



Gareth Evans

A Tension

I jumped in the river, what did I see?
Black-eyed angels swam with me
A moon full of stars and astral cars
And all the figures I used to see

All my lovers were there with me
All my past and futures...

- from *Pyramid Song*, by Radiohead

The wit, elegance and serious levity of this exhibition begin with its title. Curated by Kaz in creative and collegiate friendship with artists who previously exhibited in his project's first iteration (Tokyo, 2015), *absolute now II* knowingly plays on the labelling familiar from the most heavy-handed movie sequels and franchises. Those not broken on the filmic wheel might recall *Speed II* (surely wishing it was titled *Faster*), *Die Hard II* (*Die Harder?*) or *Basic Instinct II* (no words...). In such studio naming, there is not even the low-bar punning of *2 Fast, 2 Furious* or *Teen Wolf Too*.

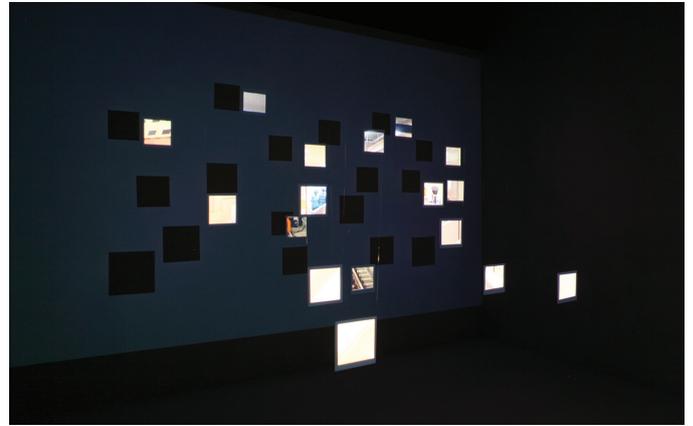
With *this* exhibition, however, there is arguably no more concise a way to summarise the idea at the heart of the text that energises Kaz's endeavour. D.T Suzuki's core conception of the eternal within *each* moment is held with the focus of a haiku by this title.



Rieko Akatsuka, *T(her) - Okutama*, 2025, mixed media, 10 x 10 x 16 cm

Not that there aren't, of course, many theories of time available. The essential, foundational quality of existence, it has long encouraged countless thinkers – aesthetic, philosophical, spiritual and religious – to engage with its in/tangible mysteries. A river, a line, a fixed landscape with all temporalities co-existent; in profound collaboration with space;

indivisible from space (hence spacetime); enabling the multiverse; and on and on... There is not the *time* (sic) or space here to explore further, except to say that Suzuki, suitably – even poignantly – delivering his thoughts via a newspaper comment piece (a medium purpose-made for the cusp between the perennial and the ephemeral) has more claim and authority than most for his thesis.



Kaz, *time's a revelator*, 2026, single channel video installation

The pre-eminent, path-making communicator of Zen thought and practice to Western readers and audiences, Suzuki is the incarnate bridge between radically distinct traditions and also reminds us of another fascinating alignment, in which the actions of time and space are compellingly unexpected. Quantum physics – with its wave/particle duality, understanding of superposition (a particle can exist in multiple locations and states *at the same time*) and discovery of the impact of observation – manifests a fertile conjunction with key tenets of Eastern thought, as popularised in books like *The Tao of Physics* by Fritjof Capra and Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*.

Such distillation has laid out remarkably fertile ground for artists across all media. Like the remarkable 'dry' garden of Ryōan-ji in Kyoto, the entirety of which cannot be viewed from any single point, this *collaborative* response to the thing seen or experienced, what we might call an 'ensemble encounter', centres Suzuki's appreciation of human perception in the process. Indeed, the nature of consciousness is the other great mystery raised by his essay. Just as with time, what it might be – where it emerges from and how it is realised – has exercised us for millennia.

Transmitter

Oh, picking up something good

Hey, radio head

The sound of a brand-new world...

- from *Radio Head*, by Talking Heads

One of the most distinctive writers seeking to synthesise thinking about both subjects is Michael Pollan, whose books on evolutionary botany, plant / food sensoria and psychedelic possibility are now joined by *A World Appears: A Journey into Consciousness*, in which he rejects the widespread 'machine' analogy of the brain's abilities and instead celebrates

its organic qualities of flux, of constant becoming and passing away.

