

Artist Exchange Program between Youkobo & ECoC 2016, Activity Report Part5 Kosice #3

Youkobo × KAIR 2016



Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo



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Learning About European Capitals of Culture Through the Activities of Artist-in-Residence Programs (AIR)

Tatsuhiko Murata, Co-director, Youkobo Art Space

Outline of the Program

The European Capital of Culture was established more than 30 years ago in 1985, while cultural exchange between designated ECOC cities and Japan began in 1993. The artist exchange program that has developed between AIR in ECOC cities and Youkobo, an AIR based in Tokyo, one of Asia's key metropolises, began when Vilnius was designated European Capital of Culture in 2009. It was a program of exchange that involved stay and production for artists from both countries. Although the condition of contemporary art in such capitals of culture has yet to be widely disseminated in Japan, we can see vibrant developments taking place as a result of this cultural agenda. With the full support of the EU Japan Fest, Youkobo has actively developed a residence program that supports young artists from ECOC cities. A sustainable route for a program of exchange was found with the establishment of K.A.I.R., an artist residence program in Kosice launched to coincide with 2013 Kosice. Youkobo has often hosted artists from major cities such as London, Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam in the past, but is also committed to reaching artists in lesser-known cities and offer the same chances for professional development. Through the particular characteristics of this program, Youkobo also intends to foster a greater understanding of European contemporary art within Japan. Utilizing the fruitful exchanges gained through this program to develop a network between the EU and Japan, we aim to encourage sustainable forms of exchange by continuing to dispatch young Japan-based artists to AIR in ECOC cities.

An agreement was signed in 2012 between K.A.I.R. in Kosice and Youkobo in Tokyo, whereby both agreed to host artists for a two to three-month period as part of a mutual exchange program. Since then, Youkobo hosted Slovakian artist Erik Sille in January 2013, while Juka Arakawa travelled from Japan to Kosice in March of the same year. Manabu Kanai and Michiko Tsuda stayed at K.A.I.R. as the Japanese participants in 2014 and 2015 respectively, while Boris Silka and Radek Brousil stayed at Youkobo in corresponding years. The program consists of an ongoing exchange between two cities, developed through the work of participating artists in response to new environments. This report is an overview of the program in 2016.

Background to Collaboration with European Capitals of Culture

It was in 2008 when two Lithuanian artists Saulius Valius and Diana Radavičiute joined a residency at Youkobo that an opportunity emerged to develop an exchange exhibition as part of the 2009 Vilnius European Capital of Culture celebrations, and through the support of the EU Japan Fest 12 artists and two collectives from Japan and nine artists from Lithuania were brought together with a local museum in an event which proved to be very successful. Following this Merve Ertufan, a young artist from Istanbul, designated ECOC in 2010, undertook a two-month residency at Youkobo, while an opportunity was created for Mitsumasa Kadota to travel from Japan to Guimarães, Portugal in 2013. Together with the continuing exchange program with K.A.I.R., from 2014 young artist Miiroko Sasaki was dispatched to join ArtCamp, a summer school organized by the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen City, Czech Republic, which was designated the European Capital of Culture in 2015. This dispatch has continued, and to date 20 participants have joined ArtCamp. An exchange program has also developed with OPEN AIR, a residence program located in Pilsen. In addition, artists Tsuguo Yanai and Kazuhiko Yajima were also dispatched to join the Paper Object Festival, an international event held in 2014 when Riga was designated ECOC status. The artists stayed at Kurudiga AIR in Riga City.

The scale of these programs being carried out by Youkobo is limited, but it is expected this exchange of artists where the faces of respective participants are visible, and the sharing of information between residence programs pursuing similar activities will lead to their further development. Not limited to ECOC, "microresidencies" may become the nucleus for expansion into other cities in Asia.

