

Do you remember a picture (it really is turmoil of thought that surrounds her. a picture!), painted - or rather written -/.../ by the most powerful pen of our age, Finally she hurls herself headlong into and entitled The Woman of the Crowd? the midst of the throng, in pursuit of In the window of a coffee house there an unknown, half-glimpsed countenance sits a convalescent, pleasureably absorthat has, on an instant, bewitched her. bed in gazing at the crowd, and mingling, Curiosity had become a fatal, irrestistthrough the medium of thought, in the ible passion!



Already as a little girl, I was fascinated by the beautiful bodies of men.

At the age of nine, I peered into the boys locker room through a hole in the wall. That is when I decided that I wanted to be a boy-photographer.

In the old Edo period, the pleasure quarters of Tokyo were situated on the island of Yoshiwara, an area of indulgence that the Japanese called "ukiyo", the floating world, or the sad world. Here, artists of the time depicted beautiful geishas and famous kabukiactors in their wood cut prints, so called ukiyo-e....





WHEN THIS STORT DEGINS TOU FIND ME, AMANDA. IN KADUKI-CHO, SHINJUKU, THE MODERN DAY TOSHI-**WARA. KADUKI-CHO IS HOME TO MORE THAN 300** HOST CLUDS. ESTABLISHMENTS WHERE WOMEN CAN **RELAX IN THE COMPANY OF A NICE MAN FOR A FEW** HOURS. THE HOSTS ARE CONTEMPORARY GEISHAS. PART-TIME BOYFRIENDS FOR RENT. THEY DO NOT SELL SEX. THEY SELL FEELINGS.

I came here in search of my muse, a beautiful young man who can inspire my art so that I can create masterpieces!

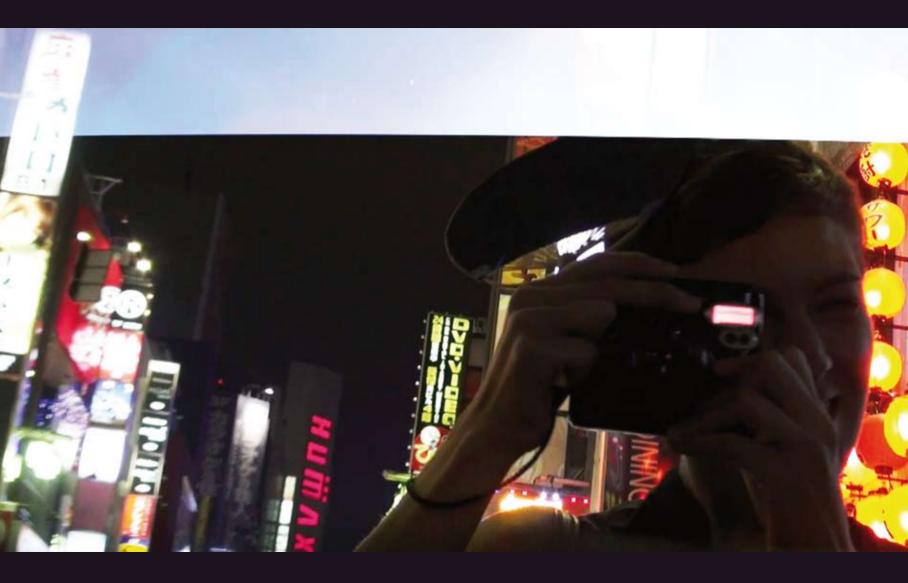
Join me, enter the floating world...

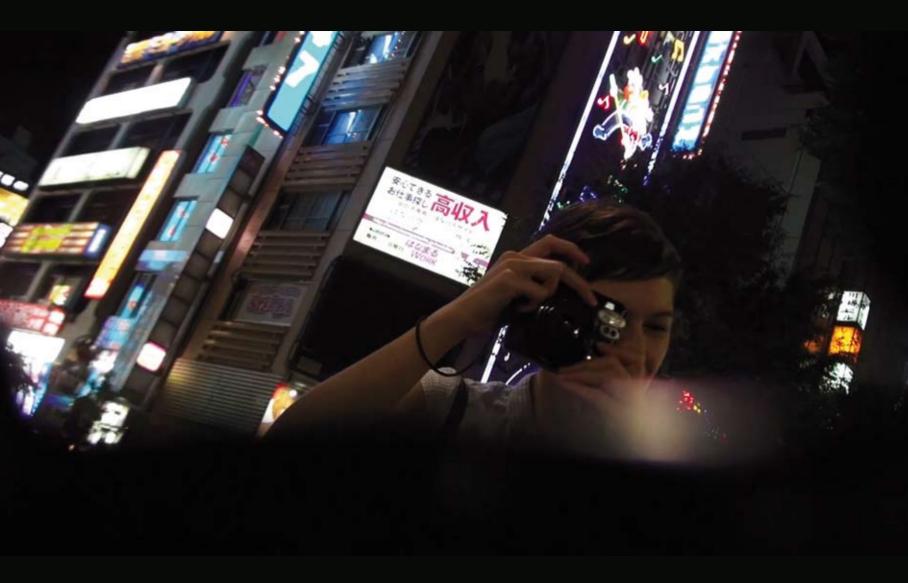


























- What are these little boys doing here?
 - Aren't they a bit too young for this?



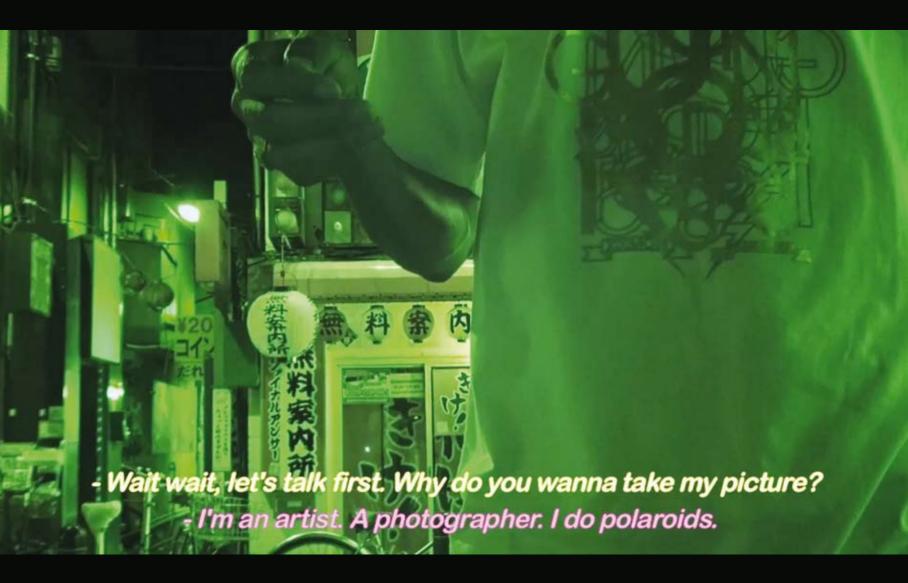
- What are you doing?- Catching.















































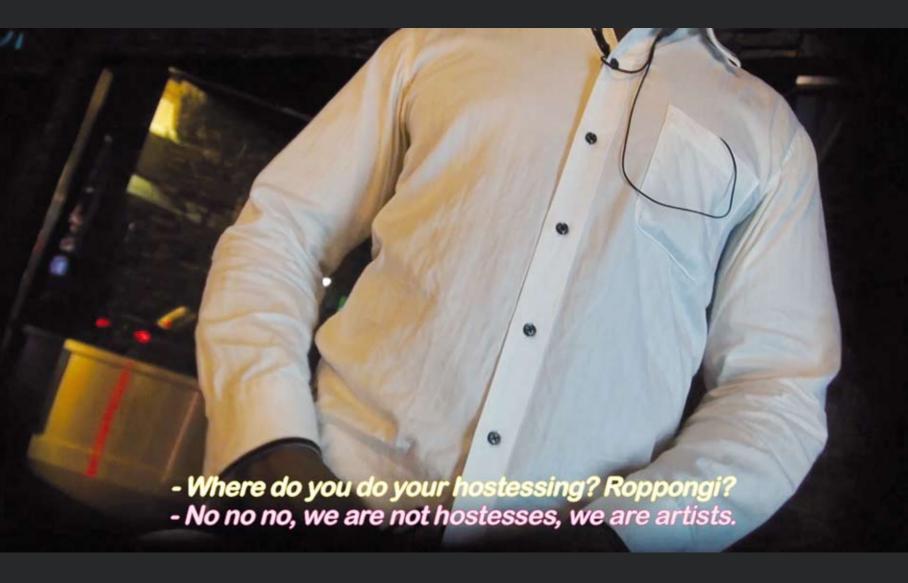


(22) Dispiriting things -

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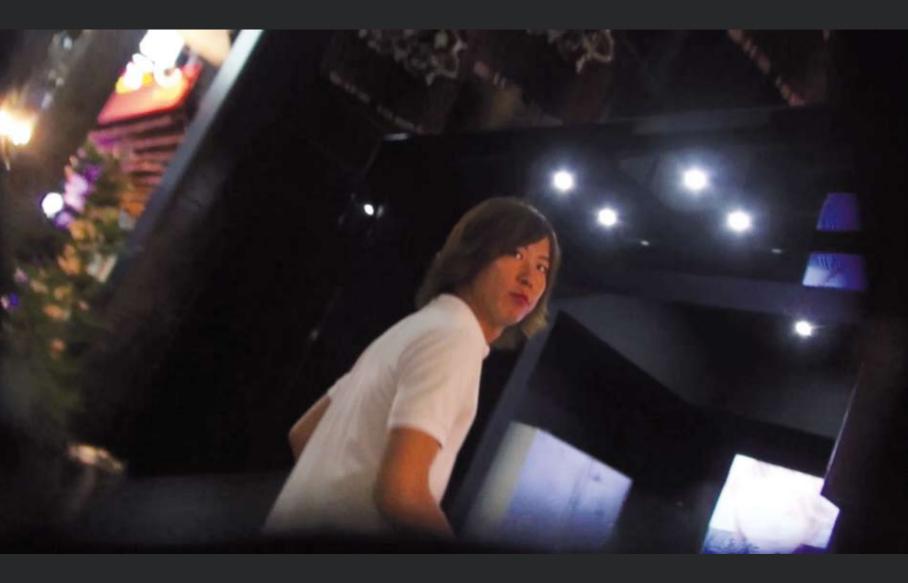
It's even more dispiriting for a man when a woman fails to visit him. And when the night has grown late at his house and suddenly he hears a subdued knock at the gate, and with beating heart he sends to find out who it is, only to have the servant return and announce the name of some other, boring person, well the word 'dispiriting' doesn't begin to cover it.

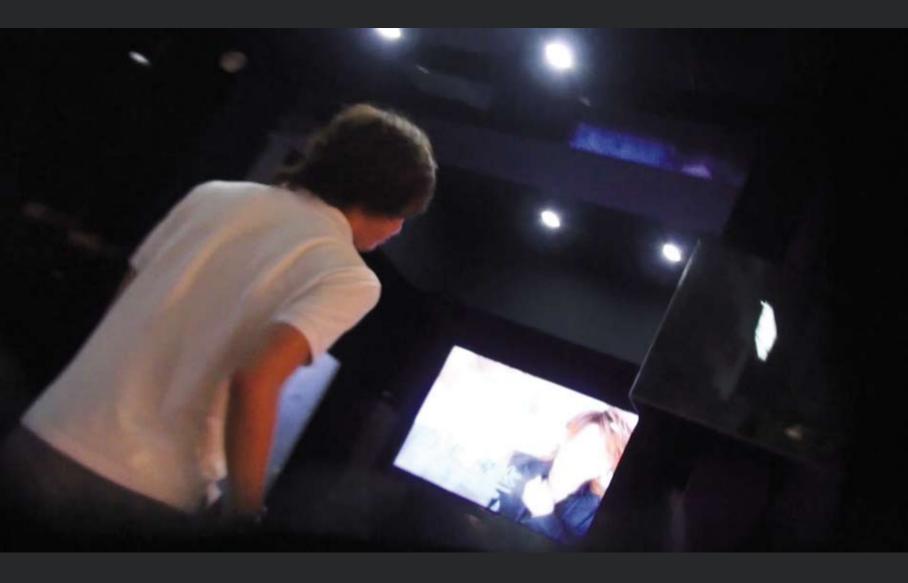












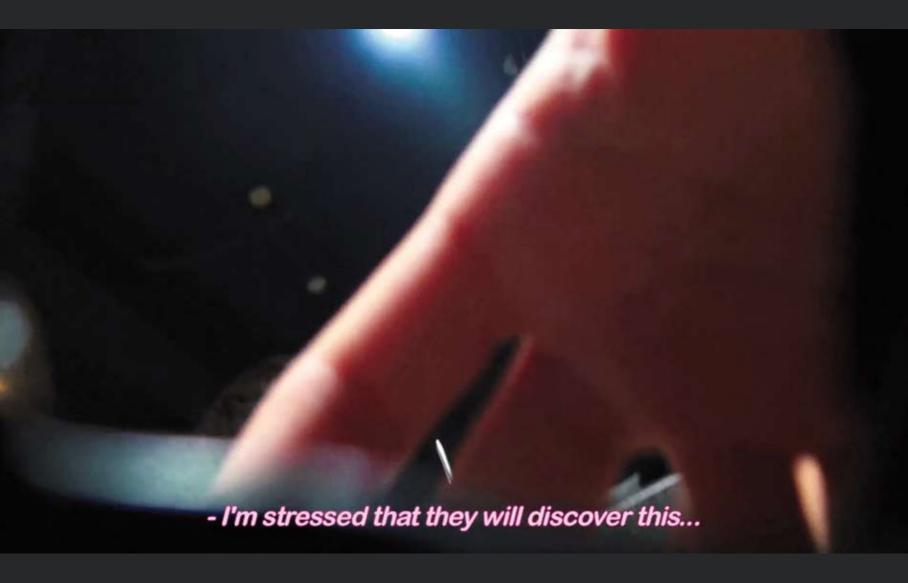






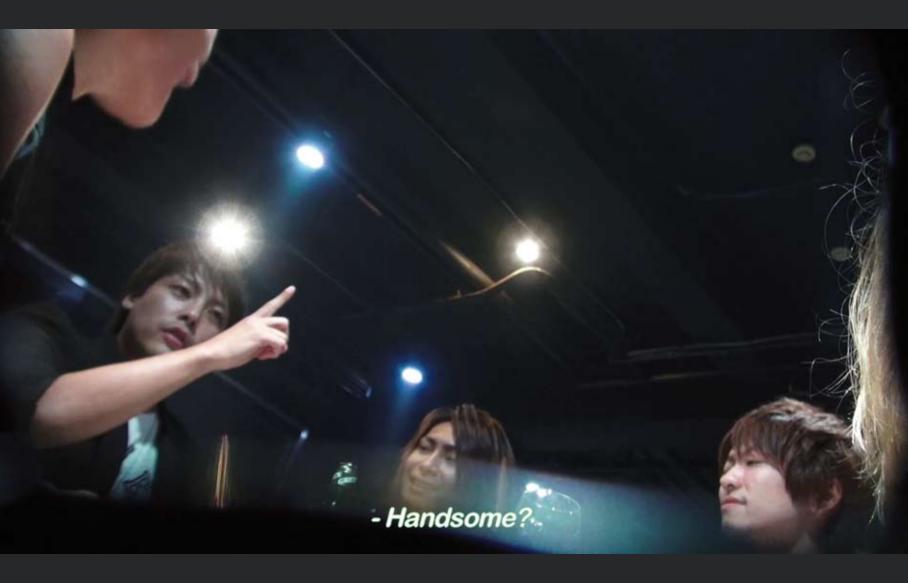


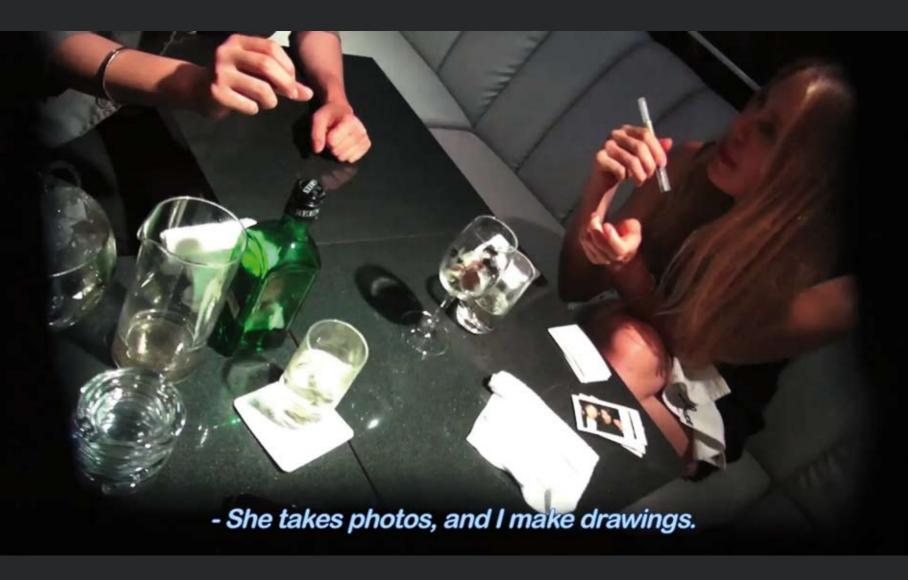


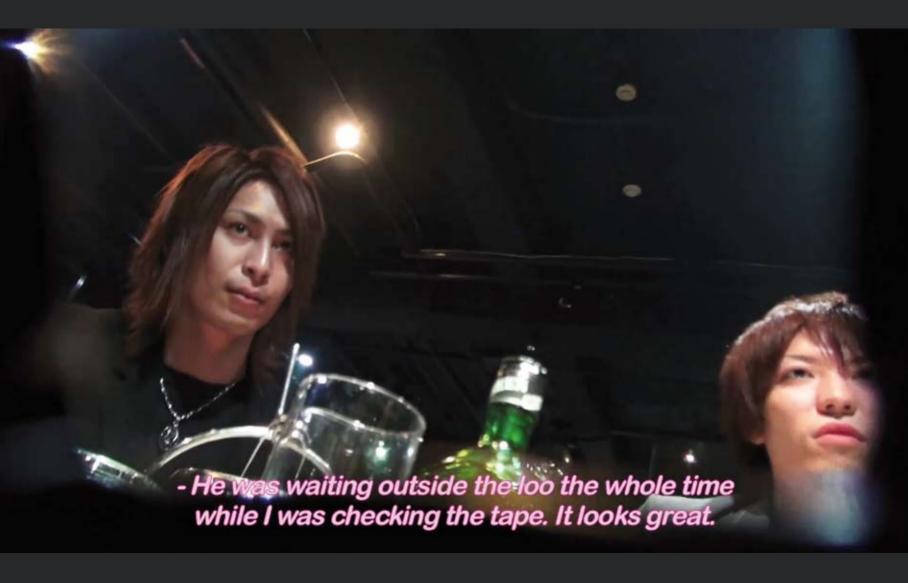






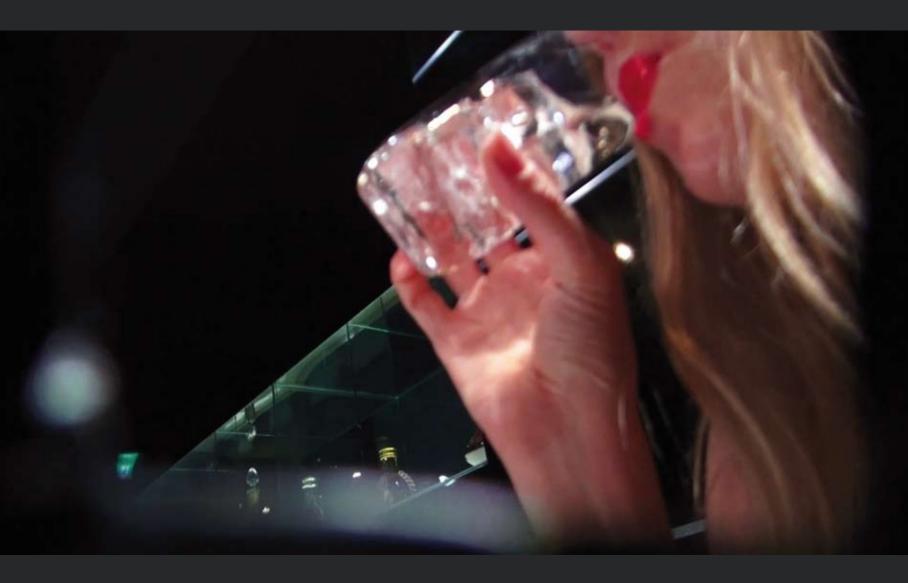












a host can make a lot of money if he is good at his job he gets 30 procents worth of what the woman buys for him the more he drinks, the more he earns















(32) The place known as Koshirakawa

/---/

Counsellor Yoshichika was looking even finer than usual, in fact simply marvellous. There he was, in the midst of these gorgeous colours, such dazzling sheens of summer under-robes that there was no choosing among them for beauty, and he was simplicity itself in his single cloak. He kept looking across towards the ladies' carriages, and sending messages over to them. Noone who saw him could have failed to find him delightful.

/---/

How sad it was when Counsellor Yoshichika suddently took the tonsure towards the end of that month. It is the way of the world that the flowering blossoms should fall and scatter, but Yoshichika passed from his brief glory even before 'the dew fell on him'.







She and her friends spent their nights in a desultory progression from coffeeshop to bar to pachinko parlour to coffee shop, again, with the radiant aimlessness of the pure existential hero. They were connoisseurs of boredom. They savoured the various bouquets of the subtly differentiated boredoms which rose from the long, wasted hours at the dead end of night.

























in the daily metamorphosis of external things, there is a rapidity of movement which calls for an equal speed of execution from the artist.

/===/

she is the painter of the passing moment and of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains.









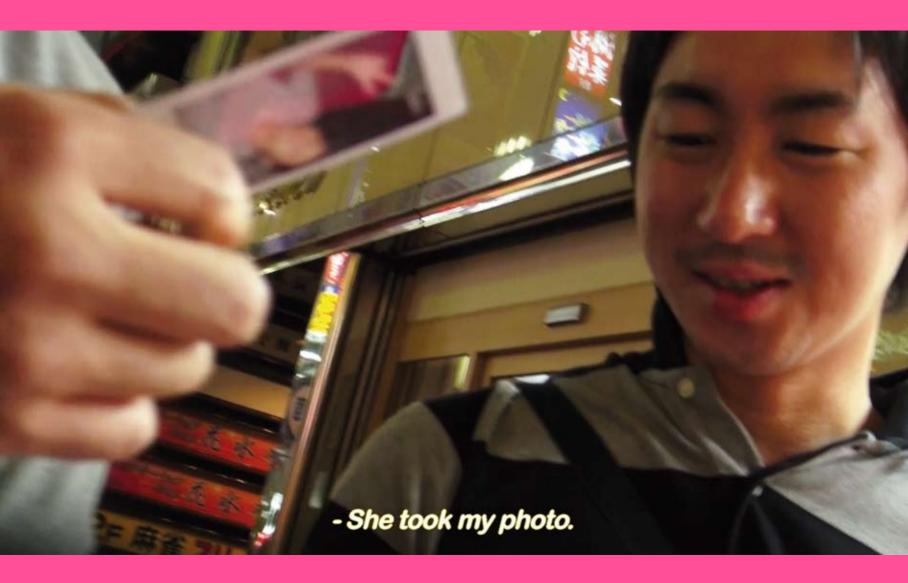














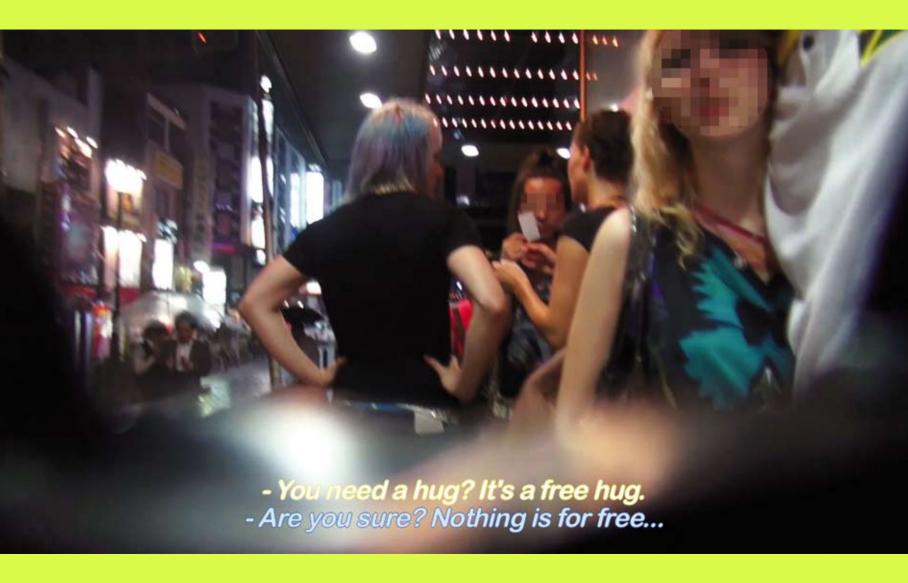






Wherever those deep, impetuous desires, war, love, and gaming, are in full flood; wherever are celebrated the festivals and fictions which embody these great elements of happiness and adversity, our observer is always punctually on the spot.



