

Michikusa Walks with the Unknown

Request for visitors

Do not touch the artworks and display cases. Please take care your hand luggage to prevent accidental contacts with artworks and display cases. No writing implements other than pencils may be brought into galleries.

Photography is permitted in this exhibition with following rules:

- No video shooting, flash photography or use of tripods are permitted.
- Please take care that your photography does not disturb other visitors.
- Photography is permitted only for purposes of nonprofit and private use.

Please credit #artist’s name, #title of the work and #ArtTowerMito when posting photography taken in this exhibition.

Lois Weinberger

Born 1947 in Stams, Tyrol, Austria. Based in Vienna, Austria, where he died in 2020.

Photography is permitted in this exhibition with following rules:

Lois Weinberger consistently took inspiration from ruderal species, the plants that live in environments heavily disturbed by human activity. Interpreting his practice closely engaged with nature as poetic and political actions, he was a pioneering figure in making work side by side with nature through a creative process that emphasized fieldwork.

His series of black-and-white photographs taken in a suburb of former East Berlin in 1994 reveal glimpses of other kinds of growth and decline, beyond human control, in a landscape that had changed from war zone to public housing. In this area that is, in part, xenophobic, Weinberger carried out the symbolic action of transplanting the plants from his own garden.

Comprising 624 slides, **Gartenarchiv (Garden Archive)** is a collection of photographs taken over the course of eleven years and documenting the vegetation on a plot of land in a Vienna suburb. In how the documentation attempts neither to categorize nor label the images, the viewer is able to discern the link between the richness of the flora inhabiting this sparse land and the concept behind the work. Many seeds from the plants on this plot of land, called simply “the Area” by the artist, were “scattered” as elements of the work and transplanted across the world.

“The way a society deals with its plants tells us a lot about itself,” Weinberger once said. Will this exhibition likewise prompt us to re-examine that society? By turning our attention to the periphery of nature, what

Weinberger called the “place where the living reveals itself above the orderly,” we are able to reflect on practices that defeat hierarchies with the principles of diversity and coexistence in nature, and disrupt the artificially constructed order.

Keiji Tsuyuguchi

Born 1950 in Tokushima Prefecture. Based in Hokkaido.

Photography is permitted in this exhibition with following rules:

“The photographer arrived late to the incident,” believes Keiji Tsuyuguchi, who has attempted to capture the changes that occur in an environment by placing himself within it and repeatedly visiting a location with the aid of historical documents and reference materials, rather than reproducing the results of an incident.

‘Natural History,’ which he started in 2011, is a series in which Tsuyuguchi continues to visit and photograph landscapes that have a particular history or genius loci, and then shows them by arranging the landscapes from different perspectives. From the area around the rivers Izari and Saru that were centers of indigenous Ainu culture, the River Yoshi that has possessed an ancient past as a place of geographical and spiritual exchange between humankind and nature, the Pacific coast in the Tohoku region of northeast Japan that has frequently faced the overwhelming power of nature, and the Fukushima exclusion zone and its boundaries—the photographs capturing these places suggest the existence of space that transcends the artificial in the interstices of the landscapes covered by, as the artist has described, “what we call nature, which gradually and steadily permeates.”

‘Place Names,’ on the other hand, is a series that consciously focuses on the distortions and disruptions of meaning that occurred when place names shifted from their original Ainu names to being written syllabically in Japanese katakana script at the end of the feudal period in the mid-nineteenth century to their subsequent renaming in logographic kanji characters, and thus attempts through images to intervene in the character or identity of the place. As the poet Paul Celan once wrote, the individual things within a name are related to the world while also belonging to us: when a place (Ort) is included in a word (Wort), that place name is often something that aspires for a place that is nowhere, as opposed to a particular place. We can also interpret Tsuyuguchi’s photographs, which are shot as what he calls “fragments peeled

off the landscape” while ascribing both proximity and distance in between incident and place, as “nowhere places,” ungraspable and disconnected from a particular incident or location. And when there appear concatenated meanings of places encompassed in words forcibly separated from their former terrains and communities, the “nowhere place” is once again evoked within the mind of the viewer.

Law Yuk-mui

Born 1982 in Hong Kong, where she remains based.

Photography is permitted in this exhibition with following rules:

With a focus on the landscape and geography of Hong Kong, a place where various races and cultures intersect, Law Yuk-mui creates richly poetic works reflecting that history and rapid social change.

