

# Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

Press Release 2019/02/18

## *Sophie Calle, “Exquisite Pain” from the Hara Museum Collection*

January 5 (Saturday) – March 28 (Thursday), 2019



[1]



[2]

When Sophie Calle held the exhibition *Exquisite Pain* at the Hara Museum (1999-2000), the response was huge. It was the first solo show at a Japanese museum for the internationally acclaimed French artist. The work was acquired by the Hara Museum immediately after the show ended and is now being presented in its entirety, occupying the entire museum again after a hiatus of 19 years.

"Exquisite pain" refers to the pain of a broken relationship that Calle experienced. In this work, the story of her pain and recovery is told through photographs and texts. Letters to her most beloved person and photographs of the days up until the fateful day of the breakup comprise "Count down" (part one). The gradual recovery that she achieved by sharing her story with others and listening in turn to theirs comprise "Count up" (part two). The unfolding of this story and her encounters with other clearly touched the hearts of many viewers. Through it all, however, runs a fuzzy distinction between fact and fiction which underscores the danger of unquestioning belief. It is a work that will surely provoke many questions in the viewer's mind.

### Who Is Sophie Calle?



Photo : Jean-Baptiste Mondino

Born in Paris in 1953, Sophie Calle is a French contemporary artist who has won fame for work that is often controversial and evocative. For the project *The Sleepers* (1979), Calle photographed and interviewed 28 strangers whom she had invited to come to her home and sleep in her bed. For *The Hotel* (1981), Calle worked as a chambermaid at a hotel in Venice where she photographed the rooms of the hotel guests. For *The Address Book* (1983), Calle interviewed the people listed in an address book that she found in the street and then published the interviews in the French daily newspaper *Libération*. In the 1990s, she embarked on a series of works on sightless persons beginning with *The Blind*. It was a profound exploration into the nature of sight and perception which lies at the very foundation of art. Calle's work inspired the author Paul Auster to model a fictional character named Maria Turner after her in his novel *Leviathan*. Calle in turn assumed the personae of Maria Turner in an installation she created called *Double Game* (1998). These works, which push the boundaries of contemporary art, remain a focus of much attention today. Calle has held solo exhibitions at major museums throughout the world, including the Tate Gallery (1998) and the Pompidou Center (2003-2004). In 2017,

Calle held a solo exhibition in France that was much-talked about for its unusual venue, the Museum of Hunting and Nature. In Japan, she has held several solo exhibitions, including two at the Hara Museum: *Exquisite Pain* (1999-2000) and *For the Last and First Time* (2013), the latter of which traveled to the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (2015) and the Nagasaki Prefectural Museum of Art (2016).

### **Related Event**

**Artist Talk: Sophie Calle** at the Hall at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

February 1 (Friday), 2019

\*Details to be announced on the website.

**Other Exhibitions in Tokyo** \*the artist is scheduled to make an appearance

**Sophie Calle, "Parce Que"** at Gallery Koyanagi

February 2 (Saturday) – March 5 (Tuesday), 2019

**Sophie Calle, "Ma mère, mon chat, mon père, dans cet ordre".** at Perrotin Tokyo

February 2 (Saturday) – March 11 (Monday), 2019

### **Interesting Facts about *Exquisite Pain***

#### World Debut at the Hara Museum

*Exquisite Pain* made its world debut at the Hara Museum. It was the desire of the artist to premier the work in the country from which the work got its impetus. A Japanese version was thus produced for the 1999 show at the Hara Museum. This was followed by French and English versions that later appeared at venues around the world.

#### French Version

The French version *Douleur Exquise* made its debut at Calle's large-scale solo exhibition at the Pompidou Center (2003 – 2004). It was acquired by the Pompidou Center afterwards.

#### Text Embroidery Done in Niigata



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"Count up" (part two) of the exhibition is distinguished by the use of embroidery for all the text. Initial plans called for the embroidery to be done in France, based on a report by the artist that a certain craftsman there was able to do the embroidery exactly as stipulated by the artist. The volume, however, proved to be too daunting. A lucky encounter with a person from an embroidering factory in Niigata led to all the embroidery being done there by machine. For the substrate, linen fabric favored by the artist was shipped in from Belgium. Everyone was thrilled with the results, including the artist who later had the French version embroidered at the same factory.

#### Actual Objects to be Displayed in "Count down" (part one)

Many of the objects that appear in the photographs in "Count down" (part one), objects that have been stored away for 15 years such as handwritten notes about her activities, maps, Polaroid's and paper currency (Chinese), are on display, including a key to a room at a certain hotel that should not have been kept.

#### Participation of Philosophers and Artists

Among those who shared their stories with Calle in "Count up" (part two) are philosophers and artists, one of whom was Jean-Michel Othoniel, a French contemporary artist who held a solo exhibition at the Hara Museum in 2012.

## Exhibition Details

**Title:** *Sophie Calle, "Exquisite Pain" from the Hara Museum Collection*

**Dates:** January 5 (Saturday) – March 28 (Thursday), 2019

**Place:** Hara Museum of Contemporary Art 4-7-25 Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0001

Tel: 03-3445-0651 E-mail: [info@haramuseum.or.jp](mailto:info@haramuseum.or.jp) Website: <https://www.haramuseum.or.jp>

**Venue / Organized by:** Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

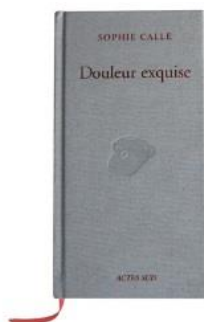
**Hours:** 11:00 am - 5:00 pm, Wednesdays until 8:00 pm (except March 20) (last entry 30 minutes before closing)

**Closed:** Mondays (except January 14, February 11), January 15 and February 12

**Admission:** General 1,100 yen; Students 700 yen (high school and university) or 500 yen (elementary and junior high); Free for Hara Museum members, students through high school every Saturday during the school term; 100 yen discount per person for groups of 20 or more.

**Directions:** 5 minutes by taxi or 15 minutes on foot from JR Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit); or from the same station take the Tan No.96 bus, get off at the first stop (Gotenyama), and walk 3 minutes.

**Guided tours:** Free Japanese-language tours are given by a museum curator every Sunday and national holiday, starting at 2:30 pm and lasting about 30 minutes. No reservation is required. Free mini-tours in English are also available upon request.



## The Museum Shop Information

The French publication *Douleur Exquise* is available in the Museum Shop. This volume includes an English insert available only at the Hara Museum. Text in French. Hard cover, 281 pages 4,800 yen (tax included)

## Images for Publication

\*Please do not trim or alter the images. Putting text over the images is prohibited.

Photo credit for the images [1] and [2]:

Installation view of *Sophie Calle, "Exquisite Pain" from the Hara Museum Collection*

©Sophie Calle / ADAGP Paris and JASPAR Tokyo, 2018

Photo by Keizo Kioku

Photo credit for the image [3]:

Installation view of *Sophie Calle – Exquisite Pain* at the Hara Museum from 1999 to 2000

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