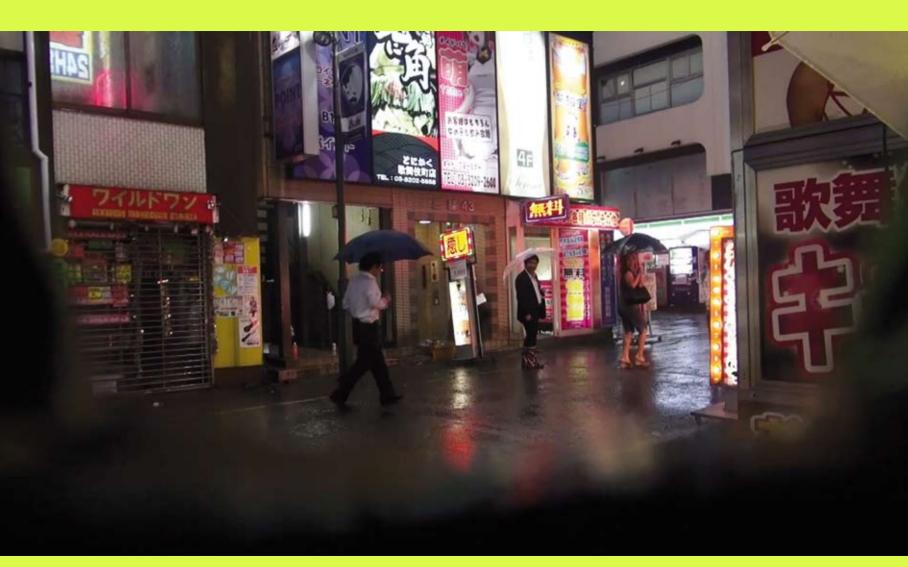




- Apparently the host clubs open again at 5 in the morning.









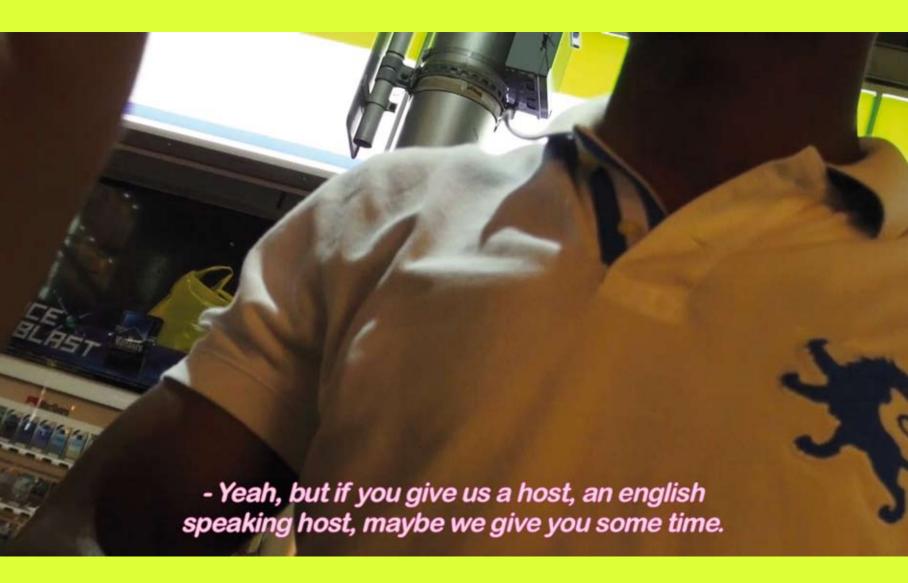












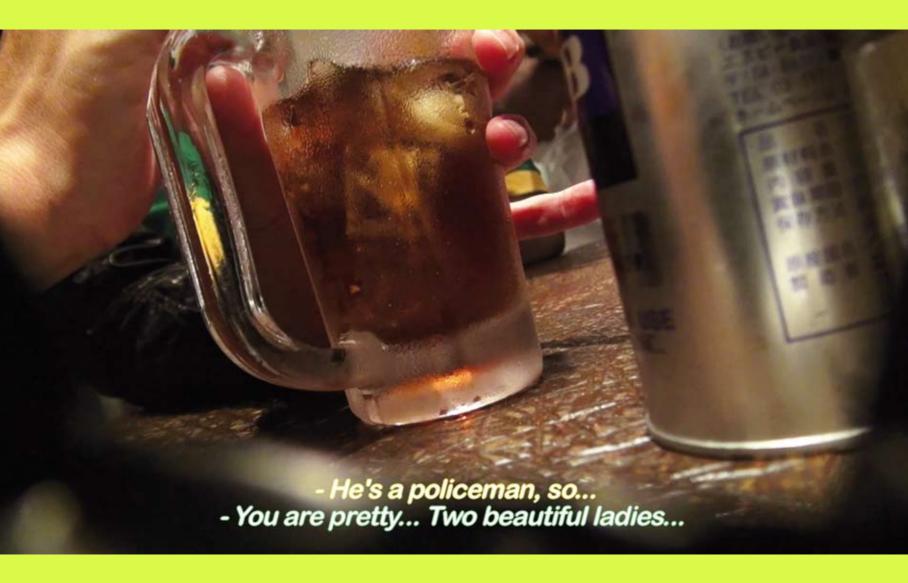












































I speak as if he had no secrets from me. Well, then, you must realize that I was suffering from love and I knew him as intimately as I knew my own image in a mirror. In other words, I knew him only in relation to myself. Yet, on those terms, I knew him perfectly. At times, I thought I was inventing him as I went along, however, so you would have to take my word for it that we existed.

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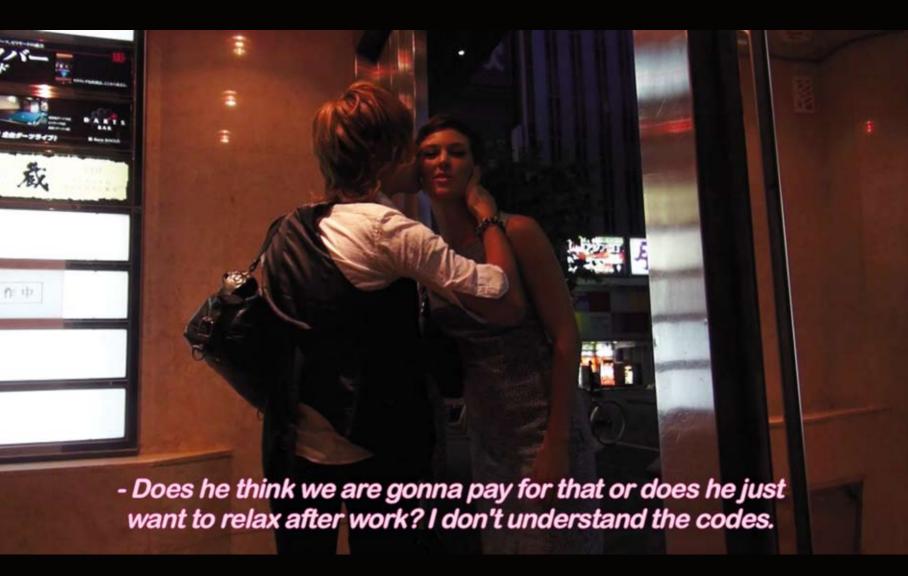














this city presents the foreigner with a mode of life that seems to her to have the enigmatic transparency, the indecipherable clarity, of a dream. And it is a dream she could, herself, never have dreamed. The stranger, the foreigner, thinks she is in control; but she has been precipitated into someone else's dream.





















HAPPY TO BE ALIVE AND NICELY DRESSED









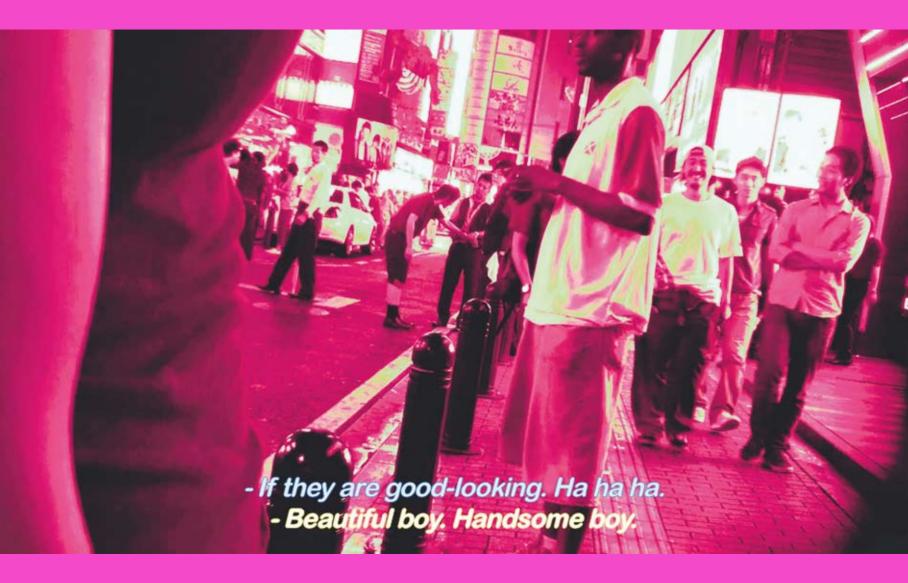


So I suppose I do not know how he really looked and, in fact. I suppose I shall never know, now, for he was plainly an object created in the mode of fantasy. His image was already present somewhere in my head and I was seeking to discover it in actuality, looking at every face I met in case it was the right face - that is, the face which corresponded to my notion of the unseen face of the one I should love,

















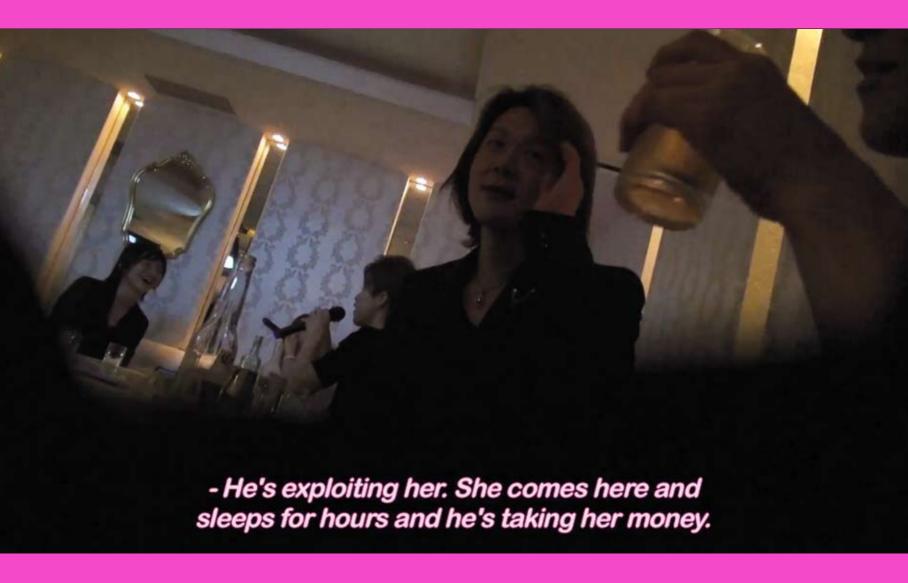




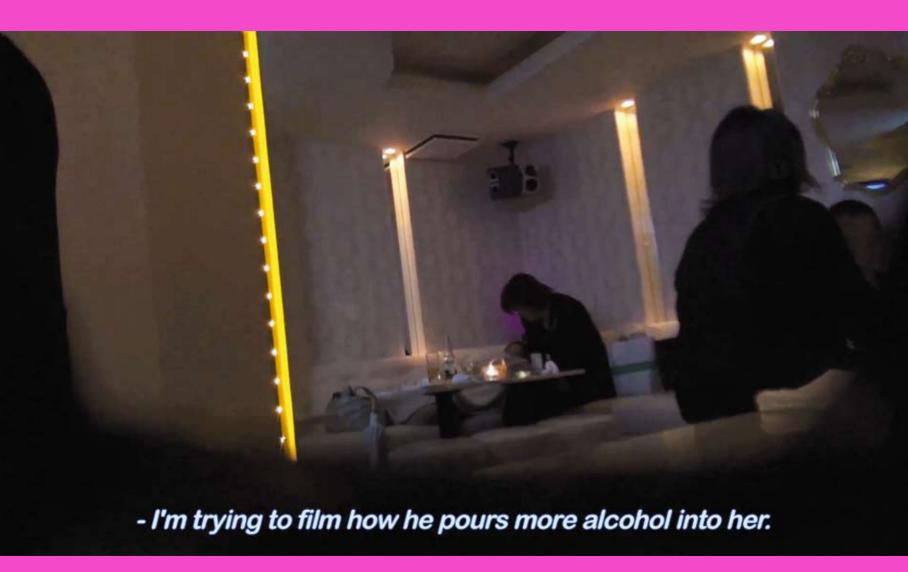














- It's because he's older. Why you don't want young guys: they're boring.



- He went backstage to pull coke... to be able to drink more.
- Yeah, he's rubbing his nose...











So, although I thought I was the most romantic spectacle imaginable as I wandered weeping down the alleys, I was in reality at risk - I had fallen through one of those holes life leaves in it; these peculiar holes are the entrances to the counters at which you pay the price of the way you live.

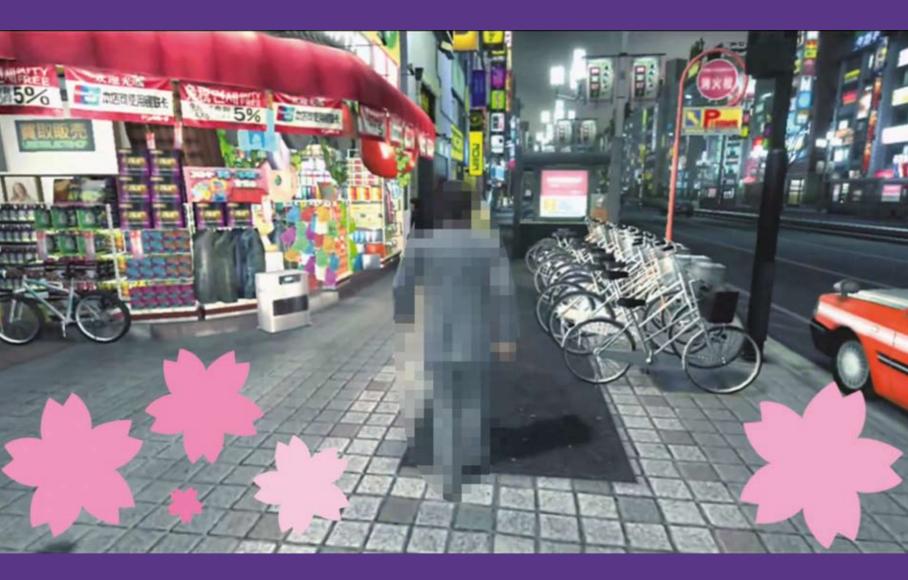






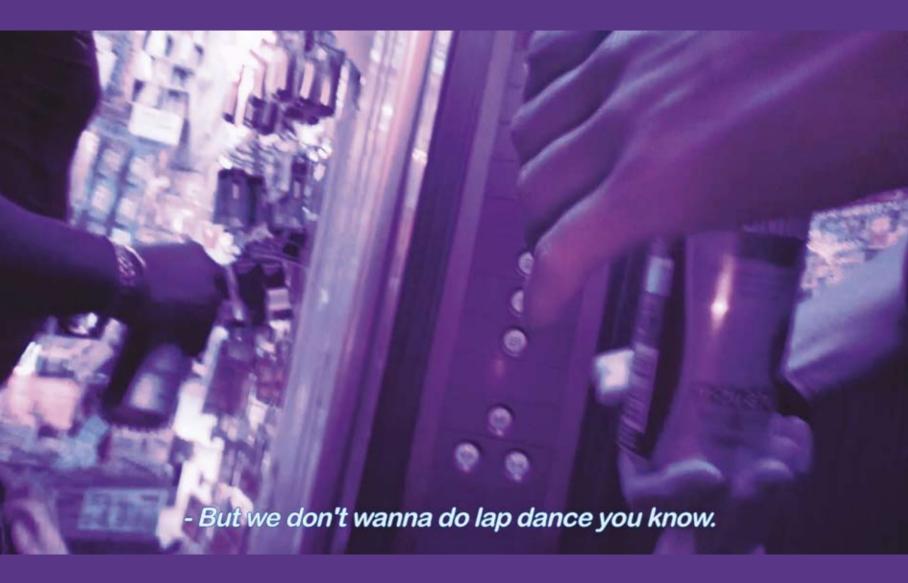










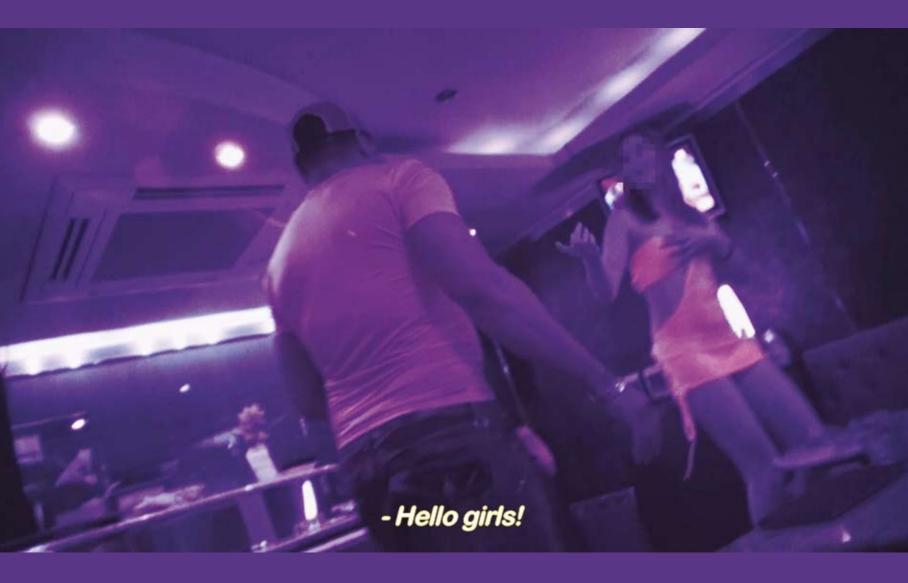














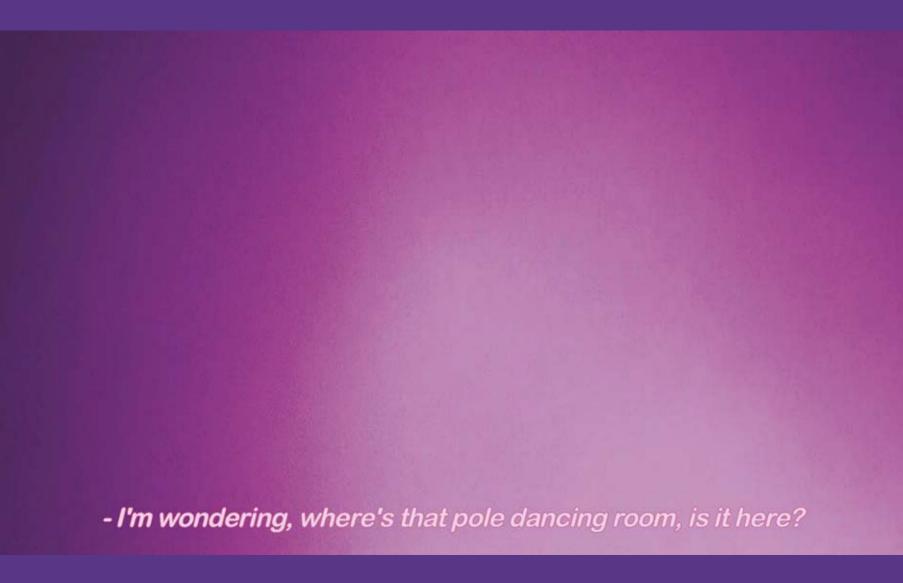


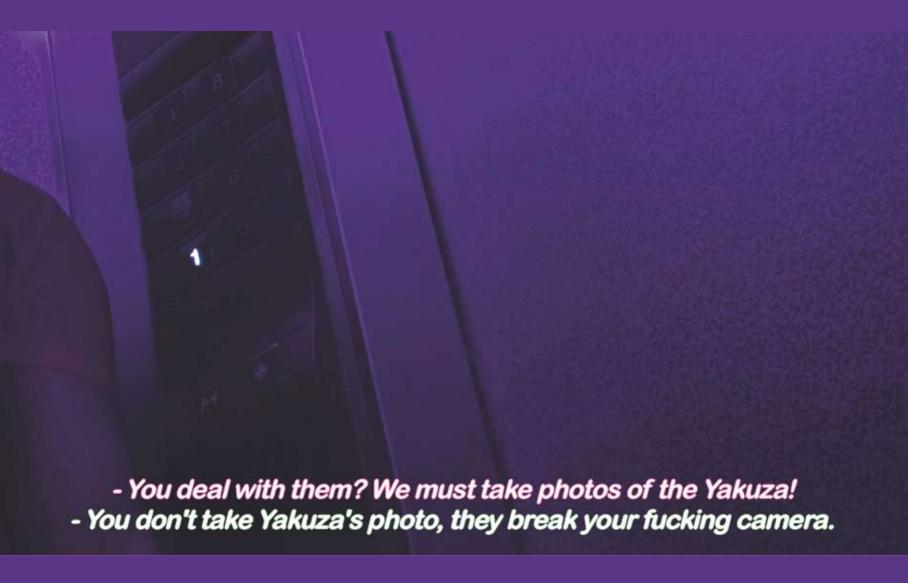


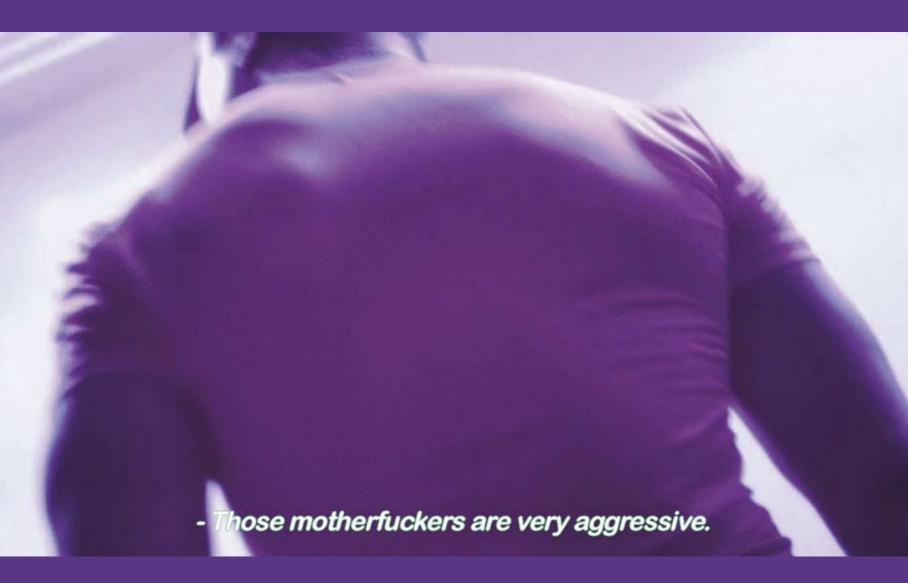








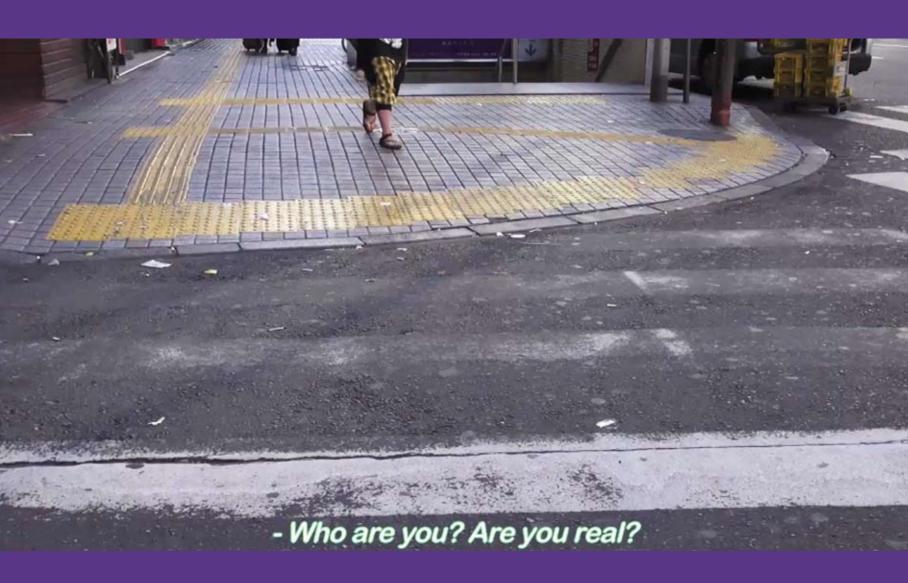








































(278)

Is there any occasion to match a moonlit night for sending your thoughts winding to distant places, and recalling past moments, their sorrows and joys and pleasures, as if it were today?







