



20 contemporary artists from Japan

rapo

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藏书章

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Foreword

In commemoration of the 2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange, The Japan Foundation is honored to present "Rapt! 20 contemporary artists from Japan," a project organized with the cooperation of various art facilities throughout Australia.

The project is designed to examine a number of approaches to a variety of features of Japanese contemporary culture, with an emphasis on how these are presented in art. To explore this objective, the project is structured around four basic components: 1. Curatorial Exchange; 2. Thinking; 3. Artist-in-Residence; and 4. Exhibition. In other words, rather than merely presenting art as one aspect of contemporary Japan through an exhibition, we hope to place a special emphasis on the process that leads up to the exhibition. To do this, we first enlisted the help of researchers in sociology and architecture for a preliminary seminar in Tokyo to facilitate discussion with the general public on various facets of contemporary Japan. In addition, we invited curators from Australia to undertake contemporary art surveys in cities throughout Japan. Based on these surveys and related discussions, we decided on a group of exhibiting artists, who then took part in artist-in-residence programs in cities throughout Australia. While collating the results of these programs, we arrived at a complex plan to stage exhibitions (along with workshops and site-specific works) at approximately ten sites in and around Melbourne. Moreover, this catalogue focuses on the formative process involved in realizing the project. Often referred to as the Information Age, at present, an unspecified number of people are making connections throughout the world via the Internet and mobile phones. At the same time, the emotional life of the individual seems to now hinge on immersion in a "world" of one, devoid of links to family, society and the community. Though there is a tendency to view this situation in a negative light, when artists immerse themselves in something as part of the creative process, they enter a similar state of mind. This allows them to access an imaginative realm that is divorced from existing value systems. Conversely, we tend to see this type of immersion as something positive. "Rapt" is a word that expresses this ambiguity; and by focusing on the possibilities this ambiguity holds, we have selected it as the title of this project. We are looking forward to the discoveries visitors to the exhibition will make, and how existing notions regarding Japan will be betrayed — in the best sense of the word. An ambiguous relationship involves valuing each other's viewpoints while remaining open to outside influences. It is our sincere hope that in the future the relationship between Australia and Japan, as fellow residents of the Asia-Pacific Region and moreover, the world, will be one of this type. As the organizers of this project, it would give us no greater pleasure than to find that through the process of realizing "Rapt!," a stronger relationship is created between the two countries. Finally, we would like to express our sincerest appreciation to the three Japanese curators, the many individuals working in the Australian art world, and the participating artists for their great efforts in assisting us with this collaborative project. In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to the museums and collectors who kindly allowed us to borrow invaluable works from their collections, all of those who were involved in organizing the surveys and public seminars, and the numerous others who helped us realize this project.

September 2006

The Japan Foundation

国際交流基金は、2006年日豪交流年を記念して、オーストラリア各地の美術機関の協力を得て、美術プロジェクト「Rapt! 20 contemporary artists from Japan」を開催いたします。

本プロジェクトの目的は、「現代の日本文化の特徴をどのように捉え、美術を通じてどのように呈示するか」です。その目的を追究するためにプロジェクトは、1. Curatorial Exchange、2. Thinking、3. Artist-in-Residence、4. Exhibitionという4つの要素で構成されています。すなわち単に展覧会として現代日本の一断面を呈示するのではなく、展覧会に至るプロセスそのものを重要視しています。そのため、社会学や建築学の研究者の協力を得て、東京において事前に公開セミナーを開催し、聴衆と共に現代日本を多角的に考察する場を設けました。また、オーストラリアからキュレーターを迎えて、日本各都市への現代美術調査を共に行いました。さらに調査と議論の結果を踏まえて出品作家を決め、オーストラリア各都市においてアーティスト・イン・レジデンスを行い、その成果を集合しつつ、ワークショップやサイト・スペシフィックな作品も含めて主にメルボルン市内の10数カ所において展覧会を行うという複合的な事業内容となりました。加えて本カタログは、これまでのプロセスを反映した構成となっています。

