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Press Event in English: Nov. 16

Seven Contemporary Artists Explore ‘Decoration’ in Historic Tokyo Art Deco Setting



Humans have always engaged in the act of decoration, beginning with rituals to mourn the dead and tattoos associated with sorcery. Decoration of space, objects and self is seen in all cultures and in all eras, persisting even as the motives, motifs and means of expression have changed.

To explore this theme, the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum has invited seven artists from around the world to share their work in the unique exhibition space afforded by the museum’s main building, a splendid Art Deco residence completed in 1933, and the white-cube galleries added in a recent expansion. This group exhibition, “Decoration never dies, anyway,” opens Nov. 18, 2017 and runs through Feb. 25, 2018. Starting from diverse points of views and using different means of expression, these artists of various nationalities, ages and genres challenge us to reconsider the concept of decoration in our daily lives.

You are invited to attend a special press briefing in English on Thurs. Nov. 16 at 3 pm, including a guided tour of the exhibition and museum. Requests for interviews with the artists are welcome, but should be made in advance and are subject to the artists’ availability.

Who are the Artists?

Belgian artist **Wim Delvoe** borrows decorative elements from Gothic cathedrals and reworks them in intricate laser-cut steel sculptures with modern contexts, such as a flat-bed trailer. In addition to this Gothic series, he will exhibit works from his Tyre and Suitcase series.

Dutch artist **Nynke Koster** takes molds of interior pieces of historical buildings and creates from them furniture such as stools that visitors can sit upon. She will create a new work especially for this exhibition, which is her first in Japan.

Makiko Yamamoto, from Japan, draws the windows of stranger's homes, using her imagination to create lives and personalities for the people who live within. She then pulls the residents into her work, inviting them to recreate the scenes she has imagined for them.

Japanese fashion designer **Yoshikazu Yamagata** creates art that is worn on the body but transcends the boundaries of fashion. One work, a circular dress with embroidered flowers, was inspired by the wreath former U.S. President Barack Obama laid at the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima in 2016.

Twins **Akiko & Masako Takada**, from Japan, create as a team, taking inexpensive and everyday items such as suction cups and pumice stones and transforming them, with intricate handwork and vast imagination, into suggestions of very different and often precious objects.

Thai artist **Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook** seeks, in a video installation, to close the perceived gap between the living and the dead, and ourselves and others. Visiting morgues, she decorates the corpses of strangers with floral-print fabric. She and others then read the corpses love poems in classical Thai.

Los Angeles-based **Kour Pour** was born in Britain, where his Iranian father restored Persian carpets. He paints large and colorful canvases that look like fine antique carpets but with unexpected juxtapositions from other cultures and times.

About the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum

Converted into an art museum in 1983, the Prince Asaka Residence is a rare example of Art Deco architecture situated inside a spacious garden. Its beautiful interior has served as the exhibition space for over 170 exhibitions, including shows on subjects often overlooked by art museums, including and jewelry. Since a 2014 expansion and the addition of new white-cube gallery space, the museum has taken an active role in promoting contemporary art.

