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**READING ENTROPY IN LANDSCAPES OF
MENTAL IMAGERY AND OUTSIDE OF SPACE**

CONTENTS

Since my residence was across two cities of Düsseldorf in Germany and Amsterdam in the Netherlands during writing period, the thesis topic on entropy was considered in a multidisciplinary cultural background in Europe.

PREFACE

This thesis will read entropy outside of space in different geography and culture, and entropy in landscapes of mental imagery floating in the different states of mind in the context, according to a viewpoint as an artist. In this, I assume that there are two different axes of entropy; one is in landscapes of mental imagery, and the other is outside of space. I would like to discuss how the intersection of one axis and the other could synthetically appear in front of our eyes.

First of all, I shall describe the concept of entropy. The term of entropy was originally used in the science of thermodynamics, which had been introduced to indicate the study of heat.[1] For example, it is described as follows. "If 'randomness' would be defined, it could be possible to create a measure of the states. This is called entropy. It is used not only within the meaning of a measure for randomness, but also for complexity, amount of information, and non understanding." "Entropy is the word that was firstly used by Clausius, who had established the science of thermodynamics within one of the physics already more than 100 years ago. Clausius did not mean that he was aware of entropy, which was a measure of randomness, however, after a while, (even if it describes so, it is also more than 100 years ago) Boltzmann reached approximately this recognition of entropy." [2] In understanding these points, it should be noted that entropy in this thesis is used in the sense of quantification of chaos

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[1] Peter William Atkins [1992] *Entropy and Order - Invitation to the Second Law of Thermodynamics,* Japanese translation by Tomiko Yonezawa, Hiroyuki Mori, Nikkei Science Inc., p12, pp.46-47.

[2] Junichi Hori [1969] *What Is Entropy*, Kodansha Ltd.,Publishers, p.18, p.50. Clausius means here Rudolf Clausius, and Boltzmann means Ludwig Boltzmann.

randomness, complexity, amount of information, non understanding, etc.

On the other hand, from positions of artists, how entropy would have been addressed? An American artist, Robert Smithson wrote in his publication as follows: "Recently, there has been an attempt to formulate an analogy between "communication theory" and the ideas of physics in terms of entropy. (…) Not only do we communicate what is true, but also what is false. Often the false has a greater "reality" than the true. Therefore, it seems that all information, and that includes anything that is visible, has its entropic side." [3] His thought on entropy is that there is a value in a non-routine thing in the ordinary, or in a thing seen as falseness in usual. Through this, I think he tried to propose his role as an artist, not to question moral implications, but to question a new value. In the second chapter of this thesis, I shall discuss about the relationship between his work and entropy.

In these times, the word "entropy" is used within the fields of information theory, physics, philosophy, literature and art. Entropy is also seen in films, publications, and common media, such as magazines and newspapers. To take an example, in cinema, when we finish watching a film and forget that the reality itself is contained in a different time than the time of the film, we feel as if we were in the fictional time. This can be described as entropy of experience in a familiar place. In the field of physics, black holes in the cosmos are defined that they contain entropy. [4] Therefore, cinema and the entropy of black holes have a common meaning, which is included in the terms of entropy. Through these, I think that an experience on entropy is able to stop and observe that something is broken or covered, as well as experiencing heterogeneousness, which we've never done before in our lives. In order to understand the relationship between entropy and contingency more deeply, in the third chapter; Entropy and contingency, I introduce entropy in philosophy.

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[3] Robert Smithson [2000] *Gesammelte Schriften*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, Köln, p.34, German. English edition as follows: Robert Smithson [1996] *The Collected Writings*, University of California Press, English. The first edition [1979].

[4] Clifford A. Pickover [1996] *Welcome to Black Hole!*, Japanese translation by Jun Fukuem, Mitashuppankai, p.12. Particles emitted from black hole in the center of the galaxy have energy. Therefore, black hole can be considered to have temperature, and its entropy would increase.

Today, our society can be roughly classified into two systems in general; one is chaotic society, which is not yet shaped by a system. The other is shaped by a system from the chaotic society. Under the chaotic society, different geographical space and different cultural space, and landscapes of mental imagery floating in the different states of mind in the context, exist in chaos, which is not specifically ordered. On the other hand, under the society shaped by a system, outside of space and landscapes of mental imagery exist in an order.

I think entropy has a role in society, to connect different things together, such as different individual areas or different areas of things, while covering or mixing the boundaries. Besides, I think there is a similar meaning reading the role of an artist in society, as entropy mixing the boundaries. Here, I define entropy, which is about covering boundaries of things, as not going back to chaos, but creating a new situation, or a process of progress. Then, when we try to find a way for a new art, are we able to consider whether there is any new entropic way, which is neither a unified system, nor an alternative way, as an absolute disorder? When considering the role of the artist, it is sometimes thought that all that matters is the artist's individuality although it is impossible for artists to exist only independently of society. In the fourth chapter of this thesis; Artist Collective- nüans, taking specific examples of my own artist collective nüans, I shall clarify how artists can traverse two worlds, between individual and collective, beyond the borders and securities.

Based on above, I discuss about entropy in my own work in the fifth chapter of the thesis; Epilogue. I would like to investigate how entropy in landscapes of mental imagery and outside of space could appear in front of our eyes.

FLOATING ISLAND: ROBERT SMITHSON

2.1 FROM INSIDE OF SPACE TO OUTSIDE OF SPACE

Robert Smithson's notion regarding the meaning of entropy in heterogeneous things was brought into art field, and it has given me a significant impact on the work, in understanding on the relationship between art and entropy. Therefore, firstly I would like to deal with the relationship between Robert Smithson's conception of work and entropy.

