

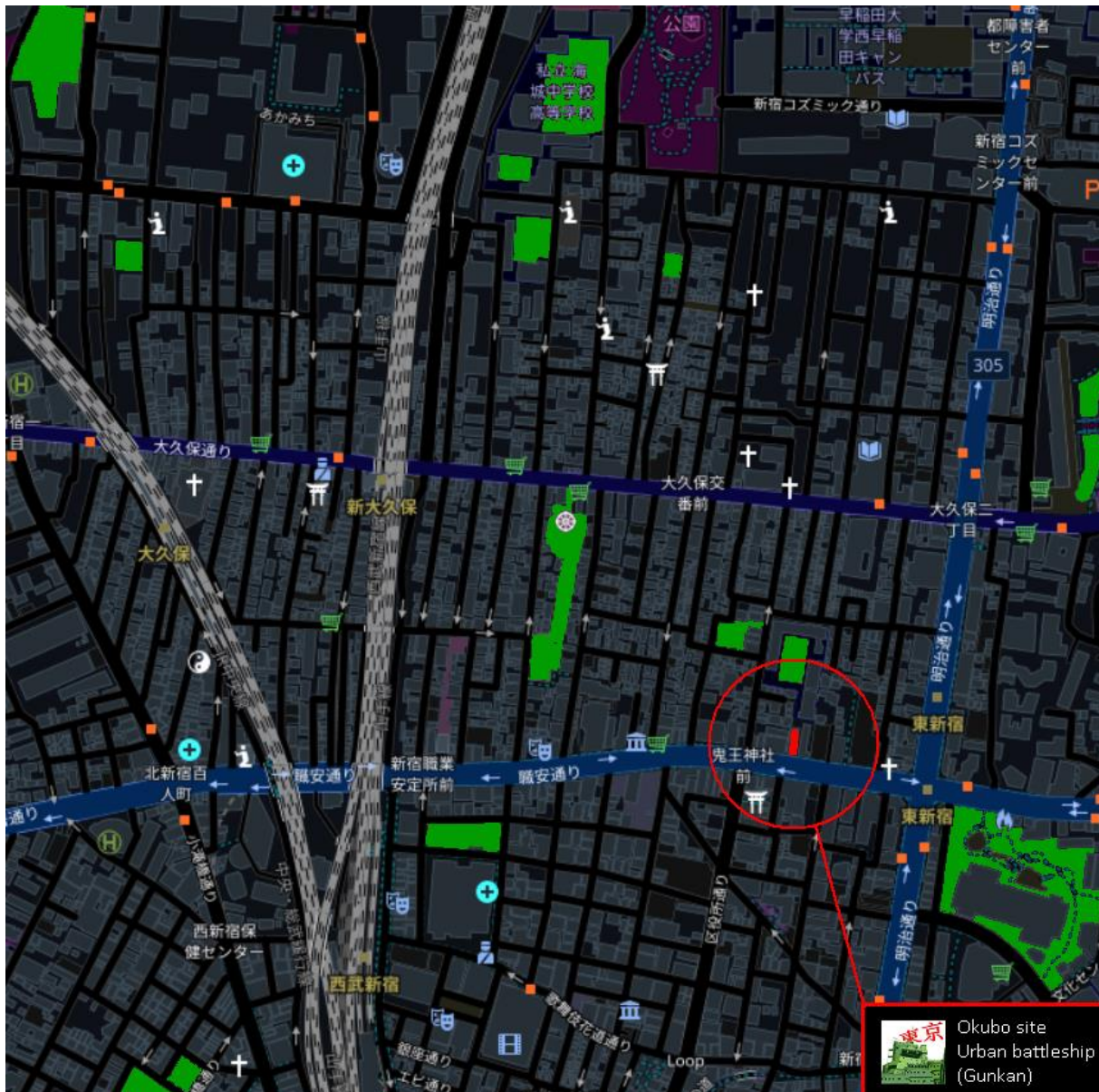


Tokyo 'Scape

Rob van der Bijl is an urban planner with a fascination for Japan's urban landscapes, especially buildings that could feature in manga drawings. He works since 2008 in Tokyo and Amsterdam on his 'Urban Landscape' project, in which he converts his photos into manga inspired images. Titled TOKYO 'SCAPE a selection of them were exhibited in the Netherlands at CAMERA JAPAN FESTIVAL (Rotterdam, October 2014), STUDIO FRANJO (Amsterdam, April-July 2015) and on the internet (since November 2017).



Tokyo 'Scape Brochure



Map of Tokyo, Okubo (based on OpenStreetMap)

We are in Tokyo: “Eyes mark the shape of the city. Through the eyes of a high-flying night bird, we take in the scene from midair. In our broad sweep, the city looks like a single gigantic creature – or more like a single collective entity created by many intertwining organisms. ... To the rhythm of its pulsing, all parts of the body flicker and flare up and squirm. Midnight is approaching, and while the peak of activity has passed, the basal metabolism that maintains life continues undiminished, producing the basso continuo of the city’s moan, a monotonous sound that neither rises nor falls but is pregnant with foreboding.” (Haruki Murakami: *AFTER DARK*, Tokyo 2004)

Tokyo 'Scape Prologue (1998-1999)



Comics ('Strip') series in magazine *Blauwe Kamer* (1998-1999)

Manga and comics uniquely represent images of cities and landscapes. Beyond visual stories they create meaningful characterizations of urbanity. Certainly, manga and comics show special features of buildings and spaces, and especially of cities, for example Tokyo and Paris. Our first sampled comics series about cities in the Dutch magazine for landscape architecture and urbanism *Blauwe Kamer* served as a first exercise, in other words, as a prologue to our Tokyo 'Scape project. From 2013 the series is continued as blog on the website of *Blauwe Kamer*.

