Tokujin Yoshioka: Waterfall

Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation
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Waterfall

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Sydney
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The Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF) Tokujin Yoshioka installation represents a milestone in the exhibition history of the Foundation, which has curated and organised twelve commissions and projects since April 2008. While Tokujin is an artist – a representative of SCAF’s core focus group – he most frequently works within the framework of functional design: furniture, lighting and cutting-edge retail, restaurant and fashion interiors. Art and design, long separated into rigorous categories, now periodically overlap in the upper echelons of innovative creative practices. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, how do these two disciplines interrelate?

The aftermath of the postmodern period has given rise to intersecting creative endeavours. Art schools worldwide no longer pigeonhole students in sculpture, painting, printmaking or medium-specific departments. Emerging practitioners most commonly conceptualise their projects, selecting the best pathway to realisation from amongst the many technical methodologies their education has placed at their disposal.

Similar forces were at work, of course, during fin-de-siècle and early twentieth century artistic movements: between 1903 and 1932, the Wiener Werkstätte, spearheaded by Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser (with Gustav Klimt’s early participation), encouraged avant-garde collectors1 to commission or acquire paintings, furniture, lighting, carpets and tableware linked by aesthetic and philosophical considerations.

In art history, as in the history of mankind, cycles repeat themselves, propelled and transformed by differing forces. A hundred years after the Wiener Werkstätte, we find ourselves again in the company of top-tier artists who work in design – and original designers who, like Marc Newson and Tokujin Yoshioka, realise their commercial endeavours alongside their free-flow creative work, showing in world-renowned museums and galleries without forgoing their functional client-specific commissions. The designer, fashion guru, architect, filmmaker, photographer and chef have become the creative researchers of our time and, where their practice clearly stands as original
and groundbreaking, they now find their place in the increasingly complex and multilayered history of art.

SCAF’s artists-of-interest list has been built up over twenty-five years of global exhibition viewing, including local, national and international biennales, triennales, surveys and retrospective shows. In keeping with the earlier Sherman Galleries’ and now SCAF’s area of interest, this hot list focuses on Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. In most cases I, together with colleagues and advisers, have either connected personally with the artists’ work or simply built up a picture of their practices via individual and group exhibitions, catalogues, articles, reviews and, more recently, the high tech methodologies that allow visual and textual information to be shared in a flash.

My discovery of Tokujin Yoshioka’s work, however, was serendipitous. Life’s coincidences play, as we know, a huge role in our personal and professional journeys.

Art as fashion has always loomed large in my aesthetic and historical consciousness. In March 2010, having recently donated my twenty-five year, seventy-five piece contemporary Japanese fashion collection to Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum, Japan Fashion Week in Tokyo beckoned as a potential repository for a prospective SCAF project, this time a visual practitioner expressing the Zeitgeist and future trends via fashion. The 1970s and 1980s triumvirate – Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo (founder of Comme des Garçons) – were in their late sixties or older and Miyake, at least, had officially retired. The terrain was identified and Amelia Groom, a University of Sydney PhD candidate researching Japanese aesthetics, was consulted with the goal of identifying specific emerging fashion groups as post-Miyake new wave practitioners.

I flew to Tokyo with Anna Waldmann, my colleague and researcher-in-arms, to explore the next generation of fashion artists. We were hopeful of encountering an original aesthetic underpinned by new and sophisticated conceptual thinking. At least twelve runway shows and an intense tour of high-profile, cutting-edge stores left us disappointed. The work overall was moderately interesting and the stores were integrated, meshing interior design, lighting, clothes and music in small-scale, seamless spaces that interestingly related to the Wiener Werkstätte practice of fusing various aesthetic and, in this case, often aural elements so as to create a whole that was larger and more coherent than the sum of its parts. Nevertheless, fashion as function, fashion as lifestyle and fashion as flocks dominated the scene. Fashion as art – garments that break with the past, signal the future and incorporate textile innovation or futuristic thinking – was still the domain of the original three internationally acclaimed innovators. Miyake, Yamamoto and Kawakubo remained the innovators, confirming their place amongst the great artists of the last quarter of the twentieth century. The body of work they created inspired subsequent generations worldwide. Their oeuvre continues to resonate far beyond the fashion category they chose to inhabit. They were and are artists who revolutionised the language of design, causing reverberations far beyond their era and shores.

SCAF’s artist search needed a new direction and luck was at hand. Akira and Tomoko Nakayama, our eminent SCAF Advisory Board members and Japan-oriented art aficionados, now based between Tokyo and Adelaide, have multiple connections with Japan’s high-level creative world. ‘Please think of Tokujin Yoshioka,’ the Nakayamas had said at a SCAF post-exhibition opening dinner shortly before our trip. ‘Fashion, we know, is your current focus, but Tokujin is an artist whose designs and installations merit serious attention.’ It turned out that the artist was coincidentally in Tokyo. He had been in Korea and was off to Milan. A tiny window of opportunity opened up, which allowed us to meet him.

Clambering up a small staircase, at the bottom of which sat an intriguing glass-like bench (later identified as Water block, 2002), we emerged into a light-filled, intimate meeting room adjoining busy working spaces. My close friend and colleague Johnnie Walker, a Caucasian Japanese citizen who has lived within the tight circle of creative industry Japan since adolescence, and my longstanding curator friend Chikako Tatsuuma served as translators together with Tokujin’s own highly professional staff. Publications were opened, images and histories shared. Waterfall leapt onto the computer screen: optical glass reinvented to evoke liquidity and light, capturing a precise, intriguingly calming, ice-like solid structure. Straws, mist, gentle movement and meditative white interiors all came into view. We quickly understood that we were in the presence of a great innovator. He had, it turned out, started his career with Miyake, who remained a mentor as well as an important client. He originally explored the potentialities of fashion practice, subsequently understanding that he needed, perhaps, a larger canvas with more varied pathways. He turned ultimately to design in the most broad possible sense, becoming in the process a creator, difficult to label or categorise within traditional frameworks.

He explains his thinking as follows: ‘It comes down to the purpose behind my work. Deep down, I am thinking first of how I can move people or bring them joy. When I try to compare whether I am better able to do that when I make an artistic object or when I create a [practical] design, I come to the conclusion that it is both and neither. It tends to fall somewhere between the two: not wholly part of either, but still intersecting both. For this reason, I gradually began to feel that I wanted to establish my own field.’ According to Jan Hoet, legendary curator of Documenta IX: ‘For 20th century modernism, the films of Chaplin were just as important as the paintings of Mondrian. Today, everything is interdisciplinary.’