Pastiche is a video work that layers complex and vividly emotional connections among humans and plants over the geopolitical identity of Hong Kong. The three-part work opens with found footage shot in a botanical garden in Hong Kong during the British colonial era and the process of a Kunqu (Kunju)¹ traditional theater performer changing from male to female, progressing then toward a climax based on the play *The Peony Pavilion*, which depicts human emotions within nature. At the finale, where emotional shifts of sorrow, joy, and love are expressed through gesture, sound, and song, words by the artist and quotations from plays and literature form a montage, creating an effect that oscillates from the visual to the linguistic.

The strangeness of the plot of The Peony Pavilion, in which a young woman falls in love with someone in her dream, dies, meets her lover again as a plum blossom, and is then resurrected and eventually reunited with him, suggests forms of sexual love other than that between two humans, and modes of life and death different from our conventional understanding of reproduction. Moreover, the fact that the *Bauhinia X blakeana*,² the orchid whose flowers are a symbol of Hong Kong and which appears at the start, is a hybrid sterile evokes a release from the repressive relationships constructed on heteronormativity and what humankind has defined as “natural.” In Kunqu style of female impersonation steadily declined since the Cultural Revolution, the viewer can sense the subtle interchange of human emotion and the interpenetrative, indivisible state of nature. “Or every man be blind,” as Emily

Dickinson wrote in her poem “Tell all the truth but tell it slant.” Is the sense of uncertainty we always feel throughout Law’s work a disorientation that comes from the disquiet in the contradictions and confusion that pervades Hong Kong? Or is rather the manifestation of a versatility that can dismantle existing dichotomies and break free from the systems that dominate and oppress?

1. A type of classical Chinese theater established during the Ming dynasty. One of its most representative plays is *The Peony Pavilion*.
2. *Bauhinia X blakeana* is a tree native to Hong Kong. Commonly known as the Hong Kong orchid, it is used as the official emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

mixrice

(Cho Jieun, Kim Jungwon, Ko Gyeol)

Request for visitors

Formed 2002. Based in Seoul, South Korea.

Photography is permitted in this exhibition with following rules:

Examining the changes that occur due to migration as well as its traces and evoked memories, mixrice collaborates with communities or individuals in a state of transition to create work across a range of media, from photography to video, text, animation, and more.

The Vine Chronicle traces the trajectories of trees transplanted when the land at their original locations around Korea was redeveloped. From trees bought up and transplanted for urban development to trees displaced from where they were cultivated due to the construction of a dam, or the trees that became people’s spiritual anchors on Jeju Island—trees are a part of human lifestyle and accordingly at the mercy of whatever society deems convenient. In its examination of such trees we see mixrice’s sincere gaze directed toward the kinds of redevelopment that are now widely pursued.

This series of works that mixrice has made about plants originates in the story of a particular zelkova tree. The 1,000-year-old zelkova was bought at a high price for a luxury residential area, only to wither a few years after it was transplanted and then be replaced by another tree. This story sparked the group to embark on an exploration of the values and concepts of time that surround trees. Through dialogue with communities submerged by a dam project or through the spiritual connections with trees that elderly Jeju people talk about, mixrice spreads out a plant-focused narrative net linking past, present, and future. As traces of the things that once lived in a place now abandoned, mixrice copies the outlines of the plants. During the time when the

transplanted trees are taking root in the soil, people come together and gradually construct new relationships with nature or with the communities that exist around nature, which is an approach that can once again tie humankind with the environment.

Uriel Orlow

Born 1973 in Zurich, Switzerland. Based in London and Lisbon.

Photography is permitted in this exhibition with following rules:

Through exhaustive archival research and on-site fieldwork as part of the creative process, Uriel Orlow turns his attention to the historically underrepresented or neglected, making work that evokes memory through space.

The exhibition introduces five pieces from the body of work **‘Theatrum Botanicum’** made between 2015 and 2018. These works decipher South Africa’s historical and contemporary entanglements with Europe from the perspectives of plants, exploring the trade of goods and exchange of knowledge during apartheid and into the present. In **Grey, Green, Gold**, Orlow attempts to respond poetically to the history of South Africa through symbolic anecdotes involving Nelson Mandela, namely the cultivation of a rare yellow species of the strelizia reginae and the garden that Mandela tended while an inmate at Robben Island prison. In the center of the exhibition room is a three video works, which focuses on the medicinal herbs used in traditional remedies and, by joining up antithetical concepts like the human and natural worlds, tradition and modernity, the rights of indigenous peoples and intellectual property rights, it explores their meanings. Exhibited in another room is a recent project by the artist, **Leaning from Artemisia**, which surveys the history and cultivation of the titular plant grown as an antimalarial medicine in the Republic of Congo. This medicinal plant has had a great historical impact on warfare and saved the lives of many, but its effectiveness is not recognized by the World Health Organization. In the course of drinking an Artemisia tea and conducting research on-site, Orlow built up a sustainable relationship with a local women’s cooperative in Congo and opened up new possibilities for artistic intervention in history or at a location.

