

TOKYO

1955-1970

A NEW AVANT-GARDE

MoMA



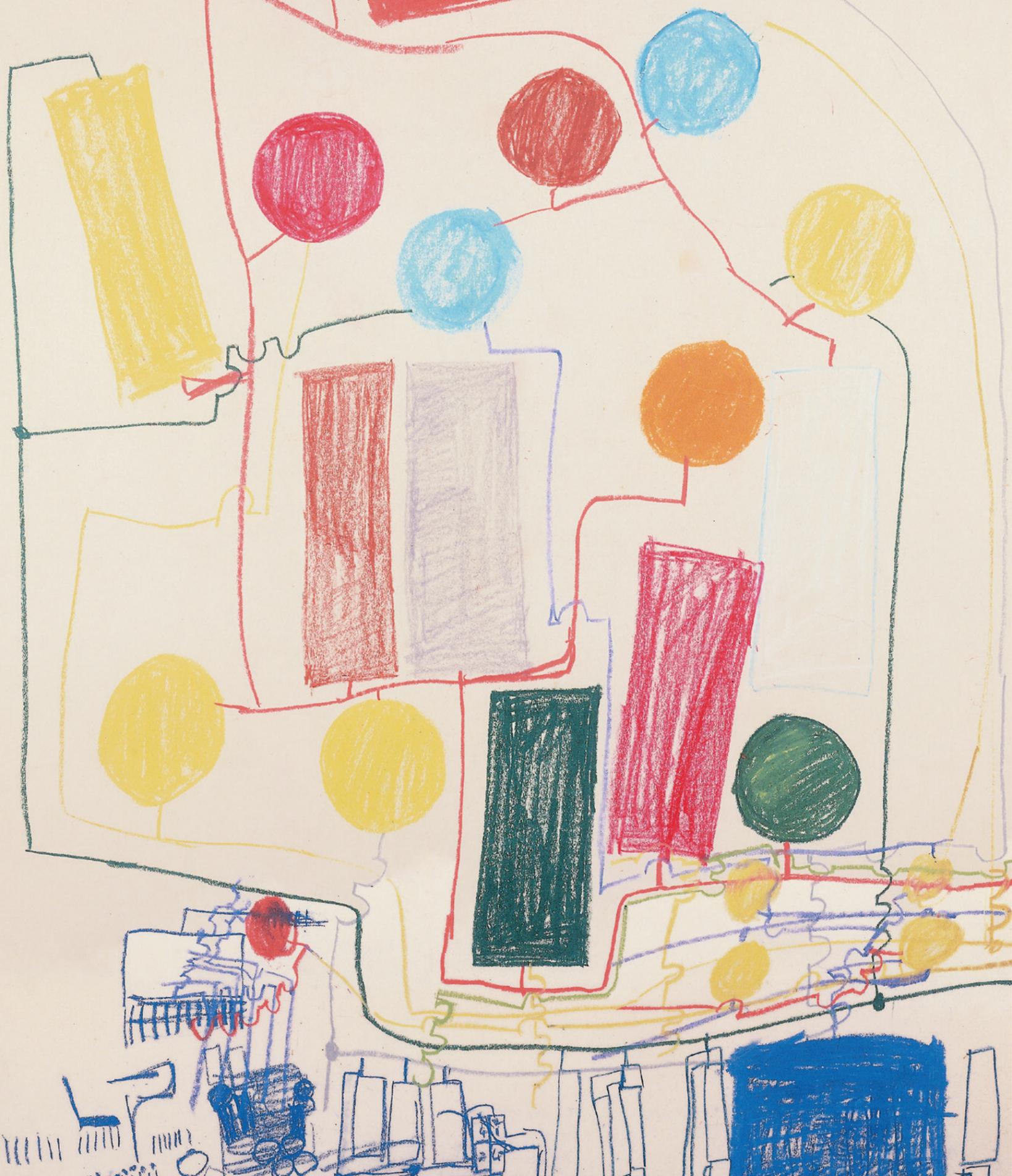
食う爲に必死に耕す 父母兄弟姉妹におくる

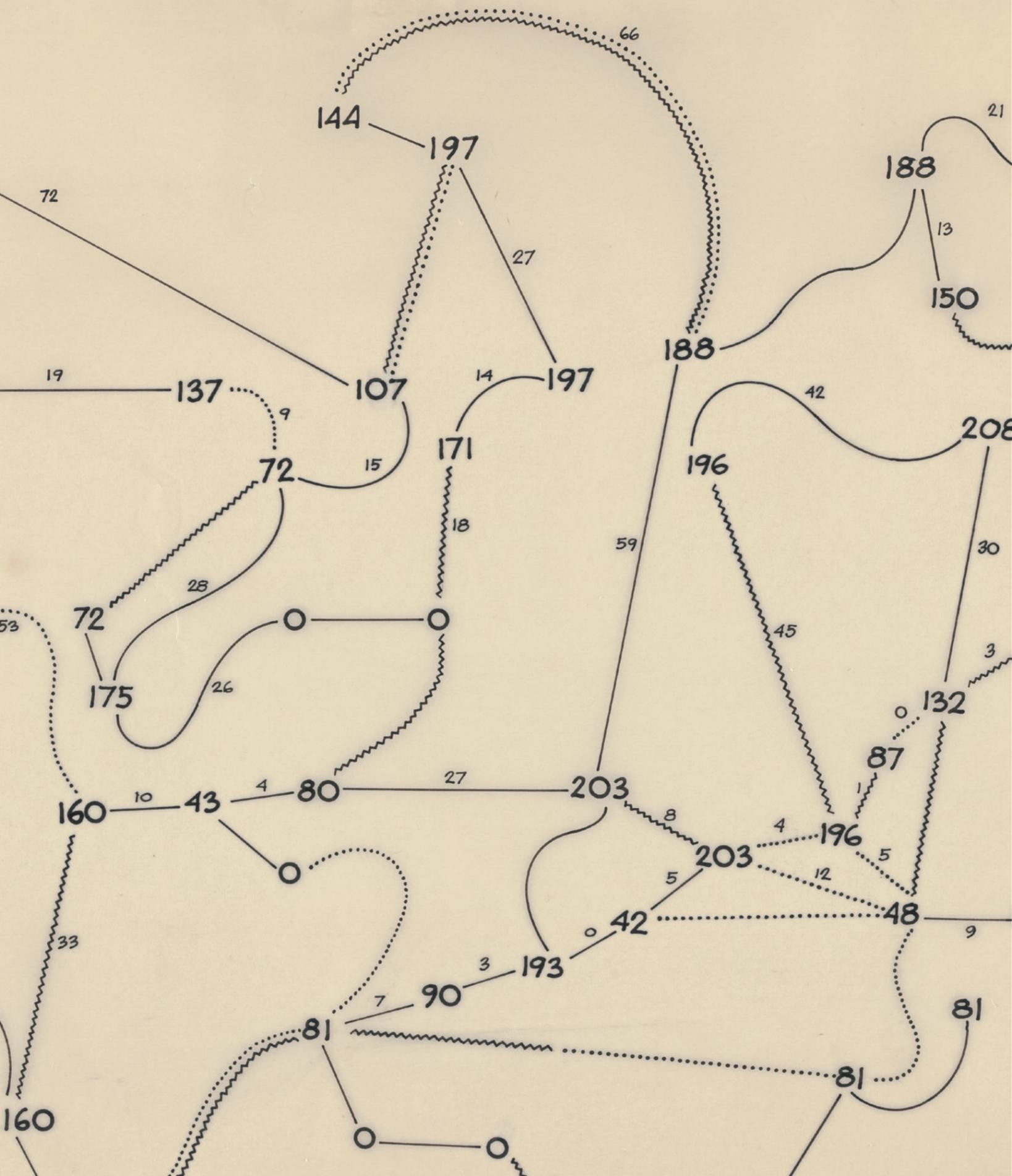
1956 豊田

TOKYO 1955-1970

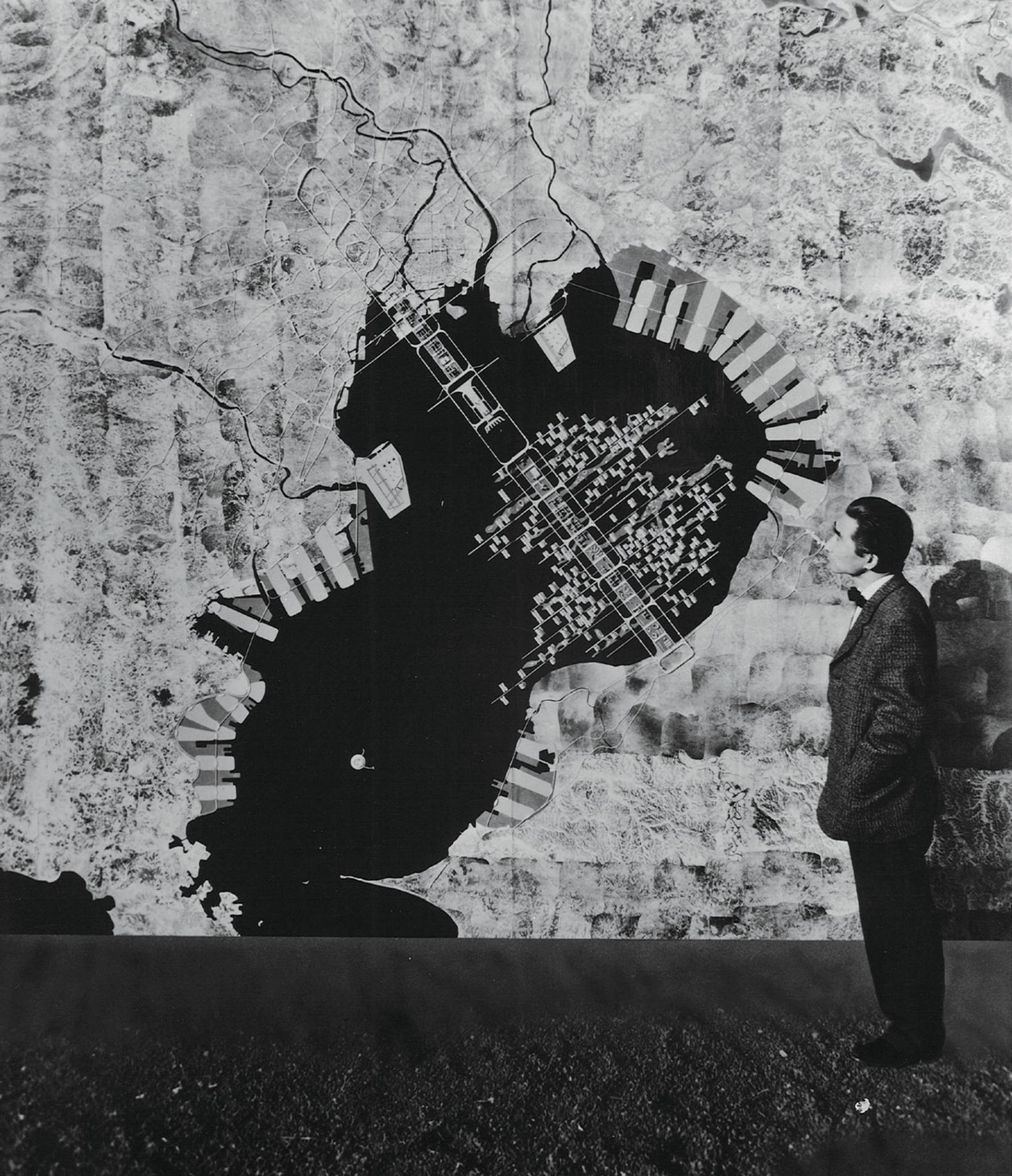
an exhibition co-organized by
The Museum of Modern Art and the Japan Foundation











Front endpaper:
AY-0
Pastoral (Den'en)
1956 (detail; see plate 33)

Page 3:
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
Upheaval (Nairanki)
1958
(detail; see plate 25)

Page 4:
TANAKA ATSUKO
Drawing after "Electric Dress"
(Denki-fuku no tame no sobyō)
1956
(detail; see plate 35)

Page 5:
KITADAI SHŌZŌ
and **ŌTSUJI KIYOJI**
Composition for APN
(Asahi Picture News)
(APN no tame no kōsei)
January 1–7, 1953
(detail; see plate 47)

Page 6:
ICHIYANAGI TOSHI
Music for Electric Metronome
(Denki metoronōmu no tame
no ongaku)
1960
(detail; see plate 109)

Page 7:
MIKI TOMIO
Rose-Decorated Ear
(Bara no mimi)
1962
(see plate 49)

Page 8:
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
"1,000-Yen-Note Trial"
Impounded Objects:
Works Wrapped in Model
1,000-Yen Notes (Mask)
(Sen-en-satsu saiban
ōshūhin: Mokei sen-en-satsu
konpō saku hin [Masuku])
1963
(see plate 60)

Page 9:
HOSOE EIKŌ
Sickle-Toothed Weasel, No. 5
(Kamaitachi saku hin 5)
1968
(detail; see plate 74)

Page 10, opposite:
Tange Kenzō with his model
of A Plan for Tokyo, 1960
(Tōkyō keikaku 1960)
1960
Photograph by Kawasumi Akio
(detail; see plate 6)

Page 12:
SHIOMI MIEKO (ALSO KNOWN
AS SHIOMI CHIEKO)
Falling Event
Event score (detail)
1963
Scanned from the original ink
on paper
Full sheet: 7 x 9" (17.7 x 23 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art,
New York. The Gilbert and
Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Pages 13 and 14:
Plates 1 (recto) and 2 (verso)
HI RED CENTER
Hi Red Center poster
1965 (Fluxus Edition
announced 1965)
Fluxus Edition, edited by Shigeo
Kubota, designed and produced by
George Maciunas, New York
Offset printing on paper,
double-sided
22 1/8 x 17" (56.2 x 43.2 cm)

< falling event >

I Let something fall from a high place.

II Let yourself fall from a high place using an elevator, parachute, rope, or anything else, or using nothing.

C. Shiomi 1963





DORYUN CHONG

with essays by

MICHIO HAYASHI

MIKA YOSHITAKE

MIRYAM SAS

and additional contributions by

MITSUDA YURI

NAKAJIMA MASATOSHI

TOKYO

1955-1970
A NEW AVANT-GARDE

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Tokyo 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde* (November 18, 2012–February 25, 2013), organized by Doryun Chong, Associate Curator, with Nancy Lim, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art.

The exhibition is co-organized by The Museum of Modern Art and the Japan Foundation.

The exhibition is supported by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, and ITOCHU International Inc.

Special thanks to JAPAN AIRLINES.

Produced by the Department of Publications, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Edited by Diana C. Stoll
Designed by McCall Associates, New York
Production by Matthew Pimm
Color separations by Evergreen Colour Separation (International) Co., Ltd., Hong Kong
Printed in China by OGI / 1010 Printing International Ltd.

This book is typeset in Alright Sans, Miller Text, Vinyl. The paper is 157 gsm Gold East Matte

Published by The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 Street, New York, New York 10019

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2012944116

ISBN: 978-0-87070-834-3

Distributed in the United States and Canada by ARTBOOK | D.A.P.
55 Sixth Avenue, 2nd floor, New York, New York 10013
www.artbook.com/www.artbook.com

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Thames & Hudson Ltd

181 High Holborn, London WC1V 7QX
www.thamesandhudson.com

Front cover: Nakanishi Natsuyuki performing *Clothespins Assert Churning Action* (*Sentaku basami wa kakuhan kôdô o shuchô suru*), for Hi Red Center's *Sixth Mixer Plan (Dai-roku-ji mikisâ keikaku)* event, Shimbashi, Tokyo. May 28, 1963. Photograph by Hirata Minoru (detail; see p. 63, fig. 17).

Back cover: Akasegawa Genpei. *Ambivalent Sea B (Aimai na umi B)*. 1961 (detail; see plate 52)

Printed and bound in China

CONTENTS

TOKYO 1955–1970: A NEW AVANT-GARDE

DORYUN CHONG
26

TRACING THE GRAPHIC IN POSTWAR JAPANESE ART

MICHIO HAYASHI
94

THE LANGUAGE OF THINGS: RELATION, PERCEPTION, AND DURATION

MIKA YOSHITAKE
120

INTERMEDIA, 1955–1970

MIRYAM SAS
138

Trauma and Deliverance: Portraits of Avant-Garde Artists in Japan, 1955–1970
MITSUDA YURI
158

Tokyo 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde Chronology
NAKAJIMA MASATOSHI
178

Selected Bibliography
197

Checklist of the Exhibition
200

Trustees of The Museum of Modern Art
216

TOKYO 1955–1970: A NEW AVANT- GARDE

—
DORYUN CHONG



Plate 4
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
Sheets of Vagina (Second Present) (*Vagina no shitsu* [*Nibanme no purezento*])
1961/1994
Vacuum tube, car-tire inner tube, hubcap, and wood
71⁵/₈ × 35¹³/₁₆" (182 × 91 cm)

On October 18, 1962, Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Takamatsu Jirō, and their colleagues staged a guerrilla performance event on a train on the Yamanote loop line in central Tokyo. Captured in a handful of black-and-white photographs and in a retrospective description by their fellow artist Akasegawa Genpei,¹ the event perplexed unwitting witnesses — mostly office workers in suits who were riding the train or waiting on the platform (fig. 1).

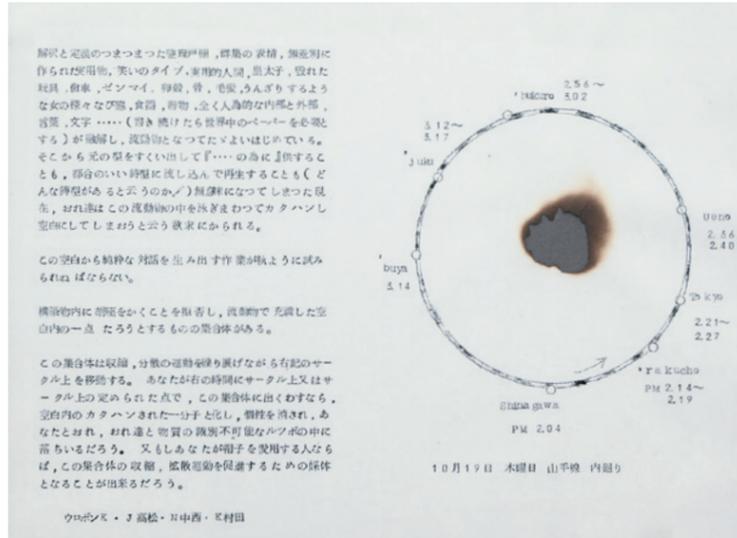
In one image we see Nakanishi standing in the train, his face painted white, seemingly absorbed in a book (fig. 2). Next to him, hanging from a strap-handle by a chain, is one of his *Compact Objects* (*Konpakuto obuje*)—transparent forms, each about the size and shape of an ostrich egg, in which sundry items, such as wristwatches, bits of rope, sunglasses, bottle caps, and human hair, are encased in resin (plate 5). Then we see him on the platform squatting and licking another *Object*, as Takamatsu stands behind him holding (all too naturally) a newspaper and yet another *Object*, apparently oblivious to the bystanders gawking at his co-conspirator (fig. 3).

In 1965 Shigeko Kubota, who had moved from Japan to New York the year before to join the burgeoning Fluxus group, collaborated with artist George Maciunas to produce an illustrated map of the events organized by Hi Red Center (*Hai Reddo Sentā*), the artists' collective formed in 1963 by Nakanishi, Takamatsu, and Akasegawa (plates 1, 2). The map, edited by Kubota and designed by Maciunas,² shows on its recto side the heart of Tokyo ringed by the Yamanote line; this is overlaid with textual descriptions of Hi Red Center's events—twenty-one in all. Number 3, the *Yamanote Line Incident* (*Yamanotesen jiken*), now considered part of the group's

pre-history, is located at two points: between the Ebisu and Meguro stations, and between the Tamachi and Shimbashi stations in the southern section of the loop line. The map provides further information about the event: "A continuous black string with various everyday objects attached to it at intervals was laid out on the street from a moving streetcar along [the train's] circular route"; the *Compact Objects* hanging from the straps were "observed by performers at close range with battery lights"; and the newspapers they read had "holes burned in them."

