



MONASH UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART  
EDUCATION KIT

MUMMA

# MIDORI MITAMURA

## ART & BREAKFAST, MELBOURNE

5 MAY - 23 JULY 2011

CURATOR: ROSEMARY FORDE



Midori Mitamura is a Tokyo based artist who creates installations that combine photography and video, text, found materials and everyday objects gathered while travelling. Mitamura's exhibition *Art & Breakfast, Melbourne* has been developed during a three month period as visiting artist-in-residence at Monash University.

*Art & Breakfast* is an ongoing

project that has previously taken form in Stockholm, Tokyo and Berlin (2006-10). The project begins each morning with the artist making breakfast to eat together with gallery visitors. Mitamura then spends time in the exhibition space, creating and rearranging a series of small improvised installations each day. These temporary handmade installations reflect the transient nature of memory and emotional

experience. This exhibition framework makes for an intimate exchange, whereby atmosphere, open-ended possible narratives and a kind of everyday mise-en-scene are built and shared between artist and visitor.

This exhibition and residency is developed in partnership with Tokyo Wonder Site, Asialink and Monash University Faculty of Art & Design.



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Midori Mitamura  
*Art & Breakfast, Melbourne* 2011 (detail)  
installation view  
Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne  
Photo: Christian Capurro



## MIDORI MITAMURA: BIOGRAPHY

(b. 1964 in Aichi, Japan, lives in Tokyo)

Mitamura studied fashion and photography and has exhibited extensively in Japan and internationally for over two decades.

Her recent solo exhibitions include *I'm standing beside the water*, Bambinart Gallery, Tokyo, 2011; *Temptation in Blue* at Nanatsudera Studio, AICHI Triennial, Aichi, 2010; *Purple Flower in her dress*, Grita Insam Gallery, Vienna, 2009; *Green on the Mountain* a travelling exhibition to Helsinki, Oulu and Turku in Finland and Secession in Vienna, Austria, 2005-06; and *Stories in two rooms*, Contemporary Art Factory, Tokyo, 2002.

Selected group exhibitions include *Quiet Attentions: Departure from Women*, Art Tower Mito + Contemporary Art Gallery, Ibaraki, 2011; *Domani* National Art Center Tokyo, 2009; *Tokyo Story* Esso Gallery, New York, 2007; *Busan Biennale*, South Korea, 2006; *Location of the Spirits*, Ludwig Museum, Budapest and the Moscow Contemporary Museum, Moscow, 2003; and *On Happiness*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, 2003. Mitamura has completed residencies in London (2008) and Finland (2005). She is represented in Japan by Bambinart Gallery, Tokyo and in Germany by Galerie Lichtblick, Cologne.

## WHAT IS AN ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM?

An artist-in-residence program provides the opportunity for artists to visit and live in a place they might not otherwise reside in, to spend a period of time focused on researching or making art work. Facilities such as a studio, accommodation and a network of practicing artists, curators, and educators with whom they can engage with, are usually provided by host institutions. Artists may learn from and contribute to the local community and there is potential to develop longer term cultural, artistic or professional relationships.

Monash University Museum of Art, together with the Faculty of Art and Design at Monash University, Asialink and Tokyo Wonder Site (Japan), provide an opportunity for an invited artist from Japan to spend three months in Melbourne. The artist is provided with accommodation and studio space at Caulfield campus as part of the Faculty of Art & Design Visiting Artists Program. The artist has the use of facilities to make new work, presents a lecture to students and exhibits a body of work in the project space at Monash University Museum of Art.



## MIDORI MITAMURA TALKS ABOUT HER WORK

### IN GENERAL...

My installations structure space through the combination of various materials such as photos, images, music, language, old clothes and second hand goods. And then I pretend that it's "a drama which people can venture into." The objects displayed in the space exist like picture book illustrations and the people who view them can imagine a story for each item.

I think my artworks are close to anyone and everyone's lives, and are a way of sharing awkward and endearing emotions and memories with people through the everyday details of life. In order to realise this, I insitgate encounters with myself, my family and also people who are strangers to me.

Our lives are merely one part in the passage of a long history, the greater part of which is not especially dramatic, but having said that it isn't smooth either. And yet, we all live our lives as if pushing the meter-needle of our experience to its maximum point.

We all awkwardly continue on through the heart ache and cruelty of life but then at times see that the surface is humorous. Perhaps we encourage one another through an optimistic point of view.

It is that element of life filled with both heart ache and warmth that I wish to convey with my artworks.

I choose between the various approaches to making art in accordance with the location – such as participatory art, improvised installations and performance art, and incorporating photos and videos of objects.