Tokujin is SCAF’s twelfth invited artist. The Foundation asked him to conceive a project for our space, our community and the many national and international visitors we welcome to Sydney.

In a decade or perhaps less, Tokujin will, I expect, be seen as having heralded in a new cross-disciplinary creative approach, for which a name will be found and a trend will surely follow.

We are honoured to welcome him to Sydney and know that our Foundation visitors will find serious stimulation and deep joy in his work.

Endnotes
1. The Wiener Werkstätte oscillated financially, as do all new avant-garde movements. Artists often relied on wealthy Jewish patrons such as Adele Bloch-Bauer and Hermine Gallia who commissioned portraits by Gustav Klimt, engaged Hoffmann as preferred interior designer and furnished their apartments with Wiener Werkstätte furniture, lighting and objects.
3. Ibid., p. 10.
Waterfall

2005–06
Optical glass, stainless steel, 450 x 70 x 75 cm

pp. 10–11 Installation view, Tokujin Yoshioka_SPECTRUM,
MUSEUM Beyond Museum, Seoul, Korea, 2010 © Nacása & Partners Inc.

pp. 12–15 Installation views, Sensing Nature, Mori Art
Museum, Tokyo, Japan, 2010

pp. 16–19 © Nacása & Partners Inc.
DSM: I’m interested to start from the very beginning – to find out how it all began. How did you become interested in design and who and what were your influences?

TY: I decided to become a designer at the age of six. I always liked drawing as a child and it was my father who told me that being a designer is an occupation. I wasn’t good at verbally articulating my ideas at that stage but I started to realise that it is possible to communicate with many people by means of design.

Florian Idenburg writes that ‘a collective sense of responsibility toward the profession inspires Japan’s architects to feed an ongoing stream of ideas, passing on knowledge, influence, and interest from one generation to the next’.

Toyo Ito worked in Kiyonori Kikutake’s office and Kazuyo Sejima, who exhibited here at Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF) in 2009, was apprenticed to Toyo Ito. You in turn studied with Shiro Kuramata and Issey Miyake. While this tradition of master and apprentice is less pronounced in Australia, do you see this relationship and ongoing exchange as vital to nourishing education, innovation and exploration of new design and architecture?

While I was travelling around the world with Mr Kuramata and Mr Miyake I was able to witness other people’s reactions to their creations. I learnt that design is not formulated by a single sense of value but exists freely amongst various values. Design is by its very nature free. There is nothing in design that says certain things must be done in a certain way. I believe that training a person has the same meaning as creating a new sense of value. By accepting various values, we not only create ‘objects’, we create a new culture, which others can inherit in the future. Issey Miyake is adept in discovering hidden treasure. Even when people have different opinions from his own, he lets them experiment, saying ‘he might create a new sense of value’. Miyake is great at drawing out people’s potential.
Can you explain the concept behind your installation for SCAF – the inspiration for the idea and the use of straws? Do you design specifically for each venue?

In response to a series of installations I have exhibited in many countries, people have told me about their experiences of natural phenomena. When I think about my own creations, I am aware that there is a beauty beyond our human imagination, which is realised not through a superficial understanding of nature but through an understanding of the relationship between principles of nature and coincidence in creation. With each installation I intend to design objects by capturing the atmosphere of the space. The straw installation for SCAF will create a scene that looks as if clouds are made of transparent water particles. We often take nature for granted but when we take a fresh look at it, we are in awe of its greatness. And that greatness is what we find beautiful. I have always admired that kind of beauty.

You challenge yourself to develop projects in new materials. Is your design process a matter of experimentation and trial and error?

I used to believe that technology can give us a future that we haven’t seen before but the reality is that it weathers with time. I have always been interested in materials, basically since I was a student. They were always in my mind whenever I thought about a design. I prefer a design that is only feasible in a particular material, or that allows me to make the material itself a focal point. My works have been created in that way since the early years. When making a table, for example, it would look more refreshing to me if it were just planed off and not painted; and I find beauty in paper when it is crumpled or ripped. The important thing for me is not simply to adopt new materials or technology but to find a ‘new approach’ by using those materials.

When I design something, I go through many experiments and studies before reaching completion. I start as a beginner and end up a master by testing the design in various conditions, including some bad conditions. Also, by carrying out the tests over and over again, I quite often encounter happenstances; I see new happenings and hints beyond my imagination, which can’t be created just from sketches. By adapting those accidental results (which I think is inevitable), I continue the creation for my design.

You have said that ‘designers will come to focus more on designing emotions and feelings rather than designing a form of things’. Can you explain what you mean by this ‘emotional energy’ and how this relationship between substance and context translates into your design?

Designs continue to multiply every day, even when objects are in surplus. We live in comfort as we are now; the need for design is decreasing, but we still want to make ‘things’. We must consider the new role of design. I think that true creations are achieved when designs are inspired by human feelings and are free from shapes and ideas of materialism. Sound and smell are full of wonder. It is quite amazing to think that something invisible can touch our emotions so much. Music makes people cry and a scent reminds people of an image from the past. The human heart does not need form to be moved. I often think about design without form and I feel that my design is actually closer to music or to a scent. People ‘see’ objects using not only their vision but also their senses of hearing and smell, their perception and various feelings. I believe that I can express ‘emotional energy’ by creating objects that awaken those feelings.

You once said that ‘various things other than form, be it light, movement or fragrance can become design elements’. Do you see your projects such as VENUS – Natural crystal chair, 2008, as breaking the rules and pushing the bounds of creativity or are they a direct response to the environmental, ecological and financial issues we now face? Does design have a role to play in raising awareness?

VENUS – Natural crystal chair, which was created through the principles of nature and unpredictable beauty, is a message from me to the future which goes beyond the perception of conventional creation. Nature never gives us the same face twice and the beauty of nature comes from that aspect. Many of my works adopt this principle of nature. For instance, the structure of Honey-pop is derived from honeycomb and the strength of PANE chair is achieved by having thin fibres tangled together, like the structure of plants. When I design installations I don’t just use nature as a motif but I investigate the spiritual uplifting and the mechanism of it. I believe that creation gives opportunities for people to realise substantial beauty. I would like to continue to create objects that can move the hearts of as many people as possible.

