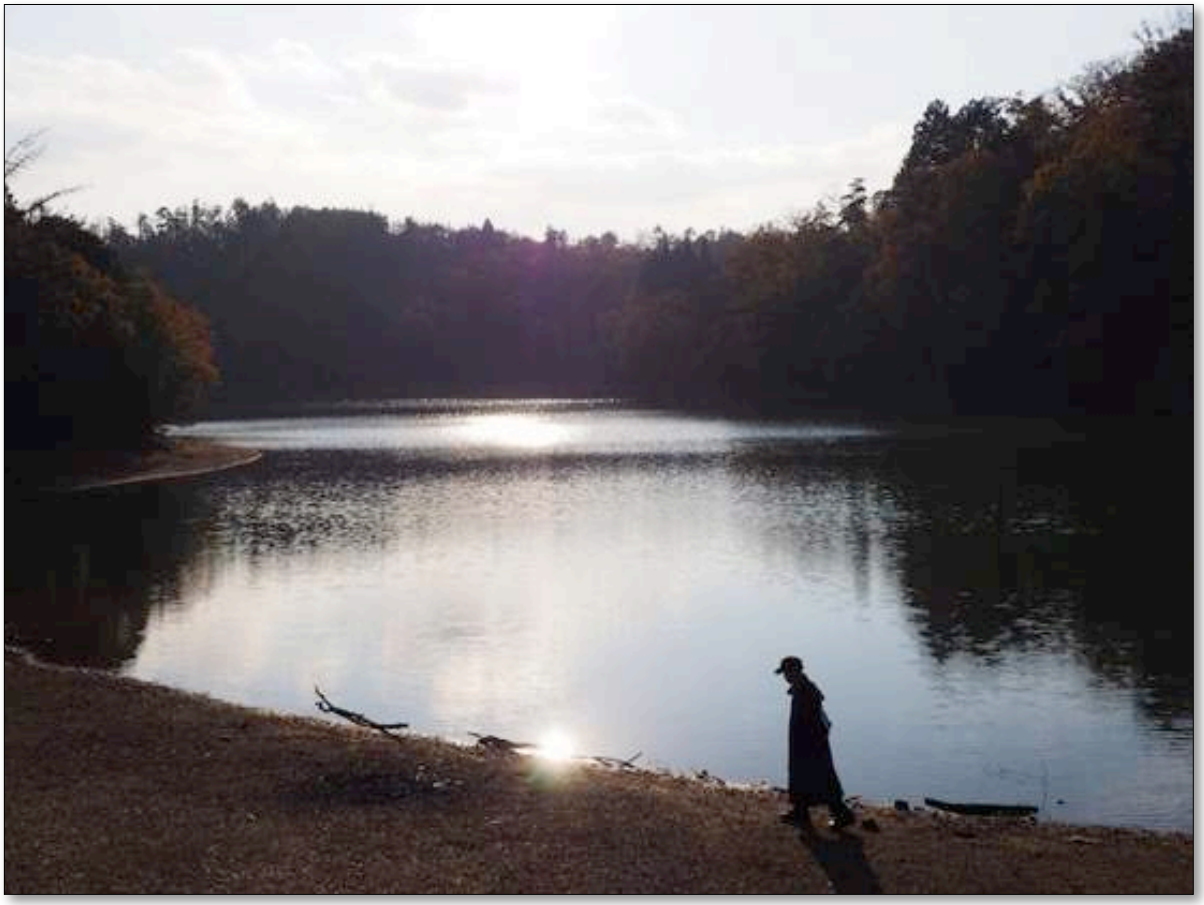
"The Reality Behind What We See"
～The Poet, Yoshimasu Gozo, in Kyoto～

A Documentary Film
Directed by Haruo Inoue
2017



[The Poet Gozo Yoshimasu]

78-year-old Gozo Yoshimasu is Japan's most reknowned poet. Yoshimasu began composing in his twenties and has since been on the cutting edge of contemporary poetry for the past sixty years. He continues today to energetically work as ever before. Yoshimasu overturned the common sense notion of poetry that comprise only of words as his type of poetry is expressed through such mediums as photographs, motion pictures, paintings, performances, and travels. Yoshimasu's life just may be summed up as "poetry in avant-garde." Although a member of the Japan Art Academy and recognized as a Person of Cultural Merit, Yoshimasu's creative drive never seems to end.

[Earthquake – Kyoto – Journey for Water]

Contemporary Japan seems to be hanging onto the back of a dragon as politics reeks of war, radiation, *tsunami*, and earthquakes. . . Yoshimasu, who witnessed the devastation caused by the massive *tsunami* of the Great Earthquake of 2011, was at a loss for words upon seeing the impact of "water" strip everthing away.