Pollan inevitably draws on Buddhist thought in his investigations and finds an interesting parallel with Suzuki's position (not least, as above, comparable in some ways to Shōji Ruten). Like an astronomer who cannot study the universe from outside it, so we, as Pollan underlines, cannot examine consciousness at a remove. This being 'inside' complicates both authors' readings of the human experiential position but serves primarily to remind us of the power – pivotal in our species' mental apparatus – of imagination, which enables projection and is central to art. This ability to become 'other' is arguably the finest expression of consciousness.

These ideas and concerns come together in the unique space/time of the gallery, which here is darkened to confirm its quasi-auto/cosmological status. The world (and more) is made afresh here. Further, all the pieces shown engage in distinctive ways with the moving image, its fluid eternity of the animated still, and the surfaces onto which it lands, or from which it is fashioned.

They speak inherently to our focus on time, space and attention. The latter confirms the threaded reality of the previous. The absolute now – as Suzuki reminds us – operates, like art, through the eternal's being within time, which can only occur in place.

Rieko Akatsuka's alcove at once sets the parameters. Her various pieces – suggesting the above proposals under the shared title *T(here)* – are realised in materials inherently carrying this thematic charge. Postcards – dispatches in place and time – are inherited across two generations and meticulously recast as collaged, almost theatrical dioramas of memory displaced from chronology. Illuminated from within – both technically and by familial love and care – they are moving images in both senses. As Ryōan-ji garden suggests a natural fecundity through its absence, so motion is present here in the frozen narratives. When the actual, barely perceptible animation of a line enters the drawings of Akatsuka's mother, the tentative

quality of the gesture indicates the proximity *and* uncrossable distance within her project.

Tereza Stehlíková's layered films share the generational and relational intimacy. As a series that confirms these priorities through its own on-going making, *4 Generations of Women's* choreographed actions of bodies in dialogue and *motion* with each other and the ecology of their site are inseparable from their embodiment of the concerns explored. The temporal conversation happens here also with the more-than-human world: the presence of the vividly extant prefigures its inevitable merger with the place of which it is a part.



Tereza Stehlíková, *Being Between Beings*, 2025, film with sound, 9 mins 44 sec.

The surfaces Stehlíková films are of skin and leaves and more. George Barber's *ETERNAL SWIMMER* has generated its own *exhibiting* plane from the conceptual priority of its premise, sublimated deep into its realisation. A defining loop, both existentially and politically, it justifies its form through an empathetic necessity. The hints to its origin and motivating expression might come in the colour of the swimmer's garb, in the sculpted receiver's fibreglass (many small boats are made of similar) but the swimmer is perhaps finally the *viewer*, and it is from this recognition that solidarity can begin.

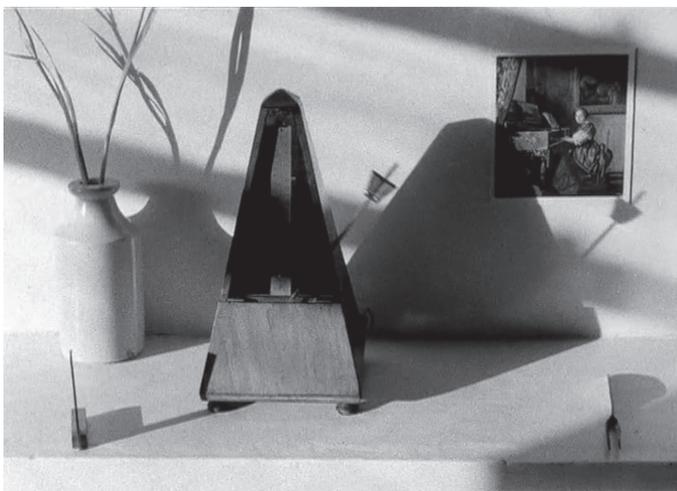
The exhibiting screens in Kaz's showing also realise - through their dispersal - his aesthetic and intellectual intentions. Channelling a high-stakes reference to American singer-songwriters Gillian Welch and David Rawlings' *Revelator* (with its own nod to Blind Willie Johnson's earlier *John the Revelator*), the at once variously durational single / multiple projections of *time's a revelator* serve as quantum particles proposing a whole that one might not be able fully to apprehend (Ryōan-ji persists...). This exploded presentation (its origin screen active throughout) is kin to both our awareness of a fly's optic potential, as well as, scale



George Barber, *ETERNAL SWIMMER*, 2026, HD video (loop)

apart, to James Turrell's Skyspaces. Micro and macro meet in implication.

