

Interview with Shingo Yoshida

Realized by Rose Merriman
on the occasion of the exhibition

WATER(PROOF)

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At MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin

<http://momentumworldwide.org/exhibitions/waterproof/>

Curated by Rachel Rits-Volloch & Tainá Guedes

I met Shingo Yoshida in his studio, located in Neukölln. It was a hot day, and I had arrived late, thanks to works on the S-Bahn station and being in a part of the city I wasn't familiar with. Shingo's studio was bright, with high ceilings with the floor and walls painted white. He had laid out catalogues from previous exhibitions on the floor for me to look at. I noticed that one was about Cashel, a town back in Ireland.



We started talking the role of nature in his work, and how he got started using nature as a subject.

“The first time I became interested in nature, it was a long time ago. I visited Norway on a ferry. I arrived around a huge mountain, and the sea was wrapped around. And then I thought ‘Humans are powerless, weakness and nothingness when you are around (nature).’ What is between nature and the garden? Or the village and the jungle? How do humans make a co-habitation with nature? So that’s why I started. I work on other subjects also. In nature, you think about our identity and weakness.”

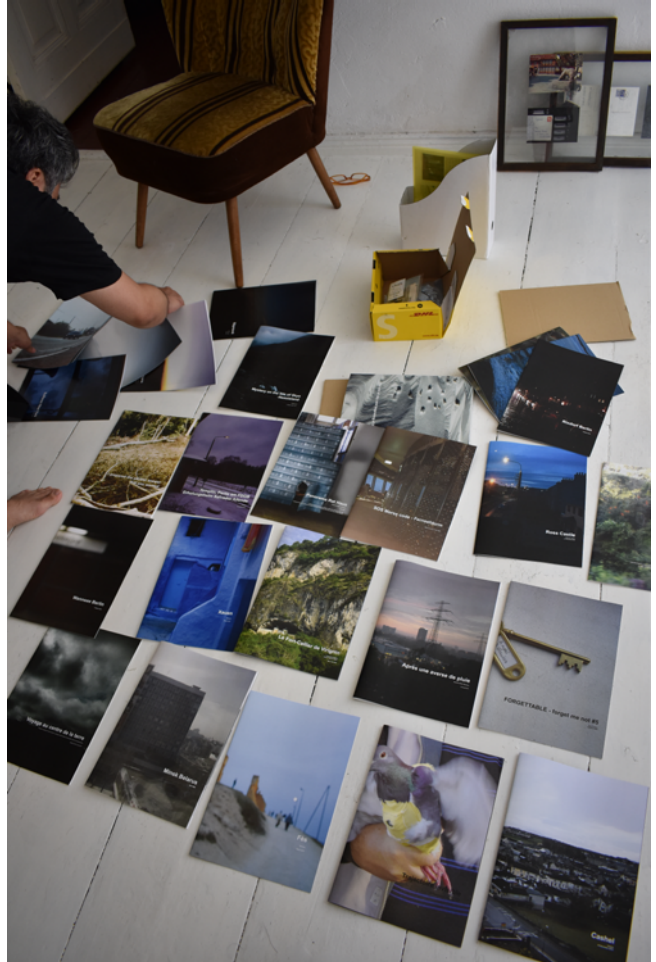
My next question was about *Réprouvé*, the work that is being shown as a part of Water(Proof). Filmed in the small village of Calama in Chile, *Réprouvé* depicts a “no man’s land where one can breathe an untouchable atmosphere.”

“I was there (in Chile) for a residency. In the middle of nothing, I found this huge amount of debris. I made the installation by myself. Here, there is a strong wind coming every second. So, it is kind of an instrument and an installation.”

While in Chile, Shingo came across a square tapestry, made of seven different colours. It is called Wiphala, and he was told that it was very important to some native South American people who live in the Andes. This was one of the inspirations for this project.

“It’s very important to the indigenous people. Each colour has a meaning. Red is earth, orange is society and culture, green is nature and blue’s heaven, something like that. I was very fascinated by the idea of this. It is something quite new, it came from the 16th century, from an Inca emperor. I wanted to do a work about the culture with the rug.”

In Shingo’s work, he is interested in small sections of society, and this is where he focuses his practice, on places and cultures that are often unknown.



“I am not interested in the macro society,” He says. “By looking at the micro society, we can see the macro society. In the micro society, there are many hiding stories. I try to find some micro society and culture to understand the world. I know many artists who are much more intelligent than me who talk more about philosophy and politics. I am more interested in traveling and meeting people. It is important for me to understand the culture. It is more about the process than the result for me. If you understand a small culture, you can understand how society is.”