"The sacredness of space becomes so obvious and with it, one of the largest forward-looking laws of modernity: as it becomes older, context becomes more text, circumstance becomes more content. In a strange reversal, artwork in the gallery "frames" the whole gallery and its laws. (…) maybe, for once, a collector should buy an "empty" gallery space." [5]

　　　　　--Brian O'Doherty

In the 80's, to define the framework of exhibition spaces, an Irish conceptual artist, Brian O'Doherty who had been worked in the United States wrote brilliant white space and humour in his writing, *Inside the White Cube [1976].* In this, he especially addressed aesthetic space and white cube philosophy. To remove "flames" of art in general, white cube appeared in the writing, as the most important part of the concept in the means for making new flames by an artwork

On the contrary, in the 80's the same, a land artist, Robert Smithson considered white cube as one of the choices in variety of exhibition spaces. Therefore, to take art out from the framework of white cube, Smithson drew the concept of the work *Floating Island*, which was a

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[5]　Brian O'Doherty [1996] *In der Weißen Zelle*, Marve Verlag, pp.9-10, p89, German.
　　　English edition as follows: Brian O'Doherty [1986], *Inside the White Cube*, The Lapis Press, English.

little island moving on the stage −on the sea of the Manhattan Island, which was thought to be a metaphor of capitalism and a huge financial market in his work. As a criticism of commercial art, there were also generosity and intellect to incorporate the criticism in the work.

To establish an artwork, it is necessary to have spectator's "eyes" in a temporary exhibition space, installation, performance, or in front of the work, which is expected to disappear, as a process of the work is more important than existence of the work in future. When a temporary artwork is presented in a place, where nobody besides the artist can see it, the spectator is able to see it later through the medium of record, such as photograph, video and text. In such a work, which is expected to be recorded, the main factor of the surface touching the social "eyes" is taking over as an important role; many different filters, media, information entropy, texts, etc. I think, through this, the change has been brought into art, like existence of landscape of mental imagery, as well as more fragile states of minds, subtly and slightly wavering, when spectators face up to the filters.

2.2   FLOATING ISLAND

In 1970, the concept of *Floating Island* was created by Robert Smithson and was only realized in 2005, 32 years after his death[6]. On the sea surrounding the Manhattan Island, a little boat, which was made with natural materials, such as trees and grasses, collected in New York City, is a work that looks like a small floating island just about to move. After that, the natural material of the work is returned to Central Park, and the work is naturally assimilated to the park. This is a very site-specific work, which reminds us of recycling the environment, through the mobility, proceeding and artifacts (work), which are infinitely closed to nature.

Floating Island contains a social element, which still exists today. On one hand, people want to live a consumer lifestyle, on the other hand, that experience creates garbage. Smithson was interested in things, which are continuously changing between people and landscapes, and he took artifacts, garbage (here, it is natural material of the work) as a dynamic

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[6] Robert Smithson, www.robertsmithson.com/sculpture/floating_island.htm (January23. 2012.)

thing to think about the environment. In the end, the garbage from the *Floating Island* work was put in Central Park, the static place for Smithson, to show a dynamic relationship with the place. Moreover, Smithson considered the utopian[7] character of the place (site) throughout the work, which was about an island.

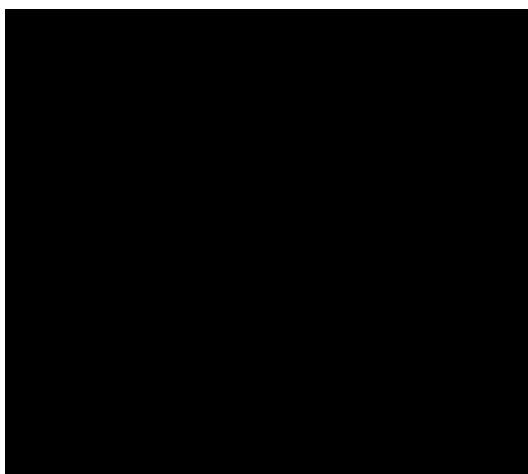## 2.3   ENTROPY AND ROBERT SMITHSON

Figure 1[8]: Work, Robert Smithson

Regarding the monumentality, which was, until then, an important subject in the context of art, Robert Smithson tried to position a new sort of monumentality[9], which was related to architecture of science fiction novels and science fiction films, as well as the new monumentality, shown by Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt, Dan Flavin, etc. during the 60's. It was also a new artificial monumentality, which contained the idea of a mixture of time, past, present and future. On that basis, he related with entropy, which was conducted from system to chaos, from chaos to system, to verify an ambiguous law between artifacts and ready-

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[7] "Utopia" here is regarding as follows. Thomas More [2003] *Utopia*, Penguin Books Ltd, English, the first edition [1516].

[8] Figure 1: Work, Robert Smithson [1971] *Oolite Island, Summerland Key,* Robert Smithson [2000], *Gesammelte Schriften*, p.251.

[9] Robert Smithson [2000] *Gesammelte Schriften*, p.27.

made, the verge of artifacts and nature, to question what art was.

In the *Floating Island* work, Smithson considered picking nature and garbage from different places of New York City, in order to make an artwork as a utopian island, and to put it back into Central Park. Through this, I think Smithson successfully showed the idea of subtle floating boundaries, in the contrast of nature and architecture. The installations by Smithson, located in a vast nature, are scenes of dialogues between site (place: a specific location) and non-site (non-place: galleries and museums, where they can be changed).

"Here, one recognizes the attempt to recapture a border or a wilderness, which doesn't exist anymore. We must accept the entropy in such cases, and more or less learn to integrate these things, which appear to us so ugly, again." [10] −Robert Smithson
Entropy has properties that gathering things would diffuse outside of space, thus, in some sense, I think Smithson considered entropy as a reflective device, in order to see the mental imagery.

Next, I would like to introduce two persons who gave a significant impact on Smithson's thought that it should have been judged by its new worth instead of good or bad, concerning both of truth and falseness on entropy. One is Norbert Wiener. He was a mathematician, a pioneer of cybernetics theory, and an influential advocate of automation. Smithson was especially influenced by Wiener's idea from the book, *The Human Use of Human Beings*.

"Entropy is a devil, but unlike the Christian devil which is simply a rational devil with a very simple morality of good and bad, the entropic devil is more Manichean in that you really can't tell the good from the bad, there's no clear cut distinction." [11] −Norbert Wiener.