### ON PHOTOGRAPHY...

I use photographs as one of the main materials in my artwork. Sometimes, the photos I use in my artworks are not taken by me. They are old family shots, or photos I have found that were taken by people I don't know.

With the found photographs, I am intrigued by the sense and viewpoint of the photographer. How did they feel when they pressed the shutter? I think that thought is expressed in the photo.

The presence you feel from photography as a media plays a big role as a part of my artwork. In this way, because the photo has lost its specific information and identity, we can only imagine the surrounding story of the instant in time which otherwise ought to be certain.

### ON BOOKS...

Books are another important material I use in addition to photos. Books offer a direct approach to our consciousness, letting us speak with the author one-to-one across space and time; they offer infinite value and potential.

But you have to read them, or rather, they must be read. Otherwise they are just lines of characters and bundles of paper. The gap between their physical presence and their potential is something I find interesting and curious.

Whatever age we live in through reading books we can converse with people from the distant past, and we can share that time with other people who have read the text. They are surely a gift from the past.

... When we view someone's bookshelf it lets us imagine the kind of life they live. In other words, a personal bookshelf is like a portrait of the person.



### ON ART & BREAKFAST...

My exhibition here at MUMA is a site-specific artwork inspired by a particular location and made out of many found objects.

Along with installations, I have also produced participatory art projects during several years travelling. The exhibition at MUMA is part of a series called *Art & Breakfast*. *Art & Breakfast* is a title which hints at the phrase B&B (Bed & Breakfast). I create the work while I'm visiting another place. It's an art project that includes breakfast and is a phrase I have coined.

*Art & Breakfast* started when I had breakfast together with some people who visited one of my exhibitions. Based on the images and memories that I collect during my travels I create installations from the objects from the place I am visiting, collecting things until a countless number of small installations cover the space. This way of making is free from the usual constraints and stresses of exhibitions such as transportation and construction issues.

Making work this way also means that it's not a one way passage of bringing an artwork from far away. Making unrestrained installations on location like the exhibition at MUMA, makes it possible for me to create a deeper form of feedback with the basis of my artwork.

### STARTING POINTS, CURRICULUM LINKS AND POSSIBILITIES

#### Discuss this quote:

Artist Rirkrit Tiravanija once quoted this sentence from Wittgenstein: "Don't look for the meaning of things, look for their use." One is not in front of an object anymore but included in the process of its construction.

— Nicholas Bourriaud in an interview with Bennett Simpson, 'Public Relations', Art Forum, 2001

### VCE ART

#### Formal Framework

- How has Midori Mitamura constructed her installation?
- How important is the use of found objects?
- How are these used and what might they reflect on?
- Can you speculate about the process that might have been used in the production of the work?
- What type of relationships between the objects can you make?
- How has Midori Mitamura arranged objects and used the space?

#### Personal Framework

- How are Midori Mitamura's personal experiences conveyed in the work presented?
- How has the artist's residency influenced the work?
- How do you interpret the use of the space and the idea of Art & Breakfast?
- What is the relationship between art and food, if any?

#### Cultural Framework

- Refer to the other presentations of Art & Breakfast found on Midori Mitamura's website. How do these compare to the permutation of the project presented at MUMA? Do the sites of the breakfasts influence their presentation?
- How does the installation of the objects and arrangement of the space influence your response to the work?

#### Contemporary Framework

- How is the viewer included in the artwork?
- How does this differ from your usual experience of a museum or gallery?



## VCE STUDIO ART

### Materials and Techniques

- Who are some of Midori Mitamura's influences? Speculate on who she may have been influenced by.
- How might these influences have influenced her choice of materials and processes?
- Compare the strategies and tactics of Midori Mitamura with contemporary artists such as:

Rirkrit Tiravanija  
Cecil Floyer  
Yoko Ono  
Gabriel Orozco  
High Red Center (Japan)  
Gordon Matta-Clark  
Allen Ruppersberg  
Joseph Beuys  
Bianca Hester  
Harrell Fletcher  
A Constructed World  
Damp  
Veronica Kent and Sean Peoples (The Telepathy Project)

- Compare the strategies and tactics of Midori Mitamura with pre-1970s artists such as:

Giorgio Morandi  
John Brack  
Marcel Duchamp  
Gutai artists (Japan)

## POSSIBILITIES FOR MAKING...

Construct your own installation based on an experience of another place. How might you engage or include the audience or viewer in the work that you construct?

Respond to the idea of the 'everyday' using found objects collected around your home, school or neighbourhood. Experiment through the use of categorising or juxtaposing different forms. What relationships can you find? What relationships can you negate?