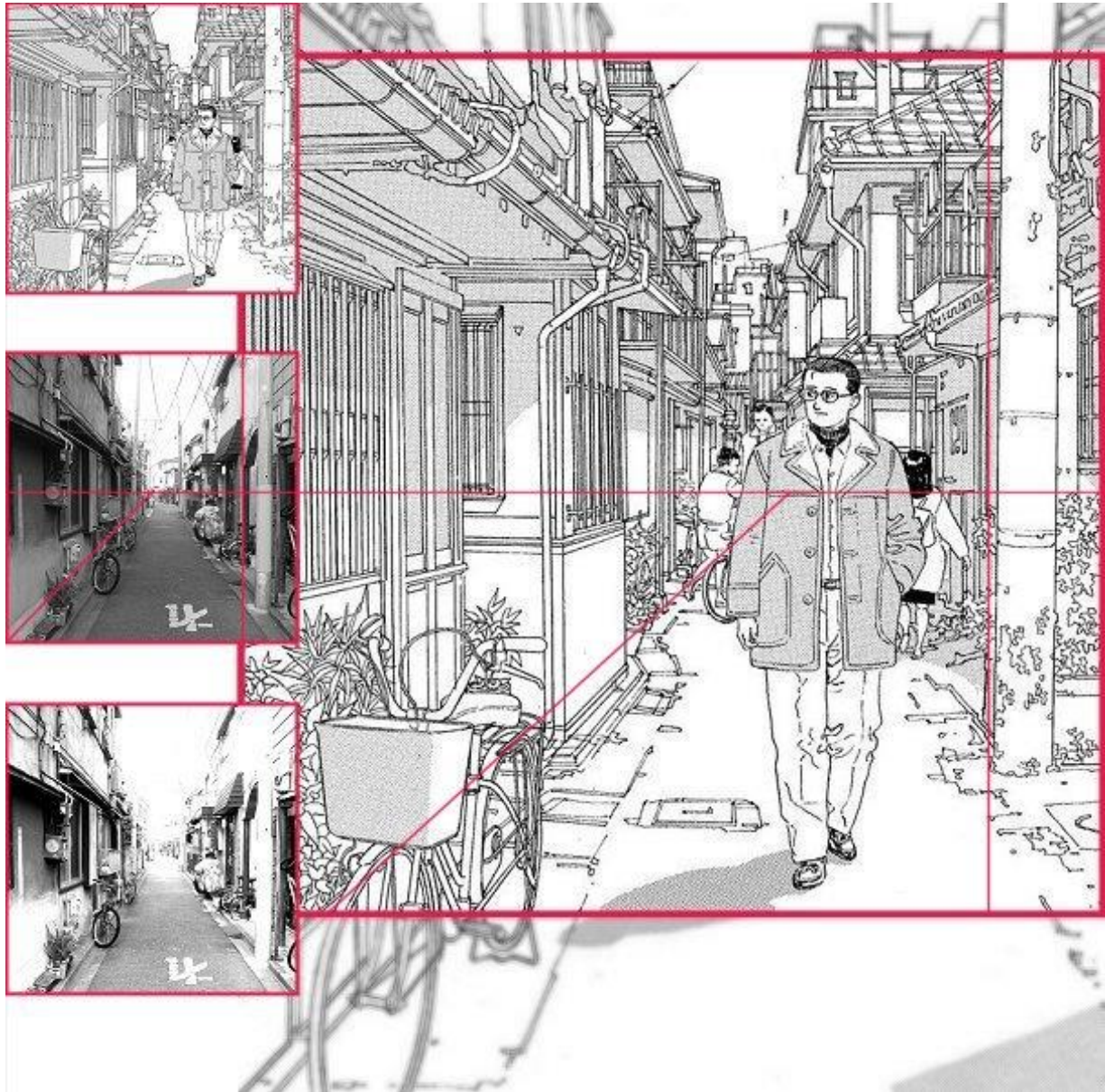
Tokyo 'Scape Pilot (2005)



Urban Landscapes Pilot Tokyo (2005)

Tokyo metropolis represents our object of research. This great city is a true laboratory for urban planning. We love Tokyo as melting pot of urban landscapes and as world capital of comics and manga. May 2005, our Tokyo 'Scape project started with a pilot in which a series of three strips was composed based on existing images. Each strip is an attempt to penetrate the urban landscape through graphic editing and abstracting. These strips situate Tokyo in an imaginary comic story. Urban contours and structures are graphically displayed from positions during bird's-eye flights.

Tokyo 'Scape Research (2005-2008)



Jiro Taniguchi (2005-2008)

During the first three years of our Tokyo 'Scape project, the mangas of Jiro Taniguchi (1947-2017) played a decisive role in our research. For example, we have carefully studied the compositions from his book 'The Walking Man'. A man is walking through a street in his neighborhood. It could just be the Setagaya district in Tokyo. This main character of Taniguchi is observing his environment constantly: a street, a park and numerous details from the quiet, yet wonderful depicted landscape of the city. In 2008 we were able to identify comparable places for the first time on site in Tokyo.

Tokyo 'Scape Research (2008)



Kei Minoharo (2008)

The first fieldwork in Tokyo (April 2008) was partly carried out with the help of the well-known Japanese urbanist Kei Minoharo (we knew each other from earlier work outside Japan). With him we crossed Tokyo in a tour along a large number of sites. We also discussed the role of pencil control and drawing in design. In a luxury shop in the famous Ginza district, Minoharo tried out several pens. He taught us how to look at the city. For our part, we told him about the work of Jiro Taniguchi and other manga authors such as Katsuhiro Otomo and how we were inspired by the French authors Boilet and Peeters' with their beautiful comic story about 'Tokyo as a garden'.

