

**OPEN
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ARTIST INFORMATION PACK

9 JULY-16 OCTOBER 2016

LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL 2016

KOKI TANAKA

FABIEN GIRAUD & RAPHAEL SIBONI

**RAMIN HAERIZADEH, ROKNI HAERIZADEH &
HESAM RAHMANIAN**



Tomo Saito, San Francisco, 2010

KOKI TANAKA

Koki Tanaka was born in Tochigi, Japan in 1975 and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. He is known for installations and actions created from everyday objects found on site and actor and viewer participation. Tanaka's work is concerned with communication, power, and ethics, as well as with the aesthetic and form of the collaborative work of art; he represented Japan at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.

Currently, Tanaka's work can be seen as part of group exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven.

Hou Hanru, artistic director of the MAXXI in Rome, said that his work represented “an inventive approach” to exploring ideas of how communities are made, which was an important current issue given the political experiments occurring across the world.

Hanru further explained the jury’s selection: “Koki Tanaka is one of the most original artists of his generation to emerge on the global art scene in the last decade... A shrewd observer of the most ‘indifferent’ matters of the everyday, he always manages to magically transform them into fantastic events with a sense of humor, offering open but pungent implications that reveal the uncanniness of existence.

“On the other hand, Tanaka, a global trotter, is also a savvy mobilizer of collective actions and encourages sharing and exchange among participants to produce a common sense of creativity and imagination while probing new rules of negotiation and collaboration.”

Visit for more information: <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/koki-tanaka-artist-of-the-year-2015/>

INTERVIEW WITH KOKI TANAKA BY HOU HANRU

The Japanese artist and Deutsche Bank’s Artist of the Year 2015 Koki Tanaka discusses the pressures of art history, working with communities, the ‘Fukushima effect’ and how to sell palm fronds.

Hou Hanru: Can you describe your generation of Japanese artists? You were born during the mid-1970s and I guess you have a very different outlook to the generation born during the mid-1960s – I’m thinking of artists like Tsuyoshi Ozawa...

Koki Tanaka: Midori Matsui, an art critic, questioned why our generation didn’t touch on ‘bigger’ issues – the older generation, for example, are still struggling with the question: what is ‘Japanese’ art in a global age? Matsui thought that because we grew up during a recession period in Japan, we didn’t experience the 1990’s economic bubble or spend a lot of money to produce physically big works. In contrast, the Japanese artists that came before us, who were active during the 1980s and 90s, were making large-format sculptures, paintings or installations.

When I was at art school I felt everything had already been done by great artists – the artworld was somehow already completed. So it's not just that we grew up in an economic depression, even in art we felt there was nothing we could do.

I was a painting major and in Japan that was the only way to do contemporary art. But the painting professors encouraged us to do something else. I tried many different things at art school. I guess the professors expected us eventually to go back to painting, but most of us didn't. However we still wanted to do *something*, to make something. So I started looking at everyday objects, the kind that could easily be found in 99-cent stores.

HH: It seems that those were mainly household or kitchen objects.

KT: For me the everyday is related to the daily routine. That's why I used things physically close to me.

HH: Do you think this use of everyday objects is also a way for you to go beyond the reference of art history?

KT: I think so. I was looking at everyday objects and playing with them to see how I could view and use them differently. This was the way I could escape the seriousness involved with the perspective of art history.

HH: It seems also to be present in some recent works. Especially the political dimension of art history: in the case of Japan, the effects of the military occupation by America. Do you also think this is a change in your work?

*KT: Yes, it's a quite recent thing. But I should first talk a bit about the drawing series *History Is Written from Someone Else's Perspective, Someone You Don't Know. Making Our Own History Requires Each of Us to Rewrite It from Our Own Point of View* [2010–], in which I document various milestones in the history of twentieth-century Japanese art, from the 1950s to the 70s. This wasn't so much something that came from me, but actually more something that related to my experiences of meeting foreign curators. Because postwar Japanese art is becoming quite popular right now, they often ask about the relationship between my work and the Gutai or Mono-ha groups of the 1950s and 60s. Although they probably only know these two groups, there were actually many other Japanese artists whose works are related to actions and performances. I wanted to show another aspect of Japanese postwar contemporary art. And to demonstrate that I wasn't only influenced by Japanese postwar contemporary art. We are living in a global age, we are influenced by so many things: a Japanese person could be influenced by any other regional art history. I thought it would be nice to react to such expectations, not just by showing people what they wanted to see but also by showing another flow of history.*

LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL ARTIST KOKI TANAKA RECREATION OF THE SCHOOL STUDENTS STIKE OF 1985

In April 1985, children from Liverpool and other cities across the country, took to the streets in an impromptu strike against the Conservative Government's Youth Training Scheme. This strike was the largest in the country with some 10,000 children participating.