Wiener's theory presumes that it was determined in information theory: If the more

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[10] Robert Smithson [2000] *Gesammelte Schriften*, p.305.

[11] Robert Smithson [2000] *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 301. Norbert Wiener,*The Human Use of Human Being*s, the first edition [1950].
Norbert Wiener [1979] *The Human Use of Human Beings, (The Second Edition),* Japanese translation by Yasuo Shizume, Shikao Ikehara, Misuzu Shobo Co., Ltd.

information is, the more amount of entropy contains therein. In the information society that we live in, I think it makes it possible for people to understand a message through communication means and machines, only when people begin to understand the message, including entropy. The great increase of information entropy would be unavoidable in the information society in future. Contrarily, I think Smithson was actively trying to find both good and evil in the role of entropy on information theory.

The other person is J. G. Ballard. He was one of the English science fiction authors. The relationship between science, technology and humans was interwoven in his novels. "I'm interested in the communications landscape, where your responses to violence are on a much more conceptual level. The danger lies in ambiguous responsibilities, where one doesn't know one's own moral direction." [12] −J.G. Ballard.

In Ballard's novels, he shows us that we do not notice in everyday life, for example, anxiety, confusion, madness, etc., which lie in people's minds. Ballard's concept and daedal words cause a reaction of people who read it. If "violence" above would be recognized as implications of entropy, Smithson would have involved in the invisible mental world, visualizing by the means of communication, as well.

During the 1960s and 70s, not only work itself, but also surroundings, social background, time and site-specific things were generally brought into art works. Among them, artificial information was found as the representation of reality. Smithson related to the hidden ambiguity of reality and fiction, took this as an idea while taking on entropy, novel by Ballard, a new monumentality, and created the theory of the interaction between "site" and "non-site". The relationship between artwork and its circumstance was the idea of "site (outdoor)" and "non-site (indoor)". On one hand, a "non-site" artwork can exist as the same work in different places, which are in museums or galleries. For example, transportation of an artwork from one museum to another museum makes no difference to the existence of the work. In this case, it can be described as spectators experiencing a fictional travel in an artificial space, from one place to

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[12] V. Vale, and Mike Ryan [2004] *J.G. Ballard Quotes*, RE/Research Publications, p.247, English.

the other place (non-place[13]), as mental imagery. On the other hand, "site" is located outdoors, as an artwork is site-specifically placed. Smithson emphasized the importance of temporarily changing "site" through nature or by humans. I think the spectators can also experience a fictional travel, not by moving, but by pictures of site work or text about site work. Therefore, in contexts of both "site" and "non-site", the axes of entropy, outside of space in different geography and culture, intersect with the axis of entropy in landscapes of mental imagery in the different states of mind, which is subtly floating.

ENTROPY AND CONTINGENCY

In order to understand the relationship between entropy and contingency more deeply, in this chapter, I introduce entropy in philosophy. As the aim of this thesis is to read entropy outside of space in different geography and culture, and entropy in landscapes of mental imagery floating in the different states of mind in the context, I shall discuss the philosophy of Shuzo Kuki, who had learned in different cultural and philosophical backgrounds in Japan, Germany and France, and moreover closely related to the philosophy of entropy. In addition to this, I would like to present the analysis of contingency and entropy in media that can be seen as an important method for active artists.

3.1 SHUZO KUKI AND CONTINGENCY

In the late 18th century "the concept of entropy" in physics was argued in Europe. After this, in various fields of physics, science and philosophy, in relation to Indeterminism[14],

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[13] Marc Augé [1995] *Non-places, introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*,
   English. Non-place was later presented the similar thought to Smithson's non-site in Augé's writting.
[14] Indeterminism: 1. The idea that the will of humans is not determined by any other cause, but by yourself. 2. The idea of not admitting inevitable decision of God or nature, but to accept

the low conservation of energy and the concept of entropy were discussed and also influenced each other. For instance, Ludwig Boltzmann, who was closed to atomism on entropy and Henri Bergson, who was closed to energetics on entropy, argued different views regarding entropy. Bergson's philosophy on entropy was that there are two different contra positive processes in organic things, which are not irreversible, such as birth and death. The contra positive conflict energy of rising and falling will be gradually expanded in the progress of creative ways.

On the other hand, Shuzo Kuki is well known as one of the philosophers in Kyoto, Japan, who was part of the generation following Kitaro Nishida, alongside Tetsuro Watsuji and Kiyoshi Miki.[15] After studying philosophy in Japan, he studied in France and Germany from 1921 until 1929. In 1927, he also studied at classes of Edmund Fusserl and Martin Heidegger. Alongside combining Japanese philosophy and European philosophy, he argued ontology of society, in particular, for example, "encounter" based on contingency. In addition, while citing scenes to meet things such as inevitability and contingency, identity and difference, which seemed to be uneasily compatible, he highlighted the sense of contingency.[16]

Philosophy "playing God"[17] and "Bon"[18] is located in the center of Kuki's philosophy.[19] His thought is that existence in the world is about contingency. And, contingency is approved in the seemingly close relationship to the nothing in existence, however, it exists. For example, I could say that it is inevitability that I am born in Japan, but it is also the existence of contingency; my being is different as the others. Surely, existence has such a

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change and ransformation through contingency. [2004] *Kojien*, Japanese Dictionary, 5th edition, Iwanami Shoten Publishers.

[15] Megumi Sakabe, Masakatsu Fujita, Kiyokazu Washida [2002] *The Word of Shuzo Kuki*, Minerva Press.

[16] Masakatsu Fujita [2003] *Essence of iki*, Shuzo Kuki, Kodansha Ltd.

[17] The word "playing God" was used by Herakleitos.

[18] The word "Bon" was used in Tibetan Buddhism.