Tokyo 'Scape The First Series (2008-2014)



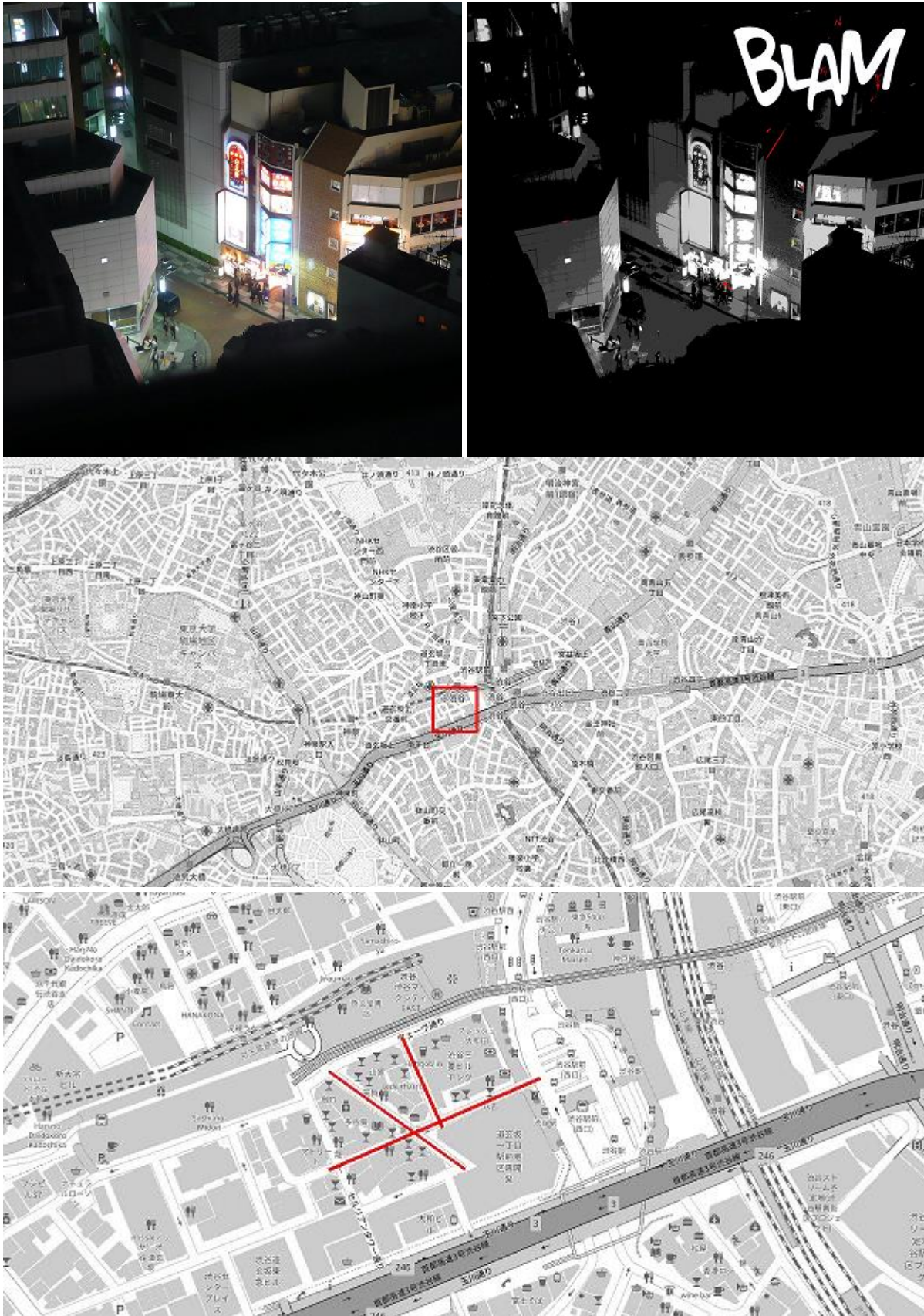
Tokyo 'Scape The First Series – panel 1; Shinagawa-Minato



Exploding Shinagawa-Minato – *Dzziiii*

The exploding sun had set the sky of Tokyo on red fire. “Dzziiii” screamed movements from midair. Accelerating cars. We could smell burning rubber in the air.

Tokyo 'Scape The First Series; Example of mapping



Tokyo 'Scape The First Series; Example of mapping



Shibuya-Dogenzaka; Panel 2 of Tokyo 'Scape First Series

The area around Dogenzaka commonly referred to as 'love hill' has been subject of close analysis (courtesy by OpenStreetMap). However, in this project we didn't focus on this famous tourist part of the neighbourhood, but on the 'every day' fringes of the area downhill. Here our story has been situated:

Shibuya-Dogenzaka – Blam

The bomb went off not far from Shibuya station. "*Blam!*" The streets of Dogenzaka started to vibrate. We tried to escape from the scene.

