



Greeting

The Humboldt Lab Dahlem was a project of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation) in cooperation with the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation). It developed new forms of presenting artefacts of the Ethnologisches Museum (Ethnological Museum) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Asian Art Museum) of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin) in Dahlem for the planned Humboldt-Forum in Berlin-Mitte. The experiment began with the question of how objects accommodated in a museum can open up new perspectives on our globalized present. In its search for solutions, the Humboldt Lab Dahlem therefore collaborated with scholars, custodians, curators, and artists. The results were regularly presented in so-called "Probebühnen" during the opening hours of the museum. In this manner, the Humboldt Lab Dahlem provided stimuli for dealing with the current challenges of presentation and mediation that are also posed to other museums in Germany and Europe.

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Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa / Teaser

During 1884/85 the Ethnologisches Museum acquired a stock of textiles and objects from the Ryūkyū Islands (the present day Okinawa Prefecture, and part of Japan). Like all collections from comparable museums, this one too needs to deal with the imperialist politics of its nascence in a critical manner. At the same time, presentations of the objects need to reflect issues from the current discourse that is taking place in the regions of origin. The project "Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa" set out to discover what role artists from the objects' cultures of origin could play in this process of negotiation. How can the Eurocentric museum-like presentation be shaken up? An answer was provided by the Okinawan artist Yuken Teruya, with his installation. On invitation from the Humboldt Lab Dahlem, he presented a subjective selection of objects from the historical collection, supplementing them with the most varied artifacts from every day culture, combined with contemporary artistic positions.

Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa / Project Description

Illuminating Negotiation Processes

by Alexander Hofmann

Like most collections in comparable European and American museums, the Ethnologisches Museum collections and, in part, those from the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, were acquired largely at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Due to the context of Euro-American colonialism and imperialism at that time, collections such as these, and their means of acquisition, are generally viewed with skepticism. "Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa" explores the role that artists from the cultures of origin can play, in an attempt to involve the collections in current discourse and make tangible the negotiation processes of the present between the represented and the representing.

Within the framework of the Humboldt Lab Dahlem, the artist Yuken Teruya, from Okinawa, who now lives and works mainly in New York, was invited to enter into a discourse with the Okinawa collection belonging to



the Ethnologisches Museum together with the curators there and the curators of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. This is one of the worldwide most significant portfolios of material culture from the archipelago that, until 1879, was known as the Ryūkyū Kingdom. The core of the collection consists of 147 artifacts, largely textiles. They are the remainder of originally 469 artifacts, that, on instructions from Berlin, were collected between 1881 and 1884 by representatives of the imperial Japanese government in Okinawa. The Japanese emissaries' task was made a lot easier due to the fact that the Ryūkyū Kingdom had been dissolved by force some years ago and subsumed into the territory of the young Japanese national state in 1879. Although the acquisition by the Berlin museums is legally unimpeachable, having been bought for the princely sum of 5843 Goldmarks, the existence of the objects in Berlin, in the context of the troubled history of Okinawa in the 20th century is, at the very least, not unproblematic. The islands were a major site of war in 1945 in battles between Japanese and US-American troops. After significant human losses, in particular amongst the local population, the traditional textile culture was largely destroyed. The islands were occupied by the US military from 1945 to 1972. To this day there is a massive military presence on the islands, which were, however, returned to Japanese jurisdiction in 1972.

Dealing with Issues of Local Identity

The artist Yuken Teruya was selected for this Humboldt Lab project because he had dealt with questions of local identity in previous work, often in cooperation with local textile craftsmen and women from his place of birth. He also brought with him experience in the dealing with artifacts from historical collection from previous projects. For "On Okinawa" the artist came to Berlin several times over a period of a year: to view the collection, choose a selection of historical objects for the presentation, hold conversations with the curators, and finally for the realization of the exhibition in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst.

The final form of presentation was developed in cooperation with all the participants. The curators had expected the artist to deal with the historical collection, the objects of which had been taken from Okinawa to Berlin, articulating it as a "loss." However, for Teruya, the fact that the objects had been kept in safekeeping and protected from the catastrophes of Okinawa's history in the 20th century by being in Berlin, along with the fact that this history – just like the present situation in the group of islands – was not being talked about in Berlin, held much greater relevance to him.

