

THE BAKERY

MEIRO KOIZUMI
RITE FOR A DREAM II

24 June – 7 July 2017

In the Bakery, we are delighted to present *Rite for a Dream II*, a brand new video by Meiro Koizumi (1976, Gunma, JP). Koizumi often investigates his own surroundings: Japan's ritualistic culture and past events. In his recent work he broadened the spectrum of his investigation by reflecting on particular events in a way that they can be applied and understood on a global scale.



Meiro Koizumi, *Rite for a Dream II*, 2017, video

In the video *Rite for a Dream II*, the artist has re-edited footage from the famous Japanese TV series *Kamen Rider* from the 1970s. All the images of monsters and super heroes have been erased by the artist, as well as spoken words. What is left are meaningless gestures by the characters, which are completely detached from their original context. In *Rite for a Dream II* these gestures transform into abstract images of what seem to be supernatural rituals.

The work relates to Koizumi's previous video *Rite for a Dream (Today my Empire Sings)* (2016), which is inspired by a strange dream he had when he was a child. In this dream, Koizumi's father was taken away by the police to be fed to the chicken. Many years later, the artist wondered what made a little child have such a nightmare, but he realized it wasn't such a strange dream after all. His nightmare was clearly influenced by *Kamen Rider*, in which parents were often kidnapped by evil monsters.

Koizumi's new film is not only about the nightmares caused by the TV show, but also a feeling of anxiety towards totalitarianism. This anxiety can be seen as a collective unconsciousness of Japanese society, caused by the trauma of Imperialism and World War II. In *Kamen Rider*, references are made towards totalitarianism, with the Imperial Japanese regime replaced by monster characters that bear strong resemblance with the German nazi's.

Just as the image of Japanese totalitarianism is repressed in the TV series, the image of the Emperor as a god is repressed in Japanese society nowadays. Since 1945, the new constitution states that the Emperor has to be depicted as a human being, not as a god. The emperor has therefore been separated from any religious practice. But the imperial family is still practicing the traditional rituals privately inside the Imperial Palace, safely hidden from the public eye, because it is exactly this religion that justifies their reign. Koizumi has added texts to the video, describing these private practices. The different layers of dreams and reality in this *Rite for a Dream II* create a new perspective, opening up a new truth and possibilities for ways of dealing with the past.

Meiro Koizumi (Gunma, Japan, 1976) lives and works in Yokohama. He studied at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (1999-2002), and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (2005-2006). Koizumi held other major solo exhibitions amongst others at Arts Maebashi (2015), Kadist Art Foundation (2014) and at the MoMA (2013).