

Marjan Krebelj

PORTFÓLIO

Dear Japan

Dear Japan is my homage to traditional Japanese art. In this series I research human relationship with nature and oneself. The purpose is to create atmospheric and contemplative images (a kind of visual haiku), which will question certain assumptions of the western thought. The main inspiration comes from sumi-e (ink wash painting) of Muromachi, Momoyama and Edo period, and from books like *In Praise of Shadows* by Junichiro Tanizaki. Big influences come also from the western tradition, the names like Dante, Rembrandt, Turner and van Gogh spring to my mind among the first. Especially van Gogh is a major influence in the third chapter, not only as a painter but also as philosopher and writer.

1. Shodo

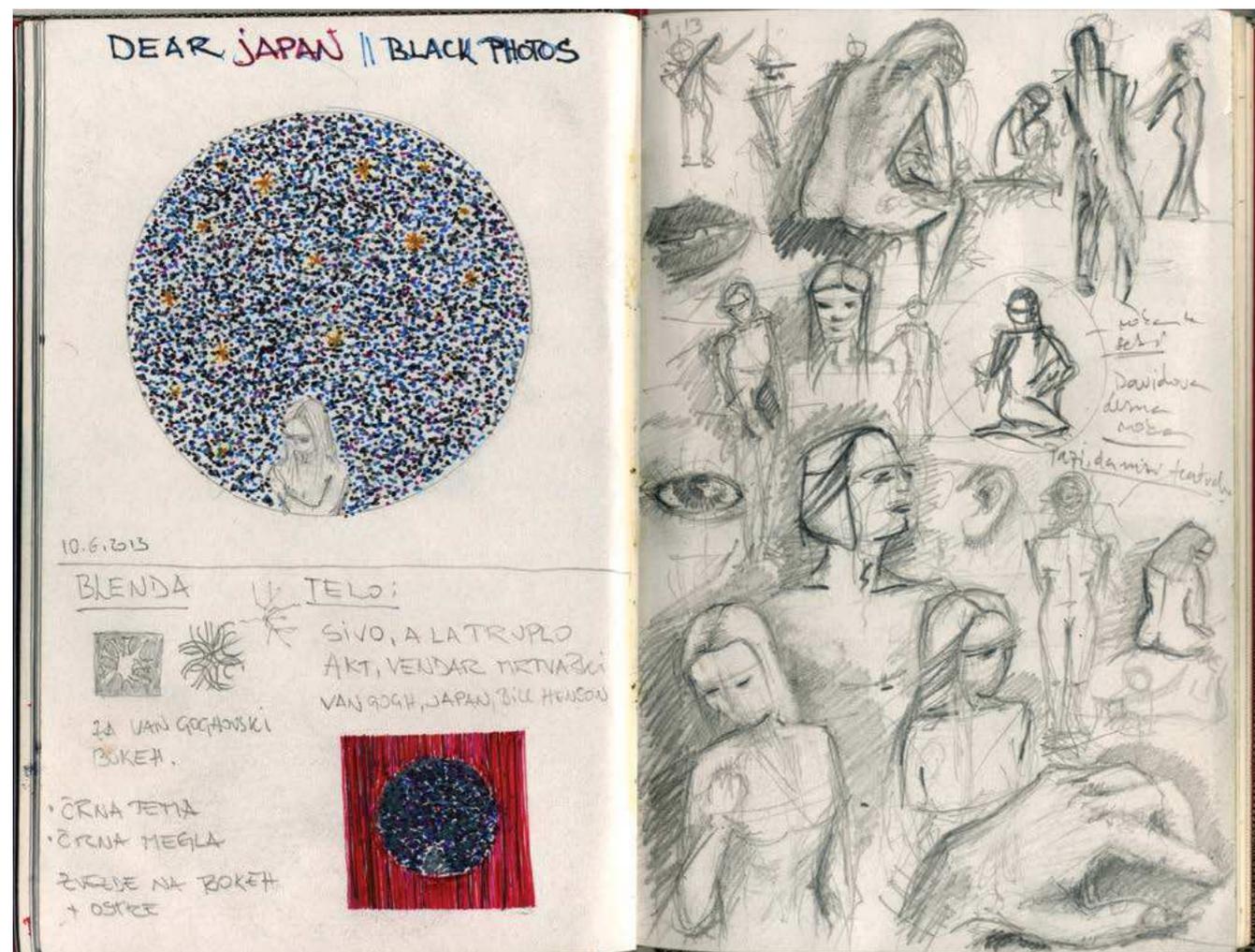
The first chapter of the series is inspired by traditional calligraphy scrolls. The photographs are influenced by the color scheme of white, red and black that appear in Japanese scrolls and graphics. The series does not go very much beyond that, even though I often use this colour scheme to reach some more subtle or even provocative themes.

