

Disenchanted the Image in Order to Sit down and Look

As a Japanese person born in the 1980s, it would not be an overstatement for me to state that the world is shrouded in illusion. Or is that going too far? Since statistics took on the role of describing reality, photography has reinforced its strategic aspect as an image. This was particularly evident in the Gulf War, which became manifest as a “TV war”, with the reality of the war being broadcasted to the entire world and confined to the TV monitor. In our present day, it is not just governments but also terrorists who use the media to fight their battles. The feeling that news media are subject to this kind of manipulation. Even before terms like “fake news” or “post truth” were coined, we must have had a premonition. It appears that we are no longer able to point to any reality. We even doubt whether chairs are safe enough to sit in.

This does not mean that we are cut off from all possible ways to formulate the world by ourselves. It is still possible to augment the world based on the belief that only the reality that can be seen with our own eyes, or be touched with our own hands may be accepted. We should acquire the physician’s and warrior’s attitude of being present at the very site of life, and the journalist’s stance of attempting a heuristic understanding of the world. As an artist, I would like to deal critically with media manipulation. This is the terrain in which this exhibition dwells, and the statement it aims to deliver.

The kusokora explored in this exhibition is a highly sophisticated form of criticism of images. Literally translatable as “crappy collages”, they are the Japanese equivalent of collage memes, and were developed by internet users as the act of parodying the situation surrounding media from a meta-level. I believe that introducing a critical viewpoint into the current media landscape is the most politicised practice for an artist. It is about reformulating the world by continually reshaping the gaps between media to open up new avenues.

The subject I deal with here is the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Karlov. He was shot from behind while delivering a speech at the gallery where a photographic exhibition was being held. I cannot overlook the fact that this affair took place in an art gallery. By staging this exhibition, I aim to resist the violence of abusing the media to make a political statement by standing on the same media landscape.