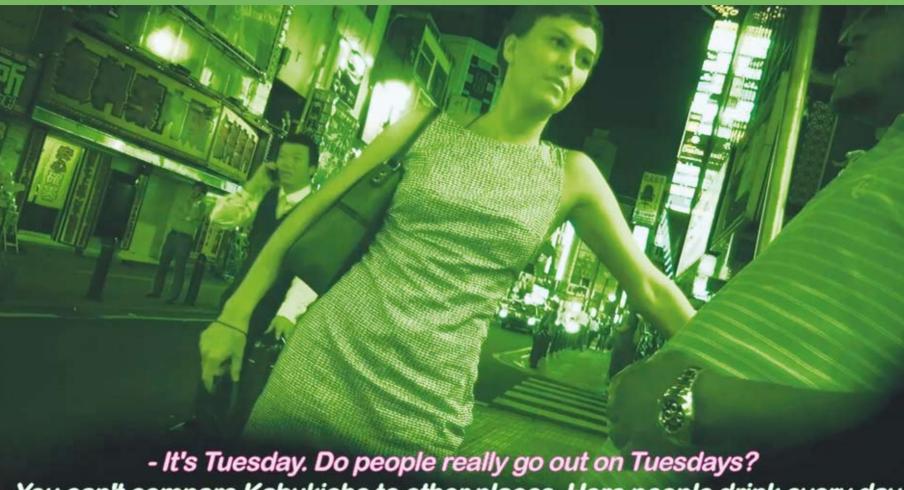




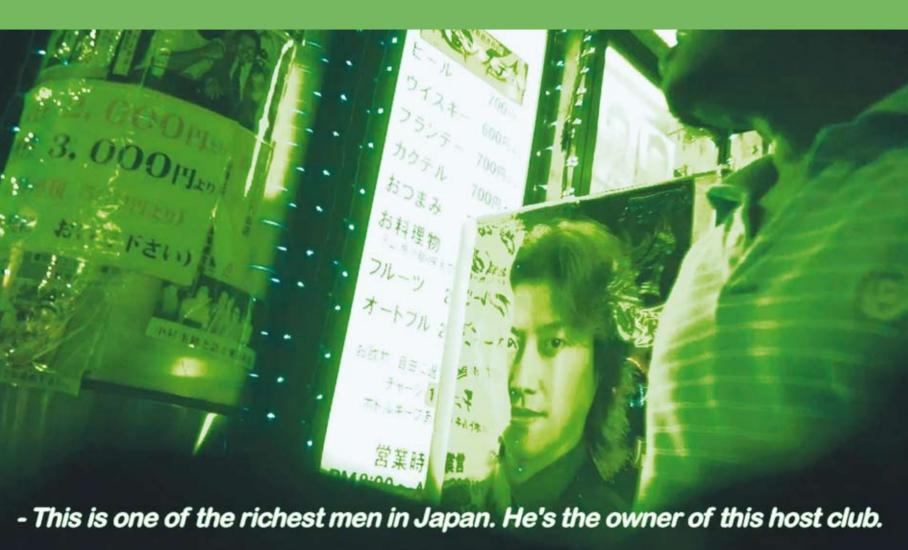
the Kabukicho bars are my living rooms intoxication is like coming home







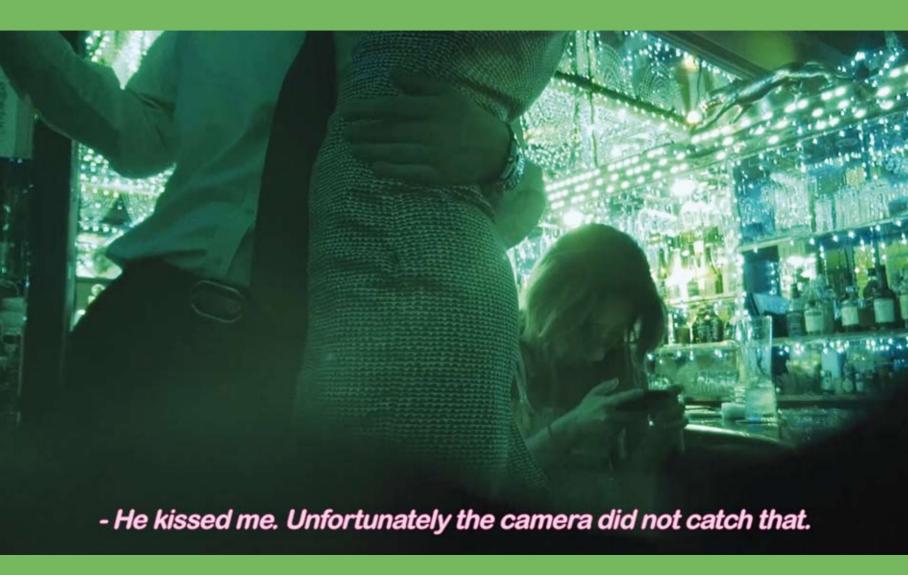
You can't compare Kabukicho to other places. Here people drink every day.







- It's good that we are boozing, so those who gave you the funding for this project can see that we are using the money for what it's meant for.

















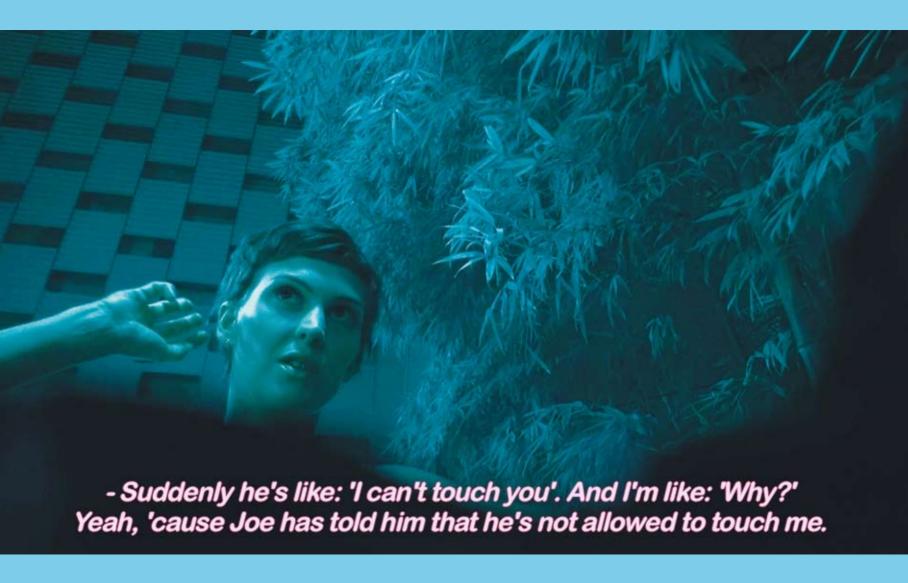


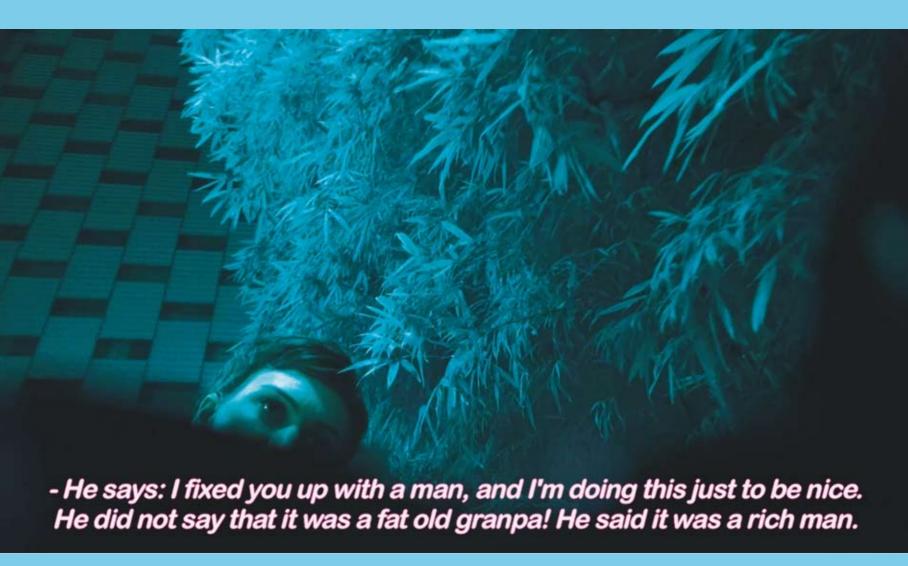
It was as if there was a glass between me and the world.

But I could see myself perfectly well on the other side of the glass. There I was, walking up and down, eating meals, having conversations, in love, indifferent and so on. But all the time I was pulling the strings of my own puppet;













(2) Times of year

If you break off a branch of splendidly flowering cherry and arrange it in a large flower vase, the effect is delightful. And it's particularly charming if a gentleman, be it one of Her Majesty's brothers or a normal guest, is seated nearby engaged in a conversation, wearing a cloak in the cherryblossom combination with undersleeves displayed.







- I brought all the Nigerians here. Whatever they do, I have done it.
- Aha! So you're the papa.



- What did I tell you today? How many hosts have we photographed? We've been boozing all night! Pull yourself together, you're the camerawoman!





- Tell me what you people are doing here?





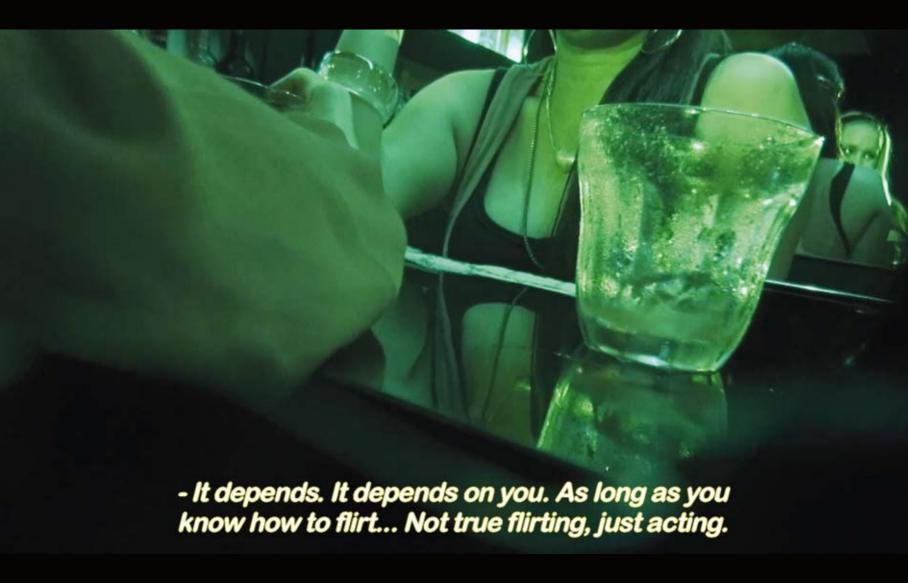
















Do you think she injected something in her lips? Should I do that too?
 Yeah, I think you should - I just haven't told you before.









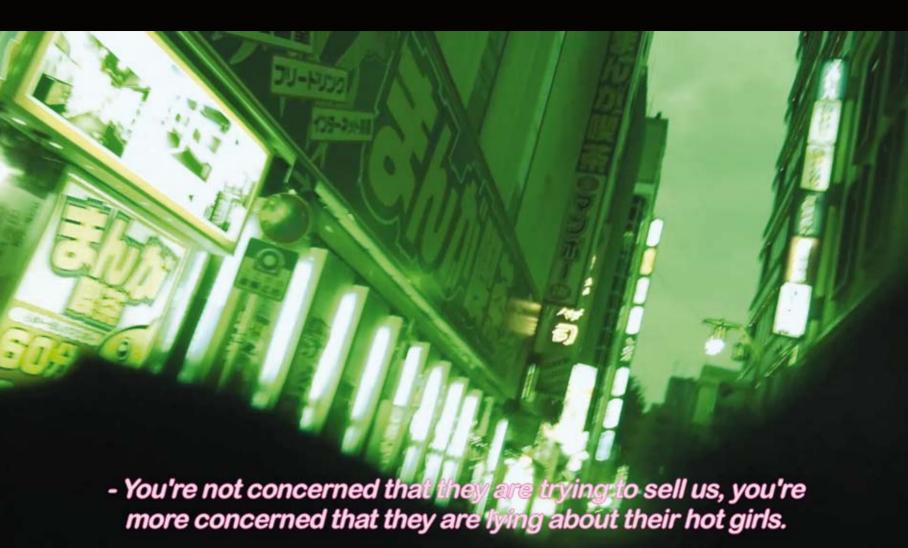


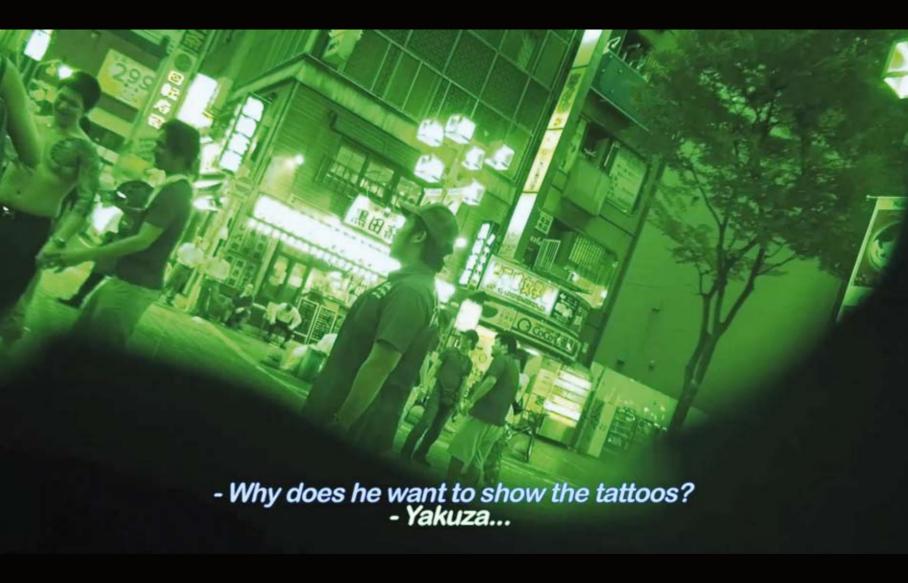


- It's twenty to five. Now is when our fat chances on cute little guys turn up.











- If you fuckin do anything with this film they will fuck you up.















/---/

"Why do you hasten thus to relinquish this night?"

(72) Our apartments in the long room -





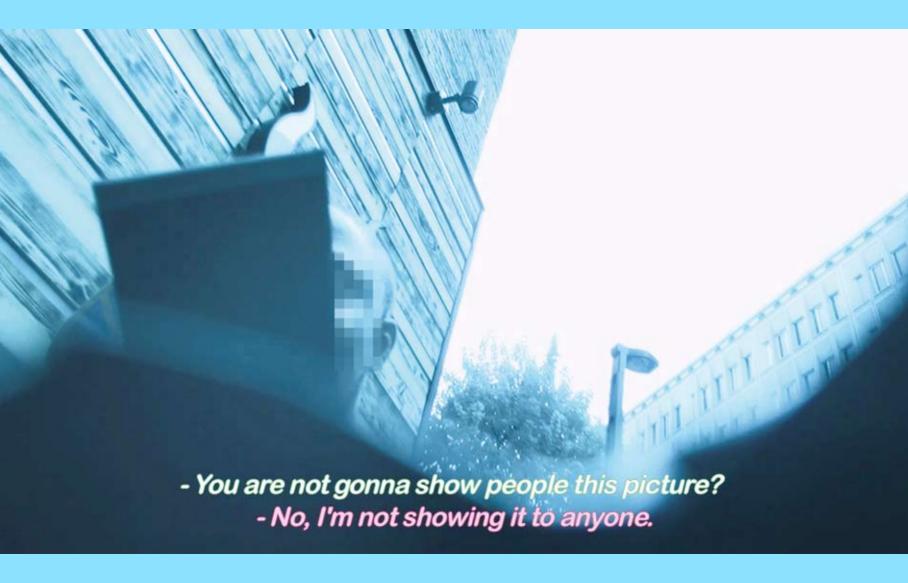
















Her passion and her profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flaneuse, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world /.../









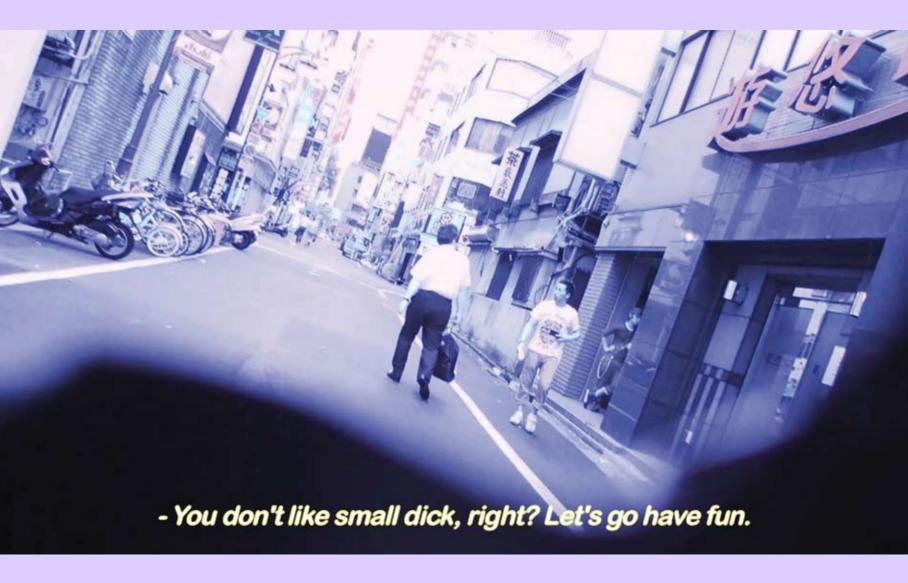












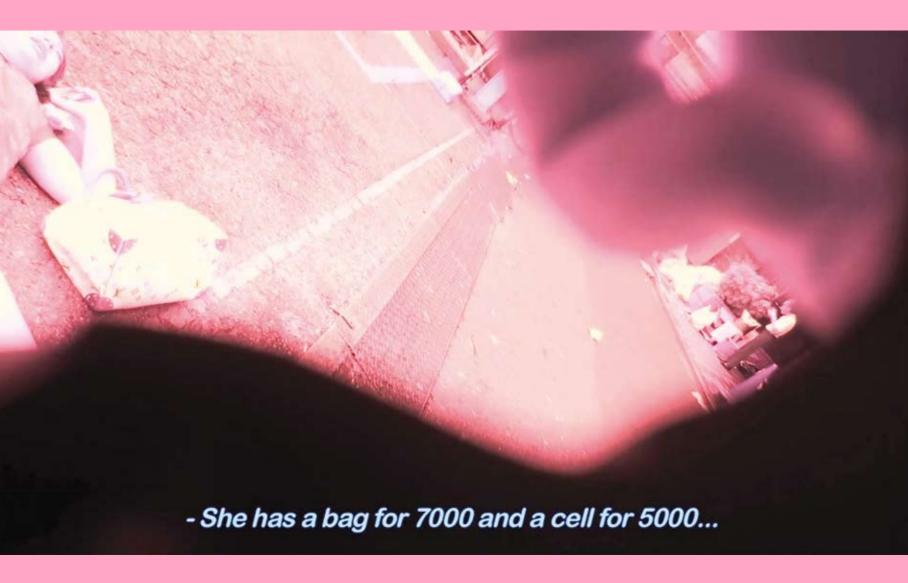






Art can save some people but it can not save everyone













- I'm pissed cause you didn't let me film the police crackdown on the mafia.
- That could've been a nice turning point, when the police gets mad at you.





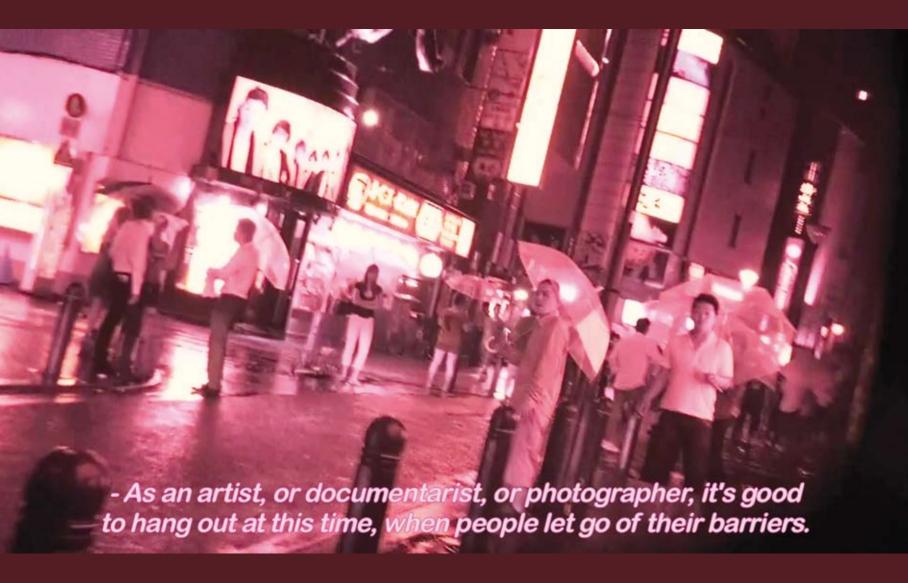
And so away she goes, hurrying, searching. But searching for what?

