



Recollecting the days and moments: Japanese Experimental Cinema

Curated by Tomonari Nishikawa

Total Run Time: 70 minutes

Sunset (Takashi Nakajima, 7.5 min., 8mm, 1972)*

Replace Film Remix 2 (Stom Sogo, 20 min., digital video, year unknown)

Memory 4 "Michi" (Sakumi Hagiwara, 8 min., 8mm, color, sound, 1973)*

Polaroid (Shunzo Seo, 6 min., 16mm, 1980)

Drill (Takashi Ito, 5 min., 16mm, 1983)

In the Room (Yuka Sato, 7 min., digital video, 2014)

Landscape (Shiho Kano, 12 min., 8mm, 1998)*

A Place to Name (Ataru Sakagami, 5 min., digital video, 2015)

* will be screened from digital video copies

Japan has a long history in experimental cinema, and its most fruitful period would be in 1960s, when the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo had many screenings of both international and Japanese underground/experimental cinema. *Recollecting the days and moments* exhibits eight short films made by Japanese film artists, not focusing on a particular era or style but rather trying to show a sense of diversity in Japanese experimental cinema. The films in this program would express ideas of personal memories or filmmakers' reaction to sites or images that might have been haunting them.

Sunset (Takashi Nakajima, 7 min., 8mm, 1972)

The visual shows footage of his trip to Nemuro, a rural city in Hokkaido, the northernmost prefecture in Japan. The film alternates shots, aggressive and serene ones, and black frames intervene between them, with a gently fade-in/out or a sudden cut. – T.N.

Replace Film Remix 2 (Stom Sogo, 20 min., digital video, year unknown)

The video shows a collection of abstract and poetic, yet warm and beautiful images with a repetitive, soothing sound, together with a hint of violence. It also displays a sense of searching and wandering through mundane but peaceful moments. – T.N.

Memory 4 “Michi” (Sakumi Hagiwara, 8 min., 8mm, 1973)

The filmmaker walks and traces his old memory, while the texts narrate his thoughts, responding to the image projected on the screen or his reaction when he was filming at the site/object. The correspondence between two cameras – a change from subjective viewpoints to objective ones, is playful, echoing to a game he might have played with his friends in his childhood. – T.N.

There are three shots with Japanese texts, and here are the English subtitles:

- *The apartment I lived when I was born.*
- *I did not know there were patterns of playing cards on the gate until today.*
- *Walking through the town to come to this place, we called it ‘adventure.’*

Polaroid (Shunzo Seo, 6 min., 16mm, 1980)

The visual exhibits a series of Polaroid pictures and its developing process, as well as how he handles the camera and such photographs. The camera does not move, and the viewers would understand the environments and surroundings from these emerging pictures. – T.N.

Drill (Takashi Ito, 5 min., 16mm, 1983)

It is a study of visual effects, especially in spatiality with 2-dimensional images shot by a still camera around the entrance of the dormitory of a company where Takashi was working and staying at the time. The effects were carefully created by a re-photographing technique, frame by frame, and the result is mesmerizing and haunting. – T.N.

In the Room (Yuka Sato, 7 min., digital video, 2014)

Every single scene and cut, however short, makes you explore the nostalgic sensation of films made on film. Why do the arrangements of self-developed negatives and positives, for example, or the relationships between color and black and white give rise to such an inexorable archeological interest? On the other hand, the fact that it also demonstrates a new imagination obtained through reconstruction based on the detailed computation of broken-down images must not be overlooked. – Y.S.

Landscape (Shiho Kano, 12 min., 8mm, 1998)

You can see the woman sitting still and the landscape in turn. In this film, the character is not the heroine, and is equated with the landscape. As the subject is equated with the existence of a film too, the difference of time each having is presented in this film. – S.K.

A Place to Name (Ataru Sakagami, 5 min., digital video, 2015)

A horror world depicted with pixilation animation. Characters do not appear, but giant “straw monsters” reminiscent of swarms of insects lurk in the gardens of dwellings with no people, occasionally attacking these houses suddenly like the pummeling of giant tidal waves. The tatami mats, walls, and floorboards are all destroyed... The peacefulness of traditional Japanese dwellings is contrasted with the violence of the monsters, and viewers are given a real sense of the fear of being attacked. – A.S.