

dumb type



memorandum

memorandum



memorandum was first presented by Le Manège, Scène Nationale in Mauberge (France).

The final version of *memorandum* was premiered at the New National Theatre of Tokyo on November 27th 2000.

1999

Oct 7–9 : Le Manège, Scène nationale de Maubeuge – Espace Gérard Philipe, Feignies (France)
Oct 13–24 : Maison des Arts, Créteil / Festival d'Automne à Paris (France)
Oct 28–30 : Haus der Kulturen der Welt – Berlin (Germany)
Nov 4–6 : Festival d'Automne, Madrid (Spain)

2000

Mar 15–17 : Charleroi/Danses, Brussels 2000 (Belgium)
Mar 21–23 : GRAME / Maison de la Danse, Lyon (France)
Mar 30–31, Apr 1st : Centre de Développement Chorégraphique / Théâtre de la Cité, Toulouse (France)
Apr 6–8 : Teatro Central, Sevilla (Spain)
July 21–22 : Julidans/Stadsschouwburg, Amsterdam (Holland)
Aug 2–27 : Tanzhaus NRW, Düsseldorf (Germany)
Sept 1–3 : Festival de la Bâtie, Geneva (Switzerland)
Oct 28–29 : The Museum of Art, Kochi (Japan)
Nov 27–Dec 16 : New National Theatre, Tokyo (Japan)

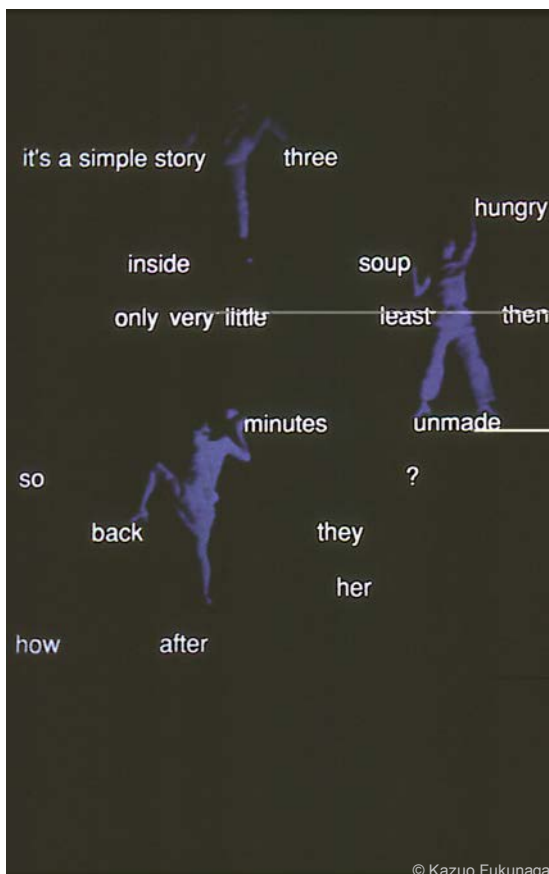
2002

Jan 10–12 : New Opera of Tel Aviv, Israel (Israel)
Mar 1–3 : Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (USA)
Mar 7–9 : On the Boards, Seattle (USA)
Mar 14–16 : Portland Institute for Contemporary Art - Newmark Theater, Portland (USA)
Mar 21–24 : Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis (USA)
May 17–18 : Festival Art Rock - La Passerelle, St Brieuc (France)
May 24–Jun 1 : Maison des Arts, Créteil (France)
Jun 22–23 : Singapore Arts Festival - Victoria Theatre, Singapore (Singapore)
Jun 28–29 : Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur- Istana Budaya Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

2003

May 16 : Modern Dance Association of Korea - The KCAF Arts Theater, Seoul (Korea)
Jun 13-14-15 : La Biennale di Venezia - Teatro Piccolo Arsenal, Venice (Italy)
Sept 27 : Bangkok Playhouse (Thailand)
Oct 9-12 : Melbourne International Festival of the Arts - Forum Theatre (Australia)
Oct 28-Nov 2 : Redcat Center - California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles (USA)
Nov 14-15 : Pittsburgh Dance Council - Byham Theater (USA)

memorandum



now we freeze in front of a frozen cascade

like losing one's focus towards too fast phenomenon.

