



Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver
About bed: a, 1995
Print and colored pencil on paper
13 3/4 x 16 3/4 in
34.9 x 42.4 cm

SHUZO AZUCHI GULLIVER

'Synogenesis'

February 4 - March 25, 2023

Opening Reception:
Saturday, February 4, 6-8pm

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Nonaka-Hill Gallery is delighted to present SHUZO AZUCHI GULLIVER Synogenesis, which marks Azuchi's first West Coast solo exhibition, encompassing multimedia works spanning from 50 years of the artist's dynamic career.

In 1963, after finding a book on the works of Marcel Duchamp, written entirely in French -Shuzo Azuchi was inspired by the liberating qualities he saw in the works, prompting him to commence his first Happenings in highschool. Staging performances such as, Grassfields (1963), in which 9 performers weeded a 9m x 9m plot of the schoolyard, while viewers watched from the roof.

In 1967, Azuchi studied philosophy at Ritsumeikan University, during this time Azuchi met international members of Fluxus, picking up the nickname "Gulliver," and leading him to broaden his artistic practice with developments in expanded cinema. Using his own body as a reference point, Azuchi charts its relation to space, time, and empirical data. The influence of Duchamp retained in Azuchi's documentary approach to artistic production. Cataloging both the physical and intangible world (space, sound) and calling to question the necessary structures (organic and constructed) which define us.

Weight (Human Ball) (1978), part of a larger body of work in which the artist creates a stainless steel ball recording his weight at the time of its production, documenting, cataloging and superimposing the artist's physical mass within the context of a given time - while the polished surface of the ball reflects the surrounding world. The object rests on a sofa - its weight imprinting on the cushion providing a placeholder for the artist's physical presence. The later work, *Weight (Human Ball)* (2022), again documents the artist's weight at the time of production, now presenting a slightly heavier mass. The series provides a comprehensive chart documenting the artist's physical presence in the world over a period of time.

Focusing on the ideological concept of the body, Azuchi's ongoing *BODY* (1973-) project, formulates a contract entrusting 80 individuals to 80 parts of the artist's posthumous body. The contract, structured as a legal agreement, lists each of the 80 pieces of Azuchi's body utilizing spatial designation (right/left), names, numbers, and signs 'A', 'B', 'C' as symbols for the respective parties. The work not only breaks down the physical composition of the body, but in the process of producing the contract - each party recognizes and confirms the existence of the other. Each of the 80 pieces are intended to become preserved as art objects after the artist's death.

While the analytic mapping of the flesh reiterates the artist's larger play on the physical body's spatial presence, it also introduces Azuchi's larger exploration into contracts (signs and meanings) which define language, understanding, and provide the foundation for empirical knowledge.

“Here I am citing the concept of a contract. And this act works to clarify itself. The many concepts that we have formed can be thought to be a single contract. The view of the world is a bunch of contracts concluded between the world and us. If the contracts represent an exchange, what have we exchanged with the world?”

(Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver: Appearance (Dieci.due Arte, 1991).

During the 1984 performance *De-Story*, Azuchi enclosed himself within a geometric structure composed of measurements necessary for the artist to sit, stand, and lie. Confined in the space for 10 days (a total of 240 hours). A speaker attached to the tall ‘stand’ section, projects the rhythm of the artist's heartbeat - recalling the coporality of the being inside the structure. Small “*De-Story*” (1984), documents this work, reformulating it into a model fit for a goldfish. Presented alongside the relic Foodbox for “*De-Story*” (1984), the original bento-box used to serve the artist food 3 times a day during the 10 day performance. While these works chart a spatial trajectory of the physical body, they recognize the body as a structure which grounds it into the world.

Azuchi's work also extends beyond bodily observation. Interested in how each living form is composed of four elements, (A=Adenine, T=Thymine, C=Cytosine, G=Guanine), making up the genetic material DNA. Azuchi repeats patterns for genetic coding in works such as *Body/A.T.C.G* (1993), printing the ‘ATCG’ coding upon a piece of paper and delicately clipping it upon a hanger - in a shape reminiscent of the human figure.

Although Azuchi's body of work is far ranging, they call to attention the necessary structures fundamental to life - whether that be the physical body, the structuring of language as an agreement of sounds, symbols and their meanings, or the construct of time. Azuchi's cataloging of the world provides not only a humorous perspective on the nature of reality, but also a method in the search of meaning and truth.

Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver (b. 1947; Shiga Prefecture, Japan). Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver lives and works in Tokyo, Japan. Selected solo exhibitions include *Breath-Amorphous* (2022) BankArt, Yokohama (Japan); *Cinematic Illumination* (2020) Museum of Modern Art (United States); *La dolce vita* (1999/2015) (2015) Neue Kunstverein Wuppertal, Wuppertal (Germany); *Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver* (2009), Dieci.Due Arte, Milano (Italy). Permanent installations and public/museum collections include Shiga Museum of Art (Shiga, Japan); The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (Kyoto, Japan); Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (Tokyo, Japan); Museum of Modern Art (New York, United States).

Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver

Biography

- 2023 *SHUZO AZUCHI GULLIVER: 'Synogenesis'*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles
- 2022 *'Breath-Amorphous'* BankART, Yokohama
- 2020 *'Cinematic Illumination'* Museum of Modern Art, New York
'Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions 2020: The Imagination of Time', Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo
- 2019 *'Note to note'* Spaziordanseei, Oligiate Olona (Italy)
- 2018 *'On a bien accroché'* (with Marc Buchy) Maison Grégoire, Brussels
- 2017 *'Japanese Expanded Cinema Revisited'* Tokyo photographic Museum, Tokyo
- 2016 *'Sange/Letters from the World (petali che cadono)'* Spaziotemporaneo, Milano
- 2015 *'La dolce vita (1999/2015)'* Neue Kunstverein Wuppertal, Wuppertal (Germany)
- 2014 Begins *"Sound gift,"* a project to counteract *"BODY"* project, where ever single sound pronounced until death is presented as a gift.
'SHI' (with Yuki Okumura) Etablissement d'en face project, Brussels
- 2012 *'From/To Sri Lanka'* Sakado station, Sakato (Japan)
- 2011 *'One night exhibition in the Dream'*
- 2010 Holds comprehensive one-man exhibition *"EX-SIGN"*
- 2009 *'Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver'* Dieci.Due Arte, Milano
- 2004 *'Tai-i (Paradigm)'* Kyoto Seika University Gallery Fleur, Kyoto
- 2003 Lecture *'Il fascino indiscreto del denaro'* at Aura Magna dell'Ateneo Veneto, Venezia
'Zero/Concept' (Art affairs, Amsterdam)
- 2000 Researcher, Tokyo University Research into Artifacts, Center for Engineering.
- 1999 Lecture and speech *'The ancient human being and the modern artist: The sense of drawing'* Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Milano, Milano
- 1998 *'Ex-self'* Mizuma art Gallery, Tokyo
- 1997 *'Fukui Biennale 7: Media and Human body'* Fukui City Art Museum, Fukui (Japan)
- 1996 *'Art Meets'* Charlottenborg (Copenhagen)
'Garden Project' Aalsmeer (The Netherlands) Commissioned by City Aalsmeer, Provincie Noord-Holland and Mondrian foundation
- 1994 *'Of the human condition'* Spiral art center, Tokyo
- 1993 *'Shuzo Azuchi Gulliver'* Unimedia, Genova
- 1992 *'Brain-Internal Affairs'* Beatrixziekenhuis, Gorinchem (The Netherlands)
'Avanguardie Giapponesi Degli anni 70' Galleria comunale d'Arte moderna Bologna, toured to Setagaya Museum, Tokyo
- 1991 *'Body'* Dieci.Due! Milano
- 1990 Activity in Europe increases.
- 1984 Lecture *'Paik opera (dedicated to Nam Jun Paik)'* Nagoya art forum, Nagoya
'De-story' (240 hours performance) Az corporation, Tokyo
- 1977-78 Organize *'Yoyogi opened studio'* Tokyo
- 1973 Begins the exemplary *"BODY"* project, where the body is divided into 80 parts after death and entrust the parts to 80 specic people through a specic executive group.

Short Curriculum Vitae

- 1967 Forms “*PLAY*” group with acquaintances from Kansai to oppose “Gutai group” Late-60s. Produces experimental cinematographs, networks with Japanese members of Fluxus.
- 1967 Makes headlines as one of the leaders representing Japanese “*futen*,” or hippie.
- 1964 Begins working on subjective works such as the performance (‘*Happening*’). Befriends American beatniks visiting Kyoto, studying philosophy at University.

Permanent Installations, Museum and Public Collections

Shiga Museum Art (Shiga, Japan)
The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (Kyoto)
Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (Tokyo)
Museum of Modern Art (New York)
Kyoto Seika University (Kyoto)
Shiga Prefectural ZEZE High School (Shiga, Japan)
Haverford College (Haverford, USA)