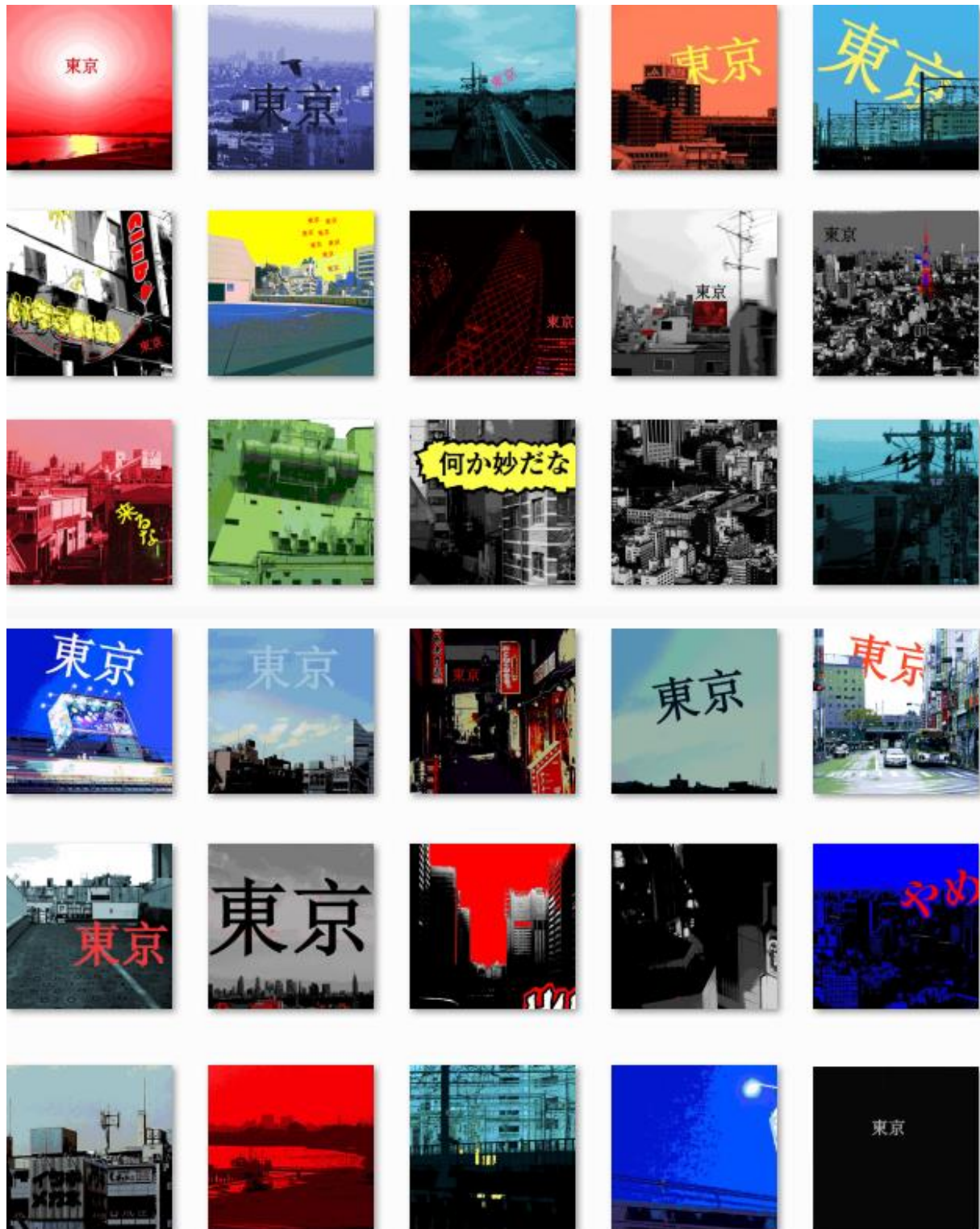
Tokyo 'Scape The First Series – panel 5; Okubo



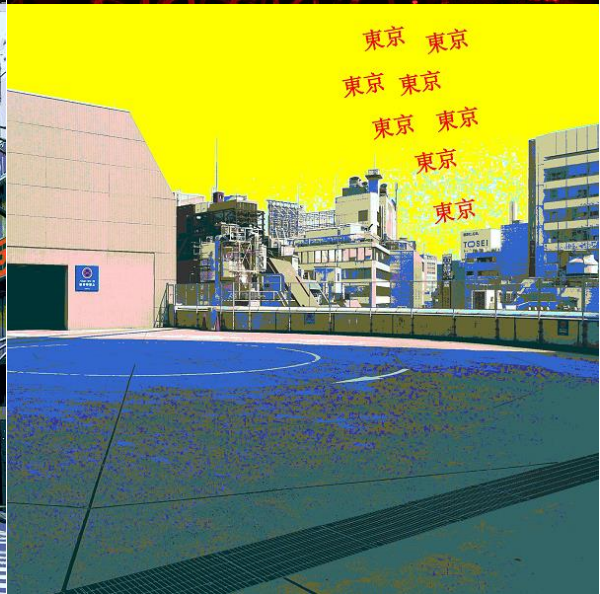
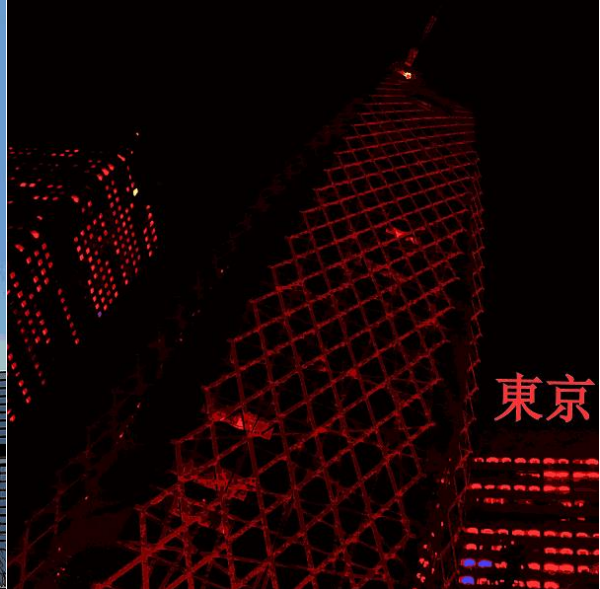
東京 (Tokyo) ... invader at Okubo