The Japanese expression shinrabanshô refers to ‘all limitless things that are in the universe’. For the exhibition Sensing Nature (Mori Art Museum,
Tokyo, 2010) you were asked to think about how the innate human ability to sense nature and the Japanese view of nature exist in our urbanised and modernised world. How has your perspective of nature influenced your design practice? Do you have a connection with shinrabanshô?

The ultimate beauty in this world is the one that you can never recreate; beauty created by happenstance and disorder, which has elements that can’t be decoded by normal thinking. This is the proof of life, and nature, which changes its appearance every minute, is the best creation that exists in this world – sunlight, breeze, the sound of leaves overlapping with each other. Our hearts are influenced by various elements in nature. I’m not trying to recreate those elements but I am trying to recreate the feelings that people experience when they perceive nature and therefore am trying to adopt those elements into my design. My desire not to give shape to things is probably due to the fact that I have, at least to a certain degree, come to understand the beauty in nature.

Your X-Ray mobile phone, 2010, for KDDI and optical glass table, Waterfall, 2005–06, originally designed for a private gallery in Tokyo, are examples of your ongoing interest in working with transparent materials such as glass, water and plastics. Optically, transparency is the physical property of allowing light to penetrate, but it also suggests openness, communication and accountability. How is this ability to see through to penetrate, important to your design philosophy?

Transparent materials are seemingly not visible but they appear with light and change their shapes in response to the movement of light. They represent the light itself and are very profound. Light doesn’t have a shape but it creates a mysterious aura that can change the atmosphere around us and it echoes deep within our emotions. These natural phenomena accumulate within our minds and are expressed as transparency.

While you have your own independent practice you have also worked alongside Tadao Ando and Olafur Eliasson on the aforementioned private gallery and with companies such as Driade and Moroso. Are these collaborations about connection and interaction? Is it important for you to work with individuals and companies who share similar concerns about the environment and nature?

There are slight differences between collaborative works and my own works. Certain requirements exist in collaborations, but I don’t perceive those requirements as limitations. Rather, I enjoy developing my idea under those conditions; beauty is born by turning the impossible into the possible. I always try to create works that make people ‘feel’ the characteristics of the companies I am working with. Therefore, working with companies that have a clear vision gives me the opportunity to propose profound projects rather than simply reflect our common ideas on environment and nature.

Internet-based social networks play an increasingly important role in disseminating information, as evidenced by the recent happenings in the Middle East, and in bringing people together in the face of calamitous events such as the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in March 2011. Conversely, the introduction of new communication technologies can also lead to a sense of isolation and an erosion of traditional social structures. What is your view on social media? Can design facilitate new forms of interaction?

There might be positive aspects and negative aspects to social media. It really depends on how it develops – it might be able to establish new communication methods. I believe that communication through design generates future values by means of people's perceptions of and feelings towards objects. This has always been the case. Maybe one's life can be transformed because of a single design, or maybe design can fill our lives with new hope. The world of design is filled with dreams, and that is what makes it so wonderful.

You distinguish between the artistic and design aspects of your practice. How do these two strands complement and influence each other?

The difference between design and art has always been discussed but it is not important to me to distinguish between being a designer and being an artist. Rather, the works I create are categorised into design, art or architecture after their completion. Whether it is art or design, quality talks. What counts is how much we can influence people. I simply continue to create works in the hope of having an impact on as many people as possible. I want to make people happy, move their emotions. That comes before anything else.

Endnotes
When viewing Tokujin Yoshioka’s artworks and products, many of us become immersed in his sophisticated, aesthetic, almost meditative space. The essential source for his imagination and creative practices is his sensibility towards nature. His perspective on nature, and the natural phenomena and principles that influence his sensibilities, however, do not take their cue from continental plains, deserts or jungles. Instead, they are linked directly to what the Japanese call *shinrabanshô*—the whole of creation in the entire universe—while at the same time resonating with the particularities of the Japanese climate and topography.

In considering the Japanese view of nature, I would first like to identify the two broad meanings of the Japanese word for *shizen*, or ‘nature’. The first is ‘a spontaneous state; a natural state untouched by humans; a state as it is’. This meaning has its origins in the ‘abandoning of artifice and being oneself’, an idea that comes from the Taoist philosophy of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. It describes the state or phenomenon of selflessness, or renunciation of the ego, as expressed in the concept of *jinenhô* in *Mattôshô*, the text by twelfth century Buddhist monk Shinran, or the concept of *shinjin jinen ni datsuraku* in *Fukan-zazengi* (*General Advice on the Principles of Zen*) by thirteenth century Zen master Dogen. The second meaning of *shizen* is that which corresponds to the Greek word *physis*, the Latin word *natura*, and the English word *nature*, to which *shizen* was assigned as a translation in the Meiji period (1868–1912). In this sense, the word means: ‘A condition that arises due to spontaneous creation or development without being altered, shaped or restricted by human activity as opposed to culture in the form of things that are artificial or man-made’; ‘The quality of something in the form of the original force that induces its spontaneous creation or development. True character. Essence’; and ‘The places including mountains and rivers, vegetation, ocean, etc. where humankind emerged and has traditionally lived. In particular, such places that are unmodified by humans for the purposes of making them more convenient for human living.’ In other words, when used in contrast to the artificial or man-made world, *shizen* refers to the objectified natural world, including everything...
The difference between these two meanings seems to be largely attributable to differences in religious views, hence I would like to consider the Japanese view of nature by first focusing on the influence of religious views and climatic factors.

