

Meanwhile at a 7-Eleven

3-CHANNEL VIDEO-INSTALLATION, ROLAND VON TESSIN

ミーンワイル・アット・ア・
セブン-イレブン

Accompanying Text

Streams of people forcing their way through the reflecting, flashing surfaces of Tokyo reaching to infinity. People live in modular cubicles, interpolated and nested in concrete canyons. Loneliness and the countless possibilities of connecting with someone are two sides of the same coin. 7-elevens, venues, karaoke boxes and bars, which only offer intimacy for five people, form the hubs of Tokyo.

Scenes like J-Punk are retreats and serve identity. Cyberpunk offers a referential system, which unites dystopian and anarchistic elements in a post-apocalyptic setting. In the context of Tokyo, the punk slogan “no future” also loses its ironic distance. Whilst the traumatic explosion of the Hiroshima bomb burned itself deeply into collective memory, the sword of Damocles hovers over the city in the ever-threatening form of the earthquake. The threat finds its pop-cultural counterpart in the auspicious as well as destructive power source Akira, from the eponymous manga series, or the Godzilla films: the city without ground which does not allow lingering but promotes restlessness and escapism.

In comparison to the classic utopia of many science fiction genres, the world of cyberpunk is not shiny and sterile but murky and characterized by violence and pessimism. It originated in the early 80s and mirrors the emerging critique of the growing commercialisation and urbanisation. Anarchy, the prime topic of punk, serves as a trigger and promises the break with the beautiful regime, the strict traditions and rigid corporate structure. One of the first cyberpunk films, *Burst City*, was filmed and produced by the first punks in Tokyo in 1982. Self-dramatisation and role-play go hand in hand with each other. Make-up, clothes and music refer to sci-fi, western punk bands and combine themselves again with manga and aspects of traditional Japanese theatre. Already at the time of Jun'ichiro's old Japan and Barthes' realm of signs we find, in the western meaning, a certain kind of post modernism *avant la lettre*: the eyes, the smile, the gesture, the clothing, the environment, the perfect orchestration and the mastery of their codes. (Andreas Koller)