



KIMONO tales

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UNDRESSING FOR REDRESSING

A project by **Angelo Cricchi**

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Music by **Yuya**

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KIMONO TALES

Kimono Tales is a voyage of the eternal female universe through the photos of Angelo Cricchi, accompanied by the artist Massimiliano Ionta and the Japanese musician Yuya.

Angelo Cricchi's articulated artistic project uses diverse narrative codes, in a synesthetic mix of photography, video, music and voices, which confer together in Massimiliano Ionta's exhibit, to the rhythm and melody expressly composed by Yuya. The portraits of Cricchi's muses in kimonos are the absolute protagonists of their "stories" revealed, their voices taking life in a choral story surrounding the feminine essence in its widest sense, triggered, almost by happenstance, by the mysterious and liberating power of a common object within the Japanese culture, that is, the kimono.

The "Kimono Stories" speak of the human soul through the naked hearts of Angelo Cricchi's muses, attentive observer of temperaments and holder of four kimonos which were left to him by a mysterious visitor from Japan.

THE STORY OF K

"K is a Japanese girl who lives in the small town of K, not far from the capital.

I know her through a friend. I soon discover that K dresses only in ceremonial clothes: kimonos combined with traditional socks and sandals. Even in Japan this is not common.

The little and kind K begins to appear on the screen of my cell phone like an oriental saint, while I was struggling in the Roman traffic.

Every October afternoon someone knocks on the door of my studio. I find myself in front of K in person, dressed with her kimonos, who smiles at me, she was real and helpless.

K remained with me for a few weeks. She was always cheerful but also careful. Elegant and selfless. Ready to participate or step aside.



After a short time she become the favorite guest of all my friends, who compete in order to grab the attention of the “girl with kimono” at exclusive parties.

For most of the time she makes long and solitary walks through Rome, and the cobblestones consumed his gray sandals, now held together with a double-sided tape.

One day she looks at me straight behind the back of his head, as they do in Japan, and said: “I’ve taken my decision, I stay here, (pause) Forever.”

At that moment I was going through a turbulent period of my life, so I dissuaded her and advised her to return to the city of K, where she has all her affections and work.

She smiles and does not reply. “All right”, she says only.

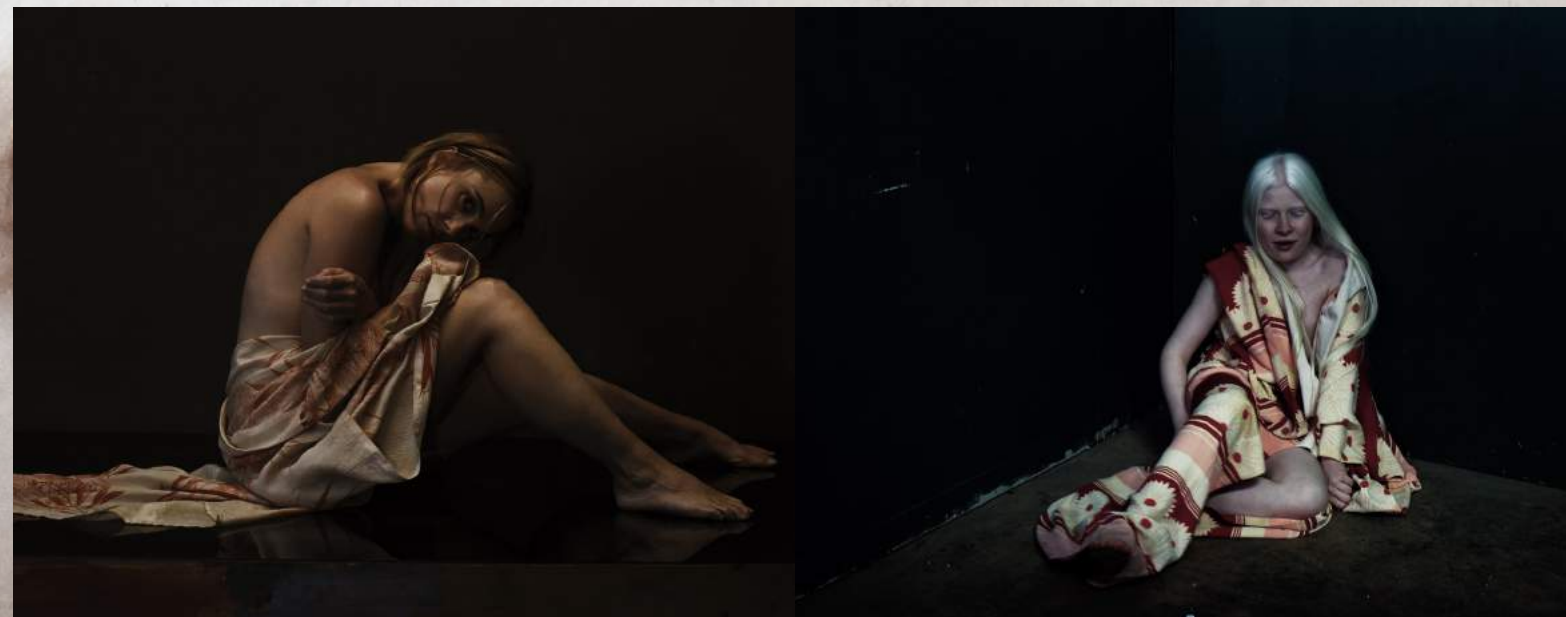
Then I see her meticulously fold in her kimono in my closet. “I leave them here, and one day I will come back to get them. They are the sign of my presence. Make good use”.

