



Children of Veins Ryoko Aoki & Zon Ito

This recent work from leading Japanese artists, Ryoko Aoki & Zon Ito, maps a psychedelic journey of transformation. Described as a 'visual funhouse', the collaborative animation explores the subconscious and physical relationships between the mind, body and the universe that bind us together.

Zon Ito works primarily in embroidery on fabric, clay sculptures, handmade books and animated films. His works capture a hallucinatory landscape where morphing human figures and twisted wildlife scenes are captured in an aesthetic drawn from 1980s video games, underground illustration and youth culture. Ryoko Aoki's drawings, installations, collages and animations share a similarly dark but engaging sensibility.

Children of Veins references the kawaii (cute) culture popularised in Japan through manga and anime, however it does so in a way that is slippery and dark. The artists present a world of animated images that come together in a fluid movement, referencing freedom and possibility, yet there is an underbelly there: a world turned upside down. The world we are presented with is a universe of hyper-real trajectories of the unconscious.

On viewing Children of Veins...

When he asked his father about the dream, the old man's reply was brief. It climbed bald through the window one night, loping away from urban ghettos and bar-room riots, the smouldering limbo of shanty towns. Pressed delicate tendrils against a somnolent skull, sang strange spells in esoteric tongues, dispersed at the dome of first light.

Clutched between lithe fingers, a map, meandering creases, wrinkles like a smiling buddha, blazed a determined trail after the dream. Nude feet scaled wavering peaks sketching ashes beneath celestial showers, to rest, the crotch of a valley, nurtured dusken wolves, an umbrella of sky.

Neck craned, flowers bloomed constellations of stars stretching telescoped stems, pluck fairy floss curls of lambent dust. Gaze hypnotic at lurid flames melt earth eagles shivering upwards of lone pines, stark rockets where breath halts, exhale and beat, hiccup, through skeleton lens and firework eyes. Devoured hungry, flash form and fluid flicker, a licking of fragile limbs, and virile rays still onwards, no pause, evolving a perpetual tide.

Lone tree squats on mute hill, prostrate beneath a cupola of stars, wonder lit up like a final cigarette, closed his eyes and smiled as the lines marched triumphant, ants over the curve of his eyes, stroking the vacant drum of his mind, an interminable parade an entire lifetime away.

Emily Wong



Details of work

Ryoko Aoki & Zon Ito
Children of Veins (2004)
 DVD, video animation
 9mins, 40 sec loop



Artist biographies

Ryoko Aoki was born in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan in 1973. She studied at Kyoto City University of Arts and completed her Master of Fine Arts there in 1999. Aoki has held a number of solo exhibitions since 1999, including *Hammer Projects: Ryoko Aoki*, The UCLA Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, USA (2005); *Sliding Circle*, Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles (2004); *critorium 51*, Art Tower, Mito, Japan (2002); and *Patterns*, Kodama Gallery, Osaka, Japan (2000). She has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, including *Mirage on a summer day*, Gunma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi, Japan (2005); *Past in reverse*, San Diego Museum of Art, USA (2004); *Why not live for art?*, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Japan (2004); *girls don't cry*, PAROCO Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2003); and *Kyoto x Amsterdam - new directions*, Kyoto Art Centre, Japan (2001). Ryoko Aoki's works are held in the Museum of Modern Art, New York and numerous private collections.

Zon Ito was born in Osaka City, Japan in 1971. He studied at Kyoto City University of Arts where he completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 1996. Since 2000, Ito has held a number of solo exhibitions, including *Key of your fountain*, Kodama Gallery, Osaka (2005); *Veins*, Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, Germany (2004); *The end of the neighbourhood*, WATARI-UM, Tokyo, Japan (2003); *Alchemist meeting*, Kyoto Art Centre, Japan (2002); and *Yamanami Highway*, Kodama Gallery, Osaka (2000). He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions in Japan and abroad, including *11th Triennale India*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2005); *How latitudes become forms art in a global age*, Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, USA ((2003); *Yokohama Triennale*, Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall, Japan (2001); and *Video-Bar*, Northern Photographic Centre, Oulun Kaupunki, Finland (2000). Ito's work is held in the National Museum of Art, Osaka; Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; and WATARI-UM, Tokyo.

Ryoko Aoki and Zon Ito have worked collaboratively together since 2004. Exhibitions include *I still believe in miracles*, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de paris, France (2005); *AniMate*, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan (2005); *Fusion: architecture and design in Japan*, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2004); and *Roppongi Crossing*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2004).

Ryoko Aoki and Zon Ito are represented by Kodama Gallery, Osaka.