

## Who is Hanayo? *Jerome Sans*

Hanayo's world is fast rolling, soft and hypermodern. Germany-based Japanese artist Hanayo has been performing all her life and first gained attention as a geisha girl which led the way for a cover story in the trendy London-based *The Face* magazine and as model in a Jean-Paul Gaultier ad campaign. It wasn't the Western exposure that made Hanayo a superstar in Japan; instead it was her appearance in a comedy show on Japanese TV. In addition to being a *favorite* fetish figure of the media, Hanayo has performed in New York and throughout Europe and Asia with many alternative music bands such as Red Krayola. She also produced numerous CDs featuring her music. Her last one was very successful and one song was *even* included in a Colette mix CD in Paris recently. Once she appears on stage, more than a singer, Hanayo is a true character who performs. Between performance art and stage actions, Hanayo is a kind of Japanese Bjork who stands between the sweetness of childhood and the extreme of wild dark experiences. She is between the pure and the impure. The beauty and the beast at the same time. Hanayo is a true artist who denies any possibility of category. Paradoxical? Not at all. She plays with extremes: cultivating a Lolita style of clothing and hair dressing while summoning punk words or trash rock behavior. She looks like a manga character, like one of those eccentric Asian teenagers, pushing the limits of behavior and style. She mixes cultural elements like a musician composes a bootleg record, superimposing two impossibles.

She always turns around *every* situation. She *never* conforms to what you expect, but deviates to create other situations. Hanayo is *furtive*, you'll *never* find her in a predefine zone. But nor is she a troublemaker.

Besides releasing CDs with underground electronic musicians and DJs, she has published books of her photographs, put out an eponymous comic book, performed in many museums and theatres, and has exhibited her art extensively. Hanayo is everywhere. Her work is like a »Hana-world«. Everything is part of it. There is no left over. That is why she is shooting pictures all the time. Her snapshot photos are a pictorial diary of her everyday life. It includes her direct environment, her friends, her daughter, her cities, her travel... her life. She keeps shooting all that is going on around her. This is why she transforms the white cube exhibition space into a »Hana- room«.

The intimacy at the center of art has, at this new century, entered singular dimension. The 1980s were marked essentially by the image, by the public image, brand images, logos. In contrast, the events of the last few years seem to bear the mark of the private, the individual, as expressed in the recurring production of photographs, videos and installations taking the form of personal diaries, biographies, autobiographies and everyday conversations. Hanayo's pictures are often overexposed, fuzzy and very colorful. Their qualities deny all traditional professional photographic technique to assume a more casual, amateur sexy modus operandi, and are like a field of experiences. Her photo works defy any notion of chronology. They cancel distances in time, bring into co- presence events from different periods or places and distill these episodes of life into a harmonious disorder, countering the linearity of facts with a shattered narrative, approached rather in the manner of Jean-Luc Godard, without beginning, middle or end. They are fragmentary narratives with as many beginnings as there are fragments. These fragments are never developed or explained. They remain in suspense and are like so many questions probing our perception of the world . The possibility of the

enigma, offered to each individual, like an open door to a different reading. Enigma as metaphor for one possible reading of these photographs. The work as fragment. These snapshot photographs are like pop-up bubbles in a dreamland. While capturing the techno and manga culture, she also shows the tradition that continues via intimate relationships with her family members, developing an endless world. In her musical style, in her dress code in her photos, she is in constant movement and metamorphosis, like a chameleon. With each performance, you can't avoid getting from her the perception she wants you to have. There is no way to escape.

excerpt from "*The Curator's Egg. Vol. 3 -- On Stage* " curated by Jérôme Sans,  
edited and published by Corporate Culture Department, Shiseido Co., Ltd.