/.../ ceaselessly journeying across the great human desert /.../

She makes it her business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distil the eternal from the transitory.









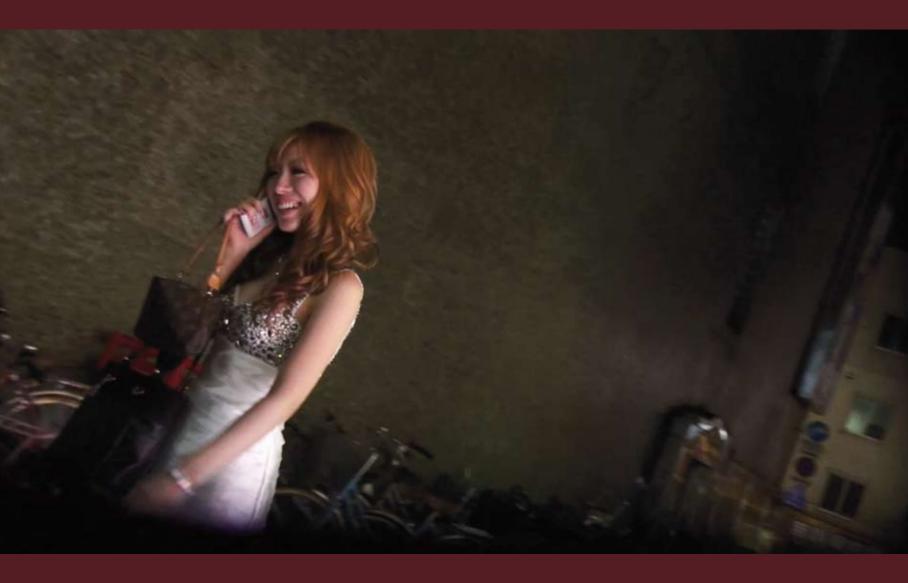


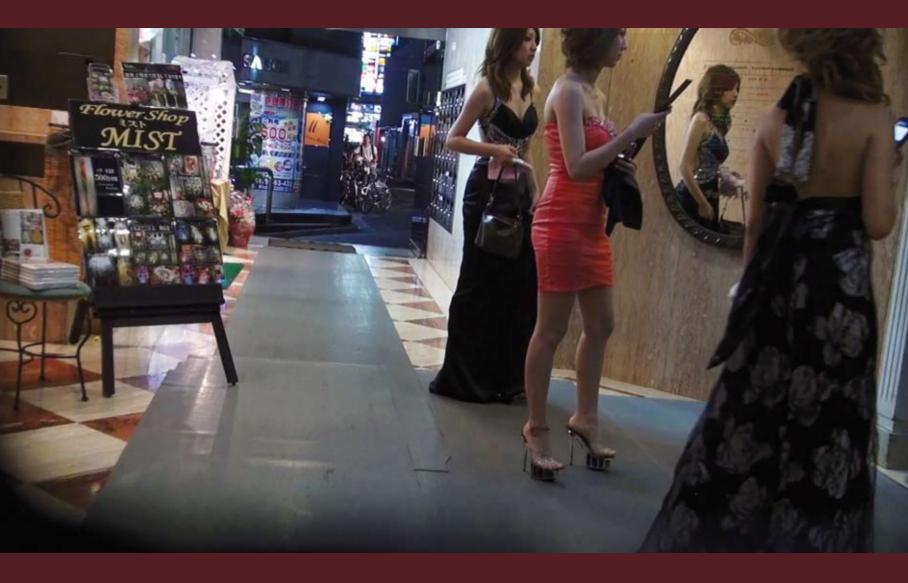












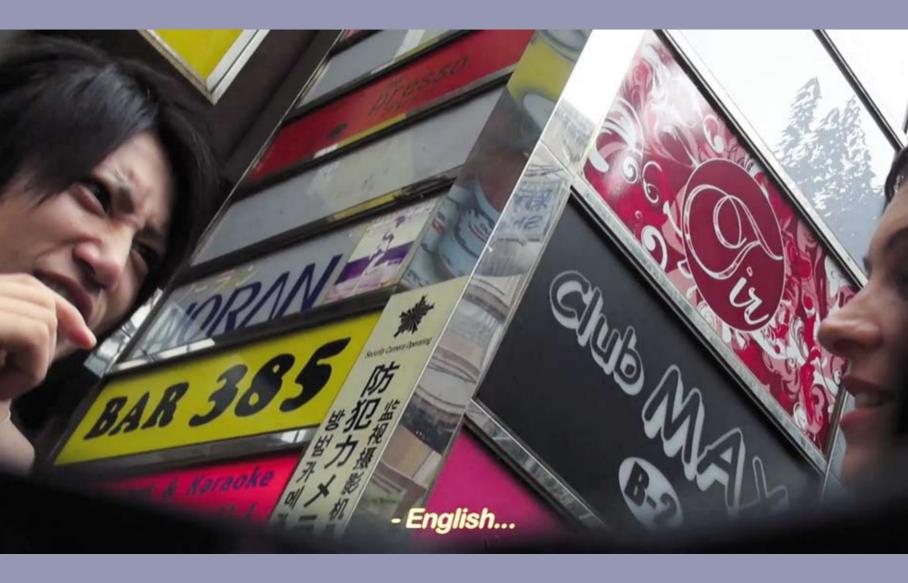


HOW COULD HE AFFORD NOT TO CAPITALIZE ON HIS YOUTH?















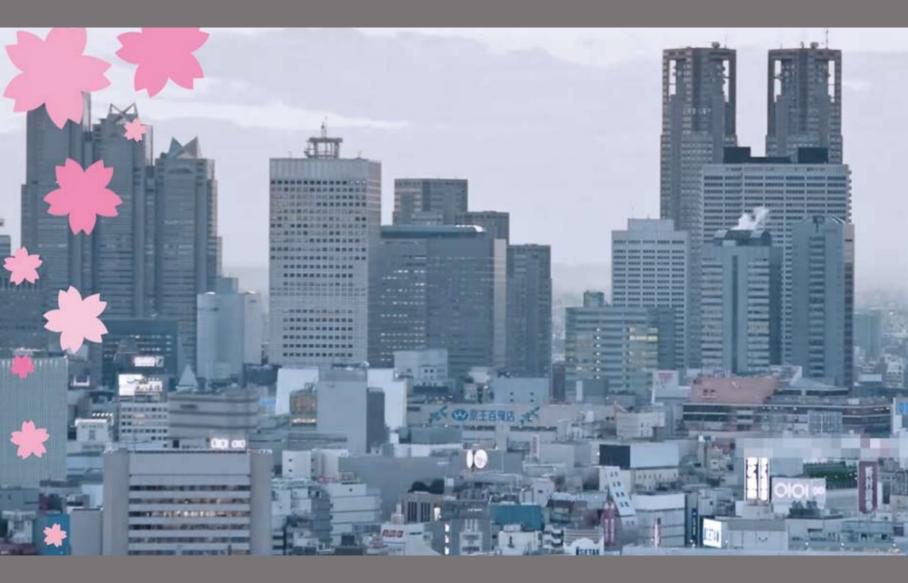






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I, Amanda, alien to the world, yet frantically busy taking part in every bit of it. At home as I was ever, in this homelessness.









































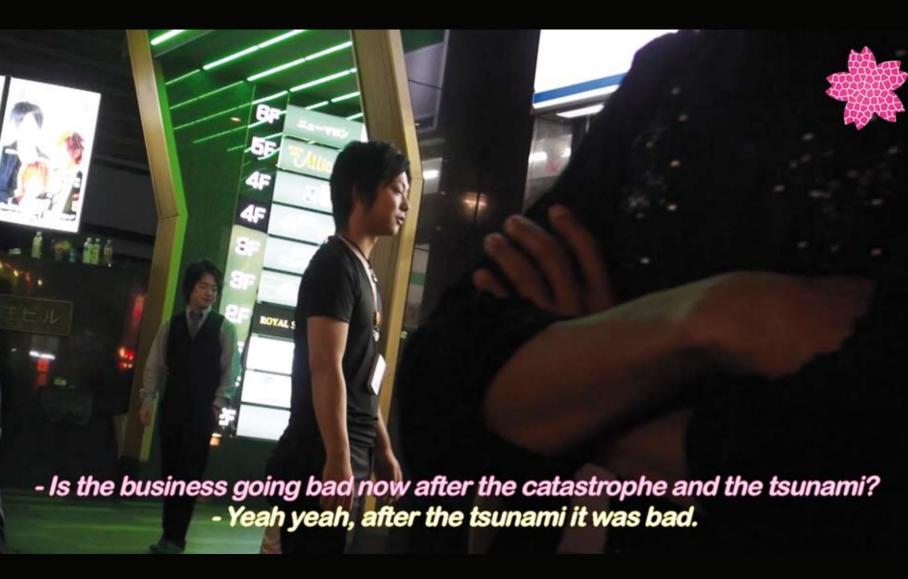






How far can I go for art?







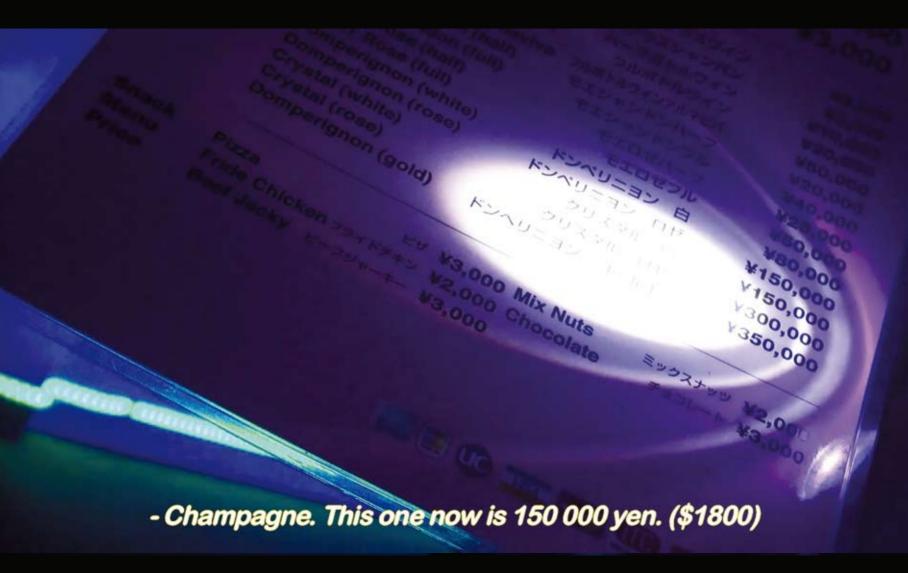










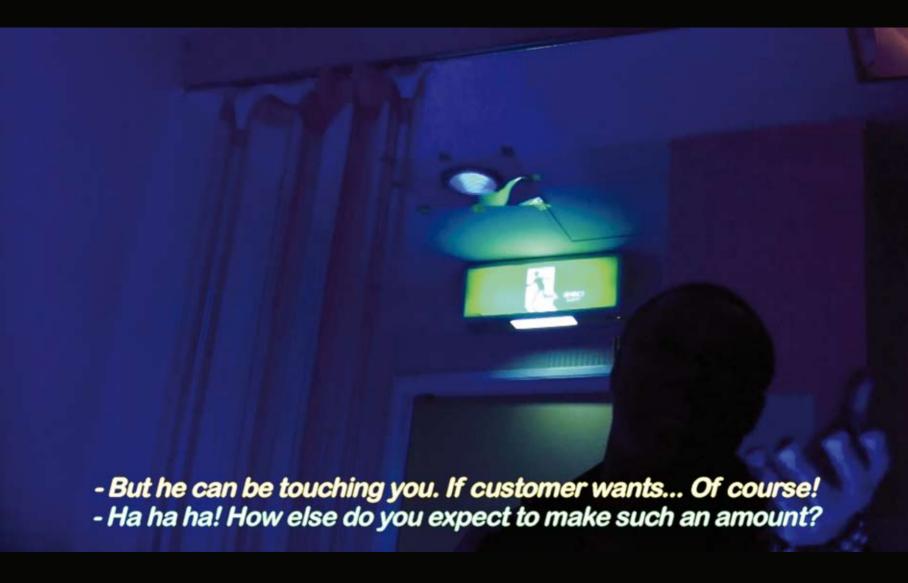




- Who are these customers anyway who have so much money? Takuza?

- Men make money to enjoy themselves. It's only poor men who don't enjoy.

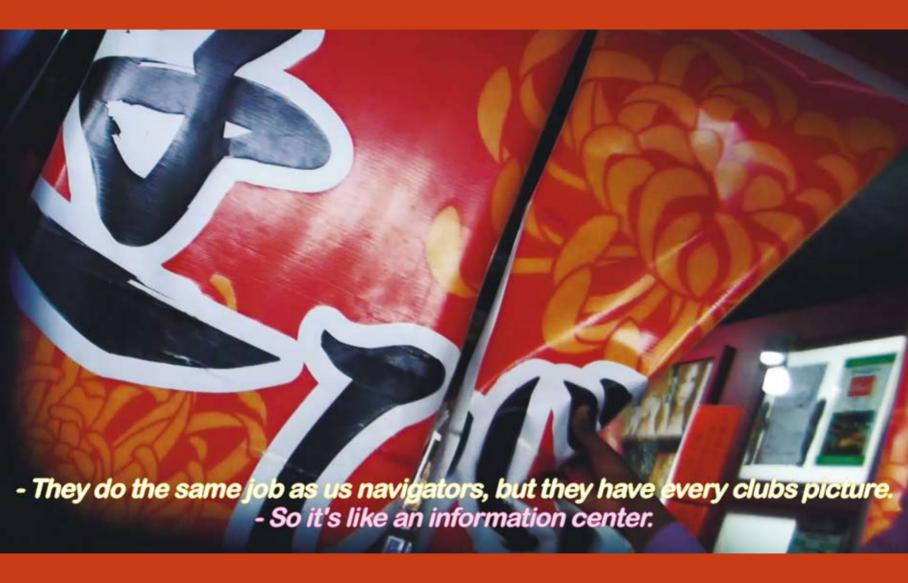








Will I ever find my muse in this labyrinth, that whispers of wasted youth and lost innocence?





















Many hosts retire around the age of 28, when their beauty has faded after years of drinking. Some become contracted navigators who fish these streets for customers they can lead to a club of choice.













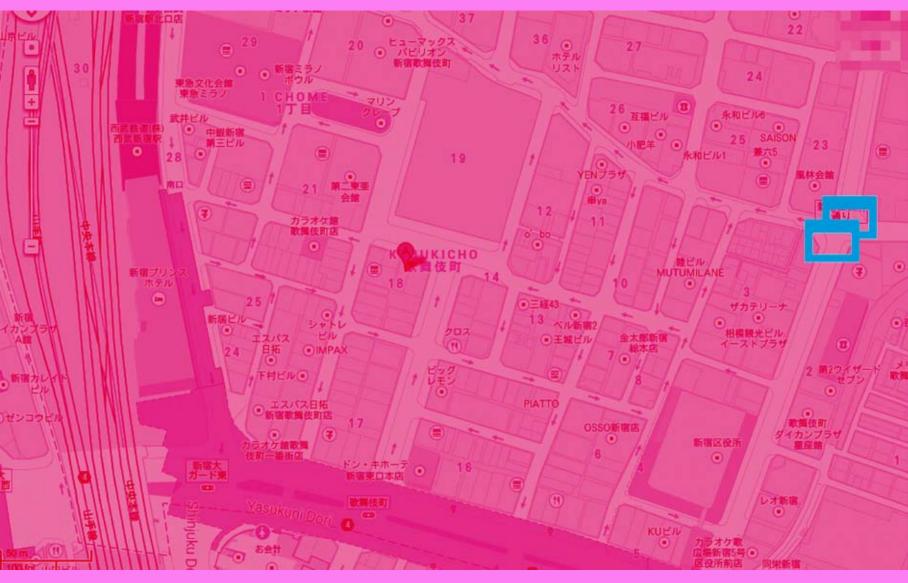


(20) The sliding panels that close off the north-east...

1---1

Despite their protestations, some of the senior gentlewomen managed to produce two or three poems on spring themes such as blossoms and so forth, and then my turn came. I wrote down the poem:

With the passing years
My years grow old upon me
yet when I see
this lovely flower of spring
I forget age and time























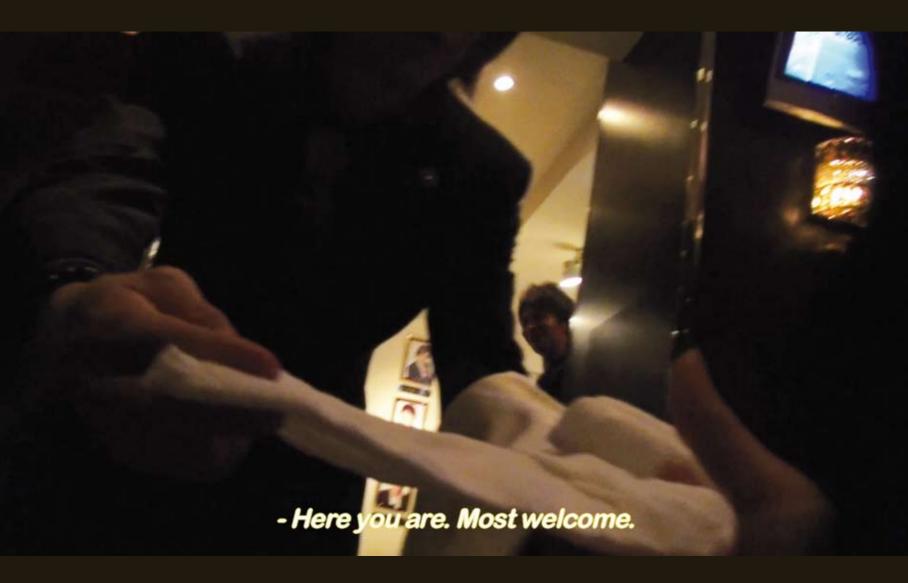


Is beauty addictive?

- And if it is, would that be

a good or a bad thing?





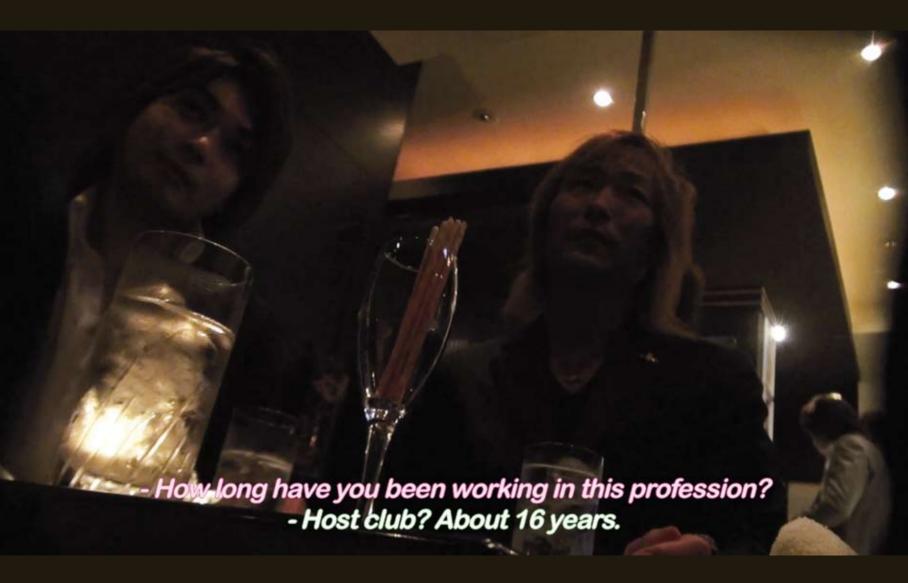








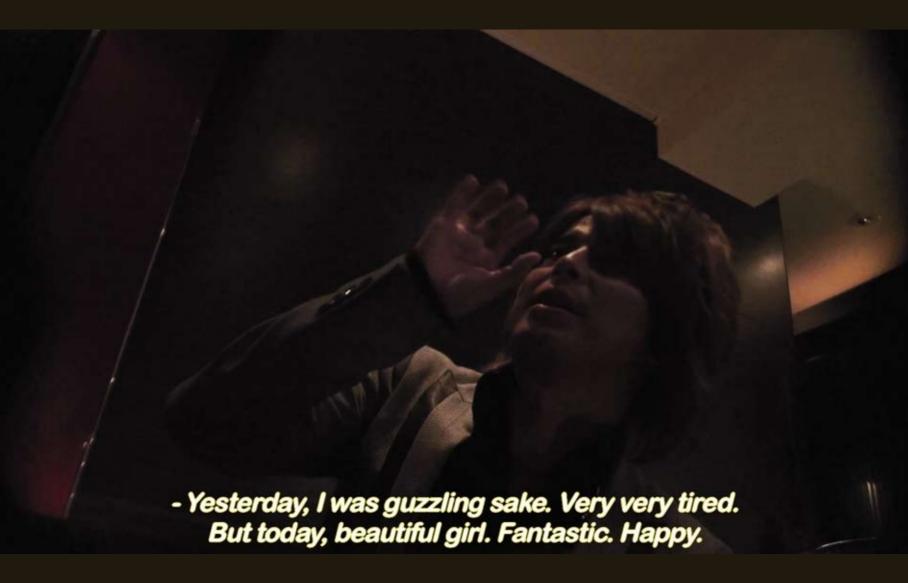




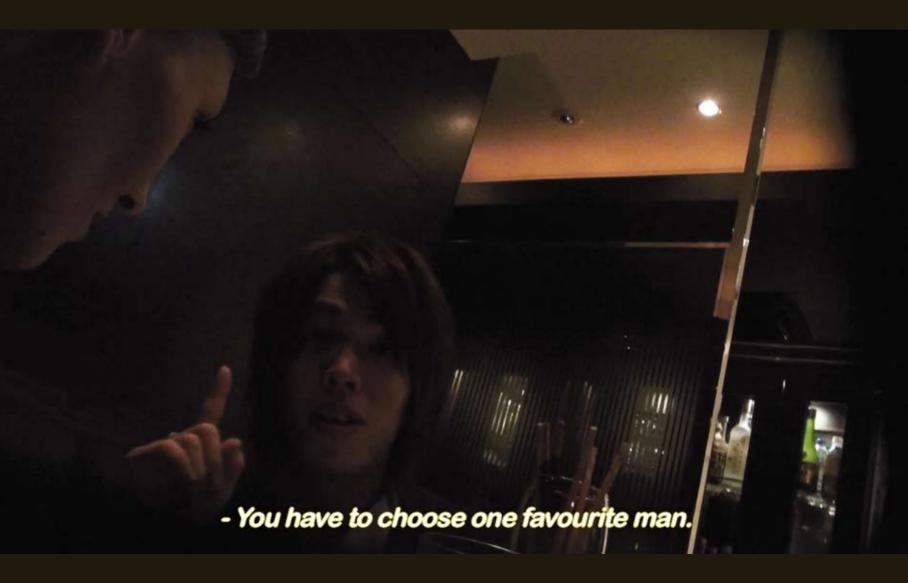
























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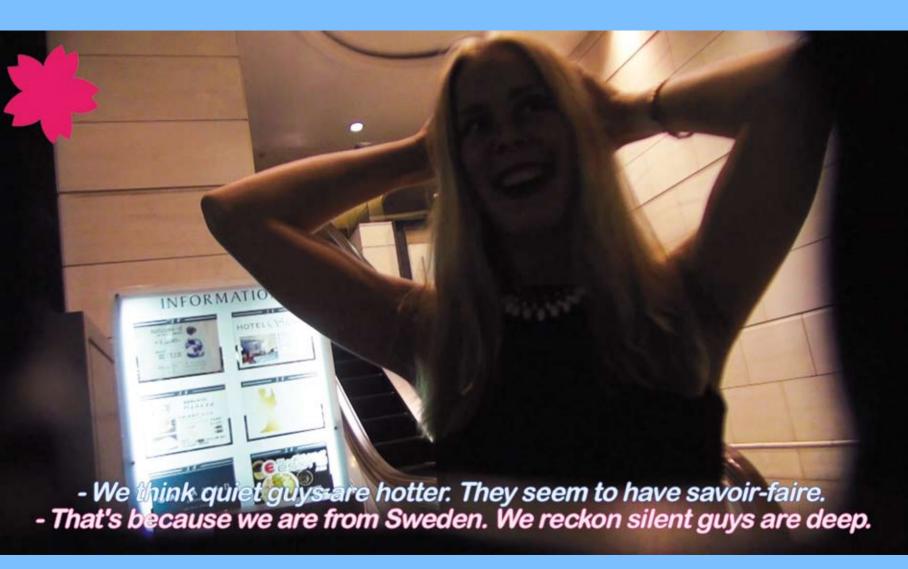
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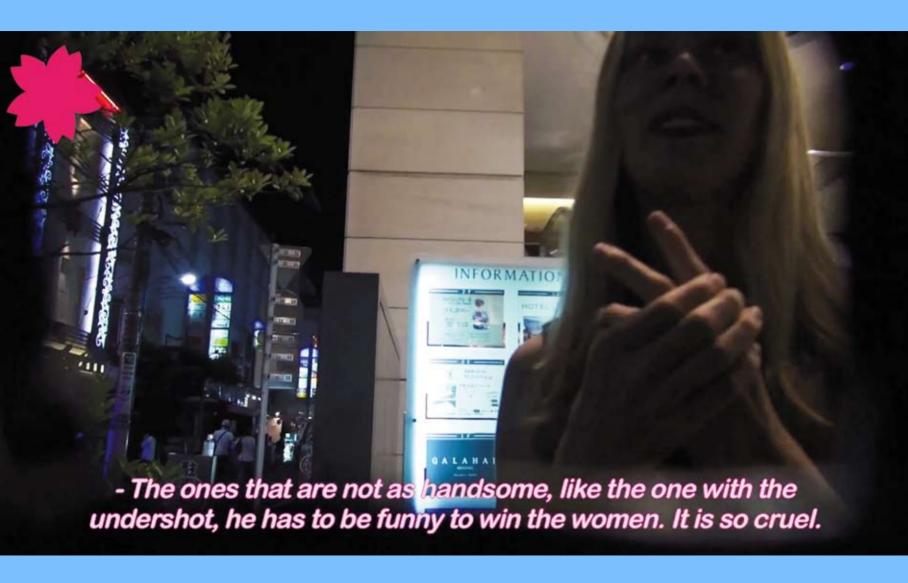


Tonight I talked to some other customers. Many of them are hostesses themselves. When their club closes late at night they need to relax. So they bring the cash they got from the sarariimen and drink it away with their favourite host in the morning.