For Liverpool Biennial 2016, artist Koki Tanaka revisited the time of this School Students' Strike and recreated the protest walk in Liverpool. Tanaka worked with original participants, their children and current students, to retrace the steps of the original route from St George's Hall to the Pier Head.

Tanaka invited people to join the iconic recreated walk in early June this year, starting at St Georges Hall at the original time of 1pm. As well as walking the original route, original participants were encouraged to share their memories of 1985 and reflect on how the strike related to both the present and future.

Students were given the task of interviewing participants and everyone was invited to bring placards with text or images revealing their current social or political concerns.

Tanaka said: "The energy, joy and optimistic feeling in the Dave Sinclair's [the original photographer of the 1985 strike] images of the march really struck me. I wanted to work with those involved to look back at what happened, and wonder if any have children and how they feel about the current social situation in the UK, in particular the current Work Experience Scheme, which is not dissimilar from the Youth Training Scheme of 1985."

This event was filmed and is now showing at Open Eye Gallery throughout the Biennial.

Website: <http://www.bienniafoundation.org/2016/05/liverpool-biennials-artist-koki-tanaka-to-recreate-the-school-students-strike-of-1985/>

FABIEN GIRAUD AND RAPHAËL SIBONI



Image location: <http://www.biennial.com/img/78f5591ee797a354/w-4-fabien-giraud-raphael-siboni-the-unmanned-2045-the-death-of-ray-kurzweil-2014-phot-giraud-siboni.jpg>

Fabien Giraud (b. 1980) and Raphaël Siboni (b. 1981) live and work in Paris, France. Their work is collaborative and reflects on cinema history, philosophy and technological evolution. Their recent series, *The Unmanned*, traces the history of technology from a non-human perspective and featured in shows in; Casino Luxembourg; Vox in Montreal, Canada; the Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'Ile de Vassiviere in Beaumont-du-Lac, France; and, in the most recent Biennale de Lyon this year in France's Lyon.

Their most recent addition to *The Unmanned* series is the newly commissioned film *1922 – The Uncomputable* for Liverpool Biennial 2016. This project presents a history of technology in reverse, focussing on 7242 (the Earth's dismantling), 2045 (machine intelligence overtakes human intelligence), 1922 (Lewis Fry Richardson's attempt to build a giant weather forecast factory) and 1542 (the discovery of California by conquistadores).

The artists' solo exhibitions include venues such as Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2007) and Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, Australia (2009). They have been involved in numerous group shows in venues such as; Museo Pallazzo Riso, Parlermo, Italy (2015); Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark (2011); and Moscow Biennial, Moscow, Russia (2009).



Giraud, F and Siboni, R. 2045 - The Death of Ray Kurzweil (2013/2014) Image of the installation at the Casino Luxembourg. © Eric Chenal.

More information

The Unmanned series: www.theunmanned.com

1922 – *The Uncomputable*, Biennial 2016: www.biennial.com/2016/exhibition/artists/fabien-giraud-and-raphal-siboni-

ARTICLE FROM ARTFORM INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

BY MARA HOBERMAN



Image location: <http://www.biennial.com/img/c513cbb5d54e6944/w-5-fabien-giraud-raphael-siboni-the-unmanned-1997-the-brute-force-2014-photo-fabien-giraud-raphael-siboni.jpg>

Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni play with temporal conventions of filmmaking and work in both 35mm film and state-of-the-art digital video technology.

Referencing the past, present, and future, the eleven works included in *The Unmanned* —the artist duo's first institutional show—establish an eerie alternate reality wherein humanity is barely present and automated technology reigns supreme.