情報化時代と言われる現代において、人びとはインターネットや携帯電話によって不特定多数の人びとと繋がり世界に向かって開かれていていると感じる反面、個々人の精神生活は、家族、社会、公共性とは関係なく自分だけの「セカイ」に没入しているという側面もあります。否定的に捉えられがちなこの状況は、しかし、アーティストが作品を制作する場合には、何かに没入して既存の価値観とは異なる想像力の飛躍を可能にする精神状態にも似ており、我々はこれを肯定的に捉えることもできます。その両義性が「Rapt! (没入)」であり、その両義的な関係の可能性に注目し、本プロジェクトのタイトルとしました。「Rapt!」をご覧いただく方々がどのような「日本」を発見されるのか、また今回のプロジェクトが既存の日本観をよい意味でどのように裏切っていくことができるのか、いまから大変楽しみにしています。

お互いの関係を深めつつも外に向かって開かれているという両義的な関係性。日本とオーストラリアの関係は、アジア太平洋地域の一員として、また世界の一員として、未来に向かってそのような関係であってほしいという期待も、ここには込められています。今回の「Rapt!」がそのプロセスを通じて、これからの日豪関係に寄与することができれば、主催者としてこの上ない喜びに存じます。

最後になりましたが、本プロジェクトの開催にあたり、協働作業に熱心に取り組んでこられた3人の日本人キュレーターとオーストラリアの美術関係者の皆様、ならびにご参加いただきましたアーティストの方々に、まずお礼を申し上げたいと思います。また、貴重な作品をご出品いただきました美術館や所蔵者の方々、調査や公開セミナーでお世話になりました皆様をはじめ、本プロジェクト実現のために、ご支援、ご協力を賜りました多くの関係者の方々に対しまして、心から感謝申し上げます。

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“Rapt!” as a Passage

HIRAYOSHI YUKIHIRO

I “International Exchange” and “Introduction of Cultures”

On the occasion of the First Open Seminar of “Rapt!” one of the panelists, Mr. Miura Atsushi spoke on the characteristics of contemporary Japanese culture in cities, dividing them into two large categories, “package” and “passage.” A package refers to something like a typical huge shopping mall in the suburbs, designed as an enormous apparatus of desire, where a variety of products and services are gathered and efficiently arranged under a thorough marketing plan, inciting and inflating consumer desire. On the other hand, a passage is a system in which various apparatuses share the same time-space but are generated, multiplied or dissolved individually in a random manner. People are able to make their own choices from the apparatuses that are loosely structured together, and create networks in their own fashion. (For details, refer to the record of the seminar, pp.58-69.)

¶ What we tried to achieve through this project entitled “Rapt!” was to construct the overall project as a sort of passage. This was a large experiment in itself, for the project started as an “international exchange exhibition,” which has functioned as a package to this day.

¶ “Rapt! 20 contemporary artists from Japan” is a project organized by The Japan Foundation in commemoration of the 2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange. The project is part of a series of events that introduces the cultures of Australia and Japan to audiences in both countries, with hopes to promote further cultural exchange. Here we have “international exchange” and “introduction of cultures.” The project, systemized under these two terms, is based on a process in which a hosting organization makes choices from the range of phenomena that define the society of its country, creates a certain context in which each of those phenomena can be organized and presented to audiences in another country. This is an act of packaging, of contextualizing an entity that is defined within borders and perceived as a country. This form of cultural exchange has been the norm to this day and surely there will be more in the future. However, the individuals involved in this project began by reflecting on such cultural exchanges from a critical viewpoint.