Notes

- (1) A report about ArtCamp, a summer school organized by the University of West Bohemia : http://www.youkobo.co.jp/related_activities/page4.html
- (2) Activity report about Riga. : <http://www.youkobo.co.jp/news/2015/03/european-capital-of-culture-ecoc.html>
- (3) A report about "microresidencies. : <http://microresidence.net/>

The Partnership to Continue

Zuzana Kotiková, director of K.A.I.R Košice Artist in Residence

The collaboration between K.A.I.R. Košice Artist in Residence and Youkobo Art Space started in 2013. Since then, three artists from Slovakia and four artists from Japan could travel to Košice and Tokio as a part of the residency exchange program. In 2016 we organizes residencies of Hiroe Komai and Radek Brousil.

The exchange project in 2016 was specific, because the Slovak artist was actually not from Slovakia. Radek Brousil is the artist from Czech Republic based in Prague. He got the opportunity to take part in the residency in Tokyo because he was one of two winners of Oskár Čepan award for contemporary visual artists in 2015. The two months residency in Tokio was special price for the winner of 20th edition of the award.

Hiroe Komai was traditionally selected through open call. Her application was the best considering the aims of K.A.I.R. residencies. We always look for the artists who are open to reflect the local environment in their work during the residency. Hiroe´s previous works, subtle collages focused on architecture, convinced us that she is the right artist to work with. Hiroe spent two months in Košice observing the local architecture which is the combination of historical buildings in the city center and prefabricated panel blocks districts around. Her point of view and precise work on the collages created beautiful series of works about our city. The exhibition of the collages called HIROE KOMAI, JAPONSKÁ UMELKYŇA, ŽILIA A PRACOVALA V KOŠICIACH OD 9. OKTÓBRA DO 4. DECEMBRA 2016 (Hiroe Komai, Japanese artist, lived and worked in Košice from the October 9th till the December 4th 2016) was organized in Šopa Gallery, the exhibition space in Košice city center which is connected with K.A.I.R. studios and where some of the residency artists have their exhibitions and presentations.

The exchange project between K.A.I.R. Košice Artist in Residence and Youkobo Art Space is always very fruitful for the artist, organizations and also the local art scene. I see it as important to keep this cooperation continuing in the next years and bring the opportunity for more Slovak and Japanese artists to meet and inspire from the new environment which is often very different than their home.

KAIR Kosice – Youkobo Art Space Tokyo exchange residency

Radek Brousil

Two months that I've spent at Youkobo Art Space residency program in Tokyo was one of the best time I could ever imagine in connection between work, culture, art and human relationships.

It gave me very interesting feedback in terms of social life, but also my artist practice.

Youkobo helped me to integrate in the Japanese art world, provided amazing service and offered luxury accommodation and facilities.

It was also helpful in sharing my work in the international context in forms of help to provide my artist talk in public, such as University artist talks etc.

Recently, I am focusing on a Japanese make-up industry, which is totally contrary to that of Europe, as here, the cultural background pushes women to achieve lighter skin tones to fit a perfect pattern. My result of research and artist production was shown at the final open studios which with I closed my artist residency at Youkobo.

I started new relationships, met great many curators, artists and people from the field. Have seen plenty of gallery spaces, museums, architecture. Visited fabulous restaurants and ate delicious food. Also I had a chance to get closer to the Japanese culture and get deeper into it's folklore such as theater, music and religion.

I can definitely recommend Youkobo Art Space Tokyo residency and I am wishing everyone who's involved in it a lot of luck and enthusiasm in the near future.

