

ANOMALY

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Press Release: Chim ↑ Pom
May, 2020, Tokyo / A Drunk Pandemic
June 27th – July 22nd, 2020

Chim↑Pom

May, 2020, Tokyo / A Drunk Pandemic

Saturday, 27th June - Wednesday, 22nd July, 2020

Closed on Sunday, Monday and National Holiday

12:00 - 18:00 (Friday until 20:00)

*To protect public health against COVID-19, we will shorten the opening hours, and suspend the reception event.



A Drunk Pandemic was created by Chim↑Pom and curated by Contact Young Curators for the 2019 Manchester International Festival. A Drunk Pandemic was commissioned and produced by Manchester International Festival and Contact. Photo by Michael Pollard

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As a state of emergency has been lifted, ANOMALY is pleased to announce the reopening of the gallery with a solo exhibition "May, 2020, Tokyo / A Drunk Pandemic" by Chim ↑ Pom.

The exhibition will be on view from Saturday, June 27th to Wednesday, July 22nd, 2020.

As the exhibition title "May, 2020, Tokyo / A Drunk Pandemic" suggests, the presentation consists of two projects recently initiated by the artist. For the past few months, the world has been experiencing unprecedented uncertainty and fear stricken by the COVID-19 pandemics. Tokyo 2020 Olympics, the grand celebratory sports event was significantly affected to postpone as a consequent. "May, 2020, Tokyo", the installation shown at the gallery was staged in May during the time of a state of emergency, when residents were asked to "Stay Home". Various locations were chosen and remain untold. It is their attempt to confront the metropolis of Tokyo, where there are based and their creation always played on the streets and public space until today.



May, 2020, Tokyo, work-in-progress, ©Chim ↑ Pom

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“A Drunk Pandemic”, another installation will be presented for the first time in Japan. It originates from the project with the same title they showed in the abandoned tunnels under Manchester Victoria Station last year. Commissioned by the Manchester International Festival (MIF, Manchester, UK) and Contact (Manchester, UK), a large-scale installation invited local residents to be part of the process and the guided public tours were also accompanied. The project was also selected for the cover and featured spreads in the ArtReview September issue.

In Manchester, Victoria Station is operated as one of the major stations with thousands of commuters pass by today. Chim ↑ Pom installed a temporary brewery in the underground space of the station, where cholera victims were buried during the outbreak in the 19th century.

The brewery “Pub Pandemic” was bartended by the artist and served a special beer “A Drop of Pandemic” for the visitors to drink brewed in the tunnels during the exhibition. With a visualization of the bioprocess in the making of a locally crafted beer with yeast in relation to the cholera virus, and the correlation with urban sanitation exemplified by a swage system at that time, “A Drunk Pandemic” reconnected with their own urban theory encompassing the local history and context.



A Drunk Pandemic was created by Chim ↑ Pom and curated by Contact Young Curators for the 2019 Manchester International Festival. A Drunk Pandemic was commissioned and produced by Manchester International Festival and Contact. Photo by Rob Connor

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Historically, Manchester is widely known as an illustrative example of the industrial revolution. However, the rapid urbanization had poor sanitation causing a cholera pandemic. Improvements in basic infrastructure such as sewage system were taken as measures against the pandemic. Many cholera sufferers came from poorer communities: they were often older, more unhealthy, working-class or drunk. Richer people regarded cholera sufferers as morally inferior and cholera itself as immoral. In order to eliminate this 'immoral disease', the quality of life of these so-called 'immoral people' needed to be revamped. It is said that the revolution in urban hygiene and sanitation started with this kind of thinking. During cholera and plague outbreaks, people in Manchester drank beer instead of water. The water used in the brewing process was boiled, making beer safer, so at the time debated whether they should drink water or beer.

