

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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MUSEUM EXHIBITION SURVEYS VIDEO ART FROM JAPAN

VIDEO FROM TOKYO TO FUKUI AND KYOTO, on view at The Museum of Modern Art April 19 through June 19, consists of sixteen videotapes by artists living in Japan whose work has rarely been exhibited in the United States. Organized as part of Japan Today, a series of cultural programs to be presented in five American cities this spring, VIDEO FROM TOKYO TO FUKUI AND KYOTO explores the Japanese approach to this international medium.

"The sixteen videotapes presented here are clearly by Japanese artists, whose approach to the medium and subject matter come indirectly from Shintoism, the Japanese religion that ascribes numinous qualities to both natural and made-made materials. The videotapes are also Eastern in sensibility: they have a particular kind of concentration, a flowing sense of time, and lyrical use of color," notes Barbara London, director of the exhibition.

Japanese video activity began in the late 1960s, during a time of active experimentation in all of the arts and several years after the first portable camera was put on the market. Since that time in Japan there have been numerous video exhibitions in museums and galleries, and video courses have become part of university curriculum.

The video artists represented by works in this exhibition utilize the medium for its portability, immediacy of image, and plasticity. Most of them work with the small-format (one-half or three-quarter-inch) portable video camera and recording deck, which are easily transported from location to location and are ideal for spontaneous documentation. Fujiko Nakaya

53

protests the mercury-poisoned waters in northern Japan in her work Friends of Minamata Victims. Family crises are examined by Kou Nakajima in his two-channel work, My Life, which covers a traumatic week when his mother died and his daughter was born, and in Kyoko Michishita's Being Women in Japan: Liberation within My Family, which documents the artist's sister's recovery from two aneurysms. Mako Idemitsu's fictive videotape, Another Day of a Housewife, simulates an ordinary day during which she was watched over by a televised eye. Nobuhiro Kawanaka presents Kick the World in one uninterrupted shot while walking through a public park filled with miniaturized replications of international cities.

Using video it is possible to screen imagery on a television set during recording and to replay material immediately from the just-recorded videotape. This is important for Keigo Yamamoto, who studies the interval between perception and response in his Foot No. 3 and Foot No. 4. In age: M→F, Hitoshi Nomura brings the camera into and out of focus to reveal a wall of photographs of himself in various guises, while Hakudo Kobayashi uses simple materials floating on water to produce the unusual illusory effects in Part 4.

Video color is a composite of red, green, and blue. Potentially limitless color combinations and painterly affects can be made with black-and-white or color imagery by using computers, special effects generators, and synthesizers. Examples of this include Akira Kurosaki's Summer Dream and Syncopation and Katsuhiro Yamaguchi's Ooi and Environs, which is set in his hometown. Using similar equipment Toshio Matsumoto produced collagelike effects in his Mona Lisa by superimposing the famous visage over many different landscapes. Tsuneo Nakai constructed a special audio-video system with a synthesizer to produce the pulsating television set in his work, Tune.

Video has also been applied to other contemporary art activity. For example, the Video Information Center, a four-member group, began using video in 1972 to document experimental Japanese theater and dance. Their small, one-room center, located on the outskirts of Tokyo, contains portable video equipment and an archive of over six hundred videotapes. Dance No. 7, performed by Min Tanaka, and Hitagata, choreographed by Tatsumi Hijikata and danced by Yoko Ashikawa, are representative examples of the Video Information Center's documentary work.

VIDEO FROM TOKYO TO FUKUI AND KYOTO, organized and first shown at The Museum of Modern Art in April 1979, then presented on tour in the United States, Canada, and Japan, is part of Japan Today, a program held during the spring of 1979 in five United States cities featuring contemporary Japan. VIDEO FROM TOKYO TO FUKUI AND KYOTO is made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, Matsushita Electric (Panasonic), The Japan Foundation, and the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission.

As part of VIDEO VIEWPOINTS, a lecture by Fujiko Nakaya, "Japanese Video Today," is being given April 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the Founders Room. Tickets are free and are available at the Lobby Information Desk.

A 32-page catalogue is published for the exhibition, and is available for \$2.50 from the Museum Bookstore.

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For further information, please contact Luisa Kreisberg, Director (212) 956-2648 or Bruce Wolmer (212) 956-7298, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019.

SCHEDULE

Works are shown weekdays 11:00 to 5:45; Thursdays until 8:15; weekends until 4:45.

PROGRAM 1 April 23, 30; May 5, 12, 19, 26; June 1.

Mako Idemitsu, Another Day of a Housewife (1977-78, 18 minutes, color)

Nobuhiro Kawanaka, Kick the World (1976, 20 minutes, black-and-white)

PROGRAM 2 April 24; May 6, 13, 20, 27; June 2.

Hakudo Kobayashi, Part 4 (1978, 17 minutes, color)

Toshio Matsumoto, Mona Lisa (1973, 3 minutes, color)

Akira Kurosaki, Summer Dream (1978, 7 minutes, color)
and Syncopation (1979, 9 minutes, color)

Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, Ooi and Environs (1977, 10 minutes, color)

PROGRAM 3 April 19, 26; May 7, 14, 21, 28; June 3.

Fujiko Nakaya, Friends of Minamata Victims (1972, 20 minutes, black-and-white)

Kyoko Michishita, Being Women in Japan: Liberation within My Family (1973-74,
30 minutes, black-and-white)

PROGRAM 4 April 20, 27; May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; June 4.

Hitoshi Nomura, age: M→F (1978, 31 minutes, color)

Keigo Yamamoto, Foot No. 3 (1977, 10 minutes, black-and-white) and
Foot No. 4 (1978, 10 minutes, color)

PROGRAM 5 April 21, 28; May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; June 5.

Tsuneo Nakai, Tune (1978, 30 minutes, color) with music by Hideki Yoshida

PROGRAM 6 April 22, 29; May 4, 11, 18, 25.

Video Information Center, Hitogata (1976, 60 minutes, color) with choreography
by Tatsumi Hijikata, performance by Yoko Ashikawa; and Dance
No. 7 (1976, 40 minutes, color) with performance by Min Tanaka

PROGRAM 7 June 7 - 13.

Kou Nakajima, My Life (1974-78, 30 minutes, black-and-white, 2 channels)