¶ There are two main reasons as to why we questioned the methodology that has been incorporated up to now. The first reason is because we felt a sense of discomfort at the “image of Japan” that has been packaged and presented to other countries. We felt that when contextualizing Japan, the viewpoint has always been biased to a certain degree. In many of the exchange exhibitions of the past, there has been a strong tendency to present Japan under the following images: “Japan as a cyber-nation that is highly developed in the fields of machinery and electronics,” “Japan as the hub of otaku culture as represented by Akihabara,” or on the contrary, “Japan as a country that respects tradition” or “Japan as the country of exquisite handiwork.” These contexts are not incorrect, and in fact effective strategies that introduce Japan to outside countries in lucid explanations. However, these ways of packaging — whether they are geared to the future or to the past — are methods that emphasize the outward

differences between the country introduced and the countries to which the images are projected, which makes packaging nothing but a method based on exoticism. To add, if these strategies are taken mainly against Western culture, packaging results in internalized orientalism.

¶ The second reason relates to the gap between the presentation of one's own culture and the idea of "cultural exchange" that is professed through this presentation. In other words, we are critically asking ourselves whether or not Japanese culture in a package can bring exchange with the country to which this package is presented. The self-analytical method through which one's own culture is interpreted and presented embraces aspects that can only be understood by those who belong to that culture, which consequently forms a very solid context that helps one to understand individual phenomenon within a given framework. A recent and most telling example of this idea is the exhibition "Little Boy" organized and curated by the artist Murakami Takashi. This sort of contextualization engenders critique in the form of response. Yet the package itself remains a one-way thing, and does not allow for a two-way dialogue of context and critique. And, the more solid the context is, the less possibility there is for the audience to freely conjoin the individual phenomenon he sees, or even appreciate other phenomena that certainly exist but may have dropped out from that context, with leeway for an interpretation that is unbound to the given context.

¶ The critical reflection on the two issues mentioned above has become the impetus for turning this project into a passage. Of course this does not mean that we are naively determined that we can give a comprehensive presentation of Japanese contemporary culture that is not biased to any degree. Neither do we believe that we can resort to abstraction and that presenting "the best of Japanese contemporary art" will suffice. What we are aiming for is to impact "Japan in the raw" against "Australia in the raw" to the greatest possible extent. To do so we must actively engage Australia who is our partner of "exchange" and avoid turning this into a closed package so that the project remains open-ended until the very last moment (or even beyond the last moment). This process of creating a passage is our experiment.

II The Crossing of Multiple Viewpoints

The process by which this project came to be is closely interrelated to how this catalogue has been structured. As readers will see in the thematic chapters of this catalogue, "Rapt!" was realized through four large steps, namely, "Curatorial Exchange," "Thinking," "Artist-in-Residence" and "Exhibition." However, the first three steps were made, not as preparatory stages for the final output, the "Exhibition." To put it another way, the four steps altogether create the "Rapt!" project. The contents of the individual steps can be followed by reading in-depth the respective chapters. Here, I would like to discuss how these steps were involved in turning this project into a passage, which is the focal point of this essay.

¶ Firstly, "Curatorial Exchange" and "Thinking" were conducted on the basis of the critical reflection mentioned earlier. There was "exchange" between the individuals involved from the very early stages of this project, discussing and examining Japan and Australia from various perspectives, and exchanging information on "contemporary Japanese culture." Apart from the staff of The Japan Foundation, this project includes three curators from Japan and four from

Australia, with an additional three Japanese advisors (a sociologist, an architectural critic, and an art journalist), as well as the individuals responsible for the venues of the residencies and exhibitions. The conversations between the many individuals comprising this project enabled each of us to see beyond our limits and grasp various phenomena occurring in current Japan. By multiplying the viewpoints to understand these phenomena, we aimed to create a network of viewpoints. The aim was not to have everybody fully understand each other's cultures, nor was it to achieve a mutual understanding that transcends cultural gaps, which is an inevitable accompaniment to international exchange. The crossing of viewpoints is important because what each of us have left out from our scopes can be scooped up and layered on top of each other, the connecting points from which a sort of network can arise. The aim was to incorporate the gaps and the impossibility to understand to a certain degree (although of course the aim to resolve such issues that arise from exchanges, i.e., dialogues is an aim in itself) in order to acknowledge "Japan in the raw" as our respective realities. Hence, in creating this network it was important for us to understand topics such as graffiti in the city environment, the relationship between Japanese farm villages and contemporary art, or the distinctions between Sydney and Melbourne. The organization and curation of this project were established on the crossing of multiple viewpoints, which was an absolute requirement for us to avoid a packaging based on a context that only allows for one interpretation, and arrive at a passage that embraces the possibility for recipients of "Rapt!" to interpret what they encounter in their own ways.