After the earthquake, and as if dismantling his own "framework of the mind," Yoshimasu began to cut out words, ruled lines, and notes of all sizes and shapes he kept in his "diary." He then started to paste Japanese and manuscript paper together to make one large piece of paper, and with pencil and pen, words and colors, wrote whatever what was on his mind onto that paper, collaging onto the paper mailed letters he had received that day. By further adding more color to his work, a new styled diary was born. This was his new "poetry."

Yoshimasu called the piece *Kaibutsukun* (Little Monster) because the "poetry" comprises brilliant colors reflecting an abstract drawing.

(Kaibutsukun was displayed for the first solo exhibition of the poet called *The Voice Between: The Art and Poetry of Yoshimasu Gozo* at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo in 2016.)

Autumn in Kyoto. Yoshimasu Gozo stands alone on the banks of a lake.

Yoshimasu doesn't simply "write." He turns on a lamp, burns an incense, plays a cassette tape, and listens to himself "chanting" . . . At times he is blindfolded and at other times he listens to the sound of a rock, pouring ink onto paper. . .

At *Ryukyo-in*. Yoshimasu Gozo creating *Kaibutsukun.*
While playing the natural voice of the famous *tanka* poet Akiko Yosano (1878–1942)
Yoshimasu blindfolds himself, and taking a sanukite in his mouth, pours ink and colors.