For the exhibition, Yuken Teruya chose a combination of different strategies. First he chose objects from the historical collection and interposed them with his own critical works dealing with the current situation in Okinawa. Second, he took on the role of "ethnologist" himself, and with the help of a network of friends and acquaintances he gathered a new collection of artifacts from the material culture, which were representative of the history of the islands during the 20th century and the current situation. The artist placed a special emphasis on the protests against the American military presence, the politics of the Japanese government, activities by environmentalists and on the "World War II Reference Center" run by Isamu Kuniyoshi. The collection, which artfully combines historic events like the brutal battles of Okinawa in 1945, as well as contemporary everyday life, like local printed flyers for burial sites, is a welcome new addition to the Ethnologisches Museum.

Thirdly he created a new textile piece of art together with local craftsmen and women, combining motifs from historical collection objects, episodes and figures from the past, present and a utopian future in Okinawa into an artful projection. Fourth, he wrote commentaries about the exhibited objects from a fictional perspective, looking back from the future. Fifth, Teruya filmed a concert in Okinawa, with traditional songs, one of which is the musical score of a poem that is inscribed on a scroll in the original Berlin collection. The poem was also the origin of a traditional dance, which was being regularly performed in the 19th century. Yuken Teruya invited the dancer Erina Nakamine from Okinawa to perform the dance for the opening of the exhibition in Dahlem, wearing cloth designed by him. This performance was also documented on film and later shown as part of the exhibition. And sixth, he talked about his intentions in a video interview.

The history and parameters of the historical collection were documented by the responsible curator in the form of an illustrated information panel. Most of the exhibited objects were hung from the display cabinet ceilings, presented, in part, floating in space, thus emphasizing the constructed character of any object-based narrative of past, present and future.

The dialog of the historical artifacts, contemporary artwork and the "new collection" allows the public, as well as the participants in the project, to take a fresh, complex and reflective look at the historical collection inventory from Okinawa. As far as the museum participants were concerned, they were very grateful for the valuable contacts they had made thanks to the artist. There is an explicit wish to show the presentation to an



audience in Okinawa and to intensify exchange between Berlin and Okinawa.

The final result was a multilayered installation, which integrated the historical artifacts in a current discourse on representation. Questions of local identity, as well as domestic and intercultural power relations were dealt with. As an art installation, naturally the show had no claim to being representative. However, the mechanisms of re-exclusion as a result of the subjective position taken by the artist were received in very different ways. At least one reviewer was irritated by the fact that the issue of representation in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst was handled representatively by an artist, and/or through the medium of art. In this respect, artistic media seem suited only to a point, to fulfill the request for a dissolution of the curatorial monopoly on interpretation through the involvement of those being represented. However, they certainly serve as a welcome contribution to the updating of the historical collection inventory by tying into contemporary issues.

Dr. Alexander Hofmann has been the curator for the arts of Japan at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst since 2004.

Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa / Positions

Past, Present, Imagined Future

by Titus Spree

Okinawa has been shaped by the might of the ocean and various colonizing forces. The exhibition “Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa” succeeds in communicating an experience of the hybrid cultural identity of the archipelago beyond the boundaries of historical categorization.

On first sight the exhibition by Yuken Teruya appears to blend harmoniously with the historical collections in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin-Dahlem, so that you could almost overlook the fact that you are visiting a contemporary art installation. Found objects from modern day Okinawa, and works of art by the artist himself, blend, apparently without a rupture, with the collection of objects from Okinawa; only on closer inspection does the viewer become aware of a second layer of meaning.

Kimonos from the museum collection hang side by side with brightly printed panels of fabric by the artist; in direct proximity to rusty Japanese imperial army helmets from the Second World War, brightly embroidered patches are displayed, along with other mementos from the US soldiers still stationed there, 70 years after the war's end. Each of the objects seems to tell a story of its own. And each of these stories draws you further into the multifaceted culture of Okinawa, which, despite being part of Japan since 1871, unlike any other region in highly centralized Japan, has succeeded in maintaining its own distinct identity.

The vivid variety in the exhibition invites the viewer to embark on a journey of discovery and become immersed in the distinct culture of this East Asian chain of islands, which was once known throughout all of Asia as the Ryūkyū Kingdom. On maps of East Asia the tiny Ryūkyū Islands look like stepping stones that will take you, with a skip and a jump, from southern Japan to Taiwan and southern China. And, as with so many other things, here too, one can draw conclusions about the history of the place: the story of a small group of islands on the geopolitically significant periphery of the two Asian super powers, China and Japan.

