

Private View: 8 October 2015  
Exhibition Dates: 9 October - 21 November 2015  
Open Tuesday to Saturday 11 - 6pm or by appointment

# Yoshinori Niwa

## Historically Historic Historical History of Communism

Edel Assanti is pleased to present Yoshinori Niwa's first London solo exhibition, *Historically Historic Historical History of Communism*.

Yoshinori Niwa's practice takes the form of social interventions, executed through performance, video and installation. Niwa deploys a nonsensical vernacular to examine culturally diverse social realities, an artistic strategy whose roots can be traced to the post-war Japanese avant-garde. Through the construction of absurd scenarios, Niwa exposes systems of exchange that drive contemporary society, as well as disjunctures in collective conceptions of history, ideology and value.

*Historically Historic Historical History of Communism* draws together a body of work spanning four years, in which Niwa examines historical and current conceptions of communism in former Soviet Union countries as well as in his native Japan. The series is Niwa's response to a subject matter that is at once distant and ever-present, as Niwa explains: "It is obvious that I have no experience or memory of the Revolutions and the collapse of the Berlin Wall, but somehow I have memories of those events as if I had re-experienced them. Maybe I have 'experienced' them many times via mass media and books, and created fake memories."

The exhibition centres on Niwa's three-channel film work *Looking for Vladimir Lenin at Moscow Apartments*, 2012. The film documents Niwa on a visit to Moscow, asking people in the street if he can borrow something from them related to Lenin during the Russian presidential election in 2012. Responses vary from cheerful nostalgia to aggressive revulsion. Visiting willing participants' homes, Niwa collects 150 portraits, photographs, propaganda posters, flags and badges of Lenin, documentation of which was originally exhibited alongside the film at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. This is shown alongside Niwa's other work, *Tossing Socialists in the Air in Romania*, 2010, in which he visited the Romanian Communist Party and convinced them to agree to be tossed into the air by local young people.

Niwa's outsider status within these intimate encounters reveals a gap between the political position of the nation and the individual citizens' state of mind. Despite the ambiguous connotations of the artist's search for Lenin, the absurd, at times seemingly naive dialogues throughout the film epitomize the nonsensical lens Niwa turns upon society across his practice. His strategy affords a critical distance through which collective assumptions are revisited, and the status quo of inherited models can be challenged.

The exhibition will be accompanied by the launch of Niwa's new monograph, *Historically Historic Historical History of Communism*, which presents the series in its entirety, with contributions from notable curators and political scientists. A series of related events, including a performance and a lecture at Goldsmiths College on 7th October 2015, organised by The Arts Catalyst, will be held in conjunction with the exhibition.

Niwa graduated Tama Art University's Department of Moving Images and Performing Arts in 2005. Niwa's work has been exhibited internationally. Recent group exhibitions include *Double Vision: Contemporary Art From Japan*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Haifa Museum of Art (2012); *Aichi Triennale 2013*, Aichi Arts Center (2013); *Roppongi Crossing 2013: OUT OF DOUBT*, Mori Art Museum (2013). Niwa will be included in a forthcoming major exhibition at Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art later this year. Niwa was selected as one of ArtReview's Future Greats in 2014, and his work is included in international collections including the Mori Art Museum and Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo. Niwa lives and works in Tokyo, Japan.

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