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Born 1982 in Chiba Prefecture, where he remains based.

Yoichi Kamimura searches for ways to

perceive the landscape through the visual or auditory senses, and approaches environments around the world via field recordings and, based on the materials and concepts he attains there, creates installations, paintings, sound performances, sound art, and more. The field recordings he has made in the Shiretoko Peninsula since 2019 have seen him search for a borderless ecology encompassing humankind and nature via the various phenomena that involve drift ice.

Breathe You is inspired by his experience sensing the outside of the human world within a place of darkness when he undertook field recordings on a sea of drift ice. The artist has made a new installation that fills the entire space with a meditative soundscape comprising various environmental noises produced by drift ice, the cries of marine life, and a mixture of human breathing or whistling that recreates the now rarely heard phenomenon of “singing” drift ice.

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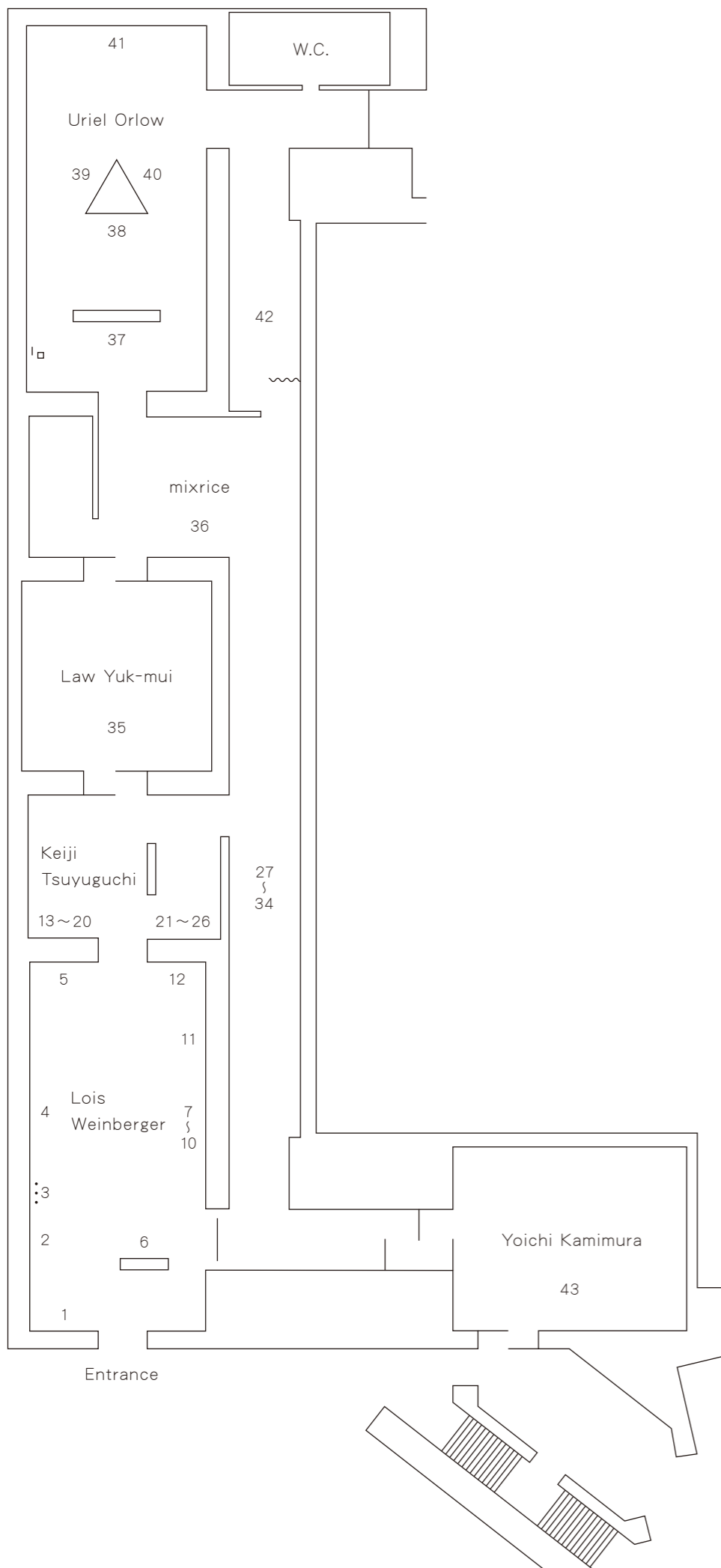
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List of Works

