

Charlotte-Susabi

A review by Takashi Kikui

Masaki Iwana, the director of this film and a renowned Butoh artist once wrote “It is difficult to define Butoh, because ‘the real’ exists only in the unfolding of ‘the act’”.

For Masaki Iwana, who declared “I started creating solo dance performances outside of the Butoh lineage” at the beginning of his own Butoh activity - procedures became necessary, essential - during his practice to define “What is Butoh?”

This process of updating the Butoh to be searched, cutting its provisional definition and updating the Butoh experience can be confirmed through many of his texts, and this work which has become his fourth movie, is also refusing to be involved in the genealogy of the existing movies, earnestly exposing questions and responses to “What is a movie?”

Kamimura, a performer who lives in Paris, meets Asako who runs a glass shop in Paris and they become attracted to each other. The glass plate Kamimura uses for his performance is used in Iwana's own Butoh solo *Susabi* in 1989, and the video of that time - with 6mm thick glass sheet put on top of five cups filled with water - has been inserted in this film as well. Glass gives the noise of squeaking.

At the same time, Iwana uses the title “Susabi” as a way of dealing with the soul of the dead, moreover through it he implies “Roughness” and “Frightening”. This film, attached to the title with this name inherits his intention clearly.

For Asako and Kamimura, the existence of his ex-wife Suiko who passed away, give them breath, and now, following the traces of her dis-communication by death spurs on the journey of the two. On Michiyuki's travels, companions who will lead a part of their journey appear. One is Charlotte who spoke to Kamimura saying “Let's meet in a dream” at a dimly lit metro.

Others are mini-market owner Yoruzuya, an old man and his grand-daughter Masako who live in an abandoned village - the only two who are left behind by the country, the village, and the family.

Aiming “anywhere not there” - they are going back and forth instantaneously between France and Japan - time tripping between the past and the present. Kamimura tells us how the journey to break through reality is possible, saying “it’s a privilege only for those who have despaired in the world and yet try to live on”. However, this work should not be regarded as a trans boundary story. It is because it cannot be treated with this viewpoint that it crosses the boundary of the prescribed space-time.

Through accepting from the beginning the swirling grief and despair of life and death in this reality, the film pushes the extent of life’s tension to the limit, and cuts off attribution, regulation and its borders for each individual. It is not trans boundary but a kind of revolution. It is related to the practice by Iwana named “Susabi/S’amusé” in his 1989 Butoh performance that “pursues glass cracks inside the body”. “Flesh/Body” is there.

Charlotte-Susabi, a chimera's cinema which has settled neither in Butoh nor film as a framework, is a process to “advance an experience”, and which gives birth to a previously unexplored scramble of Butoh and cinema, echoing the desire for a kind of revolution from far away.

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