III The Homogeneity of "Japan," the Homogeneity of "Australia"

When a person voices the words "Japan" or "Australia," usually there is a sense of homogeneity working as a premise in understanding the words. Although we could say that they are simply terms that specify geographical territories delineated by politics, the terms are connected to imaginary territories that are more abstract and largely influenced by the speaker's knowledge and experiences of what they think is "very Japanese" or "very Australian." Generally speaking, an "international exchange exhibition" is a miniature reproduction of such homogeneities. Yet as we all know, none of us live in a closed, homogenous space. Needless to say, Tokyo cannot speak for the whole of Japan and "local cities" (the term used by Tokyoites to refer to cities outside of Tokyo) are not always miniature versions of Tokyo. For example, Teruya Yuken whose work jumps over Tokyo and is directly connected to the world at large is from Okinawa, a region that has its own specificity. Likewise, Tokyo is another case example of Japan with its own specificity. Of course if we place most value on the individual over any collective entity and break down all similarities to the individual level, we will be left with nothing but chaos and lose the sense of perspective we need to systematize our findings. This is why we must be conscious of the fact that homogeneity is secured only through the buildup of heterogeneity. This awareness is parallel to the aforementioned idea of crossing viewpoints. At the same time, it is also the reason why we perceived the "Artist-in-Residence" as an important factor of this project.

¶ I will speak later on how we made the "Exhibition" into a passage, but will mention here that its main venue will be in Melbourne (aside from Melbourne, there will be one venue in

Sydney). Meanwhile, the residencies participated by a total of six Japanese artists will be held in five cities: Brisbane, Perth, Darwin, Sydney and Melbourne. Unfortunately, we could not realize a residency in the desert areas, but we tried to disperse the residencies and cover as many areas in Australia as possible. This is our testament to the fact that our subject is not the homogeneity enwrapped in the term "Australia" and that we have endeavored to incorporate the heterogeneity of the various regions in Australia by having artists reside and create their works in the respective places. Each of the artists will experience "Australia" in their own ways, which will be embodied in the works they create.

¶ This way of thinking also seems to suit the essence of an "Artist-in-residence." The essence is, I believe, something that cannot be explained in simplistic terms such as the exchange between the visiting artist and the local residents. Indeed we are aiming for an "exchange." Each of the artists will engage themselves with the community, nature and culture of each region with distinct issues of concern. However, the exchanges are not about showcasing the creative processes behind the works and having the artists build relationships with the residents through conversations. What we are counting on is the sharing of a time-space between the artists and the local residents through the residencies and the flowering of new understandings that can only be achieved through those experiences, which in turn will renew the ideas behind the words "Japan" and "Australia," and finally give rise to a new relationship between the two. We also hope that the experiences will be condensed into the works of art. The artists will probably have ideas in the making within realistic constraints as they set foot in their designated places. The actual outcome however, depends entirely on the "encounter" they will experience. Here again, the project remains open-ended.

IV The Exhibition as a Passage

Again, the exhibition "Rapt!" will take place in and around Melbourne. The main reason for this is because there are many alternative spaces in Melbourne. We chose galleries within Melbourne universities, not-for-profit galleries, artist-run spaces and other public spaces as our venues. Our selection is due in part to the fact that the Biennale of Sydney and the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art will also be held this year, which caused scheduling conflicts with large museums. As it turned out, this selection matched our intention to establish the project as a "passage."