January 25, 2017
Prague



Radek Brousil Born July 27, 1980 in Nitra, Slovak Republic, currently living in Prague, Czech republic www.brousil.name/



Studies:

2000 - 2001 - Academy of Arts in Brussels(Anderlecht) – Painting studio
2002 -2003 - Academy of Fine Arts in Prague - New Media studio
2006 - 2007 - Concordia University Montreal - Photography
2008 - 2009 - London College of Communication
2002 - 2009 - Academy of Art, Architecture and Design in Prague –
Studio of Photography - MGA diploma

Solo exhibitions:

March 2002 - Medicaments - painting and video installation, Addict Gallery - Brussels
March 2008 - St-Francis Comes To Montreal - Parisian Laundry Gallery - Montreal, Canada
June 2009 - Study Of A Young Man - Karlin studios - Prague, Czech rep.
August 2009 - Image vs Re ection - 35m2 Gallery - Prague
September 2011 - "Untitled 9 - Untitled 15" - Fotograf Gallery, Prague
January 2012 - "Untitled 19 - Untitled 21" - Atelier Josef Sudek, Prague
July 2012 - Variations - Ferdinand Baumann Gallery, Prague
September 2013 - Studio Works - OPEN Gallery, Bratislava
January 2014 - Studio Works - Fotograf Gallery, Praha
April 2014 - Studio Works 2(curated by Jiri Ptacek) - Plusminusnula gallery, Žilina
October 2015 - Hands Clapsed, FAIT Gallery Brno

Group exhibitions:

February 2004 - PRIVATE EVOLUTION - group exhibition in AAAD - Prague,
September 2005 - FOTO TYPO ZIVE - Langhans Gallery in Prague
September 2005 - JE DESIRE - group exhibition at AAAD gallery Prague
May 2006 - Sigmund Freud-LIFE IS BUT A DREAM--group exhibition at Prague's City Hall
March 2007 - PTV PRESENTS - Galerie Espace - Montreal, Canada
March 2007 - GET A LIFE - group exhibition - Fonderie Darling - Montreal, Can.
April 2007 - SOAP/SAVON - group exhibition - Art Mur gallery - Montreal, Can.
July 2007 – VICE photo exhibition – New York - USA
March 2008 - The Essence - Manes gallery - Prague, CZ
May2009 - Month of Photography - Krakow, Poland
June 2009 - Cup of Tea - AVU gallery - Prague
December 2009 – Residencias exhibition at Clube Portugese de Artes e Ideias, Lisbon
May 2010 - EGO portrait x photography - Langhans gallery - Prague
March 2011 - Twist - Tuica/Tusovka - golden PARACHUTES, Berlin

April 2012 - Coal and Steel - Candid Arts Trust Gallery, London

October 2012 - Hidden River - DOX, Prague

May 2013 - The Intimate Circle - Municipal Library, Prague

December 2013 - Construction Works, w/Jean Pfeiffer - TIC Gallery, Brno

March 2014 - 9th International Biennial Of Photography And Visual Arts Liège

October 2014 - SPOT, NTK Gallery Prague(curated by Milian Mikulastik)

October 2014 - Hands, TIC Gallery Brno(curated by Jiri Ptacek)

April 2015 - WYSINWYS - Soda Gallery(curated by Michal Stolarik)

October 2015 - Oskar Čepan Award Finalists exhibition

(cur. by Barnabas Bencsik) - Košice

November 2015 - ArtWorks Open, Barbican Arts Group Trust, London

Awards:

- Oskar Čepan Award Winner, Young Visual Artists Award 2015

- nominated for Foam Paul Huf Award 2015 Residencies:

2009 - Residencias artísticas at Clube Portugese de Artes e Ideias, Lisbon

2010 - Internship at PMGalerie, Berlin

2011 - Czech Centre Brussels, Belgium

2012 - Banská St a nica Contemporary, Slovakia

Books:

2013 - Asides, Artist book, published by Štokovec, Space for Culture

The Reason for Darkness

Hiroe Komai

"It's so dark!" was my first impression of Košice. It never changed in the two months I was in town.

My flat was on the 6th floor of a tower block on Laborecká 14. The view from my bedroom made me feel anxious and it reminded me of my first visit to Berlin in 1991. I could recognise several tower blocks faintly in the total darkness. The subdued pedestrian lights lit the invisible promenade like a theatre stage, and as if it was beckoning me into the darkness. It made me feel even more lonely. The view from the window at night became the subject of my first artwork in Košice.