(Angelo Cricchi)

THE 4 KIMONO OF K

Kimono (... meaning “something to wear”, or “clothing”) is a traditional Japanese garment of ancient origins, as well as the national costume of the country.

The kimono consists of a tunic of various lengths, crossed in front and closed with a long belt known as obi (...). There are kimonos for men, generally brown or gray in color, and kimonos for women, differently textured and embellished with paintings and weaving.



The kimonos worn in the photo sessions that inspired Angelo Cricchi belong to a Japanese girl named K, a guest for a brief period in the Roman artist's house/studio, where the four feminine garments - one light pink used for sleeping, one for daytime with a floral decoration on a red background, a full-bodied, blue kimono and a short, turtledove colored, silk one - all left in custody with the promise that, one undetermined day in the future, they would find their way back to Japan. K's kimonos, taken from their proper context and wrapped around the exotic and evocative charm given by western imagery, become more like a magical object that underlines the beginning of a kind of scenic ritual, that of undressing to adorn an enchanting article of clothing capable of triggering unforeseeable emotions and revealing a dimension of the soul by an appearance which, until then, had been hidden.

ANGELO CRICCHI'S PORTRAITS

Photographically, this is a particularly unusual work with regards to the artist's former productions, as it is totally removed of any superstructure: a set reduced to the essentials, no iconographic research is foreseen, no kind of specialized technique, there are no productions, nor art direction, make-up and hairstylists, assistants. Even artificial lights are absent, except for a small point when it begins to get dark. The work metaphorically follows the concept of jazz improvisation on a preformed schematic outline.



THE MUSIC OF YUYA

Voices are taken from kimono portraits which abandon their identity in order to free themselves to the sound of a concertina (a small musical instrument similar to an accordion) on the notes composed ad hoc by Yuya, Cherry Blossom in the Night, inspired by the photos of Angelo Cricchi. The concertina is a western instrument, invented in 1829 by the Englishman Charles Wheatstone, its structure is similar in some parts to a typical Japanese reed instrument called a sho (...), and its sound is able to bring the East and West together. Though it is a small object, the concertina is a musical instrument that is able to deeply touch emotional cords, allowing the acoustic effect to modulate with relation to sound and space.

THE MUSES

The cast is made up of the vastest selection possible, which contemplates the participation of anyone in the condition to interpret or express any of the immeasurable shades through which the feminine manifests itself, and, those willing to wear one of K's four kimonos, may do so with no limits of age, ethnicity or bodily esthetics. Professional models are excluded and little-known or complete strangers have been chosen by the artist.



