



Maija Tammi Solo Exhibition *White Rabbit Fever*

- Period Friday, August 4th through Saturday, September 22nd, 2017
- Hours 12:00~19:00 | Open Fridays and Saturdays
(Closed through Sundays and Thursdays, National Holidays, Aug 19-20 & Sep 15-16)
- Venue KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY
THE TUB 2-8-17 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0047 (TEL 03-5843-9128)

▼ OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, August 4th 18:00~19:15

▼ TALK EVENT: —*The Art of Scientia*—
Friday, August 4th 19:30~20:30

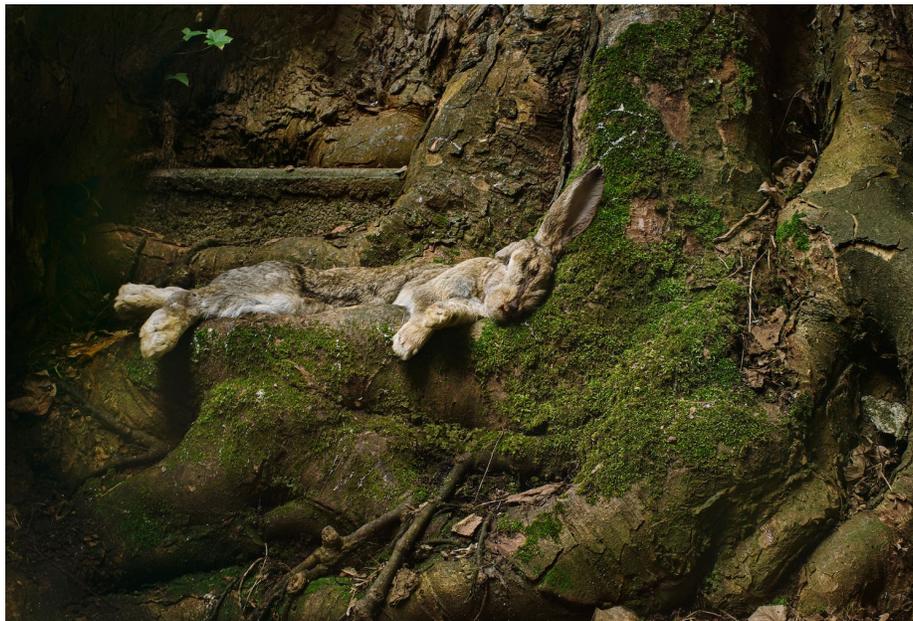
Speakers: Hiromi Nakamura (Tokyo Photographic Art Museum), Maija Tammi (Researcher, artist)

Scientia is a latin word meaning *knowledge*—the origin of the word *science*—, and the talk event will feature Tammi's works, as well as Nakamura's short presentation, introducing worldwide artists delivering artistic expressions through scientific approaches.

KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY is pleased to announce the opening of Maija Tammi Solo Exhibition, *White Rabbit Fever*, on Friday, August 4th, 2017. This exhibition commemorates the release of Tammi's monograph *White Rabbit Fever*, published by Bromide Publishing House Ltd. (Hardcover, 200 pages, bilingual: Japanese/English).

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Maija Tammi, born 1985, is a Finnish artist who is currently working on her studio art-based doctoral thesis at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture in Helsinki. She also regularly collaborates with scientists and musicians. Tammi's works are themed on primordial perceptions of our world, such as life and death, disgust and fascination, aesthetics and beauty, perception of time, and moral values—expressed in the medium of photography, video and installations.



Day 1, from the series *White Rabbit Fever*, archival pigment print
© Maija Tammi, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



Day 17, from the series White Rabbit Fever, archival pigment print
 © Maija Tammi, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

In her *White Rabbit Fever* series, Tammi documents a rabbit corpse lying in a forest and gradually decaying over 100 days, and questions the ambiguous borderline between life and death, beauty and abhorrence, and disgust and fascination.