What might be the significance of this event, situated roughly at the midpoint of the timeframe of this exhibition and publication? By the early 1960s Japan was a relatively stable and increasingly prosperous country, having ostensibly shed the shadows of the defeat of World War II. The society and urban spaces had been reconstructed, and the citizens had been organized (to some extent) into an orderly collectivity under the solidifying power of the state. The *Yamanote Line Incident*, like many other artistic gestures presented in this project, was a response to and constituent of the heady, chaotic, and altogether exhilarating span of years from 1955 to 1970.

Japan's wholesale reconstruction in the first postwar decade and the period that followed was so thorough that it had to be engaged not only on the social and spatial strata, but also on the subjective levels of the individual and of the body itself. Many artists found that images and objects were not enough to achieve such an engagement. They began to move their work beyond traditional institutional spaces—galleries and museums—and to make use of theaters, city streets and other public spaces, mass media, and more as new venues for their explosive experimentalism. In fact, the entire city became a multilayered matrix of avant-garde production and energy at this time. But before presenting this story of remarkable creative fertility, it is necessary to limn the space and the time: Tokyo in the 1950s and 1960s.



Top left:
Fig. 1
Yamanote Line Incident
manifesto
1962
Printed paper with burn hole
6 1/8 x 8 3/8" (15.5 x 21.3 cm)

Top right:
Fig. 2
Nakanishi Natsuyuki riding the
subway with a Compact Object,
during the Yamanote Line
Incident, October 18, 1962
Photograph by Murai Tokuji

Bottom left:
Plate 5
NAKANISHI NATSUYUKI
Compact Object
(Konpakuto obu)
1962
Bones, watch and clock parts,
bead necklace, hair, eggshells, lens,
and other manufactured objects
embedded in polyester
5 5/8 x 8 3/8 x 5 1/2"
(14.3 x 21.2 x 14 cm)



Bottom right:
Fig. 3
Nakanishi Natsuyuki on subway
platform with a Compact Object,
during the Yamanote Line
Incident, October 18, 1962
Photograph by Murai Tokuji

I. Place/Time: Tokyo, Rising/A Decade and a Half

Tokyo, the capital of Japan, is customarily touted as the largest city in the world. Though its sprawl is indeed mind-boggling, this characterization is somewhat misleading.³ The metropolitan government of Tokyo oversees twenty-three special wards (sometimes called cities) as well as more than thirty municipalities, many of which lie west of the heart of the capital, thus creating an elongated terrain that merges with adjacent urban centers such as Yokohama to create an extraordinarily vast and dense megalopolis. But of course what most visitors, and even residents, consider Tokyo is a concentrated cluster of special wards, especially the handful that surround the Yamanote loop line. Tokyo's well-known centers of artistic, cultural, political, and economic activities—such as Ginza, Shinjuku, and Ueno—are located on or near this train line, which was completed in 1925 by connecting preexisting railways and assumed its current form in 1956. The railway, the main organizing structure of the city, follows the center ring of the city concentrically around its nucleus—the imperial palace—famously described by Roland Barthes as “a void.”⁴

The statistical data of Tokyo as the largest metropolitan economy with the largest population in the world are notable in their own right, but even more so when considering the rapidity with which the city attained this scale and status. The carpet bombings of the final years of the Asia-Pacific War razed the city almost to the ground. Tokyo lay in ruins in September 1945 when General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, moved into Tokyo's Dai-ichi Seimei building, known as General Headquarters (or GHQ), initiating the occupation of Japan that would last until 1952. The Allied occupation signaled a radical time of transition. Among the pivotal changes and events of this period: the Shōwa emperor, Hirohito, was no longer considered divine; the constitution was

overhauled and rewritten, renouncing Japan's right to militarize itself in perpetuity; the 1946–48 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal sent several military leaders to the gallows and more than a dozen to serve life in prison.⁵ Japan embarked on reinventing itself from a defeated nation to a democratic citizen society by overcoming the nightmarish experiences and memories of the war and renegotiating its relations with the outside world.

With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Japan—now securely part of the United States' so-called Crescent bulwark against the much-feared spread of Communism—was turned into a supply station. The regional “hot war” that was taking place precariously close by served the nation crucially in its economic regeneration and growth. At the same time, Japan's (in)direct participation in the new Cold War world order brought a tidal shift within its boundaries. As the Cold War escalated, GHQ engineered a massive purge of Communists and sympathizers from all levels of government, press, and corporations—a witch hunt not unlike those orchestrated by Senator Joseph McCarthy and his cohorts in the United States. By the end of the first postwar decade, the occupation had ended with the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which was signed in September 1951 and came into force in April 1952, and the war in Korea had also ended. By 1955, with the continuing economic upswing and new political independence, Japan's mood had changed considerably—so much so, indeed, that the government proclaimed that the postwar era was over.⁶ While Tokyo's growing prosperity was without doubt the main motor behind the reconstruction boom of this period, a critical push was provided, within the next decade, when the city was named to host the summer Olympic Games in 1964: a decisive signal of Japan's emergence from military defeat and into the international arena.

It would be wrong, however, to characterize this as an era of uninterrupted growth, wealth, and

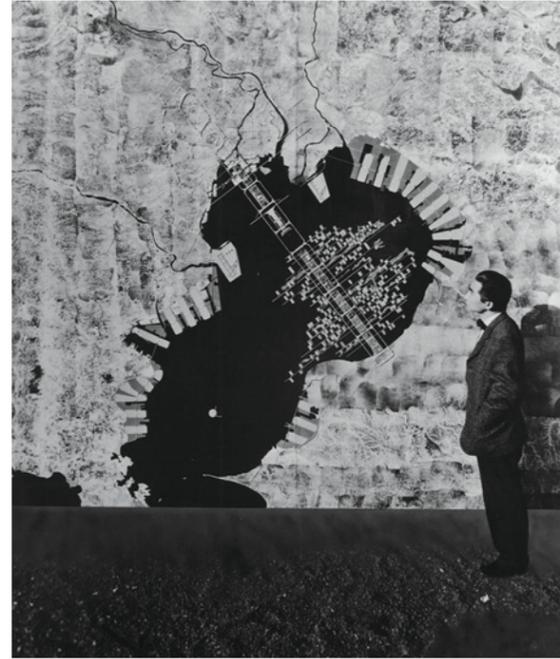


Fig. 4
Demonstrators protesting the U.S.–Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security (Anpo) and surrounding Tokyo's National Diet Building, June 18, 1960

Plate 6
Tange Kenzō with his model of *A Plan for Tokyo, 1960* (*Tōkyō keikaku 1960*), 1960
Photograph by Kawasumi Akio

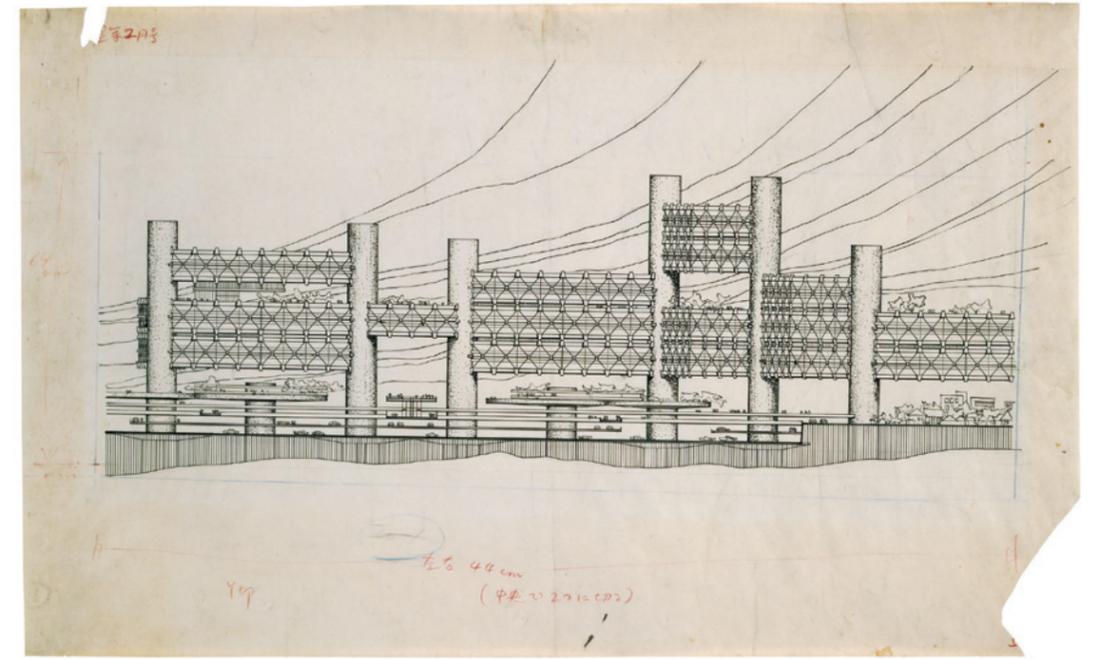
stability: it is remembered also for periodic eruptions of protest and the subsequent repression of antigovernment movements. The 1960s opened with massive demonstrations against the renewal of the so-called Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States (known in Japan by the shorthand Anpo; see fig. 4).⁷ In the following years, Japan had its share of student uprisings and anti-Vietnam War rallies, but the decade closed with government crackdowns precluding any possibility of protests on the scale of those in 1960.

The streets in Tokyo during this time were not only a site for political protest, which might be described as a form of public performance. Artists also made use of the city's public spaces as their own forum for radical actions and events, as in the case of the *Yamanote Line Incident*. Such guerrilla-style events were responses to the wholesale spatial, topographic, and social reorganization of Tokyo, as well as to the city's lack of infrastructure for art and artists. These guerrilla events could also be seen as rejoinders to the mega- and meta-imagination of the city of the future conceived by the Metabolists, a group made up primarily of architects, including Kikutake Kiyonori and Kurokawa Kishō, along with architecture critic Kawazoe Noboru, and graphic



designer Awazu Kiyoshi. Recently celebrated as the last true avant-garde movement in architecture,⁸ the Metabolists imagined the growth of the city not in a mechanical or functionalist way, but in organic, biological terms. Architect Tange Kenzō, who made a name for himself during the war and cemented his reputation in the immediate postwar years, was the teacher of the young architects at his Tange Lab at the University of Tokyo, and his *A Plan for Tokyo, 1960* (*Tōkyō keikaku 1960*; plate 6) sets out this vision. Believing that “a radial centripetal city like Tokyo would inevitably reach a state of confusion and paralysis as the population grew” (Tokyo had close to ten million residents by this time), Tange and his team envisioned a “civic axis,” “a linear structure capable of growth like a vertebrate animal.”⁹ The Metabolists were nothing if not big thinkers: the three-level megastructure of *A Plan for Tokyo* combines transportation systems and offices, commercial and residential spaces that project into and span the Tokyo Bay. They made multiple designs for forests of vertical skyscrapers, horizontally linked in important nodes of the city, such as Shinjuku, Shibuya, and Marunouchi—as seen in Isozaki Arata's *City in the Air: Shinjuku Project* (*Kūchū toshi: Shinjuku keikaku*, 1960; plate 7). It is perhaps not surprising

Plate 7
ISOZAKI ARATA
City in the Air: Shinjuku Project
(*Elevation*) (*Kūchū toshi: Shinjuku keikaku* [Ritsumenzu])
1960
Ink and color pencil on paper
20 7/8 × 33 3/4" (53 × 85.7 cm)



that these large-scale proposals rarely came into existence, although certain individual edifices were built. Tange's Yoyogi National Stadium (Kokuritsu Yoyogi Okunai Kyōgijō), completed in 1964 for the Olympics (plate 8), and Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower Building (Nakagin Kapuserutawā Biru), completed in 1972 (plate 9), are effective embodiments of the Metabolists' organicist understanding of potential advancements in architecture.

Among the many great cities that have been devastated in times of violence, Tokyo has the distinction of having been rebuilt and subsequently expanded at a truly unprecedented pace and scale. The story of the city itself, in its role as a site of remarkable artistic flowering after the war, has not yet, however, been a subject of much focused study.¹⁰ It may certainly be said that Tokyo is less known for its experimental cultural productions than as a place of “exotic” popular culture and social patterns, which are apparently of abiding interest to Western audiences.¹¹ In terms of time period, the midpoint of the 1950s signaled a critical shift in artistic tendencies and mood in Tokyo, and that shift continued to have repercussions through the following decade. One goal of *Tokyo 1955–1970* is to bring attention to this aspect of the city's history by closely examining this particularly

galvanizing sixteen-year period, and to present Tokyo's complex, intimate, and often confrontational relationship with the artistic productions it hosted.

Encompassing works of diverse mediums and disciplines, this exhibition and publication are organized around two narrative strands—a double-helix, if you will—one strand being the theme (and physical deployment) of the *body* and *figure* in Japanese art of this era; the other, the radical engagement of *multiple genres* in the art of the period. Some works under consideration here fit relatively neatly on one side or the other of these two tendencies; in other cases the theme of the figure/body and the idea of cross-genre (later known widely as “intermedia”) art are brought together in a single endeavor. Naturally, there are works and practices here that do not fit handily into either category. (Any effort to describe and characterize the art of a place and time, however wide the net is thrown, must also be an exercise in exclusion.) Nonetheless, it may be said that these two critical impetuses served to contest the mainstream of modern art and institutional structures that upheld it, stirring up postwar Japanese art in general and transforming Tokyo itself into a hotbed of experimental artistic activities—which would collectively crystallize into a new avant-garde.



Plate 8
Tange Kenzō's National Gymnasiums for the Tokyo Olympics (Yoyogi National Stadium) (Tōkyō Orinpikku Kokuritsu Okunai Sōgō Kyōgijō [Kokuritsu Yoyogi Okunai Kyōgijō]), 1964
Photograph by Murai Osamu

Plate 9
Kurokawa Kishō's Nakagin Capsule Tower Building (Nakagin Kapuserutawā Biru), Tokyo, 1972
Photograph by Ōhashi Tomio



Fig. 5
OKAMOTO TARŌ
Men Aflame (Moeru hito)
1955
Oil on canvas
83 11/16 × 121 7/16" (212.5 × 308.5 cm)
The National Museum of
Modern Art, Tokyo

II. Artists, Collectives, Tendencies

THE FIGURE IN THE MID- TO LATE 1950S

Consider two paintings made in 1955, at the closing threshold of the “postwar” period: Okamoto Tarō's *Men Aflame (Moeru hito)*; fig. 5) and Nakamura Hiroshi's *Sunagawa No. 5 (Sunagawa goban*; see p. 113, fig. 14). Although Okamoto (1911–1996) and Nakamura (born 1932) are separated by a generation, the two works have much in common—both are enraged responses to continued victimization at the hands of a powerful oppressor. *Men Aflame* was made in reaction to the horrendous disaster that befell the Japanese fishing boat *Dai-Go Fukuryū-maru* the year before: the vessel was exposed to massive amounts of radiation when, on March 1, 1954, the U.S. military tested the hydrogen bomb on Bikini Atoll.¹² The painting is a semiabstract allover composition of squiggly serpentine forms, flame motifs, and floating eyeballs, painted in a bright palette of yellow, red, and purple, which by then had become the artist's signature hues. All elements in the painting allude to the disaster, which was deeply painful for

the Japanese citizenry—the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were only a decade old—and the pain was undoubtedly worsened by the fact that the U.S. military was again the perpetrator. This theme was clearly a touchstone for some other Japanese artists as well; Ikeda Tatsuo addresses it, for example, in his 1954 *10,000 Count (10000 kaunto*; plate 10) from his series *Anti-Atomic Bomb (Han-genbaku)*.

Despite Okamoto's central, influential place in the Japanese art world in the immediate postwar years, and perhaps because his identity and philosophy were shaped by his experiences while living in Paris before the war, he was distanced from the emerging generation of young Turks, including Nakamura.¹³ Painting *Sunagawa No. 5* while still in his early twenties, Nakamura did not shy away from realistically depicting a contemporary event: the forceful displacement of local residents for the construction of an American air base.¹⁴ On either side of the midsection of the horizontally elongated, almost cinematic picture, a group of downtrodden but defiant farmers face off with smug lawmen—a standoff that will have a predetermined outcome. Both Okamoto and Nakamura address pressing contemporary events, and bring suffering or struggling human figures to the center of attention. Their figures serve as signs of the times in which the artists lived and worked; they also signify what was at stake artistically in Japan.

In the mid-1950s, the Japanese art world witnessed significant shifts in terms of generation, ideological stance with regard to art's connection to politics and society, Japanese art's relations to the outside world, and the formal languages of visual expression. These changes did not signify a complete break from the past: links existed naturally between the older generation of artists, who had participated in the war, and the younger generation, who had experienced the war in some manner, but were too young to have participated. And importantly, pre-war avant-garde movements—Japanese schools of





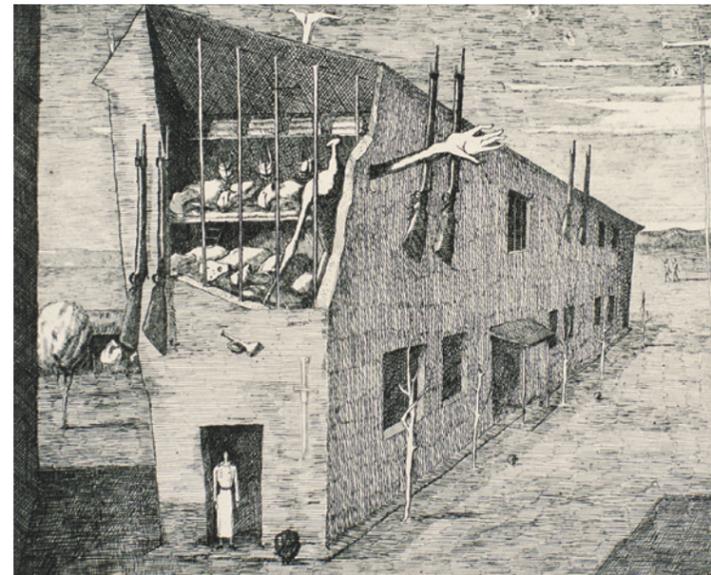
Plate 10
IKEDA TATSUO
10,000 Count (10000 kaunto),
 from the series *Anti-Atomic Bomb (Han-genbaku)*
 1954
 Pen, ink, and Conté crayon on paper
 10¹⁵/₁₆ × 14⁷/₈" (27.8 × 37.3 cm)

Constructivism and especially Surrealism—had been rediscovered and revived, providing a crucial impetus for budding vanguard artists. The decade immediately following the war had also generated several important artistic movements. The established hierarchical system of guildlike artists' associations and exhibitions, which dominated the art world in prewar years (and with which Okamoto was associated), rebuilt itself, while the younger, socially conscious—even activist—artists (Nakamura among them) underwent continuous changes of course. A central question that was on the minds of the younger generation was whether artists and their works can have a truly participatory relationship with reality.

