

GROWING SPACE

CURATED AND PRODUCED BY SYNONYM

Exhibition: 2022.7.30. (sat) - 10.10. (mon)

Artist: Mitsunori Kimura, Luc Schol and Riko Yasumiya

Venue: Batting LALALA Midori

458-0801 Aichi, Nagoya, Midori Ward, Narumicho, Kakitsubata - 92

The inaugural exhibition at GROWING SPACE, Batting LALALA Midori is self-titled *GROWING SPACE*, in partnership with Aichi Triennale 2022.

In addition to the interactive light installation *neuro—muscular interaction* (2021) created in collaboration with Riko Yasumiya back in March 2021, SYNONYM would like to present a curation of artworks and installations starting from the 30th of July until the 10th of October 2022, exhibiting a variety of art forms such as wooden sculptures from Mitsunori Kimura, landscape photography and moving images from Luc Schol, as well as interactive installations from Riko Yasumiya.

The exhibition of *GROWING SPACE* is a reaction to the theme behind this year's Aichi Triennale 2022 *STILL ALIVE*, which focuses on global propositions of values and beauty in a post-COVID-19 era. *GROWING SPACE* outlines a relationship between nature, humans and animals, centring on the concepts of coexistence and escapism, it's a proposal for us to reconsider the mutual relationship, to increase awareness and change our sensitivity towards what's surrounding us with the pandemic hopefully coming to a close.

Escapism quintessentially draws on the idea of a utopia. Human beings have dabbled around and imagined an ideal world away from depression and sadness since early times. For the past two years due to the pandemic, we all had to endure and suffer, the feeling of compulsion has swelled and multiplied to a level where it felt almost suffocating. On the other hand – a relatively positive note – during various periods of lockdown, people around the world have all begun to realise the importance of nature, the talks of being out in the open and escaping to nature have perhaps once more become the centre of discussion. It's our intention in curating a utopia where we could all escape to, realising a game-like world with separate distinctive islands enveloped by an enigmatic air guiding the audience through the main story narrative, from reality to the realms of fantasy, simultaneously crafting a bonus stage for us to discover a hidden

world within, creating a coexisting relationship among all the artworks, whilst illustrating the fact that humans, animals, even nature are all subject to the same laws of existence — they grow, they develop and ultimately they die.

At *GROWING SPACE*, you would find artworks allowing viewers to meditate, to interact with and to encounter our surroundings in a different spectrum, you may also experience a fragrance of hinoki (cypress) emanating from the sculptures created by Mitsunori Kimura. The exhibition also serves an educational purpose for everyone to understand more about the human body, endangered animals and nature. A batting centre is a place for children and adults to have fun and to learn, on top of all, *GROWING SPACE* hopefully opens up everyone's existing perception to what art could be. Please give art another chance, amidst the ongoing pandemic and war, humanity still thrives and grows, let's stay hungry and stay curious, keep our fingers crossed and hope for better years to come.

On the 24th of August during the exhibition period, an art workshop designed for elementary kids, co-organised by SYNONYM and Sakura Kids International, will be hosted by Mitsunori Kimura, who will guide and inspire the kids to make their own creations using a variety of materials. This exhibition is warmly supported by the Aichi Triennale Organising Committee and Hémash.

Mitsunori Kimura

Mitsunori Kimura (b. 1983) was born in Shizuoka, Japan. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in sculpture from Nagoya Zokei University. After graduating with a Master's degree in Fine Arts majoring in Environmental Art from the same university in 2007, Kimura has actively participated in group exhibitions not only in Japan and Asia but in Europe as well, including Biennale de Lyon 2017, meanwhile the artist has also held solo exhibitions in Japan and Korea throughout the years.

Kimura is a sculptor who creates works by wood carving and oil paint modelling, he picks up the motifs of his works from daily moments and unexpected intimacy — curious, childlike and playful — at first glance, many of Kimura's works share a humorous and amusing aspect to them. Enchanted by animals and inspired by artists like Katsura Funakoshi and Georg Baselitz, as well as animalism omnipresently developed around the 5th and the 6th century ancient Japan, the artist works exclusively with the material of wood. In 2015, Kimura started experimenting with a unique carving method on the surface of wood using a chainsaw, as if actual hair is growing out of the wooden panels or sculptures, this is not an intent to reflect on the transience of life but instead, it alludes to the obscurification of the intermediate, or rather, the liminal state between life and

death.

In September 2020, while participating in an artist residency program at Kamoe Art Center in Hamamatsu, Japan, impacted by COVID-19, *Breathe* (2020) was born — an ongoing sculptural project that evolves around various species of animals and the idea of ‘breathing’ — a simple yet complicated process undertaken by the lungs of both humans and animals, in an attempt to explore deeper into our coexisting relationship with animals under the current social climate.