2. Sumi

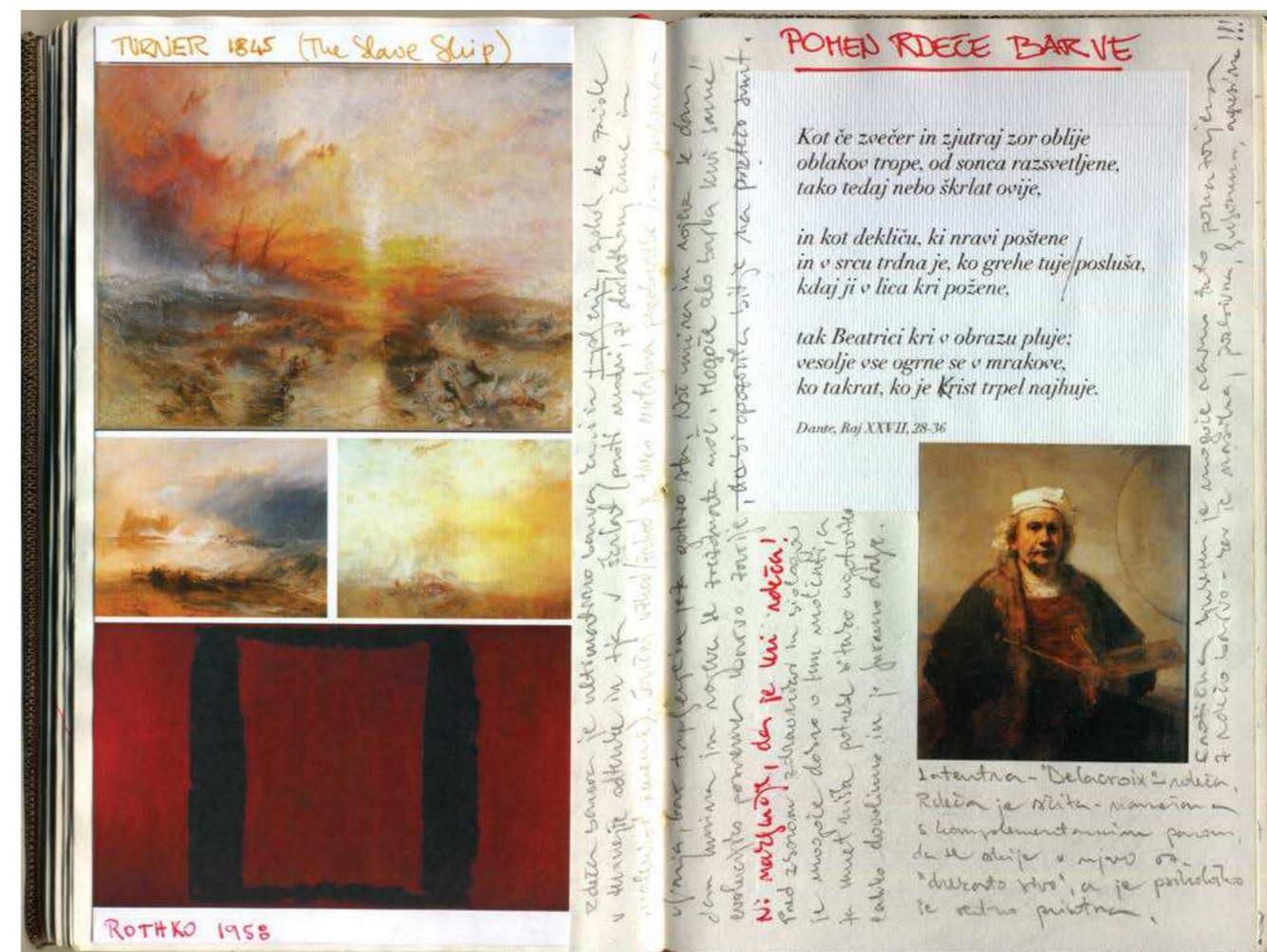
The second chapter goes deeper than mere color scheme and tries to explore human relationship with nature. Japanese art was always deeply connected with nature and pictorial aspects of its landscape which brings about very contemplative nature of the photographs, very much as sumi-e landscape paintings of Japanese tradition. This chapter features landscape images with a model which is there to convey even more emotion and to help the viewer project oneself into the mood of the image. One thing that is very characteristic is the use of trees which fascinate me beyond description. To me a tree is one of the most profound things one can contemplate upon. It is a perfect fractal - each branch resembles the whole tree and it is further divided into smaller branches. The shape of a tree is both ridiculously simple and profoundly complex. Each tree has its own unique form and size, yet you can quickly recognize an oak from a cherry tree. A tree is like a small universe and the pattern that these branches render on a 2-dimensional photograph is each time completely unique, chaotic and yet just so beautiful.