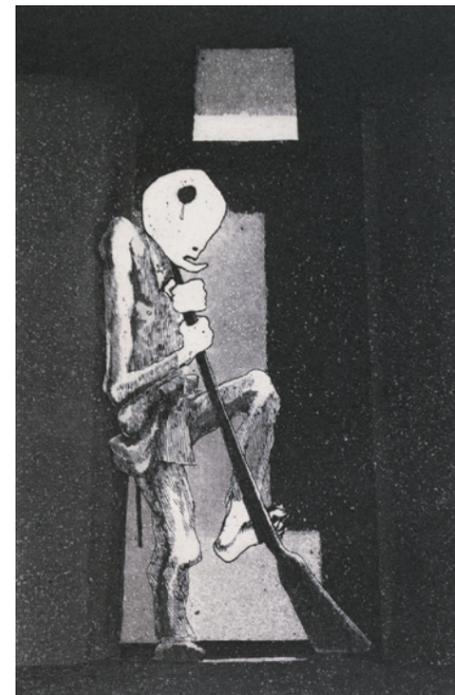
The generation of artists who had experienced the war—including Yamashita Kikuji, Hamada Chimei, Katsuragawa Hiroshi, and Ikeda—did not have the kind of international experiences Okamoto had; their worldviews and early artistic motivations were very much shaped by what they had been through and seen during World War II—whether they fought on the battlefield or simply felt the pain of the country hurtling down the road to defeat.¹⁵ Hamada's series of etchings (at times mixed with aquatint) *Elegy for a New Conscript (Shonenhei aika; plates 11–14)*, which he began showing in 1951 and continued to augment over the following years, is a group of melancholic images of brutality and desolation. At times, harrowing visions of bodies—part-bodies, to be more precise—appear on a bleak plain. One of the most

famous images in the group, *Elegy for a New Conscript (Landscape) (Shonenhei aika [Fūkei], 1952; plate 12)* shows a naked and pregnant female body, her legs spread apart, with a stick emerging from her genitalia. Furthermore, the extreme foreshortening obscures the head—is the head even there? What happened to this poor body? It is perhaps too horrifying to even wonder. When visages are shown in Hamada's series, they are highly abstracted, as in one 1954 image, in which the figure is seen at the moment of committing suicide with a rifle (plate 13), or another from the same year, which shows decapitated heads impaled on stakes in a ruined landscape dotted with Chinese brick buildings (plate 14).

Memories of past war traumas were not the only fuel for artistic creation during this period. Yamashita Kikuji was one of the main figures in what was known as Reportage painting (*Ruporutāju kaiga*) in the 1950s, a movement led by socially committed artists who often observed or participated in proletarian struggles through their artistic endeavors. The "conversion" to Reportage was particularly trenchant for Yamashita, who had formerly been mobilized to serve as a war painter, producing propaganda glorifying imperialistic militarism.¹⁶ Strikingly, just a few years after the war, he painted *Totems (Oto otemu, 1951; plate 15)*, which clearly exhibits the influence of the Surrealistic style and visual vocabulary that had been so influential before the war (though its rather subdued, even drab palette is distinct from Okamoto's vibrant primary, primitive hues). Signaling



Top left:
Plate 11
HAMADA CHIMEI
Elegy for a New Conscript (Shonenhei aika)
 1953
 Etching
 Plate: 10⁷/₁₆ × 8⁷/₁₆"
 (21.5 × 26.5 cm);
 sheet: 14¹⁵/₁₆ × 16⁷/₁₆"
 (38 × 41.8 cm)



Top right:
Plate 12
HAMADA CHIMEI
Elegy for a New Conscript (Landscape) (Shonenhei aika [Fūkei])
 1952
 Etching
 Plate: 6 × 8¹/₄" (15.3 × 20.9 cm);
 sheet: 11⁹/₁₆ × 13⁹/₁₆"
 (29.4 × 34.4 cm)



Bottom left:
Plate 13
HAMADA CHIMEI
Elegy for a New Conscript (Sentinel) (Shonenhei aika [Hoshō])
 1954
 Etching and aquatint
 Plate: 6³/₈ × 9³/₄" (16.2 × 24.8 cm);
 sheet: 13 × 15¹⁵/₁₆" (33 × 40.5 cm)



Plate 15
YAMASHITA KIKUJI
Totems (Oto otemu)
1951
Oil on canvas
28³/₄ × 46¹/₁₆" (73 × 117 cm)

Fig. 6
YAMASHITA KIKUJI
The Tale of Akebono Village (Akebono mura monogatari)
1953
Oil on jute
53¹⁵/₁₆ × 84¹/₄" (137 × 214 cm)
Courtesy Gallery Nippon, Tokyo

Plate 16
KATSURAGAWA HIROSHI
Rooster and Steel Construction (Ondori to tekkotsu)
1957
Oil on canvas
38 × 57¹/₈" (96.5 × 145.1 cm)



Plate 17
IKEDA TATSUO
Arm (Ude)
1953
Oil on canvas
28⁵/₈ × 23⁷/₈" (72.7 × 60.6 cm)

Plate 18
IKEDA TATSUO
Big Street (Ōdōri)
1954
Oil and ink on paper
9⁵/₈ × 12¹/₈" (24.5 × 30.8 cm)



the growing importance of activist politics and proletarian sympathy through the first half of the 1950s, Yamashita made one of his best-known works, *The Tale of Akebono Village* (*Akebono mura monogatari*, 1953; fig. 6), a painting based on a real-life incident of two deaths that were caused by social injustice in a town in northern Yamagata Prefecture.¹⁷ While ostensibly “reporting” on the event (in fact Yamashita was working from second-hand information), the painting, though figurative, is far from a naturalistic account; rather, it is a morbid, fablelike tableau populated by anthropomorphic animals alongside the human corpses. The work also exemplifies the significant theoretical and critical thrust of Reportage painting: the Reportage artist must find a form that connects external reality with inner subjectivity.¹⁸ The movement flourished in the first half of the 1950s; by the time Katsuragawa, also active in Reportage, painted *Rooster and Steel Construction* (*Ondori to tekkotsu*, 1957; plate 16), it was already on the wane. Contrasting a caged black bird against a new steel structure being built in front of Tokyo Station (close to the imperial palace), this painting questions the progress and reconstruction that were driven by economic growth and touted by the government, which turned a blind eye to unresolved remnants of the past. The floating

red sun—a turgid national symbol—adds to the ambivalence of this portrait of the time.

A desire for a new artistic language was clearly stirring by the second half of the 1950s. The figure—no longer merely the medium for conveying war violence or proletarian struggles—seemed to be moving toward a more complex relationship with social concerns and image making, mutating into bizarre, fantastical, and even abstract forms. Both Ikeda and Nakamura, who had been young Reportage painters in the early 1950s, underwent a metamorphosis in their ideology as well as work. Ikeda’s early painting *Arm (Ude)*, 1953; plate 17)—with its bizarrely absent head behind a fist holding the handle of a shovel—arose from his sympathy for the working class but already suggests a direction away from the naturalistic depiction of their toil. In the following year, he would make drawings that announce an irrefutable transition. *Big Street (Ōdōri)*, 1954; plate 18) shows the impoverishment that many still suffered at this time, encapsulated in a simplified composition inhabited by stick figures rendered in an intentionally childlike manner. The same year’s *10,000 Count*, from the Anti-Atomic Bomb series, exhibits an increasingly allegorical style that diverges from realism and anticipates a remarkable body of work Ikeda would soon develop: meticulously rendered pen (and sometimes

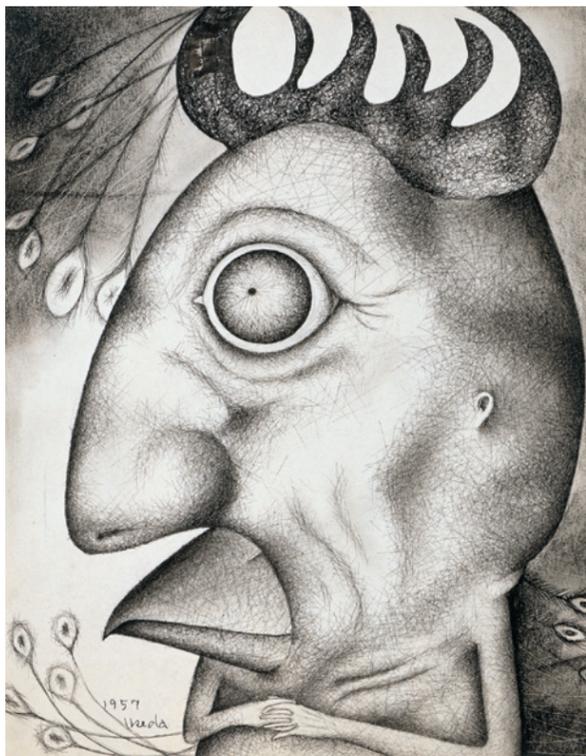
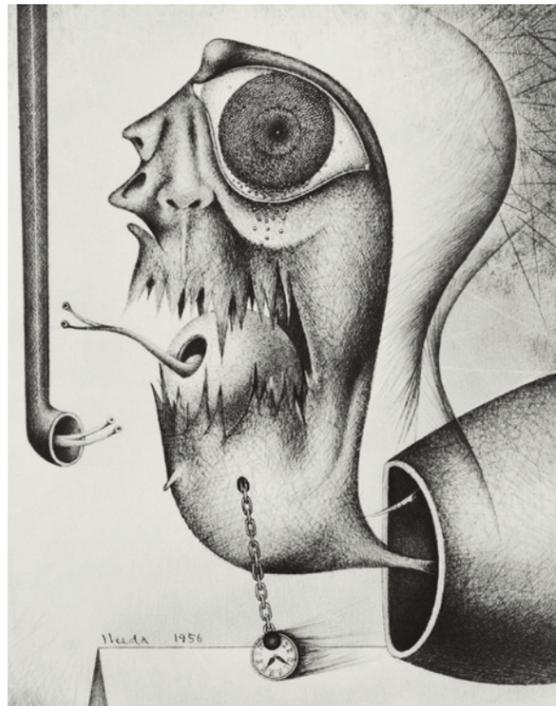


Plate 19
IKEDA TATSUO
Boss Bird (Bosu dori), from the series *Chronicle of Birds and Beasts (Kinjūki)*
1957
Ink and Conté crayon on paper
14³/₄ × 11⁹/₁₆" (37.4 × 29.3 cm)

Plate 20
IKEDA TATSUO
Business (II) (Shōbai [II]), from the series *Genealogy of Monsters (Bakemono no keifu)*
1955
Ink on drawing paper
11⁷/₁₆ × 14¹³/₁₆" (29.1 × 37.6 cm)

pencil) drawings of monstrous, often humorous human and animal figures—which can be seen both as a parody of the illogical human life and as partly derived from the rich panoply of spirits and demons in Japan's animistic religion. The beginning of Ikeda's *Chronicle of Birds and Beasts (Kinjūki)*; plate 19), *Genealogy of Monsters (Bakemono no keifu)*; plate 20), and other series, begun in 1955 and ongoing until the end of the decade, coincided with his membership in what was known as the Seisakusha Kondankai (Producers' discussion group). This consortium, which also included slightly younger artists Ishii Shigeo and On Kawara, made the point that it was "concerned with the creation of a new realism which did not owe its concept and pictorial vocabulary to the legacy of Social Realism,"¹⁹ and thus clearly expressed a shift away from the aesthetics and strategies of Reportage painting.

Two works from Ishii's *Violence (Bōryoku)* series, *Acrobatics (Kyokugei)*; plate 21) and *Under Martial Law IV (Kaigen jōtai IV)*; plate 22), both 1956, could not



be more distinct: the former is a tightly woven tapestry of human figures, whereas the latter is a disquieting urban landscape invaded by mysterious spheres, from which panicked minuscule human figures vainly seek shelter. As different as these works are, however, both render a sense of claustrophobia through their almost *horror vacui* compositions. In its intentional lack of specificity and visual mayhem, *Under Martial Law IV* is a clear ideological departure from Reportage painting as well as from the Socialist Realist school that was encouraged and supported by the Japanese Communist Party (although the work's title is of course a clear reference to the country's early postwar years). Ishii himself stated: "For an artist to witness the struggle around the base of the foreign military force and to report the incident by means of painting is to remain totally passive against reality." For him, the engineered "peaceful, democratic look" of Japan's postwar society was the "perfect crime committed by contemporary Imperialism."²⁰ Even Nakamura, a contemporary of Ishii and Kawara and a onetime enthusiastic participant in Reportage activism, moved toward the metaphorical and allegorical, as seen in his 1958 trilogy *Period of War (Sensōki)*; plate 23), *Period of Peace (Heiwaki)*; plate 24), and *Upheaval (Nairanki)*; plate 25).

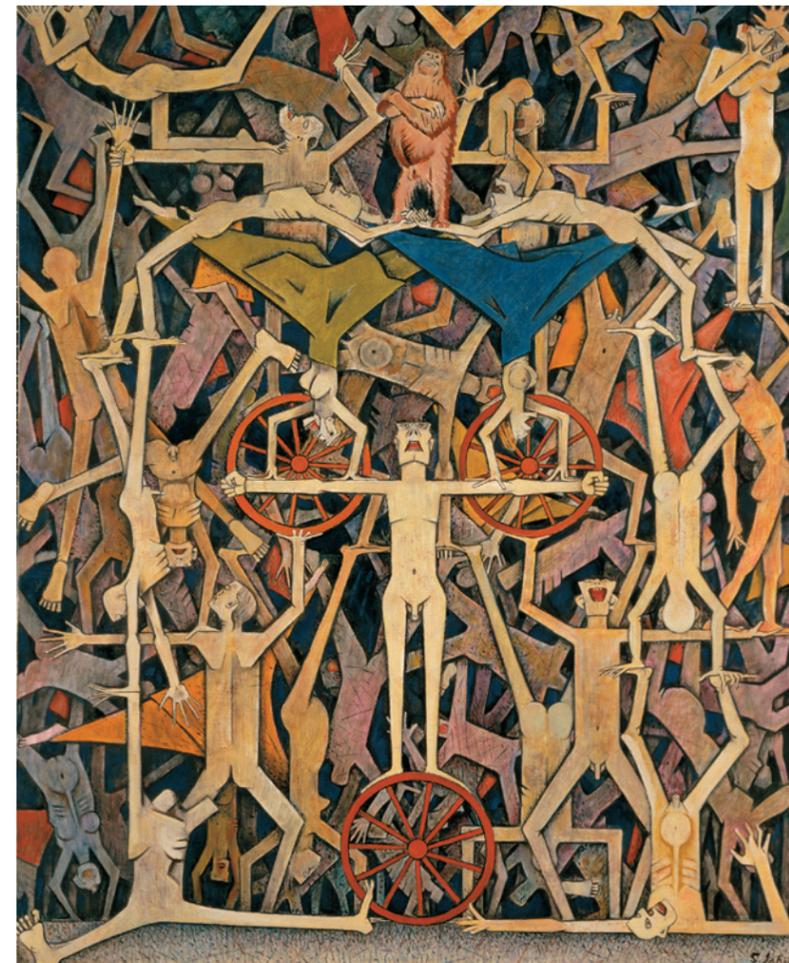


Plate 21
ISHII SHIGEO
Acrobatics (Kyokugei), from the series *Violence (Bōryoku)*
1956
Oil on canvas
63³/₄ × 51⁵/₁₆" (162 × 130.4 cm)

Plate 22
ISHII SHIGEO
Under Martial Law IV (Kaigen jōtai IV), from the series *Violence (Bōryoku)*
1956
Oil on canvas
56⁷/₈ × 44¹/₄" (144.5 × 112.4 cm)

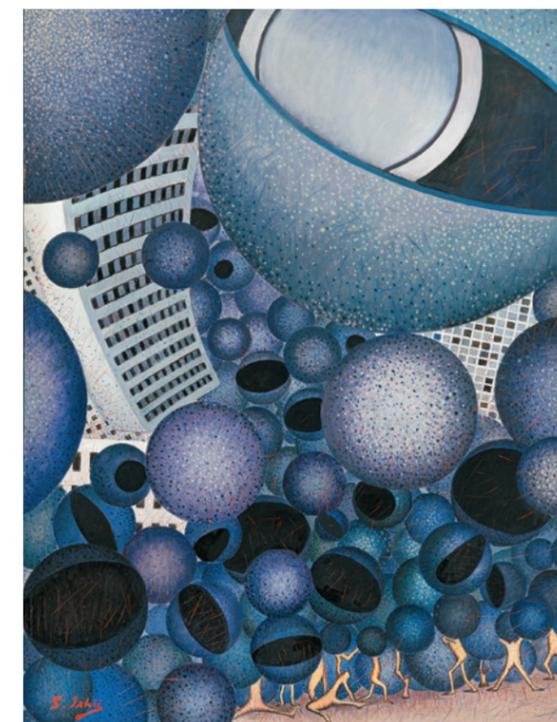




Plate 23
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
Period of War (Sensōki)
1958
Oil on plywood
36 × 71³/₄" (91.5 × 182.3 cm)

Plate 24
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
Period of Peace (Heiwaki)
1958
Oil and newspaper on plywood
36¹/₈ × 71⁷/₈" (91.7 × 182.5 cm)

Plate 25
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
Upheaval (Nairanki)
1958
Oil and pencil on plywood
36¹/₄ × 72⁷/₁₆" (92 × 184 cm)



Plate 26
MADOKORO (AKUTAGAWA) SAORI
Myth, Birth of Gods (Shinwa, kamigami no tanjō)
1956
Dyed linen
52³/₈ × 77⁵/₈" (133 × 197.2 cm)

Although the art world at this time was dominated by male artists (this is true for the whole period concerned here), there were important contributions from women—possibly due to the radically changed social climate and structure in postwar years, in no small measure affected by the American-led reconstruction effort. Madokoro (Akutagawa) Saori, whose career was cut short by her death at forty-two in 1966, was closely associated with Ishii, Ikeda, and Kawara.²¹ In the mid-1950s she made paintings that are notable for their unique dyeing technique and for their mythological and primitive iconography, as seen in *Myth, Birth of Gods (Shinwa, kamigami no tanjō)*, 1956; plate 26). In contrast, Yayoi Kusama's connections with the Tokyo scene, though significant, were few, and this separation from her contemporaries was made even wider with her departure from

Japan in 1957.²² Kusama's drawings from the years leading up to her emigration to the United States presage what would become her signature stylistic languages—obsessional accumulation and what she would dub "Infinity Nets"—which might be characterized as a sublimation of figuration. These elements can be seen in such works as *Infinity Nets* (1951; plate 27); *Untitled* (1952; plate 28); and *Untitled* (1954; plate 29). While her abstraction distinguishes Kusama's work from the styles of her contemporaries, the organicism and sense of proliferation in her paintings closely resonate with the work of her male cohorts, in particular Ishii.

