

Dialogue Between Monet's Waterlily Series and Contemporary Artists

Art Office Shiobara CEO Masashi Shiobara



JANAINA TSCHÄPE, Blood, Sea, 2004 ©JANAINA TSCHÄPE

I would like to say that the autumn of art has finally arrived, but this year the situation is a little different from the usual autumn due to the influence of the new coronavirus. The world's largest art fair, Art Basel, has been held every March in Hong Kong, June in Basel (Switzerland), and March in Miami (USA), but this year all cities have decided to cancel. Similarly, the coordinators of Britain's largest art fair, Frieze, announced that both Frieze London and Frieze Masters would be held at a venue at a smaller scale, but it was ultimately cancelled. Frieze New York, after being cancelled in May 2020, is set to be held from the 7th to the 9th of May 2021. The Paris art fair FIAC, scheduled to be held from October 22 to 25th, 2020, was abandoned due to concerns that the risks caused by the new coronavirus could not be eliminated. For the same reason, all the large-scale international art fairs scheduled to be held after March this year have been stopped. Preventing the spread of infection and the outbreak of clusters

is a top priority; however, in the future, event restrictions, travel quarantine complexities, and reoccurrence of lockdowns will hopefully be dealt with.

Due to the current ongoing global pandemic, the world has had to adapt accordingly. Logistical problems, such as the reduction of air travel, have forced art fairs to move online by creating 'online viewing rooms' in order to survive. I have been in Japan for more than half a year since the Armory Art Fair in New York in March, and though I have been keeping up to date with the online viewing rooms, I have begun to miss the feeling of experiencing art in person.

The Orangerie Museum, located on the banks of the Cezanne River in Paris, is smaller than the nearby Louvre and Orsay Museums, but is maintained to showcase Claude Money's last and largest series, the waterlilies. In addition, the works of Post-Impressionists, such as Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne, Modigliani, Renoir, Utrillo, and Doran, collected by the art dealer Paul Guillaume, and the École de Paris, are also worth seeing at l' Orangerie.



JANAINA TSCHÄPE
Stream of Thoughts 2, 2020
watercolor crayon on paper
paper: 35 7/16 x 45 1/4 inches (90 x 115 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo / Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, USA
Photography by Ding Musa
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JANAINA TSCHÄPE
Stream of Thoughts 1, 2020
watercolor crayon on paper
paper: 35 7/16 x 45 1/4 inches (90 x 115 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo / Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, USA
Photography by Ding Musa
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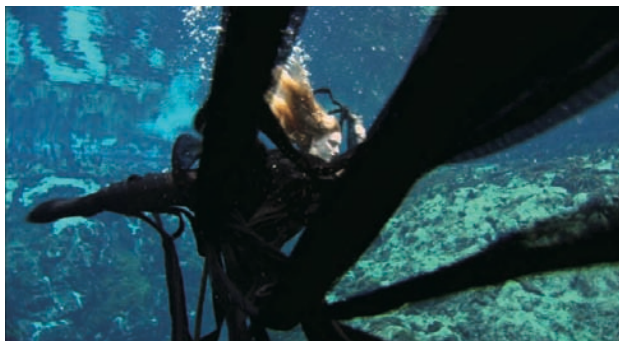
Before it was turned into a museum in 1852 during the Second Empire of France, the Orangerie was built as an orange-growing greenhouse (orangery) by Napoleon III for his princess in the Palace of Tuilley in 1945. At that time, infrastructure was not as developed as it is today, so growing and eating delicious fruits in their remote homes was a luxury for aristocrats and wealthy people. It was a symbol of wealth. The building has large south-facing windows to let in the sun so that the fruits could grow well and prosper. Until just before his death, Money continued to draw waterlilies, which represent the same landscape with varying light. He donated a series of 100 works, about 2 metres long and 100 metres in length to France. Since this greenhouse for

cultivating oranges was suitable as an exhibition space for Monet's series of works, two rooms were created with four works in each room.

The museum is now where "Contemporary Counterpoint," a project that explores Monet's waterlilies in relation to the work of various contemporary artists is held. The selected artist will be exhibiting works created through dialogue with the waterlilies in this historic space. This current exhibition is the fifth iteration of Contemporary Counterpoint, and the artist Janaina Tschäpe, who is well-known in Japan, has been selected.