3. The Black Paintings

The third chapter is an exploration of how human consciousness connects with oneself through the shadows (as defined by Junichiro Tanizaki) and through the experience of death. On one hand looking into shadows is looking into oneself, but at the same time I find it amazing that atoms, which were previously floating in the universe, at some point come together to form not just life - but Consciousness itself and become self-aware. Then, at the moment of death, this matter and this very Consciousness dissolves back into the Universe of which has always been a part of. For a brief moment Universe organised itself to become Conscious. And just before being dissolved back each of us is confronted with oneself in the most honest way, therefore death can also be beautiful (as opposed to western view which fears and denies death). How could death be beautiful? Many times our mortal existence is a bad advertisement for the ideas and love that we carry in our hearts (that is why people are often disappointed when they meet their favourite artist, the mortal body can't compete with the ideas they materialised in their works). So imagine a person which develops such perfection of the personality, that he or she has to die in order to give his or hers ideas a proper life without being burdened by the imperfect human body. In that case immortality is granted and this series is a visual essay on all these types of death and the afterlife that follows.



Sketches for the serie
Dear Japan 2011-2013



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Recent times are marked with an overflow of kitsch, plagiarism, instant art, copies and everything that shocks the viewer with what is inconsistent with traditional views and understandings of beauty and aesthetic cannons that are the result of historical peaks in fine art. In this atmosphere, Marjan Krebelj's photographs are a healing touch to everything nowadays considered mainstream. The mastery and excellence of his work, which are nowadays rare in artistic expression, can easily be seen even by viewers of no artistic education. His work exhibits a tendency toward perfection from the moment of conception to the execution of the photograph. His use of skillfully deliberate framing, composition, relationships between details and the whole, tonal relationships and rich tonalities inside a minimal range of colours as well as the motif and the integral message are the result

of hard work and the affinity for beauty and minimalism. All of that exceeds today's limits of what can be seen. His work demands more than just a casual glance, because the message is hidden and the work is so rich in technical and other virtues that it borders on extreme. I've been following his work since the beginnings and I've noticed a big upgrade in knowledge and favouring artistic merit before marketability. All these traits give his work a special personal language that is original but nevertheless respects tradition while maintaining modern expression and the immediacy.

Leon Zakrajšek

Marjan Krebelj, M. Arch., (*1981)

Born in Ilirska Bistrica, Slovenia. Having graduated in architecture Marjan Krebelj works in various domains of visual expression, although his strongest affiliation is with photography and design. During his studies on Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana he worked part time job at a local TV station (TV Galeja) where he produced a weekly show on music and film. Later he fully dedicated his life to design and photography. In years that followed he worked in architectural office as well as a freelance artist. He still regularly works in graphic and industrial design.

Teaching has been always a strong part of his career. He started a photography class at local primary school in 2001 and has led many photography and art courses for people of all ages since then. The experience he gained brought him a respectful position of a lecturer and adviser for the Ministry of Education of Slovenia, where he instructs teachers on subjects like creativity, art and giftedness. In the past two years he also lectured on Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana.