Another resonance is evident with abstract paintings by Maeda Jōsaku and Nakanishi Natsuyuki. The former's *Garden of Earthly Delights (Jardin des Delice [sic]; Kairaku no sono)*, 1959; plate 30)

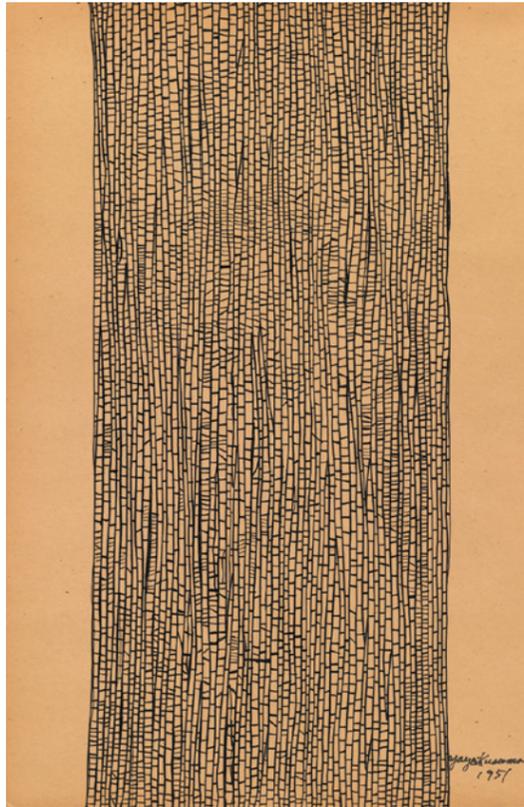


Plate 27
YAYOI KUSAMA
Infinity Nets
 1951
 Ink on paper
 15 1/2 × 10 1/8" (39.4 × 25.7 cm)

Plate 28
YAYOI KUSAMA
 Untitled
 1952
 Pastel and ballpoint pen on paper
 14 7/8 × 11 1/2" (37.9 × 29.4 cm)

Plate 29
YAYOI KUSAMA
 Untitled
 1954
 Gouache and pastel on paper
 19 15/16 × 18 1/4" (50.6 × 46.3 cm)

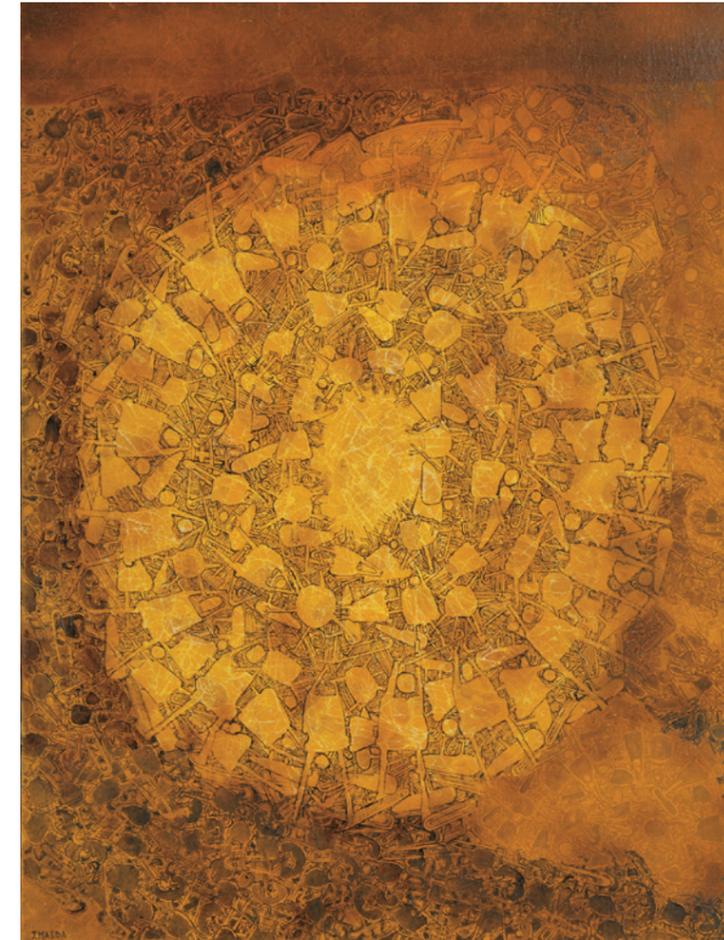


Plate 30
MAEDA JŌSAKU
Garden of Earthly Delights
 (*Jardin des Delice [sic];*
Kairaku no sono)
 1959
 Oil on canvas and *washi* paper
 45 11/16 × 38 3/8" (116 × 97.5 cm)

features a humanoid form in innumerable repetitions (again reminiscent of Ishii's work), tightly overlapping one another and seemingly swirling toward a central void. Other works, such as Nakanishi's *Map of Human* (*Ningen no chizu*, 1959; plate 31) and *Rhyme '60* (*In*, 1960; plate 32), not only evince a similar logic of proliferation but are instructive to consider in relation to the artist's production as part of Hi Red Center. While these abstract paintings may be seen as a subsuming of the human figure under a language of abstraction, during the brief period of 1962–64, Nakanishi would powerfully foreground his own body as the central medium and subject of his practice.

It is also in this light—with the fate of the figure in mind—that one may consider Kawara's masterful *Stones Thrown* (*Tsubute*, 1956). In the upper register of a strangely shaped canvas, he paints a row of tires rolling away—or barreling down toward us?—leaving a trail of crushed stones and sticks strewn

across an unfolding reddish brickscape. The artist had been recently celebrated as a young prodigy with his alternately fascinating and terrifying Bathroom (Yokushitsu) series of drawings of 1953–54, in which apparently placid figures seem to be involved in an ultimately incomprehensible drama of butchery and mutation. In the drawings Kawara abstracts and fragments human bodies into dismembered limbs, or, even more disturbingly, plumbing pipes. It is as if the frightening, impassive appendages, rendered in thick outlines, have finished the job of depopulation.²³ Made in the same year, Ay-O's *Pastoral* (*Den'en*, 1956; plate 33) shares unexpected qualities with Kawara's work of this period. Here, too, torsos and limbs of the figures seem pneumatic, and the simplified palette is dominated by yellow, as if giving form to the homogenizing, dehumanizing force of standardization that turns individuals into an army of workers, undifferentiated except by gender, toiling for prosperity in the postwar brave new world.



Plate 31
NAKANISHI NATSUYUKI
Map of Human (Ningen no chizu)
1959
Paint, enamel, and sand on plywood
47⁵/₈ × 95¹/₄" (121 × 242 cm)

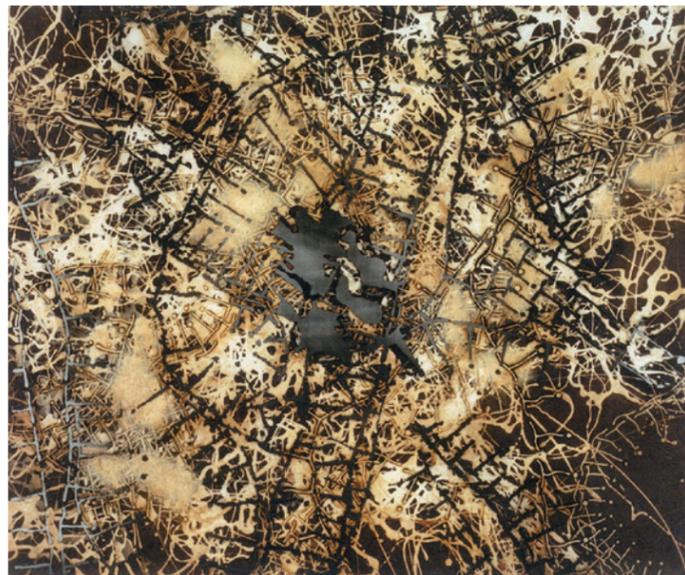


Plate 32
NAKANISHI NATSUYUKI
Rhyme '60 (In)
1960
Paint, enamel, and sand on iron
33¹¹/₁₆ × 39⁵/₁₆" (85.6 × 99.8 cm)

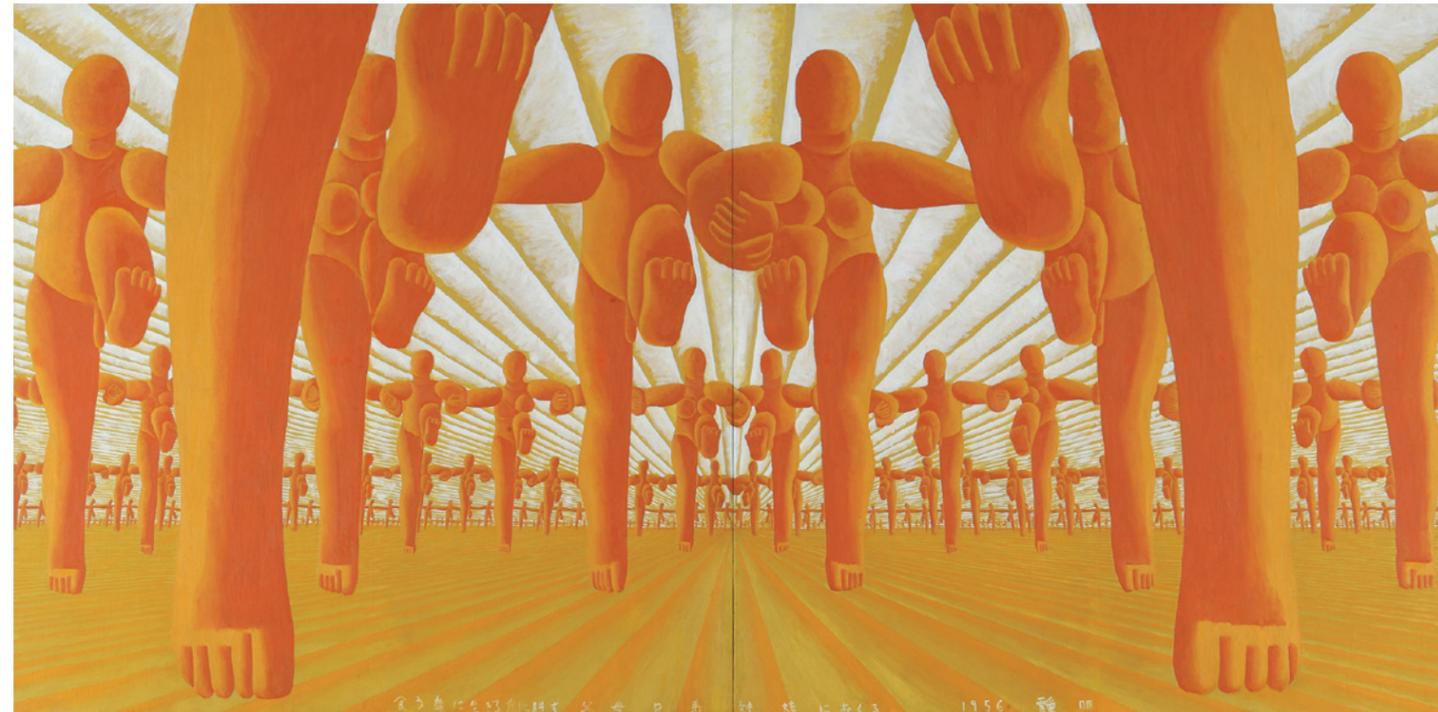


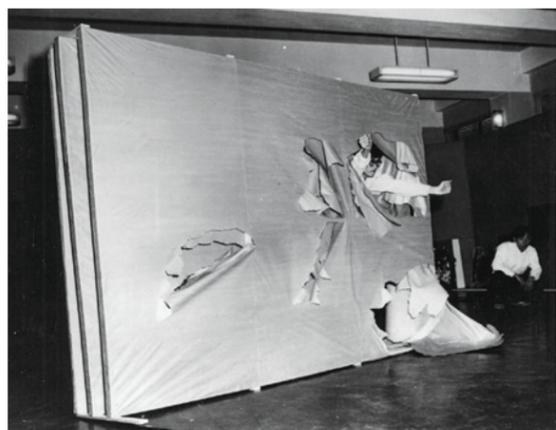
Plate 33
AY-0
Pastoral (Den'en)
1956
Oil on panel
72¹/₁₆" × 12'1¹³/₁₆" (183 × 370.4 cm)

THE DAWN OF CROSS-GENRE: JIKKEN KŌBŌ AND GUTAI

While the struggle around the figure was unfolding in the 1950s, another important tendency—cross-genre or interdisciplinary and intermedia work—was coalescing in postwar Japanese art. The chief proponents of these movements were two artists' collectives, Jikken Kōbō/Experimental Workshop, based in Tokyo, and Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai (Gutai art association) in the Kansai (Osaka-Kobe) region. In addition to their cross-genre orientation, Jikken Kōbō and Gutai had two other important things in common. First, both were groups of young, enterprising artists who came under the leadership of an older and charismatic leader—poet and critic Takiguchi Shūzō and artist Yoshihara Jirō, respectively—who had established vanguard credentials in prewar Japan. And second: unlike the numerous artists' societies and collectives that flourished from the immediate postwar years into the early 1950s, these two groups enjoyed a measure of longevity; Jikken Kōbō existed from the early 1950s nearly to the end of the decade, and Gutai from 1954 to 1972. The similarities, however, more or less end there.

Based in Kansai (second only to Tokyo and its surrounding region in size and significance), from where most of its members hailed, Gutai took care from the beginning to present itself outside its immediate environs. The sporadically published *Gutai* journal—tightly edited and designed and generously filled with reproductions and writings by group members and occasional outside contributions—was distributed both in Japan and overseas.²⁴ Influential French critic and curator Michel Tapié visited Japan in 1957 and 1958 and subsequently promoted the group in Europe and America, securing them much-desired recognition in the international scene.

Within Japan, Gutai had begun its campaign of self-promotion early on, and in its first years members organized group exhibitions and stage performances in Tokyo as often as in Kansai. In fact, some of the most iconic early performative actions were carried



out in Tokyo.²⁵ The first Gutai exhibition in Tokyo was presented at Ohara Kaikan; there, Shiraga Kazuo, dressed in white boxer shorts, dove into and wrestled with a pile of mud in *Challenging Mud* (*Doro ni idomu*, 1955; fig. 7), and Murakami Saburō broke through multiple screens of Kraft paper in violent movements in *Six Holes* (*Mutsu no ana*, 1955; fig. 8), from Paper-Breaking (*Kami yaburi*). In the *Gutai Art on the Stage* (*Butai o shiyō suru Gutai bijutsu*) event held at Sankei Kaikan, Tokyo, in October 1957, Shiraga and two male performers walked onstage wearing different versions of Tanaka Atsuko's *Electric Dress* (*Denki-fuku*, 1956; see p. 115, fig. 17), an elaborate contraption made of lightbulbs and tangles of electric cords.²⁶



Plate 34
SHIRAGA KAZUO
Untitled
1958

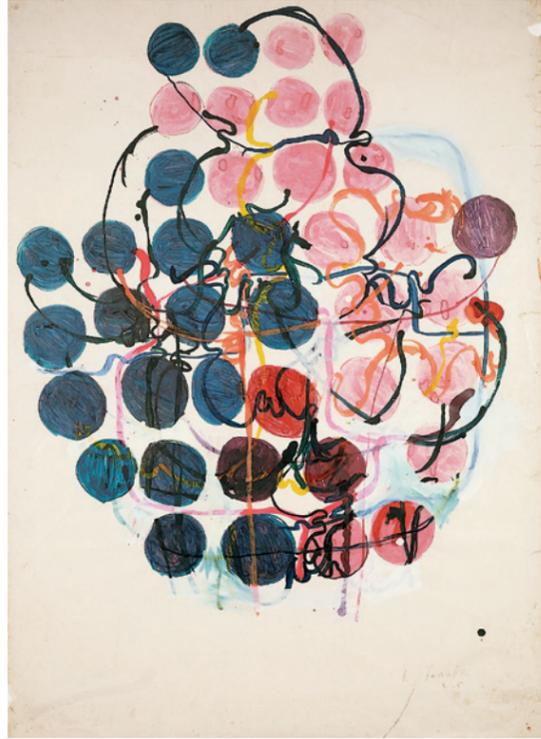
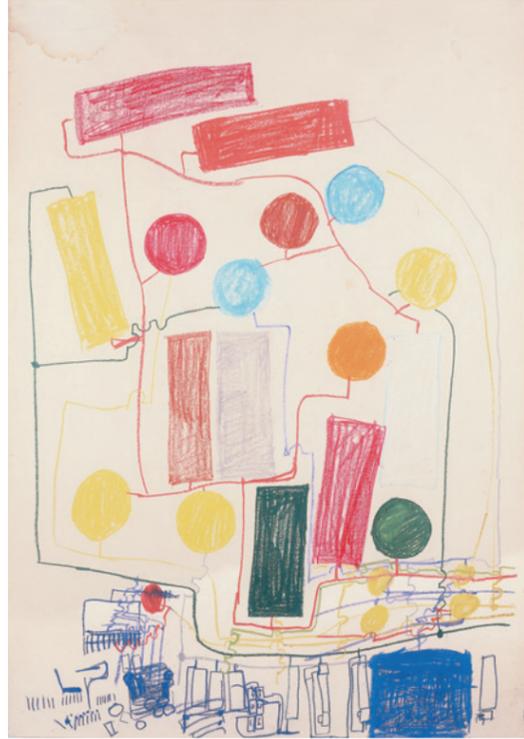
Oil on Japanese paper lined
with linen
71⁵/₈ × 95³/₈ × 1⁹/₁₆"
(182 × 242.4 × 4 cm)

Interestingly, although Gutai may today be best remembered for these groundbreaking performance-based innovations, and their performances continued into their later years, the artists regarded themselves primarily as painters. Shiraga, Murakami, Tanaka, and others developed their own unique painterly vocabularies and practices, to which they adhered throughout the Gutai years and afterward. Shiraga painted with his feet on canvases laid horizontally on the floor (plate 34). Tanaka made numerous paintings and drawings featuring her signature repeating circles and tangled lines derived from *Electric Dress* (plates 35, 36). In *Work Painted by Throwing a Ball* (*Tōkyū kaiga*, 1954; plate 37), Murakami hurled an ink-soaked ball onto a pictorial surface, leaving traces

of a forceful registration of the moving object—anticipating his plunges through paper surfaces with his own body. But not all Gutai paintings were performatively inspired, nor were all engaged in a direct relationship between action and picture. Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)* (*Sakuhiin [Mizu]*, 1955; fig. 9) consists of teardroplike transparent plastic bags filled with water tinted with a range of bright hues. Motonaga hung this work at Gutai's first exhibition in Tokyo, amid his own paintings as well as a group of brightly colored stones, and remnants of other artists' actions and interactive works—a truly cross-genre event. His work underscores Gutai's contribution to art not only in the realm of performance but also in that of installation.

