

SLEEK

CULTURE

The Japanese Artist Building Mini Ecosystems From Found Objects



Yuko Mohri, *Moré Moré (Leaky): The Falling Water Given #1-3*, Nissan Art Award 2015 Photo: Keizo Kioku

Yuko Mohri, Japan's much-buzzed installation artist, is set to present her first UK solo show this February. The creative first garnered attention after winning the 2015 Nissan Art Award for her work entitled "Moré Moré (Leaky)". A site-specific installation that serves as a built environment, the piece is a simulation of Tokyo's underground transportation system created using found objects. For her upcoming exhibition, she has developed upon the 2015 work to create a mini "ecosystem" that's six years in the making. SLEEK caught up with Mohri prior to the opening of her show next month to learn more about her fascination with Tokyo's transit system, her creative process and how residencies at some of London's most prestigious institutions have helped her grow as an artist.

How does your new work build upon previous concepts presented in "Moré Moré"?

My upcoming solo show develops upon previous ideas shown for the Nissan Art Award, but the most important thing about this project is improvisation. There is no pre-empted design or sketch for this project. It's almost like improvised architecture. I believe that it will be a new phenomenon, and I am so excited to create an installation using objects found in London.

Where does your fascination with the Tokyo underground stem from? Why have you chosen to explore this interest with art?

I am always amazed at the strong aesthetics of metro stations. Their designs tend to look like installations by "non-artists". I could never compete with them, although there is a part of me that needs to include the phenomena of these designs into my art.

Each of your exhibitions has been described as a tiny "ecosystem", with each work created using found objects that reveal a space's distinctive characteristics. How do you go about collecting objects and how do you decide which ones to pair together?

The most important part of my practise is the collection of objects. I collect things constantly without even thinking. My studio, my storage space, my room and my parent's house are full of my objects. Collection is like drawing for me. I draw my inspiration from these objects of interest. I try to let these objects evolve naturally in a space, creating a temporary "ecosystem" that then grows into an installation.



Yuko Mohri, Moré Moré (Leaky): The Falling Water Given #1-3, Nissan Art Award 2015 Photo: Keizo Kioku

You focus heavily on scientific phenomena like gravity and magnetism. What attracts you to these concepts and do you run into any obstacles when channelling them into your work?

I am interested in the invisible energy that pulses through ordinary life. When creating my installations I think a lot about the unseen forces circulating in our world. I used to make invisible sculptures powered by magnets, and I recently decided this work seemed unstable and unpredictable, two characteristics which I now enjoy.

In 2016 you completed a residency at both the V&A and Camden Arts Centre. How have these particular opportunities helped your work grow and evolve?

These opportunities have given me so many new ideas. I had an idea of London – the people, the buildings and the infrastructure – before I came, and so I felt very comfortable when I arrived. I have felt very at ease making my site-specific installations, and I believe that all of my research and experiences during these residencies will feed into the work presented at my solo show next month.



Photo by Naoko Maeda

“Moré Moré (Leaky)” by Yuko Mohri is on display at London’s White Rainbow gallery from 9 February until 11 March 2017