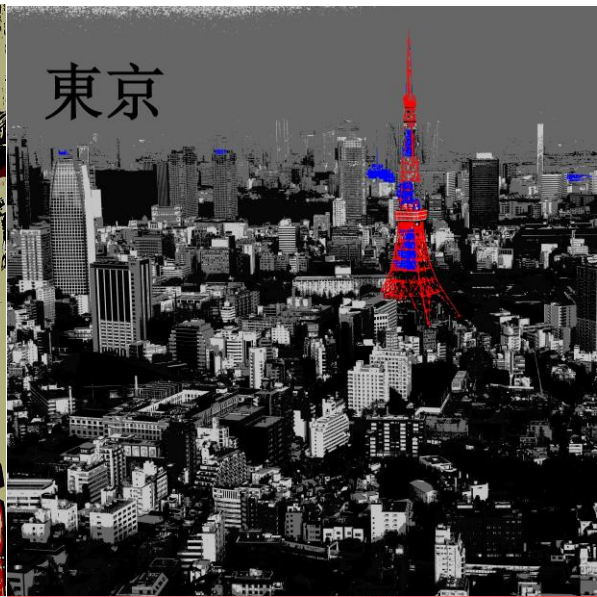
The monster building had landed in Tokyo like an urban machine. The buildings of Okubo started to shrink. A monotonous sound filled the air, like deep whispering: “Tokyo”. We in Okubo couldn’t understand this creature. To be continued at the Okubo manga story page in this brochure...

Tokyo 'Scape The Second Series (2014-2015)

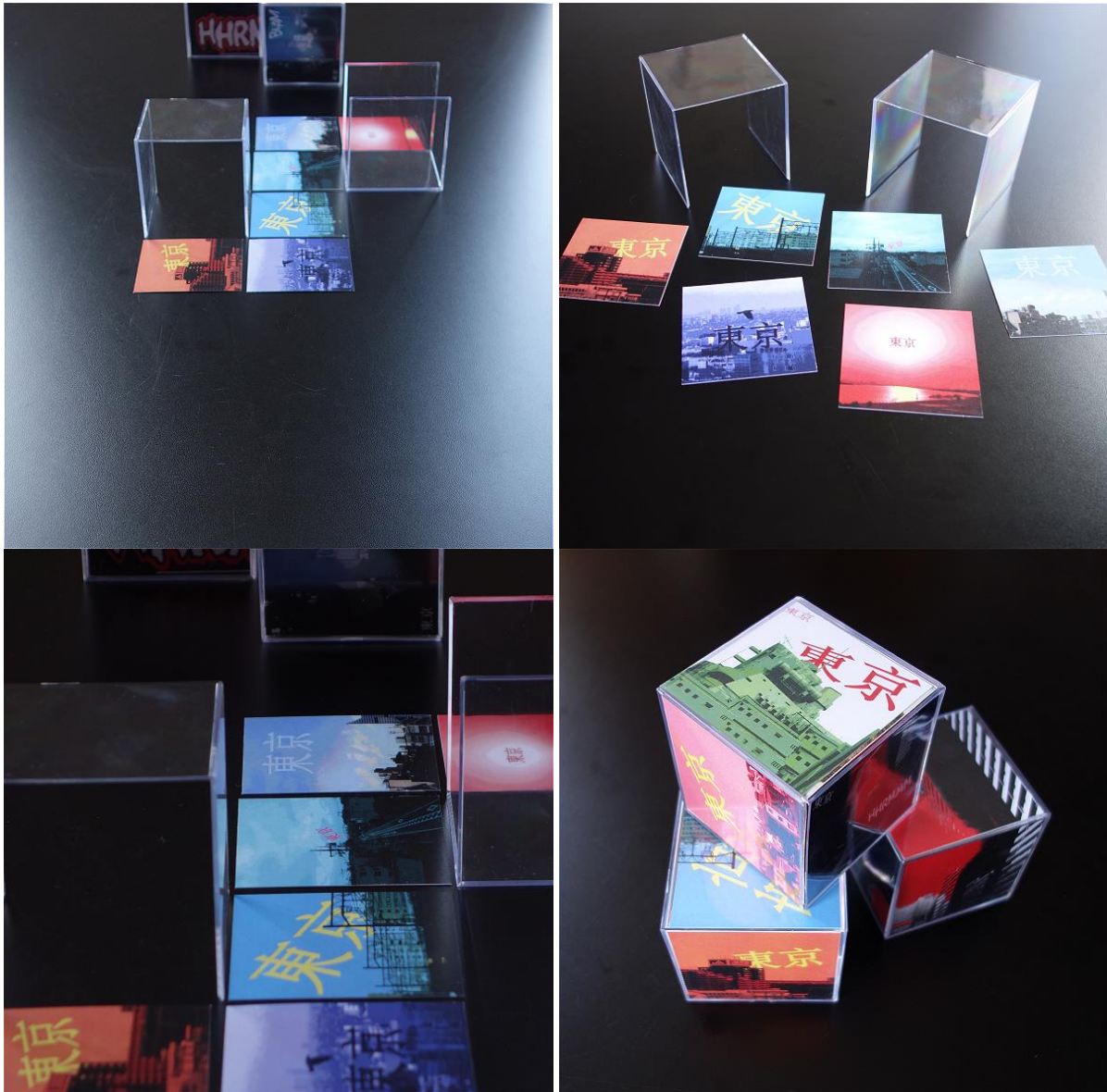


Overview of the series (above) and sample collection of 2x6 panels (next 2 pages).