While from a Western perspective, Okinawa, being an integral part of Japan, is hardly considered to have had a colonial past, many Okinawans feel they have been colonized more than twice. The first time was at the beginning of the 17th century – in Okinawa the Ryūkyū kings still ruled – when the Satsuma aristocracy from southern Japan invaded the islands. They took over the Ryūkyū Islands as an unofficial colony, which had to be concealed from the Edo shoguns. For almost three hundred years, Ryūkyū provided the Satsuma aristocracy with a small window onto the outside world, in a Japan that was otherwise strictly sealed off by the Tokugawa shoguns. As a cosmopolitan “appendage” it was key in the preparation for the modernization of Japan through the Meiji Revolution.

The second time the islanders felt colonized was when Ryūkyū was officially integrated into Japan as the Okinawa Prefecture in 1879, but with nowhere near the same rights. And then again after the Second World War, when Okinawa became a military colony, annexed by the US after the only land-based battle in the Pacific War on Japanese soil. When Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, the Okinawans had hoped, after



almost 400 years of subjugation, to be finally recognized as equal citizens in a democratic state. However, they soon realized that they were once again the victims of decisions that had been made without their participation. Only in recent years was it revealed that, before returning the islands to the Japanese, the USA had pressured the Japanese government, against the will of the local population, to sign a secret treaty, which permitted the stationing of US military bases on Okinawa for an unlimited time. Thus, the archipelago of Okinawa remains caught in a geopolitical tug of war between two self-interested and powerful protagonists over an East Asia catapulted into the modern world. Light is thrown on this, in the meantime, final chapter in a history of impotence and structural dependency, by many details in the exhibition. For instance, the military themes hidden in the colorful, apparently traditional, textile patterns of Yuken Teruya's work.

When I moved to Okinawa in 2001 to take up a teaching post at the "University of the Ryukyus" I knew very little about the eventful and painful history of this sub-tropical archipelago. Curiously, I had been appointed to the art department in the faculty of education and, as a city-socialized mainlander, I was expected to teach in a program that, loosely translated, was entitled "the pedagogy of island culture."

Even though I had previously dealt in depth with exceptional places and cultures, I needed some time before I understood what the term "island culture" implied as far as Okinawa was concerned. It is the combination of confinement and vastness that defines the island experience: confinement because you are hemmed in by the ocean, and vastness, because you are surrounded by the ocean. You are simultaneously dependent on yourself but also directly connected to the wider world. Over the centuries, Okinawa has developed an entirely distinct way of life that feeds off this polarity while also under the cultural influence of China, South Asia, Japan and North America.

"Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa" manages to communicate an experience of this hybrid cultural identity beyond the boundaries of historical categorization. Avoiding ossified didacticism, a carefully arranged "cabinet of curiosities," from the past, the present and an imagined future of Okinawa, is presented in the two exhibition rooms. In his installation, Yuken Teruya unravels the chronological timeline, which we invariably seek as the basis for our historical perspective, thus frustrating the small archivist in us from meticulously organizing everything in the compartments of our mind. The more you allow yourself to become immersed in the world of the artist, the more the items in the exhibition lose their object-character and are liberated from their temporal and spatial context, to become part of a narrative that can be told only by someone who is free of the shackles of a scientific perspective that strives for objectivity.

The exhibition, which has superficial similarities with an ethnographic presentation of objectified artifacts, is, in reality, a highly subjective interaction with the contemporary reality of Okinawa. Unlike Western museum concepts, the objects don't only represent the culture from which they originate, but also function as artists' tools, wielded in order to promote a dialog – a dialog with the context of their origins, but also with the visitors to the installation. One senses that Yuken Teruya himself has embarked on a voyage of discovery into his own culture, but, unlike the Western explorers, not with the aim of objectifying and dissecting, but in order to synthesize.

Even though much is learnt about the travails of this small island people through the installation, the visitors leave more relieved than when they entered. That is largely thanks to the printed textile scroll, several meters in length, made using the traditional bingata technique, on which a fictional parade for the country's festival of unity is depicted. This exhibition's central work transcends the military and war-scarred history of Okinawa in a joyful procession, in which history is overcome. Within this, something akin to an "Okinawan identity," in its archetypal quality, emerges all the more clearly. It is a colorful design that attempts to give a visionary yet tangible shape to the aspirations of the Okinawans and in so doing it links in to the post-colonial discourse.

Yuken Teruya's Okinawa has liberated itself from the victim role that it was forced to assume over the last two or three hundred years, and is now again in control of its own destiny. The artist has expanded the Okinawa collection by a dimension that breaks the boundaries of the museum as an institution and invites a discourse about the living concept of collecting, research, and archiving.

