

## ARTS RESEARCH CENTRE

## DR HAROLD OFFEH

## OUTPUT INFORMATION

Title:

Stranger in the Village

Output Type:

I – Performance

Venue:

Art Tower Mito Contemporary Art Gallery

Year of first performance:

2019

Research Groups:

Curating

Participatory Practice



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

Harold Offeh's Stranger in the Village explores themes of migration and settlement through dialogue with the expatriate LGBT community in Mito, Japan, employing African-American writer James Baldwin's essay 'Stranger in the Village' as frameworks for discussing personal experiences of estrangement/integration.

Produced during a residency, the multi-media video installation featured interviews and performative responses, set in a yellow space with a black triangular reading table at the centre. The content combined Japanese folk tales on the benefits and dangers of welcoming strangers with more familiar global myths on these themes, together with personal testimonies of contemporary experience, uncovering hidden histories that reveal unexpected cultural diversity, enriching the perspective on immigration and assimilation in Japan.

British Council-funded, Stranger in the Village was commissioned to inaugurate Art Tower Mito Contemporary Art Gallery's Publicness of the Art Center, a new program exploring the role of art centres in contemporary society, Offeh being one of six artists (three international, three Japan-based) commissioned for this major exhibition accompanied by an Anglo-Japanese publication.

Stranger in the Village's impact resides in its participation in a new form of exhibition-making. Publicness of the Art Center had 2 phases, a dialogue phase and production phase – a strategy often deployed in Offeh's wider practice. His exploration of Mito's social dynamics was thus instrumental in helping the museum redefinine itself as a public space for visitors to see how artists' works evolve, from discursive origin to material outcome. For Offeh, 'the public' is not an anonymous group of all-comers, but a specific demographic whose personal history shapes the artistic process. As Hideo Nakao, Curator of Kurumaya Museum of Art, said, 'Harold Offeh's video installation uses different voices, including those considered "other" and "strangers", to lead to a dialogue where individuals can live in their own way and where they can coexist."

"Harold Offeh undertook research both within and outside of the art center by interacting with the LGBT community and those who had moved to the Mito area from abroad"

"The performance Lounging, by Harold Offeh began... With the artist lounging around the café and the people reacting with various degrees... a curious atmosphere overtook the entire space"

**PHASE** I DOCUMENTS March 2-May 6 2019 Contemporary Art Gallery Art Tower Mito 10:00–18:00
CLOSED on Mondays
\*Open on April 29
FREE ADMISSION
xcept for some programs NATURAL OF THE PROPERTY OF THE **PUBLIC** TO THINK **ART CENTER** 等にあるのか。 - 0.3 年 5月 2日 (土) — 5月 6日 (月・振) 水戸芸術館現代美術ギャラリー THIS AND OF H H 2019年3月2日(土) PUBLICNESS OF フホールディングス株式会社 10:00-18:00 休館日] 水戸芸術館 ART TOWER MITO YAJ9 OT 【入場料】 第一語 F

Stranger in the Village, pages from exhibition catalogue 2019.

Image courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.

## 66

Harold Offeh's practice has a focus on performance as well as projects in which he collaborates with other participants. His work has interpreted race, gender, and cultural difference with great wit and zest, gently untangling established concepts within society or the individual.

This project provided the first opportunity for Offeh to visit Mito, where he spent time interacting with locals and examining the varied sense of belonging and identity in communities. The installation mediated by complex stories, from the interviews with people he met during his short residency or the folk tales that guided his research, is named Flexible Coexistence in reference to a previous exhibition. With a yellow theme that accentuates the silhouette of what is in the foreground, this space features a triangle shape formerly used as a label of shame against those society deemed to be deviant but that was then subsequently adopted as a symbol of pride. (The triangle also pays homage to the architectural elements of the gallery itself.)

How do we perceive "strangers"? How do people live and how do they interact with society? Turning to listen to the voices of others and through physical gestures that are a primordial means of communication and connection, Offeh investigates what flexible coexistence may entail in the future.

Exhibition Catalogue, Publicness of the Art Center, 2019

Image courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.









00-00 | 滞在制作 ハロルド・オフェイ

00-00 | 滞在制作 潘 逸舟

Image courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.



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00,00 | ハロルド・オフェイ パフォーマンス 「Lounging」(くっろいだポーズ) 00,00 | 砂連尾 理 「変身」 ワークショップ



C



00,00 | 週末の朝ごはん会 (出店: Maison Weniko) 00 | 呉 夏枝 ワークショップ「ひもづくりからはじまる身ぶり」

Image courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.