THE IMAGE AND THE MIND

From a mental standpoint of the portrayed subjects, this work has been very liberating and cathartic, stimulating an intimacy also from a psycho-analytical mechanism, through a kind of ritual which begins by undressing in order to don a “magical object” and concludes with unexpected, breakthrough emotional states. During the photo shoots, the kimonos become charged with an inductive power with regards to the person who wears them, destabilizing or reassuring, depending on each individual, transcending from the mere garment into a classic object with “magical” powers capable of possessing whomever wears it. The enchanted object from the Eastern culture evokes an image from an ancient Orient and triggers a psychic short-circuit full of suggestion that projects K’s four kimonos into the fascinating and unknown universe of Japanese mythology, populated by Yokai (...), supernatural spirits that interact in various ways with humans and which include Tsukumogami (...), common objects which come to life after turning one hundred years old. In Japanese folklore, one of these objects is the “possessed kimono” called Kosode-no-te (...).

SPACE AND RITUAL

A photo session usually follows a well-defined plan. After a brief chat, the person to be photographed is invited to choose between the four kimonos. For example, the choice of a light or heavy kimono reveals a specific attitude of the person who will wear it. An attitude more or less introverse or perhaps the way in which one accepts their own body. After which, the person is invited to sit down on an easy chair used for a small confidential interview where the “ritual” of the kimono begins.



MASSIMILIANO IONTA'S INSTALLATION

Massimiliano Ionta's installation collaborates with Angelo Cricchi's photographic nucleus, accentuating the narrative and evocative power.

THE MOSAIC TALES

The mosaic is composed of single led-walls in Instagram format which project films of the photo sessions, assembled and projected in extreme slow-motion, in such a way as upon seeing it for the first time, the whole composition appears like a static image, but is really in constant movement "like our souls, always faithful to themselves but in continual evolution". The images are accompanied by background voices speaking sentences randomly tied together from the single words taken from the kimono interviews, creating new spaces of thought, new stories and original language creations.

THE LIGHT TALES

These are the writings that light up intermittently thanks to illuminated electric wires inserted into transparent plexiglass panels, symbol of the soul's ethereal consistency, upon which the films made during the interviews are projected. These writings are fractions of sentences selected from the conversations in kimono. From these story fragments, taken from the original context, the observer may evoke said memories, which stabilize an unconscious bond with each subject's experience, filtered by each one's memory, creating an emotional crash which, suddenly, becomes the binding synopsis between strangers. Such new and hybrid memories, unique for whomever is reflected in them, joins together a kind of mnemonic short-circuit, the singularity of the individual with the plurality of the common existence.



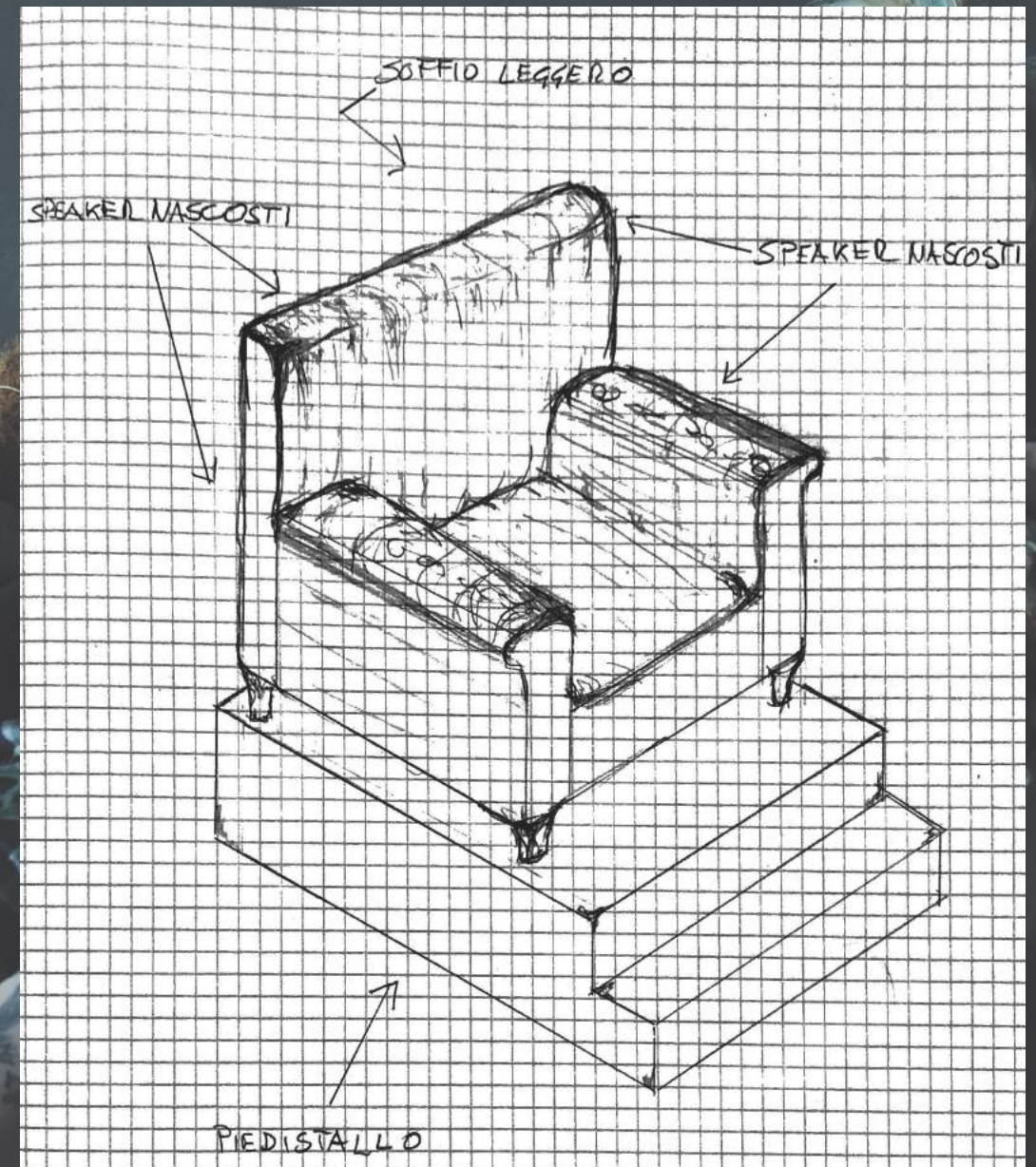
THE WHISPER TALES: IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION

The chair from which the Kimono Tales sessions begin is present in all interviews. Throne and pulpit from which the soul expresses itself, the same seat, placed on a pedestal, will be a trap for the spectator. By projecting a kimono on it, those who want to seat, will become the protagonist as the muses. Once seated, the visitor can be photographed while the armchair will whisper memories of the stories heard, through micro-speakers hidden inside.

ANGELO CRICCHI

Angelo Cricchi was born in Rome in 1961. After many years as a professional athlete, his life and passion brought him to explore the territories of fashion and contemporary art, in a continuous loop between both worlds, which have, over the years, marked his natural professional dimension. Esteemed as one of the most original photographers in Italian fashion, he has produced important ad campaigns for names like Gucci, Kenzo, Miss Sixty, Max Mara, Byblos and Antonio Marras, while collaborating with Italian and international magazines such as Repubblica's D, Rolling Stone and Elle Italia, France and Japan.

In 1997, together with Susanna Ferrante, he created Lost&Found, a cultural forge active in all facets of photography, from ad campaigns to portraits, photo shoots together with video and short films.



His works have been exhibited in museums and private institutions in Italy, France and Austria. Among the more important photography projects: *I Fiori dell'Atlis*, portraits of olympic athletes; *Ignoto a Me Stesso*, portraits of artists; *Il Mio Cuore Messo a Nudo*, nude women with small defects; *The River*, images of rivers from all over the world. These last years have seen his research driven towards the study and exhibiting of feminine iconography since the birth of photography up until the present, the results of which are two parallel works called *Gloomy Sunday*, presented at MAK in Vienna in 2009, 50 imagery portraits of female suicides captured at the fatal moment of their last breath, and *Misty Beethoven Erotic Parade*, 30 photos that trace the history of eroticism and desire. The collective imagery "put into play" through Eros and Thanatos.