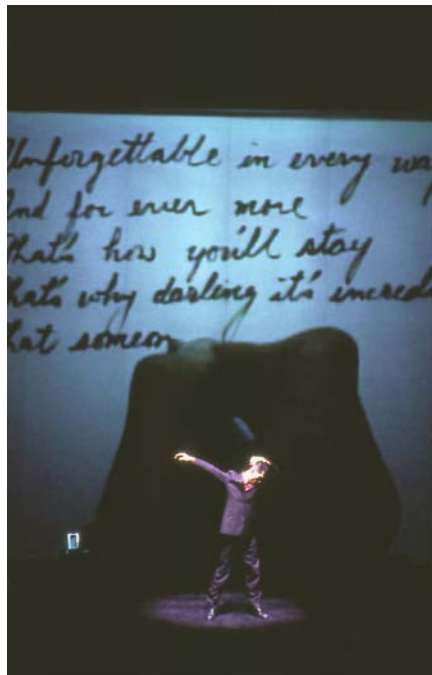
how can we survive in the frozen cascade of this world ?

how can we save our future memories?

memorandum

Para la otra vez que lo mate . . . le prometo ese laberinto, que consta de una sola línea recta y que invisible, incesante.
[The next time I kill you . . . I promise you that labyrinth, consisting of a single line which is invisible and unceasing.]
La muerte y la brújula [Death and Compass] (1942) Jose Luis Borges

Tragedy of trajectory, shadowing time's arrow in flight overhead, above no visible ground: **memorandum** is a non-elegy to recall, an impossible investigation into the unstable neurophilosophical events of memory itself. The moment now —simultaneous beginning, end and midway point in the linear maze we know as the temporal world— remains a mystery. An ever accelerating spiral of desires and uncertainties, of emotion and intellect, of instinct and memory —the moment we try to bring these diverse elements into a tenuous balance, just where are we? What is the locus of knowing/doing? The idea of «keeping» counterweights, the drive to «move on» is programmed into all our behaviours. An inertial momentum of unconscious retention that somehow powers the life-engine, which instinctively imagines things could always be better. When we shut out time behind closed eyes, are we seeing snapshots in an on-going album of after-images or an instantaneous synaptic cascade of frozen accidents?



Who can say what memory was before photography existed? What will come to replace cumulative direct experience as new technologies continue to overtake the thresholds of cognisance, the speed of human recognition? We stand before the falling waters, waiting for the perfect moment to plunge in. A homage to «love» caught in a frieze of frames-per-second. Illusions that would set us free of all circumstances. Desires that would place us front-and-centre in all events. Anxieties that keep us running to «get there»—but where? How then to go on not-escaping the gravitational pull of remembrance even as the world bids to uproot all its yesterdays? The safe and sheltering forest of memory is no more. Nostalgic reminiscences of happy days past, sweet dreams of future memories to come —all are poised without critical mass on the brink of never, swimming headlong down a horizon-less maze toward no vanishing point.

dumb type, June 1999

memorandum

Conception / creation	dumb type
Visual creation	Shiro Takatani Takayuki Fujimoto Hiromasa Tomari
Sound	Ryoji Ikeda
Conceptual collaboration	Alfred Birnbaum
Computer programming	Tomohiro Ueshiba
Video assistant	Richi Owaki
Stage manager	So Ozaki
Performers	Seiko Kato Takao Kawaguchi Hidekazu Maeda Noriko Sunayama Mayumi Tanaka Misako Yabuuchi Manna Fujiwara So Ozaki
Text by	Stefaan Decostere
Originally written for the installation	“Party”
Voice	Simon Fisher Turner Rene Eyre
Company manager	Yoko Takatani
Production	dumb type
Production, tours	Richard Castelli - Epidemic