Japan’s gods and climate

Beginning with the Kojiki (completed in 712) and the Nihon shoki (completed in 720), there are several myths and fables in Japan regarding the creation of the world and, although they differ slightly between different regions, generally speaking they all describe the darkness of the universe as a nebulous mass of something resembling floating oil or egg suspended like a jellyfish, from which various gods emerge. The nebulous mass then divides into heaven and earth in the form of an upper layer consisting of a type of buoyant, light air and a lower layer consisting of a heavy, thick, mud-like substance. Following to the Kojiki, first the powers known collectively as Kotoamatsukami appeared in the Plain of High Heaven, following which the gods of stone, earth, the sea, water, wind, trees and mountains appeared. The Nihon shoki describes the deities Izanagi and Izanami giving birth of there being myriad gods and deities. The first appearance of the word ‘Shinto’ is in the Nihon shoki, although prior to this, in the Jomon, Yayoi, Kofun and Asuka periods (10,500 BC – 710 AD), there already existed a series of beliefs now referred to as ‘primitive Shinto.’ This incorporated elements of animism and shamanism, such as nature worship, spirit worship and incantations, and rituals. According to the folklorist Kenichi Tanigawa, ‘ancient people (in Japan) regarded the violent fluctuations of nature as the work of the gods, and out of this they created a unified mythical realm.’ This is extremely interesting when compared to the creation tales of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. In the Book of Genesis, God creates light amidst darkness, leading to the creation of night and day. God also creates the earth, sun, moon, stars, animals and plants, and on the sixth day he creates humans ‘in his own image.’ If so, the image of God and humans overlaps from the outset, and the God who undertook this process of creation is the creator of all nature and omnipotent. It is understandable, therefore, that the absoluteness of this solitary God would translate into the anthropocentric idea that humans are superior to all other forms of life. Shinto does not have the kind of anthropomorphic gods found in other religions, such as Buddhism and Christianity, nor does it have religious founders and saviours such as the Buddha and Jesus Christ. According to Tanigawa, ‘[lacking both will and personality, floating in mid-air and invisible, the spirits and souls are among the kashikokimono, or the innumerable gods and deities of Japan, none of whom are particularly benevolent or malevolent, with some bringing good fortune when they attach themselves to people and others bringing bad fortune.’ Tanigawa also explains that people believed everything in the universe possessed a spirit or anima. ‘Both plants and rocks and stones spoke incessantly, giving rise to a world that stirred at night as if flames were burning and broke into a commotion during the day as if flies were buzzing.’ He thus explains how the fear of these gods that lacked both personality and specific form, and the fear of natural phenomena, such as gales and rough seas, led to a belief in the existence of yōkai (the monsters, demons and spirits of Japanese folklore), with both benevolent and malevolent personalities, such as oni, kappa and tengu. This belief in yōkai is ‘a vestige of a faint yet unforgettable memory of a society in which humans lived shoulder to shoulder with natural spirits’ while at the same time accepting the unpredictability of natural phenomena.

Following the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the sixth century, native Shinto and Buddhism underwent reinterpretations leading to the emergence of new religious phenomena that incorporated elements of both. Examples of such syncretism include shugenjō, a mountaineering asceticism that combines the mountain worship of primitive Shinto with Buddhism. It first appeared in the Nara period (710–794) and involves followers attempting to gain supernatural powers by secluding themselves in sacred mountains and undergoing rigorous training. Shugenjō could be interpreted as a continuation of the traditional view of nature, which said that spirituality exists throughout the whole of creation. As well, in the Avatamsaka Sutra, one of the sutras of Indian Mahayana Buddhism, it is explained that all sentient beings are possessed of the nature of Buddha, or, in other words, that all living things can attain Buddhahood. When this teaching was transmitted to Japan it was interpreted to mean that not only living things (sentient beings), such as humans and animals, but also inanimate objects, such as the earth and mountains and rivers, which were not included under Buddhism on the Asian continent, could attain Buddhahood. This, too, could be interpreted as the fusion of the traditions of primitive Shinto and animism with Buddhist philosophy. Invisible natural spirits were said to gather at night in summer and on certain nights each month as determined by the Japanese esoteric cosmology known as onmyōdō, in what the Japanese refer to as hyakkki yōkō (literally ‘night parades of a hundred demons’). In works such as the Hyakki yōkō emaki (Night Parade of a Hundred Demons Picture Scroll) (artist unknown) from the Muromachi period (1392–1573) and the Gazu hyakkki yōkō (The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons) by the Edo-period (1600–1867) Kano-school painter Sekien Toriyama, these natural spirits appear as yōkai and are assigned names and various qualities. Gazu hyakkki yōkō (The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons) alone includes several varieties of yōkai that dwell in mountains, including yamawarawara, yamabuba, yamabiko, sansei and kodama, a manifestation of which, Toriyama says, ‘is said to appear in a tree once it reaches one hundred years.’ Also, that people sensed the presence of life or spirituality deep in forests and in the dark is also evidenced by the existence of yōkai that took their names directly from skin and touch sensations, such as buruburu,11 betobeto-san12 and hohonade.13 The manga artist Shigeru Mizuki, who is known for his manga featuring yōkai, also based many of his characters on the yōkai identified by Sekien Toriyama. He once described yōkai as ‘ghosts one sees with the tactile sensation more than with the eyes.’14 Viewed in this light, the various characters that appear in the anime and manga that Japan takes pride in today could be regarded as products of a Japanese view of nature descended from this belief that spirits inhabit the whole of creation. In fact, these yōkai are also depicted vividly in animator Hayao Miyazaki’s works, such as Princess Mononoke and Spirited Away. Miyazaki says that in depicting
forest setting for Princess Mononoke, he sought ‘not to portray an actual forest, but to depict the kind of forest that has existed since time immemorial and that still exists in the imagination of the Japanese people’. In order to ‘depict an image of a time when forests were not simply a collection of plants but had a spiritual meaning’, Miyazaki created a group of diminutive white characters, called kodama, that were visual representations of the kind of presence people feel in forests.

It is probably a result of their being mythologised with various names and shapes that these invisible natural spirits became accepted by people in the form of beliefs in intelligent life in the dark of night and in the space between trees. Another result is that they feature in stories that continue to be handed down from generation to generation all over Japan. The belief in the existence of yôkai that are ‘seen’ through the skin and touch sensations also suggests that Japan’s topography and hot and humid climate played an important part in the ability of Japanese people to sense natural spirits as a presence.

