



# **Eiko Otake**

## *A Body with Fukushima*

Saturday, May 22, 2021

Outside

Between Music Studios and World Music Hall

Center for the Arts

Wesleyan University

Middletown, Connecticut

[www.wesleyan.edu/cfa](http://www.wesleyan.edu/cfa)

PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

Center for the Arts and Dance Department  
Wesleyan University

*present*

# **Eiko Otake**

## *A Body with Fukushima*

*United States Premiere*

The performance lasts approximately one hour.  
The projected images are from *A Body in Fukushima*.

Conceived and performed by Eiko Otake

Photos by William Johnston

Music by David Harrington

Video and sound edit by Eiko Otake

Dramaturgy by Iris McCloughan

A Performing Arts Series event presented by  
the Dance Department and the Center for the Arts.

The use of audio or video recording devices or photography  
is strictly prohibited during the performance.

If you plan to attend an event and will require reasonable accommodations  
for a disability, please call (860) 685-3324 or visit  
<http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/visitors.html>.

The Inn at Middletown is the official hotel of the  
Center for the Arts. *Show your ticket stub and receive  
10% off your food bill at the Tavern at the Armory*



Media Sponsors: The Hartford Courant



## NOTES

Eiko's note about *A Body with Fukushima* and *A Body in Fukushima*

*A Body with Fukushima* is a one-hour performance work with projections of video *A Body in Fukushima*, which I edited from selected photographs taken by William Johnston during our five trips to irradiated Fukushima.

I first visited irradiated Fukushima five months after the triple disaster occurred in March 2011: the magnitude 9 earthquake, nearly 70-foot-high tsunami, and three nuclear meltdowns. Approximately 165,000 people were forced to evacuate the area. I will never forget the deep upset and remorse I felt in the evacuation area of Fukushima. Since then, I have returned to Fukushima five times with Bill. Each visit motivated me to keep asking myself: How can I change the sense of distance between myself and Fukushima and how can I use my body as a conduit between my audiences and Fukushima landscapes?

The first exhibition of *A Body in Fukushima* was at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2014-2015. Since then, the exhibition has traveled to cities in the US and abroad. In 2015, we had Wesleyan's first three-gallery exhibition showing photos from our first two trips to Fukushima. In 2016, Danspace Project (NYC) presented my solo works in a month-long platform, *A Body in Places*, including a 24-hour Fukushima exhibition in its church sanctuary, where 24 sets of artist friends performed at every hour. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City hosted a six-month-long exhibition which culminated in 2017 with a four-hour Fukushima memorial. That same year, as a think tank fellow of the College of the Environment, I created a seven-hour video from Fukushima photographs and performed a day-long event in each of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's three locations. In 2018, we had another exhibition at Wesleyan featuring the photos from our 2016 and 2017 Fukushima visits. Throughout these times, I kept editing various video versions of *A Body in Fukushima* for screenings in theaters, galleries, and museums in many US cities as well as in Belgium, Chile, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan.

It was at the CFA in 2018 that David Harrington of Kronos Quartet, a long time friend, first saw the photos of me in Fukushima. He immediately offered to help, and began playing right on this grass. I recorded him. The subsequent recording happened in my home in New York where he improvised while watching my video. After many conversations with me during the pandemic lockdown, he took a week to play alone in Redwood, California, thinking about Fukushima. His granddaughter Emily filmed him and this performance is the first time the video is being incorporated. His sound and trust has so encouraged me to keep going with the project.

The March 2021 premiere of this performance work, *A Body with Fukushima*, opened the Tokyo Tokyo Festival's special program REAL UNDERGROUND and marked the ten-year anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. In addition to a theater performance, I also performed in six public sites in Tokyo, projecting Fukushima images onto buildings and onto myself. It was my first time performing solo in Japan, where I grew up, and my first time bringing my work in Fukushima to Tokyo, which consumes electricity produced in rural areas like Fukushima.

The book *A Body in Fukushima* that contains my and Bill's essays with the photographs from all five visits to Fukushima just arrived from Belgium where it was printed on the most environmentally friendly uncoated color printing paper for books. As a project, *A Body in Fukushima* has continued to grow in scope and expand in form, thanks to ever-willing Bill and presenters across the globe.

My sincere thanks goes to everyone who has studied with me. Without you, I would not have returned to Fukushima this many times, exhibited the photos, or published the book. I am deeply grateful for the support I have received from Wesleyan University, its Dance Department, College of East Asian Studies, College of the Environment, Center for the Arts (CFA), and Wesleyan University Press. A special thank you to former CFA Director Pamela Tatge, who supported our first trip to Fukushima; to the CFA's Jennifer Calienes, Fiona Coffey, and Rani Arbo for supporting my virtual residency; to John Elmore for his work with us over the years; and to the amazingly dedicated crew and staff that made this evening possible. Thank you to generations of assistants, all of whom studied with me at Wesleyan. And I am deeply indebted to Bill, David, Iris, and my current assistant Allison Hsu.

Lastly, I invite you all to visit my Fukushima project page at [www.eikootake.org/a-body-in-fukushima](http://www.eikootake.org/a-body-in-fukushima), bring our book to your home, and learn from this horrific environmental disaster. A nuclear meltdown could happen at any nuclear plant all over the world.