After getting his first SLR for his 10th birthday the fascination with photography never left him. He got his first darkroom experience at 11, and even as a kid he experimented with all sorts of techniques (including glass plate photography or stereo-photography), then as a teenager and

young adult spent most of his time in photojournalism, being published in all of the notable newspapers in Slovenia. In the last years he moved towards commercial, fine-art, conceptual and even mies-en-scene photography (despite not leaving photojournalism completely). He occasionally also explores moving images, video or spatial installations. His latest work is deeply influenced by all these experiences.

Notable awards

2009 - National Geographic Slovenia (1st place, Places)

2012 - Month of Photography Bratislava (2nd place in Portfolio Review)

2012 - Month of Photography Bratislava (Honorary mention by magazine Fotografia, Poland)

Notable Exhibitions and Projections

2005 - Dom na Vidmu, Ilirska Bistrica (solo)

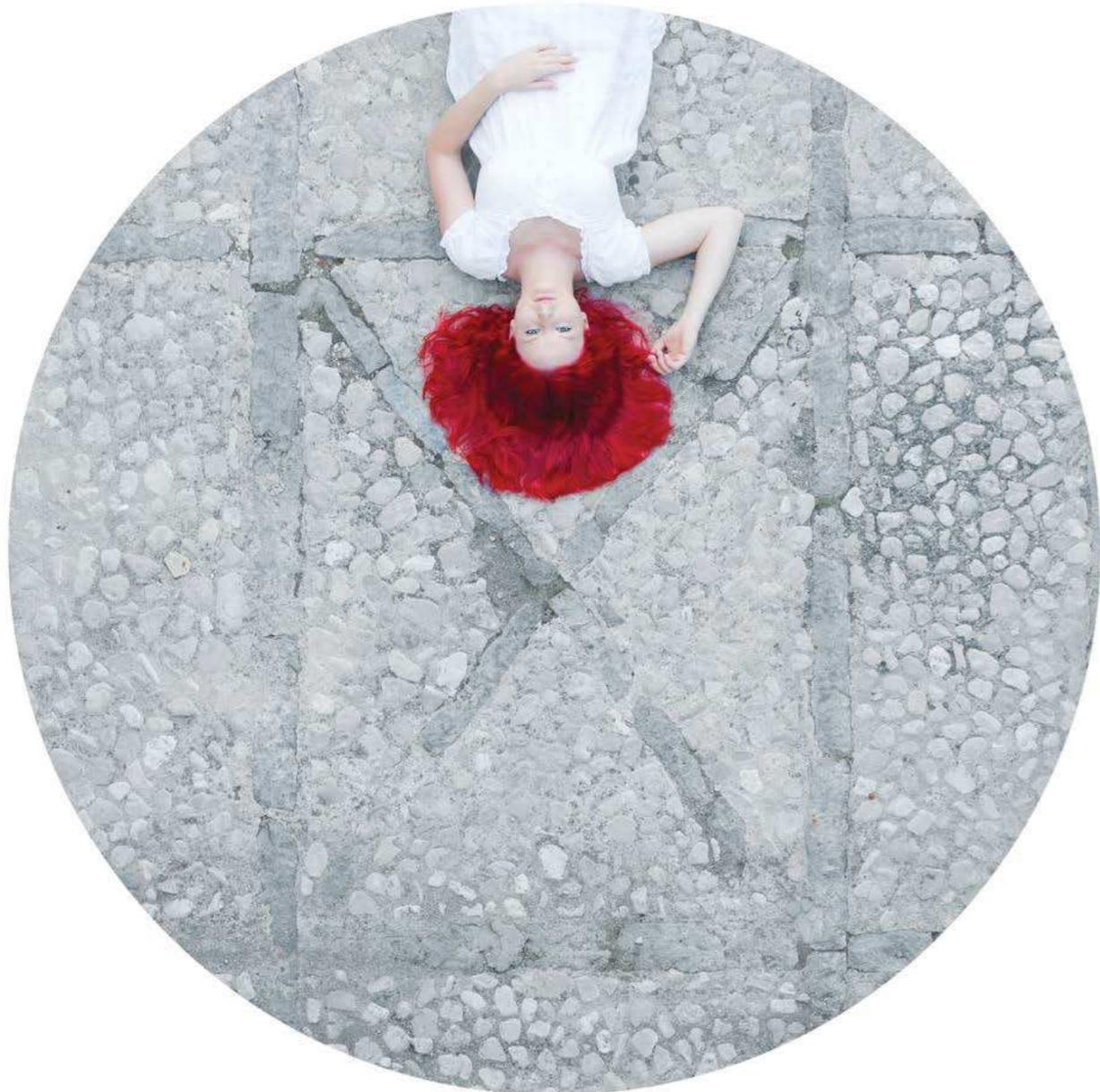
2010 - Library Makse Samsa, Ilirska Bistrica (solo)