It is hoped that this kind of subjectively-involved interplay between the collection and an artist, who is at the same time a "concerned party," can be continued. It would be exciting to return the experience that such a contemporary interplay with the collection inventory makes possible, to its place of origin, and in this way take the artifacts out of their cabinets and stockrooms, and return them to a living discourse beyond the boundaries of cultures and institutions.



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The Okinawa Collection in Berlin

by Siegmah Nahser, in collaboration with Linda Havenstein and Alexander Hofmann

Excerpt from the information panel on the documentation of Okinawa's history and the historical collection of the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin. The text was part of the exhibition "Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa."

The first director of the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin (today's Ethnologisches Museum) founded in 1873, Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), had at his disposal a network of contacts that were intensively maintained through numerous travels and correspondences, and he was therefore able to make acquisitions from all continents. 469 objects from Okinawa were ordered and purchased via the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. The Japanese Minister of Trade and Industry, Saigō Tsukumichi (1843-1902), was given a wish list with 14 subject groups via the German Embassy. It mainly contained testimonies of everyday culture along with requests for exact information on origin and usage. The letter with the wish list reproduced here[LINK] is fully in line with the notions of ethnological collecting at the time, as it was repeatedly conducted by Adolf Bastian. As a result of the negotiations, the Japanese government on January 24, 1884, presented a list with prices[LINK], and for a payment of 5,400 marks, the collection was brought to Berlin.

The notification of dispatch of the German Embassy to the director general of the Königl. Museen zu Berlin, Herrn Schöne, dated October 25, 1884 states in regard to the acquisition:

"Your Highness will already have been informed by the Foreign Office that the collection of ethnologically interesting objects from the Liukiu Islands, whose acquisition was the reason that Your Highness made use of the mediation of the Imperial Embassy at the time, arrived several weeks ago in Tokyo and was put at my disposal.

After the collection consisting of 469 numbers was packed into 20 boxes, the consignment was sent on the 14th of the month by Messrs. Simon, Evers & Co in Yokohama with the Hamburger ship "Atlanta" to the Directorate-General of the Königl. Museen.

The costs for the forwarder, freight and insurance are charged to Your Highness directly on delivery by the mentioned company.

I have requested the mediation of the Foreign Office to reimburse the local government for the costs arising from the acquisition and the Imperial Embassy for the expenses for packaging and so forth. The former amounts to 1490 yen 27sen 5rin, the latter to 152 yen 25sen, i.e., at the current exchange rate approx. 5843 M. (five thousand eight hundred and forty three marks). I have the honor of enclosing a comprehensive catalog of the collection and a list in the Japanese original and the German translation.

The Imperial Ambassador: signed Graf Dönhoff"

Shortly after arriving in Berlin in 1885, the artifacts were inventoried as is customary in museums and recorded, in part bilingually, on index cards with short descriptions. A part of this collection was exhibited for the first time in Berlin in 1892, as shown by a brief text in the tour guide of the Museum für Völkerkunde. Due to the Second World War, only around 30 percent of the objects, exactly 147, are in Berlin today. The majority of the objects were presumably confiscated by the Russian occupying forces. According to eyewitness accounts, several others are located in special depots of the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.

Since 1991/92, publications with objects of the Berlin collections, including subsequent acquisitions, have been issued. In 2000, there was a special exhibition with 50 works in the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin-Dahlem. In 2013, after extensive preparatory work, Shukumine Kyōko, professor at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts in Naha, was able to publish the entire Berlin stock of 70 fabrics of this provenance in a two-volume catalog.

The Okinawa collection for Berlin was built up along ethnological and cultural-historical lines, as it has been intended since Adolf Bastian. Further acquisitions, albeit to a lesser extent, were made from 1895 to the present, and the collection now comprises a total of 197 objects: 70 valuable fabrics, as mentioned, and 127 objects of everyday culture.

Dr. Siegmah Nahser has been custodian of the Korean and Japanese collection of the East and North Asia department of the Ethnologisches Museum since 1997 and has been responsible for the entire department as curator since 2006. Linda Havenstein lives and works as a media artist in Berlin. Dr. Alexander Hofmann has been the curator for Japanese art at



the Museum für Asiatische Kunst since 2004.

The Artist Yuken Teruya on his Work on a New Okinawa Collection for Berlin

As a response to the historical objects from the Okinawa collection of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, I proposed to enhance the collection into the present, by gathering and adding objects and textiles beginning from the time the first collection stopped. Remnants from WWII and recent objects from Okinawa are displayed amongst visual ideas of the future.

