

Muneyoshi Hase

What It Means to Be Human — Text for the 2019 solo exhibition

2019

This solo exhibition is held at my studio in the foothills of Mount Fuji.

I spent around two years in the UK and returned to Japan in 2017. During my stay, the world was undergoing major changes, including Brexit and the inauguration of Donald Trump. It was also a period in which I directly experienced significant differences in how the term “art” is defined and understood, as well as in how art is positioned within national strategies.

In this exhibition, I present one work produced in the UK, using approximately 4,000 black plastic bin bags. Visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp—something I had long hoped to do—confronted me with the absurdity of human existence as revealed through its records and memories. This work represents my own response to the question of what it means to be human, including myself within that inquiry.

Until now, my exhibitions have been held in galleries. This is the first time I have chosen my own studio—the site of production itself—as the venue. I believe that there are things that can only be done and presented here.