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Shimabuku

Bow to Bow

HD video (colour / sound / 16:9), 11:43 min

31 May – 30 June 2018

Private View: 30 May, 6.30–8.30 pm

One day, when the wars ended, people began to make music by plucking the strings of the bows they once used as weapons, or by rubbing the bowstrings together. On this day weapons became instruments. I wonder what kind of sounds were made in that moment?

Shimabuku

Shimabuku's most recent film, *Bow to Bow*, 2016, was commissioned by "Development", Okayama Art Summit in Japan, curated by Liam Gillick in 2016. It was filmed at Kibitsu Shrine in Okayama, which houses a school for archery, and the opening scene features a young man methodically firing an arrow at a target. This is followed by a scene where two men, one of whom is the artist himself, use archery bows to practice *pizzicato*, plucking at the string of the archery bows to make rhythmic sounds. Then we are presented with a man holding a contrabass while a woman rubs its strings with the archery-bow. Finally, we listen to a musical duet performing an original composition by Nomura Makoto, one musician stroking his contrabass with an archery-bow while the other plays hers with a regular music-bow.

Here Shimabuku muses on the homonymic nature of the word 'bow' (also a homonym in Japanese: *Yumi*), which refers at once to a weapon used to propel arrows and a device for playing stringed instruments. Notably, the bassist handles the bow like chopsticks, whereas for other string instruments, such as the violin, the musician wields the bow overhand like a knife. In staging these simple and elegant acts, sparked by a linguistic incongruity, Shimabuku poetically draws our attention to wider issues suggested by the bow's innate potential for aggressive injury or aesthetic solace.

Earlier collaborations with musicians include *Asking the Repentistas - Peneira & Sonhador - to remix my octopus works*, 2006. That film, made in Italy, showed the artist catching octopuses with ceramic containers, a traditional Japanese fishing method. When invited to present the work at the Bienal de Sao Paulo in 2006, he told the story to two Brazilian *repentistas* (impromptu singers) and asked them to "remix" the narrative. The *repentistas* relayed the tale in the streets, accompanied by *tamborim* (frame drums) and adding refrains such as "Shimabuku is a great man." Shimabuku filmed the two *repentistas* and showed the footage alongside his original film, thereby interweaving

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Japanese and Brazilian folklore. More recently, a site-specific installation presented at the Havana Bienal in 2015 was inspired by a huge water leak Shimabuku encountered in the exhibition space, the rhythmic sound of drops falling on the tin cans resembling a samba. After recording a video of the installation, the artist travelled to Rio where he invited musicians Kassin and Arto Lindsay to make a remix. *Cuban Samba Remix*, 2015 is a three-screen video installation, a small screen showing the tin cans and two larger ones showing video portraits of the musicians during the performance of the remix.

Shimabuku was born in Kobe, Japan in 1969. He is currently living in Okinawa, Japan. Recent solo exhibitions include Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (2014), 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2013) and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2013). He had taken part in numerous international group exhibitions such as “The Animal Mirror” in ISCP, New York (2017), “Viva Arte Viva”, the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), La Biennale de Lyon (2017), Fellbach Triennial, Germany (2016), Dojima River Biennale, Osaka, (2015), the 12th Havana Biennial (2015), the Taipei Biennial (2014), the Sharjah Biennial (2013), and the Yokohama Triennale (2011). His work is in many major museum collections including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Nouveau musée national de Monaco, Kunsthalle Bern, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, National Museum of Art, Osaka, M+ Museum, Hong Kong and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo.

Current exhibitions include *In Tune with the World* at Foundation Louis Vuitton, Paris, *Animals & Us*, Turner Contemporary, Kent, United Kingdom and *Kodomo No Kuni*, L’Onde, Vélizy-Villacoublay, France. He has a solo exhibition forthcoming at Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac, France in September 2018.