

蜜月旅行 HONEYMOON

2020 / 1.78:1 / Color / Stereo / Japan / 29 mins. / English subtitle





Video stills

Short synopsis: Set in a fictitious lunar base Nagasaki, *HONEYMOON* is the Japanese director Yu Araki's take on Japonisme. He re-examines and re-interprets the wedding scene from *Madame Butterfly* (dir. Carmine Gallone, 1954), where B.F. Pinkerton sits in seiza (正座), which is the Japanese term used for the proper, formal traditional way of sitting by kneeling on the floor and have legs folded underneath the thighs. Although seiza-style is widely known as "correct", it didn't permeate until after Japan opened up to the Occident, that is, after the culture of the "chair" had taken hold, hence the formality of what the Japanese thought had long history was only a modern, arbitrary construct. Inspired by this historical fact, Araki connects seiza with another element to contemplate the arbitrariness of humanity: constellation, which, incidentally, is a homonym with seiza (星座) in the Japanese language.

In addition, aforementioned film *Madame Butterfly* has been known as one of the most iconic collaboration between Italy and Japan, with a strong intention from the Japanese production side to "correct" the twisted imagery of Japanese depiction in which they succeeded. However, Araki critically poses a question of what does it mean to understand another culture "correctly". In Araki's version, B.F. Pinkerton is replaced by a real-life photographer Adolf de Meyer (1868 - 1946), and the matchmaker with an anthropologist Frederick Starr (1858 - 1933), and having Suzuki and Dr. Tatsukichi Irisawa (1865 - 1938), who was known for his essay "On the Japanese Way of Sitting" (1921), joining in as broadcast commentator to describe the situation from a distance. The loose, gossipy dialogue between the off-site personnel ranges from fashion to spies, interweaving various elements while the performers patiently wait in perseverance until their legs fall asleep.

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Director's Statement: This video installation is based, in part, upon actual events and persons. However, numerous of the characters and incidents portrayed and the names used herein are fictitious. Any similarity of those fictitious characters or incidents to the name, attributes or actual background of any actual person, living or dead, or to any actual event is entirely coincidental and unintentional.

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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 Pola Museum of Art, Shiseido Gallery, the National Museum of Art, Osaka, MUJIN-TO Production; 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, Kassel Documentary Film and Video Festival, 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:

HONEYMOON (2020), Fuel (2019), 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:

Starring

Taro Nettleton as Adolf de Meyer

Qinhua Yang as Cio-Cio San

Jack Mclean as Frederick Starr

With

Kosuke Matsunobu as Suzuki

Toshiaki Hicosaka as Tatsukichi Irisawa

Tomoko Inoue as Kyoko Ito

Director of Photography: Kenichi Negishi (J.S.C.)

Camera Operator: Kosuke Haruki

Camera Operator: Daisuke Takase

Camera Assistants: Sota Takahashi, Genki Hidaka

Lighting: Masahiro Tawa

Best Boy: Toru Yagi

Hair and Makeup: Sae Takahashi

Sound Design: Ichiro Fujimoto

Subtitle translation: Stuart Munro

Title design: Yasuwo Miyamura

Editing Support: Yuya Koyama

Management: Hiroki Nishioka

Management Assistant: Masakazu Arai

Location: Omori-Musasino En, Tokyo

Zabuton provided by Midori Koseki

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Curators: Nami Yamabana, Yoko Iwasaki

Installation: Tokyo Studio Co., Ltd.

Written, Edited, Casted & Directed by Yu Araki

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