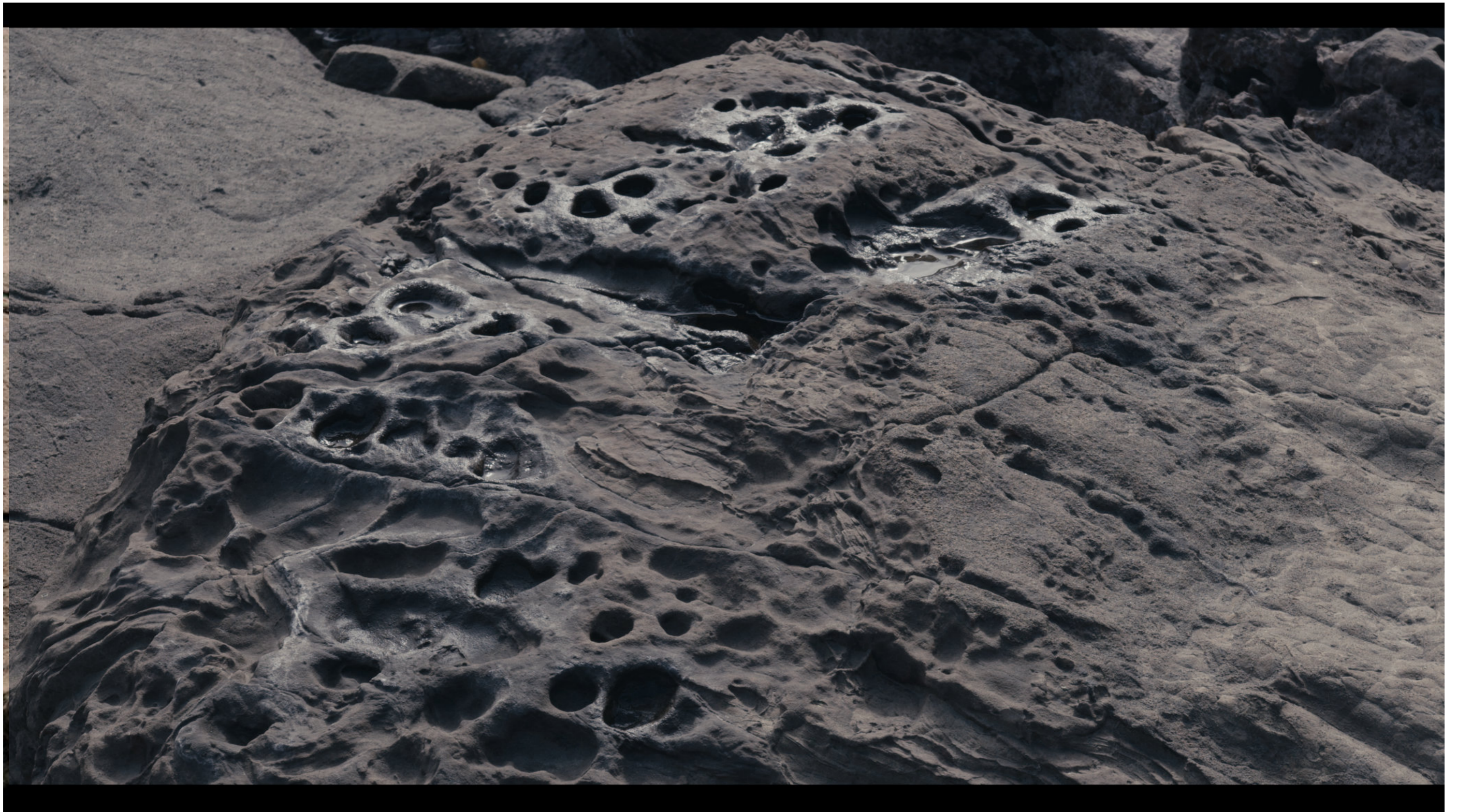
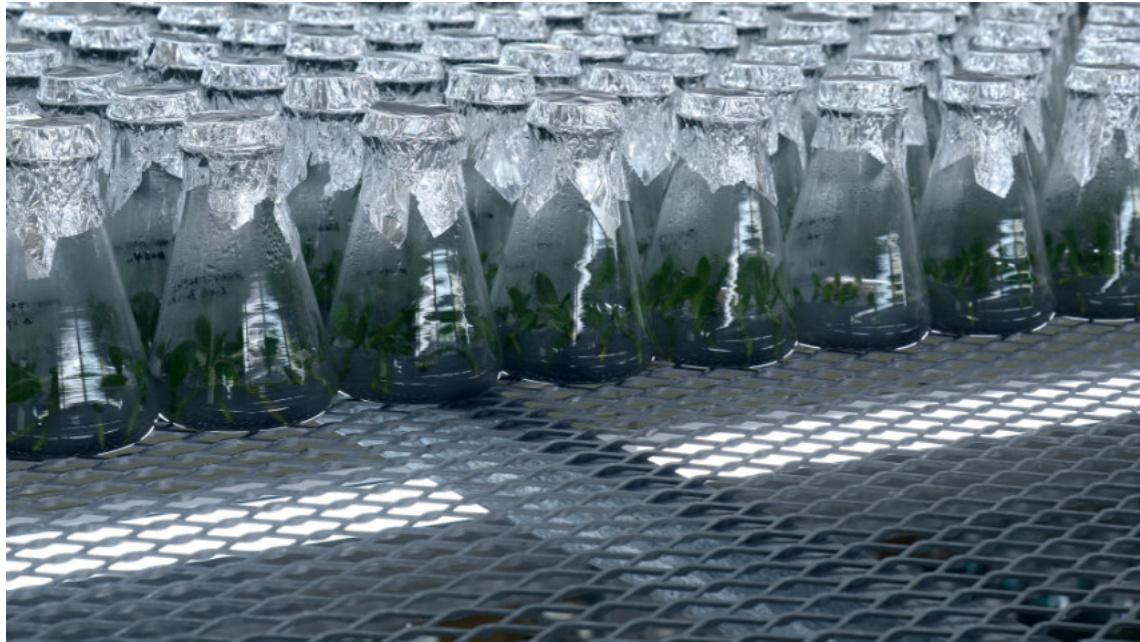


