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**Japan Society
Presents
*SHEEP #1***

**An Imaginative Work that Blends Storytelling,
Object Theater & Live Music**

**By Sachiyo Takahashi
Performed & Projected Live**

Thursday, November 4 – Sunday, November 7

**Japan Society
(333 East 47th Street)**

New York, NY, October 14, 2021 – **Japan Society** proudly presents ***SHEEP #1***, an inventive minimalist performance by NYC-based Japanese artist **Sachiyo Takahashi**. With two unique programs spanning four performances, ***SHEEP #1*** delivers a one-of-a-kind object-theater performance performed live with musical accompaniment. Performances take place **Thursday, November 4 – Sunday, November 7** at **Japan Society (333 East 47th Street)**.

Inspired by the writings of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (*Le Petit Prince*), ***SHEEP #1*** follows the adventures of a sheep in search of the meaning of life. In this performance, NYC-based Japanese artist **Sachiyo Takahashi** (Nekaa Lab) manipulates tiny figurines which are magnified with a video camera and projected onto a screen in real time, combining live operation with cinematic presentation in a style coined by the artist as "Microscopic Live Cinema-Theatre." With ***SHEEP #1***, Takahashi explores the border between narrative and abstraction, generating dream-like fables for the subconscious through wordless storytelling, an electroacoustic soundtrack and live musical accompaniment. Takahashi was awarded grants by The Jim Henson Foundation in 2017, 2018 and 2021 for her innovative work in the field of puppetry.

Four performances at **Japan Society**, playing **November 4 – 7**, will deliver two distinct programs. **Program A**, featuring **Emile Blondel on piano**, will be performed Thursday, November 4 at 7:30pm

and Sunday, November 7 at 2:30pm. **Program B**, featuring **Kato Hideki on bass guitar**, will be performed November 5 & 6 at 7:30pm.

Credits for **SHEEP #1** are as follows: Concept, Sound Design, Visual Design and Performance: **Nekaa Lab / Sachiyo Takahashi**; Live Music: **Emile Blondel**, piano (Program A); **Kato Hideki**, bass guitar (Program B); Dramaturg: **Peter Eckersall**; Technical Advisor, Builder: **Willie Gambucci**; Original Live Music by **Emile Blondel** with excerpts from Franz Schubert (Program A): Original Live Music by **Kato Hideki** (Program B). Electroacoustic Soundtrack by **Sachiyo Takahashi**; Text: Quoted from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and original text by Sachiyo Takahashi; Production: Nekaa Lab / Sachiyo Takahashi.

Tickets & Information: Thursday, November 4 at 7:30pm: Program A, with Emile Blondel on piano; Performance followed by a *MetLife Meet-the-Artists Reception*

Friday, November 5 at 7:30pm: Program B, with Kato Hideki on bass guitar

Saturday, November 6 at 7:30pm: Program B, with Kato Hideki on bass guitar

Sunday, November 7 at 2:30pm: Program A, with Emile Blondel on piano

Tickets are \$23 / \$18 Japan Society members. Tickets can be purchased online at www.japansociety.org or by calling the Box Office at 212-715-1258 (M-F 9:00am – 5:00pm). Japan Society is located at 333 East 47th Street, between First and Second Avenues (accessible by the 4/5/6 at 42nd Street-Grand Central Station or the E at Lexington Avenue and 53rd Street). In compliance with CDC, New York State, and New York City guidelines, visitors will be required to show proof of vaccination and wear a proper, secure-fitting mask at each performance. View our current visitor policies and safety protocols [here](#). For more information, call 212-832-1155 or visit <http://www.japansociety.org>

Artist Biographies:

Sachiyo Takahashi (Creator/Performer) is a composer, musician, and artist whose work centers around storytelling. Compositing sensory elements in a minimalist manner, she explores the border between narrative and abstraction to generate fables for the subconscious. Sachiyo founded *Nekaa Lab* in 2006 together with other “lab members” (stuffed toys and tiny figurines). She has been producing performances, installations and writings, while observing human nature from alternative perspectives. Sachiyo’s *Microscopic Live Cinema-Theatre* – unique performances projected from a miniature stage – has been appraised as a quirky yet imaginative merging between theatrical and cinematic experiences. She has presented her works at international venues and festivals including Prague Quadrennial, St. Ann’s Warehouse, La MaMa, The Tank (including the U.S. premiere of *SHEEP #1* in 2018) and HERE. Her recent works *Everything Starts from a Dot* and *Shinnai Meets Puppetry: One Night in Winter* have been supported by The Jim Henson Foundation. Sachiyo is also an accredited master of Okamoto School Shinnai-bushi, a traditional song-storytelling from Japan and performs using the stage name Okamoto Miya. As a way to integrate her electroacoustic audio-visual works with traditional Asian sound, she has collaborated with gamin, a Korean avant-garde instrumentalist, to conceptualize a new music theatre, *The Emotions*, with which she joined the HERE Artist Residency Program in 2020. www.nekaa.org

Emile Blondel (piano, Program A): Pianist Emile Blondel collaborates with musicians, dancers and artists of all mediums. He studied at the North Carolina School of the Arts under the guidance of Eric Larsen and in Paris at the Ecole Normale de Musique Alfred Cortot. Emile was a recipient of the Kenan Fellowship at Lincoln Center Education which culminated in his performance 'Folk Roots Remixed' at Rose Studio Theater. Orchestral appearances include the Richmond Symphony, Durham Symphony and the Heritage Chamber Orchestra. A frequent collaborator in theater, Emile created music for *Marcel and Man Ray* which premiered in the Labapalooza! Festival at St Ann’s Warehouse. He is currently on the faculty of Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and the Dalton School.