Outside the tunnels, the public and temporary toilets were built with 'Pub Pandemic' and at the end of the extended sewage pipe from the public toilets, a brick factory 'Piss Building' was installed, where cemented bricks were made from the urine of the people who have drunk beer there. The bricks were used on the street or the houses in Manchester as the most basic construction material or to repair upon request. Running from the brewery through the pub, toilet, swage, the factory to the city, "A Drunk Pandemic" was a multi-faceted project questioning the historical formation of the city and our relationship to it today.



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Bricks installed in the city of Manchester, 2019, Photo by Kate and Phil Vokes

The capitalism triggered by the industrial revolution required tremendous sacrifices in the 19th century. Manchester had witnessed a huge population increase after the industrial revolution, but the city was not well sanitized. The average life expectancy of a laborer was 22, and needless to say, most of whom were working-class and poor. The abandoned tunnels are a graveyard for about 40,000 poor people who were the victims of the social system based on factories, capitalism, labor and cities, which is now widely spread around the globe, just as “pandemic.”

The beer, urine, bricks and the drunk quietly proliferated and extricated from the forgotten underground site through the project will now take shape as an installation at the Non-Site, our gallery in Tokyo.

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With previous works "SUPER RAT" – a pest controller and new breed of poison-immune rat proliferating explosively in urban areas as a portrait of their own generation, and the video work entitled "BLACK OF DEATH" featuring a flock of crows – symbolic figures associated with death signifies the plague known as The Black Death, the new iterations by the artist today extend their critical views upon uncanny and ongoing relations between the capitalism, plagues, and urbanization.

In 2018 ANOMALY opened its door to the public with an exhibition "Grand Open" by Chim ↑ Pom, refurbishing their urban theory with a notion of public/private for a recursion when the reconstruction in Tokyo relentlessly continued. This is our second to feature their ambitious works when our door reopens to unfold peculiar trace of the urbanization and a current state of human beings while the 'new normal' emerges in the midst of our globalized life.

[Chim ↑ Pom]

The artist collective formed in 2005 in Tokyo with members Ryuta Ushiro, Yasutaka Hayashi, Ellie, Masataka Okada, Motomu Inaoka, and Toshinori Mizuno. Since their debut, their work and practice respond instinctively to the "real" of their times, Chim ↑ Pom has continuously released works that intervene in contemporary society with strong social messages on the relationship in the sphere of public and private, borders, and contradiction with no prejudice.

The major solo exhibitions and presentations include "Chim ↑ Pom" (MoMA PS1, New York, 2011), "Chim ↑ Pom" (PARCO Museum, Tokyo, 2012), "SUPER RAT" (Saatchi Gallery, London, 2015), "Non-Burnable" (Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, 2017) in addition to the international biennales such as "The 29th São Paulo Biennial" (Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavillion, São Paulo, 2010), "The 9th Shanghai Biennale" (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2012), "The 14th Biennale de Lyon" (La Sucrière and the Museum of Contemporary art Lyon, France, 2017), "The 6th Asian Art Biennial" (National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, 2017). Based in the two spaces 'Kitakore Building' (Koenji), and 'White House' (Shinjuku), they develop various independent projects to show in and out of the country.

"PIKA!" (2008), a skywriting of the work over A-Bomb Dome in the city of Hiroshima, and "REAL TIMES" (2011), a series of works produced in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, especially a panel depicting the nuclear power plant accident added to Taro Okamoto's mural "Myth of Tomorrow" made controversial reactions and discussions. They also initiated, organized, and participated in the international exhibition "Don't Follow the Wind" in the inside of Fukushima's nuclear exclusion zone,

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where the public will not see the artworks until the blockade is released. Internationally acclaimed with prestigious art awards, their audacious activities deal with taboo subjects and social issues laced with a humorous critique.

In 2021, their solo exhibition at Mori Art Museum (Tokyo) is much anticipated.

This is our first exhibition to present after the state of emergency ended.

We apologize for any inconvenience that may cause with a few requests upon your visit, but we look forward to welcoming you.

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Brick installed in the city of Manchester, 2019, Photo by Kate and Phil Vokes

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