



CURATORS WITHOUT GALLERY
CONSERVATEURS SANS GALLERIE
ギャラリーを持たないキュレーターたち

Depuis 2009

Proudly presents:

アイダ この間

2009年3月22日(日) 14:00~15:00
京都市中京区丸太通寺町西入



Project IN BETWEEN
WWW.MOMENTARIUM.ORG



Project IN_BETWEEN アイダ この間

On Remnant Urban (and Social) Space and its Creative Potential



A vacant urban lot in downtown Kyoto has been transformed into a temporary gallery that invites creative visions for such leftover spaces (March 22, 2009).



CURATORS WITHOUT GALLERIES proudly present:

IN_BETWEEN: On Remnant Urban Space and its Creative Potential
Sunday, March 22, 2009, between 14:00 and 15:00 (free of charge)
SW corner of Kyoto Imperial Palace (at Marutamachi-Teramachi Street)

Realized within just 10 days, this exhibition explores the poetry of everyday Kyoto. IN_BETWEEN looks at the open, unstructured places in the city which have a special and sometimes poetic character all their own. They put no restrictions on us, they invite us to dream, to make the space our own. In these places there is a sense of loneliness, but also of possibility. A range of local artists put their creative suggestions for leftover spaces into miniature sculptures. Consequently the audience of this exhibition is invited to add the missing links in a hands-on fashion.

CURATORS WITHOUT GALLERIES / CONSERVATEUR SANS GALERIE (CSG) is an international art organization established in 2009 by curators and citizens in Japan. Today CSG provides unusual artistic ventures to people worldwide who are excluded from the art system and institutionalized culture. CSG realizes independent, aesthetic interventions that create surprising art experiences in the everyday context through subtle shifts within human presence and co-existence.

On Remnant Urban (and Social) Space: **Research**



MOTIVATION

To my knowledge there are no artist/curator-run, alternative exhibition spaces in Kyoto, my current home town. But there are many empty, remnant spaces (in an otherwise very densely developed city) that often remain unused for decades. Since I can't afford to obtain an expensive rental gallery (the regular way of showing art in Japan), I established 'Conservateurs Sans Galerie', CSG, (Curators Without Gallery) an ad-hoc initiative, that attempts to bring non-artists and vacant urban lots into an open, creative engagement.

Before starting Project IN_BETWEEN I wondered if I can:

- a) ...get permission to convert a vacant lot on top location in Kyoto into a temporary gallery.
- b) ...engage strangers as visionaries for vacant lots – resulting in work to be shown to the public.
- c) ...realize everything needed within just 10 days and on a shoestring budget.

PROCESS (1)

Establishing a Gallery Space

I launched Project IN_BETWEEN with making a photographic inventory of vacant lots in urban Kyoto and find an empty spot on central and well frequented location. Remnant, unutilized spaces are numerous in Japanese cities due to high inheritance taxes that prompt many families to demolish their old house when its previous owner has died. Like pulled teeth it creates openings in house rows which remain empty for decades or are being turned into a parking lot. I was surprised to find vacant lots on major traffic arteries and started to approach neighbors and store owners next door to help me grant permission for my exhibition. After initial resistance ("forget it, it's impossible to do anything here!") my asserting attitude and careful explanation won me the support from the barber next to the vacant lot that soon would be a gallery... Learning: be insistent and don't take an initial "no" for the final answer.

On Remnant Urban (and Social) Space: **“Play Dough Conversations”**



PROCESS (2)

Inviting “Artists”

Now I had a gallery but no art to show yet... I was interested to bring strangers into the discussion, ignite their imagination on vacant lots that would result – with simple means – into presentable work. Introducing myself as a curator ¹⁾ – with temporary gallery in vacant lot – I approached people in cafés, book shops and the community house. After making sure they had at least ten minutes to spare, I showed them photos from vacant lots and asked them how they would use the space regardless of monetary or legal constraints. I asked my participants to help me prototype their visions in play dough and in most cases people were intrigued to add substance to their

conversation with hands and modeling material. Depending on their dedication the “play dough conversations” lasted between 5 and 90 minutes and I found them to be a great, tactile way of interaction (and potentially a novel, democratic approach to urban planning). In the course of one week I encountered 25 persons who sculpted a vision to utilize “their” remnant space. 24 of them agreed to have their work shown during the concluding exhibition.

1) Note: The title “Curator” has a bit of an exotic touch in Japan where not many know about this profession. This in turn made for an excellent opportunity to further explain my mission...

On Remnant Urban (and Social) Space: **Concluding Event**



PROCESS (3)

The Making of an Exhibition

On Sunday afternoon, March 22, 2009, the IN_BETWEEN exhibition took place (rain or shine). In an attempt to concentrate the presence of people involved, the event lasted just 90 minutes (30 minutes longer than planned). In order to attract passerbyers (on their Sunday stroll in the nearby Imperial Palace) large-scale banner and table kept all in bright white helped to offset the gallery form the surrounding gray. Visitors were invited to not just view the works on display but to create a play dough model of their own visions. Two of the participating artists were present and able to share from their experience. IN_BETWEEN was also able to grasp the interest of some owners from neighboring shops.

OUTCOME & LEGACY

Project IN_BETWEEN was an invitation not only to collectively (re)imagine the unused potential of a given situation (vacant lots). It provided a social platform to experience that we can – if only temporarily – transform our reality, by actively shaping this space that is between two people or between two buildings. Ideally Project IN_BETWEEN can provide a model for creative civic engagement which why its process and manifestations has been well documented. All participating neighbors, property owners, play dough artists, exhibition visitors will receive a follow-up exhibition catalog (in Japanese/English) which will be made public with video documentary on my website as well. Long story short: anybody can be a 'Curator Without Gallery'!