In his 1935 book A Climate: A Philosophical Study, the historian and philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji explained that there are three types of climate, in the sense of a place’s weather, geology, soil, topography and landscape: monsoon, which covers the whole of East Asia including Japan; desert, which includes Arabia, Africa and Mongolia; and pastoral, which includes mainly Europe. A characteristic of the monsoon-type climate is ‘humidity’ and, according to Watsuji, the fact that the people associated with this climate lack a sense of rivalry with nature is because ‘it does not arouse within man any sense of a struggle against nature. One reason is that in the eyes of those who live in the monsoon belt, humidity, or moisture, is nature’s gift to man.’ While on the one hand humans are ‘receptive’ to this nature, which is connected to ‘life’, on the other hand, humidity, which is accompanied by heat, ‘often combines with heat to assail man with violent deluges of rain of great force, savage storm winds, floods and droughts. This power is so vast that man is obliged to abandon all hope of resistance and is forced into mere passive resignation.’ As a result of this receptiveness and submissiveness, ‘the sun, moon, sky, storm, wind, fire, water, dawn, earth, anything similarly conspicuous and attractive, as well as the forest, the plains, animals and everything, provided only that it obliged a sense of some aspect of its power in respiratory humans, became a spirit or a demon.’ This could explain how religious views, such as the idea in the Avatamsaka Sutra that all sentient beings are possessed of Buddha nature, and the richness of the Indian mythical world, are prescribed by climate. Much of Watsuji’s book is subjective, but the following words are extremely interesting even today, especially given the spread of globalisation: ‘Today, now that the world seems to have become one, the stimuli of differing cultures appear to be toppling the distinctivensess of nature. Yet natural distinctiveness is not something to disappear without trace. As ever, man will be restrained unconsciously by its curbing, as ever he sinks his roots in it.’

The Japanese view of nature and space

We can learn a lot about the Japanese view of nature and spatiality from the artist Taro Okamoto. In the 1930s, Okamoto spent his impressionable twenties living in Paris, where he studied under the sociologist and cultural anthropologist Marcel Mauss and established friendships with people like George Bataille. He returned to Japan and, following the end of the war, carried out intensive research into Okinawa, the Ainu, and Jomon culture, among other things. Regarding the spatiality seen in Jomon pottery, Okamoto made the following observations: ‘The sensibilities of people who lived in the hunting and gathering period must have been organised with much reference to spatial relationships. In order for them to sense the presence of their prey, ascertain their precise location, and then catch them, there is no doubt they required a keen sense of three dimensions. It stands to reason that people in the hunting and gathering period, who relied on it for their very existence, were equipped with an acute sense of space that far exceeded our imagination. Without such a way of life, it is unimaginable that the kind of precise, detailed grasp of space we see in Jomon pottery could have existed.’ This ability, described by Okamoto, of Jomon people to sense or perceive the presence of something spatially is very similar to the awareness of invisible natural phenomena and the sensitivity to ghosts that are ‘seen’ with the tactile sensation that we have been discussing so far. According to Okamoto, although it atrophied in the Yayoi period (300 BC – 300 AD), as a result of the assumed flatness and symmetry that were so important in measuring land geometrically, this three-dimensional sense and sense of space were again aroused after the Second World War as people were forced to cope with new spaces created by the conversion to high-rise buildings and the complication of transport networks such as the Tokyo Metropolitan Expressway. ‘The rediscovery of spatiality in modern art is understandable from the standpoint of such new living conditions,’ writes Okamoto. ‘In a way, this sense of space means that we are on the verge of sympathetically rediscovering the long-forgotten culture and art of our ancestors.’ In addition, according to Okamoto, we need to understand the spatiality of Jomon pottery not just in three-dimensional terms but in terms of ‘supernatural characteristics that defy everyday conventions, or in or in other words four-dimensional characteristics.’

This spatiality, with its four-dimensional characteristics, is consistent with a view of nature that sees supernatural life in nature and perceives nature through the skin and the sense of touch. This spatiality is also practically identical to Watsuji’s notion of adagara (betweenness), which he defines as ‘the means by which people conjure up a fighting spirit in regions where the climate is unstable, and a unity, or community, that allows for no unpredictability and is irrational and consequently governed by “chance”’. It is also linked to the view of nature as chi. According to the Jungian psychologist Yasuo Yuasa, ‘[t]he Eastern view of nature as typified by Taoism views nature as a vast living organism. This is a pantheistic view of nature according to which what one might call mental energy and physical energy are in an indivisible, unified relationship.’ Yuasa goes on to explain how sensibility takes precedence over reasoning, stating that ‘in considering the question of chi experiencing and sensing it oneself forms the starting point, and the theoretical question of the significance of the phenomenon comes later.’ Nature is regarded not as a separate object but as the surrounding space that encompasses humans, and the energy emitted by the forms of life within this space is what mutually connects humans, society and nature. If indeed all things in the universe resonate with each other in this way as a result of the energy of chi, then they can have a causal relationship even if they are far apart, and the position that views nature on the basis of such a relationship is also consistent with Jung’s ‘synchronicity’.

Four-dimensional, ‘adagara’, ‘chi’ and ‘synchronicity’ all describe an invisible presence akin to supernatural energy or ‘vibrations’, and the perception
or awareness of these is very similar to the Japanese view of nature according to which, as pointed out by Hayao Miyazaki, the essence of a forest lies not in the trees that grow in it but in the form of the air that fills the gaps between the trees, or in other words something akin to a landscape captured on a negative film.

The Japanese view of the universe reflected in gardens and natural anti-nature

Given this four-dimensional, supernatural nature, the universe is likewise integrated as an extension of nature, and in Japanese gardens one can see a typical example of such a sense of space. The Japanese view of the universe in the Asuka period (538–710) is said to have been introduced from Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasty China, and one can gain an insight into the view of the universe shared by people of this period by looking at the astronomical star charts, images of the sun and the moon, and images of the four Taoist gods in burial chambers such as the Takamatsuzuka and Kitora tombs. Records also show that representations of Mount Sumeru, the giant mountain that is regarded as the centre of the Buddhist world, were erected in gardens in the Asuka period. The oldest known Chinese theory of the structure of the universe is the Gai Tian theory, according to which the earth is a square and the sky a circle above it, with the heavenly bodies making a full rotation along with the sky once a day. This was the dominant view of the universe in China until the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The Later Han dynasty (25–220) saw the emergence of the Hun Tian theory, according to which the square earth was covered with water and the sky formed a sphere. These Chinese views of the universe merged with Japanese myths and the ancient Japanese shamanistic and ritualistic realm and developed into a uniquely Japanese view of the universe, according to which in addition to the earth and the sky there also existed an underground realm known as Yomi no kuni (the land of the dead) or meikai (the nether world), as well as such places as tokoyo no kuni, a land of life and light, and hokkai no kuni, a land of death and darkness.