Guy Sherwin's *Metronome*, realised through revision across almost half a century, provides a form of summation to the journey undertaken. A work of time, made *across* extended



Guy Sherwin, *Metronome*, 1978/2026, 16mm film for mixed media installation

time, and imbued with the performative in its projection, it unites film, drawing, sculpture and installation. As simple as it is not, it is keen with contradiction – its timing unstable, its pace manipulated, its beat silent. Meanwhile, the device itself, patented two centuries ago, is as deceptive as a clock, fooling us into thinking we have the measure of time.

So, from the musician's friend to a note on what's quoted here: aspiring to the condition of music, consciously or otherwise, these artworks - and Kaz's curation - operate for me as scores. In addition to the heightening of the lyrics, their 'raised' consciousness gives texture to both the argument and the notion of inheritance / influence (details easily found online) alongside keen interest in Buddhist ideas throughout their oeuvres from band leaders David Byrne and Thom Yorke. On the long-running radio series *Desert Island Discs*, the former chose Oliver Sacks' *The River of Consciousness* as his shoreline reading, while Yorke opted for *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* by Shunryū Suzuki, who was also, unrelatedly, a major player in the transmission of Zen thinking. When mistaken for the older scholar, Shunryū would often say, "No, he's the big Suzuki, I'm the little Suzuki". Small is beautiful. Large has leverage. Pluralisms abound.

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down
 Letting the days go by, water flowing underground
 Into the blue again, after the money's gone
 Once in a lifetime, water flowing underground

Same as it ever was, same as it ever was...

- from *Once in a Lifetime*, by Talking Heads

absolute now II

Rieko Akatsuka - George Barber - Kaz -

Guy Sherwin - Tereza Stehlíková

Curated by Kaz

14 March - 18 April 2026

Gareth Evans (<https://garethevans.org.uk/>) lives in London and is a writer, programmer, producer and event host.

Rieko Akatsuka (b. 1965, Tokyo) lives and works in Tokyo and London. She is interested in exploring timelessness and liminal space where life and death co-exist. In recent years, she has been working with neon sculptures as well as with meticulously constructed miniature dioramas using visual material created by and related to her late parents, including items which belonged to them.

George Barber (b. 1958, Guyana) lives and works in London. He rose to prominence in the 1980s as a pioneer of the Scratch Video, a fast paced video art genre which used sampled clips from broadcast films and TV to orchestrate sound, vision, repeat edits and rhythm. He has also produced a substantial body of other moving image work; incorporating improvisation, performance, actors, comic monologues, computer animation, and more recently, poetic and political 'essay film' style works.

Kaz (b. 1967, Tokyo) is an artist and a curator based in London. His practice is concerned with being present, focusing on our relationship to the world—both physical and non-physical—and exploring the self and its interconnection with time and space. He regularly works with time-based media to create immersive experiences, using linear time framework to facilitate contemplation of non-linear time and its effect on our sense of self.

Guy Sherwin (b. 1948, Ipswich) is an artist and filmmaker based in London, known for his poetic and contemplative works, which often use footage from the everyday, engaging with light, time and sound. In addition to films and installation works, he often works with multiple projectors and optical sound performances in collaboration with Lynn Loo.

Tereza Stehlíková (b. 1975, Prague) is a Czech-British artist based in Prague. She explores the role our senses and embodiment play in conveying meaning through an artistic practice which spans moving image, installation and participatory performance, and is driven by cross-disciplinary collaboration. In 2020, she founded the online arts journal/platform *Tangible Territory*, which features contributions from established artists and authors across the field of arts, science and philosophy.



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