[19] In contrast to the philosophy of Heidegger: the existence in the world is trying to choose self-conclusion after throwing out, Kuki highlighted the existence in the world is playing contingency. As the theory of existence in time, he positioned the contrasts of the theory of Bergson, centrally past and the theory of Heidegger, centrally future, the theory of Augustinus, and Husserl, centrally now, and the theory of Kuki, the metraphysical-time, eternally now. Reference: Megumi Sakabe, Masakatsu Fujita, Kiyokazu Washida [2002] *The Word of Shuzo Kuki*, Minerva Press.

contingency and an inevitability. That is his philosophy.

Kuki has concluded that there were four fundamentally different categories of encounter between entropy and contingency. Firstly, there is the encounter of purpose and inevitability. (The encounter, that naturally happens through an act with a purpose. For instance, an act with a purpose to go to an exhibition opening offers an inevitable encounter with artists there.) Secondly, there is the encounter of causality and inevitability. (The encounter that turns out a result from a meeting with a doctor. To take an example, an act to go to a hospital because of illness, causes an inevitable encounter with a doctor there.) Thirdly, there is the encounter of purpose and contingency that is understood as a denial of inevitability. (The encounter that happens through an act with a purpose, may not result inevitable, but contingently. For example, he or she went to an exhibition opening and contingently come upon somebody, with whom he or she had not seen for a long time there.) Fourthly, there is the encounter of causality and contingency that is understood as a denial of inevitability. (The encounter that happens because of the cause, contingently results. For example, he or she went to a hospital because of illness and contingently come upon somebody, with whom he or she had not seen for a long time there.) Relating these elements to one another, there is quite a variety of encounters of inevitability and contingency.

The process of encounter from two different elements leads to creativity. For instance, in an encounter between two different organic things, on one hand creation, organization, generation, continuous process, and on the other hand, destruction, decomposition, death, non-continuous, etc. The latter contains a type of entropy, which tends to increase. Above these, I think Kuki wanted to say that it was important for people to enjoy meeting new people freely while keeping a certain distance between two different things.

Besides, Kuki described that as it was not in reality, it was called nothing. He mentioned the importance of the existence of "possible nothing", such as the dreaming world and world of art. Nowadays, this seems similar to watching a film in a black hole, otherwise known as the cinema, that can be recognized the existence of the false with a greater reality as

the true. So to speak, in the world in a film, which is a sort of not real, there are similarities to entropy. Although entropy tends to contain a negative meaning as destruction, decomposition, death, non-continuous, according to his philosophy of the encounter of contingency, if people can carefully identify an object in the first step, they would find a creativity that contains element of development.

3.2 ENTROPY AND CONTINGENCY IN MEDIA

Regarding the philosophy above, I think that it offers as an important method for artists. It can be often seen that entropy in media (randomness, complexity, etc.) is as a means of communication. For example, people convert and copy a video from the PAL format that is used in Europe into the NTSC format that is used in the United States and Japan. It is the time that information is converted from one media system to the other media system. In some cases the information is copied intact, but in other cases, during the conversion, it is copied including a noise such as image, sound, signal, etc. In such cases seen entropy in media, a computer serves a role of a compressor and then, the pressure deforms a type of a date. It is a change due to contingency, and it can be said as contingent entropy. However, it is possible for an editor to control the change, in a sense, such as no deformation of the change, the frequency of the deformation, and the frequency of entropy. Doing so, it might be different from entropy seen in nature.

On this contingency in media, entropy can be partly controlled. However, the meaning of the entropy will depend on a subjective view. For instance, when people copy a video that was convert and included a noise, they can see it as an image that has been corrupted or an image with humour, and it is due to the perspective of the viewer. As Kuki mentioned, we could admit that it is one of the significant world that has been seen as "possible nothing", non-existing, or created as non-real world. If so, artists could control certain entropy, obtain a contingent encounter of entropy actively, and see entropic humour in media, in order to rebuild it in a new world flexibly.

nüans: ARTIST COLLECTIVE

The two examples presented in this chapter appear in order to consider entropy in contemporary art. As I lived in Europe including Germany during this period, the examples are primarily intended that reflect such a variety of background. Both of them are based on my experience as nüans artist collective, which has been working since 2006. The group consists of three people: Anna Heidenhain, Elmar Hermann and me, Maki Umehara. In Section 4.1, it dealt with *Apogee* artist book[20] that was published in 2011 and in Section 4.2, specific group activities are investigated. On the analysis of these process and collaboration, I shall consider entropy seen in organic relationships and the close integration of artists.

4.1 APOGEE ARTIST BOOK

Background

To begin to working on nüans artist collective, I have to recall that I have experienced in the United States. In 1999, during my study of exchange program at the Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburg, the United States), as well as during the first visit to the Printed Matter Inc. in New York (an artist book shop), I was fascinated by artist books, which I had picked up by chance. I cannot forget about the excitement of the moment till now. I got curiosities about the unified, tight, and in some sense, integrated art created by artists, but at the same time being created as own other type of works. Since then, I've dreamt of making an artist book by myself, as an archive based around artist life.

Finally such an artist book was published in October 2011 from the Revolver Publisher in Berlin. The title was *Apogee −a Compilation of Solitude, Ecology and Recreation.* The project was organized by the concept of nüans, an artist collective of three artists, Heidenhain, Hermann and me, Umehara. The book deals with topics of the furthest points−

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[20] nüans [2011] *Apogee*, ,edited by nüans, Revolver Publisher.

island life, isolation and incredible selflessness, as the original title of the book shows.

In March 2010, nüans was located in three different time zones; Düsseldorf (Hermann), Florence (Heidenhain) and Mumbai (Umehara). After a while, we were in Los Angeles, New York, Istanbul and Amsterdam. Regarding the places of Artist-in-residency and working places, we moved to different cities. Thus, the search for ideas and material for the book project began. Further relocations in which we lived followed and with each city we hit upon further ideas, people and contributions. As we got to know new friends and artists through our relocations and Internet searches, we could collaborate with those people in *Apogee*. Gradually, an expansive archipelago was developed and more than 80 contributions by artists and authors were contributed to the book.