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C

00 | ハロルド・オフェイ パフォーマンス「Choreograph Me」(振りつけて)

00|砂連尾 理「変身」 ワークショップ

#### 第7室・屋外

### PUBLICNESS OF THE ART CENTER DOCUMENTS **PHASE II** PUBLICNESS OF THE ART CENTER October 26 2019 – January 26 2020 Contemporary Art Gallery Art Tower Mito 展示と対話のプログラム アートセンターをひらく 2019年10月26日(±)-2020年1月26日(日) 水戸芸術館現代美術ギャラリー [開館時間] 9:30-18:00 ※入場は17:30まで [休館日] 月曜日、11/5(火)、 年末年始(12/27(金) - 1/3(金))、1/14(火) ※ただし、11/4 (月·振)、2020年1/13 (月·祝) は開館 [入場料] 一般900円 前売·団体(20名以上)700円 ※高校生以下、70歳以上、障害者手帳をお持ちの方と 付き添いの方1名は無料 ◎一年間有効フリーパス「年間パス」2,000円 ◎学生とシニアのための特別割引デー「First Friday」 学生証をお持ちの方と65歳 - 69歳の方は 每月第1金曜日 (11月1日、12月6日) 100円 EMMANUELLE LAINÉ 水戸芸術館 ART TOWER MITO [主催] 公益財団法人 水戸市芸術振興財団 [後援] ブリティッシュ・カウンシル アンスティチュ・フランセ バリ本部 在日フランス大使館/ アンスティチュ・フランセ日本 グレイトブリテン・ササカワ財団 芸術文化振興基金 竹久侑 (水戸芸術館現代美術センター主任学芸員) Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower M

第II期 アートセンターをひらく 水戸芸術館 ART TOWER MIT

Image courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.





th people he met during his short e formerly used as a label of shame against ociety deemed to be deviant but that was then uently adopted as a symbol of pride. (The triangle also pays homage to the architectural elements of the and how do they interact with society? Turning to lis the voices of others and through physical gestures a primordial means of communication and con Offen investigates what flexible coexistence may support I was given. I think as an artist I'm used to dealing

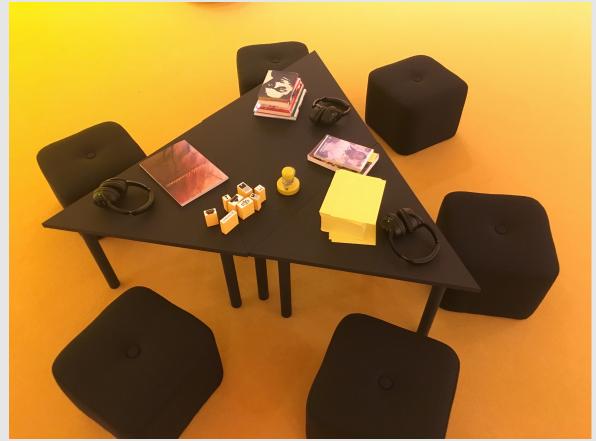
Stranger in the Village, pages from exhibition catalogue 2019.

Image courtesy of Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.



Stranger in the Village, Installation, 2019. Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan. Photo by Yuzuru Nemoto





Stranger in the Village, Installation, 2019. Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan. Photo by Yuzuru Nemoto





Stranger in the Village, Installation, 2019. Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan. Photo by Yuzuru Nemoto





Stranger in the Village, 2019. Research trip to meet immigrant farmers in Japan. Mito, Japan. Image courtesy of the artist.

Stranger in the Village, 2019. Research trip to meet LGBTQ activist in Mito, Japan. Image courtesy of the artist.



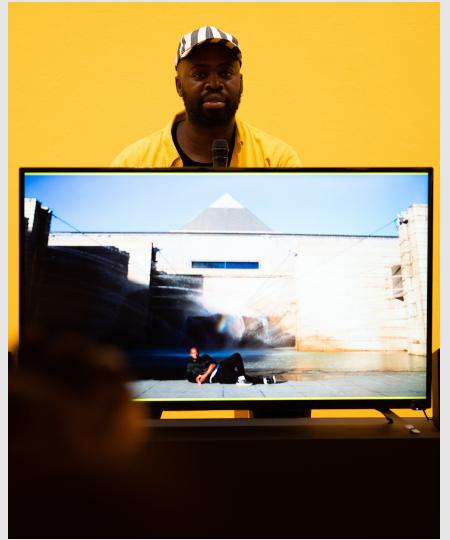


Stranger in the Village, 2019. Studio installation in March 2019 part of the initial research trip to Mito, Japan. Image courtesy of the artist.





