

A Body in Tokyo

(left) ***Abandoned Subway Station***, 2021, 14min 33sec

(right) ***Shibuya River Culvert***, 2021, 22min 44sec

Performance and Editing: Eiko Otake

Produced by Tokyo Real Underground as part of 2021 Tokyo Tokyo Festival

Both works were filmed in downtown Tokyo in March 2021, ten years after the 2011 triple disaster—the earthquake, tsunami, and meltdowns of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant—struck Northeast Japan.

As the pandemic made all cities less crowded, Eiko brought herself to the underground of the megalopolis and projected images of herself in deserted Fukushima. By using her body as a conduit between two distant places and carrying the projector herself, she connects consumptive Tokyo and irradiated Fukushima. This is her attempt to not forget what she saw in Fukushima.

I am a stranger everywhere I go. This was also true in Tokyo where I grew up. I danced in unusual places, exploring where that place ends and another place starts. —Eiko



In a Cathedral, 2016, 3min 51sec

Performance: Eiko Otake

Cinematography: Alexis Moh

Editing: Alexis Moh and Eiko Otake

From 2016 to 2019, Eiko was an artist-in-residence at the Cathedral of St. John-the-Divine in New York City, the largest cathedral in the world. She produced two Fukushima memorials and two photo

exhibitions there. Outside of scheduled events, Eiko sometimes performed in the nave without notice. She wore the same kimonos as costume as she did for *A Body in Fukushima*.

All the kimonos I have worn for a while as costumes were from my grandmother who ran a geisha house. She often designed her own kimonos. After I visited Fukushima in 2014, I began to wear clothes that belonged to the dead. —Eiko



a foreigner, 2023, 3min 31sec

Performance: Eiko Otake
Cinematography: Patrizia Herminjard
Editing: Patrizia Herminjard with Eiko Otake

Eiko rarely makes her work in a dance studio. Instead, she places her body where she feels motivated to move and think. By doing so, she finds new motifs or new ways of using motifs she has carried for a long time. Such is her “foreignness.”

I did not come here to assimilate. Having lived in the U.S. for 47 years, I wonder why I am still here. Sometimes I dance to think that. —Eiko



***A Body in Wyoming*, 2023, 25min 53sec**

Performance: Eiko Otake
Filming director Liz Sargent
Cinematography: Naomi Saito
Editing: Eiko Otake

Eiko was invited to spend a month in Wyoming for a creative residency in the summer of 2021. In the video, Eiko walks, rests, and walks again, alone. Though Eiko travels and performs in many U.S. cities, Wyoming was new to her. Eiko first edited short segments separately as if writing poems. This year, she connected these pieces and re-edited them to better reflect her experiences of being there and what she learned about the history of the place.

Many of my friends on the East Coast said it must be beautiful there. I didn't feel that way. All the hills are fenced. Nobody walks on the roads. I felt scared. —Eiko



A Body in a Quarry

(hallway) ***Mountain***, 2023, 11min 5sec

(left) ***Pit***, 2023, 15min 3sec

(right) ***Stone***, 2023, 34min 10sec

Performance: Eiko Otake

Cinematography: Thomas Zamolo

Editing: Eiko Otake with Thomas Zamolo

This past summer, Eiko was invited to a month-long creative residency at Milvus Artistic Research Center (MARC) in Knislinge, Sweden. During the residency, Eiko visited Gylsboda Quarry, a working quarry of black diabase. With its high iron content, the surface of diabase changes color when exposed to air and groundwater. Eiko observes that large amounts of mined diabase are crushed by a machine into small pieces, piled to form a mountain shape waiting to be sold as building material. This experience made her think about the time held within stone.

Putting my cheeks and bare legs against the huge walls of black diabase, I was struck by how the stone holds incredible density of time. I found deep colors of stones, combined with dynamic shapes and scrape marks created by high power machinery used in mining, breathtaking. Yet at the same time, I felt uneasy in seeing these stones unearthed from so deep below. How incessantly insatiable and violent humans have been, digging loudly. —Eiko



STOREFRONT INSTALLATION

A Body in the East Village, 2016, 19min 45sec

Performance: Eiko Otake

Cinematography: Alexis Moh

Editing: Alexis Moh and Eiko Otake

In 2016, Eiko was a co-curator and the subject of a month-long series—Danspace Project's *Platform 2016: A Body in Places*. One of its many programs was her daily solo performances in different sites throughout the East Village in New York City at different times for intentionally small audiences. This video shows three short scenes from her solo performances in a weaver's studio, a boutique, a bar, and a restaurant.

In order to distinguish one performance from the other, I tasked myself to make eye contact with each member of the audience...I entered a place, danced, and left a place, only to be seen again the next day by somebody else, somewhere else. —Eiko

A Body in a Station: Philadelphia, 2014, 11min 47sec

Performance: Eiko Otake
Cinematography: Ben Grinberg
Editing: Eiko Otake

This is an edited documentation of Eiko's performance in Philadelphia's 30th Street Station in 2014. It is the first time Eiko performed alone after working as Eiko & Koma for more than four decades.

Presented by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), the performance was a durational work of 12 hours, three hours each on four consecutive Fridays. On the day of the first performance, Eiko also opened a photo exhibition *A Body in Fukushima* at PAFA. She wanted to use her performer's body to connect two very distant places—Fukushima and Philadelphia.

I wanted to dig a hole in the crowded and elegant 30th Street Station and connect to the no-man's land, that was Fukushima. In the public performances, I wore the same costumes as I did in Fukushima, because I wanted viewers to immediately recognize I am the same Eiko as in the photographs taken of me in Fukushima. —Eiko



Pearl Street, 2023, 3min 6sec

Performance: Eiko Otake
Camera: Ben Grinberg
Editing: Eiko Otake
Commissioned by Asian Arts Initiative

This work was filmed on August 30, 2023 in the alley right behind Asian Arts Initiative. Eiko created the work after learning about AAI's long history of facilitating this neglected place for community-based art projects.

By moving I notice new details of the place. By editing the footage, I remember the place. I made this piece to include in this exhibition because I wanted to thank AAI for having me. It is also for my own memory box. —Eiko



Husk, 1987, 9min 33sec

Performance: Eiko Otake

Camera: Takashi Koma Otake

Husk is one of several dance-for-camera works Eiko & Koma created in the 1980s. After collaborating with cinematographers and experiencing long and often compromising editing processes, Eiko & Koma wanted to create their own video work that did not involve anyone else. In this piece, Eiko is alone in the frame while Koma is at the camera.

By looking at the monitors hidden from a camera's view, I controlled the framing of my body as Koma's camera followed me as smooth as possible. Even the lowest position of a tripod was not low enough for the viewpoint we wanted, so his camera was placed on a tennis ball on the floor. —Eiko



What I Carry, 2023, suitcase, mixed textiles, hoses, cables, metal basin

This is what I brought. I enjoy opening my suitcase in front of a curator. So many things come out and then, a gallery starts to feel like my home. —Eiko



A Body in Fukushima, 2014, photography

The photographs in the gallery were shot in the winter of 2014.
The photographs at the front window were shot in the summer of 2014.

Eiko first visited Fukushima five months after Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant had disastrous meltdowns in March 2011. From 2014 to 2019, she returned to Fukushima five more times with a historian and photographer William Johnston. Together, they have created tens of thousands of pictures of Eiko dancing alone in places where people were forced to evacuate due to radiation. In 2021, the book of their photographs and essays were published with the same title.

In Fukushima, I learned to dance alone swallowing my regret. I hope my work allows people to imagine Fukushima, to feel and smell Fukushima. Those experiences have conditioned my solo performances since.

—Eiko

