

A Message from the 41st Century – Transformative Art Project : Combination of Installation & Workshop under the Theme of Contemporary Society as Seen from 2000 Years in the Future.

Toshiyuki SHIBAKAWA, Hiroko SHIBAKAWA

We have been developing art projects in partnership with local communities, business and school education in museums and galleries at home and abroad for almost 20 years. In particular, we have worked on educational extension projects in collaboration with local communities, with a particular focus on the correlation between exhibitions (installations) and workshops. Toshiyuki Shibakawa, as a contemporary artist, has been creating installations inspired by the ruins of Pompeii in Italy, using painting techniques to make familiar objects look like fossils that were excavated from the ruins 2000 years later. Familiar symbols of contemporary society, such as smartphones and welcoming cats, have been excavated as fossils - By standing together in these 'ruins of the future', we are able to travel through imaginary time. It is expected to gain new perspectives on contemporary society and hints towards solutions to various problems. In the workshop, the aim is that by encountering the fossils of the future, rethinking contemporary society from our own perspectives and creating fossil artworks together, we will each feel the multilayered nature of history, recognise ourselves as creators of a sustainable future and create new values.



Toshiyuki Shibakawa teaches arts and crafts at university to aspiring teachers in the early childhood and primary education programmes. In the workshops, accordingly, we do not leave the support staff to the museum, but actively include our students and volunteers. First, we spend time explaining the concept and sharing fossil artworks. The emphasis is on motivation and prior learning of the workshop staffs. This is because we believe they themselves should find the activities enjoyable and it is important for them to fully experience them. We also use a variety of art 'techniques' to create different artworks depending on the context and situation. The participants work either individually or collectively to produce a single work of art.

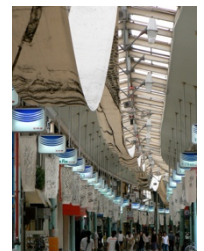


The following varieties of workshop works have been developed so far. 1. Stamping objects on paper clay to make contemporary fossils, 2. Roller and ink to rub various contemporary objects onto Japanese paper or canvas, 3. Back-colouring the Japanese paper with the colour of your choice or the colour that came out of drawing a fortune, to make lampshades, fans, etc., 4. transform the canvas work into a product of your choice e.g. eco-bag, 5. display the canvas works as large installations in museums and local shopping streets. Emphasise learning with staff, thoughts and feelings, local products and the specific culture of the area. In addition, instead of taking the finished work home with them, they are also displayed in the museum as an important part of the exhibition. Participants do not simply end up experiencing the techniques in the workshop but are left with a more lasting impression as their own work is displayed in the same space in the museum. It also provides an incentive to visit the museum. People try to cherish the places where they have gained better experiences as adults and pass them on to the next generation. This is what we consider a sustainable educational approach.



In the workshops, participants are encouraged to feel like they are time-travelling to the future world of the 41st century, so that they are prepared with characters and objects that are familiar to them from the artworks used in the exhibition, and that they can touch and enjoy. The artist himself sometimes appears as an archaeologist and talks to the children. As an excavation experience or a tour into the future world, time is spent enjoying the space of the museum itself, where the artworks are installed. The emphasis is then placed on the opportunity for participants to express their feelings as they see fit. There, we will try to convey the message that there is no single answer to the creation of a future society, but rather that anything is possible, that what we do now will lead to the future, and that we can create new values and culture for ourselves. Also, present examples of practices from other regions and tell them how to arrange the works they have created. Participants will be motivated to create again and can freely change and enjoy the work they take home.

The reactions of viewers to fossil artworks vary enormously, and at the workshops we see participants' surprise, excitement and sometimes even rejection, which compels them to speak out. In everyday life, we all wish for a better future, but it is difficult to have a concrete image or conversation about how we can create that future. The workshops correlated with the installations provide a simulated experience of excavating everyday objects in an unusual space. The artworks produced, or exhibited outside the museum in the shopping arcade, undeniably remind us of the possibility that familiar scenes will one day be excavated, as in Pompeii. We are proud to have created a space where these unique experiences can be shared loosely, especially with young children and the local community. This has become the memory of the city, and even after the exhibition or art project has ended, we believe that the memories are passed on to someone else, together with the workshop works left behind in their own hands or in the city and play a role in bringing about future perspectives. It is not about 'changing' the form of something but transforming it from inside. This 'transformative learning' is the learning required to create a sustainable future. This learning requires such social learning spaces where the boundaries between formal, non-formal and informal areas are blurred as we move back and forth between them. In creating such a space, contemporary fossil works can function as an effective catalyst and provide an opportunity for pluralistic participation and transformation of a diverse range of people.



References

Official Website: <https://www.toshiyuki-shibakawa.com/>

Exhibition at Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCTKPRH9ikM>

Workshops for the anniversary of Ohara Museum of Art: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m8goxDLcLU>

Workshop at the Akiyoshidai International Artist Village museum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7MIYzVb7XY>