*,  
2014



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SAKATA Kiyoko, *Hair Brush No.11*, 2017



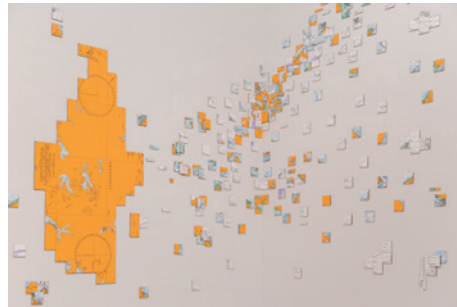
## Insularity and the State

An athlete who has competed in sailing events including the Olympics, Charles LIM YI YONG has a wealth of knowledge and experience of the sea and marine environment. Based on these, in 2005 he began exhibiting works from the series SEA STATE, an examination of Singapore's society, political situation, biosphere, and environment from multiple perspectives through the lens of the sea. Singapore is a country at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula consisting of the island of Singapore and more than 60 smaller islands, and since its founding in 1965 it has expanded its land area by more than 50 square miles. Small islands have become an object of the city-state's reclamation projects, and much has been sacrificed for Singapore's increasing wealth and might, including its unique natural environment, culture, and history. LIM poignantly critiques these realities of his homeland in sophisticated video works and installations.

### 【Major Exhibit】

Charles LIM YI YONG

*SEASTATE 8: the grid, whatever wherever whenever*, 2014-2021



Charles LIM YI YONG  
*SEASTATE 8: the grid, whatever wherever whenever*, 2014-2021  
Produced at STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery, Singapore  
© Charles Lim / STPI Image courtesy of the Artist and STPI



Charles LIM YI YONG  
*SEASTATE 7: sandwich*, 2015  
© Charles Lim  
Image courtesy of the Artist and STPI

## Related Programs

### Lecture & Talk (**\*cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances**)

#### Charles LIM YI YONG

Date: Fri., Nov. 4, 2022, 18:30-20:00

Venues: Lecture Hall and Gallery 13

Capacity: App. 40 (by order in which applications are received / fill out application form online)

Participation fee: Free

Simultaneous interpretation provided

### Forum R: Talking About the Future

**Vol.2: TAKAHASHI Soyo** (Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Ryukyuan and Asian Studies, University of the Ryukyus)

**“On Living Things: Perspectives on the Biocultural Diversity of the Ryukyus”**

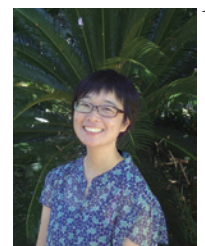
Date: Sat., Dec. 10, 2022, 14:00-16:00 (doors open at 13:45)

Venue: Lecture Hall

Capacity: 80 (by order in which applications are received, application forms accepted starting at 10:00 on Thu., Nov. 10).

Participation fee: Free

Interviewer: NONAKA Yumiko (Assistant Curator, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)



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## International Symposium

### “The Current State of Contemporary Art in Okinawa and Southeast Asia”

This symposium, consisting of two parts, featured two of the artists in the exhibition, Charles LIM YI YONG and SAKATA Kiyoko.

#### Keynote Address: “Vanishing Islands”

Charles LIM YI YONG (Artist / Singapore)

This keynote address introduced the complex and little-known history of Singapore, which is both the point of departure and the theme of the artist’s work, and clarified his understanding of the issues involved.



#### Discussion: “The Works of SAKATA Kiyoko:

##### Creating and Disseminating Art from Okinawa”

SAKATA Kiyoko (Artist; Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts Associate Professor / Japan)

KIM Hyeshin (Historian of modern and contemporary Asian art; professor at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts / South Korea)

In a conversation with KIM Hyeshin, a historian of modern and contemporary Asian art, SAKATA Kiyoko, an artist from Niigata Prefecture, explored her reasons for continuing to create and exhibit her work in Okinawa, where she originally moved to attend the Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, and the significance of voluntary relocations like her own.




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### Free days for Kanazawa citizens

#### Promote the Arts Day

2nd Saturday of each month during the exhibition period  
(Nov. 12, Dec. 10, Jan. 14, Feb. 11, and March 11)

\*Admission on the above days is free for Kanazawa citizens. (Proof of residency required.)

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### Images for Publicity

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Please send a publication (paper), URL, DVD or CD to the museum for our archives, afterwards.