Questioning Ecologies of Co-Existence through Converging Collaborative Resonances and Dissonances

Through collaborative expression between an artist, composer, anthropologist, and architect, the "Cosmo-Eggs" project reconsiders the nature of the world we inhabit and presents an experimental platform to imagine a possible ecology of co-existence between humans and non-humans.

The Japanese archipelago, a region afflicted by frequent natural disasters, experienced a modernistic distortion in the form of a nuclear meltdown following the large tsunami of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, as capitalism (in the form of ever-accelerating global corporate activities) seizes the entire planet, debate has flared up regarding the arrival of the so-called "Anthropocene," a geological era named for the profound influence of humanity's rapid expansion on earth's geology and ecosystems. How are we to think of the massive impact on earth's environment caused by the human species which—seen in perspective—inhabits only the thin surface layer of the planet?

The starting point of this project is Motoyuki Shitamichi's series of *Tsunami Boulder*, which he documented for several years after encountering them on the Okinawan island chains of Miyako and Yaeyama. Tsunami boulders are large stones carried ashore from the depths of the sea by the power of tsunamis. They exist in close proximity to places of human everyday life; plants flourish on and around them, and migrating bird colonies use them as places to rest and nest. Each of these boulders provides a platform for an ecology of co-existence between human and non-human life.

Music composer Taro Yasuno's *Zombie Music*, an automatic performance piece in which recorder flutes are played without the use of human breath, sounds similar to bird-song. Large balloons, protruding into the exhibition space from the pavilion's pilotis, take over the function of human lungs and provide the air necessary to play the recorder flutes. The resulting musical piece, titled *COMPOSITION FOR COSMO-EGGS "Singing Bird Generator*," complements the *Tsunami Boulder* videos playing in the exhibition space.

The project's title "Cosmo-Eggs" is rooted in a motif present in many mythological stories from around the world. Both eggs and stones—as round objects—figuratively represent a cycle, a recurring period, and eggs—with their brittle shells—express the ambiguous relationship between creation and destruction. Anthropologist Toshiaki Ishikura, who specializes in folkloristic mythologies, wrote a new mythological story which references common tsunami-related mythological stories told in Taiwan, the Ryukyu islands and other places in Asia, and questions the relationship between humans and non-humans.

The Japan Pavilion, designed by Takamasa Yoshizaka in 1956 and reminiscent of Le Corbusier's "Museum of Unlimited Growth" (1931), combines a square layout with a skylight window at its center, a hole in the floor directly below it, and four columns arranged in a spiral layout around the periphery. With careful thought, architect Fuminori Nousaku's design connects each of these distinct, dissimilar artworks with each other and establishes a responsive relationship between them and the architecture, forming an integral experience of the space.

The *Tsunami Boulder* videos each loop at their own distinct intervals while the *COMPOSITION* FOR COSMO-EGGS "Singing Bird Generator" piece continues to change and evolve as a result of its automatization processes. Within the exhibition space, with its numerous co-existing and intermingling stories, no same moment ever visits twice. The visitors experience a succession of unique instants created by the overlapping combinations of video, music and words within the space of the pavilion.

There will be times when music and video resonate to a surprising degree, and even moments when

the entire space will seem to vibrate in unison. Conversely, there will also be moments of complete dissonance between each individual element. Visitors will not only encounter harmonization and pleasant fusions, but also occasionally be faced with harsh conflict.

As these distinct creative works, produced by collaborators with differing skills and expertise, are free to converge as they are, the exhibition itself takes on a role similar to the tsunami boulders and their symbiotic ecologies. Through its acts of true collaboration, "Cosmo-Eggs" enables a space of continuous creative evolution beyond the limits of simple resonance, and questions fundamental ecologies of co-existence and symbiosis.

— Hiroyuki Hattori

[trans. R.Z]