

## Hikaru Fujii: The Primary Fact

*A seven-channel video installation offers an artistic and performative approach to the genesis of democracy*

June 26–October 12, 2018



Hikaru Fujii, *The Primary Fact*, video still, 2018, seven-channel video, 73 min. Courtesy of the artist.



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The International Studio & Curatorial Program announces *The Primary Fact*, an exhibition of work by current ISCP resident Hikaru Fujii. The artist's first solo exhibition in the United States, *The Primary Fact* features an expansive new seven-channel video and photography installation based on the artist's extensive research into a recently excavated mass grave in the southwest of Athens dating from the 7th century BC.

Across the seven videos in *The Primary Fact*, Fujii adds an artistic and performative approach to the archaeological and anthropological analysis of the eighty shackled skeletons from the Classical Age unearthed during the construction of a park two years ago. Fujii's interest in the history of democracy led him to document a multitude of inconclusive scientific viewpoints on the grave. The skeletons left several important forensic clues that can be used to draw a fragmentary picture of their life and death: they were all healthy young men with excellent teeth, the victims of an execution, and were buried with their clothes on, showing respect by their executors. The date and location of their death is connected to an attempted coup in first half of the 7th century BC, and it is possible that the men—who may have been members of the aristocracy—resisted the emergence of democracy, although we can never definitively know this.

Adding to the complex, yet still perplexing knowledge produced by the scientists, Fujii has reenacted the moment of the mass execution in the key element of the exhibition. Performed by Greek men, the actors fully embody the most precise details of the last moments of the victims' lives, through an anguished and visceral choreography. Fujii's investigation of movement adds a critical layer not only to the story of the deaths, but also to the rise of democracy.

Artist and filmmaker Hikaru Fujii (born 1976) lives and works in Tokyo. Fujii studied at École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs, Paris, and obtained a MA from Université de Paris 8. He undertakes extensive research and fieldwork to investigate existing systems and structures, based on the idea that art is produced from a relationship between society and history. Rather than presenting his research matter-of-fact, his work attempts to reinterpret past events from contemporary perspectives. His recent art works have garnered both international and domestic acclaim. Fujii has had exhibitions at Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo; and Sendai Mediatheque, among others.

This exhibition is curated by Kari Conte, Director of Programs and Exhibitions.

*The Primary Fact* premiered at the Fast Forward Festival 5 in May 2018, organized by the Onassis Cultural Centre in Athens.

About ISCP:

ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries,

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ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program and fourth largest in the world, founded in 1994. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences.

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