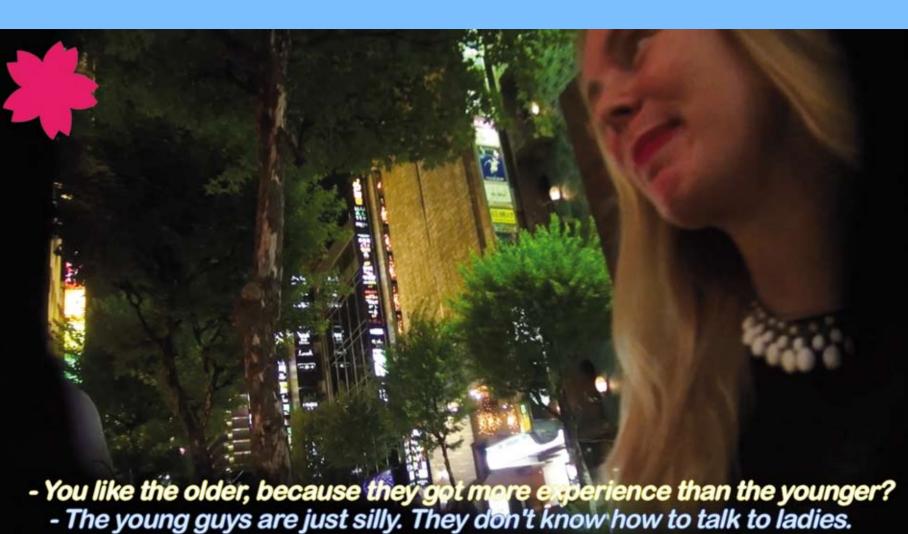


- Yeah, I liked him most because he looked like my first love from Kenya.

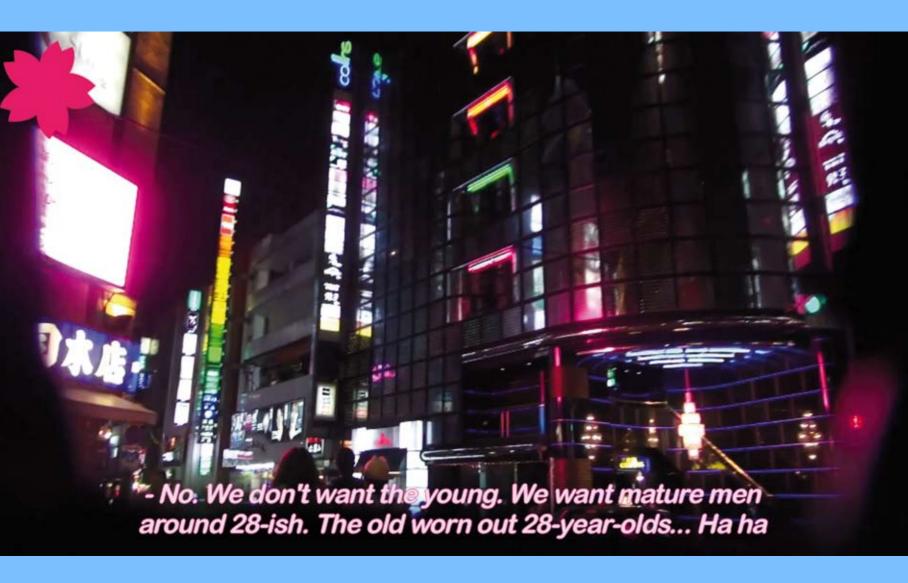








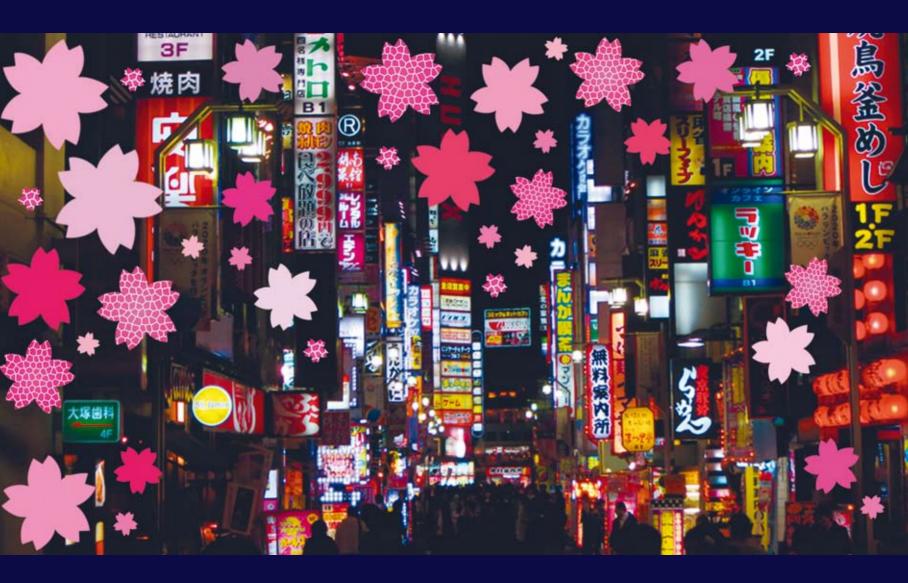




But now it is evening.

It is that strange, equivocal hour when the curtains of heaven are drawn and cities light up.

/.../ and each one hastens to the place of her choice to drink the cup of oblivion.





- Are you girls still on board?

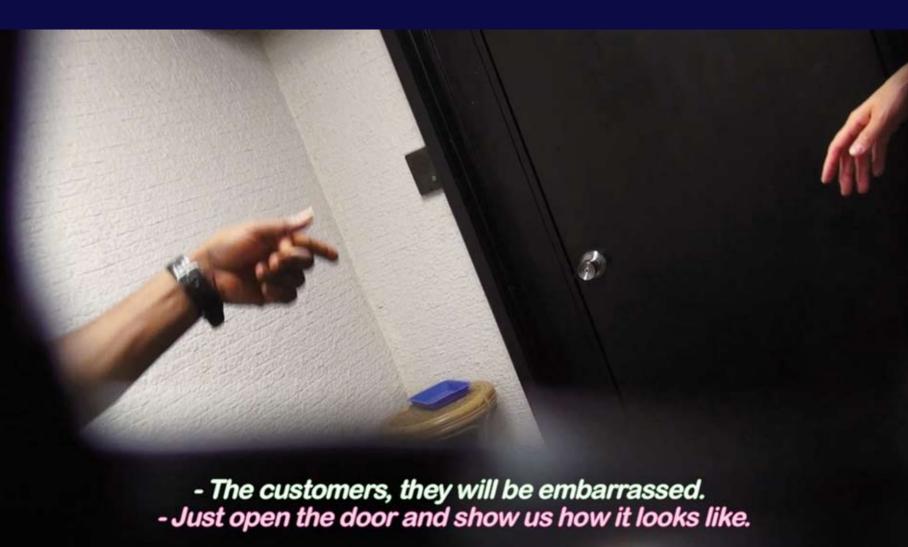


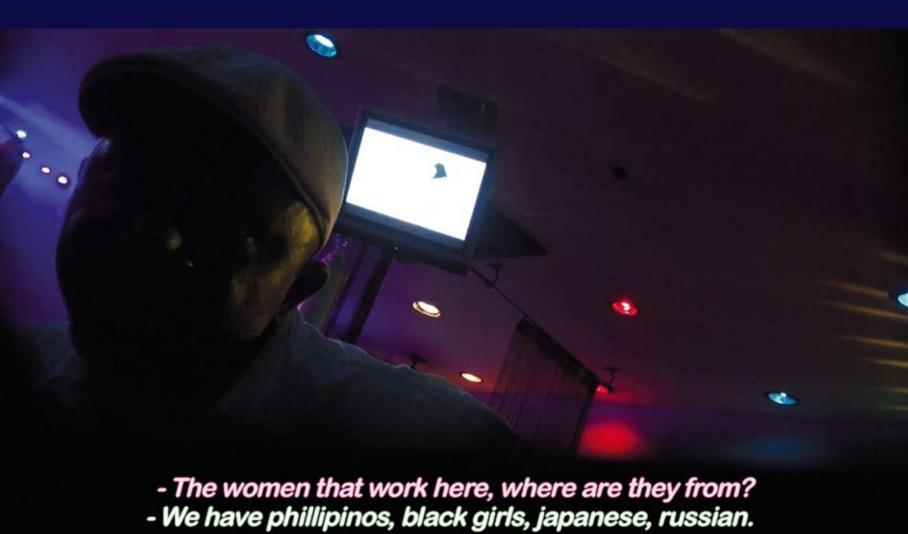
We can go to my club, you can drink for free. We hang there together.
 Maybe. (Let's shove off?)

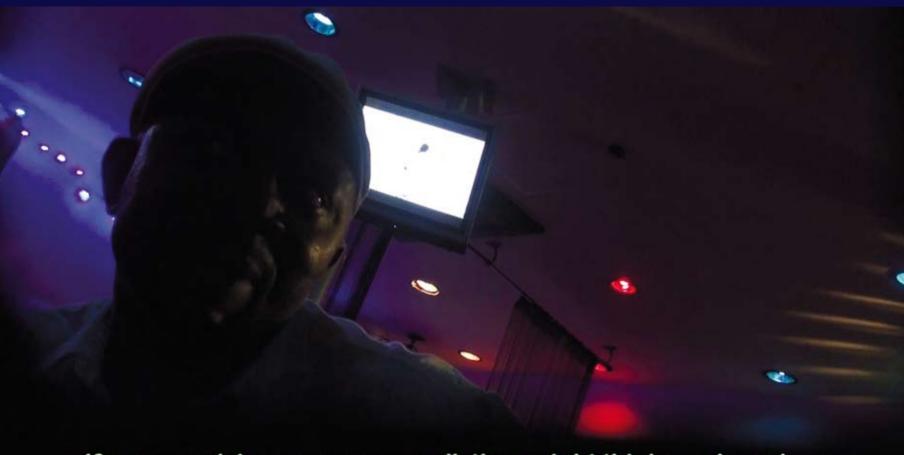




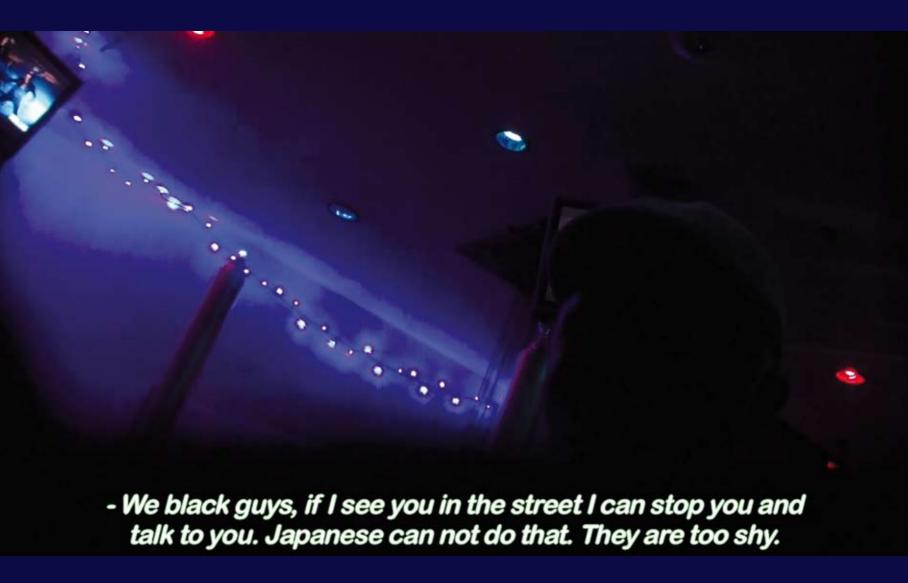
- But they are so naked the girls! They have to dress like that?
- No no no, just to attract customers. You have to put on some sexy wear.







- If you speak japanese very well, they might think you have been here a long time. And had many boyfriends. They don't like that.





- The way you looks, this is japanese type. Your stature. This is what they need. I'm here a long time. So I know what they need.







I heard that there are a lot of gangsters in this area. Is it like that?
 You are working with me, don't fear. We have to protect you.



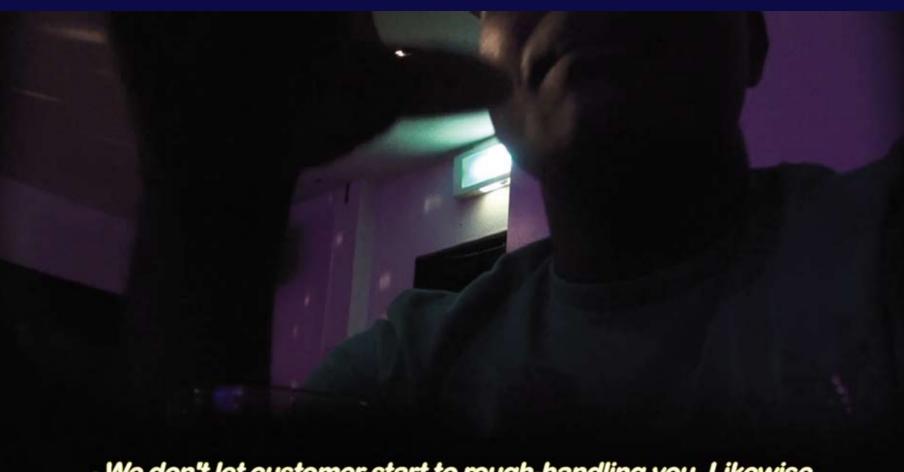
- But we saw some of them was fighting in the street yesterday.
- Each club have an amount that they pay every month.



- There's no problem with Yakuza in Kabukicho right now. Everything is quiet.



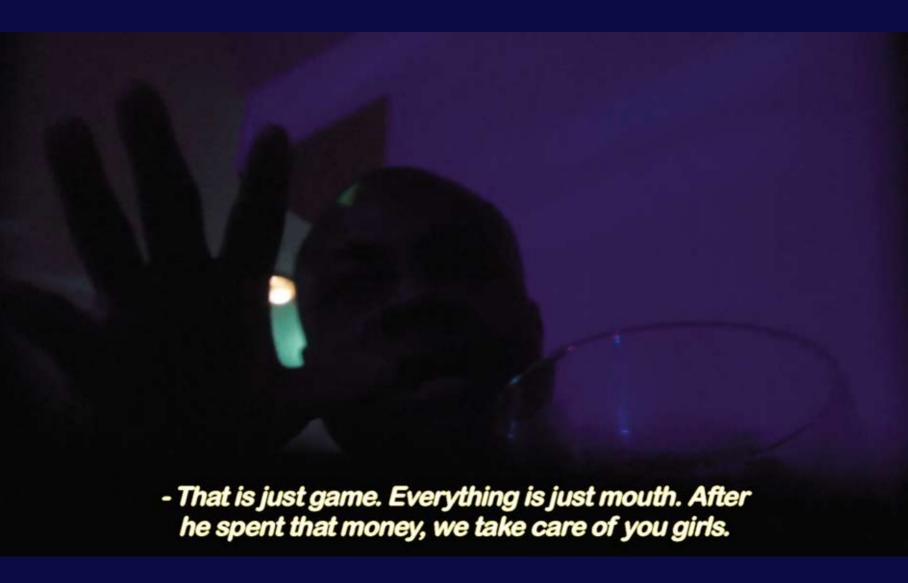
- In this type of business, when customer comes, he likes to touch girl. So that he will be willing to spend that money.



- We don't let customer start to rough-handling you. Likewise, if you get drunk, customer may take good advantage of you.



- He can touch, ok. You cannot shout at him. But you can promise him after he spend good money for you he can take you to hotel.









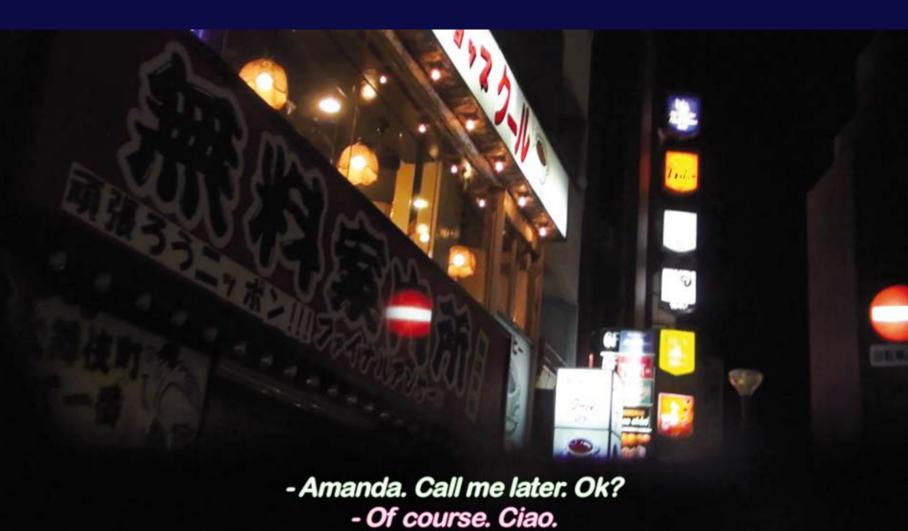
If you get a nice japanese man, can you marry him? For your papers.
 If he's a beautiful host. With long hair...



- Those guys can not do that. Cause they are doing that for business. They have many girls. Even if you ask for sex, they cannot sex you.

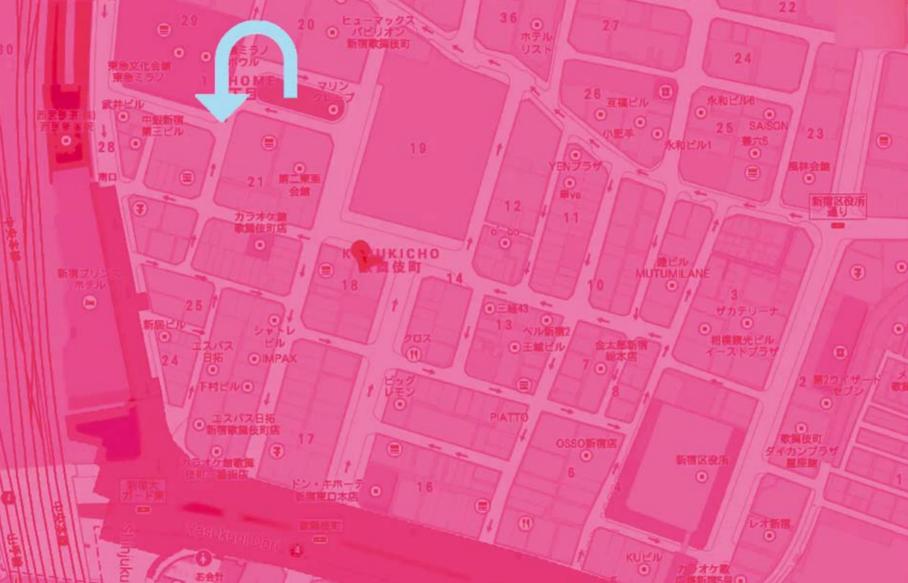


- Go and drink with him. He's gonna buy you a drink. - Yeah, I wanna drink with you. Come on. I'll take care of you.



it is, perhaps, a better thing to be valued only as an object of passion than never to be valued at all. /.../ He found me, I think, inexpressibly exotic. But I often felt like a

female impersonator.













