



Above: Gerda Steiner and Jorg Lenzlinger, *Brainforest*, 2004. Opposite, from top to bottom: Olafur Eliasson, *Antispective Situation*, 2003. Ana Maria Tavares, *Numinosum*, 2004. All images courtesy: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. All photos: Shigeo Anzai. Installation views from 'Polyphony - Emerging Resonances' at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, 2004-5

YUKO HASEGAWA

SATORU NAGOYA

SATORU NAGOYA: Let me start with probably the most awkward question – what is a 'curator' to you?

YUKO HASEGAWA: My conception of a curator is a kind of catalyst and intermediary. A curator mediates between artwork and exhibition sites and provides new interpretations of the artwork and sites. A curator is also a transporter, transporting one work, which originally comes from one place, to another place. This action causes both understandings and misunderstandings, and the exhibition may become controversial as a result.

It is interesting to be involved in that process in synergy with artists, sometimes working together, collaborating with them on new works or

projects. To my understanding, such synergy is the most beautiful thing for a curator, and for audiences as well.

SN: Can you tell me about the living artists you are most interested in now?

YH: If I can include those working in architecture, I would first mention SANAA [architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, who designed the building of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa]. Sejima and Nishizawa are really interesting creators. They create new concepts, new interpretations of the environment, do serious research, and their works are really unique. Sejima works intuitively from what her own body tells her. But at

the same time she listens deeply to the history, society and the environment of the place where the building is located and then 'jumps' into her own work. It's eccentric. Some say she's crazy, but she is really wonderful.

I can also recommend Motochiko Odani [an artist whom Hasegawa, as commissioner, brought to the Japanese Pavilion at the 2003 Venice Biennale. The title of the Japanese Pavilion show was 'Heterotopias']. He is a sculptor and video maker, and also makes installations and works in various other media. On the other hand, he is very Japanese – he's interested in statues of Buddha, the sublime and spirituality. He's always working with something new, often picking up subcultural material. I hope he will find new directions now with more focus on sculpture, because his sculptures are his strongest works.

As for world artists – Matthew Barney, absolutely! [A major solo show of Barney was held at Hasegawa's museum between July and August 2005.] He's always growing – it's amazing. His *Cremaster Cycle* works present his 'self-portrait' in a very alchemical way, which also represents a beautiful, complete cosmology. In his latest film *Drawing Restraint 9* (2005) he cleverly chose Japan as the location, the best place to deconstruct and recreate himself. He is also good at team play. I would say he is a genius.

SN: You are Japanese and a woman. How do you think these two attributes influenced your career as a curator?

YH: To be Japanese and a woman are two inferiority factors in the masculine-dominated society of Japan. Japan is so far away from the centre of the contemporary art world, and there are historical complications between Korea and China. Japan is also quite psychological. It's difficult to be a curator in Japan, where a curator doesn't have the professional identity and respect that a lawyer or doctor enjoys.

On the other hand, I'm a kind of 'light' Buddhist, and am very interested in Zen philosophy and time-based art. These are the elements of 'egofugal' [a concept coined by Hasegawa as the theme of the 2001 Istanbul Biennial of which she was artistic director]. Thanks to this unique cultural background I could conceive these ideas.

SN: Would you talk about future exhibitions you are working on?

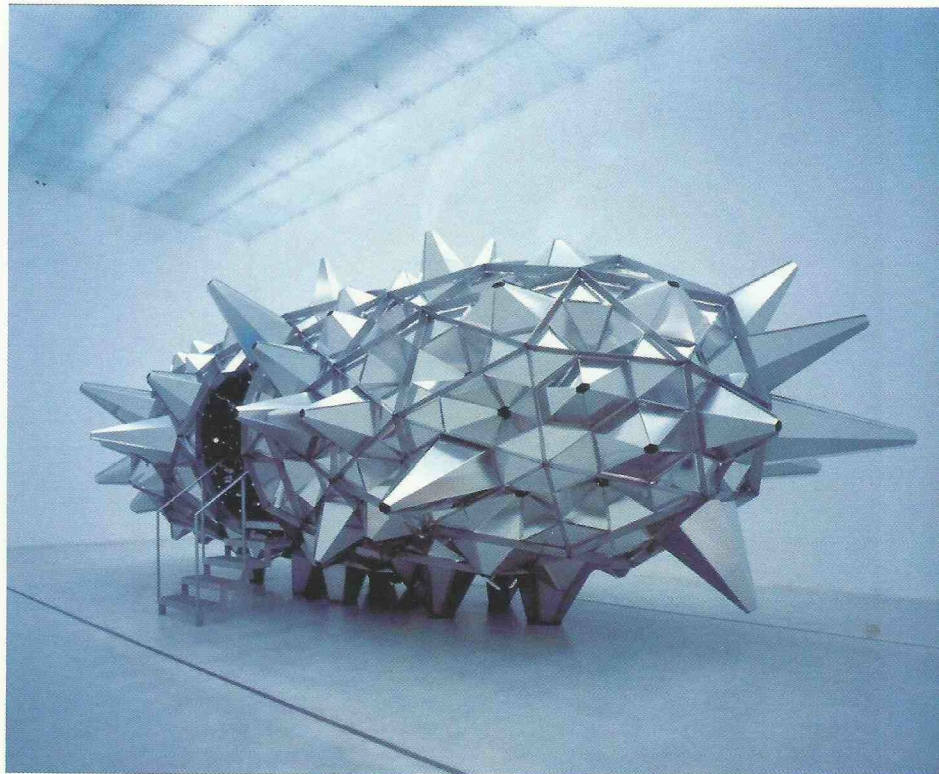
YH: I'm now preparing for a group exhibition at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León with two other curators, Octavio Zaya, and Agustín Pérez Rubio, who is the chief curator of the museum. The show will be titled 'Trial Balloon' and will open at the end of April 2006. It will showcase around 30 artists from around the world, including unknown ones, mostly in their 20s and 30s.

SN: Can you speak a little about 'topos' which seems to be one of your keynote exhibition concepts?

YH: I use that term as a double meaning. It's about the real places where we are, or where art's physical presence needs to be. And it's also a metaphor for a spiritual function that is invisible. As I see it, this double 'topos' represents the nature of art. Exhibitions virtually displace or navigate people to other places, like 'Another World' [an exhibition Hasegawa curated in 1992 at Art Tower Mito, where she was a staff curator at the time and for which she first won renown as a curator].

The 20th century saw a lot of experiments and proposals for utopias. But we couldn't really convey those ideas to the audience. In the 21st century we have to create audiences who are more intellectual and have more diverse backgrounds. I would even say that my concern now is to do with new audiences rather than new artists.

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Above: Mathieu Briand, *SYS*05.ReE03/SE*1\MOE*2-8*, 2001. Courtesy: the artist and Istanbul Biennial. Photo: Kenji Morita. From the 7th Istanbul Biennial, 2001. Below: Matthew Barney, *Drawing Restraint 9*, 2005. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York. From: 'Drawing Restraint' at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, 2005. Opposite: Maja Bajevic, *Women at Work 3 - Washing Up*, 2001. Courtesy: Istanbul Biennial. Photo: Muabul Biennial, 2001





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Brotherhood and unity
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