Much of the work in the book was completed in artists' residencies: first Heidenhain in Florence, then Umehara in Mumbai and finally Hermann in New York. Artists are generally used to being stranded in various castles, studios, villas and hotels all over the world and stay there temporarily among their peers. Crashing, shipwrecking and growing lonely are not on the agenda but also preprogrammed in a way as every residence is a departure from everyday life, an interruption to the routine, a temporary instability. Who or what is close to one another and how far one considers to be from each other is not a question that you can answer with the help of scales or maps.

Concept

Apogee artist book aims that readers would re-examine themselves being individual and standing on the opposite stage as the one in the modern society, where so many stimuli surround. Through this, it questions if it is possible to scoop out and observe both positive and negative sides. Thus, the theme of the book is "island". It is, so to speak, a projection screen for round, enclosed and consequently manageable living spaces. They are ideal settings for the most dreamlike but also the most nightmarish scenarios. Those who imagined being alone so far, can get connected with like-minded people through the book. Artificial islands arise depending on ambition, visa, finances and communication skills but at the same time new dimensions of networks develop. It is very easy to undermine social isolation via mobile communication and

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the Internet.

Therefore, the question is, to what extent a society can also shape itself by the aforementioned means. Nevertheless, in the worst case of scenario, everything is up to you alone. It's nearly impossible to carry out conflicts, hostage-taking or captivity by using different types of media. Instead every single physical exertion and brain capacity that is available at the relevant place and time is required.

Next, the author and extreme athlete, Aron Ralston describes his retrospect as follows[21]. "The lesson is that resilience is about flexibility. It's not just about exercising your strengths, but it's also about exercising things which aren't your strengths. It had nothing to do with logic; it was about the sensation, the feeling of the bone just bending in a really weird way." He also fell and his arm got stuck in a crevice during a mountain hike. It is difficult to reconstruct what was going on in his brain for a long time. It is our boundless fantasy though, that allows us to continuously overlook our bodily limitations. New ideas come out while standing on these frontiers. The mental potential increases and the power of imagination excels. There is a necessity that an idea and a curiosity pop up inside the head. The body functions, stays flexible and motivates the mind to go on, not to give up. Doing so, the body finds its own individual turning point. From the viewpoints of these, we are able to recognize the correlation between mind and body; the mind reflects the body in a particular situation, and at the same time the body is up to the mental power.

I shall write further. On an island isolated from the others, the individual requires a cultural variety of goods of household, in contrast to being bound to you. The individual desire requests that his or her goods are supplied. In isolation the cultural wasteland may overwhelm and civilization may be destroyed and fade. The castaway depends on acquired knowledge because from now on he or she relies on oneself in all aspects of life. Withdrawn from the environment the worst case of scenario is to fall into mental isolation, to obsessively wander throughout one's own brain curvatures, without finding the exit. Everyone is responsible in

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[21] Aron Ralston [2010] *Im Canyon, Fünft Tage und Nächte bis zur schwierigsten Entscheidung meines Lebens,* Pocket books, German, English edition as follows. Aron Ralston [2004] *127 hours: between a rock an a hard place*, Atria Books.

maintaining contact with the outside world either via observation and interest, or rather love and passion. No matter how far one has removed oneself, and where and how one has shipwrecked. At some point a strong interest arises to find a way back from the remote into society. If not directly, then at least by traces, letters or artworks, that one leaves on the island or sends away.

Realizations of the concept

Apogee consists of six chapters as follows. The first chapter, Every man for himself; this chapter focuses on the individual, who concentrates on his or her own productivity in isolation and solitude. Such works and essays appear here. The second chapter, Comfort isolates, solitude limits solidarity, solidarity corrupts solitude - Susan Sontag[22]; this chapter dealt with the themes of isolation and solidarity. Here are works and essays concerned to position individual within society. The third chapter, Healthy Laziness; in this chapter there are essay and works taken the themes of retirement, repose and sleep. In order to heal and create new things, sleep and rest are recommended. The fourth chapter, Oar or ore?; this chapter approaches different perspectives of artists and authors who search for inspiration in the distance. The fifth chapter, Return to innocence; this chapter questions if it is possible to realize a life in peace and harmony with nature. The sixth chapter, After metabolisms; every status is continuing to change after metabolisms. In this chapter, based on these ideas, works and essays are presented regarding several transformation processes of worlds and cultures.

Future work

The theme "island" seeks to emphasize that the existence of individual artist is important, furthermore, how he or she is able to find new relationships between the individuality and society. At the same time the book itself represents a small individuality written in English and German, and questions how it would relate with the society, where it was transported. To take an example, one can carry the printed book with the themes of island, into

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[22] Susan Sontag [2004] *The territory of conscience*, NTT Publishing Co., Ltd, Japanese translation by Kazue Kobata, p.292.

an island that really exists, to experience it. Moreover, the texts on the book would be translated in different cultures across countries. At that time, it occurs shifts or error by translation. Then, so to speak, entropy (disorder) can be observed.

During presentations, people are involved in different forms through the book and a new place of Artist-in-residency. As each work by artists and authors, means an individual in the book, the collaboration with them is finally explored at the stage of presentation after publishing. In some cases, it will be the first time actually to meet with a participant of the collaboration. In this way, the production and presentation processes are characteristics of this project. In future, I would like to observe how it would create ripple that I can call it as entropic energy.

4.2 ENTROPY AND CONCEPT BY nüans

Since I studied art in Japan, I have been looking for multiple perspectives, new international views to be active beyond a nationality or a country, and ways of activities to step away from an existing framework, and to become an "individual". I became strongly interested in   a collaboration and a team play with some artists, such as architects and musician's doing. In parallel to making art, I have been wished to form a new art community and a collaboration with artists and those who are not artists as well.

In 2006, nüans began as an artist project, formed by two German artists and a Japanese artist (the author), including nüans exhibition space in Düsseldorf, Germany. Coexistence of international perspectives, heterogeneity values and cultures formed, along with nüans network of contacts and the character. During the limited period of six months, exhibitions, film screenings, symposiums, book readings, dinner performances, lives, etc. took place. Beside these, we created site-specific projects using other spaces such as an aquarium, cinema, music studio, open-air music stage, club, museum park, museum, and furthermore

alternative space. Since 2007, nüans firstly published *PROP*[23] artist book, there was no fixed exhibition space, and projects were developed in various locations.