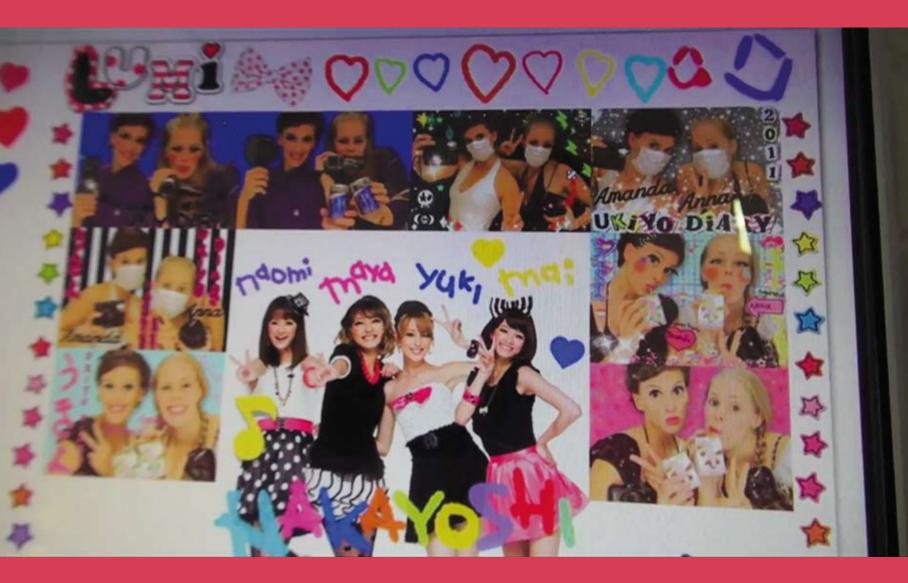






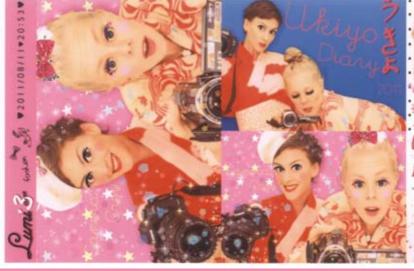


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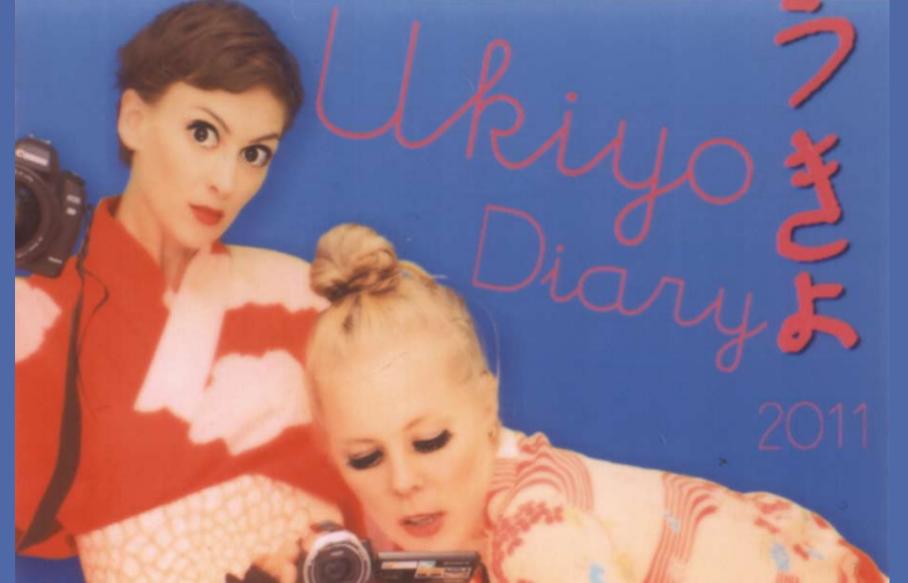


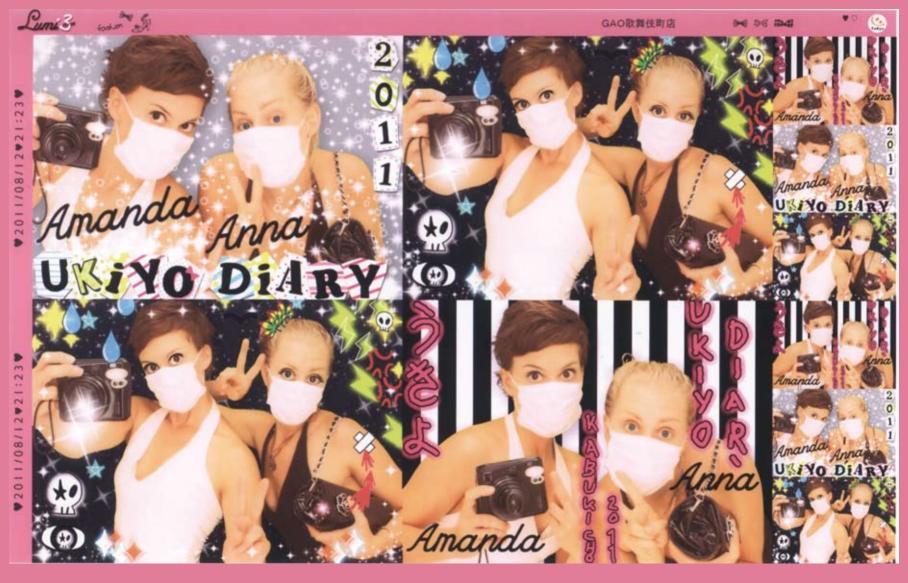






















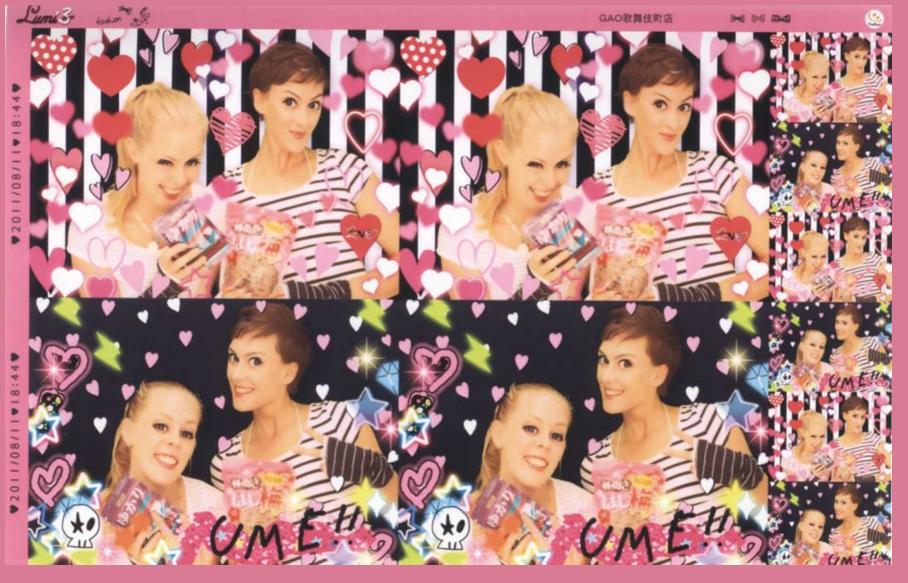
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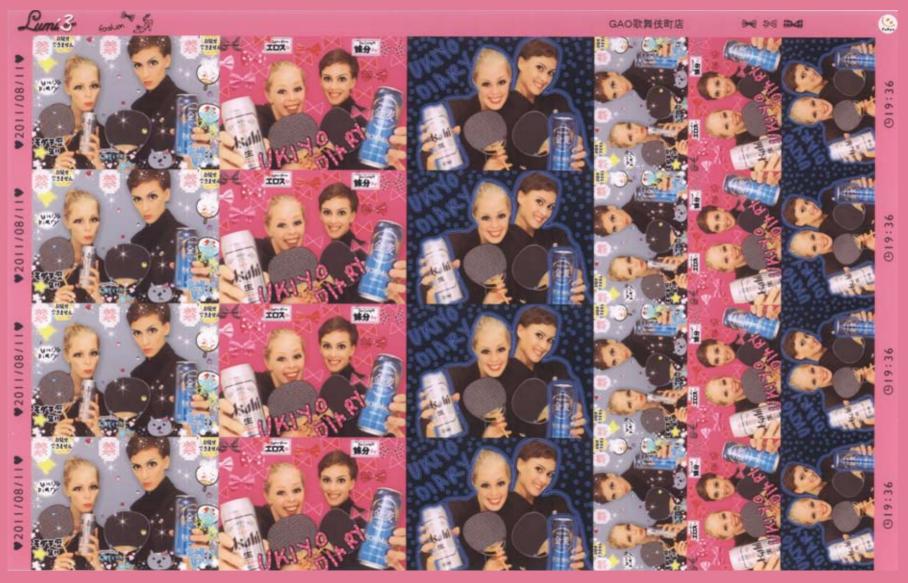
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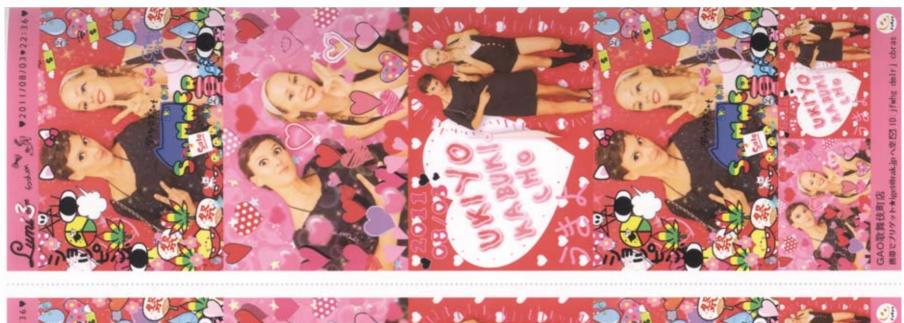




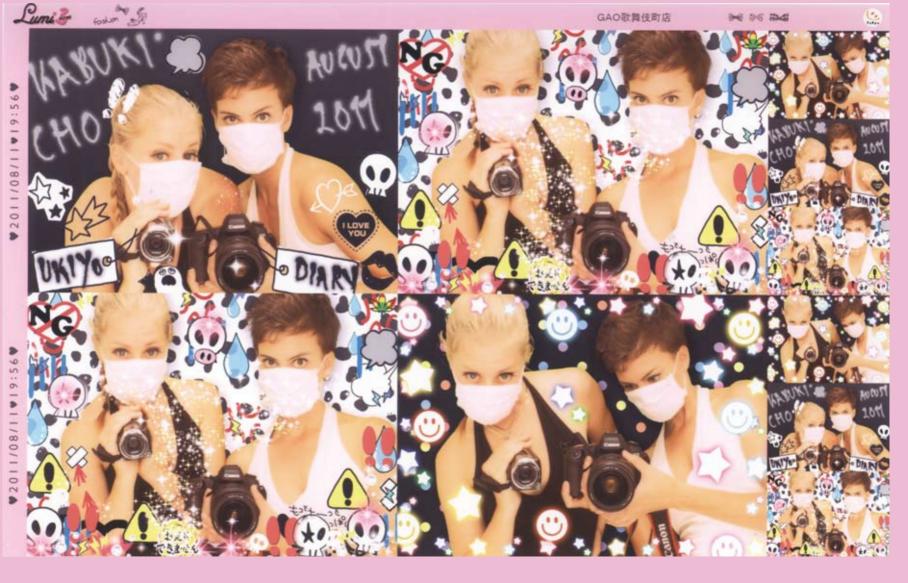


















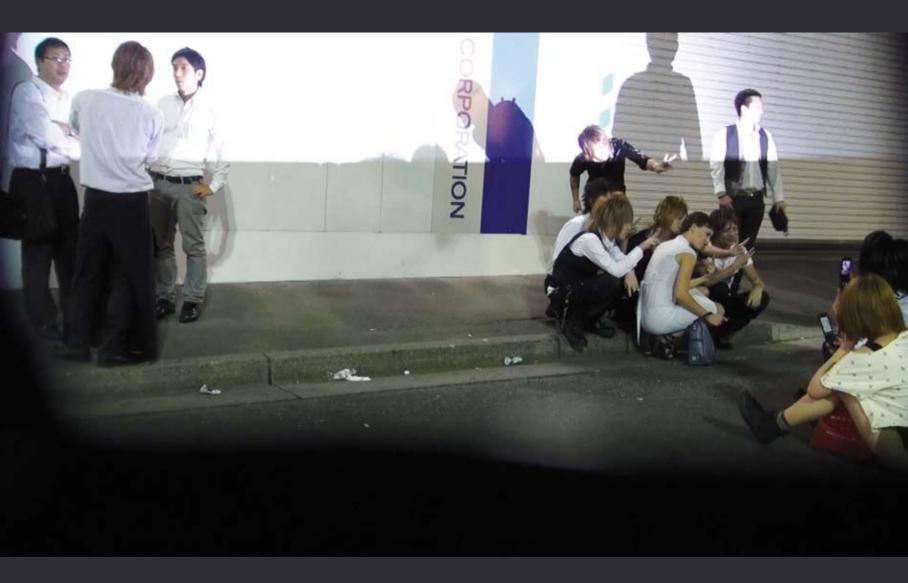


1.../

You must be content only with glimpses of our outlines, as if you had caught sight of our reflections in the looking-glass of somebody else's house as you passed by the window.

His name was not Taro. I only called him Taro...







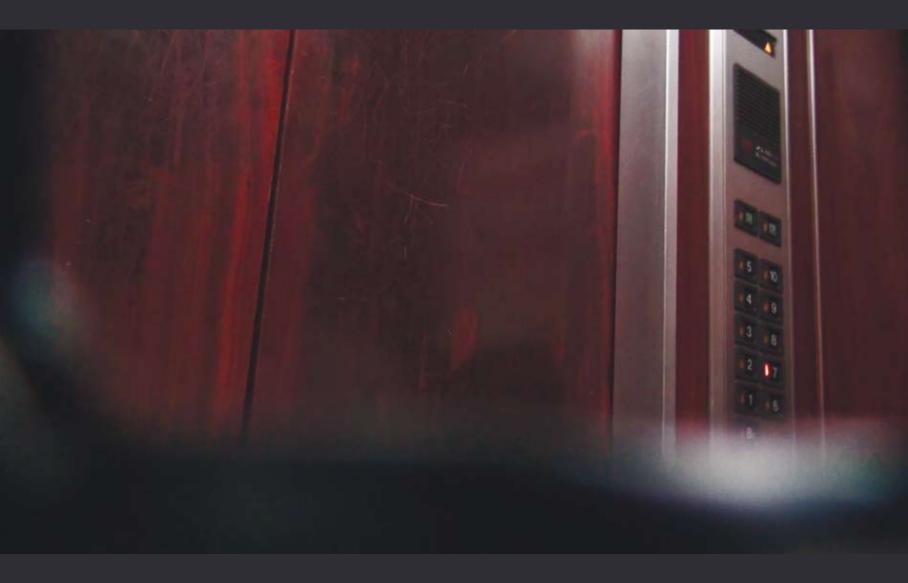






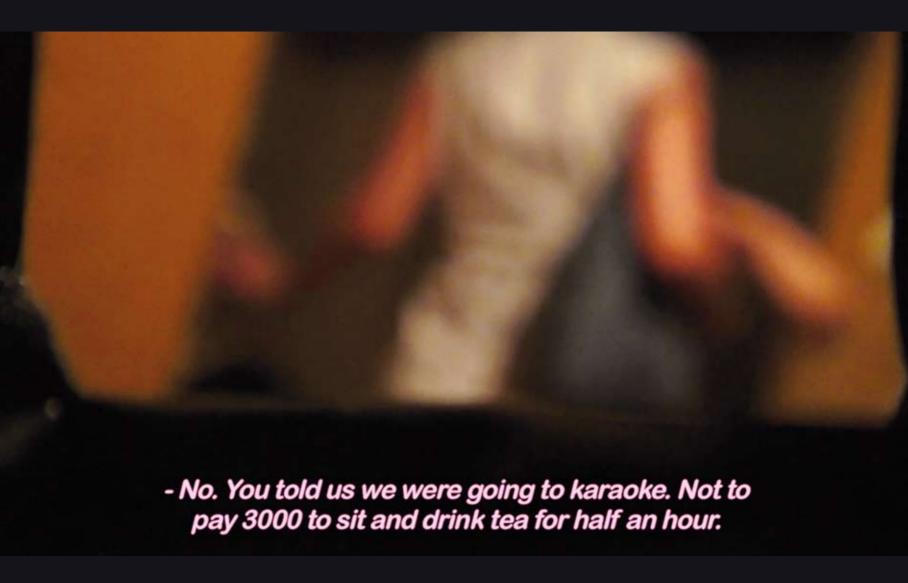


- You wanna go to karaoke?





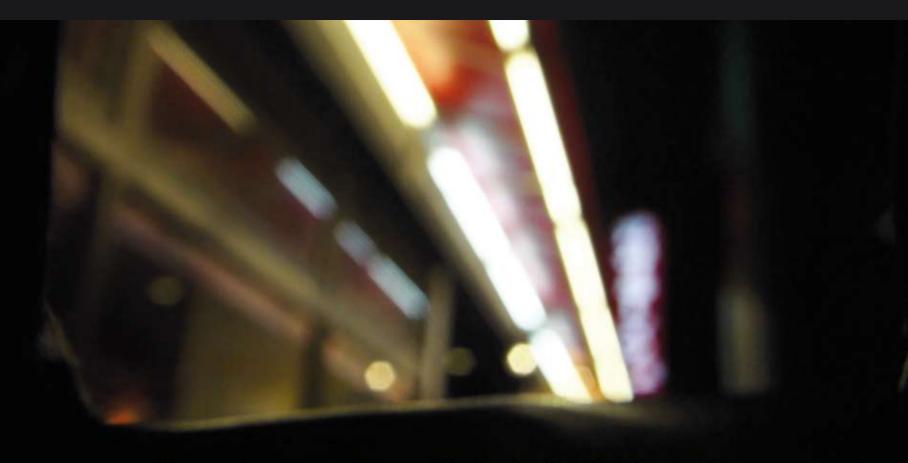
- How did we end up here? He's fiddling with my hair. It's kind of... No!
- You have good smell...





- You can not leave. You gonna have to pay.
 Can I talk to her? Can I talk to my friend?





It was damn unpleasant to be locked in, I must say...
 Yeah, I understand.

(68) Things that can't be compared -

Summer and winter. Night and day. Rainy days and sunny days. Laughter and anger. Old age and youth. White and black. People you love and those you hate. The man you love and the same man once you've lost all feeling for him seem like two completely different people. /—/











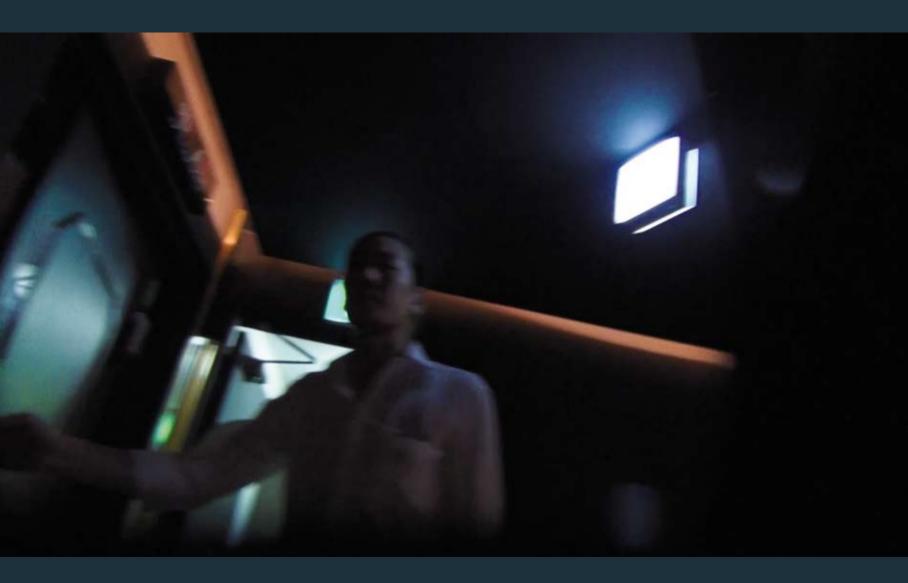






The lover of life makes the whole world her family, just like the lover of the fair sex who builds up her family from all the beautiful men that she has ever found, or that are - or are not - to be found; or the lover of pictures who lives in a magical society of dreams painted on canvas. /.../

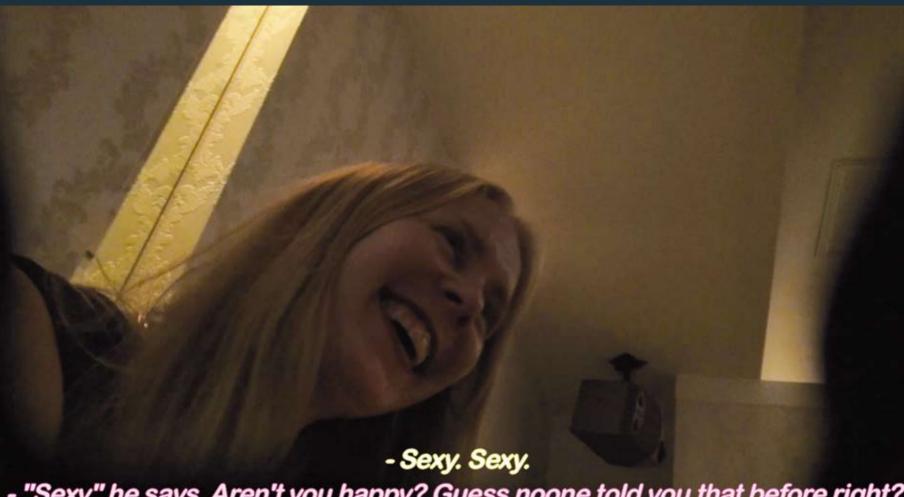








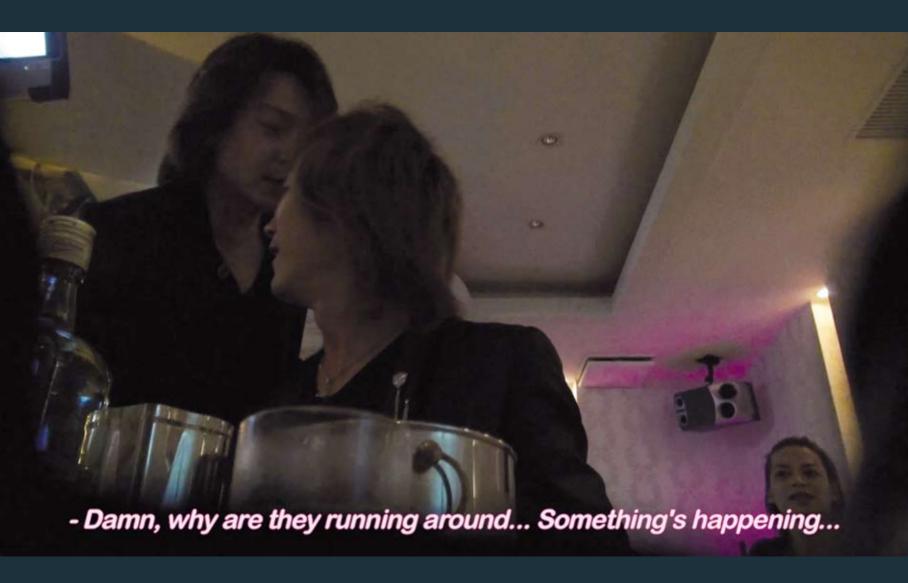




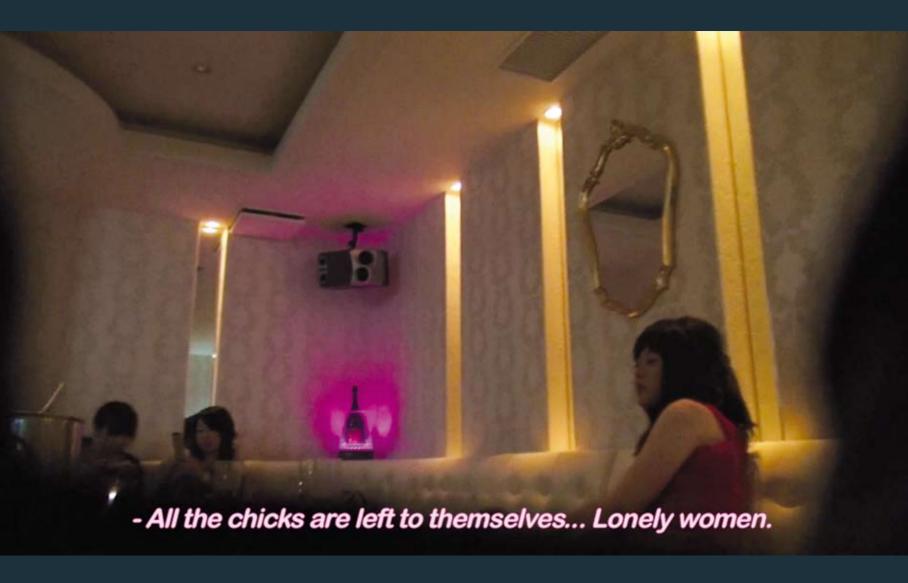
- "Sexy" he says. Aren't you happy? Guess noone told you that before right?

