During the research process for this new collection, I considered the time following the development of the historical collection (after 1846). I asked myself questions as a starting point. What were the crucial aspects in choosing objects? What should be considered, specifically for an ethnological collection? What would I like to see preserved for hundreds of years?

Instead of trying to determine objects that would hold the highest monetary value in the future, I started looking for items that reflect the current Okinawa people's movement. The items represent local cultural activities including peace movements and activities to protect nature. I continued to ask questions throughout my research. What is the root that inspires all these movements?

Another aspect of the collection is that the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation preserved the culture of the Kingdom of Ryūkyū. The kingdom was about to vanish into Japanese culture in the 19th century, when Okinawa became part of Japan. Already having these works that address the past, my ambition developed into considering how to capture a visualization of Okinawa in the future.

Contributions by Mr. Kuniyoshi

With Mr. Kuniyoshi's generous contributions, I was able to bring 43 objects in total from his collection to Berlin. 13 of these are on view in the show.

For more than 50 years, Mr. Kuniyoshi has been collecting objects from World War II battle sites and natural caves, which were used as shelters and military hospitals for casualties. He unearths objects from these locations and carefully cleans the items, removing rust. He documents all the objects, recording the date the item was excavated and where it was found. All the objects are then displayed in his viewing room. Hand grenades, helmets, water tanks and broken eyeglasses: all these remnants seemed to have gotten lost in time. They do not appear to be 70 years old at all. When the objects form a collective unit, they seem to refuse to become part of the present.

[Link Mr. Kuniyoshi's contributions to "On Okinawa: Collections from the Past and the Future."]

Mr. Kuniyoshi still visits the caves. Most of the caves are at the southern end of Okinawa Island, the area with the highest reported death toll. Here, many people were forced to commit group suicide in the shelters or people jumped off the edge of the cliff into the ocean.

Mr. Kuniyoshi has many visitors to his viewing room. As a peace education process, he offers visitors the experience of joining his research. He lets participants collect human remains from the soil. While joining in this process, it was a shocking experience not only to face the death and wartime, but to realize that the deceased have been waiting for this moment for almost 70 years without being uncovered. The bodies are being discovered at a time when populations are beginning to forget the brutal mistakes and large-scale loss during the war.

While I joined Mr. Kuniyoshi, he found a bullet deep in the soil inside the cave and quickly parted it in two. Crisp, shiny gunpowder poured out. He said it was a live American bullet, which he identified by the shape of the particle gunpowder. He set it on fire with his lighter, and immediately a fresh, yellow/orange, bright flare popped up against the blue dark cave.

This was my first sensational experience connecting to the past war. 70 years ago, suddenly becoming present in color, and then returning to darkness in front of my eyes.

These objects of war appear to be floating in the display as if intended to be released from their historical



context, in a reexamination of the meaning. The floating horizontal display also continues into the other forms throughout the exhibition, connecting past, present, and future with a new narrative.

Katsuyuki Taira: Yanbaru Forest Dwellers

Mr. Taira has been photographing wildlife in the Yanbaru Forest for decades. In his images, forest residents stare at the viewer. Mr. Taira approaches animals from a worm's-eye view. When he crawls on the ground and adjusts to the perspective of the snake (or another animal), Mr. Taira captures the relationship between humans and animals through their eyes.

The grouping of animal photographs is like a family gathering, mirroring the collection of family photos found on the shelves of homes worldwide.

Mr. Taira is a member of Yanbaru Dongurries, an environmental protection group seeking to preserve the forest of Yanbaru. The name derives from an oak tree within the forest that has the largest Donguri (acorns) in Japan. Concerned lawyers and citizens established the group in April 2012, with the representatives Attorney Jinen Kita and Attorney Asako Akamine. The purchase of these photos for the exhibition helped in funding the work of Yanbaru Dongurries, which includes research and a lawsuit against the destruction of the forest.

[Link Contributions from Katsuyuki Taira and Yumi Nakamura]

Yumi Nakamura: Dragon

Above the animal photos by Mr. Taira is an image of the night sky.

Yumi, my close friend in Okinawa, went outside during a bright full moon one summer night to take this photograph. When she captured the sky with her iPhone, she realized a dragon showed up in her picture frame. This subject repeats throughout her iPhone pictures. She frequently shares these casually taken pictures with me. Ms. Nakamura claims to see and communicate with dragons. She explains the images as portraying a force of nature, appearing to her as a dragon.