The Sakuteiki, Japan’s oldest text on garden design, thought to have been compiled at the end of the Heian period (795–1185), also includes numerous references to taboo subject matter according to the concept of shijin sôô (the four guardian gods in balance), which is truly and boldly human yet at the same time natural, or in other words the definition of art through all ages. This ‘connection between nature and anti-nature’ can also be applied to the practice of shôkkei, or borrowed scenery, which involves incorporating the natural background landscape into the composition of a garden. Taro Okamoto regards shôkkei very highly, describing it as ‘setting large spaces against small spaces in such a way that they push heterogeneity to the limit. The more heterogeneous the two are, the more powerfully this strained relationship works, a familiar, ordinary natural space being replaced by a fresh, wondrous artistic space.’ These two heterogeneous spaces are connected by ‘emptiness’ or ‘nothingness’, with an atmosphere of tension created by the continuity between the universe and the garden space. Okamoto is critical of many Zen gardens for failing to adequately create this atmosphere of tension between nature and anti-nature, although this is also an indication of the high order of the artistic standards he expected of garden design. ‘By setting the artificial against the natural and confronting us with it as something completely heterogeneous, it is possible to point up the refinement of nature itself as well as give rise to artificial beauty using supernatural expression built on a grand scale. It is precisely this doubly emphasised tension between the artificial and the natural, which is truly and boldly human yet at the same time natural, or in other words the spirit of natural anti-nature, that gives rise to art, beauty, and strength.’ Even if one gives absolute priority to nature and tries to represent it in its original form, a precondition is an anti-natural abstract effect in which nature is first removed from its situation and replaced. Only works that successfully follow the steps of reconstruction by going through this process arouse strong emotions. This is the definition of art through all ages.’ Okamoto’s words offer a wealth of helpful suggestions in considering how views of nature are reflected in art.

The Japanese view of nature and Mono-ha

Looking fresh at the Japanese art of the twentieth century in such a context, it is possible to view the Mono-ha art movement, which existed from the end of the 1960s until the 1970s, in a completely new light. In the catalogue for the 2005 exhibition Reconsidering Mono-ha (National Museum of Art, Osaka, 25 October – 18 December 2005), Kishio Suga recalls that ‘for the Mono-ha artists, their new “worldview” began by firstly perceiving in a completely natural way the four islands (as per the Chinese mythology revolving around Mount Penglai, or Mount Horai in Japanese), the east garden clearly reflects the Chinese view of the universe with its arrangement of cylindrical stones representing the main stars of the Great Bear constellation and its use of raked sand patterns to represent the glitter of the stars. Hashin tei, another karesansui garden designed by Shigemori at Komoyo-in, a sub-temple of Tofukuji, is an abstract garden consisting of a collection of vertical rocks surrounded by moss, the rocks resonating with each other to create a sublime space where one can sense an energy in which the garden and the universe are in sympathy with one another. According to Shigemori, “[o]n account of the use in traditional Japanese gardens of natural planting, natural rocks, moss and so on as raw materials, the finished works tend to be seen as reproductions of nature, but the complete reverse is true. As much as the materials may be natural, in fact they contain within them a resistance against nature,” a stance that reflects his view of art as something that “ultimately is acquainted with the appearance of beauty that is all the more greater only when its composition stems from a connection between nature and anti-nature.”

This ‘connection between nature and anti-nature’ can also be applied to the background landscape from its situation and replaced. Only works that successfully follow the steps of reconstruction by going through this process arouse strong emotions. This is the definition of art through all ages.’ Okamoto’s words offer a wealth of helpful suggestions in considering how views of nature are reflected in art.
things, external nature, places, circumstances and so on around them as they really are'.

This is nothing less than ‘a natural state. A state of being as it is, a traditional meaning of nature in Japan. Suga’s sensitivity was summed up when he stated: ‘All things are connected, and everywhere we see a state of affairs in which limitless things are linked. I described this state of affairs using the term the “totality of things” and viewed it as a collection of things that each had their own surrounding space but together formed a “unified world”’. It is also consistent with the views of nature we have considered so far. The ‘surrounding space’ of things Suga refers to is, to borrow the words of another important Mono-

ha theoretician, Lee Ufan, ‘the world of vibrations that transcends and extends beyond the objects, language and so on of a particular community’ or ‘a world of blank space’. Or, in terms of the Mono-ha’s most symbolic work, Nobuo Sekine’s **Phase – Mother Earth**, 1968, one could say it is the focusing of one’s gaze not at the earth heaped up into a cylinder but at the concave ‘emptiness’. In contrast, it is noticeable that, although they took the form of anti-art projects actually created in the natural world, the earthworks and land art that gained popularity mainly in the United States at around the same time as the Mono-ha artists were active adopted a gaze quite different from that of Mono-ha in the sense that artists such as Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer used forests, mountains, rivers, earth, deserts and other natural objects themselves as raw materials and subjects for their artworks.

In **Deai wo motomete – gendai bijutsu no shigen (In Search of Encounter – The Origins of Contemporary Art)**, Lee Ufan describes the creative process of the artist as ‘aiming not to turn the world into an object of recognition like an objet, but to free it into the midst of non-objective phenomena (the level of perception), or in other words to “world” the world’. Might not the encounters that arise when natural rock and something artificial like a sheet of steel are placed in a certain space, the vibrations in this space, be perceived via the same sensibility as that which ‘sees’ nature in the form of invisible phenomena and spirituality via the tactile sensation? ‘If viewing is encountering the world, then viewing that non-objective space is in a sense an intuitive and perceptive experience of the thickness and depth of this world of encounters’. In addition, Lee’s statement that ‘an encounter is not a confrontation with an object, but the perception of identifying with it by viewing it egolessly amidst such an expanse’ is perfectly consistent with the view of nature as ‘a state as it is’, as abandoning artifice and being oneself. It would also seem that the DNA of the Mono-ha can be traced to a Japanese cultural tradition that has been handed down in the form of a particular view of nature.