Kato Hideki (bass guitar, Program B) is a Brooklyn-based musician, composer and producer. His work is truly diverse with a wide range of forms and sounds – from ambient, noise, electro-acoustic, songs, and improvisation to sound design and music for dance, film and TV. He has released over 15 titles

and has performed at Lincoln Center, Japan Society, MOMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. He has toured Japan, the US, Europe, the UK and Australia. His music has been broadcast on NPR, the BBC and ABC (Australia). His compositions include “Tremolo of Joy,” “Hope & Despair,” “Turbulent Zone” (premiered at the Bang on a Can Marathon); “Mystic Ship of Life” (commissioned by the Kitchen); film score for the award-winning documentary, *The Journey of Monalisa*; and the dance scores *In the Sea of Heaven* and *There and Here* for TAKE DANCE and the Dallas Black Dance Theatre. In addition to his own work, Kato has collaborated with artists such as Christian Marclay, Koichi Makigami, Ikue More, Fred Frith, John King, Yoshihide Otomo, Take Ueyama, Toshimaru Nakamura and John Zorn. He is also a producer of other artists’ work, including Karen Mantler’s album *Business Is Bad* on ECM Records, and music for a Bessie-Award winning project *THEM* with Chris Cochrane, Denis Cooper and Ishmael Houston-Jones. Currently he is producing an album “*Baba Bibi* with the Tony award-winning songwriter and playwright Stew (*Passing Strange*); and an album “*I Hate Memory* with an actor/songwriter, Eszter Balint “*Stranger Than Paradise*). He studied creative writing and holds BA from Waseda University. He teaches at New York University Tandon School of Engineering’s Integrated Design & Media.

About Japan Society

Japan Society continues a return to live, in-person performance with programs in the disciplines of theater, dance, music and more, slated for Fall 2021 and Winter/Spring 2022. In Fall 2021, Japan Society spotlights the local artistic community, with the timely and topical works of three NYC-based artists with deep ties to Japan and its culture – **Suzi Takahashi’s *The Story Box*** (September 11 – co-presented and produced by HERE), **Aya Ogawa’s *The Nosebleed*** (October 1 – 10), and this presentation of **Sachiyo Takahashi’s *SHEEP #1*** (November 4 – 7).

Looking ahead to Winter/Spring 2022, **Japan Society** welcomes back international artists including emerging Japanese playwright **Shoko Matsumura** with the play ***Cooking Up*** (December 6); performers from Japan, Taiwan and Korea in the Society’s **19th Contemporary Dance Festival** (January 14 & 15); and **Shomyo no Kai**, a group of Buddhist priests performing a millennium-old chanting ritual at **St. Bartholomew’s Church** (February 11). In Spring 2022, the Society’s Performing Arts programming will highlight indigenous art forms from Japan’s northernmost and southernmost prefectures, Hokkaido and Okinawa, with two distinct programs to complete the season: ***Waves Across Time: Traditional Dance and Music of Okinawa*** (March 2022) and ***OKI: Music of the Ainu*** (May 2022).

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we’ve inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to more fully appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50th anniversary of our landmark building with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity. The “JS” monogram is created via overlapping, interconnected lines and shapes, reinforcing the idea of *kizuna* and that Japan Society acts as a platform that connects across, cultures, people, and time.

Connect with us!

Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/japansociety](https://www.facebook.com/japansociety); @japansociety and #japansociety on Instagram; and @japansociety on Twitter.

Support for 2021-2022 Performing Arts Season

Lead Sponsor: MetLife Foundation. This season is made possible, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Major support is generously provided by Doug and Teresa Peterson, with endowment support from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Endowment Fund and the Endowment for the Performing Arts, established with a leadership gift from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional support is provided by Helen and Kenneth A. Cowin, Dr. Jeanette C. Takamura, Dr. and Mrs. Carl F. Tausch II, Mr. Alan M. Suhonen‡, Sarah Billingham Solomon and Howard Solomon, Paula S. Lawrence, Dr. Stephen and Mrs. Michiko Levine, Marjorie Neuwirth, Hiroko Onoyama, Lyndley and Samuel Schwab, and Nancy and Joe Walker. Transportation assistance is provided by All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. Yamaha is the official piano provider of Japan Society. MetLife Meet-the-Artists Reception is provided by MetLife Foundation.

‡ In memoriam.

SHEEP #1 is supported, in part, by Doug and Teresa Peterson. The U.S. premiere in 2018 was co-produced with The Tank, NYC, and supported, in part, by The Jim Henson Foundation Presenter Grant. The world premiere, in Vancouver, Canada, was presented in collaboration with Blim.