Tokyo 'Scape Collection of Cubes (since 2015)



Tokyo 'Scape Cube-framed first & second series

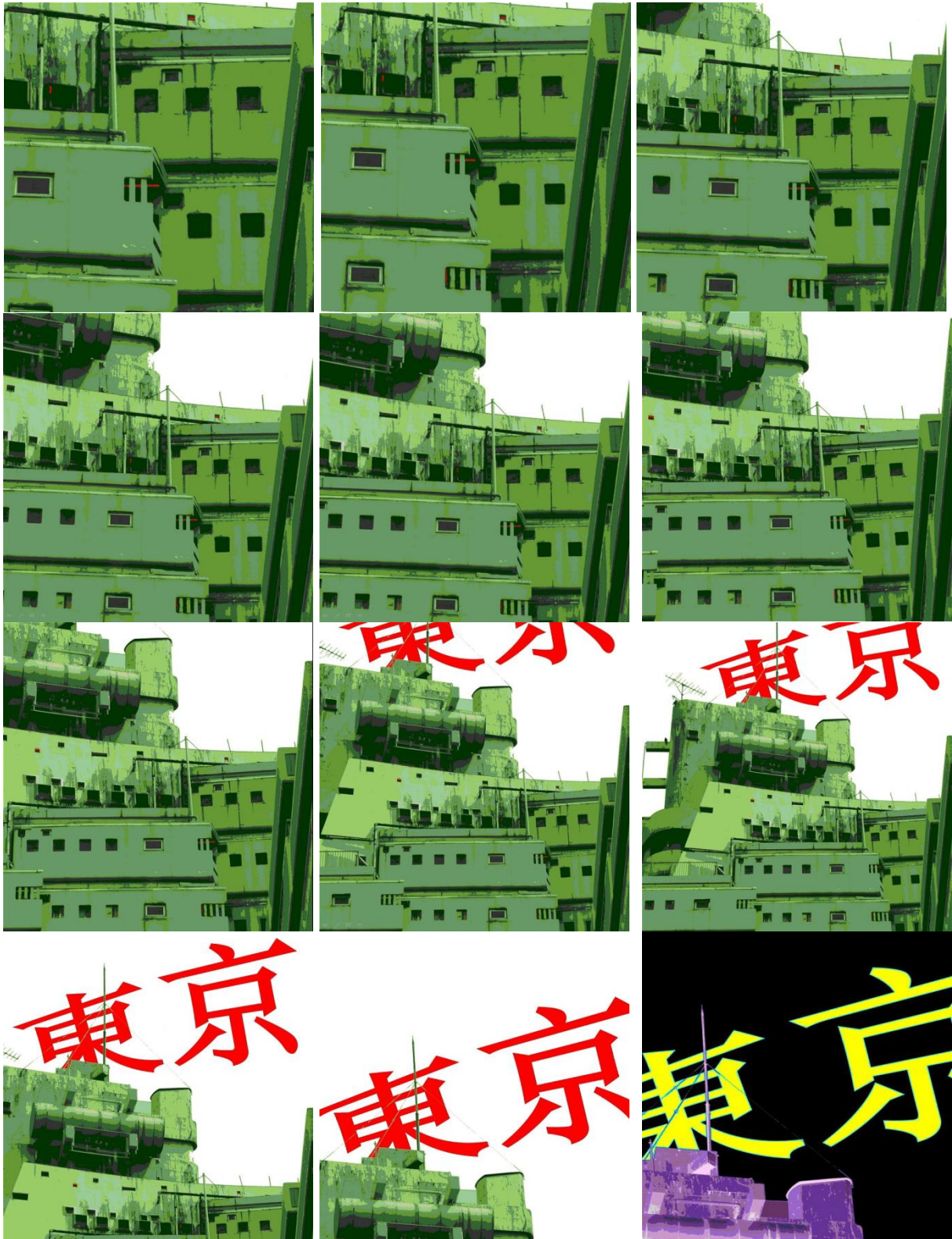
The cubes house the panels of the first and second series (in reduced size). One can imagine a virtual dice game in which the images tilt like in animes. The cubes can be easily displayed in alternating places and venues.

Above: showcase presentation.

Next page: pop up exhibition in natural landscape setting.

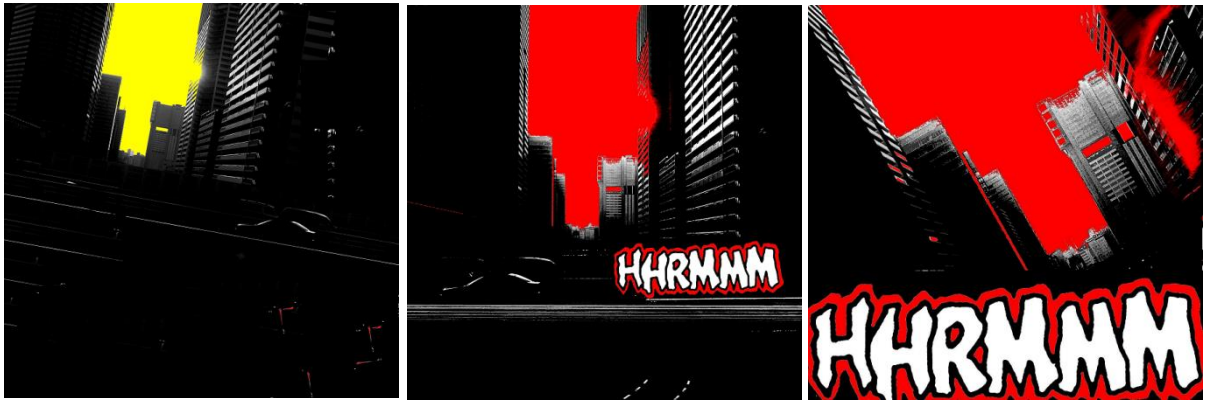


Tokyo 'Scape Animations (since 2016)