Fig. 7
Shiraga Kazuo making
Challenging Mud (*Doro ni idomu*)
at the first Gutai Art Exhibition
(Gutai bijutsu-ten), Ohara
Kaikan, Tokyo, October 1955
Photographer unknown

Fig. 8
Murakami Saburō making
Six Holes (*Mutsu no ana*), from
Paper-Breaking (*Kami yaburi*),
at the first Gutai Art Exhibition
(Gutai bijutsu-ten), Ohara
Kaikan, Tokyo, October 1955
Photographer unknown



Top left:

Plate 35

TANAKA ATSUKO

Drawing after "Electric Dress"

(Denki-fuku no tame no sobyō)

1956

Crayon on paper

42³/₄ × 29¹⁵/₁₆" (108.6 × 76 cm)

Bottom left:

Fig. 9

Motonaga Sadamasa with

his 1955 pieces *Work (Water)*

(*Sakuhin [Mizu]*), hanging

from the ceiling on the right);

Liquid, Red (Ekitai, aka,

suspended above the artist);

and *Work (Stones) (Sakuhin*

[*Ishi*], in front of him), at the

first Gutai Art Exhibition

(Gutai bijutsu-ten), Ohara

Kaikan, Tokyo, October 1955

Photographer unknown

Top right:

Plate 36

TANAKA ATSUKO

Work (Sakuhin)

1957

Permanent marker and oil on paper

43 × 30¹³/₁₆" (109.2 × 78.2 cm)

Opposite:

Plate 37

MURAKAMI SABURŌ

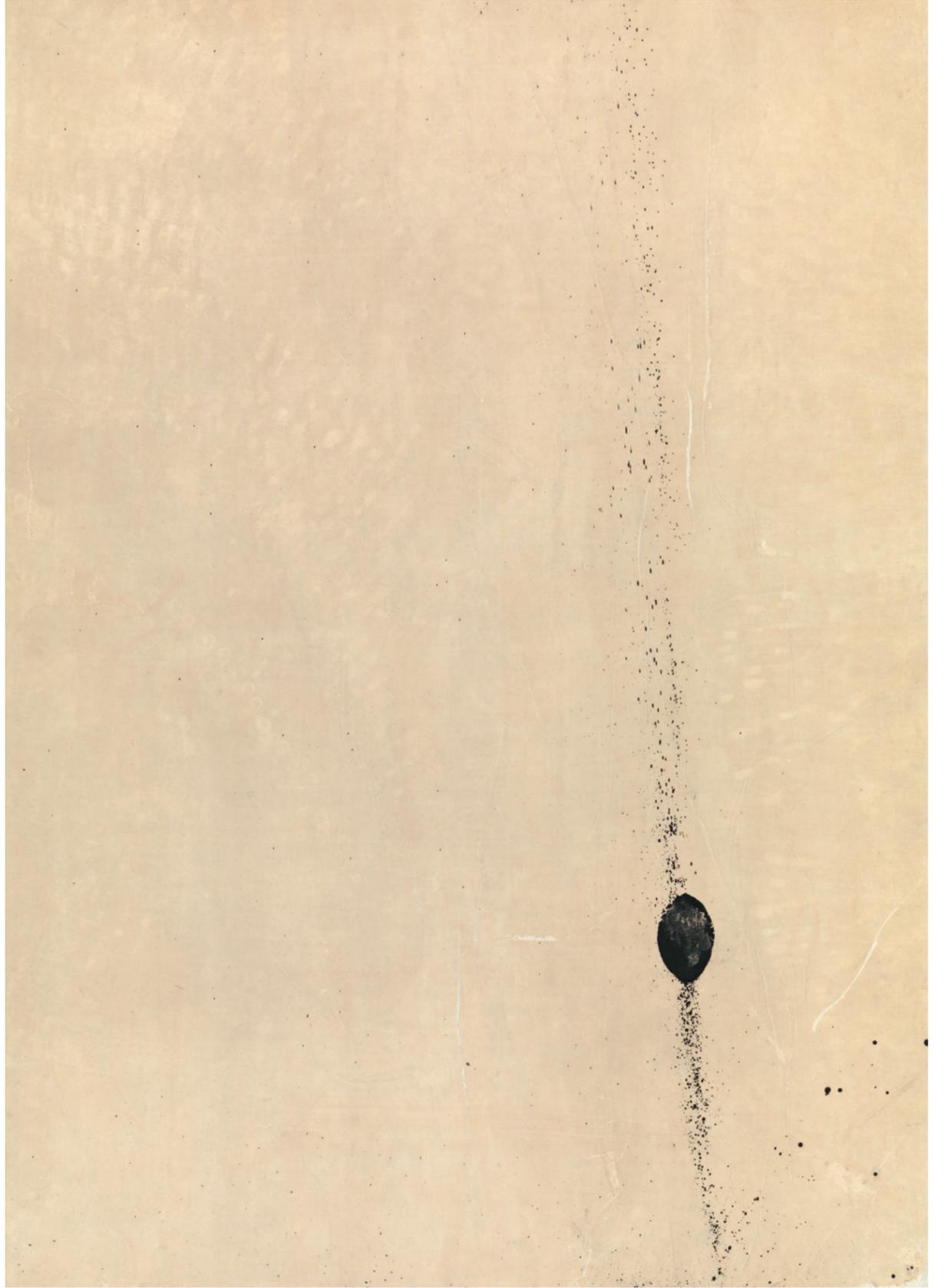
Work Painted by Throwing a Ball

(*Tōkyū kaiga*)

1954

Ink on paper

41⁵/₈ × 29³/₄" (105.7 × 75.6 cm)



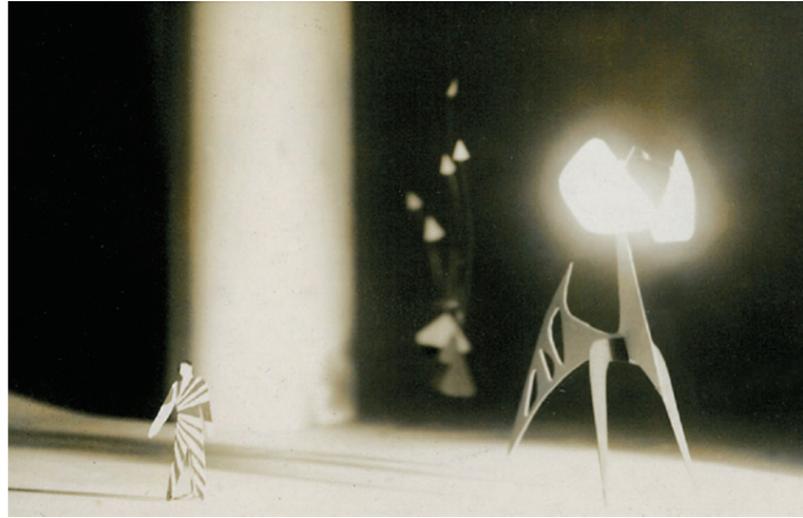
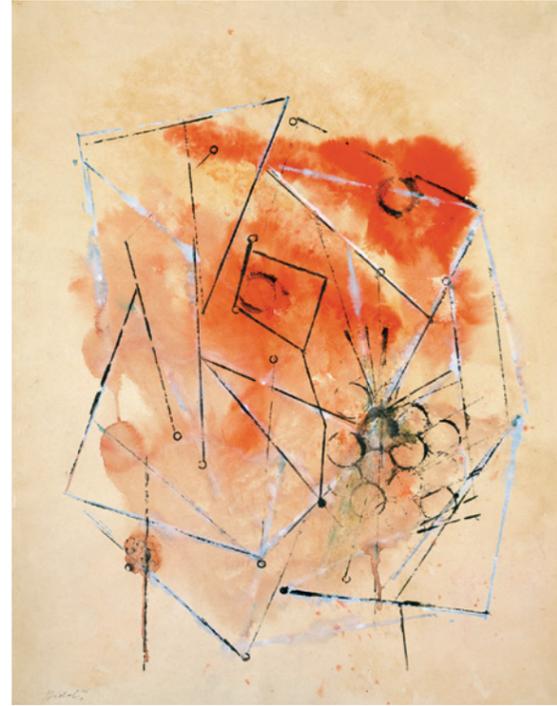


Fig. 10
Model of stage set designed by Kitadai Shōzō for a performance of the ballet *Joy of Life* (*Joie de vivre; Ikiru yorokobi*), the first Jikken Kōbō event, produced as part of the Picasso Festival, Hibiya Kōkaidō Hall, Tokyo, November 16, 1951
Photograph by Kitadai Shōzō

Plate 38
FUKUSHIMA HIDEKO
Visitor (Gairaisha)
1956
Gouache on paper
26³/₄ × 21¹/₁₆" (68 × 53.5 cm)

Plate 39
FUKUSHIMA HIDEKO
Work 109 (Sakuhiin 109)
1959
Oil on canvas
63¹³/₁₆ × 44¹/₄" (162.1 × 112.4 cm)

Gutai worked as a tight-knit group, its members devoting their energies solely to Gutai projects; this contrasted with a certain looseness that characterized the collaborations of Jikken Kōbō, whose members' activities were somewhat more diffused. This Tokyo collective—made up of visual artists, musical composers, photographers, and an engineer—first came together in 1951 on the occasion of a Pablo Picasso retrospective, specifically, the performance of the ballet *Joy of Life* (*Joie de vivre; Ikiru yorokobi*, 1951; fig. 10) that coincided with the exhibition.²⁷ Many of them already knew one another as members of artists' societies and study groups. Takiguchi, a mentor to many of them, christened the group.²⁸ The works of the visual artists of the group—Fukushima Hideko, Kitadai Shōzō, and Yamaguchi Katsuhiro—had few obvious commonalities.²⁹ Fukushima, the only female member, could be described as the most "classical" visual artist in the group; her principal mediums were painting and drawing, and her gestural brushstrokes and drips on canvas and gouache on paper were in many ways in line with gestural abstraction, which was becoming an important trend in painting. One particularly distinguishing factor in Fukushima's pictures is her use of stamps made of cans—circular forms that contrast with the supposedly intentional incorporation of



not-wholly-controllable material qualities and physical forces, as seen in *Visitor (Gairaisha)*, 1956; plate 38) and *Work 109 (Sakuhiin 109)*, 1959; plate 39).

Having both studied engineering, Kitadai and Yamaguchi were naturally interested in science and technology and in their interface with art. While Kitadai's painting *Egg of Oedipus: Wish to Return to the Womb (Oidipusu no tamago: Shikyū kaiki ganbō)*, 1952/1988; plate 40) features forms that are Surrealist-inflected, around the same time he was also beginning to explore a Constructivist formal language in paintings such as *Composition of Rotary Panels (Kaiten suru men ni yoru kōsei)*, c. 1952; plate 41). Furthermore, having seen Alexander Calder's works in reproduction, Kitadai was engaged in figuring out the construction of mobiles—an experiment that began as emulation but soon evolved into its own distinctive artistic statement, using wood and *washi* (Japanese paper). His mobiles and stabiles recall shoji, the sliding screens that are characteristic of Japanese architecture (*Mobile [Mobīru]*, 1956/1992; plate 42).

Particularly interested in movement of pictorial space, Yamaguchi, after many experiments, arrived at his first major artistic series, *Vitrine (Vitorīnu)*; plates 113, 132).³⁰ The series utilizes corrugated glass that diffuses light and causes the image behind



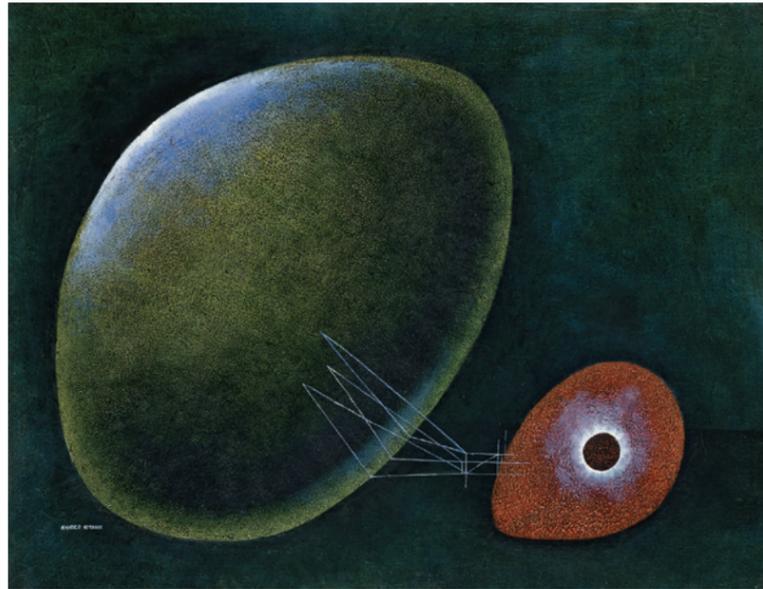


Plate 40
KITADAI SHŌZŌ
Egg of Oedipus: Wish to Return to the Womb (Oidipusu no tamago: Shikyū kaiki ganbō)
1952/1988
Oil on canvas
15³/₄ × 20¹/₂" (40 × 52 cm)

Plate 41
KITADAI SHŌZŌ
Composition of Rotary Panels (Kaiten suru men ni yoru kōsei)
c. 1952
Oil on cardboard
28⁷/₁₆ × 23⁷/₈" (72.3 × 60.6 cm)

Plate 42
KITADAI SHŌZŌ
Mobile (Mobīru)
1956/1992
Wood and Japanese paper
8³/₄ × 60¹/₄ × 1¹/₄"
(22.2 × 153 × 0.6 cm)

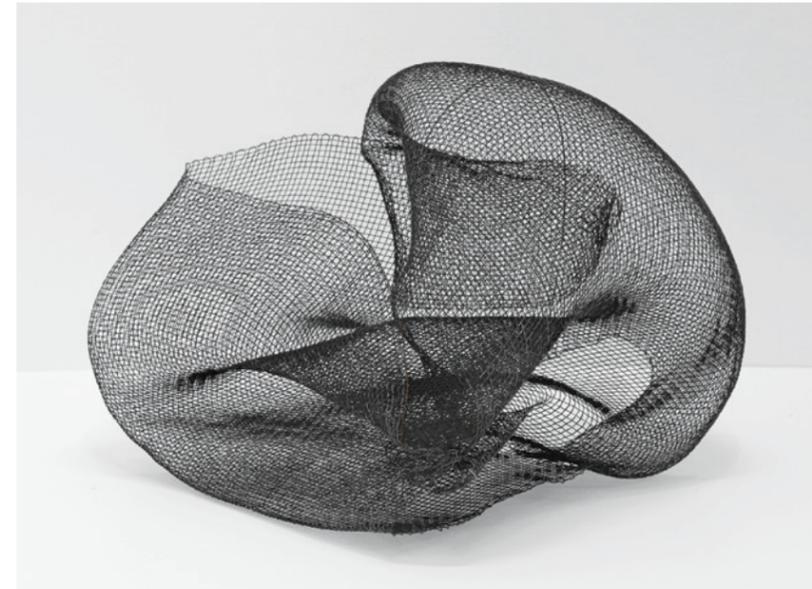
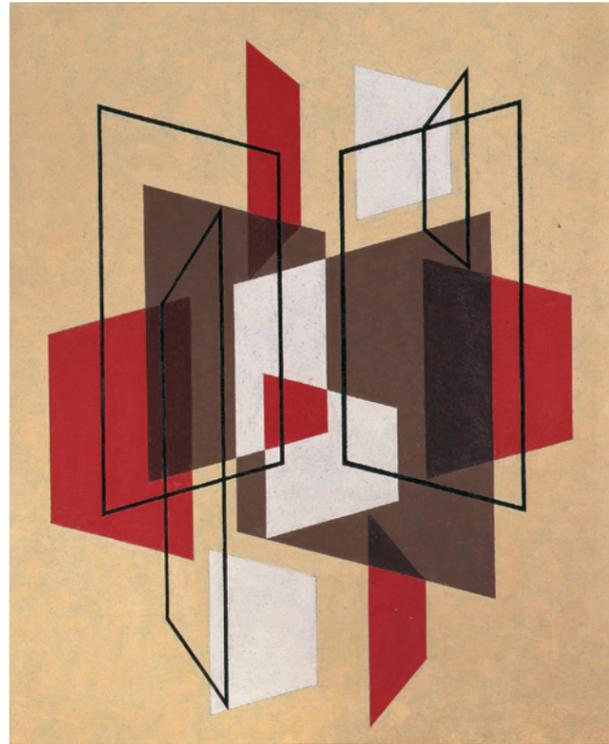


Plate 43
YAMAGUCHI KATSUHIRO
Wire Mesh Sculpture (Kanaami chōkoku)
1961
Wire mesh
19⁵/₁₆ × 17¹¹/₁₆ × 15³/₄"
(49 × 45 × 40 cm)

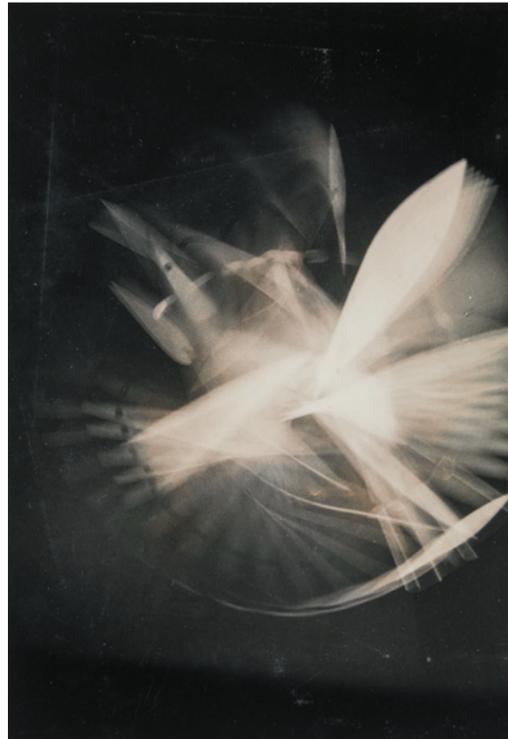
Plate 44
YAMAGUCHI KATSUHIRO
Untitled
1962–63
Iron and sackcloth
39³/₈ × 27³/₁₆ × 2 15¹/₁₆"
(100 × 69 × 7.5 cm)

it to change depending on the position of the viewer. Takiguchi, always adept at naming, offered the French word for the series, as well as additional poetic appellations such as “music box for the eye” (*me no orugōru*) and “moving relief” (*ugoku rerifu*).³¹ Yamaguchi was an indefatigable explorer of new materials and forms. His investigations would continue after the dissolution of Jikken Kōbō, as exemplified by his *Wire Mesh Sculpture* (*Kanaami chōkoku*, 1961; plates 43, 112) and *Untitled* (1962–63; plate 44).

While the spirit of experimentation is evident in their shape-shifting practices, it is important to note that what constituted the truly collective work of Jikken Kōbō was in other mediums. Yamaguchi encapsulated this well in an essay he wrote some years later: “The energy of [Jikken Kōbō] always radiated in both centripetal and centrifugal directions. By centripetal I mean an inward movement away from the outer directed teamwork of the group, a return to individual work. By centrifugal I mean the attempt to combine work in the various fields of art, music,



and literature through logically necessary ideas.”³² In 1953 photographer Ōtsuji Kiyoji was added to the roster when the group was commissioned to contribute photography to the *Asahi Picture News* (APN) section of the newly launched magazine *Asahi Graph* (*Asahi gurafu*), as seen in the *Compositions for APN* (APN no tame no kōsei, 1953–54; plates 45–48). The photographs, most by Ōtsuji with Kitadai and Yamaguchi, were of sculptural constructions made by the latter two, as well as by a number of unofficial members who were invited to contribute for the occasion.³³ The photographs (almost all of which feature the letters APN) appeared—at times unexpectedly and in no relation to the texts around them—in seventy-one issues of *Asahi Graph*, from January 1953 until May 1954.³⁴ The sculptural constructions, made exclusively for the purpose of photography, did not survive, but the images reveal that they were made from a wide range of easily available materials, such as acrylic panels, wood, paper, pins, and so on. Though mostly abstract, the



Top left:
Plate 45
 ŌTSUJI KIYOJI and
 YAMAGUCHI KATSUHIRO
 Composition for APN (*Asahi
 Picture News*) (APN no tame
 no kōsei)
 February 11, 1953
 Gelatin silver print
 7³/₈ × 5³/₁₆" (18.7 × 13.1 cm)

Top right:
Plate 46
 ŌTSUJI KIYOJI and
 YAMAGUCHI KATSUHIRO
 Composition for APN (*Asahi
 Picture News*) (APN no tame
 no kōsei)
 1953
 Gelatin silver print
 8 × 5³/₈" (20.3 × 13.6 cm)

Bottom left:
Plate 47
 KITADAI SHŌZŌ and ŌTSUJI KIYOJI
 Composition for APN (*Asahi
 Picture News*) (APN no tame
 no kōsei)
 January 1–7, 1953
 Gelatin silver print (2003)
 8¹/₄ × 5⁷/₈" (21 × 15 cm)

Bottom right:
Plate 48
 KITADAI SHŌZŌ and ŌTSUJI KIYOJI
 Composition for APN (*Asahi
 Picture News*) (APN no tame
 no kōsei)
 December 23, 1953
 Gelatin silver print (2003)
 6⁷/₁₆ × 4¹³/₁₆" (16.3 × 12.2 cm)

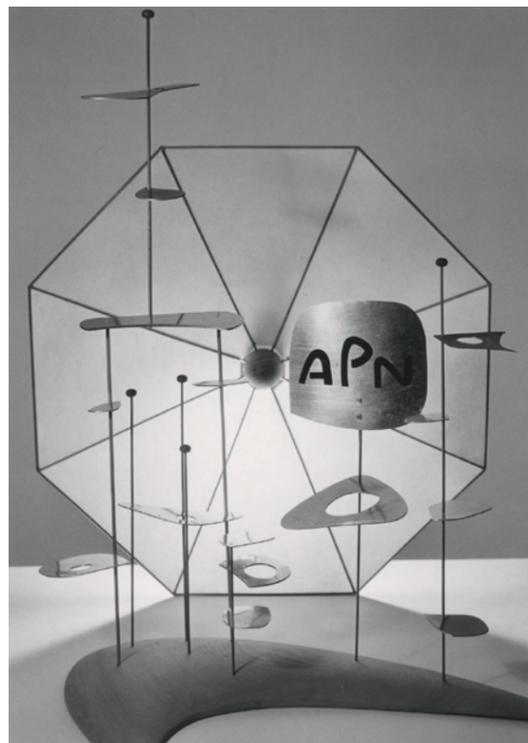
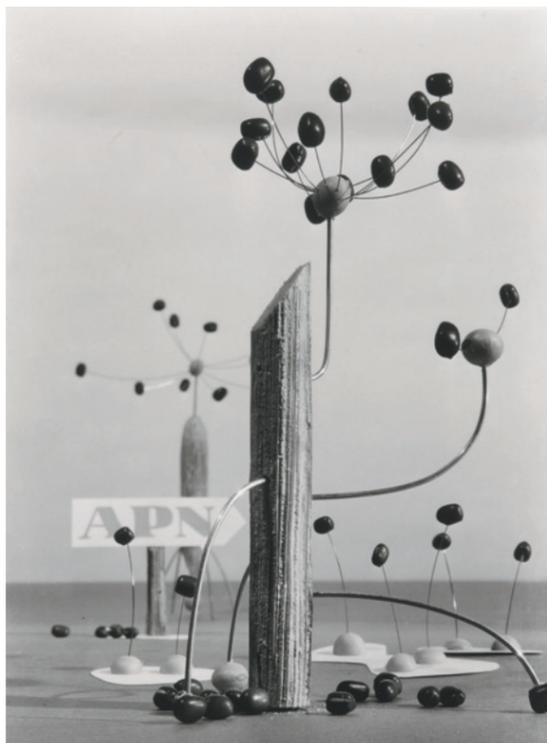


Fig. 11
 LÁSZLÓ MOHOLY-NAGY
Lightplay: Black/White/Gray
 c. 1926
 Gelatin silver print
 14³/₄ × 10¹/₄" (37.4 × 27.4 cm)
 The Museum of Modern Art,
 New York. Gift of the photographer

images overall convey a certain sci-fi sensibility and humor, and hearken back to the Bauhaus photographs of Naum Gabo or László Moholy-Nagy (fig. 11).

