

# SCOPE OF MODERNITY

Aiko Tsukahara

## ***Neoclassicism 1:50, 2019***

Ceramic plaster, bulletproof glass, installation with theatre spotlight

H40 x W66 x D144 cm, 1:50 scale of the Parthenon temple (placed on the pedestal of the same volume)

### ***'EUROPE STARTS HERE!'***

—A plastic plaque at the entrance to the Acropolis in Athens

Origin of Europe is a relatively new role to the Acropolis compared to its 2500-year-old history. By the wake of the Enlightenment in the late 18th century, Europe began to form its collective identity.

Johann Joachim Winckelmann's theory of the superiority of Greek antiquities reinforced the European border by arguing that the ancient Greece encompasses the complete beauty of Europe. Winckelmann's longing for the past was mainly about the expression of sculptures with an exaggerated idea of beauty. Some of his influential theories were based on false facts, such as that the ancient Greek sculptures were originally white. His intensions were conceivably aesthetic back then; nonetheless, the consequences have been highly political.

Even today, what separates Europe from others is supposedly its aesthetic value. The collective idea of beauty backed by eras of ancient and modern gives a certain shape to politics and ensures legitimacy of decisions. As a matter of fact, 'Architecture' since neoclassicism has been politics itself. To clarify the shape of beauty, the words in the beginning shall be rephrased.

### ***'WHERE DOES EUROPE END?'***

## ***Mobile 1:50, 2023***

Steel, paint, installation with theatre spotlight

H75 x W105 x D270 cm, including 1:50 scale of B-2 Spirit

After visiting Piet Mondrian's studio, Alexander Calder gained the idea of a kinetic sculpture. Marcel Duchamp saw Calder's hanging sculptures and called them 'mobiles'. What these three modern artists had in common was that they were exploring the expandability of space beyond dimensions in their respective media.

Mobilisation of (air) space reached at new level when disruption of radar waves became the major strategy in the air defence technology. Energy to grasp everything in the space and energy to prevent it from happening fill the sky. The expansion of space is achieved through invisibility.

## ***Pedestal Included, 2023***

Wood, paint, acrylic plastic, uncut diamond from Jwaneng Mine, Botswana

H155 x W35 x D35 cm

Supporting medium for modernism.

**Icon, 2023**

Charcoal, paper, framed in museum glass

H92 x W92 x D4 cm, three works

Carbon –the chemical element with atom number 6, and the basis of all life– is the most diverse element in forming chemical compounds. Every industry benefits from this ‘friendly atom’.

The use of carbon residue dates back to pre-historic era. The primary use of charcoal was as a source of fuel, but it was also one of the oldest drawing materials in the world. Light-absorbing smokiness of charcoal is a reminder that cave paintings were created with fire and seen in the firelight.

Icon was once reduced to the zero-point by Kasimir Malevich. For the radical modernist, total separation from history and heritage was crucial to build a new world. In his writings Malevich provokes to burn the epochs of the old –as if the ashes of the past were the only material for the future.

When one friendly atom, C, combines with two popular atoms, O, it forms molecules of carbon dioxide and acts as a greenhouse gas. The invisible threat visualises an inconvenient truth. Black Square has been housed in a climate-controlled museum. The outside world has been threatened by the radical change of climate. Burning is no longer the option for iconoclasts today.

Abstraction creates complexity of connection by bonding particles of matters. Abstraction then releases particles of matters like evaporation, as a course of transmission. The capability of abstraction is the unanticipated transmission; it should be able to liberate art from the Euclidian system of time and space.

**Long Manifesto 1:1, 2023**

Projection with Kodak carousel slide projectors as light source

Actual scale of the horizontal windows on the north west side of Villa Savoye

Vertical hierarchies were considered to be dominant in the structures of modernism, despite the fact that they were supported by horizontal foundations. Horizontality has maintained its authority undetected because of its self-imposed height restriction. However, nowadays deconstructions of vertical hierarchies have been revealing more complex orders of horizontality.

The famous argument between Auguste Perret and Le Corbusier on the window formations –Perret to be vertical and Corbusier to be horizontal– was an allegory of paradigm shift in modernism. This argument of form and function, which developed into the question of which of two would let more light into a room, has been written as if Corbusier’s ‘triumph’ over his former mentor. What did he actually win, then?

Corbusier’s masterpiece, Villa Savoye, was designated an official French historical monument after it was completed and was almost never properly lived as intended. In between, it was abandoned twice: first by the Savoyes during the World War II, and then by the soldiers, both Germans and Americans, after the World War II. Bernard Tschumi, who visited the ruin of the Savoye, wrote how he was moved by the villa in its state of vandalism and disrepair.

In the black and white pictures of the Savoye as a ruin, the horizontal windows –one of Corbusier’s architectural manifestos–are particularly emphasised. They look like slightly opened eyes, whose vision is difficult to discern. This may as well have been the result of the awkward window shapes in which the form supersedes its function, as Perret once pointed at. The pre-determined monument was set to pull emotional trigger through abandonment, as Tschumi had it written.

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Forum Box