

IWAKURA 岩倉

Open weekdays, 13th - 27th January
The Briggait, Glasgow

Iwakura is a village on the northern edge of Kyoto, Japan. Nearby is the arts and humanities university *Kyoto Seika University*, where this exhibition's contributors met. *Iwakura* refers to the place and memory of where these artists met and lived together during an exchange program in Japan.

The *Kino-Ryo* dormitories at Iwakura were the base for the relationships that have brought together this exhibition. Aside from the dorm's temperamental heaters, inquisitive monkeys and large insects that seemed to have crawled out of Miyazaki's *Nausicaa*; the dormitories housed an international community, where discussions, debates and critiques took place. Even years later, these widely dispersed former tenants of *Kino-Ryo* are still connected by their shared experience and friendships.

The exhibition aims to look at the effects of this exchange program, and to see how the experience has impacted each artist's work or even method of working. It will raise questions about how living in another country such as Japan can shape and inform an artist's perspective:

Can we cross the language barrier through art? Are we able to exhibit multiple perspectives? Is it possible to integrate traditional skills into contemporary artwork? What is an individual culture now - especially one so famously esoteric as Japan - when globalisation binds different nationalities together to form these subcultures?

Kyoto Seika University is a relatively young University, born in 1968 with the "intention of providing a progressive, liberal and humanistic alternative to the 'production-line' education system of that time". In 2007, it became the first member of *CUMULUS*, an International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media, promoting international exchanges with the incentive that "students can be inspired by being exposed to different cultures". The exchanges took place with Universities such as Glasgow School of Art, Edinburgh College of Art, the University of Michigan, the Australian National University, The Cooper Union in New York, California College of Arts, ENSA Paris Malaquais and Ecole de Design Nantes Atlantique.

Iwakura features new works by UK-based Susie Olczak, Alex Tobin, Phyllis Smith, Tokyo-based Katherine Roblou and Danish artist Tilde Lerche Engstrøm; as well as international guests from Seika's sister institutions in the US, France, Australia and Germany.