Janaina Tschäpe was born in Munich in 1972 and grew up in São Paulo, Brazil. She holds a BFA from Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg and an MFA from the New School of Visual Arts. She is currently working in New York and Rio de Janeiro. Until now, her work has included themes of 'transience' and 'strength,' as well as elements such as 'water,' 'life,' 'woman,' 'memory,' and 'sorrow.' She has been engaged in creative activities around myths related to water and plants, including the myths of water-dwelling creatures.

Tschäpe's exhibition at l'Orangerie will present an old video work, *Blood Sea*, 2004, reimagined in relation to the drawings the artist created while envisioning Monet in his pond in Giverny. The work has the theme of water, which is the source of life. At the beginning of the production of this work, Tschäpe thought about the fact that "blood has the same concentration as seawater." The video depicts several women underwater, dressed



JANAINA TSCHÄPE

Blood, Sea, 2004

four-channel video installation, projected on three screens, with sound duration: 1 hour 2 minutes 22 seconds

Courtesy of the artist, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo / Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, USA

©JANAINA TSCHÄPE

in a black costume with long, heavy tentacles. The artist shot these women for a week with a high-definition camera, effectively drawing a picture in the sea using tentacles and balloons. Afterwards, Tschäpe returned to the studio and proceeded with post-production (editing work) of the video while drawing the scene in watercolor. She says that drawing watercolors solidified the image and made the editing process smoother.

Her work often features liquid motifs such as water, blood and tears. It is not unrelated to the name Janaina, representing the Afro-Brazilian water goddess. A woman wearing a sculptural costume dances in the water like a mermaid, and the water currents transform the costume. There is a simultaneous monstrous horror and sublime beauty, and what you see is caught in the space between dreams and reality.

Tschäpe's works at the museum were originally created to enhance the beauty of Monet's waterlilies. However, the artist is exhibiting video works taken with a high-definition video camera, which is a modern technology. Well, I would say, what would Monet do with his waterlilies if there was high-definition technology in the Impressionist era? Photographs and videos are now well established as a way of expressing art, just like paintings. Even Leonardo da Vinci used the camera obscura, the prototype of the camera.

In 1837, the invention of the Daguerreotype (silver photography), which was an improvement of existing photographic technology by the Parisian stage background painter Louis Daguerre, made it possible to directly record images through a lens. Until then, there was no way to record and save the image projected by the camera, so the painter did this with a paintbrush. Portrait photography using this technology, which accurately reflects the subject, became popular in France in the 1840s. However, at the same time, the spread of photography threatened the lives of artisan painters who made a living by making portrait paintings. At this time, Dominique Anglade, a major French painter who served as the director of the French Academy, even demanded the French government to ban photography. Indeed, there was backlash from artists.

As a result, the development of photographic technology has revolutionized the painter's consciousness of drawing, recording and reproducing. Among them, Impressionist painters tried to make the impression of the object more accurate than the accuracy of the object, and at that time, tubed paint was created, so the canvas was taken outdoors. It became possible to draw while looking at the light on the spot, and the flowing time and the changing light were reproduced on the screen on the spot.

It is important to note that in the 1840s and 50s, photographs and videos were mainly documentary. In the 1870s, video cameras became more popular, but there was no fantasy element in the work; they were only used to record performances and to capture spatial events. In the 1980s, artists of the generation who used video to explore themselves came onto the scene, and they began to interpret their world view through video works, such as exposing their private lives. And in the 1990s, these works had nothing to do with reality, or the reality was created by the camera and the artist. The boundary between the real and the virtual disappeared at the turn of the century, and reality became surreal, like in Tschäpe's work, and fantasy was projected in photographs and videos.

Monet captures the time flowing on the screen and the changing light. However, the image of the finished painting is fixed and does not change. Tschäpe creates works with various expressions and techniques such as drawing, printing, painting, video, and performance. Among them, the image changes as the time continues. It is possible to say that her paintings are ‘art of stillness,’ and her video works ‘art of change.’

In music, ‘counterpoint’ refers to multiple completely different melodies, emphasizing the harmony of the chords that they create. As for the composition technique, Tschäpe, an artist from a different era than Monet, created a new painting by sketching while imagining Monet’s scenery by the water lily pond in Giverny. I am looking forward to seeing the contrast between the two arts of ‘stillness and change.’

About the Author

Masashi Shiobara.

Born in Akagiyama, Gunma Prefecture in 1962. Established Art Office Shiobara in 2004. Advisor to Nichido Contemporary Art. As an advisor and purchasing agent for the collection, he exchanges information and buys and sells art at overseas art sites for more than half the year.

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