#630

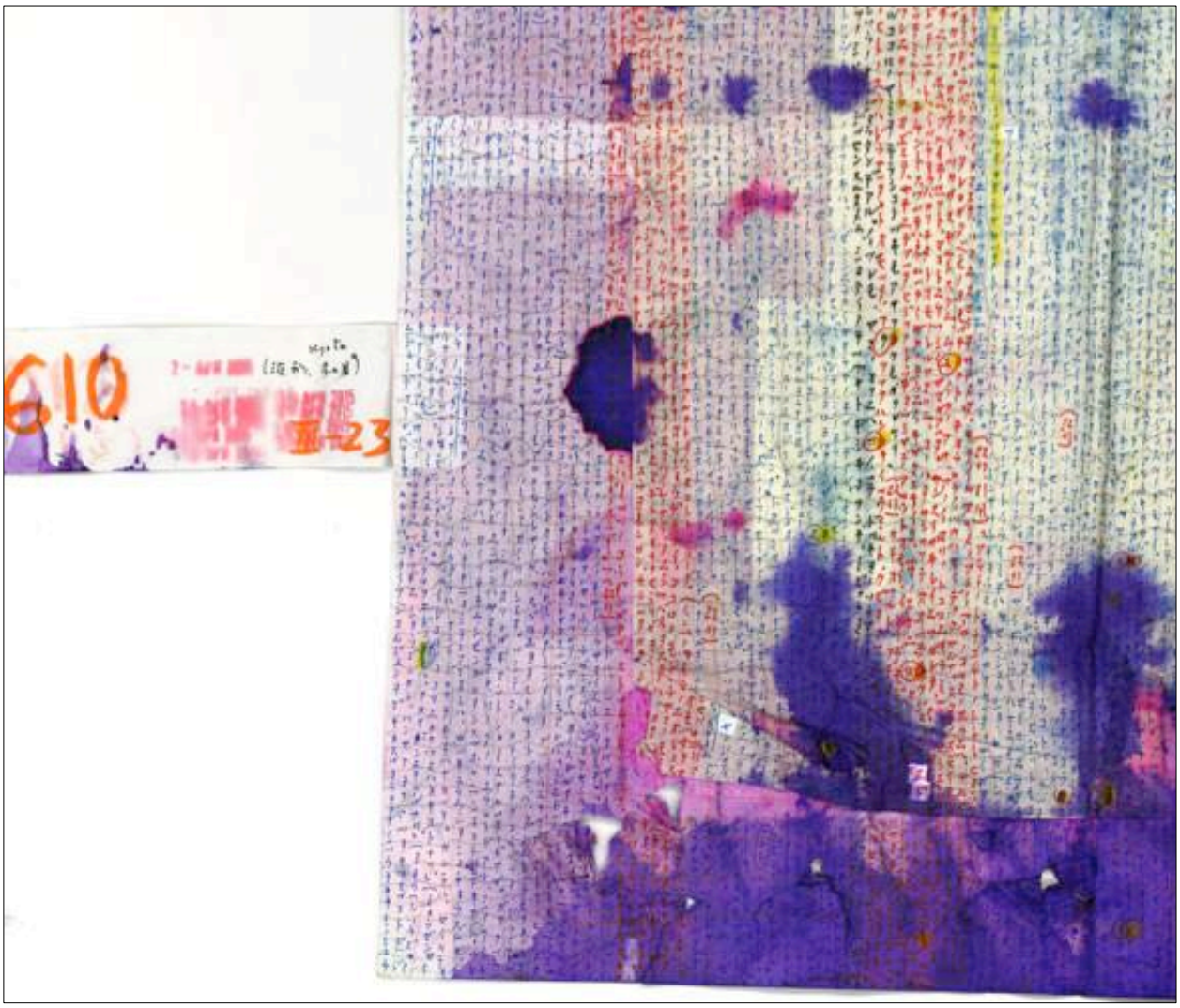
#609

The ocean is the mother of life as life is being sustained by that water. There are times when human beings come under attack by water. After the Great East Japan Earthquake, the poet, who was alarmed by the double-edged meaning of water, visited Kyoto which holds a rich source of underground water. This journey was made not only to search for a new meaning of water but to reexamine the meaning of life as well.

Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and home to many World Heritage Sites, has a 1200-year-old history. Kyoto is located in a valley surrounded deeply by mountains, and beneath this formation of land lies a rich source of groundwater. (The amount of underground water is almost equal to the water in Lake Biwa, Japan's largest lake). Yoshimasu begins a dialogue with "water" in Kyoto. Through the four seasons of Kyoto, a collection of poems is born.

Yoshimasu revolves around *Ryukyoin* which Nobel Prize in Literature winner Yasunari Kawabata depicted in *The Old Capital*. Yoshimasu is on a "journey for water" by pursuing the dragon mirage and following Kyoto's "water" at Daigoji Temple, Myoshinjin Temple, Daitokuji Temple, and Kifune Shrine. There *A Tongue of Water*, words Yoshimasu coined for water, are introduced. Yoshimasu responds in a child-like manner to things that pass before his eyes and converses with everything under the sun with gratitude. The camera shows the sheer pureness of the poet, though nearing 80 years old, which marvels all sensibilities. Images of Yoshimasu are overlapped with the images of Kawabata and Basho. . . No one has ever seen anything like this before as this is a documentary on Yoshimasu's precious creative background.

Shinokatawarade (So Close to Poetry) commonly known as *Kaibutsukun* (Little Monster)



Completing a page of *Kaibutsukun* every three days

National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

From the solo exhibition of *The Voice Between: The Art and Poetry of Yoshimasu Gozo*

From the above-mentioned solo exhibition.
Youngsters in line to receive Yoshimasu Gozo's autograph

A collection of Yoshimasu Gozo's works on display at a major bookstore

Working beyond the borders of poetry.
A joint project with the late Butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno

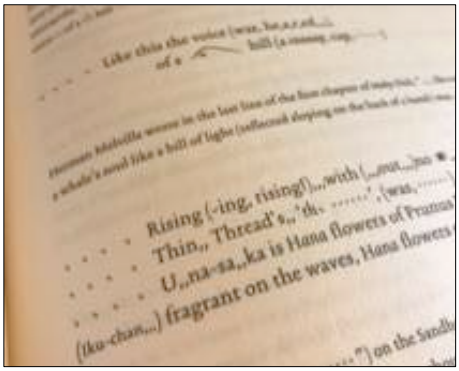
A session with the musician Yoshihide Otomo

Yoshimasu Gozo's study in Tokyo. *Kaibutsukun* is pasted on the wall.

Ryukyo-in in Kyoto. Yoshimaru Gozo gazing at a Japanese garden with autumnal leaves in the background.

Cast

Yoshimasu Gozo 吉増剛造



「Alice Iris Red Horse」 Selected Poems by Yoshimasu Gozo
Published September 27th 2016 by New Directions

Poet. Born in 1939 in Tokyo. Member of the Japan Academy of Arts and recognized as a Person of Cultural Merit. *Alice Iris Red Horse* was published by New Direction in 2016. Graduated from the Faculty of Letters at Keio University. A collection of poetry entitled *Shuppatsu* (Departures) was published in 1964. Since then, he has continued to compose poems prolifically. His major collection of poems include *Yokinshihen* (Golden Collection of Poems, winner of the Jun Takami Award); *A Thousand Steps* (winner of the Tosonkinen Rekishitei Award), *Oshirisu, ishi no kami* (The God of Rocks Osiris; winner of Shiseido's Gendaishi Hanatsubaki Award), "Yuki no shima" aruiwa "Emiri no yurei" ("Island of Snow" or "The Ghost of Emily;" winner of the Ministry of Education for Fine Arts Award), and *Omote-gami* (winner of the Mainichi Award for Art).