26 Visions on How to Utilize Vacant Lots in Kyoto (prototyped in play dough) **1/2**



VISION 01: **Dance with Agriculture in Vacant Space** CREATOR: **Ojee** COMMENTS: **Bodies and animals dance together (with hot spring)**



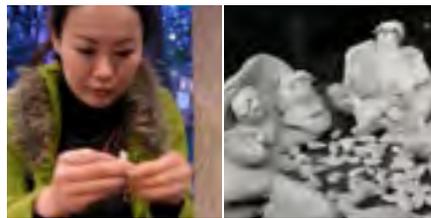
VISION 02: **Untitled** CREATOR: **Iori Takeda** COMMENTS: **A-A-Aliens!!!**



VISION 03: **Football Space** CREATOR: **Yoshitaka Yokozawa** COMMENTS: **In Europe kids are playing with balls in the park and in back alleys. In Japan there are signs "Don't enter the grass" or "Don't play because it is dangerous!". There are "Don't!" signs all over the place and kids have no place to play outside. It can't be helped that kids stay in the house and play video games...**



VISION 04: **Vietnamese Coffee House** CREATOR: **Kha Chau** COMMENTS: **I have a dream to have my own Japanese restaurant in Kyoto which is the old Japanese capitol.**



VISION 05: **A cozy place invites friendly people** CREATOR: **Satomi Tamiya** COMMENTS: **It is very difficult to be just as i am. When I am truly myself other people can naturally gather around me. Then the only thing I need is comfortable chairs and tables.**



VISION 06: **Full Recycling** CREATOR: **Yonsupu Hara** COMMENTS: **Lets effectively use our Garbage and natural resources with 1) Earth worm breeding 2) Veggie garden 3) Trout farming 4) Bullfrog farming 5) Plastic bags recycled into light oil 6) Methan gas station 7) Light oil station 8) Solar energy station on rooftop.**



VISION 07: **Having Tea Without Rush** CREATOR: **Noriko Kawasaki** COMMENTS: **The garden over the rainbow.**



VISION 08: **A Park for Kids** CREATOR: **Tetsuji Takahata** COMMENTS: **These days I rarely see kids playing in the park.so that i create a park for them.**



VISION 11: **Book Hideout** CREATOR: **Nathali Stumpf** COMMENTS: **My escape, my own world and my own thoughts.**



VISION 09: **Yoga Observatory** CREATOR: **Iwasaki Yuko** COMMENTS: **While watching the stars above me I make my yoga poses...**



VISION 10: **Soccer Match** CREATOR: **Chun Din Tam** COMMENTS: **The Thai national team is playing against Vietnam.**



VISION 13: **Entrance to the Forest** CREATOR: **Eri Oomura** COMMENTS: **It is wonderful where the space is fully overgrown (taken over) by plants. Like a forest.**



VISION 12: **Small House** CREATOR: **Kei Takeuchi** COMMENTS: **I like to have this kind of house with a big hot tub next to it that I can rent out.**

26 Visions on How to Utilize Vacant Lots in Kyoto (prototyped in play dough) 2/2



VISION 14: **Lounge** CREATOR: Rin-san COMMENTS: Romantic lounge offering leechie fruits.



VISION 15: **Slow Paced** CREATOR: Nolly (Noshiyori) COMMENTS: A space where strangers can get and play together.



VISION 16: **Spend time together with flowers** CREATOR: Machiko COMMENTS: The garden in where everybody is welcomed.



VISION 17: **Totoro and Flowers** CREATOR: Mie Matsuoka (Osaka) COMMENTS: If there was a parasol it would be better. Playing with play-dough brings me back to my childhood.



VISION 18: **Play and Sports Ground** CREATOR: Reiwaku COMMENTS: The soil is covered with grass, there are no stones and we are running.



VISION 19: **Shinto Park (hens, vegetable and veggie garden)** CREATOR: Shinto COMMENTS: Milk (1 liter): Yen 200; Egg (1 piece): Yen 50.



VISION 20: **Dinosaur Bath** CREATOR: Hinemosu Hirune COMMENTS: I am the walking bath tub.



VISION 21: **Play Station** CREATOR: PeLe COMMENTS: Some are enjoying a drink, some are watching a sports game. Of course we can play interactive video games at this open air video projection screen that fills the entire back wall.



VISION 22: **The Tree House of My Dreams** CREATOR: Canpi COMMENTS: I build a hut on a humongous tree and I invite people and we spend a fun time together.



VISION 23: **Space Shuttle** CREATOR: Hori COMMENTS: Open the house door and within two minutes we have launched in space!



VISION 24: **Japanese Lantern Party** CREATOR: Kaya COMMENTS: We make lanterns and at night we light the candles in them and have fun.



VISION 25: **Shake Our Hands** CREATOR: Kosuke Tamai COMMENTS: Being this "in_between situation" it would be wonderful if this space could facilitate many encounters among strangers.



VISION 26: **Spoon & Fork** CREATOR: Mie Saito COMMENTS: Wooden benches in the shape of an oversized spoon and fork invite people to sit down and share a picnic.

The "play dough conversations" took place between March 12 and 22 and engaged strangers at various public locations in Kyoto