Trying to do new activities, I am urged to think about the meaning of them. To play various roles as an artist, for example, creating work, making book, writing text, planning, management, curatorial work, education, renovation of space, networking, and so on. All these create the active power of artists in society. Within these various activities, the preparatory process will advance over time, as waves were very slow. How to achieve the concept of each project, how to determine each work, are close to the direction of conceptual art. In this way, the concept of nüans is an organic cohesive artist collective.

The final chapter in *Apogee* is entitled "After Metabolisms", and implies the entropic activities of nüans, as the states of the after repeating metabolisms, using a metaphor. For example, according to the flexible content through relating with others, new methods of communication can be found. The role of each person supporting projects can change and afterwards become a new one. nüans is not an institution, but merely a collection of three artists. We live in three different cities, and furthermore often in different countries. The state is similar to natural mineral water, which is divided; there are elements of hydrogen (Heidenhain), oxygen (Hermann) and calcium (Umehara) in different places. However, to work as nüans means providing time, information and ideas, which can be shared for the other members. Every decision is finalised with the other members and synthetic ideas are built. This creates "something as nüans", rather than "something as individual". The figure of an individual artist is broken for once, for example, like the natural mineral water, Evian (made in France), and the label of "nüans" is going to be put on it, instead of the name of each artist. The interesting thing is that it is possible to emphasize the anonymity of individual personality even more there. Such ambivalent thoughts and behaviours in between individual and artist collective, are that appeal to me.

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[23] nüans [2007] *PROP –proud to be a v.i.p.*, edited by nüans.

EPILOGUE

5.1 WORK CASES AND ENTROPY

In the spring of 2000, six days after my arrival in Düsseldorf, Germany, I met with Klaus Dinger[24], a musician and a former member of Kraftwerk, for the first time. He looked like a Tengu[25], who could freely pass over time and space. He had a special presence, which did not seem to exist in reality. Suddenly, I was asked by Klaus Dinger to sing a song. In newly learnt German, I could not say anything yet. At that time not really good in English, however, I produced broken words in front of the microphone, and sang a song, distorted melodies, to collaborate and improvise. Twelve years on from that time, a CD containing those songs is set to be released[26]. It will sound more real, when the whispering voice of Klaus Dinger, who died, and his existence is replayed. The words will sound more alive through audio, even through my words were somewhat broken.

My interests, as an artist, are to pick up the broken something, to organize it, and to further question it against a new background, in a relationship between the thing and its context in daily life. In doing so, I try to contrast landscape of mental imagery on entropy and outside of space as much as possible. I also choose environments where I could encounter a variety of heterogeneous things, the changes of the meaning through psychological or physical dislocation, which rises during the working process, in relation making the thing standing out. An encounter with entropy provided me a strong support for my multidirectional interests as an artist. With the background of the worldwide economic crisis and the environmental crisis today, to get the idea of the entropy of Robert Smithson to function as a device for reading the past, present and

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[24] Klaus Dinger worked within the groups of Kraftwerk, La! Neu?, Japandorf, etc.

[25] Tengu is described as follows. [2004] *Kojien, Japanese Dictionary*, Iwanami Shoten, Publishers, 5th edition, 2004. It is a mysterious fictional figure, which lives deep in the mountains. It is said that it has the figure of a human, with a red face, a high nose and Uchiwa (a Japanese fan) with supernatural power, can freely fly with wings. It is described in *Konjaku monogatarishu* (Anthology of Tales from Past).

[26] CD, Japandorf (Düsseldorf, Germany). It is going to be released in 2013.

future, appears in front of us with a new meaning.

Next, I introduce my work Volcano of desire[27], which dealt with a volcano, one of the entropic forms. The artificial volcano, which is the topic of this work, exists in Wörlitz (Germany), and today, it's possible to see these artificial eruptions once a year in reality. This volcano can be considered as a site-specific artwork, and land art at the end of 18th century.
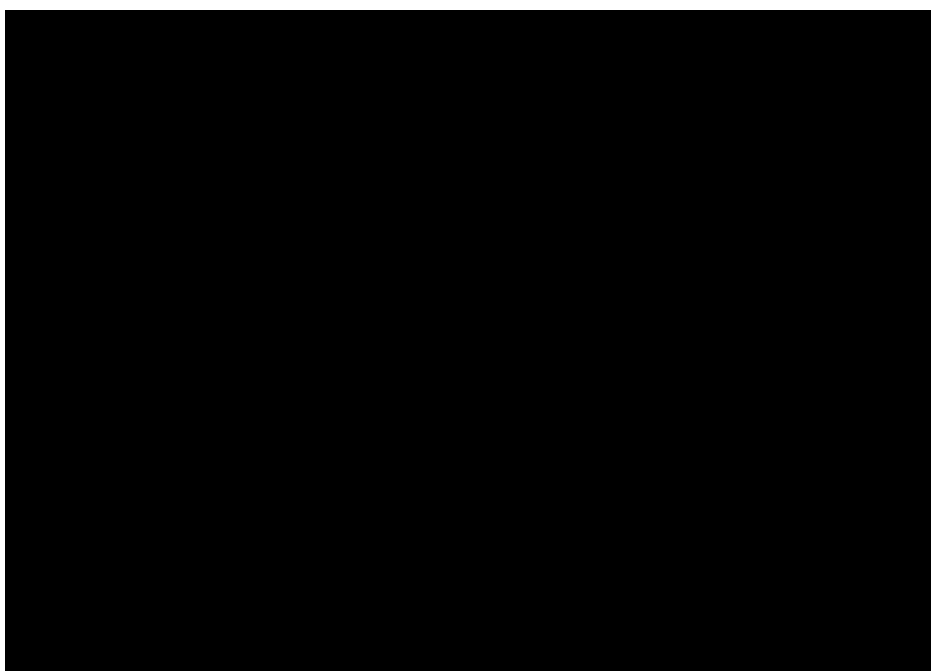

Figure 2[28]: Work, Maki Umehara

The rich profusion thee confounds, my love,

Of flowers, spread athwart the garden. Aye,

Name upon name assails thy ears, and each

More barbarous-sounding than the one before.