The exhibition opens with *Untitled (La Vallée von uexküll)*, 2009/2014, an ongoing series of digitally filmed desert sunsets. Made using progressively higher-definition cameras, each video is screened on a correspondingly high-tech projector. Five such digital recordings are shown here in a suite of walled-off but connected white-cube rooms. Notions of time and progress in these videos—which are as hypnotic as light installations by James Turrell or Doug Wheeler—are both subtle and stirring. Though the series as a whole is

overwhelmingly white, in the company of the 2014 depiction of a distinct glowing orb surrounded by a graduated halo, the 2009 video appears vastly different—more blown-out and pixelated. Each projection documents part of the Earth’s rotation in minutes and, cumulatively, the series measures five years of technological advancements.

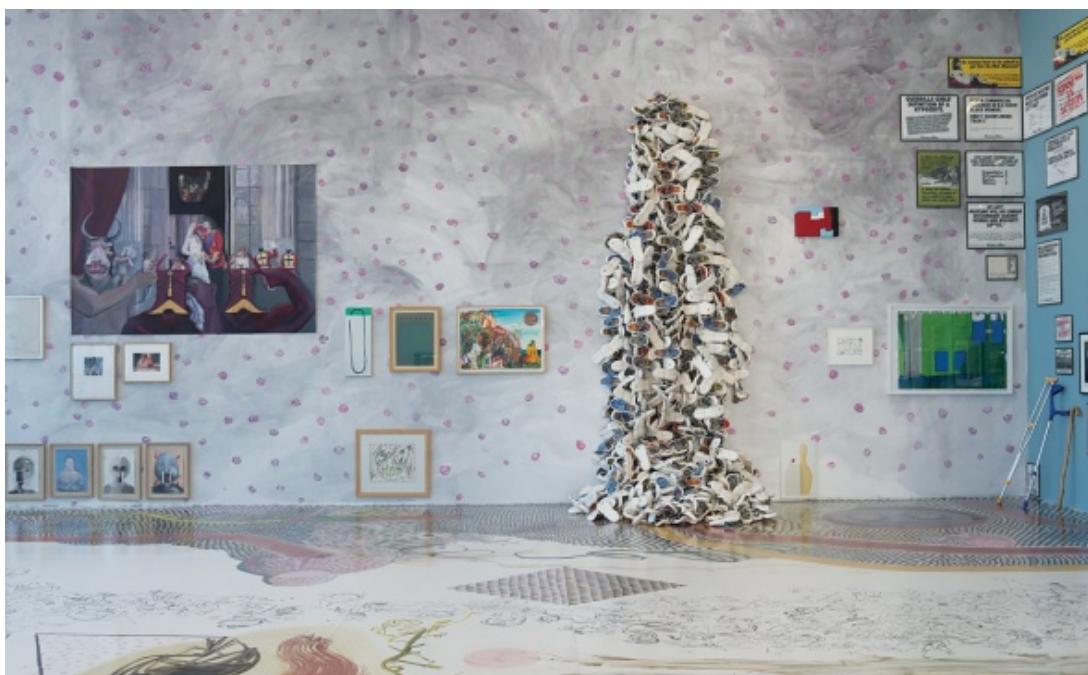
Chromatically and conceptually more complex, a trilogy (also titled *The Unmanned*) that describes man in competition with technology was appropriately shot from cameras attached to drones or otherwise controlled by computers. The most straightforward episode is *1997—The Brute Force*, 2013–14, which portrays the room where chess champion Garry Kasparov suffered defeat to IBM’s Deep Blue on May 11, 1997. As the camera pans around the abandoned set, narratively significant details (miniature Russian and American flags, a framed poster advertising “Kasparov vs. Deep Blue: The Rematch,” the final chess board) are treated to the same detached examination as ostensibly irrelevant minutiae (paint cracks, a dangling coiled phone cord, swaths of drab gray carpeting). This disconcertingly nonhuman POV, the work of a camera mounted on a computer-programmed robotic arm, is a chilling illustration of technology’s unsympathetic brute force.

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RAMIN HAERIZADEH, ROKNI HAERIZADEH & HESAM RAHMANIAN

Ramin Haerizadeh (b. 1975, Tehran, Iran), Rokni Haerizadeh (b. 1978, Tehran, Iran) and Hesam Rahmanian (b. 1980, Knoxville, USA) have lived together in Dubai since 2009. The collaborative practice of Rokni and Ramin Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian, represents a radical redefinition of the collective, as it is constantly growing and collapsing to incorporate friends, writers, artists and musicians according to project. Their projects incorporate performance, installation, painting and sculpture and are created in the villa in Dubai where they live and work.