At the same time that the APN photographs were being conceived and made, Jikken Kōbō members were engaged in another project, utilizing the “auto-slide” — an automated combination tape recorder and slide projector. This device had been developed for educational purposes by Tōkyō Tsūshin Kōgyō, the Tokyo telecommunications engineering company (later renamed Sony), which also sponsored the project. Each auto-slide show brought together a visual artist in the group with a composer or two: Yamaguchi was paired with Suzuki Hiroyoshi in *Adventure of the Eyes of Mr. W.S., a Test Pilot* (*Shiken hikōka W.S.-shi no me no bōken*, 1953; plates 123–25); Fukushima Hideko with her younger brother, Kazuo, in *Foam Is Created* (*Minawa wa tsukurareru*, 1953; plates 126–28); and Kitadai with Yuasa Jōji in *Another World* (*Mishiranu sekai no hanashi*, 1953; plates 129–31).³⁵ These collaborations were presented in the Fifth Experimental Workshop Presentation (Jikken Kōbō dai-gokai happyōkai) at Dai-ichi Seimei Hall, an event that also included music and sound compositions by the members. Seen together, these auto-slide works, mixing still images, music, and spoken narrations, are strikingly imaginative and original, situated somewhere between composed still images, illustrated literature, and cinema. The futuristic and Constructivist aesthetics, suffused with a surreal air of the auto-slide works, culminate in a spectacular way in *Bicycle in Dream* (*Ginrin*, 1955; plates 133–35), a collaboration of Kitadai and Yamaguchi, with filmmaker Matsumoto Toshio and with special effects by Tsuburaya Eiji (of *Godzilla* fame).³⁶

From the time of the group's founding, Jikken Kōbō's work was inherently collaborative, cross-genre, and multidisciplinary. Music played a significant part in this mix (by sheer number, there were more composers/musicians in the group than visual artists).



In addition to Fukushima Kazuo, Yuasa, and Suzuki, the collective also included Satō Keijirō, musicologist and critic Akiyama Kuniharu, and pianist Sonoda Takahiro, as well as Takemitsu Tōru, arguably the most celebrated composer to emerge from postwar Japan. A large number of their official public presentations were musical concerts — featuring the members' compositions and also music by European contemporaries or predecessors, including Arnold Schoenberg, Erik Satie, and Olivier Messiaen. More experimental music was presented in February 1956 at the *Musique Concrète/Electronic Music Audition* (*Myūjikkū konkureto/Denshi ongaku ōdishon*) at Yamaha Hall. Two members of the group, Takemitsu and Suzuki, were joined by the members of the so-called Sannin no Kai (Society of three, made up of composers Akutagawa Yasushi, Mayuzumi Toshirō,

Fig. 12
Environmental installation
by Yamaguchi Katsuhiro for
Jikken Kōbō's concert *Musique
Concrète/Electronic Music
Audition (Myūjikkū konkurēto/
Denshi ongaku ōdishon)*, by
Mayuzumi Toshirō and Takemitsu
Tōru, at Yamaha Hall, Ginza,
Tokyo, February 4, 1956
Photograph by Ōtsuji Kiyoji

and Shibata Namio). Notable also was Yamaguchi's dynamic spatial installation of ropes tautly stretched between the audience area and the ceiling, like vertical hammocks (fig. 12)—a precedent to environmental art, which would become an important trend in Japan a decade later.

Ultimately it was Jikken Kōbō's dance and stage performances that utilized the members' wide-ranging skills most successfully. All participated



in these projects, also collaborating with outside dancers and choreographers, dramaturges and directors. In 1955 Jikken Kōbō organized two stage performances—*L'Ève future* (*Future Eve*, or *Mirai no Ivu*; fig. 13), a ballet; and *Pierrot Lunaire* (*Tsuki ni tsukareta Piero*; fig. 14), Schoenberg's *Sprechstimme* (spoken-voice) musical cycle of poems from 1912—in March and December, respectively. Although both are preserved only in documentary photographs and preparatory drawings, and scant written information survives, one can nonetheless glean from what documentation remains an air of invigorating experimentalism.³⁷ Kitadai's stage sets—massive, metal, anthropomorphic constructions for *L'Ève future* and Japanese-style wood-and-paper folding screens for *Pierrot Lunaire*—not only attest to his long-standing dialogue with Western precedents such as Alexander Calder, Jean Tinguely, and Isamu Noguchi, but also demonstrate his success in personalizing them in his own practice and naturalizing them in the milieu of postwar Japan. While *L'Ève future* evoked an air of a futuristic (as suggested by the title) society of mechanization, *Pierrot Lunaire* was a reinterpretation of a benchmark work in early twentieth-century European avant-garde music. Working with Takechi Tetsuji, a radical theater director, Jikken Kōbō engaged three actors from three different genres/traditions (Shingeki or “new Western-style theater,” Noh, and Kyōgen), each to play one of the three characters of Columbine, Harlequin, and Pierrot.³⁸ The final result was a realization of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the defining ethos of Jikken Kōbō.

The efforts of both Gutai and Jikken Kōbō serve as reminders of what was at stake at this purported end of the postwar years. As much as young artists could construct new milieus for experimentation, their work was also a salvaging operation in search of the legacy of prewar avant-gardes, both Western and Japanese, and the relevance of their work vis-à-vis the larger culture.

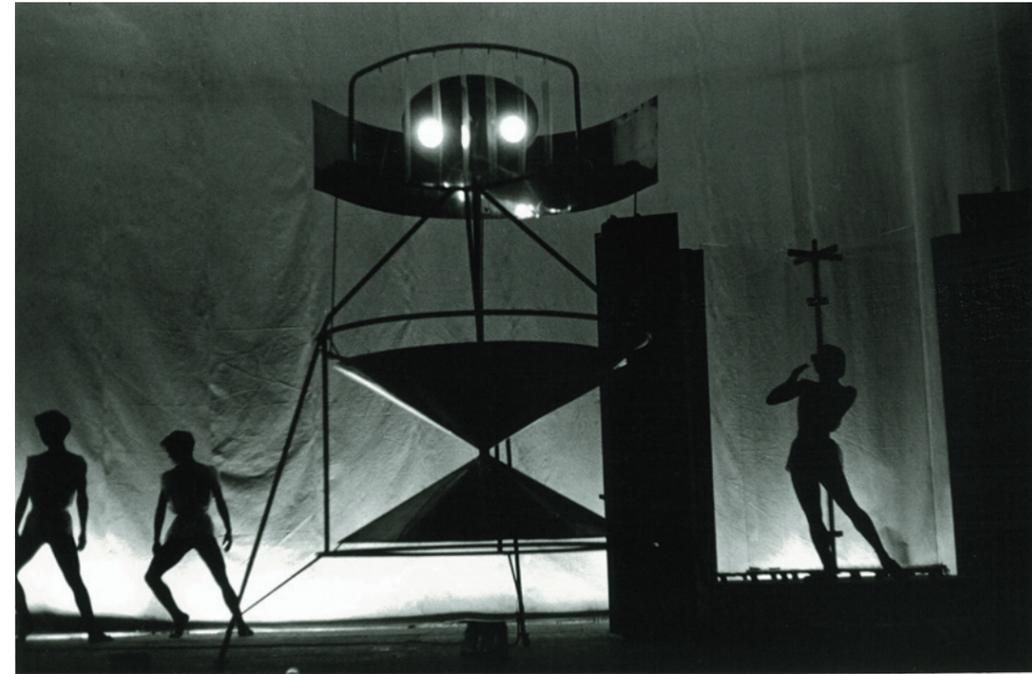


Fig. 13
Jikken Kōbō's performance
of *L'Ève future* (*Future Eve*;
Mirai no Ivu, based on Auguste
Villiers de l'Isle Adam's 1886
novel), in collaboration with
Matsuo Akemi Ballet Company;
stage design by Kitadai Shōzō;
directed by Kawaji Akira;
choreography by Matsuo Akemi.
Haiyūza Theater, Roppongi,
Tokyo, March 29–31, 1955
Photograph by Ōtsuji Kiyoji



Fig. 14
Jikken Kōbō's performance of
Arnold Schoenberg's 1912 *Pierrot
Lunaire*, directed and produced
by Tetsuji Takechi; script trans-
lated by Akiyama Kuniharu;
stage design by Kitadai Shōzō
and Fukushima Hideko. *Pierrot
Lunaire* (translated as *Tsuki ni
tsukareta Piero*) was part of
*An Evening of Original Plays
by the Circular Theater (Enkei
Gekijō keishiki ni yoru sōsakugeki
no yūbe)* at Sankei Interna-
tional Conference Hall, Tokyo,
December 5, 1955
Photograph by Ōtsuji Kiyoji

FROM THE FIGURE TO THE BODY, FROM THE LATE 1950S INTO THE 1960S: THE YOMIURI INDÉPENDANT, ANTI-ART, AND NEW ARTISTS' COLLECTIVES

By the turn of the decade, the stage was set for an efflorescence of almost anarchistic creative energies. As we have seen, in the late 1950s “traditional” mediums such as painting, drawing, and print constituted the principal arena in which the figure was explored artistically. This investigation might very well be understood as a response to the actual fate suffered by countless human bodies in the violence of war, as well as to the subsequent breakneck reconstruction and modernization and the deluge of foreign cultures and influences. Concurrently, less concerned with questions of reality and representation, Jikken Kōbō and Gutai artists utilized the performing body as a critical motor and locus of creative production. As groundbreaking as their experiments were, however, they unfolded in more or less pre-defined realms: on the pictorial surface or on the stage. In contrast, new tendencies emerging in the late 1950s and early 1960s staked out different spaces—private as well as public, often blurring the boundaries between the two.

The most important of these tendencies was played out at an “official” venue and with a new generation of artists. The Yomiuri Indépendant (“Yomiuri Anpan” for short)—named after the newspaper company that sponsored it—was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum every February or March from 1949 through 1963, over the course of about two weeks.³⁹ The tenth edition, in 1958, was a turning point, featuring core members of the new generation—including Akasegawa Genpei, Arakawa Shūsaku, Shinohara Ushio, Yoshimura Masunobu, Miki Tomio, and Kudō Tetsumi. Many of these artists would be associated with groups such as Neo Dada—originally known as Neo Dadaism Organizer[s] (Neo Dadaizumu Oruganaizā[zu])—and—Hi Red Center, and these collectives were part of a larger tendency known as “Anti-Art.”

Though they had few stylistic or formal commonalities, the works by these artists were aligned in that most were sculptural (many of them verging on installation) and they were often related to—as representations of, allusions to, or substitutions for—the body. Miki Tomio sculpted the human ear, a seldom-observed human feature, almost exclusively and obsessively throughout his short life and career (plates 49, 50). Appearing in various sizes, the ear was sometimes accompanied disquietingly by its inner canal, like a bizarre appendage, as if it had been violently pulled intact out of a head. In most cases, Miki’s ears were made in cast aluminum, but in a few instances they were made out of fired clay or plaster, and in one case painted with vibrantly hued roses. Arakawa Shūsaku was known for a series of “coffins” (*kan’oke*), wooden casket-shaped containers lined with plush fabric and holding carcasslike forms made of cement with cotton and gauze (see *Untitled Endurance I*, 1958; plate 114). These works were made in a variety of sizes, the smaller pieces harkening back to the strange erotics of Surrealist objects, and the larger versions towering like colossi over the viewer. The combination of overwhelming scale and sexual allusion are even more confrontational in Kikuhata Mokuma’s *Slave Genealogy (By Coins)* (*Dorei keizu [Kahei ni yoru]*), 1961/1983; plate 51), which consists of two large wooden logs—telephone poles, in fact—lifted on the far end and sitting atop a platform of bricks, which is draped with a white fabric and strewn with coins. From one pole, studded with hundreds of five-yen coins, emerges an erect phallus (hand-carved and painted black), while the other features a vulvalike form with shreds of fabric tied all over it. Both logs are wrapped with ropes, and candles are placed in front of these totems, as if a vigil is being held. Some aspects of the sculpture’s iconography—such as the ropes and tied knots—clearly allude to the Shinto religion, but the work can also be seen as a commentary on the rise of contemporary materialism.

Plate 49
MIKI TOMIO
Rose-Decorated Ear
(*Bara no mimi*)
1962
Wood, clay, cloth, plaster,
and collage
35⁵/₈ × 22¹³/₁₆ × 7⁵/₁₆"
(90.5 × 58 × 18.5 cm)

Plate 50
MIKI TOMIO
Untitled (Ears)
1964
Cast aluminum
21³/₈ × 19 × 1¹/₂"
(54.3 × 48.2 × 3.7 cm)

Plate 51
KIKUHATA MOKUMA
Slave Genealogy (By Coins)
(*Dorei keizu [Kahei ni yoru]*)
1961/1983
Cloth, five-yen coins, candles,
wooden logs, bricks, and other
miscellaneous materials
Dimensions vary with installation
Overall: 44¹/₂" × 77¹⁵/₁₆" ×
17' 4¹¹/₁₆" (113 cm × 198 cm × 5.3 m);
cloth when fully spread out: 97⁵/₈"
(248 cm) long

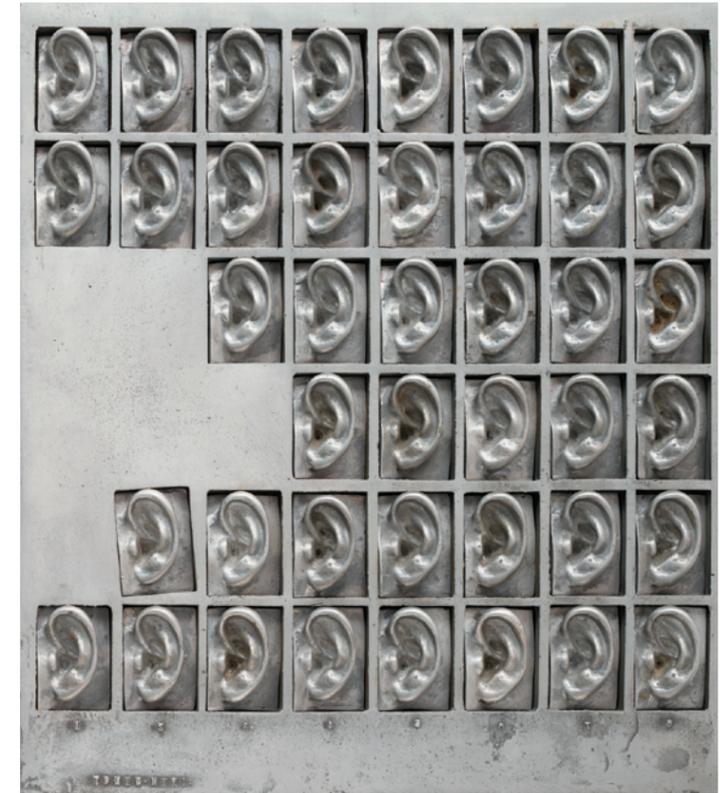




Plate 52
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
Ambivalent Sea B
(*Aimai na umi B*)
1961

Collage and watercolor on paper
15¹/₁₆ × 10¹¹/₁₆" (38.2 × 27.2 cm)

Plate 53
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
Ambivalent Sea 12
(*Aimai na umi 12*)
1961

Collage and ink on paper
14¹/₁₆ × 9¹³/₁₆" (35.7 × 25 cm)

If Kikuhata's work may be seen as still harboring a possibility of wholeness in its combination of male and female dimensions, Akasegawa Genpei and Kudō Tetsumi's works convey a debilitating sense of "impotence" (to borrow a term from Kudō) that belies the sculptures' provocative forms and titles and their impressive scales. Akasegawa's *Sheets of Vagina (Second Present)* (*Vagina no shitsu* [*Nibanme no purezento*], 1961/1994; plate 4) is a relief made of reddish-brown inner tubes cut open, folded and pleated, and sewn together, on top of which are affixed a hubcap and clusters of vacuum tubes. The strategy of evoking the corporeal through a combination of salvaged refuse of industrial, mechanized civilization was an outgrowth of the society of prosperity and abundance in which Akasegawa's generation found itself. At the same time, the work is the artist's version of the mechanistic woman and



the erotic machine, explored by Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp earlier in the century. This theme also appears in the artist's work in photo-montage (see *Ambivalent Sea B* [*Aimai na umi B*, 1961; plate 52]), a technique he investigated with much success (*Ambivalent Sea 12* [*Aimai na umi 12*; 1961; plate 53]).

