Visions of Exchange
Mercedes-Benz Art Scope Award 2009–2017

June 2th – November 4th, 2018
Daimler Contemporary Berlin

The artist-in-residence program "Mercedes-Benz Art Scope" was founded in 1991 by Mercedes-Benz Japan as an artistic exchange program between young artists from Japan and Germany. Since 2003, the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo has facilitated and presented the results in cooperation with Mercedes-Benz Japan and the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin. Each exchange pursues a specific theme through which independent artistic positions can unfold: conceptually with regard to the individual experience of cultural, urban, and landscape impressions, as well as with the handling of material and media. The program allows participating artists to consider new topics, techniques, and materials. Their artistic results present viewers with the opportunity to encounter current contemporary works, which refer to individual as well as to global aspects.

"Mercedes-Benz Art Scope 2015-2017: Wandering to Wonder" is the latest iteration of this exchange and will be exhibited from May 27th to August 27th, 2017 at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2018, the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin will present artists that participated in the exchanges between 2009 and 2017. The previous thematic exhibitions at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo shed light on opportunities for connection and dialog across various artworks. Bringing these artists together in Berlin will once again provide a significant overview of the results of these artistic exchanges, as well as open up fresh avenues for intercultural considerations and relationships.

For example, ***"Art Scope 2009-2011: Invisible Memories"*** addressed the impressions of foreign countries and cultures on the associated choice of specific media and formats in the artistic works. Meiro Koizumi (* 1976, Gunma Prefecture, JP) works in video, performance, and mixed media that touches upon a range of human experiences, histories, and emotions. Hiroe Saeki (* 1978, Osaka, JP) creates delicate works in graphite, watercolor, and pastels on paper evoke the genre of Ukiyo-e prints, the 'floating world' representations that were common in 17th-19th Century Japan, but in distinctly modern and abstract forms. Eva Berendes (* 1974, Bonn, D) often deploys mixed media and fabric in the form of geometric-abstract screens or partitions, which divide the spaces of their placement. These recall the sliding room screens found in traditional Japanese households, but also evoke the constructivist tendencies of European modernism or Bauhaus architecture. Jan Scharrelmann (* 1975 Cologne, D) sculptural program is equally based in geometric and abstract concerns, and his play of interior and exterior occurs through the use of contrasting colors and surprising shifts in perspective.

In 2012-2014, it was the aspect of travel, or rather, what ***"Remains of Their Journey,"*** that formed the central concept for the artists. These four artists were invited to relate their distinct experiences after participating in Art Scope, which resulted in works that highlight the diversity of contemporary art practices. Ryosuke Imamura (* 1982 in Kyoto, JP) creates delicate installations inspired by everyday life and memories, which incorporate subtle phenomena mainly of light and sound and allow for unexpected relations to emerge. Satoshi

Ohno (* 1980 Gifu, JP) explores the possibilities of painting in the 21st Century digital era based on his reading of Eastern and Western art history, and is characterized by symbolic, energetic imagery that highlights the conflict and fusion between the natural and the artificial. Rita Hensen (* 1960 Bedburg, D) creates installations that combine drawings, sculptures, and photographs that draw from the direct experiences of their locations. In various forms of 'translating' or 'transforming' lived experience into material works, surprising relationships emerge among images, objects, and spaces. Benedikt Partenheimer (* 1977 Munich, D) focuses his photographic and media practice on the quiet observations of every societies, framing vignettes that are simultaneously surreal yet somehow known.

