



Dear all at Arts Maebashi!

We are writing to you from Germany's capital, where we personally feel we are so far blessed with a mild impact of Covid-19.



„Habitat“, gaehtgens.hirsch, 2020

Just as spring was turning Berlin green, the news of Corona turned into real life events for us. So while nature was calling into the outdoors, the official guidelines tried to slow down our contact with the virus and made us live indoors. Of course this made shopping more emotional - what do I need? What could be ahead? Why is everyone - including us - keen on toilet paper? While Berlin was crawling inside, looking for information and digitally caring for each other, outside the urban wildlife was going about a spring that had more room and quiet than usual. Birdsong became prominent and at night we marveled at the sound of urban silence. During short walks in the day we so much enjoyed a new and improved quality of air - here was the impossible suddenly coming true!

While everyday-life was restricted, many other things were suddenly possible: caring for neighbours and homeless, thanking the ones working for our supplies, government moving quickly and providing money fast and making bike-lanes pop up over night. Yes, many of us have discovered the joy of cycling. But all of us did not know what the perspective on the future should be. This became a source of unrest and worry, pushing politics to find out how we can go back into physically moving around. Now we all are trying to figure this out, some being energetic and



beginning to party again - it is Berlin, after all. Even the tourists are coming back! As if nothing much had happened. Others being more careful and more connected to the issues with Covid-19. All of us beginning to work with facial masks, many from private production. A great variety of masks is blossoming, making them has almost become a self-empowering act. Though the cultural use here is somehow set on the feeling that this item will protect oneself. Whereas really it is a courtesy to all others, as we have had the chance to learn in Japan.

For our work the situation is positively strange: since December we are preparing an exhibition project in Düsseldorf centered around the microbiological aspects of cooperation. With Corona coming into the picture we were unsure what that would make our project feel. Luckily our curators are glad to be so much in touch with all the viral issues. But we are now thinking hard how to best plan for an uncertain situation: the project will take place in October and usually this is the beginning of flu-season in Germany. So what should we expect with Corona on top? How can we find a fluid and adaptable format? This is what we are approaching as Berlin's cultural life is also scrabbeling to see: where are we going? What is possible? And what do we really really need?

All of you have been in our thoughts and we hope you and yours are doing well. We wish for the AIR programme to succeed. Our hearts go out to the ones challenged by Corona, especially those without proper support. Please all take care and find sources for joy - we hear this is very beneficial for our immune-systems! In this spirit we send you a picture from our current series „Habitat“.

With kindest regards

gaehtgens.hirsch
(David & Daniela)

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