

# Katsunobu Yaguchi



Photo: Tsutsumi Yano

Katsunobu Yaguchi's keen focus is on ideas of revival and recovery in the context of the everyday life, and his experimental practice and his production of art have been exercised as a direct response to the environment of his surroundings.

In 2008, he came across an old abandoned house in Mito City, Ibaraki, and incorporated it into a contemporary project, entitling it *Last Home*. This house had originally been built from salvaged lumber, gathered from the surrounding burnt fields after the Second World War. Extensions were added at several stages, and the house was then turned into an eatery. There were plans for it to be pulled down following Yaguchi's exhibition, however the current owner, who was pleased to see the house brought back to life, postponed the demolition. Yaguchi decided to keep the original layout of the eatery, setting up 'Café Washington' the following year. While running the café, he carried out various social initiatives and events in collaboration with his neighbours, including the production and distribution of *The Washington Newspaper* and the management of *The Washington Festival*.

In 2013, the house was finally torn down, Yaguchi taking on the entire demolition work himself, with the idea of retracing the memories and history of the building. The demolition process was captured in a series of photographs and videos, which are included in *Washington Documentaries*. Yaguchi was able to preserve the ground floor exterior walls and named the outdoor space 'The Washington Site'. As an alternative space, it has continued to generate ideas and possibilities.

Following this, in 2016, the demolition began of SUNTOPIA, an old multi-storey department store a few blocks away from Café Washington. Yaguchi visited the construction site and made performative drawings on the walls there at underground level. He also conceived and conducted a new project there, *The Last Bargain Sale at SUNTOPIA*. By committing himself so fully to one specific location, Yaguchi has expanded on the relationship between himself ('the body') and his surroundings ('the space'). Through these projects Yaguchi's art practice has encompassed a broad range of media, including photography, film and video, painting, drawing, sculpture, performance and installation. Recently, he has embarked on a number of new projects at several locations in Oshu City, Iwate.

Katsunobu Yaguchi (b.1978 in Ibaraki, Japan) moved to the UK in 2002 and graduated with an MA in Drawing at Camberwell College of Arts, London, in 2004. Based in London, he presented a series of improvised performance art pieces until he returned to Japan in 2008. Selected performances: *Phantom of Tennis*, The Washington Site, Mito City, Ibaraki, Japan (2016) *The Reason For Madness*, Todd Anderson-kunert & Katsunobu Yaguchi, Calm & Punk Gallery, Nishiazabu, Tokyo (2012) *Speak on United spirits of Japan ( Speaking Quietly and singing Attractively )*, ACM theatre, Art tower Mito, Mito City, Ibaraki, Japan (2010) *iPROJECTmyCORKING -sonorous son-*, National Review of Live Art, Glsgow, Scotland (2007) Selected project: *Michinoku Cafe Washington*, Ohshu City, Iwate, Japan (2024~) *Kaze to Zoku*, Kanegasaki Town, Iwate (2019-2022) *The Last Bargain Sale at SUNTOPIA*, Mito City, Ibaraki, Japan (2016) *Washington Festival at Suntopia Street* (2009-2013) Selected Solo Exhibitions: *The Progress of Café New Washington*, Keiko Ogane Gallery, Mito City, Japan (2018) *Washington Documentaries*, Prismes sector, Paris Photo, Keiko Ogane Gallery, Paris, France (2018) *Tomatoravel*, Criterium77, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito, Mito City, Japan (2009) Selected Group Exhibitions: *No Photography*, Sage Paris, Paris, France (2019) *Transit Station*, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, Denmark (2010) *Spectre vs. Rector*, The Residence, London, UK (2007) *Cross Polly Nation*, General Public, Berlin, Germany (2006)