2011 - SIDDHARTA, solo exhibition with Siddharta band, Ljubljana

2012 - EMZIN competition Exhibition in Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana

2013 - Haus der Fotografie - Wien, FotoSecession, Vienna

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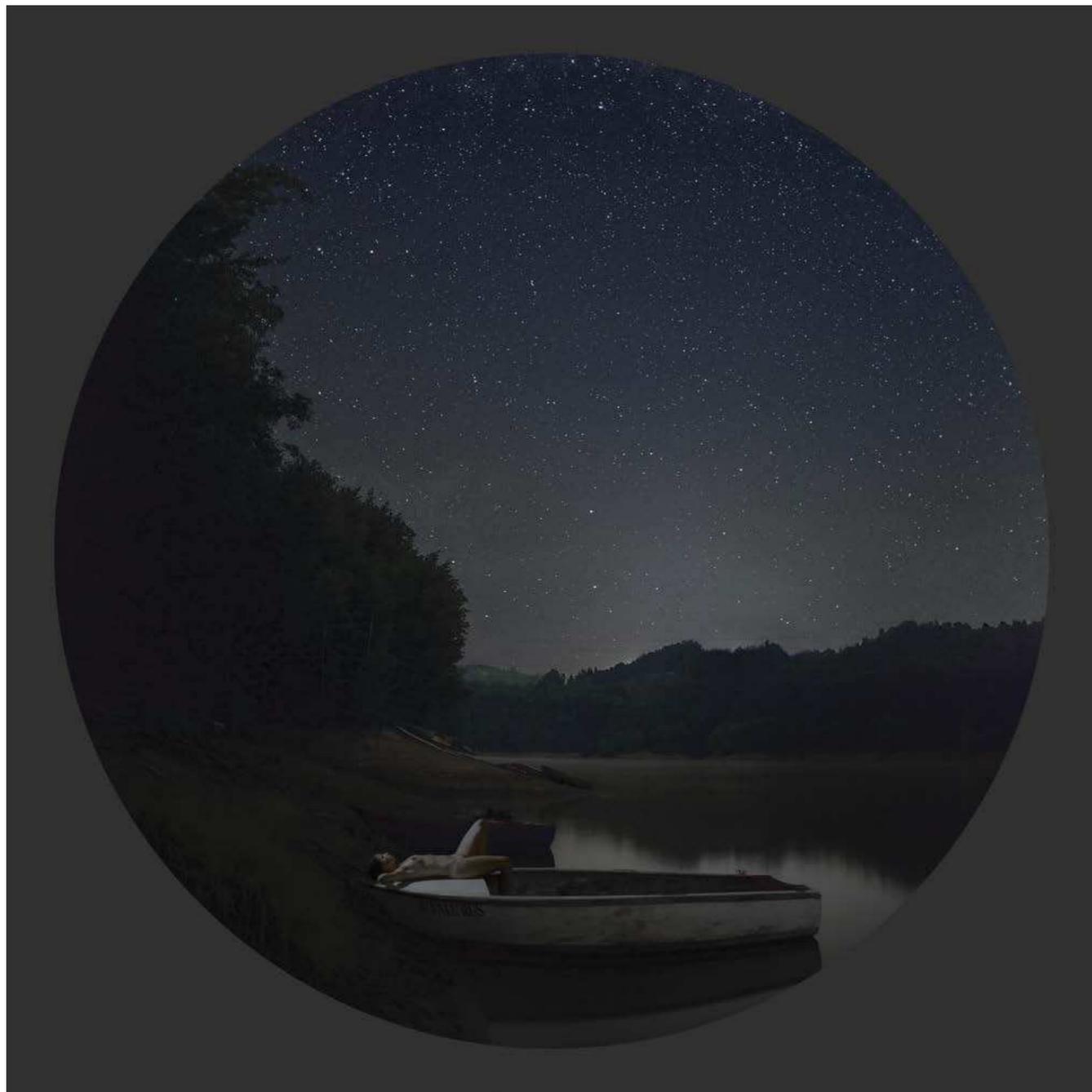
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Dear Japan, The Black Paintings, 2011-2013