These three artists have been commissioned to create a series of installations, performances and sculptures for Liverpool Biennial 2016. The work will be realised through a wide range of media throughout the city and will focus on the question "What if?". At Cains Brewery, for example, they will create work on-site, using 'smuggled' objects shipped from Dubai to Liverpool in a container. They have recently exhibited at; Den Frie, Copenhagen, Denmark; APT8, Brisbane, Australia; and ICA Boston, USA.



Haerizadeh, R. Haerizadeh, R. Rahmanian, H (2015) *Slice a Slanted Arc into Dry Paper Sky*. Installation view, Kunsthalle Zurich. Photo by Maaziar Sadr

More Information: <http://www.biennial.com/2016/exhibition/artists/ramin-haerizadeh-rokni-haerizadeh-hesam-rahmanian>

ARTICLE FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

BY ROBERTA SMITH

Satire, gender-bending and exuberantly mixed mediums are among the feats of this art extravaganza, an exhibition that never stops giving. It features the collective and individual efforts of two Iranian brothers — Ramin and Rokni Haerizadeh — and their Iranian-American friend Hesam Rahamanian. To unite the array, the artists have painted the gallery's floor and walls to suggest a Middle Eastern courtyard; they have also festooned white plastic lawn chairs with blue tape and collaborated on videos, assemblages, bulky but often arresting paintings and a functioning fountain that once graced the foyer of their home in Dubai. Adding to the show's expansive embrace are impressive works from their art collection by six women: Martha Wilson, Etel Adnan, Rose Wylie, Angela Dufresne, A. K. Burns and Hannah Barrett.

The three men's work is up and down, but their affinity for found objects and images is, if sometimes familiar, unmistakable. Among the standouts: Mr. Rahamanian's elegant assemblages and magazine pages furiously vandalized with paint, and just about anything by Rokni Haerizadeh, who prints out YouTube screen grabs, adds paint and marshals them into amazing stop-action animations. He is represented here by 16 animation cels, and three videos, including "Reign of Winter," which converts the most recent British royal wedding into a kind of *auto-da-fé*. His biting style draws from Goya, Honoré Daumier, Art Spiegelman and Surrealism.

Also terrific is "The Maids" (2012-15), a collaborative stop-action video made using staged photographs of the three artists in drag. Based on Jean Genet's play of the same name, it centers on two housemaids and their employer, veers from absurdist to sadomasochistic and ends (I had to be told) by evoking Jacques-Louis David's painting "The Death of Socrates." The intimate power dynamics unfold hilariously, conjuring the luxuriousness of Persian miniatures and the overacting frequent to Mannerist painting.

The action is dominated by Ramin Haerizadeh — bald, bearded and resplendent in changing gowns and roles. The earmarks of an underground classic are abundant.

FIRST U.S. MUSEUM EXHIBITION OF RAMIN HAERIZADEH, ROKNI HAERIZADEH, AND HESAM RAHMANIAN



Image location:

www.icaboston.org/sites/default/files/styles/partial_width_uncropped/public/ramin-haerizadeh-rokni-haerizadeh-and-hesam-rahmanian750.jpg?itok=rGzYsrIC

In December 2015, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA) presented *The Birthday Party* —the first U.S. museum exhibition dedicated to the Dubai-based artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahamanian. *Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahamanian: The Birthday Party* was on view at the ICA through to March 2016.

For the ICA, the artists created an on-site installation that brought together their collective and individual works with those of a diverse, multi-generational group of artists. The title of the show was borrowed from Nobel-prize winning English writer Harold Pinter's play of the same name – The Birthday Party – the plot of which centres around a birthday party for a man who does not know it is his birthday.

Earlier that year (2015), the three artists staged a performance in a vacant Dubai gallery that used *The Birthday Party* as a starting point. During the

performance, they shuffled around the space in costumes made of long prayer robes that obscured their vision, spilling paint across a floor they constructed, while unwrapping presents and making accumulative sculptures out of their contents. The exhibition – like the artists’ home – was both improvisational and accumulative. It pulled together the intimacy of their collective life and a critical engagement of a globalized contemporary culture.

