



homelandscape

01.10. - 06.11.2011

ELINA MORIYA
MIKA OSAMITSU

Teasmith Gallery

6 Lamb St, London E1 6EA
Mon-Sun 11am-6pm

Private view Thu 13 Oct. 7pm-9pm

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London E1 6EA
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Tel: 020 7247 1333

Homelandscape is the first collaborative project by two Finnish-Japanese artists, Elina Moriya and Miika Osamitsu. The exhibitions consist of Elina's photography and Miika's essay and sound installation. The exhibition is a part of a larger series that the artists are working on at the moment.

The series explores both artistically and philosophically the theme of encounter in all its subtle variations - between people, between languages, between concepts, between colours, between mind and arising thoughts. These unique and unpredictable encounters always leave a trace or an imprint of some kind. The purpose of the series, including the present exhibition, is to highlight some of these visible and invisible, familiar and uncanny traces, which make us what we are, but also which we conveniently or creatively use to model the world into desired shapes and sounds.

Both artists, with a bilingual and multicultural upbringing, have carried traces of two completely different traditions and customs all of their lives. This has had consequences. They have lived without a fixed sense of nationality, without a stable homeland under their feet, but also without the very need for this stability.

The present exhibition, the first in the series, concentrates on the theme of home and the variety of ways in which we conceptualise and experience home and its counterpart homelessness.

Artists want to convey by the audio-visual elements the idea that all of our experiences are based on the variety of traces - that somehow seem to come from the past and pass on to the future, while manifesting themselves only in the actual present of the here and now.

The visual part of the exhibition consists of Elina Moriya's photographs taken over a period of ten years in the forests of Finland and Japan. Her photographs depict trees. Trees appear as living organisms for biologists, building material for carpenters and shelter for recluses. Trees also produce elemental oxygen for all complex life on Earth, enabling our very breathing, which is irremovably present in our every experience of home and homelessness.

For whom does a tree or a forest become a trace of home?

When does a scratch on the wall cease to be a trace of home and manifest itself only as a visible object, an ordinary scratch on the wall?

These kinds of questions have been the driving impulse for both artists.

The sound installation is also trying to convey the trace-like quality of our experience - what does familiarity in the context of sound mean? When does a noise become a sound - a sound of our home, a sound of our original free-floating homelessness?

This exhibition, like the forthcoming ones, includes an essay on the subject.

The philosophical posture is central to the collaboration and the series as a whole, so that visual, audible and textual layers are inseparable from each other. This is how the collaboration started in the first place, by a deep philosophical conversation in the midst of photographs and sounds, by a realisation that a home can vanish in an instant, by tsunami, by earthquake, by war, by phone call, by arising of a thought.



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ELINA MORIYA and MIIKA OSAMITSU

traces

Traces is an ongoing collaborative project between photographer Elina Moriya and Miika Osamitsu. The artworks are a combination of Elina's photography and Miika's essays, poetry and sound installations. Both artists are Finnish-Japanese.

The world is made of ceaseless encounters. Some of them are pleasant – some of them can stir enormous anxiety, even wars. Fluid interaction between people is not the only major challenge for humans; devastation of the biosphere shows how the multiplicity of relations overflows the human dimension. At its most basic level, encountering ourselves, being confronted with our own minds, is maybe the most difficult task of all; and the negligence in completing this important task is maybe the very reason for all the other difficulties in various encounters. How to encounter things, how to act in the midst of countless encounters of things, is an ongoing challenge for humans. Traces faces the challenge by trying to highlight some aspects of these encounters and the tensions arising from them.

Language influences our way of thinking and behavior to a certain extent, as recent researches in cognitive science has shown. It is therefore important to be aware of the conceptual and metaphorical frameworks we are living by, in order to know the unobtrusive limits that they project on our experience of the world. However, these limits are not to be understood as a barrier creating a deficiency in expression, but only as an inborn fact: a human can't be a monkey, a human can't talk every language in the world, but only those that he has grown into and those that he is willing and able to learn. Nothing is lacking in any language or experience. Nothing is lacking in an infant's cry.

The so-called limits of language and expression have always been crossed and transgressed by skillful means. This is the place where translation – as a process of transmuting – has played an important role. By translation we don't mean its common implications in the context of written or spoken languages: it is used in a much broader sense – translation from thoughts or sentiments to poems, poems to photographs, photographs to tastes, tastes to vowels and vowels to colours in the footsteps of young Rimbaud. Translation at this very basic level means simply any kind of transmuting and transforming from one shape to another, in any kind of encounter where the need of expression arises and the impulse is passed on. Translation as a process of transmuting, thus is not an aspect of language, but it defines generally the transmutational aspect of all encounters, of which the translation between spoken languages is only one expression. The question, then, is not what is the language of animals, but what is actually being translated in the encounter between cats and dogs, mother and a baby, or a moon and a recluse? How many languages can a dragon speak?

The work of art as a stranger is in most cases understood or encountered within some habitual and fixed boundaries that we are not even aware of. Art, already a translation in itself, needs to be translated and transformed onwards. Without translation, things remain unknown – not in the sense of the ever unattainable Other – but in the sense of the unfamiliar. Not everything in the world might be understood, but it is possible to inure and familiarise oneself to almost anything, even to the uncanny and the frightening.

Realising the limits of one's language in an encounter is the first step towards the limitlessness of language, limitlessness of translatability.

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