Lois Weinberger

Outdoor work (Plaza)
 Wild Enclosure
 2020
 Spontaneous vegetation

1. Untitled
2007
Photograph
2. Feldarbeit (Fieldwork)
2014
Marker on cotton
3. Walking Sticks
2004
6 wooden walking sticks
4. Feldarbeit (Fieldwork)
2004
Marker on cotton
5. Poem
1990 / 2020
6. Drawing for Wild Enclosure
2020
Pencil and color pencil on paper
7. Berlin-Marzahn
1994
Photograph
8. Berlin-Marzahn
1994
Photograph
9. Berlin-Marzahn
1994
Photograph
10. Berlin-Marzahn
1994
Photograph
11. Documents from Gebiet II (Area II)
2004-2009
Photograph
12. Gartenarchiv (Garden Archive)
1988-1999
624 slides (digitized from slide films)

All works courtesy of Studio Lois Weinberger and Krinzinger Galery, Vienna.

Keiji Tsuyuguchi

From the series 'Natural History'

13. Izari River, Honryu
2012
Chromogenic print
14. Izari River, Honryu shirattise
2012
Chromogenic print
15. Saru River, Nioi
2011
Chromogenic print
16. Saru River, Nibudani
2015
Chromogenic print
17. Minamisoma, Itagawaura, Tohoku Pacific Coast
2015
Chromogenic print
18. Minamisoma, Itagawaura, Tohoku Pacific Coast
2015
Chromogenic print
19. Yoshino River, Awashima
2014
Chromogenic print
20. Yoshino River, Inbeyama
2014
Chromogenic print
21. Fukushima, the boundary area with the difficult-to-return zone
2014
Chromogenic print
22. Fukushima, the boundary area with the difficult-to-return zone
2014
Chromogenic print
23. Fukushima, the difficult-to-return zone
2016
Chromogenic print
24. Fukushima, the difficult-to-return zone
2016
Chromogenic print

25. Fukushima, the zone in preparation for lifting of the evacuation order

2014
Chromogenic print

26. Fukushima, the zone in preparation for lifting of the evacuation order

2014
Chromogenic print

From the series 'Place Names'

27. Sappinai
April 2001 / September 2002
Chromogenic print

28. Osachinai
May 2015 / August 2015
Chromogenic print

29. Gokibiru
June 2001 / August 2001
Chromogenic print

30. Hattari
May 2001 / June 2001
Chromogenic print

31. Shutokunai
May 2016 / November 2016
Chromogenic print
Collection of Sagamihara City

32. Nobuka
July 2001 / September 2001
Chromogenic print
Collection of Sagamihara City

33. Oyochi
May 2002 / October 2002
Chromogenic print
Collection of Sagamihara City

34. Mataoci
May 2003 / May 2002
Chromogenic print
Collection of Sagamihara City

Law Yuk-mui

35. Pastiche
2019
3-channel video, 6-channel sound
22' 20"

mixrice

36. The Vine Chronicle
2016
2-channel video, sound, 9 photographs, wallpaper
8' 46"

Uriel Orlow

From the series 'Theatrum Botanicum'

37. Grey, Green, Gold
2015-2017
Concrete plinth with loupe and seed, slide projection with 81 slides, photograph

38. Muthi
2016-2018

Single-channel video, sound
17'

39. The Crown against Mafavuke
2016
Single-channel video, sound
18' 45"

40. Imbizo ka Mafavuke (Mafavuke's Tribunal)
2017
Single-channel video, sound
28'

41. Muthi
2017
Print on PVC
3 prints (set of 7)

42. Learning from Artemisia
2019-2020
3-channel video, sound
14' 18"

Yoichi Kamimura

43. Breathe You
2020
6.1-channel sound, fluorescent paint, UV light, LED grow light, sand
Approx. 15'

Also on view:

Criterion 97 Ryosuke Higo