Brainstorm places that are important to your personal identity and history. Compile a song list that reflects these ideas.

Consider ideas or states of being that you value. Plan, cook and share a meal at a time that reflects these ideas.



## KEY TERMS

**Asialink:** a centre that is part of the University of Melbourne dedicated to promotion of public understanding between Asia and Australia.

**Tokyo Wonder Site:** is an art centre dedicated to the generation and promotion of new art and culture from the heart of Tokyo. Across 3 venues, it supports emerging artists and intercultural exchange, with studios, exhibitions and residency programs. It has been running since 2001 and has hosted a number of Australian artists in residence, as well as working in partnership with Asialink to place Japanese artists in residency programs here in Australia.

**Australia Council for the Arts:** is the Australian Government's principal funding and Advisory Board for the Arts.

**Cross cultural exchange:** the exchange of ideas, practices, habits, routines between people of varying cultural experience.

**Banal:** commonplace, familiar.

**Commodity:** a quantifiable object or product that can be exchanged for a physical object or product that is determined to be of equal (or greater) value.

**Found Object:** an object found or bought by an artist and selected because of a particular interest. Such objects may be exhibited in their found state, transformed via assemblage or exhibited as a readymade.

**Readymade:** this term was coined by Marcel Duchamp to describe artworks made from pre-fabricated or manufactured objects.

**Installation:** the way in which artworks are installed or placed in the gallery. This can be done to influence or question the viewers' perception of space or the objects or artworks.

**Mise-en-scene:** French term with its origins found in theatre and cinema, it means simply "put in the scene", in this context the term refers to everything that goes into the installation.

**Juxtaposition:** the presentation of two unrelated objects or ideas placed side by side in order to stimulate a response.

**Participatory Art:** an approach to artistic practice that actively seeks to involve the participation of the audience in order for the work to be activated or complete.

**Phantasmal:** something apparently seen but having no physical form.

**Utopia:** an ideal place, world or state, generally considered to be envisioned rather than actual.

## OTHER LINKS AND RESOURCES

### Midori Mitamura

<http://www.midorimitamura.com/>

### Midori Mitamura, Knitting Woman in the tenement-house, 2007

<http://www.imagesagainstawalls.com/artists/m/mitamura.html>

### Midori Mitamura at Bambinart Gallery, Tokyo

[http://www.bambinart.jp/en/artists/midori\\_mitamura/index.html](http://www.bambinart.jp/en/artists/midori_mitamura/index.html)

### Social practice and the everyday in art

David Goldenberg & Patricia Reed, What is Participatory practice?

<http://fillip.ca/content/what-is-a-participatory-practice>

### California College of Arts – Social Practice

<http://www.cca.edu/academics/graduate/fine-arts/socialpractices>

### Franics Bonami on the everyday in art

Now is Forever Again, TATE ETC, Issue 15 / Spring 2009

<http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue15/everyday.htm>

### Australia Council for the Arts

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/>

### Asialink

[http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/about\\_us](http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/about_us)

### Tokyo Wonder Site

<http://www.tokyo-ws.org/english/index.html>

### The Gutai art movement

<http://gutai-group.co.tv/>

### The High Red Center artist group

<http://www.experimentalcommunities.net/blog/?p=41>

### Rirkrit Tiravanija

<http://21cblog.com/21c-artist-interview-rirkrit-tiravanija/>

### Allen Ruppersberg

<http://allanmccollum.net/amcimages/al.html>

### Harrell Fletcher

<http://www.harrellfletcher.com/>

### A Constructed World

<http://www.aconstructedworld.com>

### The Telepathy Project

<http://www.thetelepathyproject.com/>

### *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices,*

Johanna Billing (Editor), Maria Lind (Editor), Lars Nilsson (Editor)  
Blackdog Publishing, 2007

### *The Everyday (Documents of Contemporary Art)*

by Stephen Johnstone (Editor)  
MIT Press, 2008

### *Participation (Documents of Contemporary Art)*

Claire Bishop (Editor)  
Whitechapel Gallery & the MIT Press, 2006

### *The Everyday Life Reader*

Ben Highmore (Editor)  
Routledge, 2001

### Essays available from MUMA:

Rosemary Forde, *Art & Breakfast, Melbourne* exhibition catalogue, Monash University Museum of Art, 2011

Ryoko Kamiyama, 'An imaginary trip beginning from objects – Midori Mitamura's microcosm', *On Everyday Planet* exhibition catalogue, Fuchu City Art Museum, Tokyo, 2009

Andreas Spiegl, 'Photographs of Time', *Green on the Mountain* exhibition catalogue, Secession, Vienna, 2007