(The Metamorphosis of Plants, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, excerpt[29])

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[27]   Work, Maki Umeahra [2011] *Volcano of Desire.*

[28] Figigure 2: Work, Maki Umehara [2011] *Volcano of Desire*
            nüans [2011] *Apogee*, edited by nüans, Revolver Publisher, pp.286, 287.

[29] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe [1996] *Werke Kommentare und Register, Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, Band1,* Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen, C.H. Beck, German.
            Jochann Wolfgang von Goethe [2009] *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, Englishtranslation by Douglas Miller, The MIT Press.

Compared with the Ludwig Boltzmann and Robert Smithson who were already introduced regarding entropy, I would like to recall the Duke of Anhalt-Dessau and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, even though the period goes back further. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) was inspired by his travels in Italy in 1798 to write the poem *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. He understood that the change in nature represents a prototype of metamorphosis (transformation of states) and that this is apparent from the diverse plant forms in nature which have evolved for specific environments. Goethe perceived that people are able to intuitively decipher what are initially hidden secrets in nature, through rational as well as physical experience. At the same time Duke of Anhalt-Dessau (Léopold , 1740-1817) discovered a volcano whilst also on a trip to Italy and subsequently ordered a prototype of an artificial volcano to be built in Wörlitz, Germany between 1788 and 1794. This served as an expression of his ideas about nature, knowledge and passion in his landscaped garden. To this day the architecture and the landscape of the old island seem to be much-loved by couples, who visit to regain their lost passion.

People are able to find many villas and private gardens, where it is quiet and peaceful. But often they are not easy to access, because they are defined with fences and walls. Firstly they have to find a gate to enter such gardens. I had contemplated a series of works entitled *The Volcano of Desire -The Secrets of Gardens* to explore the secrets of such gardens. Intentions that are normally kept private is included in this series connecting the two areas of nature and art, but also exploring their limits and their secret laws. In this work regarding the poetry of Goethe, I try to pose the question if it is possible to perceive nature's ancient harmony through my irrationality, using my five senses and my intuition, and to record it.

5.2   CONCLUSION

Based on my observation, I analysed on entropy outside of space in different geography and culture, and entropy in landscapes of mental imagery floating in the different states of mind in the context. Finally, I would like to conclude as follows.

Regarding information entropy, an existence of landscape of mental imagery appears, as well as more fragile states of minds, subtly and slightly wavering, while spectators face up to art works, which are applied in different media, pictures, videos, and texts. According to Robert Smithson's entropy, people are able to sense the reality from a new perspective, in interaction and dialogue with the hidden ambiguity of reality, such as site and non-site, disorder and order, nature and artefact, wildness and urbanism, outside and inside, newness and oldness, good and evil, reality and fiction. According to Kuki Shuzu's entropy, it is defined as nothing that is not in reality. People are able to recognize the existence of "possible nothing", such as the world of art. The existence of contingency and the process of encounter from two different ambiguous elements lead to creativity. In an encounter between two different organic things, there are on one hand creation, organization, generation, continuous process, and on the other hand, destruction, decomposition, death, non-continuous, etc. Based on these things, people are able to enjoy meeting new people freely, while keeping a certain distance between two different things. According to nüans entropy, "island life, isolation and selflessness" offer people to exchange energy of each individual artist within a society and a collective flexibly, and share it. Moreover, there is art that can be achieved through a collaboration and meeting with new people.

As mentioned above, I think it is significant, how to understand entropy that means randomness and complexity, in order to increase active creativities and create new art.
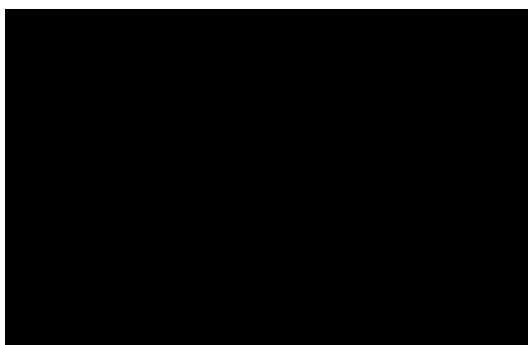

Figure 3[30]: Work, Maki Umehara

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[30] Figure 3: Work, Maki Umehara [2009], *Ukifune -a chapter of Tail of Genji*, 1008, mixed media.
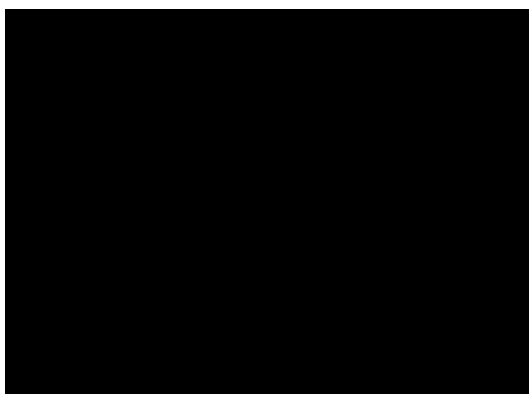
Figure 4[31]: Work, Maki Umehara

APPENDIX:

THE WORK, HIDDEN DESIRE

Last but not least, the following is the concept about my final work of the master of fine arts at Sandberg Institute. I would like to introduce it as an appendix of the fifth chapter: Epilogue.

We are surrounded daily by diverse media and all manner of fictions. Indeed these two aspects form cornerstones of our everyday lives. The ubiquitous media and the fictions they generate shape our reality, but no sooner do they appear than they blend seamlessly into their surroundings obscuring their message. I try to understand these processes instinctively using my five senses, and to record what I perceive.

