

Curatorial Message

On the theme *New Menagerie**

The Koganecho Area Management Center (KAMC) has been running AIR programmes since the success of the first Koganecho Bazaar art festival in 2008, and organised over 500 international artist exchanges, developing connections mainly in East and Southeast Asia. What sets this organisation apart from other artist residencies is that it has a clear long term objective and supports a number of long-term artists as part of its "urban development through art" project, which aims to reinvigorate the neighbourhood (which was deserted after police raids in 2005 cleared out the local red light district) using art. As such, it does not have any obligation to exhibit multiple international artists in order to show something "exotic" or "unique", as some AIR programmes can be prone to do. Rather the aim of the programme is to develop long term collaborations, and to create a place where artists with different perspectives can come together to try out new ideas and contribute to the local community.

For the **Koganecho Bazaar 2019: *New Menagerie***, KAMC hopes to explore a new relationship between art, artists, visitors and management. While keeping an awareness of how the history of art presentation is rooted in appropriation and exoticism, how can AIR programmes promote self-reflection and be a place of genuine cultural exchange? Is it possible to create a "New Menagerie", a new way to manage and create works that involve more collaboration than spectacle? Is there a way to challenge the system, and find new ways of presenting that gives artists, visitors, local residents and management equal say in how this arts festival is run?

We hope artists who join us for the New Menagerie will create work that will challenge binaries of the viewer/the viewed, the self/the other, the dominating/the dominated, and to consider how we can change our ideas of what an "artwork" is, using the town as a stage. In addition, we would like artists to examine the relationships between artist and management, residents and visitors, audience and exhibits, and think about how we can evolve the system to work more collaboratively in the future. In doing so we would like to create a "New Menagerie", a new ecology of people connected through art.

* A "menagerie" is a "collection of wild animals kept in captivity", and comes from the French word "menage", meaning the management of a household. They were most prominent in the 16th-18th centuries, as places for European royals to show off their wealth and power by presenting never-before-seen plants and animals collected from the newly "discovered" North America and the Indian Ocean trade route.

Koganecho Bazaar 2019
Curatorial Team