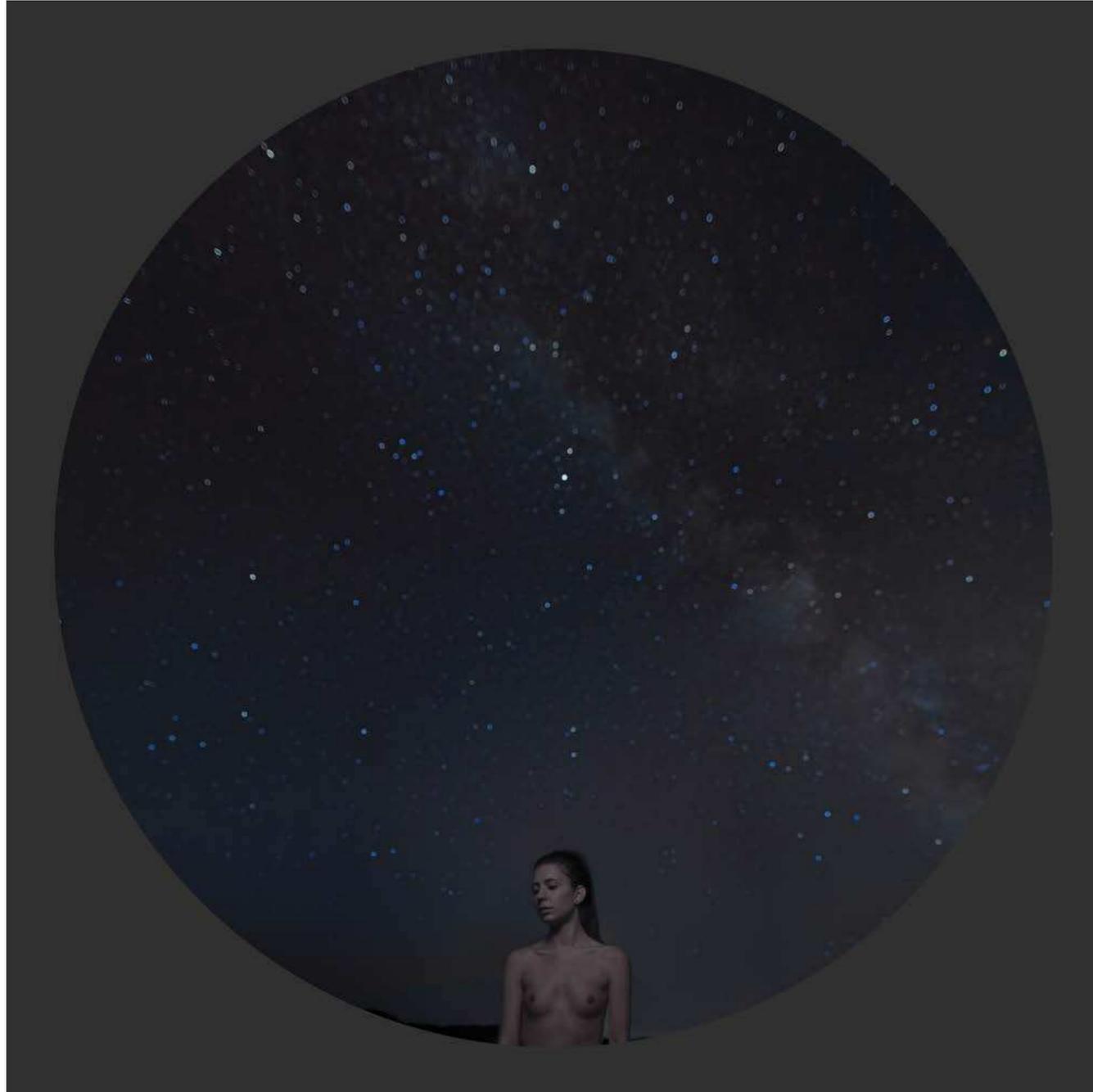
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