Yoshimaru takes pride in his reading out loud performances, frequently holds poetry reading events quite overseas, and is admired by many as *Kamikaze Gozo*. Yoshimasu has not only restricted his activities to poetry, but has transcended genres by employing photographs and motion pictures called *gozo Cine*. He is Visiting Professor at Josai International University. In 2016, the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo organized for the very first time since its opening a solo exhibition for a poet called *The Voice Between: The Art and Poetry of Yoshmasu Gozo* which attracted its own share of attention.

Direction, Screenwriter, Editor, and Producer

Haruo Inoue　井上春生

Film director. Born in 1963 in Nara Prefecture. Attended Japanese school in Singapore and graduated from the Faculty of Law at Doshisha University. Studied under film producers Yasuo Furuhata and Kinji Fukasaku at the Toei Studios Kyoto. Major films include *Kabul Triangle* (a Japan-Afghanistan collaboration, 2006), *Bado koru* (Bird Call, 2006), *Cheri pai* (Cherry Pie, 2006), *Onpu to konbu* (Notes and Seaweed , 2008, and invited to be screened at the Second Chungmuro International Film Festival in Seoul), *The Roots* (a Japan-Afghanistan collaboration, 2008), *Toku no sora* (The Faraway Sky, 2010), *Kakashi to raketto* (Scarecrow and Paddle, 2015). In collaboration with Afghan Films, Inoue has organized four Afghanistan Film Festival in Japan. Inoue is guest lecturer at Musashino Art University and lecturer of *Creative eigajuku* at Tenri Univerity. He has also worked on television commercials for the cosmetics brand Shiseido and won third prize in the JAA Koho Concours (JAA Advertisment Contest) in 2001. He won a special campaign award for the ACC 46th CM Festival in 2006.

Executive Producer

Shuri Kido 城戸朱理

Poet. Born in 1959 in Morioka City, Iwate Prefecture. At the age of 20, while a student at Meiji University, Kido was selected as an outstanding new poet by *Yuriika*, a review magazine on historical poems and criticism. His first collection of poems was published as *Shokan* (Summons) in 1985. Actively engaged in criticism, Kido is considered the leading figure of a new generation of contemporary poets and known as the "giant young poet who destroyed postwar poetry (postmodern poetry in Japan)." With the publication of *Kozukata* he received the Rekiteishinei Award in 1984. With the publication of *Maboroshi no haha* (Illusive Mother) Kido received the Ministry of Education for Fine Arts Award for Best New Talent in 2011. With the publication of *Hyoryubutsu* (Driftage), he received the Shiseido's Gendaishi Hanatsubaki Award in 2012. Kido has published eleven collected works of poems and four volumes on essays in criticism. He has also translated the works of Erza Pound and T.S. Eliot. Kido writes book reviews for Japan's largest circulating newspaper *Yomiuri Shinbun* and writes a monthly review on poetry in *Mainichi Shinbun*. He is guest lecturer at both Ferris University and the Joshibi University of Art and Design Graduate School. He has produced and supervised art documetaries for the past twenty years. *Haha monica* (Monica the Mom), a film he worked on as executive producer, was invited to be screened at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2004.

【Film Data】

Cast: Gozo Yoshimasu

Executive Producer: Shuri Kido

Producers: Yoshio Kakeo and Haruo Inoue

Producer, Screenplay, and Editor: Haruo Inoue

Reading Out Aloud: Akira Otaka and Aya Kobayashi

Filming: Koichi Yasuda and Sumio Ohki (J.S.C)

Lighting: Daisuke Watanabe

Video Engineers: Shinya Iwasaki and Jun Morita

Recording: Taro Nakamura

Translator: Tomoyuki Endo, Michael Fessler, Naomi Kai and Craig Dale

Assistant Producer: Keiko Onoda

Production: Reiji Yamamoto, Ryosuke Honaka, Toshifumi Akatsuka

Copy Editor: Yumiko Shirasaki

Filming Assistants: Hiroyuki Uno, Takuya Yamamura, Kenta Nakayasu

Legal Affairs: Naoki Mori

Project and Filming Support: Daigoji Temple, Myoshinjin Temple, Daitokuji Temple, Kifune Shrine, Shinshoji Betsuin (Ryukyo-in)

Cooperation: National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Kazuo Ohno Dance Studio, Yoshihide Otomo, Yoi Suzuki

Video Camera: REDONE・SonyNEX-FS700R

Studio: PROCENSTUDIO・NiTRo SHIBUYA

Film Production: HUGMACHINE

Production: Shinnyo

A Japan Movie 2017