

# SUPERPOSITION: Equilibrium & Engagement

## Noguchi Rika

Photographs from the *Small Miracles*, 2014 and *Untitled (Oujima)*, 2014 series; *Cucumber 21 August*, 2017; and *Cucumber 22 August*, 2017 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

21st Biennale

of Sydney



*Small Miracles #1*, 2014

pigment print  
140 x 100 cm

Courtesy the artist; Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo; and Gallery Loock, Berlin

Noguchi Rika produces images of the world which are often described as painterly and poetic, inspired by different photographic processes, or sometimes just by a word or a title. Her work interprets the photographic moment and references the processes of analogue photography, challenging the 'perfection' and autocorrection of digital and especially camera-phone technology. The work often appears like old photographs, in that their visual language incorporates the colour and exposure of film and chemically produced images. By working across analogue and digital forms, the work talks about the history of the medium itself.

At the same time, Noguchi draws our attention to everyday details we may overlook. Small gestures and moments, ordinary places and interactions, views from unusual perspectives. This subject matter is elusive and quiet, requiring contemplation on our part. Returning to Japan after many years in Berlin, the artist has developed new work in response to her relocation to Okinawa.



## Questions for Discussion

1. How do you recognise the visual language of different forms of photography?
2. How do you decide what to photograph?
3. Do you always hold your camera at eye level? Do you take selfies looking up or looking down? What do you like to photograph with your phone?

## Reference Points

If we understand Noguchi's work as informed by both histories of photographic and fine art practice then we can interpret her work through ideas of pop, quotation and the everyday. By focusing on that which we overlook, the details of life, and the building blocks of visual language, especially colour and light, her work is a quiet and subtle reflection on subjectivity and society, and creative practice itself.

This locates her work in a field of work by such artists as (listed alongside the years of their Biennale of Sydney inclusion): Bernd and Hilla Becher (1979), Shirley Clarke (1982), Daniel Crooks (2010), Rosemary Laing (2008), Man Ray (1990, 2008), Daido Moriyama (2006), Richard Prince (1986), Beat Streuli (1998), Hiroshi Sugimoto (1996, 2010) and John Stezaker (2014).

## Practices and Processes

One of the things Noguchi's practice shows us is that small details and framing are key to creating images and directing the viewer to look at things we may not usually notice. To make a body of work in response to her ideas, we can use the camera as a framing device and explore colour and light, and subject matter at the same time.

### Photography

If you have access to a dark room, make a pinhole camera: you can use any kind of box but it must be light-proof. Load with photographic paper and set your camera up so it faces a view with an unusual horizon line, for example from low down and looking up at your subject matter. Your subject might be a still life or a plant viewed from the ground. Creating one image at a time, experiment with views and exposures to create unique prints. If you don't have access to a darkroom you could do something similar with a disposable film camera.

You could also use pre-prepared cyanotype paper and develop images by exposing the paper when covered in small everyday objects. For example, leaves, flowers, glasses or paper clips arranged on the paper and left in the sun for a short period of time will all generate interesting imagery.

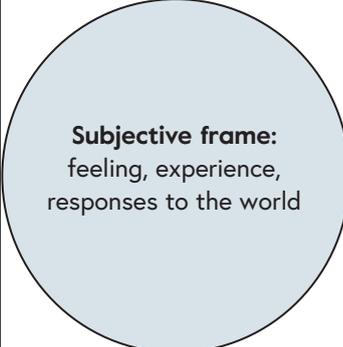
Take some photographs of similar subjects using a camera phone or digital camera; compare the two sets of images and reflect on the differences.

### Photoshop

Scan your handmade images, and/or download your digital images. Select an image from each set that look similar in composition. Combine the images in Photoshop using layers, scaling, cropping and transparency to ghost one image with the other. Create several composites of digital and analogue photographs. (If you don't have access to a darkroom, work with multiple digital images.) Display the work as a set.

### Photography

Think about your local area: What landmarks are distinct? Where do you walk each day? What are your favourite places? Create a photo series that communicates your feelings about a selection of these places; use framing to show these places from a different point of view. Present them as a sequence.



**Subjective frame:**  
feeling, experience,  
responses to the world