In co-production with **Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin - Créteil Maison des Arts - Festival d'automne à Paris - Le Manège Scène Nationale de Maubeuge - Pilar de Yzaguirre/Ysarca Madrid - La Bâtie Festival de Genève - The Museum of Art, Kochi - New Opera of Tel Aviv, Israel**

With the support of the **Town of Ajaccio, the Institut Franco-Japonais du Kansai Villa Kujoyama and Kyoto Art Center**

dumb type, an artist collective

dumb type is based in Kyoto, Japan. Members are trained in varied disciplines, including the visual arts, architecture, music and computer programming as well as writing, acting, dance, and other forms of performing arts. dumb type's work ranges across such diverse media as art exhibitions, performances, audio-visual and printed publications.

We started as a group of frustrated students

in conceptual art, painting, architecture design, video, photography, and other areas at the University of Kyoto of the Arts in 1984. "Frustrated" because as students we were not allowed to learn anything outside the category of the department each member belonged to:

oil painting majors could only learn oil painting, and so on. But being in our early twenties at that time, we wanted to try new things. During this time we were greatly influenced by presentations of artists in multimedia performance around the world, especially by the early Brooklyn Academy of Music's NEXT WAVE presentations of Robert Wilson, Laurie Anderson, Pina Bausch, and other now internationally acclaimed artists. Performances by these artists in Japan then ignited the national performance art boom.

dumb?

Our aspiration is and has always been to create something interesting and new by departing from the conventional style of theatre, which in Japan is predominantly based on dialogue. We experiment with many different ways to invent new vocabulary for theatre performance. We fuse the wide range of our group members' skills and knowledge to forge a creative style that overcomes the boundaries between the visual arts, theatre, and dance. The word "dumb" in our title literally means "not speaking", but it also symbolizes our stylistic freedom in artistic expression, which, nonetheless, does not exclude use of text. The word can also imply being stupid and idiotic. Naming ourselves "dumb," therefore, is a cynical antithesis to the more refined and established world of "high art" that we perceived dominated the art scene. Rather than holding on to the refined tastes and values of the conventional art world, we did (and still do) choose to be idiots capable of bringing revolutionary visions to the arts.

process

Being a collective, we not only bring together artistic skills, ideas, and concepts, but also our personal day-to-day experiences, interests and concerns. dumb type founder Teiji Furuhashi once said that the core group (Furuhashi, Toru Koyamada, Yukihiro Hozumi, Shiro Takatani, Takayuki Fujimoto, and Hiromasa Tomari) "wanted to start creating something new with our skills. Most of the time we spent discussing society or whatever, not specific art things. When someone had an idea it would be presented on a piece of paper. If the group was interested, we made it come true. At first the idea would be really open and gradually it became something very specific. In that way we're really democratic. dumb type is a collaboration group. We don't want someone to be king." Once the group sees a theme, the individuals explore it in different directions, and later bring his/her findings to the group, as words, movements, phrases of music, lighting ideas, costumes, stage architecture, video images, and so on. The group's assemblage and editing of those materials and ideas is a central source of our creativity. Everyone has a say in any aspect of the creation, and nobody is limited to his/her expertise. Anyone can take any kind of initiative, and no fixed sequence exists in building what comes first and what follows.

History

We were aiming at deconstructing conventional theatre and inventing new language for the theater when we organized in 1984. What we have created is work that is as formally complex as it is socially complex. Our most visible and well-known artworks fall somewhere within the boundaries of performance, oftentimes accompanied by museum installations.

In the early 1980s, a cornucopia of different cultural movements emerged in Japan in tandem with the rapidly growing economy. Our early years (from *Pleasure Life* to *pH*) coincided with those movements: post-modernism, subculture, performance art, and the Japanese underground “small theater” movement, the interaction between the arts and philosophers and intellectuals, a growing interest in the arts among the general public, and the rise in corporate sponsorship for the arts.