For the exhibition of *GROWING SPACE*, further expanding on the vocabularies of this work series *Breathe*, Kimura has turned our heads to saiga, a critically endangered antelope that’s not found in Japan, whose outstanding feature noticeably is perhaps its large nose, that serves to warm and moisten inhaled air during winter while cooling it down during summer. Working with hinoki once more, a type of wood on the other hand, that’s widely available in the country. By bringing saiga to our attention and drawing the distance closer to this sacred creature, Kimura does not only remind us that we, along with the animals, are all involved in the natural cycle of breathing. The artist also ponders on what it means to exist and to live as a human being, questions what fundamentally lies within the relationship between humans, animals and nature in a contemporary human-centred society.

Luc Schol

Luc Schol (b. 1991) is a Dutch visual artist creating his own fantastical realms. After attending the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague from 2009 to 2013, he received his BA in photography at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam in 2015. Schol obtained his MA at the Royal College of Art, London in 2021. He has previously exhibited his work at North Sea Jazz, the Van Gogh Museum and Cromwell Place London. Currently, he is based in London and Rotterdam.

Schol's practice is concerned with exploring and questioning escapist realms, whether physical or digital. He traverses these lands by foot, mouse or joystick and uses the camera to create large enigmatic imagery to invoke a meditative experience. The artist wonders what escapism means for the human condition, as it is so seemingly pointless yet so irrefutably important.

For Schol’s first showcase in Japan, working in collaboration with SYNONYM, the artist presents and combines two of his ongoing projects, *The Contemplative Landscape* (2015 -) and *Underneath the Giant* (2021 -), large enigmatic landscapes play a central role in both. Mixing landscapes shot in nature with carefully crafted scenes, he creates an experience that looks into both escapism and the

sublime. These works strive to construct an exchange between our experience of the landscape within lockdown and our subsequent release back into the wild. "Photography is a medium so intertwined with screens large and small in contemporary times," says Schol, "the printing process of the artworks adds an extra conceptual layer to the 3D crafted landscapes. A beautiful print offers a step away from the screen, finalises an image and gives it life." All the exhibited works are inkjet printed on Hahnemühle Fine Art paper, hung interspersedly throughout the space, utilising the entire location as a game world — different regions and checkpoints to explore. Also on view is *Inferno* (2017), a video piece containing an ever-burning flame that slowly fades in intensity.

Riko Yasumiya

Riko Yasumiya was born in Osaka (b. 1993), graduated from Kyoto Seika University in 2015, subsequently in 2019 she undertook Art & Science in Central Saint Martins in London and obtained a Master's degree in Arts. She's currently based in Tokyo.

Yasumiya produces visual artworks and artefacts related to human anatomy, her research lies in creating artwork that shows the possibility of delivering knowledge about the human body in a more engaging presentation than textual content alone. She encourages greater awareness and understanding of our body, by using a variety of media appropriate to teaching and presentational requirements, including textile, mixed media, 3D construction and installation. Yasumiya's interests and practice lie deep in the study of anatomy, inspired by the likes of Bridget Riley, Man Ray and Ryoji Ikeda and so on, she intends to create another world of expression of how the human body can be perceived, and to communicate with a wider audience via multimedia artworks.

At *GROWING SPACE*, currently on view are two interactive installations created by the artist in 2019 and 2021 respectively. The human heart is composed of two atria and two ventricles, this mass of muscle performs involuntary, coordinated contractions that allow blood to be pumped and circulated throughout the body. *Heartbeat* (2019) depicts the composition and movement of this vital organ, inviting audiences to observe and learn of their own cardiac cycle through the use of a heart rate sensor.

neuro—muscular interaction (2021) was an installation work commissioned by SYNONYM in collaboration with Batting LALALA. The appearance of the work reminds us of a chandelier or a skeletal model, the installation replicates the electric signals transmitted to the muscles from the nerves, and the lights would react and generate different patterns depending on the location of the viewer, just like when human muscles expand and contract when the human body is in motion.

About SYNONYM

SYNONYM is an online and offline network project space focusing on community-based storytelling. We are directors, curators and producers of art and design projects as well as exhibitions, from conception to realisation, we aim to bridge and to expand the horizons of the commercial, niche and cultural sectors.

Established in both Nagoya, Japan and London, UK, the underlying connotation behind our name 'SYNONYM' implies that despite all the individual differences we are all similar one way or another, on this constantly evolving platform, we would like to take you along a journey starting from Japan, presenting a curation of ideas and objects.

In a parallel universe simultaneously, SYNONYM also publishes an online journal celebrating travel and cultures. Acting as a catalyst, we initiate dialogues with creatives, artists, gallerists and designers in the field of art, fashion, craft, design and more, aspired to bring exceptional creative talents all over the world together.

Contact

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Credit

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GROWING SPACE Partner: Hémash co.,Ltd

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