Kudō scoured wholesale markets to procure materials like scrubbing pads, electric cords, and discarded lightbulbs. In 1962, at the penultimate Yomiuri Indépendant exhibition, he managed to secure a whole gallery for his audacious installation *Philosophy of Impotence, or Distribution Map of Impotence and the Appearance of Protective Domes at the Points of Saturation* (*Inpo tetsugaku—Inpo bunbuzu to sono hōwa bubun ni okeru hogo dōmu no hassei*, 1961; plate 54). From the net stretched across the ceiling and on the pegboards lining the walls hung hundreds of oblong forms, made out of coiled electric cords held in place with thick duct tape, each with a used lightbulb at



Plate 54
KUDŌ TETSUMI
Philosophy of Impotence, or Distribution Map of Impotence and the Appearance of Protective Domes at the Points of Saturation (*Inpo tetsugaku: Inpo bunbuzu to sono hōwa bubun ni okeru hogo dōmu no hassei*)
1961–62

Plastic bowls, paper, cotton, plastic, polyester, duct tape, lightbulbs, string, and magazine pages
Dimensions vary with installation
Installation view of *Tetsumi Kudō: Garden of Metamorphosis*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2008–9

the tip. Kudō characterized these as phallus-chrysalis hybrids—a symbol of sexuality or its inverse, impotence, fused with the notion of metamorphosis.⁴⁰ The installation also featured two large elements—strings of these phallus-chrysalises, with clear plastic bowls put together to form science-fiction-esque spheres here and there—hanging from the ceiling net and reaching the floor like monstrous stalactites. He incorporated pages torn from popular magazines and reproductions of artworks (mostly American), as well as foodstuffs such as baguettes and fresh udon noodles for good measure.⁴¹

The incorporation of parts of bodies comes up again in Yoshimura Masunobu's plaster sculptures *Two Columns* (1964; plate 55): two square columns featuring semispherical forms. On the one hand, despite the rather rigid and simple geometries, their verticality recalls a standing human form, and smaller

additional elements operate as proxies for anatomical details—breasts and vulvas, to be precise—in a way echoing Kikuhata's work. On the other hand, the repetition of those features also evokes the notion of proliferation, recalling aspects of Kudō's work.

Altogether, Kikuhata, Akasegawa, Kudō, and Yoshimura's works speak to the time in which they lived, as well as their search for strategies for destabilizing the materiality, form, and ethos of art itself. At the threshold of a new decade, the *figure as image*, which had previously undergone extensions and mutations in pictorial mediums, was reified into the *body as agent*—at once less and more than whole, substituted by or fusing with detritus of industrial-consumerist society. Catching a whiff of this shift, critic Tōno Yoshiaki dubbed the tendency "Anti-Art" (*Han-geijutsu*).⁴² The term, of course, had been in existence virtually throughout the history of modern



Plate 55
YOSHIMURA MASUNOBU
Two Columns
1964

Construction of plaster on wood and composition board, recessed in wood base, one column in Plexiglas vitrine
74¹/₄ × 36 × 18"
(188.4 × 91.4 × 45.6 cm)

art, but it touched a nerve in the Tokyo art scene of the early 1960s. Tōno's appellation, first applied specifically to the work of Kudō, caught on and became the subject of intense critical debates for several years.⁴³

Even as young artists planned long in advance for the “carnavalesque” each February/March, they were gathering into somewhat different forms of artists' collectives than before. Around 1960 Yoshimura and Shinohara, along with Akasegawa, Arakawa, and others, assembled under the rubric Neo Dadaism Organizer[s]. The group's network included a constellation of associates, among them Kudō, Miki, and the architect Isozaki Arata. Their usual gathering place was the White House (Howaito Hausu), designed by Isozaki and built by Yoshimura in Shinjuku in 1958; this would serve as their base until 1962. Soon renamed Neo Dada, the group arranged a rapid-fire series of exhibitions in 1960, at times accompanied

by guerrilla actions on the street (figs. 15, 16; and see p. 124, fig. 1).⁴⁴ They also organized performances-cum-parties at the White House, which included such events as Shinohara, with his trademark high-energy muscularity, creating “Action” sculptures out of strips of wood, or making “Boxing Paintings” (Bokshingū peintingu), performances that were captured by visiting American photographer William Klein.

The brief, combustible life of Neo Dada coincided with—and no doubt contributed to—the eruption of Anti-Art, and perhaps also to the demise of the Yomiuri Indépendant. The organizers of the exhibition, pressed by increasing challenges from young artists who might, for example, incorporate foodstuffs or stage performances in exhibitions without warning, abruptly canceled the event in January 1964, shocking and disappointing the art community.

In retrospect, the Tokyo art world was clearly on the verge of a fundamental shift; many artists, including Arakawa and Kudō, opted to leave Japan around this time. One figure from the Neo Dada circle who chose to remain was Akasegawa (who did not have the financial means to go abroad anyway).

He joined forces with Takamatsu Jirō and Nakanishi Natsuyuki to form Hi Red Center, and together they continued agitating the Tokyo art scene.⁴⁵ Not unlike Neo Dada, Hi Red Center had a relatively open approach to membership; other artists often joined in their actions and events.⁴⁶ Even though their official history was short—barely spanning two years—the group's activities were many and diverse, and all are relatively well documented. Without exception, the many short-term events and actions staged by Hi Red Center relied on the body as a primary artistic tool: specifically, the body as a nonconformist subject. For instance, one action consisted of Nakanishi walking around the city with his head obscured by hundreds of clothespins (*Clothespins Assert Churning Action* [*Sentaku basami wa kakuhan kōdō o shuchō suru*], 1963; fig. 17)—and a tandem presentation of clothespin-studded



Fig. 15
Flyer for the first Neo Dadaism Organizer[s] exhibition, Ginza Gallery, Tokyo, April 4–9, 1960
Oita Art Museum

Fig. 16
From left: Yoshimura Masunobu, Shinohara Ushio, and Yoshino Tatsumi in Hibiya Park Action (*Hibiya Kōen akushon*) for the third Neo Dada exhibition, in Hibiya Park, Tokyo, September 1–7, 1960
Photograph by Ishiguro Kenji

Fig. 17
Nakanishi Natsuyuki performing *Clothespins Assert Churning Action* (*Sentaku basami wa kakuhan kōdō o shuchō suru*), for Hi Red Center's *Sixth Mixer Plan* (*Dai-roku-ji mikisā keikaku*) event, Shimbashi, Tokyo, May 28, 1963
Photograph by Hirata Minoru





Plate 56
NAKANISHI NATSUYUKI
Clothespins Assert Churning
Action (Sentaku basami wa
kakuhan kōdō o shuchō suru)
 1963/1981

Clothing and clothespins on canvas
 (two panels with burn holes)
 Six panels, each: $45\frac{7}{8} \times 35\frac{3}{4}$ "
 (116.5 × 91 cm); seventh panel:
 $16\frac{1}{8} \times 12\frac{7}{16}$ " (41 × 31.5 cm)
 (Two panels are presented in
 this exhibition)

canvases hung on the wall (plate 56; p. 169, fig. 5); in another, group members dressed in white uniforms cleaned a street in the posh Ginza district with toothbrushes and other small tools (see p. 103, fig. 5). In the invitation-only event *Shelter Plan (Sherutā puran)*, 1964, the artists performed an unorthodox anthropometry on participants with the stated purpose of building tailor-made one-person bomb shelters (plates 57, 58, 99, 100, 138–44).⁴⁷ The option to purchase half-size, quarter-size, one-tenth-size, or full-size shelters, depending on one's financial means, and the mementos offered to participants (sealed cans, never to be opened) served as reminders of the futility of preparing to survive total destruction. In a more general sense, Hi Red Center's work could be read as a brilliant, absurdist parody of the control exerted by the state on the citizenry in an increasingly controlled society.

The year 1964 marked a critical turning point in society at large for Japan. It was, for one thing, the year in which the nation hosted the summer Olympics, decisively announcing its place on the international arena. The same year brought the start of a radically changed relationship between arts and culture—and the bodies that bear and produce them—vis-à-vis

the body politic. This shift was manifested most strikingly by the so-called Model 1,000-Yen-Note Incident (Mokey sen-en-satsu jiken), which befell Akasegawa: a grueling, protracted investigation and trial that constituted a personal ordeal for the artist and became a rallying point for many involved in the arts and culture.⁴⁸ The incident began with Akasegawa ordering one-sided copies of a thousand-yen bill for the purpose of his solo exhibition at Dai-ichi Gallery in Shinjuku, in January 1963. The ersatz quality of the copies, and the fact that the back-sides of these “model” banknotes were printed with information related to his exhibition, should have made it amply evident that the bills were not meant to fool anyone as counterfeit cash. But having recently experienced an actual incident of counterfeiting, the police were extra vigilant and sensitive in this case. Akasegawa had also made a body of works based on the image of the thousand-yen note, including a hand-painted, blown-up, unfinished photo-realistic reproduction of the bill titled *Morphology of Revenge (Look Him in the Eye Before Killing Him)* (*Fukushū no keitaigaku [Korosu mae ni aite o yoku miru]*, 1963; plate 59), as well as wood panels and a collection of everyday and household objects (bottles, a clothes

Plate 57
HI RED CENTER
Shelter Plan (Sherutā puran),
HRC Shelter Model (Model
Kawani Hiroshi) (HRC sherutā
mokei [Moderu Kawani Hiroshi])
 1964
 Gelatin silver print on wood
 $2\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$ "
 (5.6 × 3.5 × 20.6 cm)

Plate 58
HI RED CENTER
Shelter Plan (Sherutā puran),
HRC Hi Red Cans (HRC Hai Reddo
kanzume)
 1964
 Five metal cans with paper labels
 (contents unknown)
 Can dimensions:
 $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$ " (8 × 6.5 × 6.5 cm);
 $2\frac{3}{16} \times 2 \times 2$ " (5.6 × 5.1 × 5.1 cm);
 $2\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{15}{16} \times 1\frac{15}{16}$ " (5.6 × 5 × 5 cm);
 $2\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{15}{16} \times 1\frac{15}{16}$ " (5.6 × 5 × 5 cm);
 $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ " (7.6 × 6.3 × 6.3 cm)



hanger, a spoon and knife, scissors, and a plaster death mask), which he wrapped in uncut sheets of “model” banknotes (see plates 60–63). Soon after *Shelter Plan* in January 1964, Akasegawa was visited by police detectives; he was investigated for copying the bills, and his wrapped objects and other money-based works were confiscated as evidence. The following year he was indicted and found himself embroiled in a trial that would last through the rest of the decade, until he was finally convicted. His subsequent appeals were in vain. Throughout the process, Akasegawa was supported by a community of artists and thinkers, and a number of publications documented and debated the undue procedures of prosecution.

As his trial dragged on, Akasegawa seemed anything but contrite. After a regional court reached a verdict of guilty in 1967, he embarked on another

provocation, *Greater Japan Zero-Yen Note (Dai-Nippon zero-en-satsu, 1967)*. Here, the fabricated money was ridiculously large, and each bill was printed with a “0” and a faceless figure on the front, with the kanji word *honmono* and its English translation, “the real thing,” on the back. This unquestionably fake money was proffered to the public for exchange (three hundred yen) via advertisements in various periodicals. The rationale was as follows: if this exchange could theoretically go on until all currencies in Japan (if not the whole world) had disappeared, circulation of money would be short-circuited and currency would lose its exchange value—that is, its only and true meaning. What remains from this conceptual provocation, which went on from 1967 into the 1980s, are two bodies of “evidence”: the first is the money sent in by people—testament to the compromised exchange value—and the second are



Opposite:

Plate 59
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
Morphology of Revenge (Look Him in the Eye Before Killing Him)
(*Fukushū no keitaigaku [Korosu mae ni aite o yoku miru]*)
1963
Gouache on paper, mounted on panel
35⁷/₁₆ × 70⁷/₈" (90 × 180 cm)

Plate 60
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
"1,000-Yen Note Trial"
Impounded Objects: Works Wrapped in Model 1,000-Yen Notes (Mask)
(*Sen-en-satsu saiban ōshūhin: Mokei sen-en-satsu konpō sakuhiin [Masuku]*)
1963
Sheets of model one-thousand-yen notes, string, wire, paper tags, and plaster mask
14⁹/₁₆ × 9¹³/₁₆ × 7¹/₂"
(37 × 25 × 19 cm)

Plate 61
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
"1,000-Yen Note Trial"
Impounded Objects: Works Wrapped in Model 1,000-Yen Notes (Panel I)
(*Sen-en-satsu saiban ōshūhin: Mokei sen-en-satsu konpō sakuhiin [Paneru I]*)
1963
Sheets of model one-thousand-yen notes, string, wire, paper tags, and bolts on panel
32⁵/₁₆ × 31¹/₈" (82 × 79 cm)

This page:

Plate 62
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
"1,000-Yen Note Trial"
Impounded Objects: Works Wrapped in Model 1,000-Yen Notes (Panel II)
(*Sen-en-satsu saiban ōshūhin: Mokei sen-en-satsu konpō sakuhiin [Paneru II]*)
1963
Sheets of model one-thousand-yen notes, string, wire, paper tags, and bolts on panel
70⁷/₈ × 31¹⁵/₁₆" (180 × 81.2 cm)

Plate 63
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
"1,000-Yen Note Trial"
Impounded Objects: Works Wrapped in Model 1,000-Yen Notes (Bottle, can, knife, spoon)
(*Sen-en-satsu saiban ōshūhin: Mokei sen-en-satsu konpō sakuhiin [Bin, kan, naifu, supun]*)
1963
Sheets of model one-thousand-yen notes, string, wire, paper tags, bottle, can, knife, and spoon
Bottle: 9³/₁₆ × 3¹⁵/₁₆ × 2³/₈"
(25 × 10 × 6 cm); can: 3³/₁₆ × 3³/₁₆ × 5¹/₂" (8 × 8 × 14 cm); knife: 8¹¹/₁₆" (22 cm) long; spoon: 5¹/₂" (14 cm) long
(Only the bottle is presented in this exhibition)



Plate 64
AKASEGAWA GENPEI
"Greater Japan Zero-Yen Notes"
and Bottled Money from Exchange
(Dai-Nippon zero-en-satsu to
ryōgae no genkin binzume)
 (Unsealed jar)
 1967
 Glass jar, printed material,
 envelopes, letters, and currency
 13 × 8 1/2 × 8 1/2"
 (33 × 21.6 × 21.6 cm)

the envelopes in which the money was sent, some of which were accompanied with personal notes. The first collection of mailed money in envelopes is preserved in a sealed jar, while the second jar, though almost full, is left unsealed, as if suggesting the possibility of ongoing trade (plate 64).

The example of Akasegawa—or the example *made out of* Akasegawa—and his progress over the course of the 1960s, from Anti-Art sculpture and performance/body art to his incrimination by the body politic, speak not only to the trajectory of art but also to the metamorphosis of the Japanese state during this period. And it is with this view of art, as a counterhegemonic gesture, that we may consider the work of another artists' collective, Zero Jigen (Zero dimension). Initiated in 1963 by Katō Yoshihiro, Iwata Shin'ichi, and others, the group formed in Nagoya but by 1964 had shifted their base to Tokyo. Zero Jigen was infamous for what they called "rituals" (*gishiki*) in public spaces. Their sudden eruptions into the "normal" fabric of the city, via outstandingly unsocialized behaviors (such as rolling on the ground), the use of props (such as gasmasks), and often nudity, destabilized the regulated codes of propriety and shocked unwitting witnesses (figs. 18–20). The bodies of group members materializing among the complacent populace were at once scandalous and

familiar on the most primal level. Responding to the tectonic forces that moved and shaped Japanese society at the time—economic "high growth," urban transformation, and political protests—which affected and motivated many other artists of the day, Zero Jigen's "rituals" on the one hand provided a temporary means of return to a presocialized state, and on the other had the effect of eroding or banishing the normalizing structure of social values. One scholar has characterized the group's work as creating "non-hierarchical self-reflection of vulgarism," where "multiple events and worlds [...] looked strange when reflected against each other" and "the sacred seemed vulgar to others while the vulgar transformed into something sacred."⁴⁹ For Zero Jigen, the staging of their actions in unsuspecting urban contexts was as important as the return to the "normal state." Katō, customarily seen as the chief representative of the group, was by no means a cult leader: he was a businessman and family man. As the air of explosive avant-garde experimentalism was dissipating, it seemed to settle, almost like a virus, into the very fabric of the everyday: the bodies of certain ordinary citizens could at any point be transformed into states of infantile vulgarity, even while continuing to function "normally" in the increasingly orderly social machine.



Top left:
Fig. 18
 Zero Jigen ritual in Meguro,
 Tokyo (at right: Nakata Tomo),
 1964
 Photograph by Hirata Minoru

Top right:
Fig. 19
 Zero Jigen performing as
 part of Kurohata (Black flag)'s
National Memorial Ritual for
the Late Yui Chūnoshin (Ko-Yui
Chūnoshin tsuitō kokumingi)
 in Shinjuku, Tokyo, 1967
 Photograph by Hirata Minoru

Bottom:
Fig. 20
 Zero Jigen performing
Buck Naked Ass World Ritual
(Zenra ketsuzōkai gishiki)
 at the Kashima Jinja shrine,
 Tokyo, 1964
 Photograph by Hirata Minoru



SŌGETSU ART CENTER: A CRITICAL NODE OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

In 1958, the year of Jikken Kōbō's dissolution and just on the threshold of Anti-Art's emergence, the Sōgetsu Art Center (Sōgetsu Āto Sentā) opened its doors. Branching out of the Sōgetsu school of ikebana, founded and headed by Teshigahara Sōfū, the center was housed in a Tange Kenzō-designed building (fig. 21) and directed by Sōfū's son, Hiroshi. The younger Teshigahara was close to many avant-garde artists and writers in the 1950s and would later become well known as an experimental filmmaker in his own right; he was the director of, among other films, the landmark 1964 *Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no onna*). Under his leadership, the center became an extraordinary hub where all forms of avant-garde experimentation were staged and experienced.

Several surveys of the Sōgetsu Art Center's rich history have been organized in Japan;⁵⁰ in the present context, let us consider only some of the important moments in the history of this epicenter of the 1960s avant-garde arts.⁵¹ In the center's concert hall, the audience seats were flanked by large paintings by Georges Mathieu and Sam Francis—respectively representing European Art Informel and American Abstract Expressionism—emblematic of the center's internationalist ambition and orientation (fig. 22). In the early years, programs were divided into three categories: the first two (titled in English) were focused on music: the Sōgetsu Contemporary Series (avant-garde classical music) and the Sōgetsu Music Inn (jazz); and the third, the Sōgetsu Cinemathèque (Sōgetsu shinematēku), was primarily about film. In addition, the center presented experimental animations, published a periodical (SAC, later renamed SAC *jānarū* [SAC journal]), and also occasionally rented its space for more mainstream performances. The Sōgetsu Contemporary Series in particular was closely related to the wider art world, and during the first few years, its programs were dominated by members of the Sakkyokuka Shūdan (Composers' group).