At the same time the work of many artists from overseas was being introduced to Japan. The founding members of dumb type were graduating from the university, and our former director Teiji Furuhashi returned from New York where he had lived for some time. Soon, Spiral and Wacoal Arts Center, a corporate-funded art producer in Tokyo, produced our first major world-tour performance piece *pH* (1990). We received our biggest-ever four-year grant from the Japanese Saison Foundation in 1993, becoming the second recipient of Japan’s first long-term art support program. With *pH*, dumb type began performing world wide.

In the 1990s, Japan’s “bubble” economy burst, the worldwide AIDS crisis escalated, and Japanese society responded with a series of drastic changes. Local grass-roots activism arose to counter the AIDS crisis, and issues of sexuality and human rights were loudly discussed in private circles and public arenas. dumb type was thrown into the thick of it when

Furuhashi came out to his colleagues and friends about his HIV infection, and the impact was devastating. Our work *S/N*, the last directed by Furuhashi before his death in 1995, was born under such circumstances.

What now?

Our work has naturally changed after Furuhashi’s death. With the experience of painful loss and grief, and new insight gained, our work style has turned somewhat more introverted, looking within one’s self more than at the outside world. It doesn’t mean we have lost interest in what is happening “on the outside.” Living in the post-9/11 world, it is impossible to not be concerned with what is happening worldwide: wars, terrorism, crimes, poverty, hunger, environmental issues, falling economies, political corruption, and so on.

Under these circumstances what does it mean to be personally and professionally committed to art? What can art do to make a difference? This has always been dumb type’s concern. But now we address it and the world with more “internal eyes”. We continue to explore what it means to be a human being and reject the trappings of a pre-conceived idea. But how should (could) we look, where, for what answers, through what eyes, and from what angle, in order to live, commit and move on? It is also worth a mention that the advancement in computer technology, most notably the shift from analogue to digital in music and video, along with the changes in our society, are influencing both the formal and thematic language of our work. Thus, *OR*, and *memorandum*.

Biography

PLAN FOR SLEEP (1984-86) ... **EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY** (1985) ... **THE ORDER OF THE SQUARE** (1985) ... **036 PLEASURE LIFE** (1987) ... **PLEASURE LIFE** (1988) ...

pH (1990–93) was dumb type's largest scale work to-date integrating performance, installation, video, and printed material. The audience's seats lined up above both sides of a slender sixteen-meter white linoleum floor. On the stage a horizontal bar moved across the floor suggesting a giant photocopy machine. Installed on the bottom surface of the bar were a number of slide projectors, which projected images onto the floor where performers (human beings) acted and danced under the mercy of and/or against the machine (society.)

S/N (1992-96) was triggered by the former director Teiji Furuhashi's infection by the HIV virus that causes AIDS, the political issues of AIDS, and, more significantly, dumb type's overriding interest in how individual identity is conditioned within each individual's self. The performance challenged the fine line between the fiction of theatre and reality through its unusual 'live' talk show style (in which Teiji himself comes out, together with a couple of other performers, as "homosexuals" and "HIV positive"). A wide range of images, texts and vignettes surrounding such themes were combined with strikingly new dance as well as video and slides, lighting and sounds. The piece reverberated across many groups in society; its message "what can art do for society and the individual?" shocked both the theatre and the visual arts community, as well as the general community and activists, all living with the HIV/AIDS crisis.

OR (1997-1999) was created in France in March 1997, following a one-month residency at the Théâtre du Manège in Maubeuge. **OR** is a reflection on the border(s) between life and death, the meaning of its title ranging from the binary system, to the alternative A or B, the 0 (zero) radius, an operation room. Some of the most advanced techniques combined the human body and various media to elicit a range of viewpoints, whether religious, philosophical, medical, cultural, or emotional, onto a blinding-white stage that consisted of a circular floor and semi-cylindrical wall. dumb type described the work as being "about the state of 'white out' like in a blizzard, where you are deprived of ability to see, where you can't recognize anything, where you don't know where you stand anymore, where you may not know whether you are alive OR dead. But what distinguishes one from the other? Where is the border? What is death? What is it?"

memorandum (1999-2002) The first version of this show was presented in October 1999 by Le Manège, Scène Nationale de Maubeuge, France. The final version was premiered at the National Theatre of Tokyo on November 27th 2000.