"Wandering to Wonder," the latest exchange from 2015-2017, emphasizes the impressions and experiences of other cultures through photography, mixed media, and video that involves the dual physical (Wandering) and mental (Wondering) activities of both artist and audience. Menja Stevenson (* 1982 in Rottweil, D) produced photographs and prints that capture her encounters and discoveries in the sprawling Japanese metropolis. Her photographs reveal a peculiar strangeness towards the city as an experiential space by depicting topographically uncertain locations in painterly color sequences. She considers her prints to be a collaborative work with the team of the renowned traditional Takahashi printing workshop in Bunkyo-ku: the effort, time, traces, soul, and personality that have been inscribed into the surfaces of the workshop tables over the decades are given new visibility in the impressions of Stevenson's prints. Things that of and in themselves are not unusual, not worth preserving, not worthy of admiration, see their inner beauty and unique quality reflected back to them in her artistic translations and transformations. Taro Izumi (* 1976 Nara, JP) creates short video works showing actions in public and private space by himself or others, oscillating between absurdity and surreal slapstick. Through the fusion of fiction and reality in his installations, Izumi manages to humorously address culturally influenced behaviors, rituals, and rules. Tokihiro Sato (* 1957 Yamagata, JP) works as a photographer, and develops through his work the thesis that not only travels shape our cultural experiences, but also time. Through a long exposure time, the places in his images appear devoid of humans, allowing for perceptions and pictorial readings of the viewers to "wander" in open spaces suspended in time.

While the themes of "Mercedes-Benz Art Scope" have differed over the years, the opportunities for various cultural exchanges, relationships, and aesthetic cross-pollinations have remained at the core of the program. The exhibition of these previous 11 artists from 2009 to 2017 will create a space in which encounters of cultures and individuals, new and expanded experiences, and aesthetic readings transcend given national boundaries.

Artist Biographies:

Art Scope 2009-2011: Invisible Memories

Meiro Koizumi was born in Gunma Prefecture, JP in 1976 and currently resides in Yokohama. Koizumi's work in video, performance, and mixed media involves both himself and others, and ranges the spectrum of human experience, history, and emotions. For his work "Defect in Vision" for the 2011 Invisible Memories exhibition, Koizumi presented a short vignette centering around the last night of a Kamikaze pilot where real vision-impaired people acted as characters who could physically see, but who are 'blind' to ideologies and beliefs. Many of his

works revolve around questions such as these. He has been a frequent exhibitor at venues in Europe, the United States, and Asia. (http://www.meirokoizumi.com/framepage13.html)

Hiroe Saeki was born in Osaka, JP in 1978 and lives in Tokyo. Her delicate works in graphite, watercolor, and pastel on paper evoke the genre of Ukiyo-e prints, the 'floating world' representations that were common in 17th-19th Century Japan, but with a distinctly modern and abstract approach. Saeki's organic abstractions are also placed into stark contrast with the plain whiteness of the supporting background, drawing comparisons to both traditional Japanese techniques and 20th Century European trends. Her work has been exhibited in Europe and Asia.

Eva Berendes was born in Bonn, D in 1974 and resides in Berlin. Berendes often deploys mixed media and fabric in the form of geometric-abstract screens or partitions, which divide and interrupt the spaces of their placement. These works recall the sliding room screens found in traditional Japanese households, but also evoke constructivist tendencies and architectural ideas of European modernism, particularly Bauhaus and De Stijl. Her work has been shown in numerous museums, galleries, and exhibition spaces throughout Europe and the United States. (http://evaberendes.com/)

Jan Scharrelmann was born Cologne, D in 1975, where he lives today. His sculptural program ranges from the monumental to the diminutive, with each piece offering moments of contemplation and interfacing. These works utilize geometric forms that often use contrasting and bright colors to disrupt preconceived notions of the minimal object. His unique play of interior/exterior through the use of bright colors and reductive forms also conjures the 'floating world' of the Ukiyo-e genre. He has had many solo and group exhibitions, mainly in Germany. (http://www.scharrelmann.com/)

Art Scope 2012-2014 – Remains of Their Journeys

Ryosuke Imamura was born in 1982 in Kyoto, JP, where he currently lives. He creates delicate installations that incorporate subtle phenomena mainly of light and sound. Inspired by everyday life and memories, Imamura's understated - even personal - environments nevertheless invite a contemplative approach, wherein space and time seem to be suspended or relational to other factors. The play with space and object, light and sound, times and spaces allow for unexpected reactions to emerge. He has been exhibited widely throughout Japan. (http://imamuraryosuke.info/)

