



Te Adam
Pātaka Art
Toi Gallery

16 July 2013

Life goes on—a poetic perspective on disaster

Can the imagination be an effective tool for dealing with catastrophe?

The work of two artists, Lieko Shiga from Japan and Paul Johns from Christchurch, linked by their personal experiences of recent natural disasters, offers a perspective on this question in an upcoming exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery.

Adam Art Gallery director and co-curator of the exhibition Christina Barton, says the exhibition 'All There is Left' treats images as powerful aids to remembrance and reconstruction, but not always in ways audiences will expect.

"'All There is Left' is a phrase Christchurch-based curator Ken Hall has used to describe the image archive of pre-earthquake Christchurch. We have adapted his words to explore how images serve not only as historical records, but as creative tools to respond to disaster."

Lieko Shiga is a photographer who was based in the coastal village of Kitakama that was destroyed by the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

"Lieko's project *Rasen Kaigan (The Spiral Shore)* combines striking images that imaginatively convey the deep bonds between people and place with images saved from the wreckage," says Ms Barton.

"She weaves these together with words, telling us how she came to live in this place and how photography serves her as a tool to grapple with deeper questions about existence."

Lifelong Christchurch resident Paul Johns' installation focuses on the Odeon Theatre which was badly damaged in the Christchurch earthquakes.

"Rather than dwell on the earthquake's destructive effects, Paul uses what happened to him during the earthquake of February 2011 as a means to reignite memory, creating potent symbols for survival and renewal."

These artists are accompanied by *Reel-Unreel*, a video installation produced in Afghanistan in 2011 by Mexico City-based artist Francis Alÿs. This film meditates on everyday life in war-torn Kabul through a popular 'hoop-and-stick' children's game, here played with reels of 35mm film. Initially screened in a bombed-out cinema in Kabul as an off-site project for DOCUMENTA 13, a major exhibition of modern and contemporary art which takes place in

Kassel, Germany every five years, this is the work's first presentation in the Southern Hemisphere.

A highlight of the public programme accompanying the exhibition is a lecture on 19 July by Lieko Shiga, who will provide a highly personal perspective on the role of art in memorialising tragedy. Her visit has been supported by the Asia New Zealand Foundation.

In addition, a symposium bringing artists, architects, and designers together to describe projects reflecting on loss and renewal in the wake of natural disaster will be staged on 9–10 August. This is supported by the New Zealand Institute of Architects and co-hosted with the School of Architecture at Victoria University.

“We are excited that Joseph Becker, Assistant Curator of Architecture and Design at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art will be part of this event,” says Adam Art Gallery curator Michelle Menzies.

“He will be discussing the work of visionary architect Lebbeus Woods, whose imaginative drawings of post-earthquake San Francisco will be a provocative addition to debates on how to respond to the earth's volatility.”

The exhibition will be opened by Professor of Art History and leading historian and theorist of photography Geoffrey Batchen, on Saturday 20 July at 5.00pm. All media are welcome.

For more information visit www.adamartgallery.org.nz

What: All There is Left: Lieko Shiga, Paul Johns, Francis Alÿs

Where: Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University of Wellington, Gate 3, Kelburn Parade

When: 21 July–29 September 2013

Tuesday–Sunday, 11am–5pm (closed on Monday)

Free entry

To make an appointment for a preview of the exhibition, to arrange interviews and images, please contact Michelle Menzies on michelle.menzies@vuw.ac.nz or phone 04-463 5229.

For a copy of the public programme visit www.adamartgallery.org.nz

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