Among the most recent personal works:

2009, *Gloomy Sunday*, MAK (Museo Arte Applicata), Vienna

2010, *Tears of Eros*, Officine fotografiche, Milano, a cura di Valeria Ribaldi

2011, *Misty Beethoven Erotic Parade*, Mondo Bizarro Gallery, Roma, a cura di Valeria Ribaldi

2011, *Profilo d'acqua*, Doozo Gallery, Roma, a cura di Stella Gallas e Cristina Nisticò

2012, *Le perle sono vere*, Castello di Rivara, Torino, a cura di Simona Cresci

2012, *Entropia*, Rossmut Gallery, Roma, a cura di Angelo Cricchi & Simona Lianza

2012, *Blue K*, Rossmut Gallery, Roma, con Piero Pizzicannella, regia performance video e foto di Angelo Cricchi



2013, *Ritratti immaginari*, Pho_To Progetti per la fotografia presenta i ritratti immaginari di Angelo Cricchi al Milan Image Art Fair 2013 al SuperStudio Più di Milano

2015, MUSA, Angelo Cricchi, Galleria Giacomo Guidi, 9 luglio 2015, Roma

2017, *Contemporary Cluster #3 [TRIPTYCH]*, Roma, Angelo Cricchi con Mustafa Sabbagh e Matteo Basile

2018, MUSA, Corso 281 Art Gallery Luxury Suites, Roma

In January 2018 he takes first place in the placements sponsored by the Regione Lazio Arte sui Cammini with the project Three Gates of In-Perfection, with the artists Davide Dormino, Giancarlo Neri, Goldschmied&Chiari.

Today Angelo Cricchi is creative director of the magazine FLEWID-The Book and director of the Fashion Dept. at the Istituto Superiore di Fotografia e Comunicazione Integrata in Rome.

YUYA

Yuya is a Japanese artist, singer-songwriter and concertina player. Her artistic name Yuya is taken from one of the Five Modern No (...) by Yukio Mishima.

She began her career as a jazz singer and her singer-songwriter curriculum began in 2007 when she started writing original songs, concentrating principally on themes of sound and colors taken from Japanese words.

In 2009 she composed an original song in Japanese for the director Hélène de Crècy during her residency at Villa Kujoyama, the Institute of French Culture in Japan.



In 2010 her CD Sameyokashi is released, with words and music by Yuya and H. Wakabayashi on piano.

in 2011 she begins playing the concertina and composes various songs in Japanese.

In 2016 her CD antique soirée is released, words, lyrics and instruments are entirely interpreted and played by Yuya. In the same year, each spring, at the period of the cherry blossoms (sakura ...) she plays antique soirée at the Special Concert which is held at night under the blossoming cherry trees, thus evoking with her compositions, a world suspended between dream and death from the suggestive and decadent atmosphere which is highly electrifying.

Outside of Japan Yuya has given concerts in Paris in 2014 and Taipei in 2016.

MASSIMILIANO IONTA

Massimiliano Ionta was born in Rome in 1969. He began his artistic career as a musical composer and author collaborating with major international labels such as BMG, Sony, Warner and Universal.

In 2001 he founded the Factory Musicale Start-Group participating and producing winning projects for the Festival di Sanremo (Sergio Cammariere) as well as collaborating artistically by producing artists such as Morgan and Raiz from Almamegretta.

As a talent scout he has contributed to the birth of many artists such as Fabrizio Moro, Alessandro Mannarino, Bud Spencer Blues Explosion, Frank Sent Us and producer of Orange & Frenetik.

He has also composed soundtracks for films such as Sinner with Robert Englund, Caribbean Basterds by Enzo G. Castellari, Cose dell'Altro Mondo (in collaboration with Simone Cristicchi) with Diego Abatantuono, Valerio Mastandrea and Valentina Lodovini.



In 2007 he becomes involved with the new techniques of mapping projection and audio-video installations and at the end of 2017 participates in the realization of the museum installation works at Palazzo Valentini, the Foro di Augusto (The Augustus Forum), the Foro di Cesare (The Caesar Forum) and Welcome to Rome in collaboration with Piero Angela and Paco Lanciano.

In 2010, together with Frank Sent Us, he produces the first video-music composition entitled Watch the Sound, followed by numerous live performances in Italy with sponsors such as Adidas and Ceres and guest participation in events such as the RomaEuropa Festival and La Festa del Cinema di Roma as well as performances at MACRO Testaccio

In 2013 he begins a philosophical research on the conceptual relationship between existence, soul, conscience and experience together with the researcher and author, Ordinary Member of the 1st Psychiatric Clinic "La Sapienza" in Rome, Prof. Mario Scardino.

In 2016 he writes a chapter in the soon to be released volume Anima-Dignità-Gratitudine by Mario Scardino.



