

Tokyo Story

*A dense and remarkable city, a city of pandæmonium, a true semiotic jungle. International and ultramodern. Yet full of cracks through which the past seeps.**

➡ The Studio 2 art duo discovered Tokyo just like Roland Barthes: ‘not by book, by address, but by walking, by sight, by habit, by experience’. Thus encountered, paradoxically (perhaps due to the poignant feeling of alienation), the city motivated them to look closely at their own practice and to ask difficult questions: Is it possible that what we create is not unique, since our artistic doppelgänger is active in Tokyo? Living in a contemporary global village, can we still influence each other, whilst preserving autonomy and defying cultural homogenisation? These ‘cracks’ – where the past and present of Tokyo and its residents lurk, and which lie beyond the well-beaten tourist path – are what the artists chose to pursue. They found traces of the work of an unknown Japanese artist, whose very existence seemed doubtful. Following their trail, the Studio 2 artists discovered further points of convergence between themselves and this unidentified artist – meticulous craft, the pursuit of a synthesis, a characteristic line, and, above all, a strong belief that a distinction between ‘art’ and ‘design’ does not always hold. Their shared approach to their media was also striking: they used hand-drawing, 3D prints, installations and films to create their own worlds, suspended between reality and dream. Worlds populated by figures with cat faces, who less seem *kawaii* than resemble *kabuki* theatre actors; people nodding off in the Tokyo Metro, busying themselves reading *manga*, sometimes frozen in acrobatic poses. Are they overcome by Tokyo melancholy or Krakow spleen? The narrative of this exhibition is not linear – it keeps looping, inviting the audience to search for meaning on their own. *Tokyo Story* is above all a tale of a journey and an encounter with the Other, and one that allows us to discover our alter ego.

* quote Joanna Bator

curator



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