¶ An exhibition that is held in a large, singular space — even if the viewer can freely access each of the works in the space — is based on a route that begins with an entrance where viewers are led to read a welcome text, move on from the introductory work to the next in line with a given path, and out the exit. This becomes a package that orients the visual desire of the audience to see in accordance with the narrative created by the organizer. On the contrary, neither a beginning nor end is designated when a network is formed among multiple small spaces, leaving the route entirely up to the viewers. Here, a venue stands as a solo exhibition of each artist, but at the same time, it is connected to another venue. In other words, our aim is to make contemporary Japan permeate throughout the city of Melbourne. Each venue becomes a singular point and together they form a constellation of venues. The result is a homogeneity that is made from a buildup of heterogeneity. The duration of the show also

depends on the venue, which in turn demands for a moderate amount of dedication and concentration on the viewers' part in order to see "Rapt!" in full. For example, the workshop-cum-presentation by Atelier Bow-Wow, which will be held at City Square can only be seen for a few days in late August, while a viewer will need to travel quite far to see Naito Rei's installation at Birrarung in Eltham. The effort however, of the viewer who becomes actively engaged in touring and experiencing the project that is dispersed in and around the city, will enable the exhibition to rise up as a "passage." Some viewers may go around all of the venues, while others may choose to visit a limited few. The context or narrative will not come before the viewer's path; those who go through this "passage" will be able to freely interpret what they encounter from their own viewpoints and discover for themselves their own context and narrative for "Rapt!" Their experiences will become the threads that weave together the tapestry of "Rapt!"

¶ It is our sincere wish that "Rapt!" will become a rich tapestry for you and that you will be heartily rapt in our grand experiment.

[Hirayoshi Yukihiro ‡ Curator / The National Museum of Art, Osaka]

[Translated by Kohno Haruko]

パッサージュとしての「Rapt!」

平芳幸浩

I 「国際交流」と「文化紹介」

第1回「Rapt!」公開セミナーにおいて、パネリストの一人であった三浦展氏は、都市に展開される現代日本文化の特徴を、「パッケージ」と「パッサージュ」という言葉で大きく2つに分類して論じた。パッケージとは、郊外型の巨大ショッピングモールに典型的に見られるように、徹底的なマーケティングのもと、あらゆる商品やサービスを一つの空間に寄せ集めて効率的に配列し、人びとの消費欲望を喚起し昂進させる巨大な欲望装置として作り上げられたものである。一方パッサージュとは、ある時空間を共有しながらも、各装置がランダムに生成増殖あるいは消滅し、ゆるやかに構造化されたもので、人びとはその各装置を取捨選択しながら自由にネットワーク化していくことができる、そのようなシステムのことである。(詳しくは、セミナー再録ページpp.70-81を参照のこと)

我々が、この「Rapt!」というプロジェクトにおいて実現しようと模索したのは、言うなればプロジェクト全体をパッサージュとして立ち上げるということである。これは一つの大きな実験でもある。なぜならば、これまでパッケージとして機能してきた「国際交流展」がこのプロジェクトの出発点となっているからである。

「Rapt! 20 contemporary artists from Japan」と名づけられたこのプロジェクトは、日豪交流年を記念して日本の国際交流基金によって企画されたプロジェクトである。つまり、日本とオーストラリアの文化交流のさらなる発展を願って両国において数多く展開される、それぞれの国の文化紹介事業の一環として位置づけられるものである。「国際交流」と「文化紹介」。この2つの語によって組織化されるプロジェクトは、ある主体が、自国の社会における文化事象を取捨選択し、その各事象が配置可能となる一定の文脈を作り上げて、他国に持ち込んで提示する、というプロセスが前提となっている。国家という名で境界づけられたある総体を一つの文脈で切り取るパッケージング。このような手続きによる国際交流はこれまで数多く行われてきたし、これからも起こるであろう。我々は、このプロジェクトを始めるにあたって、そのような国際交流の在り方を反省的に捉え直すことから出発したのである。

