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There Is No Such Thing as an Unchanging Everyday Life

2020

My studio is located at the foothills of Mount Fuji, near the Aokigahara forest. A road about ten kilometres long runs through the forest, lined with towering trees on both sides, and it is one of my favourite routes.

In spring and summer, it is enveloped in deep green; in autumn, in vivid foliage; and in winter, it feels like a corridor enclosed by thick, white walls, reminiscent of a bridal kimono. Each time I pass through, I encounter something new.

At the end of last year, I came across a massive fallen tree by the side of this road. It confronted me with the realisation that there is no such thing as an “unchanging everyday life,” and at the same time compelled me to reflect, from a more objective distance, on my own way of being as an observer. Is this what it means to examine oneself through the presence of another? Or perhaps death is something that can only ever be seen by others.

This year, beginning in early spring, the spread of COVID-19, compounded by prolonged heavy rains caused by abnormal weather conditions, has resulted in widespread disruption and damage. The loss of the everyday that I perceived in the fallen tree has become a tangible reality, forcing us to reconsider our ways of thinking.

I believe that art possesses not only the infinite potential and hope to imagine and express anything through new ways of seeing, but also the capacity to cultivate and strengthen negative capability—the ability to accept situations that cannot be resolved, and to endure them.

In circumstances where interaction with others is no longer taken for granted, opportunities to engage directly with art have inevitably become limited. Yet I hope that what emerges may be received quietly and attentively, in each place, within each environment.