Kanako Azuma

Written Artist Talk





Kanako Azuma (*1991) lebt und arbeitet in Chiba, Japan. Sie erforscht verschiedene künstlerische Medien, darunter Fotografie, Musik und Performance, wobei Bewegtbild im Mittelpunkt ihrer Arbeit steht. Sie konzentriert sich auf fließende soziale Beziehungen zwischen Menschen, Flora und Fauna und die Auswirkungen von Naturphänomenen auf die Gesellschaft. Ihre Arbeiten geben der Kontemplation und Beobachtung dieser ambivalenten Beziehungen Zeit, ohne eine abschließende Lesart festzulegen. Ihre Werke wurden gezeigt im H.tel Salomon de Rothschild, Paris, FR (kuratiert von Yuko Hasegawa); 7th Moscow Biennale, Moscow RU; und nahm an der Ausstellung "BEYOND 2020 des japanischen Fotografen #4" teil, die in Tokyo, Paris und Amsterdam gezeigt wurde.

Kanako Azuma (*1991) lives and works in Chiba, Japan. While she explores various fields of art, including photography, music and performance, moving images remain the core of her practice. She focuses on fluid social relationships between humans, flora and fauna and the effects of natural phenomena on society. Herworks give time to contemplation and observation of these ambivalent relationships, without establishing a conclusive reading. Her works have been shown at H.tel Salomon de Rothschild, Paris, FR (curated by Yuko Hasegawa); 7. Moskauer Biennale, Moskau RU; andparticipated in "BEYOND 2020 by Japanese Photographers #4" traveling to Tokyo, Paris and Amsterdam.

Bilder/ images:

Titel: Kanako Azuma: The Voice of Each Body, 2022, digital video, 10:00 min, 16:9

This page, 1-4: Kanako Azuma: Eternal lovers, digital video, 10min, 2015



THE AGENCY In this "Written Artist Talk" we are very glad to have Kanako Azuma sharing insights into her artistic practice. Kanako Azuma is part of the exhibition N U R T U R Æ L at Lothringer 13 Halle, Munich. We would like to introduce you to our Munich audience:

Kanako, you live in Tokyo and were born in Ehime, Japan. Your practice focuses on the relationship between humans, flora and fauna, and the effects of natural phenomena in society. In your work you have also been exploring the borders between the natural and the artificial, for example in your work "Eternal Lovers" that focuses on the breed of orchids that are genetically designed or manipulated to correspond to a human beauty ideal.

Kanako, could you tell us about your work "Eternal Lovers:" What was the entry point into your research? How did you become so fascinated in the creation process of the perfect Orchid?

KANAKO AZUMA Several years before I created "Eternal Lovers," I had been researching botanical gardens and greenhouses for another piece. In the process, I became interested in orchid growing and nurturing. I was fascinated by the sight of the many beakers lined up for cultivation, the agar-based medium, and the varieties of orchids in bloom in the greenhouse. This is where I began my research on orchids.

