

Time of others [Singapore Arts Museum]

Rachel Tan Rui Qi, U1331050D

A Reflection

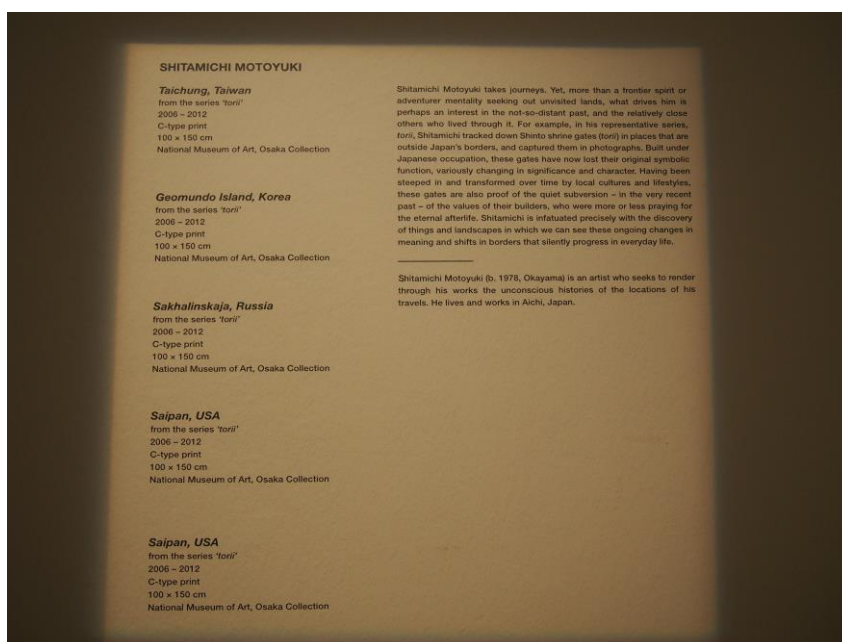
This trip to the museum was insightful because it shed light on vast multi- disciplinary and cross perspective approaches to tackling the idea, understanding and feeling of time. I was very inspired by the artists in terms of how they express their journey and experiences of time being shaped and going beyond their unfathomable life spans and how they so vulnerably display the fragility of history and future. It was personal and intimate, which was what made the art so much more impactful. Some of the artworks suggest time is linear while others suggest that time is kept alive in memories, legacies and myths and thus, rather cyclical and often haunting. Other artworks displayed time as a concept of human persuasion and obsession, while some disregarded its importance and choose to focus on the being and now. But I felt all the artworks though different in nature and direction, had one thing in common and that was the way time transcends humanity and shapes the future, whether we like it or not.

And from that came the idea of finding meaning through life and through death. Or if there was meaning at all since through time, everything we could possibly phantom had to come to an end.

Throughout the exhibition, I felt that there were four installations that struck me enough to stop and ponder about the human's life journey and to question what I can understand outside of my own existence. Below are my reflections on each artist and a few photo for reference.

A] Shitamashi Gallery

A series of 5 large photos with one thing in common ; the Shinto shrine and its evident decay, be it through the cross culture proliferation in Japan or by forces of nature. The photos suggests the idea that time will transcend the legacy of things past, which is an infallible concept on its own. All these made me bring into question of how we as people can phantom time after our deaths or if we even could think of it in such a way. It also made me realise that our legacies and identity, are all subjected to who the future thinks we are to be.



B] Death under a Mango Tree by Punseh

A cyclical film that is solely from a second person's narrative in storytelling. Some of the quote brought up were intriguing on their own.

"The world lies on nothing. Simply pushing itself into existence through an endless obscurantism."

At first, the art piece took on a pessimistic approach about time and death. Implying that there is nothing beyond death to look forward to and that life is at the edge of a wasteland. But as I watched more of the film, the narrative transformed into a conversation. Though no actual conversation took place, the narrator asked questions, he spoke on with love, Sadness and anger.

Perhaps for the Artist it was his intention to exemplify the redundancy of life and time. However to me, it inspired a new school of thought that we as people are haunted by ghosts of the past. Stories and legacies, cultural movements and morals, they all haunt humanity through 'indoctrination' from generations after generation. And this brought me to think about time as a tool for people to haunt the future.

C] Manmade by Basir Mahmood.

This art piece displays two videos of the same man side by side. On one side, he is wearing a suit for the first time and he seems unsure. On the other, he is seated with a nonchalant smirk, fully suited. This implies that time and context as seen through the eyes of men can be so easily manipulated. Which may explain why our perception of time is so inconsistent too. The way we perceive time is very dependent on our pre-existing context or prior knowledge. And so by displaying this, I was left to wonder about how time and context has shaped the worldview of many people around me.



D] Danh vo

This piece expresses not only a hope to preserve time but to preserve the emotions behind that time. It expresses a deep emotion between father and son that transcends death. By copying the heartfelt letter and going through the motions in writing french, the artist gets to relive the emotions that were real and exchanged more than a 100 years ago.