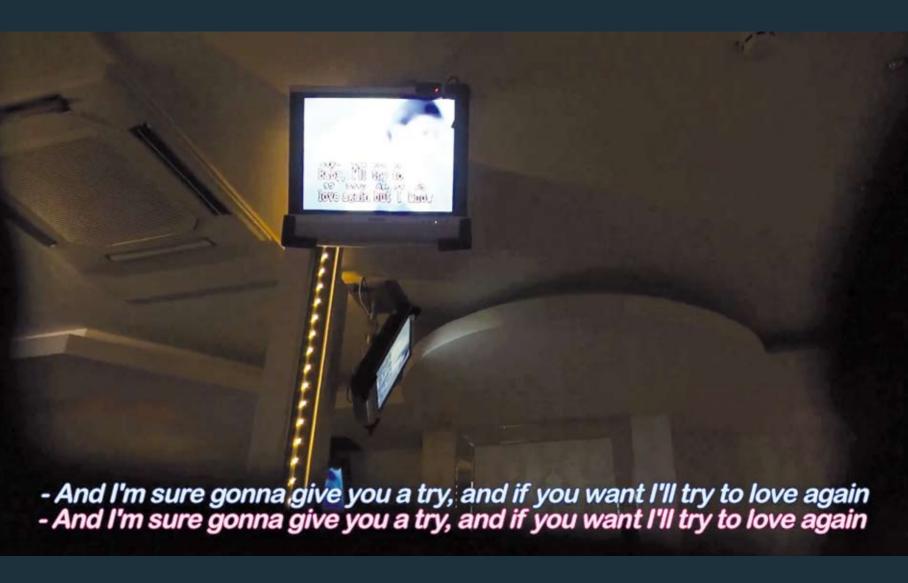














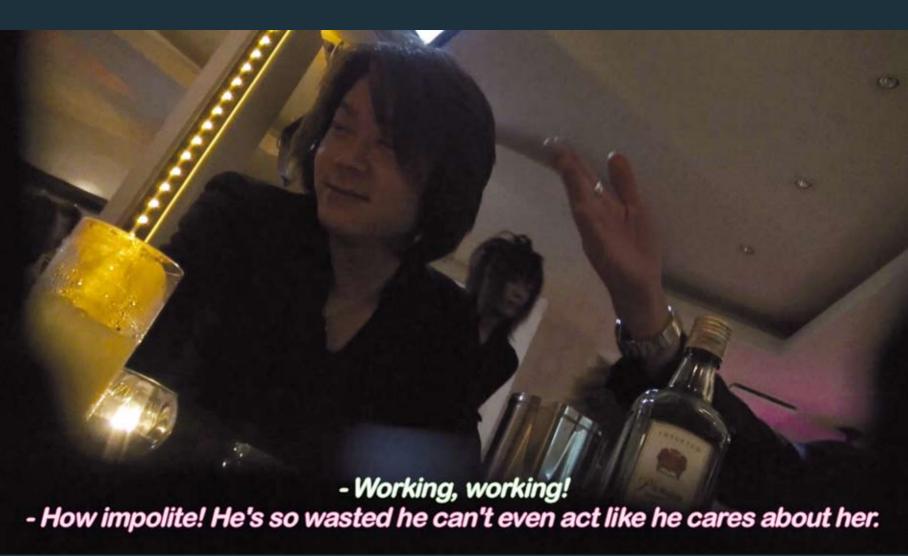










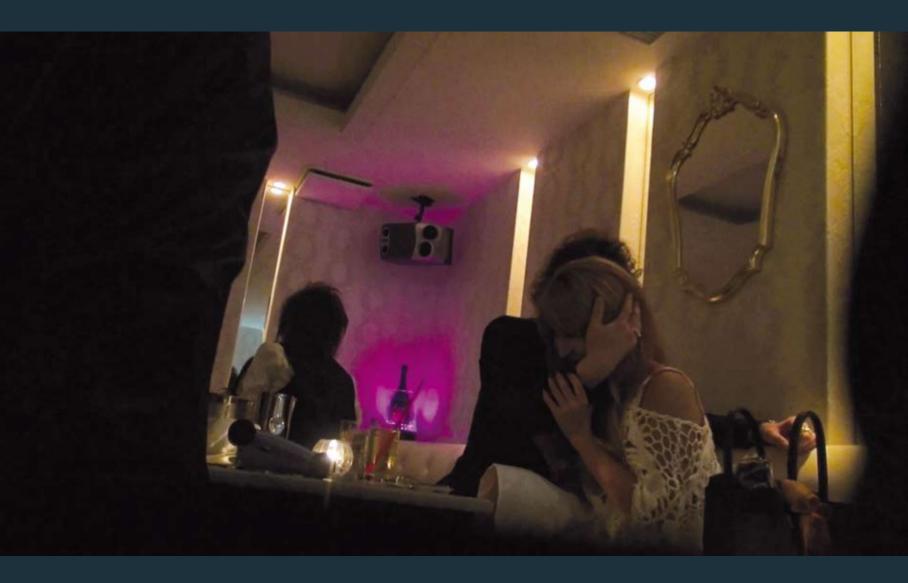


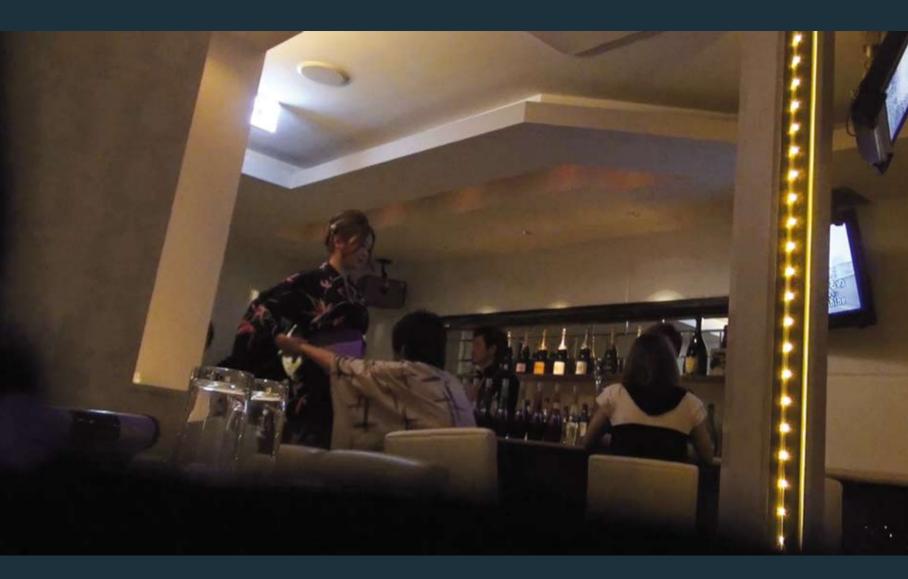
(160) Things that are far yet near -

Paradise.

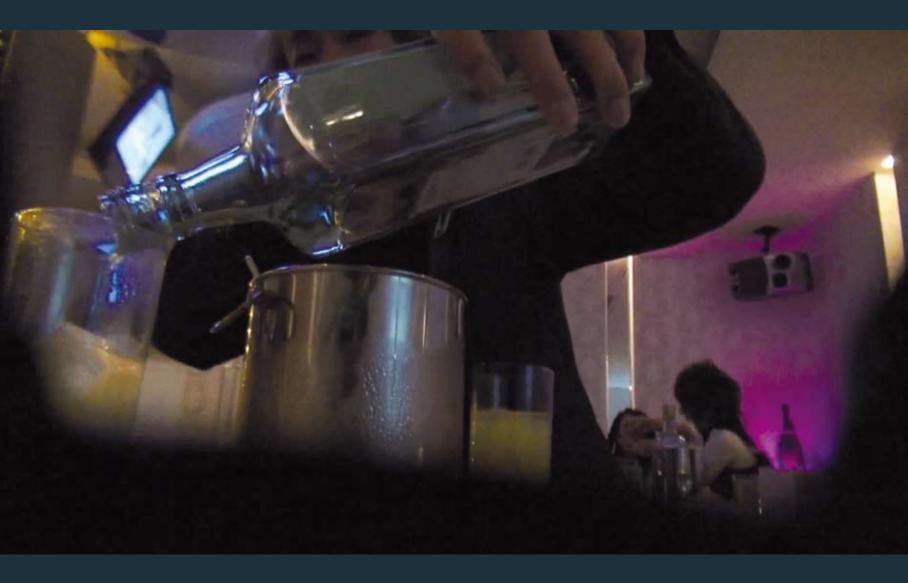
The course of a boat.

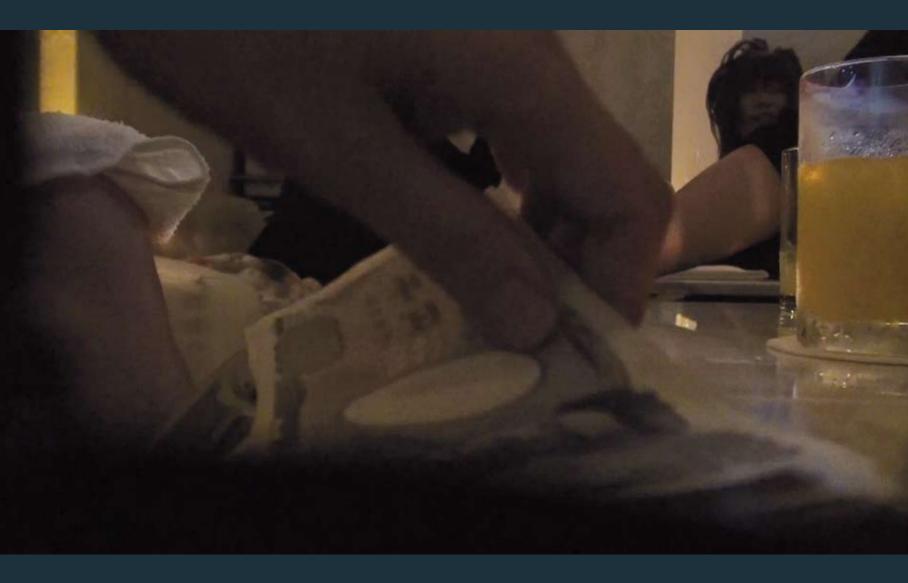
Relations between men and women.











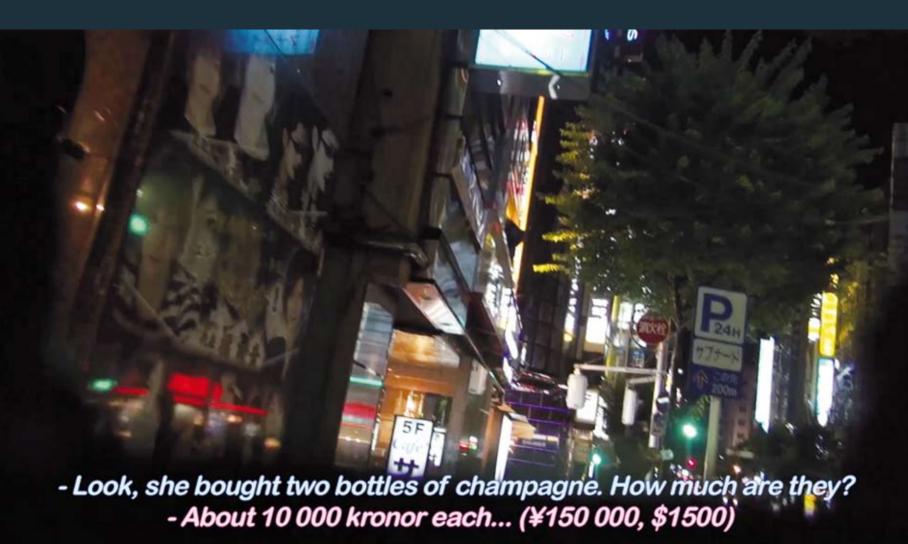


- I hope you come back. I'm here every day. I'm waiting for you.





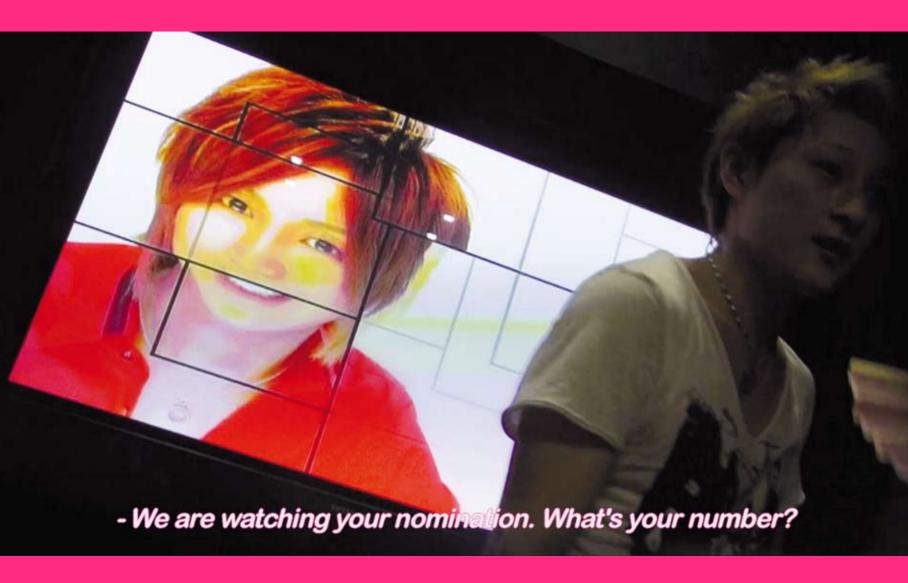




(252) The thing about someones face that's particularly fine always makes you think, 'Ah how delightful! How special' no matter how many times you see it. Pictures. on the other hand, cease to attract the eye if you see them a number of times. The painting on a screen that stands close by, for example, may be absolutely marvellous, but you never pay it any attention. But people's appearance really is endlessly attractive.









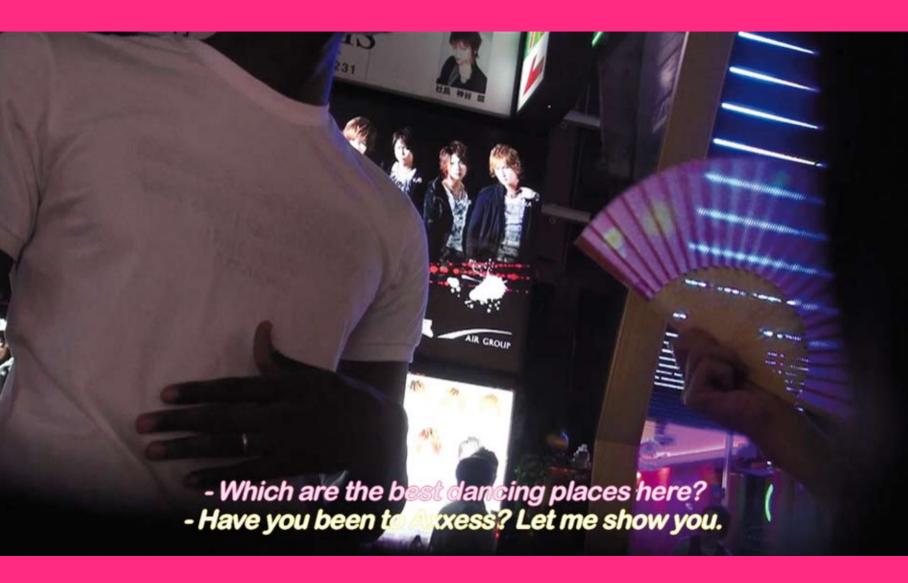






these streets shout my name; Amanda! this is where you belong, anonymous in this stream of unfullfilled desires reborn at dusk





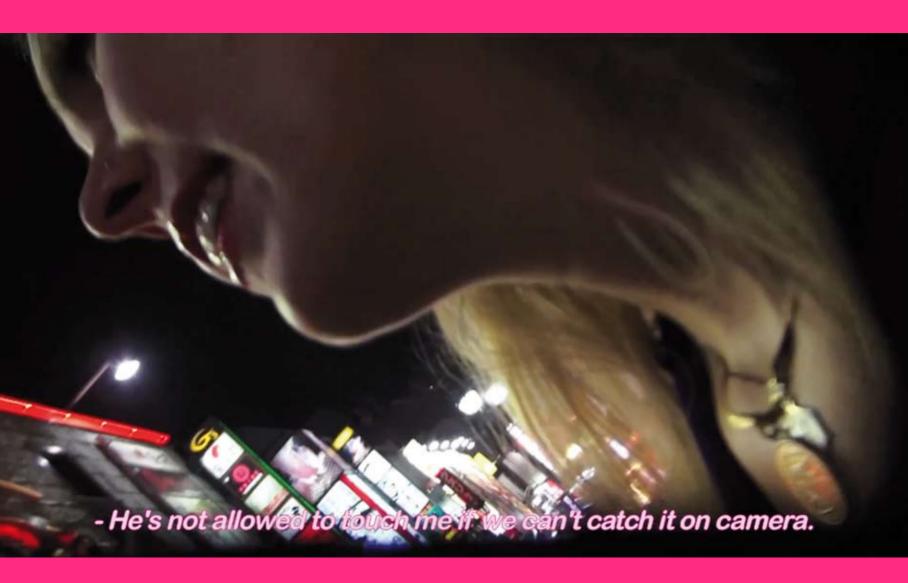


















as if in a celebration of the things they feared, they seemed to have made the entire city into a cold hall of mirrors which continually proliferated whole galleries of constantly changing appearances, all marvellous but none tangible.







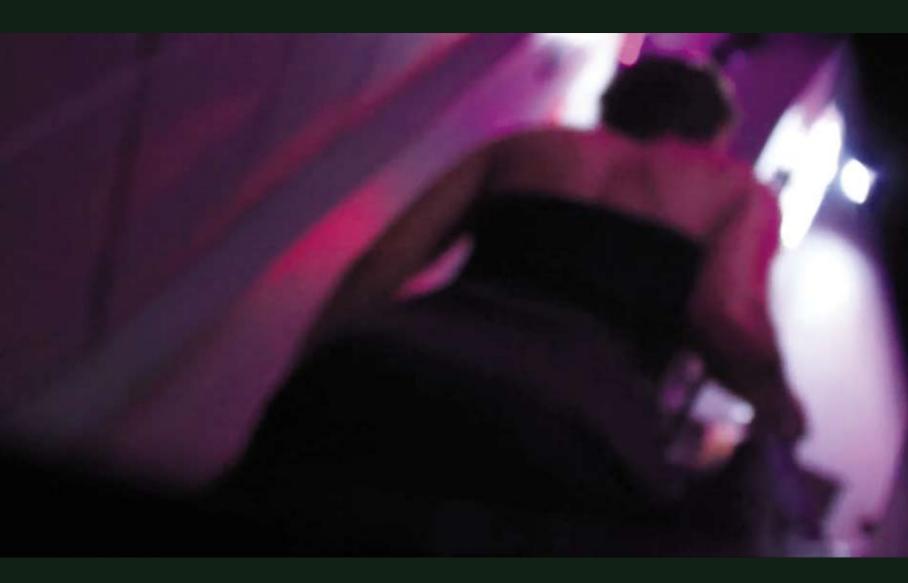








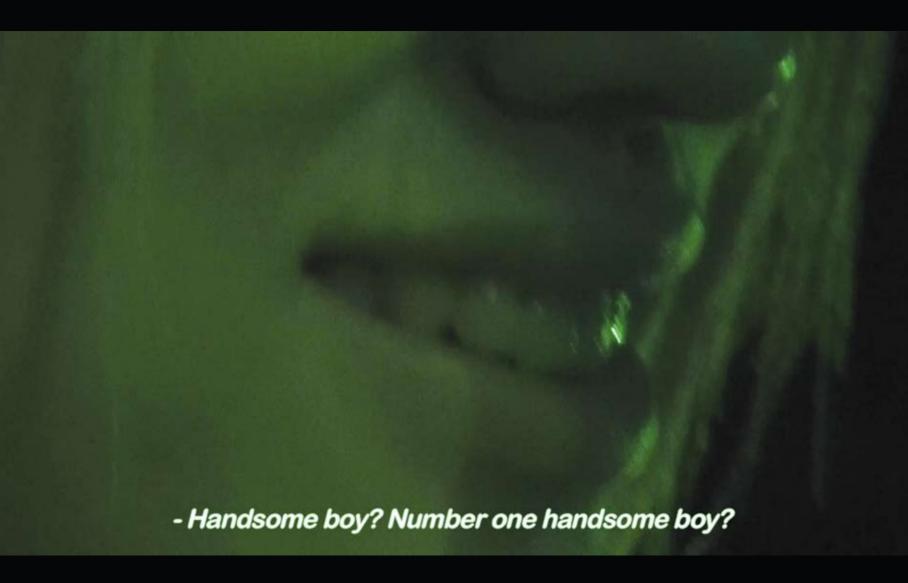






Man is quite within his rights, indeed he is even accomplishing a kind of duty, when he devotes himself to appearing magical and supernatural; he has to astonish and charm us; as an idol, he is obliged to adorn himself in order to be adored.

- Service working. Lady service.



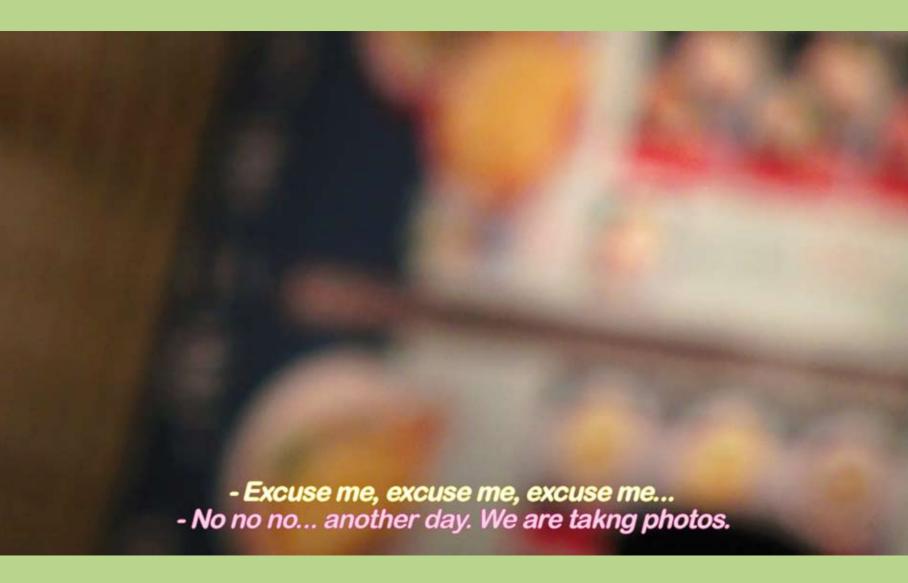


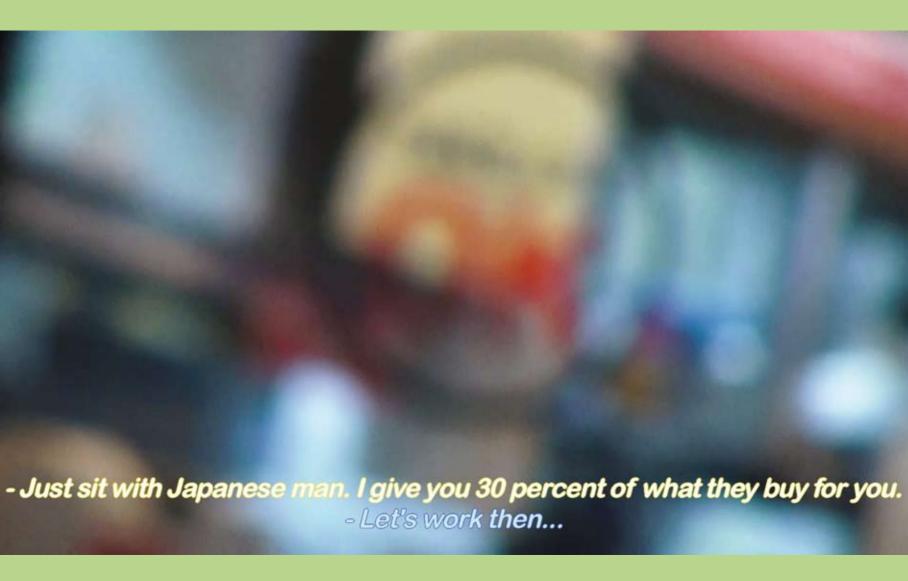




summer here is hot and humid we are coming to a point where we can not afford our lifestyle if we want to stay

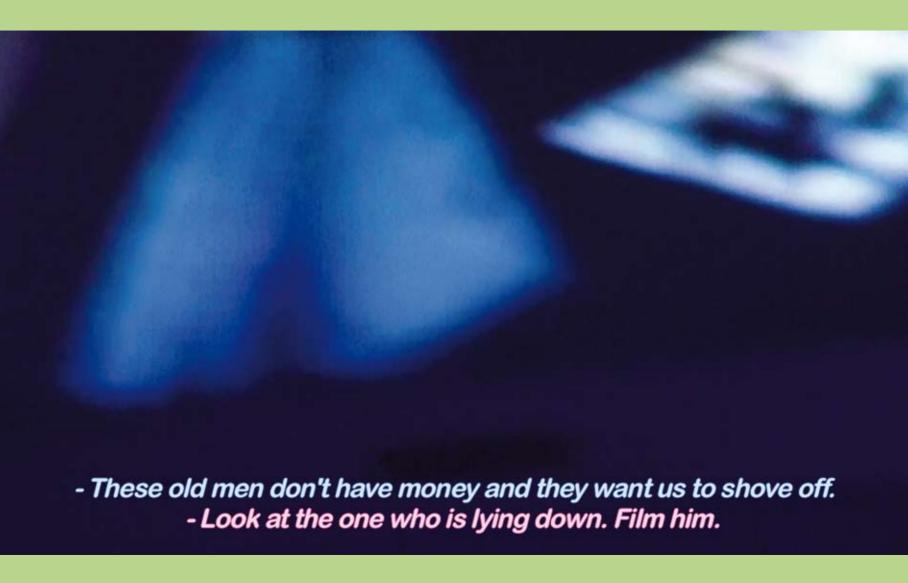












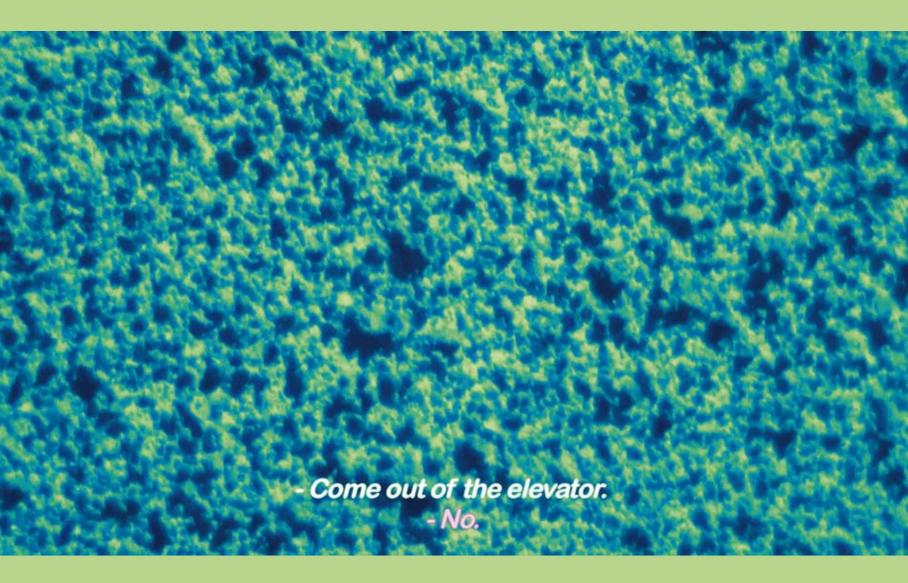




- Let's get out of here.