Combining elements of multimedia, dance and fragmented narrative, **memorandum** explores the hazy dimensions of recall that ground and disquietly erode our experience minute-by-minute.

Voyage, the last performance by dumb type was first presented by the Centre de Développement Choréographique de Toulouse in April 2002 at the Théâtre National de Toulouse, France.

Art installations by dumb type include **Lovers** (*Dying Pictures, Loving Pictures*), created in 1994 by Furuhashi and now in the permanent collection of Museum of Modern Art in New York. It consists of a dark square room with walls appearing empty at first and gradually imaging several nudes, nearly life-size men and women, walking, standing still, and embracing one another in slow movement. In the time a viewer approaches a wall to see the images better, a new figure, Furuhashi himself, appears, moves slowly in the viewer's direction, and then vanishes on the wall behind the person. The installation piece **OR**, related to the performance work, was commissioned by the Inter Communication Center (ICC) in Tokyo for its opening in April 1997. A new version of the **OR** installation was purchased by the Musée d'Art Contemporain Lyons in 2000.

This artwork was exhibited by the CDC in Toulouse (2002) and Lille 2004 - European Capital of Culture in Lille (2004), which presented also **Lovers**.

frost frames was created by artistic director Shiro Takatani in May 1998 for the Spiral Hall Tokyo and was presented at the Musée d'Art Contemporain Lyons, EXIT Festival Créteil, VIA Festival Maubeuge (France) in 2000, and CDC in Toulouse in 2002.

Other installations in 1999 and 2000 include

Love/Sex/Death/Money/Life, exhibited in Artsonje Center Seoul, Korea, and Vision Ruhr Dortmund, Germany; and **Cascade** at the Rotonda della Besana Milan, Italy and Haus der Culturen der Welt Berlin, Germany.

Commissioned by NTT ICC, the new installation **Voyages**, related to the performance **Voyage**, opened in Tokyo in August 2002.

Music projects include Takatani's contribution as artistic director on the first opera by Ryuichi Sakamoto, **LIFE**, which premiered in September 1999. In March 1998, dumb type designed the "symphonic novella" by Gérard Hourbette for the first cycle of **Dangerous Visions**, a project of Art Zoyd and the Orchestre National de Lille, France, combining philharmonic orchestra and new sound and image technologies.