My art practice begins with wondering about and observing the town. The architecture in each town has different characteristics - structures, materials, colours, windows, doors, walls - finding and observing the details that are quintessential whilst wondering about the town. Each detail tells of the town's climate, human activity and history. It is a fantastic field for work on folklore and ethnology.

The centre of Košice still contains a great deal of historic architecture. However, most other buildings are tower blocks. These council tower blocks can be seen all around the town. Most of them were built in the Communist era, and they vary slightly, depending on the exact period, but they look almost identical. Each interior was designed for a different family structure and they are all exactly same in one tower. For example, if the family consisted of parents and two kids the family was allocated the specific flat for this family size.

The flocks of buildings looked as if they were from a painting by Escher so I never stepped into the building cluster by myself as I felt I would never get out of there. During the Communist period the buildings were all the same colour. Today each building has different colours and patterns on the walls, and they look like enormous Tetris shapes or the subject of a painting by Josef Albers. Even though the facade was disguised, the original purpose of the building clusters remains the same - there were lines of benches, but no one was sitting there and I could see many deserted spaces there - as if time had stopped and they had been left behind after the change in society. On the other hand, there are flocks of houses which are very much in contrast to the planned tower blocks - the Roma's houses. Their houses are like creatures and they expand chaotically and infinitely. They derive from piles of off-cuts and found objects from the street. It is just like bricolage by Claude Lévi-Strauss. In Slovakia, the Roma population is a contentious issue, so I shouldn't say anything irresponsible. However, when I saw their colourful and unique buildings, I had to murmur 'It's art...!'

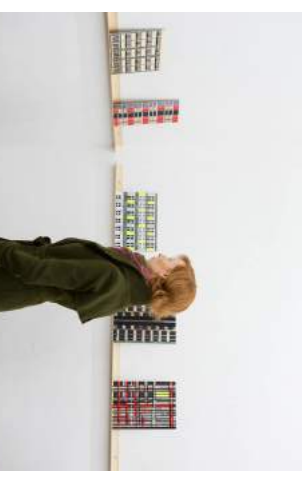


When I travel in Europe I am sometimes seen oddly. I noticed that this attitude is different in each place. I felt this odd glance from the people of a certain generation in Košice. Their facial expressions were very stiff and they looked angry or suspicious. My smile couldn't break their stiffness, so sadly I gave up trying alternative communication and left them. Of course, not all people reacted in this way. The younger generations say 'Communism completely destroyed two generations'. People from the young generation also said that their attitudes came from the environment of the Communist era. One of my important questions was 'How do family members who grew up in the Communist era, and those who grew up later, understand each other?'. When I went to the shops I felt always had the same reaction from many people. Communicating with the local people became my fear and this made me feel dismal. I am fascinated by the unique places such as old shopping centres, shops that sell everything, cafes with local characteristics and so on. Despite this, it was too hard and awkward to communicate with people there.

Up to now, whenever I have travelled in Western Europe, I have desperately relied on any tiny knowledge I had of French, Spanish, German and so on, then I just hope 'please, understand me!' in my mind. Yet it didn't work in this Slavic region. I reflected on myself being lazy for just using English, and started learning Slovakian. I learned the Slovak alphabet and pronunciation, and memorised basic expressions. Then I went to a cafe which was just in front of my studio, and tried to speak Slovakian to the staff there. I popped into the cafe every morning before I went to my studio so we became friends. Every morning I went there with my new expressions and they checked my pronunciation and taught me more natural expressions. I learned to introduce myself and went to a street market to do sketching there. I hoped this would become a trigger for conversations with the people there. I still felt the odd glance from some people, but as I expected some people addressed me. On these occasions, understanding each other was not the point. We were both smiling at each other and trying to convey and understand something, anything. This experience made me realise how your effort in speaking the native language is powerful for getting closer to the people there and for grasping the heart of the local people. It broke the silence and the blank expressions. This experience gave me confidence and I learned more expressions. I visited my local delicatessen, and I successfully managed to buy cheese and ham using very basic language. The communication with a lady took only a few minutes, but it was hard work and I sweated a lot. However, when I left the shop I had fulfillment and a big smile on my face.