—Eiko Otake

## PROFILES

Born and raised in Japan and a resident of New York since 1976, **Eiko Otake** is a movement-based, interdisciplinary artist. For more than 40 years she worked with her partner as Eiko & Koma. Since 2014 Eiko has been performing her own solo project *A Body in Places*. In 2017, she launched a multi-year *Duet Project*, an open-ended series of cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural and cross-generational experiments with a diverse range of artists both living and dead.

Eiko & Koma created their own choreography and presented their works worldwide, including many appearances at the American Dance Festival and BAM's Next Wave Festival. Durational performance works were commissioned and presented by the Whitney Museum, the Walker Art Center, and MoMA.

Eiko & Koma are the first collaborative pair to share a MacArthur Fellowship (1996) and the first Asian choreographers to receive the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award (2004) and the *Dance Magazine* Award (2006). They were individually honored by the Guggenheim Fellowship (1984) and the first Doris Duke Artist Awards (2012). Eiko's solo activity brought her an Art Matters grant (2015), a special Bessie citation (2016), the Anonymous Was a Woman Award (2016), and the Sam Miller Award for Performing Arts (2020).

Eiko has taught courses in Wesleyan since 2016, and her teaching uses movement as means of inquiry to further understanding of mass violence, nuclear disasters and other environmental matters. Eiko was a think tank fellow in The College of the Environment in 2017-2018, and an artist-in residence at CFA this academic year. Her virtual studio (<https://www.eikootake.org/virtual-studio>) presents her creative works and public discourses created during the pandemic.

**William Johnston** is a historian who focuses on how we can understand complex historical events—particularly epidemics, wars, genocides, and disasters—through the intersection of multiple epistemologies. He was born and grew up in Rawlins, Wyoming, where he developed an interest in the visual arts as well as in Japanese culture and Zen Buddhism. Johnston received his B.A. from Elmira College, in Elmira, New York, and his MA and PhD from Harvard University, and also studied in Japan at Nanzan University, Nagoya University, and Tokyo University. Since 1988, he has been employed at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where he is the John E. Andrus Professor of History, with a specialization in Japanese history and the history of disease and public health. He is the author of two monographs and numerous essays. Johnston has practiced photography since he was a high school student and has worked in 35mm as well as with large format cameras. Since 2014, he has worked exclusively with digital photography.

**David Harrington** is the artistic director, founder, and violinist of the Kronos Quartet. For over 45 years, the San Francisco-based Grammy-winning group and its nonprofit, the Kronos Performing Arts Association, have reimaged and redefined the string quartet experience through thousands of concerts, over 60 recordings, collaborations with composers and performers from around the globe, more than 1,000 commissioned works, and education programs for emerging musicians. Kronos Quartet collaborated and toured with Eiko & Koma performing live in *River* (1997) and *Fragile* (2012). David has offered his improvised music for Eiko since 2018 for her *A Body in Fukushima* and for other media works.

**Iris McCloughan** (they/them) is a writer, artist, and performer in Brooklyn. They were the winner of the 2018 Stanley Kunitz Memorial Prize from *American Poetry Review* and were named a finalist in Nonfiction for Best of the Net 2020. They are the author of three chapbooks, including *Triptych* (2021, greying ghost) and *Bones To Peaches*, (2021, Seven Kitchens Press). Their writing has appeared in *juked*, *jubilat*, *Gertrude*, and *American Poetry Review*, among many others.

## DANCE DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND STAFF

Pedro Alejandro, Associate Professor of Dance  
(on leave)  
Patricia Beaman, Artist-in-Residence  
Milka Djordjevich, Visiting Assistant  
Professor of Dance  
Doug Elkins, Visiting Associate Professor of Dance  
Maho Ishiguro, Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance  
Katja Kolcio, Associate Professor of Dance/  
Director of the Allbritton Center

Hari Krishnan, Professor of Dance/Chair  
Chelsie McPhilimy, Technical Director, Dance  
Michele Olerud, Administrative Assistant  
Marcela Oteíza, Associate Professor of Dance  
Joya Powell, Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance  
Iddi Saaka, Assistant Professor of Dance  
Nicole Stanton, Provost & Senior Vice President  
for Academic Affairs/Professor of Dance

## CENTER FOR THE ARTS STAFF

Rani Arbo: Campus and Community  
Engagement Manager  
Kyle Beaudette: Assistant Director of  
Events and Ticketing  
Jennifer Calienes: Interim Director  
Charles Carroll: Assistant Technical Director/  
Scenery Specialist  
Benjamin Chaffee: Associate Director, Visual Arts  
Andrew Chatfield: Director, Arts Communication  
Fiona Coffey: Associate Director for  
Programming and Performing Arts  
Jennifer Diglio: Accounting Specialist  
John Elmore: Art Director  
Joseph Fonseca: Technical Associate

Drew Gray: General Manager  
Tony Hernandez: Assistant Technical Director  
Rosemary Lennox: Exhibitions Manager and ICPP  
Program Manager  
Ariana Molokwu: Associate Producer,  
Antiracism Arts Initiative  
Hanna Oravec: Assistant Director for Programs  
Robert Russo: Assistant Technical Director/  
Sound and Video Specialist  
Suzanne M. Sadler: Technical Director/  
CFA Theater Manager

### Event Staff

Lighting Designer: Suzanne M. Sadler

## ON COVER

Eiko at Tomioka Sanitation Plant Ruins, 2019 1223,  
No. 0034. Photo by William Johnston.