Stranger in the Village, Performance, 2019. Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan. Photo by Yuzuru Nemoto





Stranger in the Village, Performance, 2019. Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan. Photo by Yuzuru Nemoto



Stranger in the Village, Still from video, 2019. Contemporary Art Gallery, ATM, Mito, Japan.

Image courtesy of the artist.

"Harold Offeh's video installation uses different voices including those considered "other" and "strangers", to lead to a dialogue where individuals can live in their own way and where they can coexist"

Hideo Nakao, Curator of Kurumaya Museum of Art. Review in Bijutsutecho, 2019.12.5 Founded in 1948, Bijutsutecho is the longest-running contemporary art magazine in Japan.

## PRESS RELEASE

September 2019
Press Release #1



#### Publicness of the Art Center—Phase 2



#### **Exhibition Overview**

Title: Publicness of the Art Center—Phase 2
Dates: October 26, 2019 – January 26, 2020

Closed on Mondays, November 5, New Year holidays (December 27 – January 3), and

January 14

Open on November 4 and January 13

Opening Hours: 9:30-18:00 (last admission: 17:30)

Artists: Haji Oh, Harold Offeh, Osamu Jareo, Fuminao Suenaga, Ishu Han, Yuko Mohri,

Emmanuelle Lainé

Venue: Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito

Admission: ¥900 (¥700 for advance tickets and groups of more than 20 people)

Free of charge for high school students and younger, seniors over 70, the disabled and

one accompanying adult. Student card or other age identification required.

One-year Pass: ¥2,000

First Friday of every month: special discounts for students and senior citizens. Admission for

college students and seniors aged 65-69 is ¥100

Organized by: Mito Arts Foundation
In association with: British Council

Supported by grants from: Institut français, Embassy of France, Institut français du Japon,

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, The Japan Arts Council

Supported by: Suntory Holdings Limited

Curator: Yuu Takehisa (Senior Curator, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito)

#### **Exhibition Overview**

Marking 30 years in 2020 since Art Tower Mito's opening, the Contemporary Art Center's "Publicness of the Art Center" explores over two phases the role required of an art center in today's changing society. Phase 1 was organized from March to May 2019, reinterpreting the Contemporary Art Center as a place where art is born and using the facility's gallery space for creativity and dialogue between both artists and visitors as well as between fellow visitors. In Phase 2, the gallery will be employed as a space for cultivating dialogue and various activities centered on an exhibition.

This exhibition presents new work created by six artists who were invited to take up one-month residencies during Phase 1, conducting research on the Mito area and the Contemporary Art Center, and collaborating with local citizens. It will also feature documentary footage from Osamu Jareo's Metamorphosis workshop, ongoing since Phase 1 and exploring the nature of dialogue and physical expression, as well as further workshops and a final presentation of the results.

In addition, the popular cafe space will appear in the Workshop Room inside the gallery from December 5th. It will serve as a place for people to spend time as they like, to interact with other people and take part in various activities. Opening up the Contemporary Art Center as a social space where works of art facilitate dialogue and connections that can lead to further developments in the future, the exhibition and program of related events will consider in practical ways the role required of an art center today.

## Who are the people who make up the public? **Hideo Nakao "Opening the Art Center"**

The Mito Center for Contemporary Art, celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2020, holds a two-part project "Opening the Art Center" that explores the role required of the art center in a changing society. In Phase I, the gallery was used for "creation and dialogue" by artists and visitors, and in Phase II, the gallery was opened around the exhibition. Hideo Nakao, a curator at the Kurumaya Museum of Art reviews the trial of this exhibition to explore the role of the art center as a social venue through practice.

Text= Hideo Nakao











Exhibition view of Harold Offay's Villager (2019) from "Opening the Art Center Phase II" Photo: Joe Nemoto Photo courtesy of Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito



#### **MAGAZINE RANKING TOP5**

WEEKLY MONTHLY



The back number of 2019 magazine "Bijutsutecho", all...



Art support is a top priority. "Corona and Culture" by...



Museum from Home: The The National Art Center, Tokyo...



