

PHILADELPHIA



Video still from *a foreigner* by Patrizia Herminjard

I Invited Myself, vol. III Asian Arts Initiative (1219 Vine Street) September 9 - December 9, 2023

I Invited Myself, vol. III is the third iteration of Eiko Otake's *I Invited Myself*, an exhibition series that Eiko started in 2022. Following the first iteration at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the second at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, [Asian Arts Initiative \(AAI\)](#) and [The Fabric Workshop and Museum \(FWM\)](#) in Philadelphia have partnered to present different versions of her exhibitions and related programs. The institutions have worked together and alongside the artist to present specific aspects of Eiko's expansive practice.

Join us **Saturday, September 9** for an opening reception from **3-5PM** that is open to all and an in-theater screening of *Slow Turn* with live intervention presented once at **3PM** and again at **4:30PM**. *Slow Turn* was an occasion and place-specific monologue performance co-commissioned by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, NYU Skirball, and Battery Park City Authority and was performed on September 11, 2021, the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

[RSVP Here](#)



Photo by William Johnston

EIKO'S REFLECTIONS

SWEDEN

This summer, I was in creative residency at [Milvus Artistic Research Center](#) (MARC) in Knislinge, Sweden for the month of June. MARC occupies two floors of a huge old building, which was once an active shoe factory. Living quarters and a large dance studio are quiet; however, with wide and tall windows that overlook a lake. Tall, leafy trees sway with wind, and so do their shadows on the floor. June is a beautiful season in Sweden.

Olha Marusyn from Ukraine was the only other artist-in-residence during the time I was there. We had long talks over meals on "blue nights" that stay light very late. We moved together in a studio and saw each other's presentations at museums in Malmö. Listening to this brilliant and articulate artist, my son's age, from a country that had been so violated by Russia's ferocious invasion, was affecting. The sense of distance is indeed malleable.

As a performance act, Olha screams long, guttural roars and continues to do so until exhaustion. She does not mean it, but her cries sound like "WAR." I was quite shaken. On her last day there, we went to the quarry to yell, scream, and shout. As my weaker voice joined hers, I felt even more strongly the tremendous upsets that the war brings to people.



Video still from *Stone*

In this countryside, I also met Japanese people unexpectedly and befriended them fast—Hiroshi, a stone sculptor, and his partner Akemi, a painter, and their friend Tomoko, with three beautiful children. They altogether brought me to Gylsboda Quarry, a deep quarry of black diabase. The surfaces of stone that changed color and the scraped traces left by huge machines were both very beautiful and violent. They were dug so deep that I felt we are not supposed to see them. The time these stones were holding felt incredibly dense. Thomas Zamolo, a skilled and kind cinematographer, filmed me there after the miners' working hours ended. A long blue night and a very kind stone artist/gallery owner, Pia Lindberg, made that possible.

A big thank you to MARC's Artistic Director and American dance artist Rachel Tess and coordinator Kajsa Rolfsson for being such personal hosts.

COLORADO



Photo by William Johnston

[Read a Review in DARIA Art Magazine](#)

I had only a few nights at home before I flew to Colorado for the third and final convening of *[I Invited Myself, vol. II](#)*. The six-month exhibition of my video works at the Fine Art Center's gorgeous and spacious gallery was definitely a great thrill for me. Thanks to previous Department Chair and co-curator Ryan Platt, Fine Arts Center curator Katja River, and installer Jonahan Dankenbring for accepting my idea of having the exhibition change over three seasons (winter, spring, and summer) and hosting three convenings that added so much more work for them.

The final convening had great guests again. I was pleased that two curators from Philadelphia—Joyce Chung of Asian Arts Initiative and DJ Hellerman of The Fabric Workshop and Museum—came. The summer convening started with programs at Colorado Spring's historic Evergreen Cemetery. Harry Weil of Green-Wood Cemetery (Brooklyn, NY), with whom I worked very closely, presented on his active program. My performance at the cemetery that followed included local participants from the neighborhood, seniors who take dance classes, and former students of mine, all of whom current department chair Shawn Womack reached out to. Here again, I did something I could never do on my own. Thank you to those adventurous souls. Thank you to Sue for your guidance.

[Read: Colorado College Alumni Dance and Grieve with Eiko](#)



Photo by Patrizia Herminjard

I was deeply grateful that my friend and choreographer Joanna Haigood came from California. She attended all of the convening programs and spent hours in the galleries. With her permission, I am sharing her reflections. Thank you Joanna from the bottom of my heart.

Walking through the cemetery
 Birds and cars, rustling leaves
 Figures along the walkways and in the fields of resting bodies - most unknown
 I am connected

Calling out
 I am connecting to memories of others
 Their energy lingers in my body, which trembles at times
 But I am peaceful and resolved

The black cloth is a handful of sorrow
 transforming over time into something useful
 It is spread out among many
 We are connected through this sharing



Photo by Patrizia Herminjard

David Harrington came alone to perform with me both at the cemetery and in the museum. These were his first public performances without Kronos. David played his violin while walking throughout the cemetery, and the next day in the gallery, he played walking around barefoot and even lying down. He chose to end the performance by playing towards the video of my speaking to my dead mother from *Elegies*, created in collaboration with John Killacky. David then sat up, stopped playing, and faced the video. That made everyone there listen to my voice together. With Philip Bither as a wonderful moderator, David and I had a long public conversation. Together, we enjoyed a growing constellation of

friends and inspiration. Conversation continued way into the late night.



Convening Participants

On July 20, after my guests and I left Colorado Springs, amazing Shawn brought seniors from the Hillside Community Center dance class to the exhibition, where each of them performed their own choreography as responses to my video pieces.

The core idea of *I Invited Myself* is how I can share my body and mind with people without my performing there live. What better way to end the 6-month exhibition? Heartful thanks to Shawn, all participants, and Patrizia, who filmed many performances and programs throughout the exhibition run. Thank you to Elise Butterfield for having started and run the project with me and my assistant Allison Hsu for sustaining me.



Senga Nengudivideo and Chris Montoya from a video filmed by Patrizia Herminjard

JAPAN

The last thing this summer was my visit to Japan. I had the pleasure of seeing Koma's solo dance in an intimate performance space in Niigata, his hometown—a two-week sold-out run. He is returning to New York soon and looks forward to sharing this piece with New York audiences.



Class at Biggako

Speaking of the power of intimacy, I tremendously enjoyed teaching a five-day intensive workshop at Biggako in Tokyo. Started in 1969, this school is more like a studio where people of any age, field, and nationality can take courses. I was deeply moved by what I saw and felt there from diverse, serious participants, all of whom had to make an effort to be there. I realized how deeply committed people can impact each other working in small numbers. I am so grateful.

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