The motif for my new sculptural works is the Japanese Kicho (a partition, such as curtains). Until the middle of the 19th century, aristocratic women in Japan, only communicated across a Kicho, which was made of fabric, as was tradition, even when meeting with close friends. By focusing on the change in customs, conventions and the framework of exhibition spaces over

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[31] Figure 4: Work, Maki Umehara [2009] *Ukifune -a chapter of Tail of Genji*, 1008, silkscreen printing.

time, my work develops a new strategy in its relationship to the exhibition space and notions of display. I am interested in encountering the shifts in the meaning of things in psychological or physical dislocation, or communication that arises as a result of working processes.

The series consist of four elements as follows*: 1. Coloured batik, 2. Mediated landscape, 3. Lines of river, 4. Nobody knows it.*
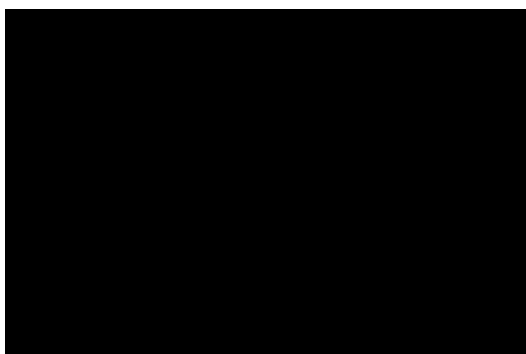

Figure 5[32]: Work, Maki Umehara

Figure 6[33]: Work, Maki Umehara

1. COLOURED BATIK

Another motif is Batik, which was developed during the 18th century in South-East Asia, mainly Indonesia and other countries including Japan, and was used as a wax-resistant dyeing technique. In the middle of the 19th century, Dutch people brought Batik from Indonesia. Fabrics were produced in the Netherlands and exported to Africa. Those Dutch-African fabrics were dyed with patterns which stand for love of nature; the *Coloured batik* work is printed in

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[32] Figure 5：Work, Maki Umehara [2012] *Hidden Desire,O Coloured Batik*, mixed media, silkscreen printing.

[33] Figure 6：Work, Maki Umehara [2012] *Hidden Desire*, the plan of the final exhibition (solo exhibition), at Gallery Juliette Jongma in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

white silver on to the fabric using silkscreen printing.

Figure 7[34]: Work, Maki Umehara

2. MEDIATED LANDSCAPE

The *Mediated landscape* with the Batik motif has been distorted perspectivally to refer to traditional Japanese painting "Yamato-e", used for depicitng architecture and landscape. Alongside the switch from a digital to a manual process and as a counterpoint to using silkscreen printing to mass reproduce the same image, *Mediated landscape* is a unique piece of work.
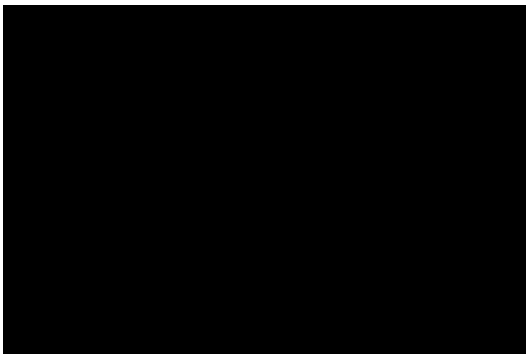

Figure 8[35]: Work, Maki Umehara

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[34] Figure 7: Work, Maki Umehara [2012] *Hidden Desire,O Coloured Batik*, mixed media, silkscreen printing.

[35] Figure 8: Work, Maki Umehara [2012] *Hidden Desire, II. Mediated Landscape*, mixed media, silkscreen printing.

3. LINES OF RIVER

Repetitions of pattern lines, in indigo blue and bright blue, are superimposed over an image of the Rhine river showing both past (from a map of the Roman era) and present (from a Google map), which is again distorted by the diagonally-overhead perspective. Whether as a result of natural disasters, by design, or for economic reasons, such as transportation, the path of the Rhine was changed naturally or artificially, and continues to be transformed even in the present day. Independent of national borders and throughout different historical epochs, our perception and evaluation of things has shifted. The same can be seen even in the case of nature and art.
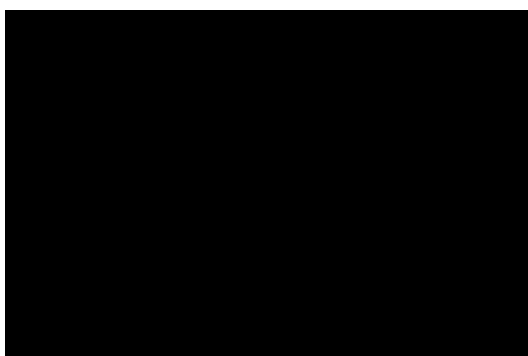

Figure 9[36]: Work, Maki Umehara

4. NOBODY KNOWS IT

I welcome guests in the exhibition, while wearing a piece of work called *Nobody knows it*. (A hidden costume, which you cannot actually see.)
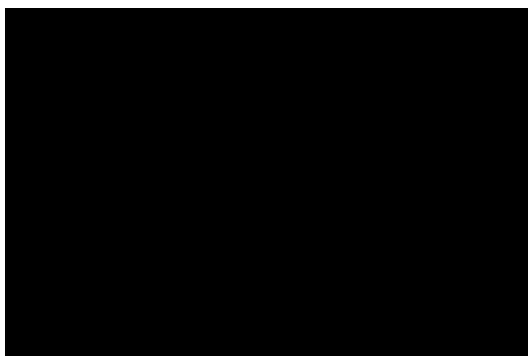

Figure 10[37]: Work, Maki Umehara

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[36] Figure 9: Work, Maki Umehara [2012] *Hidden Desire,O Lines of river*, mixed media, silkscreen printing.

[37] Figure 10: Work, Maki Umehara [2012] *Hidden Desire,O Nobody knows it*, mixed media, silkscreen printing.

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Notes, September 25th, 2024

After writing this thesis, I changed two subtitles of the work, *Hidden Desire.* Nr. 2 into
Landscape We Mediated; and Nr. 4 into *Hidden Desire* (the same as the title).