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Media Art and Beyond : toward <Environmental Unconsciousness>

In 90s in Japan, media art was promoted by companies such as NTT and Canon in the frame of cultural support and many prominent works seeking “art & science” were produced. In 00s, the diffusion of personal computers made broader public to produce works, and especially since later 00s, social collaborations including in art and science were accelerated by global networks. We live in the era that anybody can collect, filter diverse information and create, distribute broadly. The situation that “Everyone is an artist” (Joseph Beuys), is now extended into “curator, scientist, etc.” and starting to stimulate professionals. From 2000 onward, I have been curating many exhibitions and projects based on this idea, raising new interpretation of the world by merging nature, society and technology. Since 3.11 (the East Japan Great Earthquake and the following tsunami and atomic power plant accident) – unforgettably severe disaster, many Japanese including me have started asking fundamental questions on the identity of Japanese social, culture and historical background. 3.11 disclosed not only the problems of acceptance of the Modern System in this country, but also the fact that the Modern System does not function properly anymore in the information-based society. It could be said also in science. Since Industrial Revolution, science was promoted in the name of better life of rapidly growing population. Science contributed to the society enormously but at the same time, produced fatal disasters and long-term pollutions both critical to the life and the Earth. How art, science and “art and science” could contribute to the world? At early 2012, I coined a new word “Environmental Unconsciousness” beyond human perception in the age of digital data sensing and visualization. “Environment” here encloses natural, social and mental aspects and suggests new relation between the human and science from artistic mediation. Japan, where the nature and the human co-exist and not clearly articulated each other for a long time, has been producing unique products merging art and science. At present, after 3.11, Japan is in serious difficulties, but only by critically confronting to the internalized problems -- acceptance of Modernity and development of science and technologies, this country would be able raise something ahead for future society and the Earth.

CV

Yukiko Shikata is an independent curator/ critic in Tokyo covering from early 20th to the latest artistic expressions especially in relation to media and technology. She works as artistic director of “ATSUKO BAROUH arts drinks talk”, Tokyo, guest professor at Tama Art University and Tokyo Zokei University, lecturer at IAMAS (Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences). Curated many projects and exhibitions at Canon ARTLAB (1990-2001), Shiseido CyGNET (1998-2003), Mori Art Museum (2002-04), NTT InterCommunicationCenter [ICC] (2004-10) and in various locations in and out of Japan. Recent projects include: “Mission G: sensing the earth” (ICC, 2009-10), “Interferenze Seeds Tokyo 2010” Festival (2010), “polar m” by Carsten Nicolai + Marko Peljhan (co-curated with Kazunao Abe, Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media/YCAM, 2010-11), “Possible Water” (Goethe Institut Tokyo, 2012), Seoul International Media Art Biennale “Mediacity Seoul 2012” (Seoul Museum of Art, Korea, 2012). Worked as jury for many International competitions including Prix Ars Electronica, UNESCO Digi-Art Prize, Nam June Paik Award and Japan Media Arts Festival.