我々がこれまでの方法論に疑義を挟んだ理由は大きく2つある。一つは、パッケージングによって他国に向けて提示される「日本の表象」に対する違和感である。つまり、日本を文脈化する視点の偏差である。多くの交流展において、「機械・電子技術が極端に発展したサイバーな日本」「秋葉原に代表されるオタクな日本」、あるいは「伝統が今も息づく日本」「繊細な手仕事の日本」、という両極において、日本は表象される傾向が強かった。それぞれの文脈は、それはそれとして間違っただけではないし、他国に自国を紹介する際の「分かりやすさ」を戦略としている点では有効性を持ったものではある。

しかしながら、上記のようなパッケージングは、それが未来志向であれ過去志向であれ、他国の人びとに対してその文化との表面的な差異を強調する、エキゾチズムに立脚した提示でしかない。このような戦略が主に西洋文化を対象として繰り返されているとすれば、それは内在化されたオリエンタリズムでしかないのである。

もう一つは、自国文化のプレゼンテーションと、そこで標榜されている「国際交流」とのギャップの問題である。つまり、パッケージとしての日本文化は、パッケージを提示された相手文化と、交流を取り結ぶことができるのか、という反省である。自国の文化を解釈して提示する自己分析的手法は、それが当該文化に属している者にしか看取できない側面を含み込んでいるために、非常に強固な文脈を形成し、個別の事象を一定の枠組みの中で理解する手助けとなる。最近の例としては、美術家村上隆が企画・キュレーションした「リトル・ボーイ」展が、その最たるものである。このような文脈化は、提示に対するレスポンスとしての批評を生み出すであろう。しかしながら、パッケージそのものは常に一方的であり、文脈と批評という二項の関係を越えるものとはならない。そして、その文脈が強固であればあるほど、受容者が個々の事象を自由に結びつけて、あるいは確かに存在するがその文脈からこぼれ落ちてしまった事象までも汲み取りながら、提示された文脈から距離をとった解釈を施す可能性は縮減されてしまう。

以上2つの問題点についての反省が、このプロジェクトをパスサージュ化させる推進力となっている。しかし、だからと言って、我々が現代日本文化について一切の偏差を持たない総覧的なプレゼンテーションを行える、と素朴に信じているわけでもないし、あらゆる文化的背景を捨棄して「ベスト・オブ・日本現代美術」を提示して事足り、と考えているわけでもない。我々が目指していることは、できる限り「生(なま)の日本」を「生(なま)のオーストラリア」と衝突させること、そのために「交流」の相手であるオーストラリアそのものを積極的に巻き込みながら、このプロジェクトが終了する瞬間まで(あるいは終了以降も)閉じたパッケージとならないよう回路を開いておくことである。そのパスサージュ化の手続きこそが、我々の実験なのである。

II 複数の視点の交錯

このプロジェクトが具体的にどのような手続きを踏みながら進行してきたかは、このカタログの構成そのものと密接にリンクしている。カタログの章立てをご覧いただければ分かるように、「Rapt!」は「キュレイトリアル・エクスチェンジ (Curatorial Exchange)」「シンキング (Thinking)」「アーティスト・イン・レジデンス (Artist-in-Residence)」「展覧会 (Exhibition)」という大きく4つのステップを経て実現した。しかし最初の3つのステップは、決して最終的なアウトプットとしての展覧会のための準備段階ではない。換言すれば、この4つのステップの総体が「Rapt!」というプロジェクトなのである。それぞれの手続きにおいて何が行われたかは、各章をじっくりご覧いただくことにして、ここではそれらが本論の主眼であるプロジェクトのパスサージュ化とどのように関わっているかを述べることにしたい。

まず、「キュレイトリアル・エクスチェンジ」と「シンキング」は、先に述べた反省を踏まえて、企画の最初段階から「交流」を行い、さまざまな視点からの対話を行いながら日本とオーストラリアそれぞれにつ