I had a hard time accepting these images as portraits of dragons. As I view this image over and over, however, I have found that her explanation of the images as a force of nature becomes clearer. A dragon is a rich aspect of her worship of nature. In the same way, she interprets a passing breeze as a greeting from nature. To me, both these instances serve as evidence of surviving animism in contemporary life. Her image is open to be accepted as either a dragon, a picture of clouds in the light of the full moon or as something else entirely.

[Link Yumi Nakamura, "Image of a Dragon" 2014]

Yanbaru Forest Dwellers and Dragon Display

In the combined display, I find pleasure in the fusion between life on land and life within the sky. The sky's realm joins the family of nature in Okinawa.

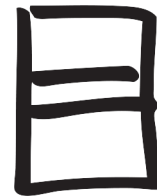
"Parade From Far Far Away"

Throughout this exhibition, my aim is to visualize what the future might look like in Okinawa. My ideas are based on analyzing what people are currently discussing in Okinawa, and they are inspired by the over 150 works in the Dahlem Ethnological Museum/Asian Art Museum historical collection from Okinawa.

My initial introduction to this historical Okinawa collection was an emotional and moving experience. It was as though I was just getting to know formerly unknown family members. This collection would have been purchased from Japan in 1884/85, 120 years ago. It survived WWII in Germany. This discovery from years ago led me to investigate what Okinawa might look like in the next 120 years.

Creating the future: The parade in "Parade From Far Far Away" occurs in the future. It is a representation of the future I want to see.

I believe that envisioning the future relates to an understanding of the past. This scroll "Parade From Far Far Away" is a regeneration of the historical Okinawa collection of the Ethnological Museum. The "Court dress"



Bingata kimono (Pre-1879, cotton, bingata dye, Shuri, Okinawa) on display from the historical collection influenced the main pattern of zigzags on the scroll, which are reminiscent of lightning bolts. The lightning pattern traditionally symbolizes wishes of health for growing children.

The kimonos from the Okinawa collection of the Ethnological Museum also inspired the people's clothing in the parade. The referenced kimonos are displayed in the same room as the scroll. When I visualized the future in terms of the clothing, I imagined a mix of past and contemporary style. Most of the kimonos in the Dahlem Ethnological collection from the 18th century are made of dyed Basho fabric (banana leaves). In response to this, I prepared Basho fabric from Okinawa especially for this work.

More than 110 participants were dyed within the parade. Most of the figures are based on actual people from the past and the present. There are Okinawan politicians, writers, artists, dancers, musicians and activists, with some people represented from different countries. Specific portraits include Tetsuo Kinjō (writer of Ultraman), Yoko Gushiken (boxer), Mao Ishikawa (photographer), Cocco (singer), Pussy Riot (artist group), Kamejiro Senaga (politician), Iha Fuyū (writer), Douglas Lummis (writer), and Susumu Inamine (current mayor of Nago City). Some of my close friends and family members appear as well. I believe that the influence of these past and present figures will contribute to the future.

In the parade, people walk in a demonstration style. It is conceived as a scene in the future, occurring at a conceptualized land unification festival, held annually to celebrate the demilitarized island of Okinawa. The event praises civilians who overcame military base issues and who preserved nature, while remaining steadfast to cultural identities and reuniting with neighboring countries.

The parade expresses the path of history, to insure that struggles are not forgotten. The present demonstrations are thus transformed into a future memorial festival.

[Link "Parade From Far Far Away," View from "On Okinawa: Collections from the Past and the Future."]

Born in Okinawa, Japan in 1973, Yuken Teruya received his BFA from Tama Art University in Tokyo, and his MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. He lives and works in Okinawa and New York.

Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa / Credits

A project of the Probebühne 4, September 23, 2014 through February 8, 2015

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New Collection: Katsuyuki Taira, Isamu Kuniyoshi, Tsukazan Public Hall, Akie Yamauchi, Yanbaru Dongurries, No Helipad Takae Residents Society, Yumi Nakamura

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Exhibition view "Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa," photo: Jens Ziehe



Exhibition view “Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa,” photo: Jens Ziehe



Yuken Teruya, “Parade From Far Far Away,” 2014, photo: Jens Ziehe



Yuken Teruya, "Parade From Far Far Away," (detail), 2014, photo: Jens Ziehe



Yuken Teruya, "Riot Over the Ocean," 2014, photo: Jens Ziehe



“Yuken Teruya: On Okinawa,” objects from the “New Collection,” photo: Jens Ziehe



Dance performance by Erina Nakamine at the opening, photo: Sebastian Bolesch



Visitors at the opening, photo: Sebastian Bolesch