

Dance

By Dan Grunbaum

True

A trio of avant-gardists uses sound, light and dance to reconsider the basis of reality

"It seems like we see an infinite amount of colors in the world, but in reality our minds are perceiving combinations of just three," says lighting director Takayuki Fujimoto, of noted Kyoto performance art group Dumb Type, in a preface to his new piece, True. "Some say that whatever we see is thus a false illusion... but this is not the case. The truth is that 'reality' itself is the creation of whatever our senses encounter. Nothing here is fake: this is how the world is made."

While this may sound abstract, Fujimoto believes it has a specific bearing on contemporary Japan. At a time when Japanese are inundated with information, he says, some find reality intimidating. "It's like we've given up on our individual power to change things, whether it's in international affairs or Japanese society."

Through an examination of how we perceive colors and how they relate to sound and movement, Fujimoto and his co-creators, mixed media performance artist Takao Kawaguchi and dancer/choreographer Tsuyoshi Shirai, hope to change this. "If one can accept reality in this sense, one can have a different outlook on one's relationship with the world... Reexamining how much of reality is created by ourselves is a way to break away from defeatism."

Fujimoto's ambitious work with LED lighting has previously been employed to great effect in the mixed media performance *Refined Colors*, which toured the world in 2004.



Also with Dumb Type, Takao Kawaguchi has been part of Japan's performance art scene since the '90s, and was until a few years ago director of the Tokyo International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. He's known for using his body as a medium in collaborations with artists like Fuyuki Yamakawa, who makes creations that utilize medical equipment to isolate bodily functions, and Atsuhiro Ito, who uses a machine he invented called an "optron" to create otherworldly displays of light and sound.

Tsuyoshi Shirai, meanwhile, began his professional career as a dancer with the innovative Kim Itoh + the Glorious Future (see *The Agenda*, p19), but has been interested in technology since his days as a student in the industrial design department at Chiba University. Founding his company Study of Live Works Baneto in 1996, Shirai has focused on works that examine the entirety of the creative process. *Room in Sakira/Ritto* (2003), for example, featured a video screen that documented dancers rehearsing, leading up to an on the spot playback of scenes of the performance.

Among others participating in *Truth* are audiovisual installation artist Takuya Minami and super-low-frequency sound programmer and experimental turntablist Manabe Daito, both of whom joined Fujimoto on the *Refined Colors* tour. Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse, Dec 14-16. See dance listings for details.



Photo by Ryuichi Maruo, Courtesy of YCAM