

Shimabuku

*Man should try
to avoid contact
with alien life forms*

Curator Chiara Parisi

Opening November 12th, 2011, at 4pm
November 13th, 2011 - June 24th, 2012

The Centre international d'art et du paysage on Vassivière Island is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Shimabuku, *Man should try to avoid contact with alien life forms*, curated by Chiara Parisi. The exhibition will open on November 12th, at 5pm, and will welcome visitors from November 13th, 2011 to February 26th, 2012.

In the meantime, Shimabuku will also be present in France in a solo exhibition at the CAPC – Bordeaux Contemporary Art Museum, from 9th November, 2011 to February 6th, 2012. Entitled *On the water*, his project has been realized during the residence of the artist in the capital of Gironde and on the muddy waters of the river Garonne.

Shimabuku's very name means "island" and "luggage", so it seemed quite natural the artist would have a show on Vassivière Island, especially as the most discrete and poetic ending to Chiara Parisi's program at the Art center.

After conducting exhibitions and projects in this unique island landscape for seven years, Chiara Parisi asked Shimabuku to slow down time and create works that would resist any exhibition constraint and propose a whole new way of relating to nature and animals.

In 1990, Shimabuku hosted in his home – while he was living in the United States – an "exhibition in a refrigerator". The artist explained the story behind this mysterious title: his flatmate had forbidden him to put any fish in their fridge. One day though, Shimabuku bought smelt and an octopus tentacle. He was very surprised by his flatmate's reaction: when he came home, instead of being mad at him, he called up a friend and they spent some time contemplating this still life in the fridge, commenting its aspect, sharing their feelings and emotions towards it. It was his first solo show.

On Vassivière Island, Shimabuku is complementing an anthology of the works he created in the past fifteen years with new productions that play on details, sounds and the origins of their names, and weave together an absolutely unique world. In Aldo Rossi's building, the exhibition *Man should try to avoid contact with alien life forms* becomes a playful and moving experience where each piece can trigger a bewildering experience that transports the viewer into Shimabuku's universe.

From the **meadow**, the visitor can get a sense of the whole project when he reads the title of the exhibition *Man should try to avoid contact with alien life forms*, as a neon sign along the front wall of the main building of the Art center. This quote from the British cosmologist and physicist Stephen Hawking reverses the author's fear that aliens would conquer and colonize the earth. Here, the artist suggests that we should not worry about forms of life that are different from ours, but on the contrary open ourselves to what surrounds us with the greatest attention.

In the first space of this exhibition, the **lighthouse**, the visitor is drawn to look ahead into the following rooms of the Art center: a balanced enigmatic object introduces the whole artistic universe of the Japanese artist.

Shimabuku wishes his viewers to engage in interactive situations that could afterwards become events in their lives. They would tell of those events, exchange their experience, and transform them into fables, tales, stories.

When he was younger, Shimabuku wanted to become a poet or a tour guide. Convinced that art doesn't have to necessarily create objects but should rather generate encounters, the artist managed to combine his two vocations. From that point on, style or medium are not what really matters in the finished work, its main objective is to connect beings together.

Then the visitor enters the **nave** of the building, where Shimabuku transforms the imposing space into a place calling for an amused discovery: the stream of a river drags and spins around little vegetal forms that the artist particularly likes: apples and potatoes. It seems like Shimabuku was primarily seeking the enjoyment of his viewer, his surprise through a burlesque action, an experience that will stay in his memory like some fables of La Fontaine – for instance *The Hare and the Turtle*, which could well have inspired this work.

Further down from the **nave**, in the **studio**, Shimabuku re-considers the *Fish & Chips* with an installation that places the viewer far below sea level: a video shows a potatoes sinking in water to end up the abyss with a translucent fish– in the meantime, while witnessing the very strange alchemy between these two objects, the viewer can feel under his feet a soft and immaculate carpet recalling the finest of sands.

On the first floor, the **study room** becomes the elegant home of *My teacher, Tortoise*. In this work, the visitor encounters a very unexpected and incongruous animal, a tortoise: it is both a typical mythological being and a central figure in the artist's body of works. The tortoise presence is like an occasion to let time slow down for a bit and enjoy the moment while it passes. The long-lived tortoise has always been a symbol for immortality and wisdom; here, it also appears as an emblem for Shimabuku's work on the island.

Doing things you didn't plan to do, is the title of the work presented in the **little theatre** of the Art center. It is a golf range – an installation and a video allowing the visitors to try out golf. From a cage, they can improve their swing, while others sit on the stairs of the auditorium and witness the performance they will have to do later on. In turns the visitors can use a golf

stick and shoot a ball while aiming at a specific goal: the little window overlooking the dam that created the lake and the island.

The visitors are invited to continue their journey in the **sculpture wood**, where Shimabuku invites them to meet the everyday inhabitants of Vassivière: the animals living on the island. The artist reverses the traditional setting of a zoological garden: he plants a sign in the wood reading, "Make the animals smile", so humans would trade their usual roles with the horses, donkeys, sheep and hens that inhabit the island, by being for once an entertainment to them.

