

## **Dam**

### **Akira Takaishi**

Dr Ry Haskings

From February 26<sup>th</sup> to March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 visiting artist Akira Takaishi from Tokyo undertook the project Dam. The project consisted of an earthwork made from clay mixed with soil derived from the dried-up section of the dam bed in bushland on La Trobe's Bendigo campus. The project is the result of an exchange and partnership between Dr Ry Haskings, a lecturer in Visual Arts at Bendigo Campus and Akira Takaishi, a member of the Art Center Ongoing collective in Tokyo Japan.



The exchange and partnership consisted of reciprocal exhibitions, residencies and hosting opportunities to be shared between the two artists and their associated organisations. The exchange was a great opportunity for two artists to share ideas and assist each other toward the ambitious realisation of major international solo projects by each artist in the other's country. Dr Ry Haskings' completed his residency and art exhibition North East Epidemiologist Spray in Tokyo through the Art Center Ongoing in July 2019 and Akira completed the bulk of his earthwork project on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> of March when La Trobe began measures towards a university-wide shutdown.

Unfortunately, this meant that Akira was not able to present documentation of his project as an exhibition, which was to be opened in La Trobe University's Phyllis Palmer Gallery on Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup>. As a result, Akira and Ry have been working towards shifting the presentation of this project's documentation online. Please keep up to date about the online presentation of the project and further information about Akira's practice via the links below. Both Dr Ry Haskings and Akira Takaishi would like to thank La Trobe University, La Trobe Art Institute, Art Center Ongoing Tokyo, Dr Anne Southall and especially the Japan Foundation (Australia) for their financial support.



## Project Statement by Akira Takaishi.

Originally, I planned to dig a hole as an earthwork. When I visited Latrobe's Bendigo Campus, I found that the dam, recommended to me as a potential site for my project, was quite interesting. It is simple basin shaped hole to collect rainwater. Dams are often partially dried out during summer and the cracked appearance of the dam bed's dried up section appealed to me. I speculated upon the dried dam bed's appearance being some sort of indicator to engage with how dry and flat this land is. My plan shifted to engage this readymade hole-shape with its cracked appearance alongside my own investigation and construction of a hole.

A concurrent objective for this project was to make an illusion of Infinite stairs much like the impossible scenario of Penrose's and Escher's, but in three-dimensions. In three-dimensions this illusion only appears when people see the object from one certain point. Through this reference it was important to communicate that the illusion of these infinite stairs exist only in our perception. The stairs encircle a hollow section of the form, which assists the illusion of the infinite. I have been using both the hole and stairs in my art as motifs. The stairs relate to ideas surrounding continuity and discontinuity. The idea of the hole refers to hollowness and also engages ideas about a void and nothingness. I see these factors as key in thinking about perception, based on the relation of mind and matter. In this work I united the two motifs as much as possible in a geometrical structure. Through building this structure these ideas can develop further through my practice.

## Artist Biography

Akira Takaishi (born/resides in Japan, b.1985) practises in the fields of land art, installation and spatially concerned painting. Through these forms Takaishi develops structural excavations as complex reflections of societal formations and individual identities. Paradoxically, Takaishi's burrows offer somewhere to escape into, and yet simultaneously entrap. As a Masters graduate from the Musahino Art University (Japan), Takaishi has had numerous solo and group shows in Tokyo, and most recently, he has undertaken an artist residency at the Cité Internationale des art, Paris, France (Sept 2016 – Aug 2017) and at the Helsinki International Artist Programme (Sept 2019 – November 2019).

For more information on Akira Takaishi's practice please visit his artist web site <http://www.akiratakaishi.com/>, the gallery that represents his work <http://www.makifinearts.com/en/>, and the art collective he is a member of <http://ongoing.jp/en/>.