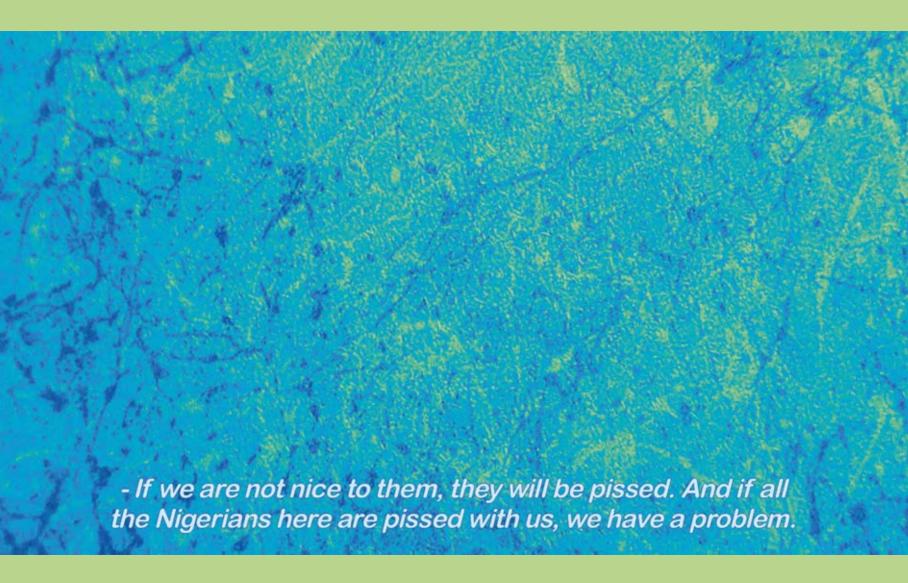


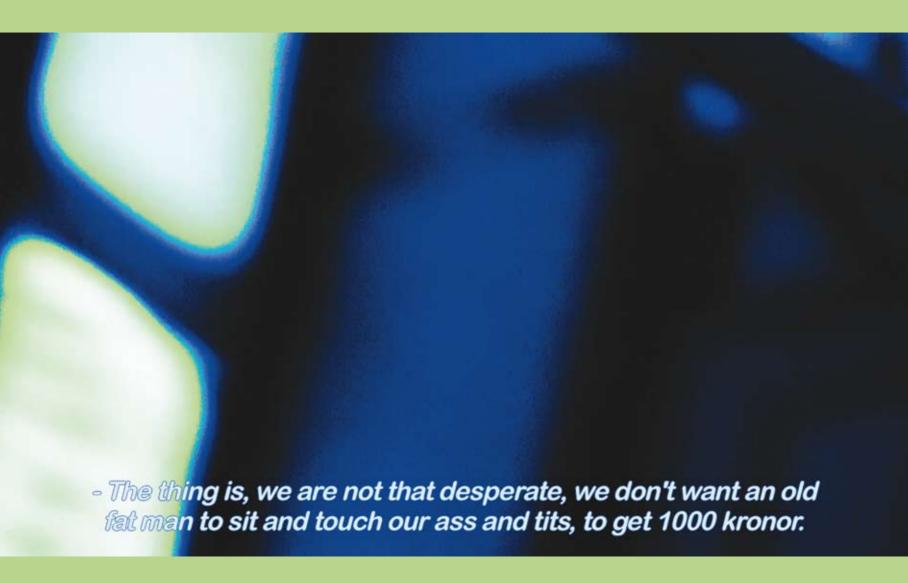


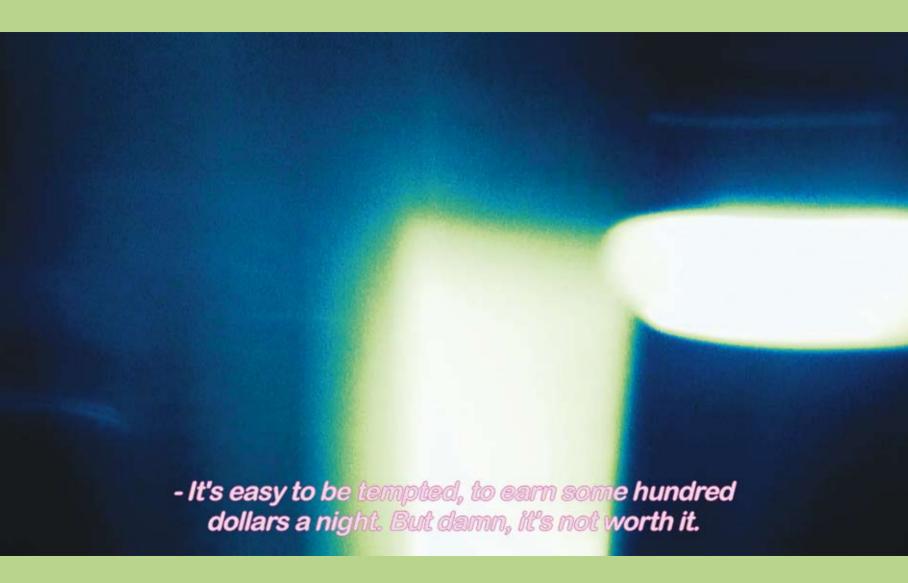












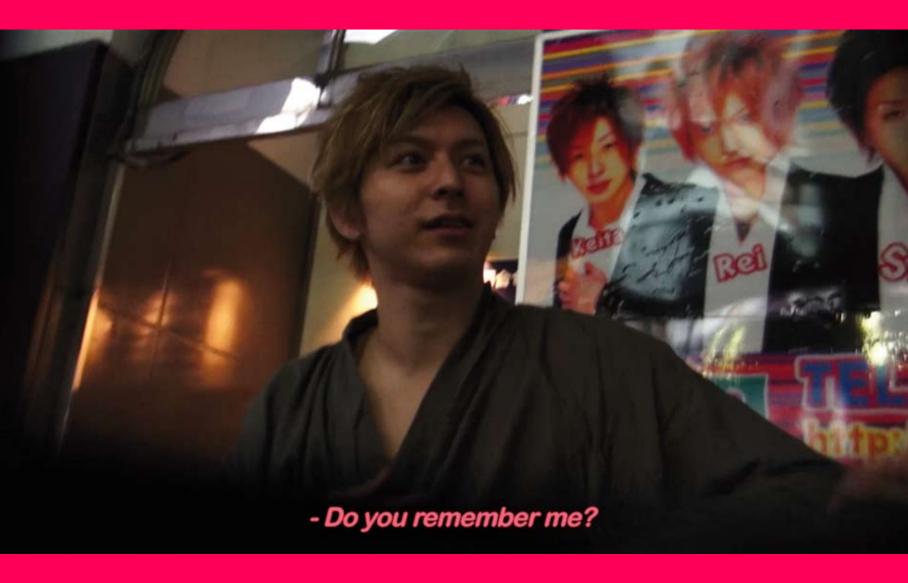


(111) Things that lose by being painted -Pinks. Sweet flag. Cherry blossom. Men and women described in tales as looking splendid.

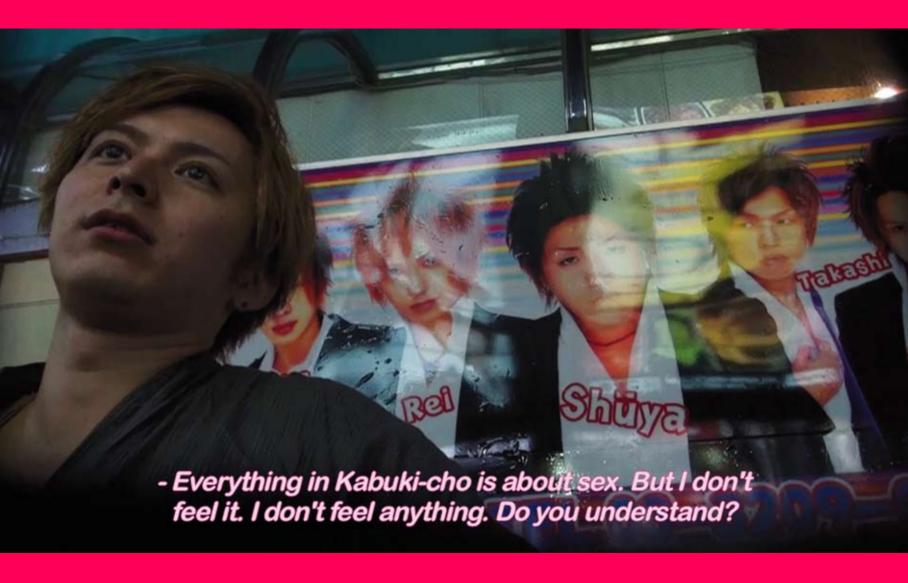
(112) Things that gain by being painted - Pine trees. Autumn fields. Mountain villages. Mountains paths.





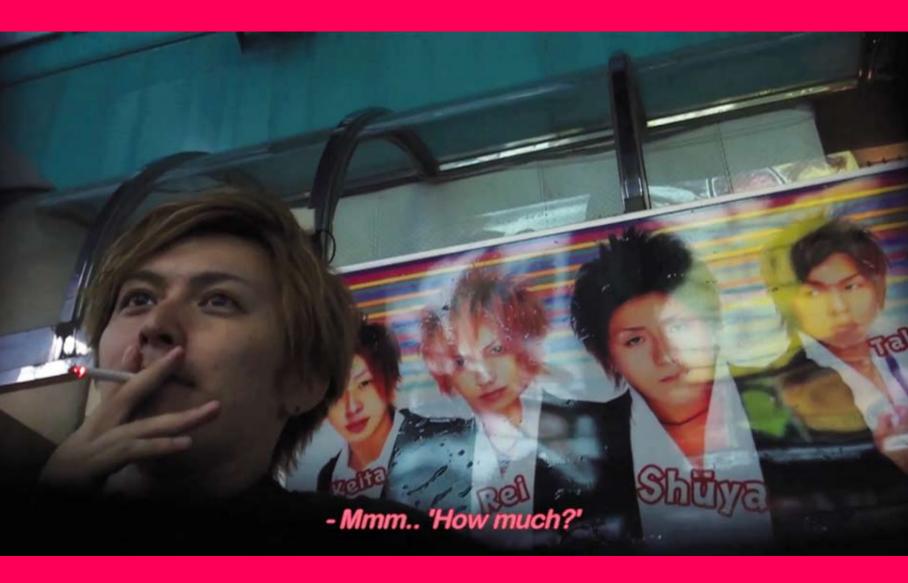
































how far does a pretence of feeling maintained with absolute conviction

become authentic?

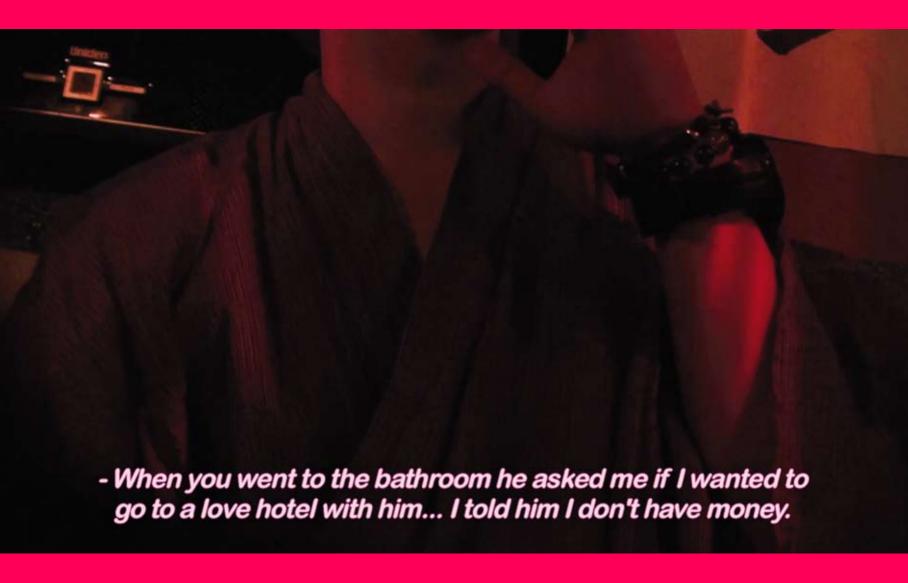


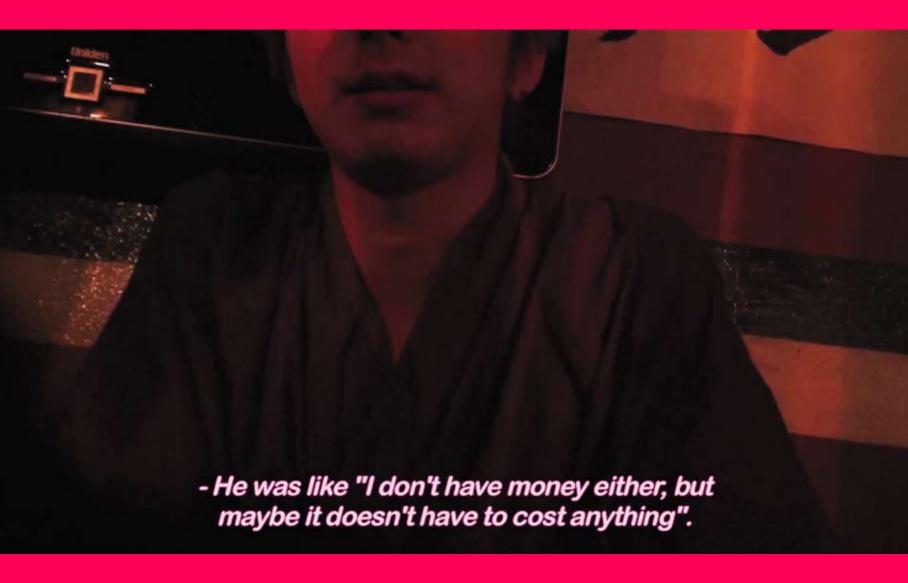




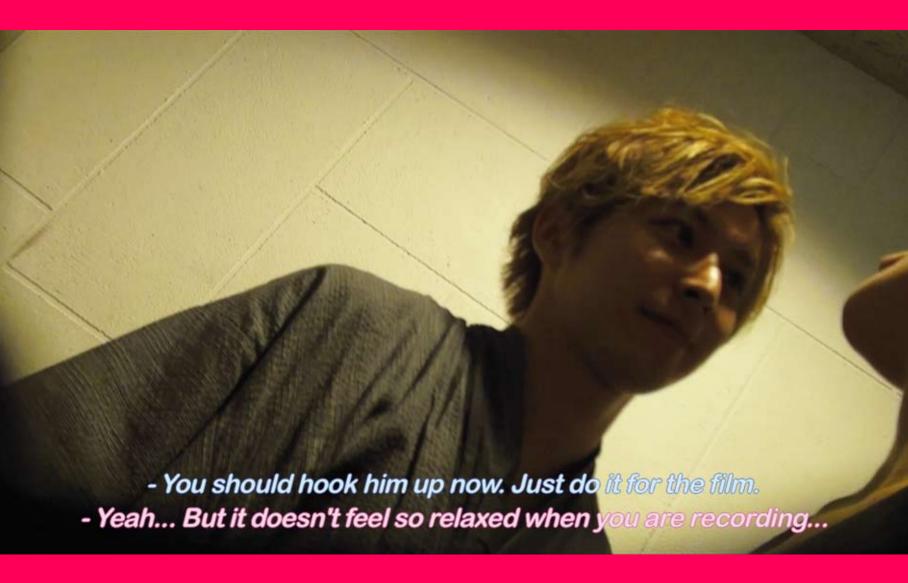






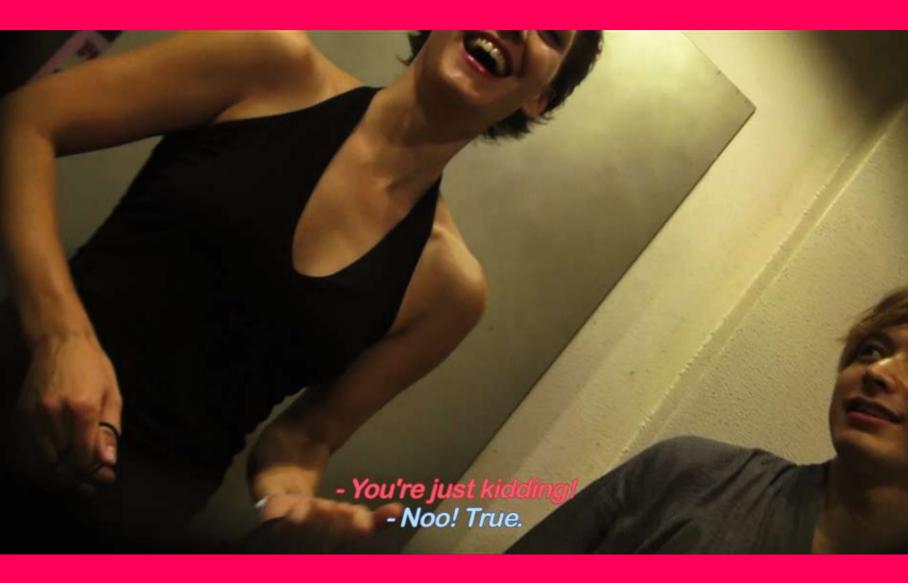








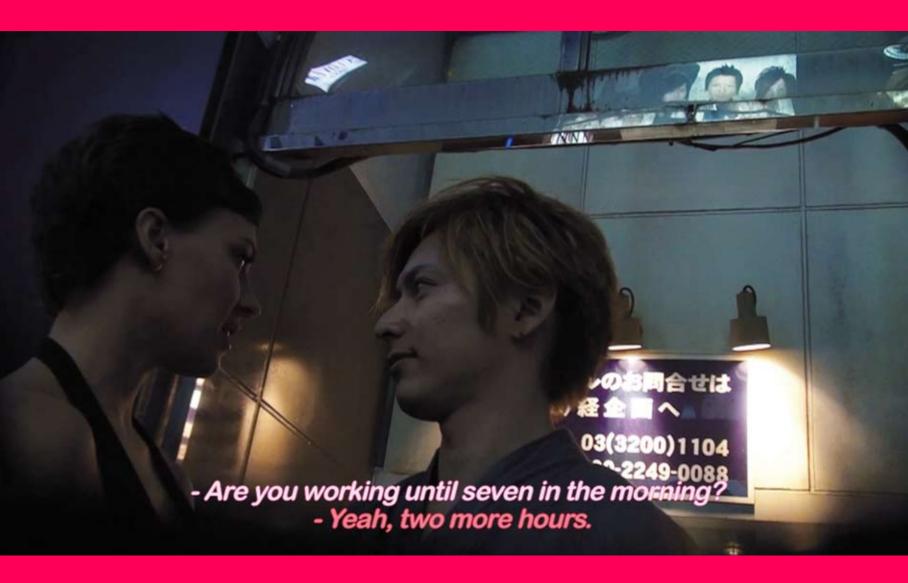




... the intangible reflections of ourselves we saw in one another's eyes, reflections of nothing but appearances, in a city dedicated to seeming, and, try as we might to possess the essence of each other's otherness, we would inevitably fail.









He inserts a 10 000 yen bill into a hole in the wall. The door opens automatically. The room is small and furnished with a big bed, a desk and a large tv. No windows. There are disposable packages on the table, I have to ask him which one is the soap. By the bed; karaoke microphones, napkins, condoms. In the ceiling; a mirror.

The mirror distilled the essence of all the encounters of strangers whose perceptions of one another existed only in the medium of the chance embrace, the accidental. During the durationless time we spent making love, we were not ourselves, whoever that might have been, but in some sense the ghosts of our ourselves. But the selves we were not, the selves of our own habitual perceptions of ourselves, had a far more insubstantial substance than the reflections we were.

Therefore I dressed rapidly and ran away as soon as it was light outside, that mysterious, colourless light of dawn when the hooded crows flap out of the temple groves to perch on the telegraph poles, cawing a baleful dawn chorus to the echoing boulevards empty, now, of all the pleasureseekers.



The day after, he calls me. He wants to meet me again. But Amanda does not live in Kabukicho anymore. She has flown off to other distant exotic places, in search of new projects that can satisfy the demands of the growing video art-market.

I will wait for you, he says. 'I will wait for you'.





purple texts: green texts: sei shonagon angela carter the pillow book fireworks pink texts:
amanda strandhed
ukiyo diary
blue texts:
charles baudelaire
le peintre de la vie moderne

ukiyo diary - one month in the floating world is a film, a video art work and a book by sonia hedstrand with support from: stiftelsen grafströmska-sandqvistska fonden, helge ax:son johnsons stiftelse, the swedish art grants committee and längmanska kulturfonden many thanks to rut karin zettergren and lili von wallenstein bokbål förlag, stockholm 2014 ISBN 978-91-86385-26-2

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