

Ong, Jyni. *Artist Yuko Mohri creates improvised ecosystems through found objects*, It's Nice That, 15 October 2018

It's Nice That

Artist Yuko Mohri creates improvised ecosystems through found objects



Japan-based artist Yuko Mohri is internationally renowned for her kinetic installations. Her interactive installations detect invisible and intangible forces such as magnetism, gravity and light and cause a performative chain of events that raise themes of chance and transience.

In the lead up to the ninth Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane which opens next month, Yuko reflects on her inventive art practice with *It's Nice That*. "I use anonymous objects, like old machines that have fallen into disuse or old tools. Then, I add small technologies like motors or magnetics and place them in a space", explains the artist. The objects are placed according to environmental features of a given space whether it be gravity, humidity, light or dark, even wind direction. The objects react to these "invisible energies", mapping their physical existence through space.

The objects document forces that aren't supposed to be tangibly manifested. The physicality of these invisible energies are amplified by the motors or magnetics and feedback to the objects. In turn, a small amount of energy that is created, like a spoon pivoting, creates "a chain reaction in a space", various bugs and errors become a part of the chain which finally generates into a whole ecosystem. Resultantly, "the environment where the work is placed itself becomes my work", says Yuko. "A work can appear with different faces in different places as each environment generates a unique ecosystem".

Such an ecosystem was featured in Yuko's recent show *Voluta* at the Camden Arts Centre last month. The audio-spatial composition responds to the surrounding architecture of the galleries, revealing the "interconnectedness of man-made and natural processes". Yuko uses objects such as a found piano to generate sounds which resultantly trigger other objects to react in the gallery.

"To me, my creation is the only way to create a 'vague' situation and keep it so", explains Yuko. The artist's interests lie in the concept of the obscure, communicated through the blurring of lines between the physical and immaterial dimensions. Yuko analogises her work through the ambiguity of the colour grey. "The colour grey", she explains, "appears sober, but is in actual fact a very deep and rich colour that can be interpreted in hundreds of ways. In a figurative sense, this is one of my intended destinations to be reached within my work." Yuko adds, "It is actually easier to observe the world in a cloudy day rather than a sunny day as the pupils get larger as the amount of light decreases under a grey sky".

Yuko's interactive installations possess an undeniable sense of presence through methods of improvisation. "Improvisation is one of the most important elements of my work", says Yuko. If the found objects move through the electrical currents Yuko implements inside, "then half the work is done", as the objects create a life of their own. The artist finally adds, "recently, I realised that the more I create, the more free I feel than before. When I was 20 years old, I couldn't even imagine what I do now. So, praying for a long life, I want to keep renewing ways of expression which have never been seen before".