

London Unit

Term

April—October 2019

Project Supervision

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Global Art Practice, Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts and Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London
Global Art Joint Project 2019

London Unit

Project theme

To Bring Nothing to the Table

The concept of “nothing” poses big questions: what does one discover, and what does one do when presented with nothing? Students begin by setting objectives, gradually and naturally developing appropriate approaches in response to the widening scope of their activities, and question their identities. Although students were given a significant degree of freedom, this was a very difficult theme demanding the ability to identify problems as well as requiring responsibility and strong judgment. As the course progressed, tutors took efforts to support students through the research process, but tried to avoid deliberately guiding the directions taken by students. The project took place in four locations: London, Suffolk, Tokyo, and Toride.



Timeline

Pre-session (Tokyo,Toride) || April 8— June 26



Joint Course: 1st session (London, Suffolk) || July 9— July 27



Joint Course: 2nd session (Tokyo,Toride) || September 3— September 19



Project report

The Global Art Joint Project—a collaboration between Tokyo University of the Arts (TUA) and Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London (CSM)—is an international project in which students of many nationalities and ethnicities, residing in Japan and the United Kingdom travel between these two countries. This year, faculty and students shared the theme ‘To bring nothing to the table,’ which forms the basis on which to layer multifaceted dialogue and collaborative work. Through these processes, students learned about the potential of various platforms for multicultural collaboration as they experienced the similarities and differences in each other’s cultures, discovered their own identities, and developed mutual understanding through the conflicts that occur between individuals.

The London Session held at the CSM campus (9–27 July) consisted of workshops and lectures led by Professor Alison Green and guest artist Pio Abad. The session opened with a camp held in Suffolk (United Kingdom), aiming to deepen exchange among participants from different cultural backgrounds. Thereafter, participants returned to London and discussed how to proceed towards ‘Exchange’ and ‘Occasion,’ two events prepared as ‘tables with nothing on them.’ What they would do was not planned out in advance, and depended entirely on conversations they had throughout the session. The interaction and relationships of trust built at the Suffolk camp led to meaningful discussion and collaboration in London; students researched and progressed towards their final work in a cooperative fashion, allowing significant activity to develop.

For the Tokyo Session (3–19 September), a program was organized to take up the strategy of the London Session in a different way. London was replaced for Tokyo and here a joint effort program was put in place to participate in the TUA Festival (Geisai). Collective production and discussions also took place in Toride, instead of Suffolk County, focusing on individual production in the studio. The complex mutual understanding that emerged as a result of students’ empathy, and continual criticism as they shared each other’s cultural backgrounds, was clearly visible in their participation at Geisai and at the ‘Occasion’ event held in Toride where their final work was presented.

The program this year was unlike the previous years, taking shape on the basis of discussion between TUA and CSM students who independently formulated and decided their objectives.