Yokohama National University opens an online program "Cit... **NEWS** 



Enjoy the "Sun" by Olafur

News Fashion Beauty People Art Culture Food Trip Astrology Blog Magazine

特集 東信のフラワーアート エディターズポスト

Art / Post

## 「アートセンターをひらく」第II期が開催中 @水戸芸術館

2019.10.30up

茨城県・水戸市の水戸芸術館現代美術ギャラリーで、展覧会「アートセンターをひら く 第11期」が開催中。2020年1月26日(日)まで。



毛利悠子『Flutter』(2018年) 撮影: Damian Griffiths 写真提供: Camden Arts Centre

2020年に開館30周年を迎える水戸芸術館では、企画展「アートセンターをひらく」 を2期に分けて開催。2019年3~5月にかけて、第1期が開催された。

## **PRESS**



### the japantimes

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## **CULTURE**

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ART / OPENINGS OUTSIDE TOKYO

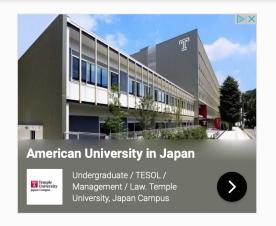
#### 'Publicness of the Art Center Phase I'

CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY, ART TOWER MITO



Yuko Mohri's "Parade" (2011-17) | JACQUELINE TRICHARD

BY YUKARI TANAKA



#### WHAT'S TRENDING

**EDITORS' PICKS** 

 China to conduct major military drill simulating seizure of Taiwan-held island



2 COVID-19 news updates



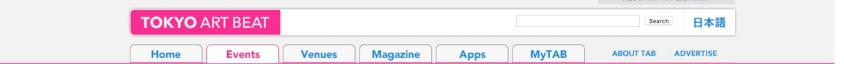
**3** 'If I Had Your Face' review: Are South Korean women really so obsessed with beauty?



**4** 'No remedy, no rights': China blocks foreigners from leaving



## **PRESS**



#### **Publicness of the Art Center - Phase 2**

Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito





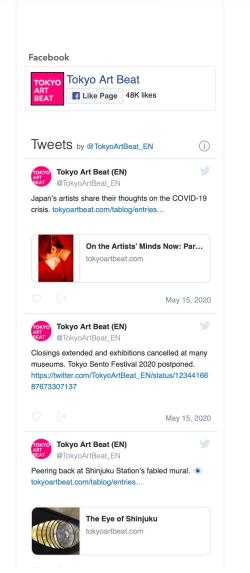
This event has ended.

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[Events] Harold Offeh Talk/Performance Date: Oct. 26 (Sat) 13:30–15:00



Also in New York and Kansa









Magazine Partners Booth Publications regist ART

Magazine > Photo Report > Publicness of the...

#### Publicness of the Art Center – Phase2 @ Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito

Publicness of the Art Center - Phase2

26 OCT 2019 - 26 JAN 2020

Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki

https://www.arttowermito.or.jp/english/

Curator: Yuu Takehisa (Senior Curator, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito)



## **SOCIAL MEDIA**





## **SOCIAL MEDIA**





水戸芸術館現代美術センター「アートセンターをひらく」 April 12, 2019 · **⑤**  •••









水戸市 March 26, 2019 · **⑤** 

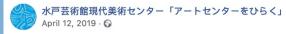
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【水戸芸術館現代美術センター「アートセンターをひらく」◆3/2~31滞在作家 ハロルド・オフェイ】

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**















水戸市

March 26, 2019 · 🕥

【水戸芸術館現代美術センター「アートセンターをひらく」◆3/2~31滞在作家 ハロルド・オフェイ】

水戸芸術館現代美術センターは、「創作と対話」をテーマに「アートセンターをひらく 第I期」を開催しています。

アーティストが1カ月間水戸に滞在し新作を制作する「滞在制作」では、1カ月3名の入れ替え制で6名の作家が滞在します... See More

[Mito Art Museum Contemporary Art Center "opening the art center" • 3/2 ~ 31 staying author Harold off]

The Contemporary Art Center of Mito Art Museum is holding " the first I period of the art center " on the theme of " creation and dialogue,"

A 6-Month-old writer will be staying in the "staying production" that artists will stay in mito for 1 months.

Harold Offeh, one of the writers who stayed from March 2th to 31th, was born in Ghana, 1977, based in the UK. I made a piece of work that has been hidden in history and society, triggered by laughter and participation.

On March 9, we performed [CHOREOGRAPH ME] by the audience's instructions.

The audience request is," shaking hands with the people at the venue "" playing with the kids ", after the intense performance, care for the off " rest for 2 minutes "

### Keywords:

Exhibition

LGBTQ

Immigration

Installation

Collaboration

### Key Dates:

March 2 – May 6 2019, Art Tower Mito October 26, 2019 – January 26, 2020, Art Tower Mito

### Funding:

Mito Arts Foundation

**British Council** 

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation,

The Japan Arts Council

#### Links:

https://www.haroldoffeh.com/projects/stranger-in-the-village

## WWW.LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/LARC

# ARTS RESEARCH CENTRE

