



Jessica Harrison

The 'Touchstones' (all untitled) are the culmination of research into the role and significance of the body in sculpture. 'Untitled (1)' and 'Untitled (1) Inverted' look at the interaction and interdependence of touch and vision in order to unravel the relationship between the body of the maker and the body of the viewer.

Starting with a hand-sized ball of soft clay, the subject, a different person for each piece, works the material blindly, manipulating the clay within the felt rather than the seen space. Uninterrupted by the eye, the resulting shape describes the space in-between the fingertips, with imprints left to document touch, to map the space just beyond the end of the finger.

The clay shapes are scaled up from impressions that fit within the palm of the hand to a size around which the whole body can wrap itself. Carved into stone by the artist, she becomes both viewer and maker. In this process of replication, the felt space is opened up and made accessible for another 'viewing' body, introducing through the stone, a new element of touch.

In a continuing process of handling, the stones are then cast in white silicone, which is turned inside out. Impressions now press outwards into the space around the object, inverting the maker and viewer's touch, as inside becomes outside and vice versa. Shown together, the stone and silicone forms represent the same felt body movements, and the same space between the hands.

Harrison studied at the Edinburgh College of Art and is completing a practice-based PhD in sculpture. She has been awarded prizes and scholarships, most recently the John Watson Prize, and has exhibited in Britain, Germany and the USA since 2006. Her work is already in collections including Pallant House, The New Art Gallery Walsall and the Fingal County Public Art Collection, Ireland.

Atsuo Okamoto

'Splitting and returning' or 'wari modoshi', embraces a traditional Japanese method of stone carving in which larger blocks are split into manageable portions, then to be fused into a single sculpture.

Taking this convention to engage with issues of contemporary life and art making, Okamoto entrusts his fragments of stone to selected people around the world for five years. During this time, the stones absorb their surrounding environment through an 'infiltration of life' as he describes it. The aim is for each piece of stone to remain beside the collaborator; kept in a pocket or a bag, on a table in the home, on a desk, in a workshop, a kitchen, a bathroom or even outdoors on a veranda. This slow weathering and the traces of contact result in a unique colouring so that there is a tonal, patchwork effect in the reassembled 'Turtle' pieces.

"Stone keeps huge memories inside it, ever since the planet came into existence. I feel that stone is the most romantic and intellectual object on earth", he says. "The pieces of stone scattered to various people of different cultures, jobs and life styles will be infiltrated by a life, hence 'Volume of Lives' as the title".

For his AF Projects show, Okamoto has made a new work, 'Volume of Lives – from London' 2012 – 2017, to take its place alongside two completed works. 49 stone pieces, all marked with delicately inscribed numbers, are presented in their assembled form. During the exhibition 'collaborators' will be recruited.

Okamoto has exhibited world wide, and lives in Tokyo, where he teaches at the Joshibi University of Art and Design. He trained at the Tama Art University and his work is in public collections including The University of Warwick UK and The Water Art Museum, Japan.

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