

Yoichi Kamimura on the screening of 'Here and Gaza'.

This screening by Yoichi Kamimura is based on the sounds of drift ice, and the sounds of war footage in Gaza. While he is a sound artist known for composing immersive natural soundscapes by fusing actuality and abstractness, this work directly reflects Kamimura's sense of urgency along with the sounds of violences taken place in Gaza. It is strongly motivated by the artist's almost unavoidable urge to self-experience ongoing violences in Gaza, to share them through his work, and to put an end to them. This screening goes beyond sounds in particular, with subtitles inserted to some of the words uttered by Gazans on the scene throughout.

The voices heard under the circumstance unimaginable would vividly remind us that these are “the bare lives of each, not a noise of the crowd.”

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel this February to implement a set of provisional measures aimed at preventing the genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Since 7 October, more than 30,000 Palestinians, including 12,000 children, have been killed, and many were made homeless in Israel's airstrikes led by PM Netanyahu. The United Nations has warned that thousands of Gaza's civilians face the “immediate possibility” of starvation in the coming weeks while Israel plans for a ground invasion in Rafah, where the displaced population is concentrated.

As calls for an immediate ceasefire spread around the world, Japan also witnesses demonstrations and forums held every day. Having said, the large majority are incredibly indifferent, and many feel alienated because they are aware of the Gaza crisis. This exhibition is held in our belief for the potentiality of art, which various people can feel, recognise, and relate to issues through artists' diverse statements and nuanced expressions.

However, Gazans are suffering unimaginable pain right now, and those who have been facing the Gaza massacre for the past several months are heartbroken, yet struggling to survive and to take action. While Kamimura is wholeheartedly in solidarity with the protests demanding a cease-fire, special considerations must be given to those who may be “hurt by the stimulus”, furthermore, art- making of what is happening in Gaza is rather controversial. For this reason, we decided not to disclose any information regarding this exhibition other than your word of mouth, but host exchanges after the screening, a space open for visitors to exchange views, deepen discussions, thus encouraging individual thinking and action instead.

I want to _____

March 8, _____

Yoichi Kamimura

The invitation criteria for this show are WHITEHOUSE members, and familiar faces professionally involved in the art world in Japan.

Looking back, people in Gaza have lived under apartheid inside the separation walls built right after Hamas took power in the 2006 Palestinian elections. The muzzle of a gun was pointed at "the Great March of Return demonstrations (GMR)", an unarmed demonstration in 2018, and the Gazans were left helpless. What is happening in Gaza has exposed the world to the vicious nature of Israel as an aggressor. But it is "the international community" that has historically ignored, condoned, and forgiven Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. Considering the art world, which has now become global, is a part of the "international community", we must point out that the way it deals with the Palestinian issue has also been problematic. While the rights of indigenous peoples' is prevalent, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine peoples is underway. In the 21st century, when decolonialism has been progressively given more attention, "settler-colonial" situation by the 'only democracy in the Middle East' escalates.

The art world is also facing an unprecedented crisis. The documenta 15 in 2022 set off a firestorm of controversy, followed by the resignation en masse of Selection Committee Documenta 16. A list of artists forced to abandon projects or roles growing only grows; cancellation of recent exhibitions by Ai Weiwei who expressed sympathy for Palestine, and Laurie Anderson Withdraws from German professorship after she signed a 2021 petition against apartheid. The eerily silence of prestigious museums and other institutions seems to deny their own raison d'etre. If nothing changes, more and more artists will abandon their hopes and aspirations in the future of the art world.

Finally, WHITEHOUSE also welcomes and respects the choice of those who wish to participate in post-screening exchanges without attending the screening. In that case, please wait to enter until the screening ends.

We hope this exhibition will be a positive step forward for us all.

Cordially,

WHITEHOUSE

March 8, 2023

Yoshi Kominami