

MONOGATARI

by Massimo Grimaldi
08.03–07.05.2023

MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale

The fourth exhibition in the series *t-space X MAO* presents Massimo Grimaldi's *MONOGATARI*, a video installation comprising two paired screens — one horizontal and one vertical — showing photographic material shot by the artist in Japan between 2017 and 2018. The work was made possible by the award of the *On Demand* by Snaporazverein prize, which allowed the artist to spend a few months living in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, deepening his knowledge of a culture for which he feels an elective affinity, particularly in terms of its formal rigour and symbolic structures.

Contrary to what the title suggests, the video installation *MONOGATARI* (which means 'story' in Japanese, 物語) does not tell a story; instead, it aims to visualise the intimate, rapt bond that you can form with a place, and the people who live there, once you have finally gotten past the assumption that you have already understood it and know how to describe it. The fascination of a landscape that seems new and exotic can never really be described; it is always the latter that describes the enchantment of the person looking at it, writing an already nostalgic draft of their biography.

Like his earlier photo reportage on the hospitals of the NGO Emergency, which is less a description of their activity as a self-portrait of the way in which the artist connected with the hospitals, the people who work in them and their landscapes, *MONOGATARI* should also be seen as an 'emotional construction'.

At the inauguration of the exhibition, the video installation will be accompanied by a performance by the ikebana artist Nami Kodama, who, by placing her own silhouette in front of the projected imagery, will further fragment and stratify its perception.



Massimo Grimaldi, *MONOGATARI*
2019

video installation

Courtesy of the artist, ZERO...Milan (IT) and Snaporazverein, Samaden (CH)

Massimo Grimaldi (Taranto, 1974) is an Italian artist who lives and works in Milan. His practice investigates the nature of what we conventionally call 'art' and the way it is perceived, valued and understood. His work is a continuous questioning of the criteria of the production and circulation of images, the power and limitations of aesthetic speculation and the possibilities for its ethical redefinition. The artist has had solo exhibitions at the Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2009); Museo di Villa Croce, Genoa (2012); Team Gallery, New York (2011; 2013); West, The Hague (2014); ZERO..., Milan (2006; 2010; 2013; 2017; 2019; 2022). His work has also been shown

in numerous group shows, including *Italics* at Palazzo Grassi, Venice and the MCA, Chicago (2008-2009) and the 50th Venice Biennale (2003). In 2009, Grimaldi won the international competition *MAXXI 2per100*, using his award to fund the construction of the EMERGENCY Paediatric Centre in Port Sudan.

IG: @massimogrimaldi

t-space x MAO

MAO has recently unveiled a new project, #MAO- Tempo- Presente, an outlet for the museum's support for artistic and creative activity through an artist and curator residency programme during which performers, artists, curators and scholars will be asked to inhabit the collections and exhibition spaces, performing and 'staging' the museum. Developed out of a collaboration with an eponymous space founded in Milan by Giulia Spreafico and Rui Wu in 2016, the project's home is the museum's newly renovated t-space.

t-space.it/about

Begun as an independent art space devoted to making artistic activity sustainable, Milan's t-space has developed over the years into a place for planning and dialogue, fostering exchange between artists and the public.

t-space MAO is also devoted to hospitality and sharing: here, visitors can take a break, drink a cup of tea, meet artists and performers and participate in the events planned for the period between October 2022 and June 2023.

t-space.it/t-spacexmao



Un tè da t-space

Tea at t-space is a video series in which artists are invited to drink a cup of tea and present their work at MAO. The conversations are available on the museum's YouTube channel.



t-dispenser

2022 / by t-space

Site-specific installation

Hot water dispenser
Gasbeton®
Tea bags
Paper cups

Conceived as a hot water 'fountain' where visitors can get a cup of tea, this installation transforms with each new exhibition and set up. A sculpture-in-progress in which the Gasbeton® bricks are a frame for the dispenser and device for the use of the invited artists: support, seat, bookrest, display and material for manipulating or marking.

The installation was conceived in connection with the exhibition Buddha10 and is freely inspired by the Shikū, 石窟, in China, cave complexes carved into the rock that house Buddha statues.

GENMAICHA

A taste of ancient Japan

According to one legend, Genmaicha originated in fifteenth-century Japan, when a servant accidentally dropped a few grains of rice he had hidden in his sleeve. The rice fell into his master's cup, into which he was pouring a very costly tea.

Genmaicha, or 'brown rice tea', is made with green tea and toasted rice. It is also known colloquially as the 'people's tea', since rice was a filler and lowered the price of the tea, making it historically more within reach of the poorest Japanese.

Drunk as a beverage during periods of fasting, religious and otherwise, it was made with equal parts tea and rice. Today, genmaicha is enjoyed by all segments of society, in Japan and beyond, and its success is also partly thanks to the creativity of producers who modulate the aromatic complexity of the infusion choosing the best quality tea and rice or adding macca or matcha for a liquid hit of umami.

Claudia Carità
—tea selector for The Tea Torino
thetea.it