Selected performances and exhibitions

- University of the Arts of **Kyoto** (Japan)
The Museum of Modern Art of **Shiga** (Japan)
Osaka International Arts Festival (Japan)
Toga International Arts Festival (Japan)
Yokohama Art Museum (Japan)
Inter Communication Centre of **Tokyo** (Japan)
New York Internat. Festival of the Arts (USA)
Theater im Pumpenhaus **Münster** (Germany)
ICA, **London** (Great Britain)
Musée Royal des Arts **København** (Denmark)
Museum of Modern Art **San Francisco** (USA)
Centro de Arte Reina Sofia **Madrid** (Spain)
Museum of Contemporary Art **Sydney** (Australia)
Glyptotek Museum **København** (Denmark)
Guggenheim Soho **New York** (USA)
Seattle Art Museum (U.S.A.)
Adelaide Festival (Australia)
Festival of **Grenade** (Spain)
Wiener Festwochen **Vienna** (Austria)
International New Zealand Festival of Arts **Wellington** (NZ)
Teatro Central **Sevilla** (Spain)
Festival Sonar **Barcelona** (Spain)
Biennale d'Art Contemporain **Lyon** (France)
Landesgalerie **Linz** (Austria)
Festivals VISAS and **VIA Maubeuge** (France)
Festival Exit, Maison des Arts **Créteil** (France)
Das TAT **Frankfurt** (Germany)
Marstall **München** (Germany)
Ars Electronica Festival **Linz** (Austria)
Palermo Festival (Italy)
Tramway **Glasgow** (U.K.)
Kobe Art Village Center (Japan)
Park Tower Hall **Tokyo** (Japan)
The Wood Street Galleries **Pittsburgh** (U.S.A.)
Festival d'Automne à **Paris**
Créteil Maison des Arts (France)
Julidans / Stadsschouwburg **Amsterdam** (Netherlands)
Expo'98 **Lisboa** (Portugal)
Zürcher Theater Spektakel **Zürich** (Switzerland)
De Warande **Turnhout** (Belgium)
Barbican Centre **London** (U.K.)
Kampnagel **Hamburg** (Germany)
Stockholm Cult. Capital of Europe '98 (Sweden)
Donau Festival **Krems** (Austria)
On the Boards **Seattle** (USA)
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (USA)
Walker Art Center **Minneapolis** (USA)
Museum of Contemporary Art **Chicago** (U.S.A.)
Artsonje Museum **Kyongju** (Korea)
Artsonje Center **Seoul** (Korea)
Haus der Kulturen der Welt **Berlin** (Germany)
Festival de Otono **Madrid** (Spain)
Charleroi/Danses **Charleroi** for Brussels 2000 (Belgium)
GRAME / Maison de la Danse **Lyon** (France)
C.D.C. / Théâtre de la Cité **Toulouse** (France)
Musée d'Art Contemporain de **Lyon** (France)
Salon du Design, Milan (Italy)
The Museum of Art, **Kochi** (Japan)
New National Theatre, **Tokyo** (Japan)
Theater Drama City, **Osaka** (Japan)
Vision Ruhr- **Dortmund** (Germany)
Tanzhaus NRW **Düsseldorf** (Germany)
Festival de la Bâtie **Geneva** (Switzerland)
New Opera of Tel Aviv (Israel)
Valencia Biennial (Spain)
Le Parvis, **Tarbes** (France)
Festival Artrock, **St Brieuç** (France)
Singapore Festival of Arts (Singapore)
Japan Foundation, **Kuala Lumpur** (Malaysia)
Saitama Arts Theater, **Tokyo** (Japan)
Theater Drama City, **Osaka** (Japan)
Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, **Vilnius** (Lithuania)
Vanemuine Theatre, **Tartu** (Estonia)
Latvijas Nacionala Opera, **Riga** (Latvia)
Le-Maillon Théâtre de **Strasbourg** (France)
Deutsches Nationaltheater, **Weimar** (Germany)
Modern Dance Association of Korea, **Seoul** (Korea)
La Biennale di Venezia - Teatro Piccolo Arsenale, **Venice** (Italy)
Biwako Hall, **Shiga** (Japan)
Bangkok Playhouse (Thailand)
Melbourne International Festival of the Arts (Australia)
Redcat Center - California Institute of the Arts, **Los Angeles** (USA)
Pittsburgh Dance Council (USA)
Cinémas du futur / **Lille** 2004 European Capital of Culture (France)
Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (Japan)
Novel Hall for Performing Arts, **Taipei** (Taiwan)
3 Wochen mit Pina Bausch Festival, **Düsseldorf** (Germany)
Théâtre d'**Angoulême** (France)
Le Carré des Jalles, **St Médard en Jalles** (France)
Dansens Hus, **Stockholm** (Sweden)
The Bergen International Festival, **Bergen** (Norway)
Modern Dance Association of Korea, **Seoul** (Korea)
Muffathalle, **München** (Germany)
Altstadtherbst / Isis Zelt, **Düsseldorf** (Germany)
La Comète, **Châlons en Champagne** (France)
Théâtre de **Nîmes** (France)
Posthof, **Linz** (Austria)
Tramway, **Glasgow** (U.K.)
Zendai MoMA - **Shanghai** Museum of Modern Art (China)
Cankarjev Dom, **Ljubljana** (Slovenia)
Melbourne International Festival (Australia)

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