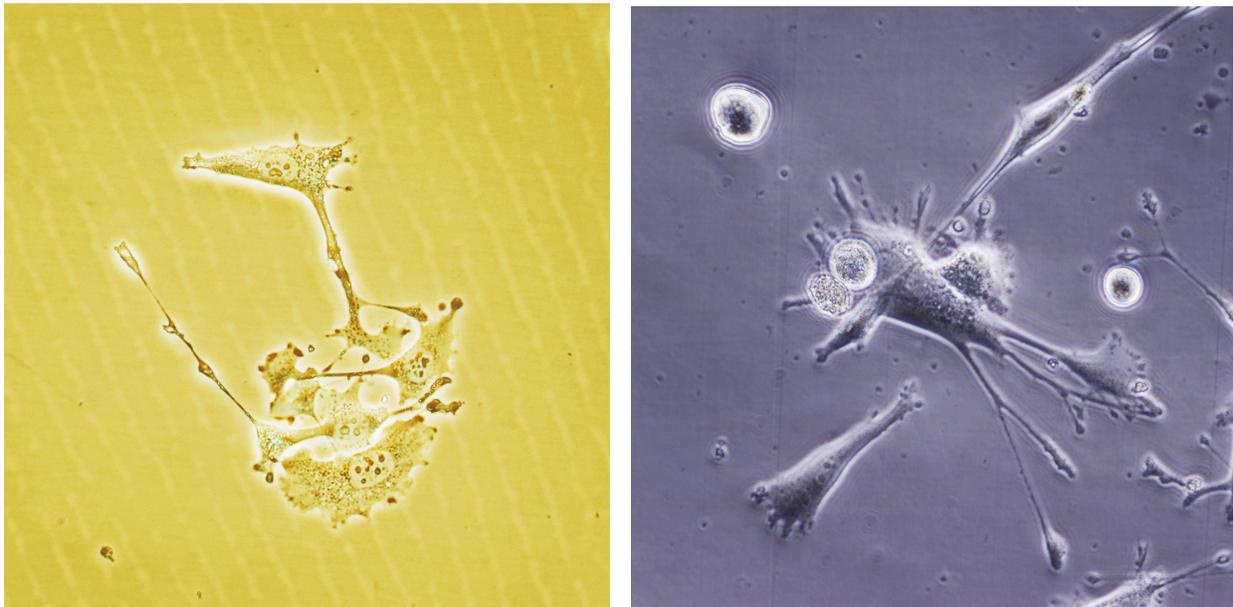
—What things are we allowed to consider ‘beautiful’? Why not all life?

Deliberately challenging the conception of beauty, she focuses the viewer’s attention on a deceased subject, which is typically considered an element of abhorrence. However, the dead rabbit is portrayed to be illusory and romantic—as though in a fairy-tale—illustrating the beautiful aspects of how every particle of the rabbit corpse returns back to the nature. The body of work consequently raises basic questions to the viewer: Until which point is it a rabbit? From what point does it cease to exist?

* * *

In addition to the rabbits, Tammi presents individual images and sequences of human cell lines that grow indefinitely; cancer cell lines that are kept alive in laboratories around the world.

These cells, unlike most human cells, can divide eternally (*), provided the nutrients and the living space. In one example, an American woman named Henrietta Lacks died in 1951, but her cells are still alive and continuously grown. Her cells—named HeLa cells—were also the first human cells in space. Tammi has also documented Pa-Ju cell line, which originates from Finnish teenage patient who died in 1983, and Us-Ki cell line derived from a Finnish patient in 2009. Tammi has been growing and documenting the cell lines under controlled conditions at a research laboratory in Helsinki, Finland.



Day 11805, Pa-ju (left), Day 11924, Pa-Ju (right)
 archival pigment print on backlit film
 © Maija Tammi, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

—*How would time feel without death?*

This unsolvable question invites the viewer to ponder the abstract conceptions of time. The exhibition also brings the viewer to the revelation of the many definitions that we use for death: there is clinical death, and some six minutes later biological death, and even after 17 days some stem cells might still be alive in a human corpse.

* Each time a normal human cell divides, the DNA sequences at the end of the chromosome, telomeres, get a little shorter. When telomeres come to a critical length, the cell dies. A normal human cell divides about 40-60 times. Cancer cells, however, have an active telomerase enzyme that rebuilds the shortened telomeres after each division, and so, with the right nutrients and environment, in theory a cancer cell can keep dividing endlessly. Evolutionarily speaking, this mechanism of cancer cells is actually much older than humans as multicellular creatures. All single-cell creatures are immortal, as they do not have or need an external regulator to limit their growth.

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Maija Tammi approaches the secret of life, by presenting the ambiguity of the borders of life and death through her scientific researches and fieldworks, driven by her pure curiosity. *White Rabbit Fever* has been presented in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Helsinki (Finland), Rome (Italy), and Turku (Finland), and will be her first solo exhibition in Japan. We sincerely appreciate your coming to the exhibition and experiencing the virtues of the work.

■ Please contact below for any image enquiries ■