The tour ends in the Café where the visitors can enjoy Shimabuku's rather peculiar ice cream recipe – a work entitled *Ice Cream With Salt Ice Cream with Pepper*.

Man should try to avoid contact with alien life forms ends the program conducted by Chiara Parisi on Vassivière, and proves one last time that this place is more than just an open-air museum, it is before all a life experience.

Catalogue

For his solo exhibition *Man should try to avoid contact with alien life forms*, Shimabuku created a book with designer Hattori Kazunari; it features a conversation between Chiara Parisi and the artist, and a text by Pierre Joseph. Its is co-published by the Centre international d'art et du paysage and Silavana Editoriale.

iPod / Artist's tour

The iPod audioguide offers a commentary on Shimabuku's work by **Koo Jeong-A et Elodie Royer & Yoann Gourmel**

Bookshop

The Centre d'art invites the exhibiting artists to propose a selection of books that have been especially influential in their work and thus enrich the bookshop's available collection.

Shimabuku

Born 1969 in Kobé, Shimabuku lives and works in Berlin.

Selected solo shows

2011, *My Teacher Tortoise*, Wilkinson Gallery, London, United Kingdom; **2010**, *Kaki and Tomato*, Air de Paris, Paris, France; **2008**, *Shimabuku's Fish & Chips*, Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona, Spain; *Album*, The Street-Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, United Kingdom; *The Story so Far*, Shugoarts, Tokyo, Japan; *Sea, Sky, Language and so on*, DAAD galerie, Berlin, Germany; **2007**, *Shimabuku's Fish & Chips (with Damian Ortega)*, DAAD Galerie, Berlin, Germany; *The Story So Far 2*, Shugoarts, Tokyo, Japan; *Shimabuku's Fish & Chips*, Wilkinson Gallery, London, United Kingdom; **2005**, *Catching octopus with self-made ceramic pots*, Air de Paris, Paris, France; *From high in the sky to the bottom of the sea*, Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona, Spain; **2004**, *Yoyo on the Moon (with Kidlat Tahimic)*, Maejima Art Center/Yume-R, Okinawa, Japan; *Born as a box*, Wilkinson Gallery, London, United Kingdom; **2003**, *Swansea Jack Memorial Dog Swimming Competition*, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea, United Kingdom; **2002**, *Then, I decided to give a tour of Tokyo to the octopus from Akashi*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Selected collective shows:

2011, *Convivio*, Micro-Onde, Vélizy-Villacoublay, France; **2010**, *Neanderthalian Nights (the world is not at home)*, Galleria Zero, Milan, Italy; Aichi Triennale, Aichi, Japan; **2009**, *The Grand Illusion*, National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center, Taipei, Thailand; *Eating the Universe - Vom Essen in der Kunst*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany; **2008**, *Laughing in a Foreign Language*, Hayward Gallery, London, United Kingdom; *Blooming*, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota City, Japan; *Between Art and Life*, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva, Switzerland; **2007**, *Age of micro pop*, Art Tower Mito, Japan; *How to live together?*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chili; **2006**, *Le Invasione Barbariche*, galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy; Anstoss Berlin, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, Germany; Berlin-Tokyo Tokyo-Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany; Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, United Kingdom; *How to live together?*, 27th Saõ Paulo Biennial, Saõ Paulo, Brazil; **2005**, *Circa Berlin*, NIKOLAJ-CCAC, Copenhagen, Denmark; **2004**, *A fripon, fripon et demi*, Collection Lambert, Avignon, France; *Why not live for art?*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; **2003**, *Utopia Station*, Venice Biennial, Venice, Italy; *The Happy Face of Globalization*, Biennale of Ceramics in Contemporary Art, Savone, Italy; 10th Biennale of the Moving Image, Geneva, Switzerland; *U-Topos*, Tirana Biennale 2, Tirana, Albany; **2002**, *C'est pas du cinéma*, Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing, France; *Art in the home*, Edinburgh, United Kingdom; *La Part de l'Autre*, Carré d'Art, Nîmes, France

Information

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**Ouvert du mardi au vendredi 14h – 18h,
le week-end 11h – 13h et 14h – 18h.**

Fares: Full price admission: 3 euros / **Reduced tickets:** 1,5 euros children over 12 years, students, unemployed / **Free:** children under 12 years, disabled and their companions, Friends of the Centre international d'art et du paysage, members of the Artothèque.

The Centre international d'art et du paysage is funded by the Ministère de la culture et de la communication / Drac Limousin and the Limousin Region Council.

The exhibition *Man should try to avoid any contact with alien life forms* is realized in partnership with Décathlon, Mademoiselle Bio, Pro Natura, Shiseido and the Syndicat mixte « Le Lac de Vassivière ».

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