

炉 FUEL

2019 / 1.78:1 / Color / Stereo / Japan / 16 mins.



video stills

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Short synopsis:

Set in Kushiro, the North-Eastern port city in Hokkaido, *FUEL* quietly observes an expert griller Shizuko Nakajima working at one of the original and oldest Robata-yaki restaurants in Japan. While the slow-paced editing is matched with contemplative visuals of slow-cooking, the film subtly makes reference to indigenous Ainu culture, as well as envisages environmental issues surrounding the fire and humans in contemporary society.

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Director's Statement:

This film was shot within the span of two days, neither with a script nor a storyboard. The process was similar to that of an observational documentary, where I followed the veteran griller Shizuko's routine while capturing the atmosphere of this distinctively unique restaurant. The scene with the television broadcast of fire incidents and the yellow vests movement towards the end of the film happened purely coincidental and that particular shot for me determined the overall tone of this film, in which a local tradition is juxtaposed with a global issue and vice versa.

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Biography:

Yu Araki (b.1985, Yamagata City) received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture from Washington University in St. Louis, U.S.A. in 2007, and completed his Master of Film and New Media Studies from Tokyo University of the Arts in 2010. In 2013, he was selected to participate in Tacita Dean Workshop hosted by Fundación Botín in Santander, Spain. During 2017-8, he was a guest resident at Asia Culture Center in Gwangju, South Korea, and Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Recent exhibitions include Shiseido Gallery, the National Museum of Art, Osaka, MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Dallas Contemporary, Dallas; and Okayama Art Summit, Okayama. His films have been programmed in international festivals such as BFI London Film Festival, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin, and International Film Festival Rotterdam, where he won the Ammodo Tiger Short Film Award in 2018. He was shortlisted as one of the 21 artists for the Future Generation Art Prize hosted by the Victor Pinchuk Foundation in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2019. He currently lives and works in Tokyo, Japan.

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Filmography:

Fuel (2020), Mountain Plain Mountain (2018), Wrong Revision (2018), Bivalvia: Act I (2017), Road Movie (2014), Angelo Lives (2014), 971 Horses + 4 Zebras (2007)

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Credits:

Introducing: Shizuko NAKAJIMA, Satoshi HATA

Music: Kenji FUJII

Sound Effects: Yu ARAKI

Shot on location at Kushiro Robata, LLC.

With thanks to Rena NAKAJIMA, Kaori KIYOSUKE, Kuniko MUNAKATA, Kumiko MIHARA, Sanae YOROZUYA

Special thanks to Mai HACHIYA, Yuji OSHITA, Shie SATO, Yumiko KOSAKA

Curator: Yumiko SANO

With the support of CAI Contemporary Art Institute, Sapporo Tenjinyama Art Studio

Shot, Edited & Directed by Yu ARAKI

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Screening history:

2020.2 | Official Selection, 49th International Film Festival Rotterdam, NL, World Premiere (festival)

2020.7 | Official Selection, 13th JAPAN CUTS: Festival of New Japanese Film, NYC, US, International Premiere (festival)