**Japanese contemporary art in the 1980s and nature**

At the end of the 1980s, as the Japanese economy continued to grow and attract more and more attention internationally, interest in Japanese contemporary art also intensified. The year 1989 was a historic one, with the Tiananmen Square massacre occurring in June and the Berlin Wall falling in November. In the years that followed, globalisation and political and economic restructuring gathered pace around the world. In Japan, 1989 marked the beginning of the collapse of the bubble economy, which peaked in late December of that year when the Tokyo Price Index (TOPIX Index) reached a record high. It was also the year when the country lost its direction, a situation from which it has yet to recover.

It was during this transitional period that two exhibitions introducing Japanese contemporary art in the 1980s toured the United States, but what is particularly interesting is that the key theme linking these two exhibitions was ‘nature’. The first of these exhibitions was **Against Nature: Japanese Art in the Eighties**, a collaborative project put together by two Americans and two Japanese curators that toured seven art museums in the United States. The second was **A Primal Spirit: Ten Japanese Sculptors**, which was co-organised by the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The title of the former was derived from the fact that at that time in Japan, which was still recklessly pursuing the path of rapid economic growth it had been committed to since the end of the war, certain artists had claimed they couldn’t understand what it meant to ‘feel at one with nature’ and instead I am very much against that’. The title also incorporated ‘the meaning of going against not only the natural landscape, but against one’s human nature, the human condition, even one’s nationality’. Because they hint at the hybridisation or contrasting of binary opposites such as city versus nature, technology versus tradition, or ornamentation/kitsch versus logical, rational expression, the key discussions around this exhibition point to new expression that has freed itself of the stereotype of Japanese culture as something with a strong affinity for nature. In contrast to this, for **A Primal Spirit**, the organisers selected artists whose work was directly engaged with forces in nature and natural materials, finding the source of their expression in traditional religion in the form of Shinto or Buddhism (especially Zen). It appears the participating artists expressed some discomfort at this direct contextualisation, and if, as I have indicated above, the origins of the Japanese view of nature permeate beyond the conscious level of things like religious doctrine and faith to the unconscious level of the very spiritual roots of the Japanese people, then this discomfort is probably understandable.

**Sensing nature**

Tokujin Yoshioka says that it has only been in the last few years that he has begun to focus on the fusion of natural phenomena and natural principles as the product of natural science, although glimpses of this fusion can be observed in his early work. I’m referring to his first job for Issey Miyake, whose studio he joined after working under Shiro Kuramata. This job involved making hats covered with transparent silicon water drops, which he followed up by making more hats using nothing but silicon. ‘Water’ continues to be a motif in his work. Yoshioka’s favourite ‘colours’ are white and transparent, but just as the current in a river never carries the same water twice, recreating phenomena with indeterminate form and instantaneous movements using colourless, transparent materials shakes off its very foundations the conventional concept of design as something that strives to create forms and colours that are as beautiful as possible. Also, the sight of a Hermes scarf floating in space on air flowing from an invisible nozzle abstracts brilliantly the essential beauty of silk scarves that move with the human body. Yoshioka once said, ‘Various things other than form, be it light, movement or fragrance, can become design elements’ and, in the context of the Japanese view of nature discussed above, it is understandable that he is often described as ‘quintessentially Japanese, even though his installations do not explicitly create an impression of Japan. If Yoshioka’s installations, many of which are achromatic, were paintings, then they would probably be consistent with the concept of ink painting as described by philosopher Yasuo Yuasa: ‘Even when a
visible natural landscape is stripped of all its colours, there is still an invisible energy flowing through it. This is what a painter paints.\[6\]

Nature as a presence: cultural identity as seen in the Japanese view of nature

So far we have considered the Japanese view of nature from the standpoint of religion, climate and the Japanese view of the universe, tracing its influence on spatial and sensual perception as well as on Japanese contemporary art. Properly, one would need to undertake deeper research and studies, and one also would want to make a comparison with philosophy, history and art in other Asian countries and in the West. However, what is clear even from this limited examination is that the Japanese view of nature envisages a continuous space from the natural world to the universe, including natural phenomena and natural environments that are invisible and of indeterminate form. It also includes what the Japanese call shinrabanshô (the whole creation) or tenchibanbutsu (all things in the universe), as well as the supernatural and four-dimensional entities that inhabit this space. Underlying the Japanese view of nature is a kind of primordial presence, or a set of vibrations that spatially link objects, and within the culture that senses this presence, people and nature are linked irrevocably.

Today, faced with an economy and society that have come to the end of a period of rapid growth and the progressing globalisation and economic economies in the rest of Asia, Japan is looking to redefine itself. People are seeking a new cultural direction, but not a new direction that simply involves becoming more Westernised, internationalised or globalised. Rather, people are looking for a more honest reappraisal of their vernacular cultural identity. The Japanese view of nature is one in which various religious outlooks, from nature worship to shamanism, ritualism, the I Ching, folk religion, Shinto and Buddhism have merged over the ages while being influenced by the unique climate and topography of Japan. This essay does little more than scratch the surface of this topic, but in a country where the political leadership lacks stability, I believe this view of nature will play an important role in helping people recall their own cultural DNA and seek out Japan’s cultural identity.

Endnotes

1. Kojien (Japanese dictionary), 5th ed., Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1998. Other meanings include: ‘The totality of external experience, as opposed to the mental. In other words, the material realm and to various phenomena.’ ‘The world as viewed from the standpoint of universality, recurrence, lawfulness and inevitability, as opposed to history.’ ‘The world of causal necessity, as opposed to freedom or what should be.’


4. In fact, compared to the dominating and overwhelming atmosphere one feels in places like the Vatican and Canterbury and other urban cathedrals on account of their solemnity and luxurious decorations, Shinto shrines like the one in Ise, Japan, which are dedicated to the sun, the moon, the earth, the wind and sun, are far from dominating or controlling on account of their very solemnity, but also because of their simple architectural style and setting surrounded by woods.


7. Ibid., p. 64.

8. Originally imported from China along with Buddhism, the theories of Yin and Yang and of the five elements were influenced by Shinto, Taoism, Buddhism and so on and developed into a system incorporating natural science and shamanism that is unique to Japan.