The cultural history of orchids is unique and profound in each country.

For example, in Japan, there is a culture of giving expensive orchids as a gift for the opening of a new store, and you can see spectacular orchids in the streets.

I found it fascinating that each country has its own story related to orchids.

There has been a lot of breeding as well as optimization of orchids, and a great number of varieties have been produced. Orchids seem to be an example of plants that have been collected, managed, and sometimes manipulated by humans.

I decided to create my work on orchids because I felt that they are a fascinating subject to think about the relationship between humans and plants.

THE AGENCY What are the roles of human beings in "Eternal Lovers" and how do they relate to the orchids?

KANAKO AZUMA In this film, I set up humans as insect-like beings and orchid vectors. Because I have a longing for fluid existence, I thought I would depict the boundary between human beings, flora and fauna as a blurred line.

THE AGENCY When the camera was not rolling in your process of shooting "Eternal Lovers:" How were the relations of people working in the lab towards their work and the orchids? What did you hear, see and experience?

KANAKO AZUMA I had the opportunity to visit the Makino Botanical Garden and three orchid farms. Everyone took delicate care of their plants. One of these places is a farm that also conducts research on orchid breeding, and one person talked about the history of orchids, including the hardships of orchid research, while showing us various materials. The extensive book of orchid names was especially impressive. It contains the history of human breeding and naming.

THE AGENCY In your new video work "The Voice Of Each Body," you are exploring a landscape that has been shaped by wind and water. We do not encounter any human beings and in general few living beings at all. In this absence of life you chose to give this landscape a voice. Can you tell us about the voice that you are working with and about its relationship to the landscape we encounter? How did you imagine those voices of landscapes which humans fail to hear? Who or what is this voice speaking to?

KANAKO AZUMA I imagined a desert-like, desolate world as one possibility for the future. In the latter half of the film, when the fruits on the ground look like constellations, I used the voices of birds singing, but other than that, I consciously used quiet environmental voices. I wondered if it would be possible to capture every object as a being with a voice. Recently, I have been hoping to think of any small voice as having a real body beyond it. To think beyond the voice is to think of distant times, places, and others. I wanted to convey such an attitude.

THE AGENCY Could you tell us about the places where you shot the images of "The Voice Of Each Body?" What is their history?

KANAKO AZUMA This film was shot on the Boso Peninsula in Chiba Prefecture, Japan. The Boso Peninsula faces Tokyo Bay and the Pacific Ocean, and still retains a natural landscape of abundance. However, because of its proximity to Tokyo, there is a large industrial area along Tokyo Bay. Scraped mountains and mega solar power plants also shape the area. In the area I researched, there was also a large air-raid shelter about 1.6 km long and war ruins, but there are few archival documents, so the process of construction and the purpose for which they were used are not quite known. While some war sites are protected, there are air-raid shelters scattered throughout the area that are being weathered by nature.

THE AGENCY How do you find and develop your camera angles and movements as a human operating a camera capturing humans, flora and fauna alike?

KANAKO AZUMA I first shoot what I am interested in incessantly. I shoot not only the visual things that interest me, but also work in response with light, shadow, sound, the noise of insects, the movement of the wind, and many other things. Afterwards, I observe those filmed images and construct a narrative. After that, I shoot the necessary scenes according to that narrative and aim to deepen the work.

THE AGENCY How did the two working processes correlate to your interest in relationships between species?

KANAKO AZUMA I am pleased that I was able to approach not only flora and fauna, but also geological formations, stones, the sun and the sea. For me, they are motifs as fascinating as flora and fauna. I would like to depict the relationships between various beings in the world. Sometimes it is between humans, sometimes it is between stones and the sea, and sometimes it is the story of flora and insects. I recently started a farm in Chiba. When I work on the farm, I sometimes feel that all kinds of relationships are connected and that a cycle exists. I hope that new stories will be born not only between my works, but also in relation to each of the works in this exhibition, and that they will begin to speak to each other beyond the individual works themselves.

Kanako Azuma lives and works in Chiba, Japan. While she explores various fields of art, including photography, music and performance, moving images remain the core of her practice. She focuses on fluid social relationships between humans, flora and fauna and the effects of natural phenomena on society. Her works give time to contemplation and observation of these ambivalent relationships, without establishing a conclusive reading. Her works have been shown at Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild, Paris, FR (curated by Yuko Hasegawa); 7th Moscow Biennale, Moscow RU; und nahm an der Ausstellung "BEYOND 2020 by Japanese Photographers #4" teil, die in Tokyo, Paris und Amsterdam gezeigt wurde.