



Yudai Kamisato / Okazaki Art Theatre, *The Story of Descending the Long Slopes of Valparaíso*, 2017, Kyoto Art Center. Photo by Yoshikazu Inoue, courtesy of Kyoto Experiment

## Synopsys

A man and woman are in front of a car. They have come here to scatter the ashes of the man's father and the woman's husband, in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. Exasperated by the woman, who will not move away from the car, the man tells her a story he heard from a Japanese emigrant who settled in Paraguay. Two men appear. One of them treats the other almost like a slave and, rather than offering his condolences to the man and woman who have come here to scatter the ashes of the man who was, respectively, their father and husband, he starts to tell them a story about Okinawa that he heard from a friend. When he finishes the story, the two men depart, leaving the mother and son alone again. The son talks about the times he visited the remote island of Ogasawara and Valparaíso in Chile. He relates a story about paradise, told to him by a Peruvian man on a long-distance bus traveling to Chile. The son talks to his mother.

## "The Story of Descending the Long Slopes of Valparaíso"

Yudai Kamisato

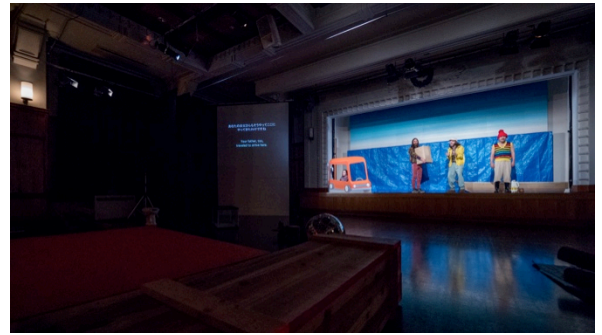
\* Messaging, messenger/what I wrote in this work

I think the most important function of theater is "messaging." In short, someone relays someone else's words or a happening = a message to someone else. Theater has always shown us how the person receiving this message reacts. The person receiving and reacting to the message is the so-called protagonist.

The characters appearing in the scripts of my works in recent years have all been messengers delivering messages. The audience is presumed to be the party receiving these messages. In other words, I have regarded the audience as being the principal and at the focus of the work. For "The Story of Descending the Long Slopes of Valparaíso," I have adopted a dialogue format; the characters give messages to each other. It is my intention to have these messages build on each other until the entire work becomes a single message = messenger, in that it delivers this message to the audience.

This work was written on the basis of things I heard from others somewhere. As the writer, I myself am therefore a messenger. To my thinking, it is precisely the action and behavior of the receiver, meaning audience members that hear the words of another, picture the other's circumstances, and are influenced in their behavior as a result, that are at the foundation of theater. Thanks to advances in communications technology, anyone can show and tell others about his or her experiences and perspectives these days. But for this very reason, I suspect that we may be neglecting the practice of listening to someone's words and picturing things in response. This is what I am apprehensive about, and I believe it is also a requirement for theater to function.

What I wrote in this work are all sorts of stories: stories of people after scattering the ashes of a husband or father at sea, of people who emigrated to South America from Japan, of people born on a certain island when it was under US administration, of human beings scattered around the globe, and of people who continue to dig up the bones of others who died in the war. They are stories of movement. This "movement" refers not only to physical relocation but also movement from life to death, and from death to life. The steady buildup and inheritance of this movement is what makes history. This is all part of the work's message.



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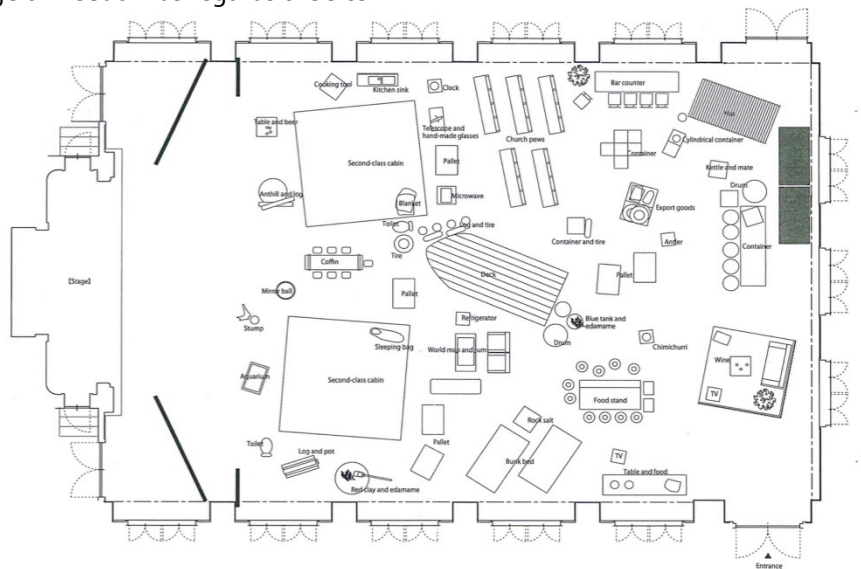
## \* About the spatial presentation

Over the last few years, I have travelled to various countries and regions around the world and seen theatrical and other performances in them. It has prompted me to think about the key role of the theater (i.e., playhouse) as a place where diverse people gather.

The Western-style theater where contemporary theater has nearly always been staged in Japan is merely one model of such a gathering site. I am not rejecting the European-derived theater of this country, which has a history of over 100 years, but I have come to think that there should be a wider range of freedom as regards the site.

In the audience space for this work, I placed objects and other items that have something to do with the stories in the play and places mentioned in them. They are a jumbled mixture of things such as a church pew, bunk bed, coffin, ship deck, and patch of red clay. By laying all sorts of objects with a miscellaneous cultural background in the seating area, I am attempting to heighten the degree of freedom for members of the audience.

For the acting area, I decided to apply traditional show and billboard know-how, and to make extensive use of backdrops, stage curtains, and spotlights. My purpose in so doing is to emphasize that the play performed there is a "show" for the audience, and that the seating area is at the focus.



KYOTO EXPERIMENT 2017 Kyoto International Performing Arts Festival Yudai Kamisato / Okazaki Art Theatre *The Story of Descending the Long Slopes of Valparaíso* Venue Map

**Text and direction:** Yudai Kamisato

**Dramaturge:** Masashi Nomura **Translation:** Gonzalo Robledo **Set design:** dot architects

**Casts:** 4 (M:3, F:1)

**Staff:** 5 (Stage Manager 1 / Sound 1 / Lighting 1 / Manager 1 / Producer 1)

**Produced by** Kyoto Experiment

Duration: 85 min.

Language: Spanish with Japanese and English subtitles

Minimum necessary dimensions of the stage area: Width: 5.4m, Height to hanging positions: 3.1m, Depth: 5.6m

**Premiere:** 2017 KYOTO EXPERIMENTS 2017 Auditorium, Kyoto Art Center