9. Various myths surrounding demons and monsters can be found in the Chinese classic Shin Hoi Jum, said to have been compiled between the fifth and third centuries BC. Siskien Toriyama was influenced by this book.
Tornado

2007
2 million transparent plastic straws
Dimensions variable
Installation views, Design Miami, Moore Building, Miami, US, 2007
pp. 48–53 © Nacása & Partners Inc.
Snow

2010
Feathers, transparent wall, electric fan
1400 x 500 x 600 cm
Installation views, Sensing Nature, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan, 2010
VENUS –
Natural crystal chair

2008
Natural crystal, polyester fibre, 78 x 66 x 78 cm
The installation also featured a crystal sofa and chaise longue
pp. 70–71 © Masaya Yoshimura
Rainbow Church

2006–10
500 crystal prisms, 160 x 900 cm
Installation views, Tokujin Yoshioka, SPECTRUM, MUSEUM Beyond Museum, Seoul, Korea, 2010
List of Works

All measurements width x depth x height.

**Tornado**, 2011
Transparent plastic straws
Dimensions variable

**Waterfall**, 2005–06
Optical glass, stainless steel
450 x 70 x 75 cm

**Water block**, 2002
Optical glass, stainless steel
120 x 40 x 40 cm
1967
Born in Saga Prefecture, Japan

1986
Graduated from Kuwasawa Design School

2000
Established Tokujin Yoshioka Design
Lives and works in Tokyo, Japan

Exhibitions
2011
Tokujin Yoshioka Waterfall, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, Australia

2010
Tokujin Yoshioka Swarovski Crystal Palace (Stardust), Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2009
Tokujin Yoshioka Honey-pop, MDS Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2008
Tokujin Yoshioka Xperiment, Axis Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2006
Tokujin Yoshioka Super Fiber Revolution, AXIS Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

Books
Tokujin Yoshioka, Invisible Forms, Access Publishing, Tokyo, Japan, 2009
Tokujin Yoshioka, Tokujin Design, Gap Publications, Tokyo, Japan, 2001

Magazines
‘100 most creative people in business’, Fast Company magazine (US), June 2010
‘100 most respected Japanese in the world’, Newsweek Japan, 17 October 2007

Television
Jonetsu Tairiku, Mainichi Hoso TV, 20 June 2010

Exhibition Catalogues
Tokujin Yoshioka Waterfall, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, Australia, 2011

Awards
2011
Wallpaper Design Awards
Ellie Deco International Design Awards (EDIDA)
A & W [Architektur & Wohnen] Designer of the Year

2010
Tokyo Design & Art Environmental Awards, Artist of the Year

2009
Ellie Deco International Design Awards (EDIDA), Designer of the Year

2008
Wallpaper Design Awards
Design for Asia (DFA) Award

2007
BVLGARI Brilliant Dreams Award
Good Design Gold Award
Design Miami Designer of the Year

2006
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan, Encouragement Prize

2001
Mainichi Design Award

Public Collections
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, US
Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, New York, US
Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany
Dolla S. Merrilees is General Manager
– Artistic and Educational Programmes, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation. Previously she worked as Director – Visual Arts, Museums and Galleries NSW, where she initiated and oversaw Leading from the Edge: 2005 National Public Galleries Summit, and as Exhibition Manager for the 2000 and 2002 Biennales of Sydney. As Assistant Curator, Decorative Arts and Design at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, and Curator of Contemporary Craft at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, she contributed to projects such as 4 + 1:5 Contemporary Australian Designs, 1999, Contemporary Australian Craft, 1998, and Alvar Aalto: Points of Contact, 1996. She is the recipient of two Ian Potter Foundation Cultural Grants (1997; 2001) and over the course of her career has provided specialist advice to the not-for-profit sector on strategic planning, exhibition development and tours, programming and fundraising. She has written extensively for print and online media. Recent writing projects include The Woodcutter’s Wife, 2007; ‘Memento mori (remember that you must die)’ in Hair: Trunk Series, 2009; and ‘Blood, brain, barrier’ in Blood: Trunk Series (to be published 2011). She is currently working on her forthcoming book.

Contributors

Dr Gene Sherman AM is Chairman and Executive Director of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation. She has a specialised knowledge of art, literary theory and French and English literature and spent seventeen years teaching, researching and lecturing at secondary and tertiary levels. As Director of Sherman Galleries (1986–2007) she organised up to twenty-two exhibitions annually, including regional and national touring exhibitions within Australia, and international touring exhibitions through the Asia-Pacific region. Gene and Brian Sherman have previously sponsored a Master of Fine Arts Administration student at the Collage of Fine Arts, The University of New South Wales (1997–2007), a studio at Bundanon and a contemporary Australian art-research room at the Schaeffer Fine Arts Library, The University of Sydney. Dr Sherman is currently on the Board of the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, and the Art & Australia Advisory Board. She is a member of the International Association of Art Critics and the Tate Asia-Pacific Acquisitions Committee and has recently become an AsiaLink Asia Literary Ambassador, a role that involves inspiring young people to become Asia literate and thus expand their career and life opportunities. She regularly lectures to a wide range of institutions on topics such as gallery management, the art of collecting, philanthropy, private foundations, Australian and Asian contemporary artists, and contemporary Japanese fashion. Dr Sherman was awarded the Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government (2003) and a Doctorate of Letters honoris causa by The University of Sydney (2008). She was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2010 for her cultural philanthropy and her support of emerging and established artists.

Previous Exhibitions

Ai Weiwei: Under Construction
1 May – 26 July 2008
Presented in partnership with Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney

Jonathan Jones: Untitled (The Tyranny of Distance)
14 August – 11 October 2008

Jitish Kallat: Aquasaurus

The View from Elsewhere
19 March – 13 June 2009
Presented in partnership with the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa / SANAA
3 July – 26 September 2009

Charwei Tsai: Water, Earth and Air
23 October – 19 December 2009

Fiona Tan: Coming Home
19 March – 12 June 2010
Presented in association with the National Art School, Sydney

Brook Andrew: The Cell
9 July – 18 September 2010
Presented in association with the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

Contemporary Art for Contemporary Kids
8 October – 18 December 2010
Presented in partnership with the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

Yang Fudong: No Snow on the Broken Bridge
18 March – 4 June 2011
On tour to IMA, Brisbane, 2 July – 13 August 2011

Dinh Q. Lê: Erasure
8 July – 10 September 2011

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