In this residency program I created works with the hope that the local people rediscover something about 'their everyday view through a foreign artist'. No humans appear in my art work yet the strongest impression in this residency program was meeting the local people. The stuff from the cafe, a lady at the sandwich shop, the always cheerful people at the market, the frame shop lady who patiently tried to understand me, the gallery staff who supported my production and solo exhibition, friendly guys who took me climbing in the mountains, the local artists. There is not enough space to describe all the memories and people. All these people fulfilled my time in Košice.

I would love to visit Košice again. I would like to have an origami workshop for the older generation who I did not have enough interaction with. I would like to have an opportunity for them to come into contact with Japanese culture, as it is an enigma. If there are a few people who enjoy it, my impression of this town might not be so dark anymore.



Hiroe Komai Born in Japan, currently living in London, UK <https://hiroekomai.carbonmade.com/>



Education

2003 Goldsmiths College, University of London (MA in Fine Art)
2000 Camberwell College of Art (BA Sculpture and Ceramics, First Class Honours)
1993 Kyoto Seika University (BA Sculpture)

Selected Solo shows

2016 "Naapurini / My Neighbours", Nature Centre Ukko, Koli, Finland
2013 "The Style", C&C Gallery, London
2012 "Mirror Phase", Ganapati, London
2011 "Visible Fractals", Slaughtertown, Valencia, Spain
2010 "Sunshine Hit Me", Gallery Haneusagi, Kyoto, Japan
2009 " Modern Living", Shinbi, Kyoto, Japan

Selected Group Exhibitions / Art Fair / Artist in Residency / Curation

2015 "Positions Berlin Art Fair", Arena Halle, Berlin
"Double Agency", ArtKapsule At Koleksiyon, London
"Doppelgänger", No Format, London
"London Art Fair", Business Design Centre, London
Artist in Residency, Kolin Rynnänen, Koli, Finland
2014 "Auction" C&C Gallery, London
"The Alpineum Mininale 2", Alpineum Produzentengalerie, Luzern, Switzerland
"Tod und Sterben Death and Dying", MGA3, Vienna, Austria
"ArtAthina International Contemporary Art Fair of Athens", Faliron Pavilion, Athens, Greece
"Kit Shrines", Divus, London
2013 "Offline Art Fair", Embassy Tea Gallery, London
"Trajector IntermezzeRematch!", Hotel Bloom, Brussels, Belgium
2011 "Preview Berlin", Tempelhof Airport, Berlin
2009 "Three By Three 4" (CoCurate), Yinka Shonibare's Space, London

K.A.I.R. Košice Artist in Residence

In the frame of “European Capital of Culture” the NGO “Košice 2013” is developing an international artist-in-residency-program for emerging artists from all over the world and out of all artistic disciplines and expressions. We give them the possibility to become a cultural pioneer and work in the inspire environment of Košice’s singular cultural surrounding to realize art projects, collaborate with the agile local art scene and present themselves to the local and national public.

We pursuit three main goals within this residency-project:

Support the creative energy of every invited artist and give him/her the chance to work in a new and very special environment to find (new) artistic ways to express.

Stimulate the art scene in Košice, in the region and in whole Slovakia. Support the dialogue as well as the confrontation of the residency-artists with local artists and the wide public.

Create/strengthen a beneficial environment for the development of innovative and international contemporary art projects with international and local participants.



