



Forest of Resonating Lamps

Artworks without Borders

teamLab Borderless opened in Odaiba, Tokyo in 2018, offering an immersive, digitally created “world of art without boundaries.” The museum attracts large numbers of visitors, more than half of them coming from overseas.

OSAMU SAWAJI

FOUNDED in 2001, teamLab is an art collective of several hundred artists, engineers, CG animators and other specialists. teamLab has released a succession of innovative artworks that use digital technology, exhibiting them not only in Japan but throughout Asia, as well as in Europe, the United States and other parts of the world.

A permanent exhibition of teamLab’s works, *teamLab Borderless*, opened in June 2018 in Odaiba,

Tokyo. The “museum without a map” showcases some sixty artworks over a total floor space of 10,000 square meters. To date, the number of visitors has exceeded 2.3 million, more than half of whom were from overseas.

The distinguishing feature of the museum is that it is literally “without boundaries.” Many of the artworks use the walls, floor and ceiling, while others are constantly shifting, not confined to one place. Picture frames, monitors, or other framing devices, as well as boundaries separating the artworks, are almost wholly absent. Moreover, since the artworks change according to people’s movements, there is no boundary between the artwork and the viewer.

teamLab says, “We want to explore a new relationship between humans and nature, and between oneself and the world through art. Digital technology has allowed art to liberate itself from the physical

All photos: Courtesy of teamLab, Exhibition view, MORI Building DIGITAL ART MUSEUM: teamLab Borderless, 2018, Odaiba, Tokyo © teamLab

and transcend boundaries. We see no boundary between humans and nature, and between oneself and the world.”

There is no guide map or route displayed in the museum, so visitors are free to view the works in any order they like. However, visitors will encounter the artwork *Forest of Flowers and People: Lost, Immersed and Reborn* as soon as they enter the museum. In this work, colorful flowers bloom, scatter and die on the whole surface of the walls and floor of the expan-



Forest of Flowers and People: Lost, Immersed and Reborn

sive space. The flowers change as people move and touch them. The viewer proceeds through the exhibition space with the sense of having entered a maze.

One of the most popular works is *Forest of Resonating Lamps*, comprising innumerable blinking lamps suspended from the ceiling.



Graffiti Nature - High Mountains and Deep Valleys

When a visitor stops near the lamps, the lamp closest to them gleams while at the same time emitting a sound with a beautiful tonal quality. Then, the light diffuses to other nearby lamps. Viewers can enjoy the magical atmosphere of being surrounded by lamps that emit a variety of colors.

In *Graffiti Nature - High Mountains and Deep Valleys*, a work that is very popular with children, creatures of various colors move around on an uneven floor surface that mimics the undulations of mountains and valleys. The viewer draws a picture with crayons on a piece of paper on which the outlines of animals and flowers have been drawn. When they scan it, the picture they drew begins to move in the artwork. Visitors can also learn about the mechanism of the ecosystem through artworks showing how snakes are eaten by giant salamanders.

Visitors can also enjoy tea through the senses of taste and sight at the EN TEA HOUSE. When a tea bowl containing tea is placed on the table, beautiful flowers bloom on the surface of the tea. Then, when



Flowers Bloom in an Infinite Universe inside a Teacup

the tea has been drunk and the tea bowl is placed on the table once again, the flowers scatter, and no flowers bloom in the empty bowl. Visitors get a real sense of the beauty and transience of flowers.

teamLab says, “We want you to immerse your body in borderless art, wander, explore, discover, and create a new world with others.” By stepping into *teamLab Borderless*, you will be able to experience an unprecedented world of art that goes beyond the bounds of convention. 