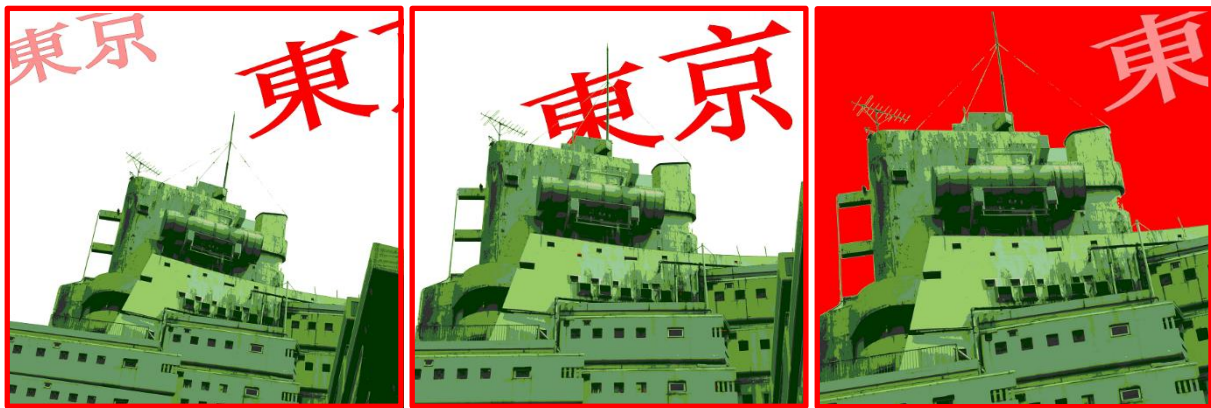
Footage from the Okubo animation. See also the next pages on the Okubo triptych and manga story.

Tokyo 'Scape Triptychs; The Third Series (since 2016)



Exploding Shinagawa-Minato – Dzziiii

The exploding sun had set the sky of Tokyo on red fire.



東京 (Tokyo) ... invader at Okubo

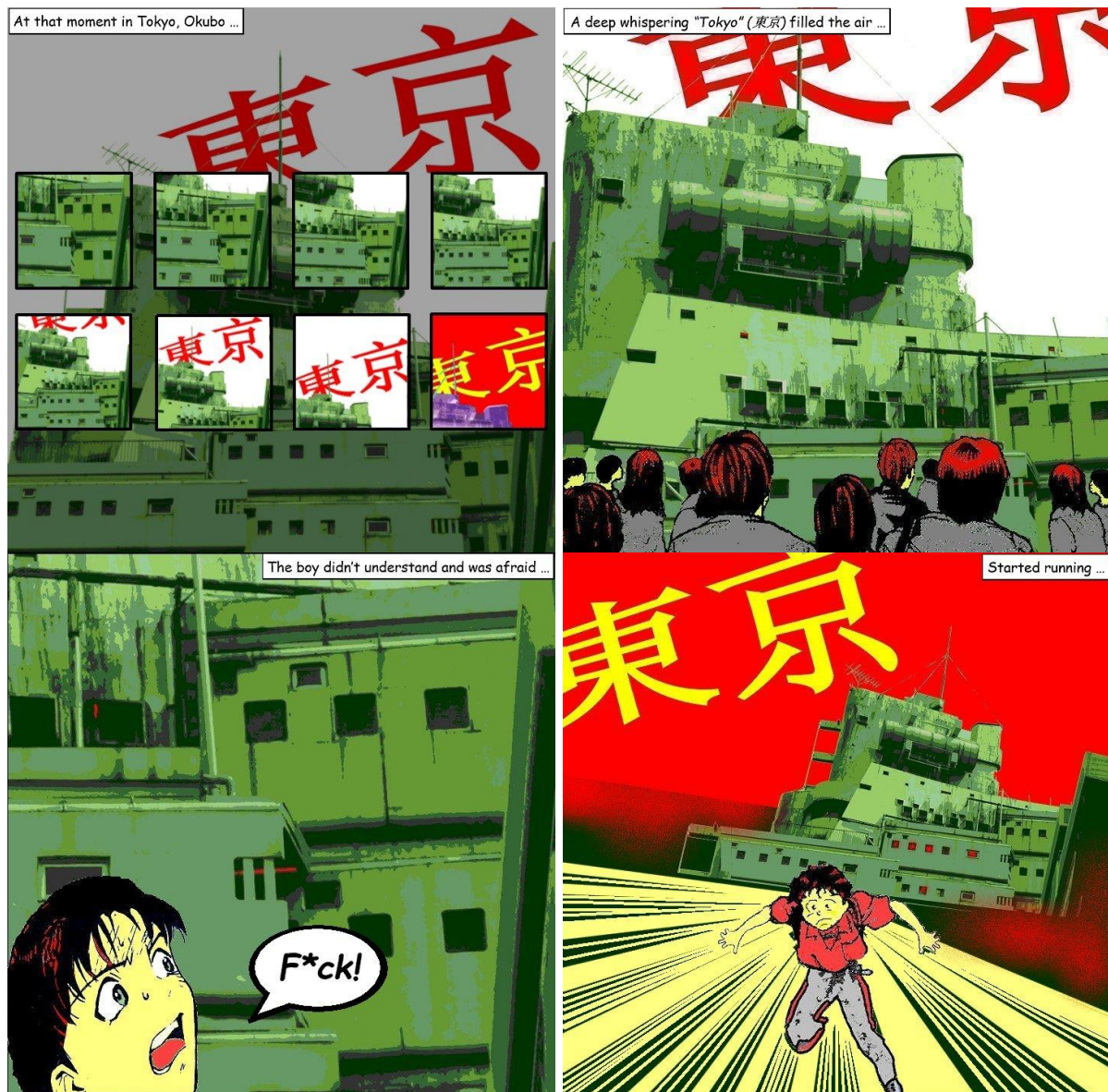
The monster building had landed in Tokyo like an urban machine.