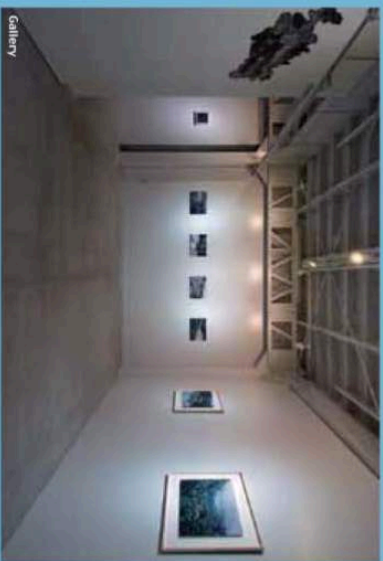
A place for artists in Metropolitan Tokyo

Youkobo Art Space is located in a tranquil residential suburb in Suginami City, central Tokyo, and consists of an art gallery, artists studios, and artist in residence program.

The residency program offers local and international artists the opportunity to live, work, and participate in a solo exhibition and/or collaborative projects within the local community for periods of up to six months.

A member of

Res Artis WORLDWIDE NETWORK OF ARTIST RESIDENCIES
Microresidence Network www.microresidence.net



Program Statement

Youkobo Art Space's primary objective is to support and enhance the creativity of artists by offering opportunities for artistic investigation on urban issues in a contemporary Japanese setting. Its various programs are committed to providing the local community with creative stimulus by promoting cultural exchange between international artists and local citizens.

Youkobo Art Space is very active in Suginami City and across Japan, organizing and presenting a wide range of non-profit activities, including exhibitions and events that are open to the public.

Studio / Gallery / Residence

Youkobo Art Space consists of two artist studios, a gallery and residential accommodations.

Other services

The gallery holds exhibitions of contemporary art and mostly solo shows. To apply please submit artwork images and resume. For more information contact the gallery.

Artist Studio rental is available but please note that priority of studio use is given to artist in residence and must accommodate to their schedule.

Access

Youkobo Art Space is located in metropolitan Tokyo, 15 km west from the city center.

From Narita International Airport, please take the limousine bus from Narita Airport, Tokyo to Kichijoji Station, 50km west from the airport (2 hours approx). Youkobo Art Space is a 5-minute taxi drive from Kichijoji Station.



youkoboART SPACE

History

Youkobo Art Space houses its facilities and operates its programs within a building complex that was originally a clinic and sanatorium for tuberculosis patients from the 50's to the 80's. After the clinic closed, a section of the property was used as a home-stay style residence for foreign artists and students; another section was home to an animation studio for nearly two decades.

These spaces were refurbished in 2001 to officially become Youkobo Art Space. Youkobo Art Space has since facilitated a broad range of artists' activities through an artist in residence and gallery program, providing artists with important resources that benefit their artistic goals. The co-directors, Hirokoto(sculptor) and Tatsuriko Murata have welcomed over 200 artists of 20 different nationalities since founding Youkobo Art Space.

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The Beginnings of the Microresidence Network

Tatsuhiko Murata

Advocate of Microresidence

Co-director, Youkobo Art Space

What is an artist in residence (AIR)? The present situation is such that when I am asked this question, it is not possible to make any generalization. This is because a plethora of AIR exist, from business models and administrative organizations to those of various forms and scales. "Microresidence" is proposed here as a general term to refer to organizations and activities focused on AIR, where the basis of AIR is perceived as being the provision of opportunities and venues for the creative activities of artists as ordinary residents.

The Microresidence.net, website was initiated with the expectation that it would bring greater visibility to microresidencies and promote their mutual activities, leading to the establishment of AIR as vessels for society. In the autumn of 2012, preparations for the site began following a gathering of microresidence directors in Tokyo (including those who participated via the Internet), based on an understanding between respective AIR operators that each would take responsibility for the conveyance of their own activities on the site. The site was later launched in January 2014.

There is great expectation that even more microresidencies will participate as the site gains the recognition of numerous artists and others who share similar concerns, bringing greater awareness of venues and opportunities for artists' creative activities. At the same time, the site will serve as evidence that art is essential to society, while increasing awareness of the activities of AIR as important social vessels.

Microresidence Network www.microresidence.net