‘WHERE I WORK’ FOR ART ASIA PACIFIC

BY ISABELLA E. HUGHES

Located on a sleepy, residential street in the al-Barsha neighborhood in Dubai, the tan-colored villa that houses the living and working spaces of Hesam Rahmanian and brothers Ramin and Rokni Haerizadeh—long-time friends since their childhood in Iran—appears unassuming. Once inside, however, it becomes apparent that this understated exterior is the literal and proverbial entryway into the fascinating life of three illustrious yet private artists, who have called the city their home for the last five years.



(From left to right) Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian in their live-in studio in Dubai’s al-Barsha neighborhood. Photograph by Farah al-Qasimi for *ArtAsiaPacific*.

The Haerizadeh brothers arrived in 2009, after one of their works came to the attention of the Iranian government for its critical nature while being exhibited at the Saatchi Gallery's "Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East" exhibition in London. That same year, during a visit to Dubai, family members and friends warned them not to return to Iran, and they have lived here ever since. Six months after their arrival, childhood friend Rahmanian joined the brothers. Back in Iran, the three had attended private tutorials with the influential painter Ahmad Amin Nazar, where they sketched, painted, held readings and discussed movies and current affairs, expanding their appetites for knowledge, which remain rapacious to this day.

Rokni, the most talkative of the three, describes their working and living conditions "as a presence of true equality," elaborating on their decision to collaborate: "In the art world, we are practicing to make a space, an ambiance for this equality to thrive—we have artworks by other artists, ordinary objects and then our own artworks." Espousing the merits of such collaboration, Rokni states definitively: "It's about finding a new idea, a new arrangement . . . if we as human beings can deal with our ego, and if we can erase the question of money and spend time together, then we can move beyond the ego." Rahmanian interjects, "Whatever we earn from art, we put back into art, but it is not to invest—we just go out and buy because we like the work." Their collection therefore acts as a sort of diary. "It's inspiring for us to be surrounded by all these artists," says Ramin.

The "post-ego practice" that these three friends pursue is evident in their joint focus both on individual artworks and on their collaborations. At times this existence appears almost monastic—they spend most of their time at home and also profess an adoration and deep love for Dubai, particularly in the summer when the town boils over in heat and empties out, leaving them free from distractions.

ARTICLE FROM THE LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL WEBSITE

Open Eye Gallery's exhibition, as part of Liverpool Biennial 2016, has a particular focus on the "Children's and Flashback" episodes and features artists Koki Tanaka, Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni, and Ana Jotta.

When Tanaka visited Liverpool for the first time he came across the book *Liverpool in the 1980s* by photographer Dave Sinclair, which shows images of a mass protest against the Conservative Government's Youth Training Scheme, which was criticised for its cheap labour with no job guarantee.

In Liverpool, where youth unemployment was as high as 80 per cent in some areas, 10,000 young people took to the streets in opposition to the initiative. The march on 25 April 1985 began outside St George's Hall moved quickly down Dale Street, past the Town Hall, ending at the Pier Head. This wasn't the planned route but the sheer enthusiasm of the students meant the crowd was hard to contain. For Tanaka, Sinclair's photographs showed an unusual combination of energy, optimism, joy and anger.

In June 2016, Tanaka revisited the scene of the protest and invited original participants to share their memories. They were joined by young people to reflect on how the future the students fought for in 1985, related to the present political situation. This walk was filmed as part of the 'Children's Episode and the Flashback' episode alongside Sinclair's photographs.

Each time significant technological progress is made in image resolution, Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni buy a new video camera and use it to film a sunset, but without a lens. The series, titled *La Vallée Von Uexküll*, and included as part of Flashback, will end when the camera is able to capture more than the human eye can see.

Three submersibles, Anti-Catty, Princess Rambo and Space-Sheep, have smuggled artwork from Dubai to Liverpool. By circumnavigating the normal procedures used to transport artworks from one place to another, they deliberately degrade the usual values assigned to art objects. In the gallery, and across other venues are videos by Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian that document the daily lives of the submersibles, the smuggling and objects that have emerged from this process.

For more information visit: http://www.biennial.com/2016/exhibition/locations/open-eye-gallery_4