Thunderstorm over Akabana-Kamiya – GORO GORO

The urban landscape around Tokyo seemed to be shattered.

Tokyo 'Scape Okubo manga story (June 2020)



Advancing monster building in Tokyo

The urban battleship building is located in Okubo, a neighborhood within Tokyo's Shinjuku ward. It is designed by the famous and controversial architect Yoji Watanabe (1923-1983). The complex looks like a battleship (Gunkan) indeed, as it shows us the architect's previous career as an officer of the Imperial Navy. In our manga story, Watanabe's building turns out to be a monster. Like an urban machine it had landed in Tokyo. The buildings of Okubo started to shrink. A monotonous sound filled the air, like deep whispering: "Tokyo" ("東京"). The people in Okubo couldn't understand this creature.

Tokyo 'Scape Chronology



Tokyo 'Scape Prologue (1997-1998)

Sampling of comics series about cities

Publications in magazine *Blauwe Kamer*

Tokyo 'Scape Pilot (2005)

Sampled strips about Tokyo

Launch of the project

Urban Landscapes Tokyo (2005-2008)

Preliminary publications on the internet

Research (e.g. 'Walking Man' by Jiro Taniguchi)

Tokyo Field Trips (2008-2012)

Meeting and site visits with urban planner Kei Minoharo

Exploration and mapping of sites

Start compilation of the first series



Camera Japan Festival (Rotterdam, October, 2014)

Exhibition of the first series



Studio Franjo (Amsterdam, April-July, 2015)

Exhibition of the second series

Collection of cubes (2015-2020)

New presentation of first and second series

Various constructions

Pop-up exhibitions envisaged

Animations (since 2016)

Based on first and second series

Ongoing presentations on the internet

Triptychs (since 2016)

Based on first series and new series (2018)

Ongoing project



Tokyo Field Trips (since October 2018)

Exploration and mapping of sites

Start of the third series

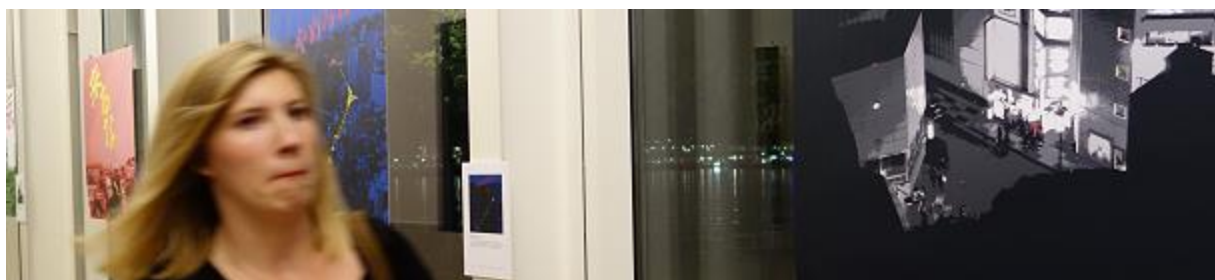
Tokyo 'Scape Manga (since 2020)

Okubo manga story

Publication in magazine *Blauwe Kamer* (June 2020)

Footage from our exhibitions: on this page, as well as previous and next pages





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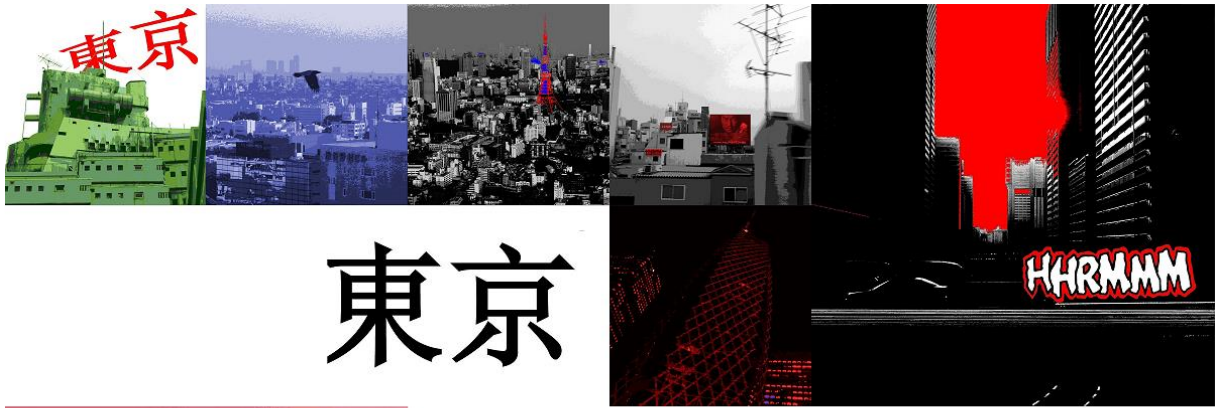
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