

After 13 years of engagement the Breaker Project is now primarily concerned with establishing of permanent locations for its activities. Since the beginning the Breaker Project has been out in the city together with artists to provide platforms for creation in daily settings, which we pitched to be meaningful for both artists and audience. What I mean by setting up bases is to turn the temporary sites that emerge for each project into permanent places, beyond the event. This is an attempt to establish a place for creative activity in every elementary school district (or junior high school district), utilizing vacant buildings to become public facilities just like libraries and community centres. This is our new outlook which is at the same time a challenge for us.

First of all, I would like to look back to our history to establish why we make the transition from temporary sites to permanent ones. Since our first project in 2003, we anticipated the effects of gentrification on the local communities in which so many exciting old buildings that we cared for in our area were demolished. In 2007 we had to leave the Festival Gate, where we had a room for our office and our activities. We continued our projects while we moved from one vacant store location to another in the Shinsekai shopping arcade. Just when we started to feel the need to change this insecure situation, we were given the opportunity by the owner of the Fukujuso (current Shin-Fukujuso) to think about how to repurpose the building. Further more, the criteria of the public subsidy was changed to suit three (or two)-year projects instead of just one. Such changes of circumstances led us towards establishing permanent bases. Although it seems the result of coincidence, I feel now that this was a necessary and seminal step for continuing our projects after more than a decade of the Breaker Project activities.

As introduced in this document book, currently there are three different 'experiments' happening in three locations; a former apartment building Shin-Fukujuso with office and artists' ateliers, where we work rather inwardly; a former close shop "Kioku Shugei-kan 'Tansu'" is a place with an open format where anybody can drop in; former Imamiya Elementary School is a platform for community based creation "Creating A New Workplace". Also "Nishinari Children's Orchestra" is an ongoing project, for which we would like to create a permanent base in the near future. Although we call them all 'bases for creative activities', according to the background of each project and the architectural characteristics, how we manage places and the content of the projects vary. Moreover when a project requires a specific location and space, we begin by looking for a new place.

Among these places, "Tansu", which was born from the artist's working process, reaches it's milestone after more than three years since opening. Not only has the place been integrated in the local community and become indispensable, but also the women in the area who have been participating in the workshop over the years have become core members who now partly manage the place. Therefore, as a next step, we are considering to search for a new way and a structure to manage it in cooperation with other local activities and social welfare facilities, with the aim of making it more independent in the coming years.

Originally the Breaker Project stemmed from my critical view on contemporary art and creation, which in my view had deviated from its connection to daily life. It is problematic that a social culture in which economic efficiency is prioritized has resulted in a uniform cultural value system with little diversity. I believe by connecting experimental artists,

whose activities run counter to the current climate of pursuing efficiency and productivity, with local society, we can each be reunited with a lost ability to imagine and create, which in turn keeps an open future. In order to achieve that, I wanted to make a platform for creation in daily life, which held projects that blur the established boundaries between art and society, and for this reconnection to be a basis for a better future.

However I would like to point out that artists do not go into the local community in order to solve its issues. What we value in artists is their ability to perceive the truth beyond the surface and their critical point of view to doubt pre-conceived ideas. Or an eye for overlooked existence and unspoken memories, and a keen observation on the implicit social pressure. Those with the artistic ability to detect and tap into underlying, as yet unacknowledged social issues can awaken the potential power of places and their people. It is also true that when artists encounter various lives in town and learn from their wisdom and knowledge, they are inspired and changed. Their sincere attitude coming from their interest and respect for all they meet in town; people, places, things and situations, could possibly close the gap between art and society, and contribute to help regaining confidence and pride for all the parties involved.

As I am editing this document book, an earthquake happened in Kumamoto, and I was stunned to see the media coverage dealing with the evacuees. They had to spend a night outdoors since the designated shelters were considered dangerous. What would have happened if it were winter? Then I thought about Imamiya Elementary School, which could become a shelter if such a disaster were to happen now in Osaka. The playground is sometimes used for the Breaker Project's "Creating A New Workplace" projects and other local activities, but the school building on the other side of the street has been kept closed for a year already with no entry allowed. If something happens, do people have to spend a night on the playground? If they reserve the school as a shelter, the building should be used regularly. The unexpected can always happen.

"Creating A New Workplace" that started in the former school site is of course not a project to reserve it as a shelter. But when you keep the place open for the locals on a regular basis, the result can mean an extra site of refuge available in the case of emergencies. By working with people who have different purposes with respect, multiple benefit could be achieved.

Although a year has passed since the experiments at 'the workplace' started, there is still a long way to go. The Breaker Project and the artists involved are still finding their way in unknown territory to seek permission to create a place that will last. Owing to the fact that the former school building is public, we must re-negotiate a future cooperation with the local government, who decides its use, a degree of undertaking that is no doubt substantial and difficult to navigate.

In the meantime new motivations are arising such as wanting to dig a well here. This idea alone motivates me to continue our project. The big question on our list is: how to manage creating a permanent place that provides a stable structure that at the same time keeps our activities free and fluid.