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Taro Izumi. ex **2 September – 15 November 2020**

Museum Tinguely's main autumn exhibition is a chance for visitors to immerse themselves in the quirky, mischief-filled world of Japanese artist Taro Izumi (born 1976 in Nara). Izumi's first major solo exhibition in Switzerland from 2 September to 15 November 2020 rests on his observations of our lifestyles, social interactions, and relations with nature and animals. Out of this material, he conceives multifarious, unclassifiable works which, starting from a simple framework and a certain economy of means, take us on journeys to the gates of absurdity. The unique creative universe unfolded for *Taro Izumi. ex* is an organic ecosystem that does not fit neatly into any established artistic category. Sculpture, installation, performance, video and sometimes even the architectural surroundings themselves are closely combined. Likewise, materials are brought together (wood, textiles, plants, household objects – items of every kind) in structures that might appear chaotic, but are actually carefully designed and assembled. An encounter with this opulent, ever-expanding cosmos is like entering a visual and mental kaleidoscope. The show at Museum Tinguely will feature works that Izumi created for the museum's own spaces and that reflect on the cultural and societal upheavals caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. *Taro Izumi. ex* will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue that for the first time will provide detailed descriptions of Izumi's work.

Video as medium as mirror as image as movement as object as video

The most fitting technique for the instantaneous transcription of the artist's invented actions is video, which he uses like a pen with which to capture and translate everything he observes. A pivotal medium of his practice, video is an integral part of all his installations and all his exhibitions and plays an essential semantic role. For *Taro Izumi. ex* at Museum Tinguely, ubiquitous screens invade the whole space; they punctuate the rooms, perch on floor and ceiling, cling to the walls and tilt in the air. Mounted on Izumi's supports, video bewilders, captures, captivates and saturates the viewer's attention even while continuously trying to intercept it. The immersive experience of Taro Izumi's video works is reminiscent of Tokyo's urban space overflowing with sounds and images, which here some of the installations seem to be reproducing.

Taro Izumi at Museum Tinguely – The attempt to capture that which cannot be captured

Tickled in a dream ... maybe ? (2017) is the largest multimedia installation to be presented at Museum Tinguely. This series combining sculptures and videos is based on photographs of athletes – mainly footballers – captured in mid-leap. Departing from images of spectacular acrobatics (volleys, sliding tackles, the audacious pirouette of a legendary kick or a famous basketball player's jump in the air), Izumi constructs support structures that enable performers to simulate movements that seem impossible to reproduce. A cross between furniture and prosthesis, plinth and sculpture, these cobbled-together structures assume a wide variety of forms and bear a certain resemblance – both formally and conceptually – to the interactive works of Jean Tinguely (1925–1991). They share the same sense of mischief and a similar spirit in the way they assemble ideas and materials, and play with the senses and with the viewer. The artist attempts to capture that which cannot be captured: movement, time and gravity.

Exhibition as Gesamtkunstwerk

Over time, Izumi's exhibitions have taken on an important immersive dimension. It is through the exhibition medium that the artist inhabits spaces and develops his narratives. In recent years, he has conceived mainly pieces that respond to the places in which he is invited to show his work. This has led him to view the exhibition as a work in its own right. By means of technology and the recurrent use of video, streaming and image superimposition, the artist has also established a complex network of interactions between his works.

Vacuum cleaner robots, flickering lights and a theatre without spectators

For his major solo exhibition at Museum Tinguely, the artist's first in Switzerland, Izumi conceived every piece as if it were part of a living organism that breathes, vibrates, moves, talks, sings, lights up. Vacuum cleaner robots move in the air like insects; screens flicker constantly; sounds are emitted; a theatre awaits spectators. Izumi tells us about absence, emptiness and virtual presence, and about places that have become inaccessible. In doing so he reflects on the new types of behaviour that have emerged with the advent of Covid-19.

With his lightness of touch and sense of irony, Izumi succeeds in amalgamating supposedly antagonistic universes. He navigates between these worlds, from the organic to the technological and from the technological to the organic, by way of everything that exists in between. Although his aesthetic resists categorization, it is nevertheless reminiscent of the total art of Fluxus.

Curator of the exhibition is Séverine Fromaigeat.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, (168 pages) which for the first time takes an in-depth look at the artist's work. This publication, published by Hatje Cantz, and edited by the exhibition curator, was produced in close collaboration with the artist, who elaborated the iconographic corpus of the work himself. With critical essays, interviews and a rich iconography, it retraces and examines his career in great detail. Translating the idea of circularity and constant movement, it can be read horizontally as well as vertically and hence is also a playful object which can be looked at, touched and interpreted in many different ways.

With a preface by Roland Wetzels, a detailed study of Izumi's artistic trajectory by Séverine Fromaigeat, a text on the ontological nature of his works by Keren Goldberg, a dialogue between the architect Jun Aoki and the museum curator Kenjiro Hosaka, a brief

biographical description by the art historian Jean de Loisy, epistolary interludes by the curator Gabriel Ritter, and an insight into the world of animals in captivity by the zoologist Robert Zingg, the catalogue reviews the evolution of Izumi's oeuvre and with it his interest in his recurrent themes, such as architecture, the animal world and the conceptual aspects of artistic creation. Available at the museum shop, in bookstores and online for 48 CHF/ 40 EUR, ISBN 978-3-7757-4737-0 (EN).

General and practical information:

Title of the exhibition: Taro Izumi. ex

Address: Museum Tinguely | Paul Sacher-Anlage 1 | 4002 Basel, Switzerland

Duration: 2 September – 15 November 2020

Opening day: Tuesday, 1 September 2020, 11 am-9 pm

Regular opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday, daily 11 am-6 pm

Websites: www.tinguely.ch | www.taroizumi.com/en/

Social Media: @museumtinguely | #museumtinguely | #tinguely | #taroizumi

Special Day «Taro Izumi» on the occasion of «Kunsttage»: Sunday, 20 September 2020

11 am–6 pm Screenings of selected videos by Taro Izumi

3-4 pm Curator's tour

4-5 pm Artist talk with Taro Izumi and the curator Séverine Fromaigeat

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