Satoshi Ohno was born in 1980 in Gifu, JP and currently lives in Yamanashi prefecture. Ohno explores the possibilities of painting in the 'digital' 21st Century based on his reading of Eastern and Western art history. Eschewing previously defined categories of portraiture, landscape, or genre painting, his work is characterized by symbolic and energetic imagery, through which conflict and fusion occur between the natural and the artificial, the organic and the inorganic. He has been exhibited throughout Japan and Asia. (https://ocula.com/artists/satoshi-ohno/)

Rita Hensen was born in 1960 in Bedburg, D and currently resides in Munich. Her installations combine drawings, sculptures, and photographs that draw from the direct sites

of their placement. In various forms of ‘translating’ or ‘transforming’ lived experience into material works, surprising relationships emerge among images, objects, and spaces. The “liveliness” of relationships is therefore a central entry point into Hensen’s installations, allowing the audience to experience something not quite reality, yet not quite fiction either. She has exhibited in numerous venues across Europe and Asia.

Benedikt Partenheimer was born in 1977 in Munich, Germany and currently lives in Berlin. After studying at the LMU University in Munich, the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia and the Parsons School for Design in New York he spent time in New York, where he assisted Richard Avedon. His photography is both straightforward and conceptual, exemplified in such works as his *Turnaround* series (2006) of unique portraits. Instead of capturing a person’s features from the front, the images were taken from behind and with a zoom lens. His work often focuses on quiet, overlooked moments, which hold possibilities for deep contemplation and reflection on various aspects of society, culture, and experience.

Art Scope 2015-2017-Wandering to Wonder

Taro Izumi was born in Nara, JP in 1976 and currently resides in Tokyo. He creates drawings, image installations and video. Though many of his videos feature Izumi himself performing, other performers are sometimes invited to appear as well. The actions in these works seem to represent "games" or "play" that alternate between meaning and nonsense. They are characterized by a peculiar blurring of the lines that separate reality and fiction, presenting the intermingling of elements in ways that are both amusing and puzzling to the audience. Through these actions, these works often reveal the customs, conventions and rules–both clear and shadowy–that lie at the bottom of societies, as well as their relativistic nature.

Menja Stevenson was born in 1982 in Rottweil, D and is based in Stuttgart. Her works span a wide variety of mediums that include video, photography, drawing, and objects. Stevenson’s overarching themes might be called acts of “discovering” and “collecting.” She produced photographs and prints that captured her encounters and findings in the sprawling Japanese metropolis. Her photographs reveal a peculiar strangeness towards the city as an experiential space by depicting topographically uncertain locations in painterly color sequences. She considers her prints to be a collaborative work with the team of the renowned traditional Takahashi printing workshop in Bunkyo-ku: the effort, time, traces, soul, and personality that have been inscribed into the surfaces of the workshop tables over the decades are given new visibility in the impressions of Stevenson’s prints. Things that of and in themselves are not unusual, not worth preserving, not worthy of admiration, see their inner beauty and unique quality reflected back to them in her artistic translations and transformations. These richly colored and ostensibly abstract monotypes simultaneously reveal the deepness of multilayered time of which that culture is constituted.

Tokihiro Sato

Was born in Yamagata, JP in 1957, and he currently resides in Saitama, JP. His longstanding and representative series, *Photo-Respiration*, was concieved of in the '80s to the '90s and continues to this day. In these magical images of locations in Tokyo, as well as many others in

Japan and abroad, only the trajectory of light from a hand-held source or reflecting mirror is recorded. Through a long exposure time, the places in his images appear devoid of humans, allowing for perceptions and pictorial readings of the viewers to "wander" in open spaces suspended in time. He thus develops through his work the thesis that not only travel through spaces can shape our cultural experiences, but also time.