Among them were the celebrated composer Takemitsu Tōru (formerly of Jikken Kōbō), and another giant in the field, Mayuzumi Toshirō.⁵²

In the years from 1961 to 1964 the center established its place in the history of the arts in Japan as an unparalleled nucleus of experimental as well as popular forms, practices, and ideas from home and abroad. On September 15, 1961, Group Ongaku (Group music), headed by Mizuno Shūkō and including Tone Yasunao, Kosugi Takehisa, Shiomi Mieko, and others, presented their *Concert of Improvisational Music and Acoustic Objets* (*Sokkyō ongaku to onkyō obu je no konsāto*; fig. 23). Their work involved simple gestures, open to chance in resonance with the aesthetics of John Cage and the Fluxus group, in which several members would soon participate. For instance, Kosugi's *Micro I* of the same year involved "wrapping up a microphone in paper and amplifying the crumpled sounds as the paper is gradually removed."⁵³ After attending the group's concerts, Ichyanagi Toshi, who had recently returned to Japan from New York, invited the Group Ongaku artists to his solo recital (Sōgetsu Contemporary Series 10), which included a performance of *IBM: Happening and Musique Concrète* (*IBM hapuningu to myūjikkū konkurēto*; fig. 24).⁵⁴ In late May 1962 the center presented *Works of Yoko Ono* (*Ono Yōko saku hin happyōkai*, Sōgetsu Contemporary Series 15), marking her return to Japan after living in the United States for a decade (plate 65).⁵⁵

A truly monumental event for the Tokyo art scene was a visit from John Cage and David Tudor in October 1962. The impact of their visit on the Japanese scene was so powerful that it was dubbed "Kēji shokku," or "Cage shock." Their almost month-long stay in Japan included a lecture and performances in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Sapporo—six concerts in all. Each concert presented a different combination of Cage's work,⁵⁶ along with pieces by other contemporary composers, such as Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and

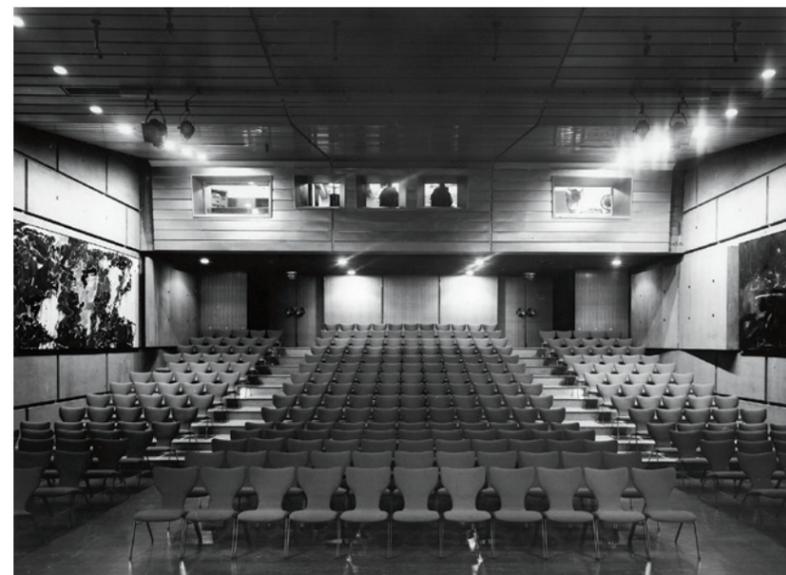


Fig. 21
Exterior of Sōgetsu Kaikan,
Sōgetsu Art Center, Tokyo
Photograph by Murosawa Fumio
(c. 1957)

Fig. 22
Interior of Sōgetsu Kaikan,
Sōgetsu Art Center, Tokyo
Photograph by Kawasumi Akio
(c. 1957)

Fig. 23
Program designed by Akio Kanda
for *Concert of Improvisational
Music and Acoustic Objets*
(*Sokkyō ongaku to onkyō
obu je no konsāto*) by Group
Ongaku at Sōgetsu Art Center,
Tokyo, September 15, 1961

即興音楽と音響オブジェ
のコンサート
〈グループ音楽〉第1回公演

不目に見えられた「音楽」の表情を捉えよう

1—コンポジションとミュージック・コンクレート
水野勝彦—音響のための三つの次元
嵯峨千枝子—モビールI, II, III
刀根康典—David Tudorへの賛歌
戸島繁雄—M.C. Ha.1
松尾元—テープのための
音楽
水野勝彦—テープ音楽
小杉武久—O.S.2, 1961

2—インプロヴィゼーション
「メタプラスム・トリス」
演奏〈グループ音楽〉メンバー

1961年9月15日—金 4,300円 五月会堂ホール
〒300 豊原町一丁目 日本橋区・五月会堂

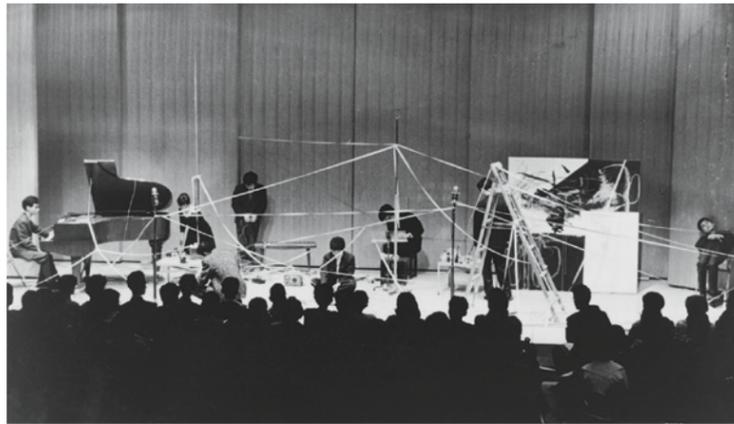


Fig. 24
Performance of Ichiyonagi
Toshi's *IBM: Happening
and Musique Concrète
(IBM hapuningu to myūjikkū
konkurēto)* at Sōgetsu Art
Center, Tokyo (Sōgetsu
Contemporary Series 10),
November 1961

From left: Takemitsu Tōru, Shiomi Mieko, Mayuzumi Toshirō, Kosugi Takehisa, Tone Yasunao, Mizuno Shūkō, Ichiyonagi Toshi, Takahashi Yūji. Photographer unknown

Plate 65
SUGIURA KOHEI
Invitation to *Works of Yoko Ono
(Ono Yōko sakuhin happyōkai)*
at Sōgetsu Art Center, Tokyo
(Sōgetsu Contemporary Series 15),
designed by Sugiura Kohei
May 24, 1962

Typewriting on paper, with
soybean sprout
18 11/16 × 4 9/16" (47.4 × 11.6 cm)

Sylvano Bussotti, as well as performances of graphic scores by Ichiyonagi (*Music for Piano #4*, 1960) and Takemitsu (*Corona for Pianists [Pianisuto no tame no korona*, 1962; see p. 112, fig. 12]). To coincide with this important event, Ichiyonagi and Akiyama Kuniharu also organized *An Exhibition of World Graphic Scores (Sekai no atarashii gakufu-ten)* at Minami Gallery, featuring a range of ingenious works by dozens of artists from around the world, including George Brecht, Dick Higgins, La Monte Young, and Iannis Xenakis (figs. 25, 26).

The energy of the Sōgetsu Art Center showed no sign of flagging in the following two years, and their roster of events and activities continued to showcase major international artists. In early 1963 a Bauhaus exhibition was mounted,⁵⁷ and in 1964 there were performances by Nam June Paik, returning from Germany and soon en route to New York (fig. 27), and again by Yoko Ono, who gave a farewell concert that summer before her return to New York. This impressive and frenetic lineup reached an apogee in November, with the appearance of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. In addition to the performances (held at Tokyo's Sankei Art Center), the center hosted a workshop with Cunningham, another concert by Cage and Tudor, and a public lecture by Robert Rauschenberg (fig. 28).

Although the Sōgetsu Art Center continued to exist until 1972, its character changed significantly after 1964. The programs of the earlier years came to an end (with the exception of the animation series), and the center's lineup was subsequently dominated

WORKS OF YOKO ONO

EVENTS
1 piece for
2 pieces for
3 pieces for
4 pieces for
5 pieces for
6 pieces for
7 pieces for
8 pieces for
9 pieces for
10 pieces for
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92 pieces for
93 pieces for
94 pieces for
95 pieces for
96 pieces for
97 pieces for
98 pieces for
99 pieces for
100 pieces for

小林健次 荒津源加 納光 於 高橋 悠
治 渡 根 二 葉 節 郎 松 平 朝 穂 一 郎
藤 本 敏 子 刀 根 謙 尚 小 杉 武 久 水
野 修 肇 野 中 村 東 野 芳 明 秋 山 邦
晴 吉 岡 隆 弘 赤 柳 原 平 珍 浦 康 平
菅 川 進 夫 橋 本 左 右 平 小 島 信 明 中
原 佑 介 吉 村 益 信 黒 川 欣 映 若 松 美
原 土 方 賢 文 奥 野 隆 志 大 野 洋
恵 エルンツ ヴィ ニ ヨ ス 小 野 洋 子

sogetsu contemporary series 15
小野洋子作品発表会 5月24日木
曜 日 18:30 草月会館ホール 会費
¥500 主催 草月アートセンター
電話番号 <408> 1126-9・1120



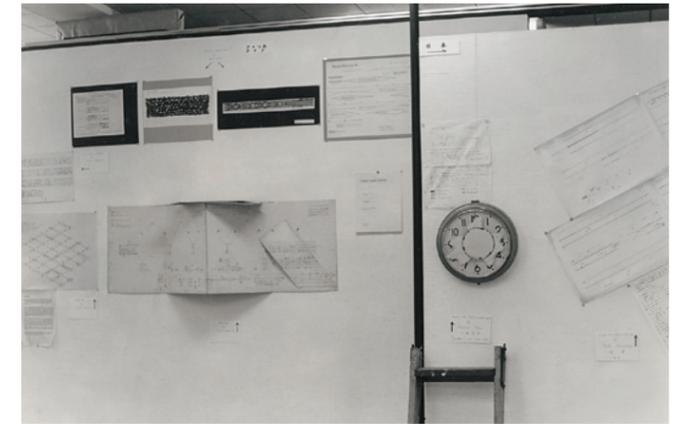
Top, left and right:
Figs. 25 and 26
Installation views of *An Exhi-
bition of World Graphic Scores
(Sekai no atarashii gakufu-ten)*
at Minami Gallery, Tokyo,
November 10–20, 1962
Photographer unknown

Bottom left:
Fig. 27
Nam June Paik performing
at Sōgetsu Art Center, Tokyo,
May 29, 1964
Photograph by Hirata Minoru

Bottom right:
Fig. 28
Robert Rauschenberg creating
Gold Standard during "Twenty
Questions to Bob Rauschenberg,"
public conversation at Sōgetsu
Art Center, Tokyo, November 28,
1964
Photograph by Sekiya Masaaki



by film and other cinema events, with some critical exceptions; for example, in 1968 the center hosted the seminal five-day event *Expose 68: Say Something Now, I Am Searching for Something to Say (Expose 68: Nanika ittekure, ima, sagasu)*, which featured both performances and cross-disciplinary works, serving as an important fulcrum for "intermedia," the critical keyword and tendency in the second half of the 1960s.⁵⁸ While the Sōgetsu Art Center played an important role for the rest of its run, the confluence of presences—of critical figures in postwar American



music, dance, and visual arts and Japanese creators with international purviews—during the first half of its life, especially between 1961 and 1964, cemented its reputation as an incomparable venue for interdisciplinary experiments and international exchanges. Figures such as Ichiyonagi, Ono, and Paik, not to mention the visiting luminaries of the American avant-garde, brought contemporaneity to the art scene in Tokyo, and the center served in effect as a springboard for those with no previous international exposure to expand their horizons.

THE FIGURE AND THE BODY IN THE LATE 1960S

A decade is not a short time, especially in such a turbulent context as Tokyo of the 1950s and 1960s. But it is still astounding to see how Nakamura Hiroshi's work transformed from his 1958 triptych (plates 23–25) to 1968's *Circular Train A (Telescope Train)* (*Enkan ressha A [Bōenkyō ressha]*; plate 66). In the later painting, the artist has abandoned the horizontally elongated format he often employed in his early years for a more conventionally proportioned canvas. More strikingly, the viewer sees little of the anxiety-ridden landscapes or figures that characterized his work of the 1950s. The center of the canvas is occupied by a circle that shows a marine landscape as viewed through a telescope (as suggested in the title), which intrudes, like a collaged cutout, upon the image of the interior of a train car. The picture is populated by teenage girls, dressed in conventional sailor-style school uniforms⁵⁹ and with pigtails. Each of their faces is dominated by a large, cyclopean eye in lieu of all other features. One of the most vulnerable figures in society,⁶⁰ the adolescent girl has been transformed into a cipher of sexual fetishism and made all the more monstrous here. Nakamura's painting has always been figurative, and the locomotive was a favorite subject from early on. Around the mid-1960s, however, his work began to take on illustration or manga-like characteristics.

In this graphic quality, Nakamura has a number of affinities with Tateishi Kōichi (Tiger Tateishi). In his painting *Samurai, the Watcher* (*Kōya no Yōjinbō*, 1965; plate 67), Tateishi presents a samurai standing with his back to the viewer, on top of a bluff in a sunset landscape that is obviously not Japanese; it more closely resembles that of the American West. The samurai is one of the best-known, even clichéd stereotypes of Japan, but here, as the title suggests, he is a specific character made popular through the work of filmmaker Kurosawa Akira (in the 1961 film *Yojimbo*).⁶¹ If the incongruous combination—albeit deftly handled rendering—of a Japanese

swordsman in a bleak American desert were not bizarre enough, Tateishi inserts minuscule supporting characters in this story painting: on one side, a troop of what appear to be Ku Klux Klan members bearing rifles and torches and a burning flag; on the other, an ambush of green tigers holding swords and raising a flag emblazoned with the visage of Mao Zedong. We assume, from this cinematic vantage point, that a bloody battle between humans and animals—and between irreconcilable ideologies—is about to take place.

These paintings by Nakamura and Tateishi exemplify a shift in approach with regard to the figure and representation. They depart from the kinds of figural metamorphosis, fragmentation, and distortion found in much of 1950s painting and other two-dimensional mediums. While one may safely posit that the human subjects in earlier works stood for both a specific and a general populace, struggling with the memories of wartime and the hardships of the immediate postwar years, the figures in these two artists' works are inhabitants of a wholly different social and cultural space. The paintings zoom in on discomfiting subcultural fetishes and zoom out to cast a wide-angled view of an improbable clash of elements circulating in popular media and cultures. These are outlandish, humorous, and confounding visions of imaginary worlds. Perhaps these worlds could only have taken shape here at this point, in a politically stabilized, economically confident, and culturally vibrant metropolis of Tokyo.

That Nakamura and Tateishi did not uphold painting as an elitist medium is evident in a 1964 performance they staged as a two-person collective dubbed *Kankō Geijutsu Kenkyūjo* (Sightseeing art research institute). Holding up their own paintings for the benefit of all to appreciate, they walked down a street near Tokyo Station, with the Shinkansen “bullet train”—completed just in time for that year's Olympics—passing behind them (fig. 29). This gesture of literally relocating paintings outside of the



Plate 66
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
Circular Train A (Telescope Train)
(*Enkan ressha A [Bōenkyō ressha]*)
1968
Oil on canvas
71⁵/₈ × 89⁹/₁₆" (182 × 227.5 cm)

Plate 67
TATEISHI KŌICHI (TIGER TATEISHI)
Samurai, the Watcher
(*Kōya no Yōjinbō*)
1965
Oil on canvas
51⁵/₁₆ × 63³/₄" (130.3 × 162 cm)



Fig. 29
Nakamura Hiroshi and Tateishi
Kōichi (Tiger Tateishi) of Kankō
Geijutsu Kenkyūjo (Sightseeing
art research institute) holding
paintings for their *Promenading-
on-the-Street Exhibition (Rojō
hokō-ten)*, near east exit of Tokyo
Station, 1964
Photograph by Hirata Minoru

sanctified sites of the artist's studio and rarefied exhibition spaces—so that they are no more exalted than the numerous signboards and billboards of the city—situates the work in an ambiguous zone where art and popular culture are open and porous to one another. Indeed, both artists were active producers of commercial illustrations, posters, and book covers, and the iconographic and stylistic similarities between their commercial work and their art served to challenge the “high art” status of painting itself (plates 68–70).

No one represented this flattened cultural landscape, where the highbrow and the lowbrow liberally mingle, better than Yokoo Tadanori. An artist, designer, and all-around cultural figure extraordinaire, Yokoo emerged as an enfant terrible in graphic design around this time, with an inimitable style that combines brilliant, even gaudy palettes and ingenious techniques, and juxtaposes strikingly incongruous iconographies. As if giving a paradoxical foretaste of the cultural prominence he would capture over

the course of his long and illustrious career, in 1965 he made *Tadanori Yokoo (Matsuya)* (1965; plate 71), the text of which reads (in English): “Made in Japan, Tadanori Yokoo, Having Reached a Climax at the Age of 29, I Was Dead.” In this early work, Yokoo set down some of the main characteristics that would continue to define his graphic composition, such as the use of well-known and even hackneyed motifs (the rising sun and Mount Fuji in this case); bold typography (focused on his own name); and photomontage (a picture of himself as a baby). Quickly recognized for his talent and for coining a visual language very much engaged with the era, Yokoo soon found himself gainfully employed in a wide range of projects, from commercial posters (for Asahi Beer, for example) to works commissioned for significant cultural figures and events.

Yokoo's oeuvre may be observed as a kind of topographical map of the art and cultural world of Tokyo at the time. This topography includes the author Mishima Yukio, a deeply polarizing figure who

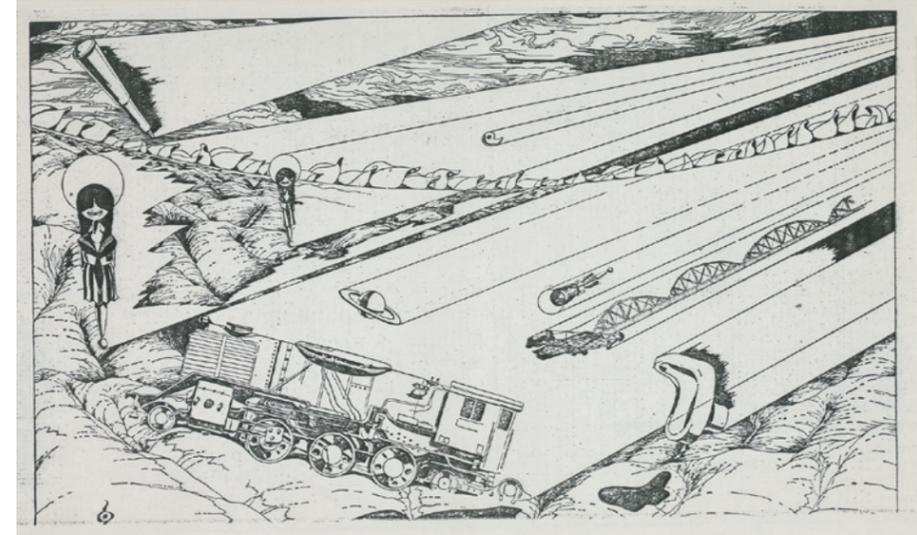
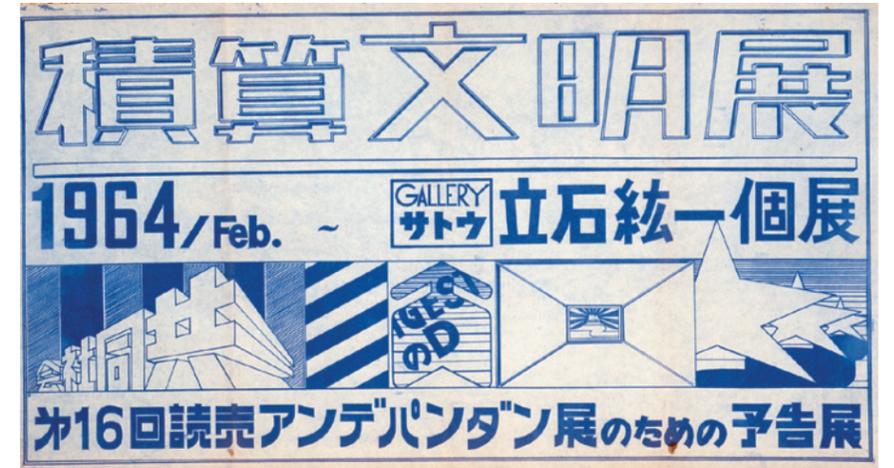


Plate 68
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
*Low-Altitude Flight of Fetishes
(Jubutsutachi no teikū hikō)*
1970
Printed paper
7⁷/₈ × 13³/₁₆" (20 × 33.2 cm)

Plate 69
NAKAMURA HIROSHI
Nara Women's University
Campus Festival (Nara Joshi
Daigaku gakuensai), poster
1965
Printed poster
15⁷/₈ × 21³/₄" (40.4 × 55.3 cm)

Plate 70
TATEISHI KŌICHI (TIGER TATEISHI)
"Like TATEISHI Koichi"
(*Tateishi Kōichi no yō na*),
self-published poster, for the
sixteenth Yomiuri Indépendant
exhibition
February 1964
Blueprint on paper
16⁵/₈ × 23⁷/₁₆" (42.2 × 59.5 cm)



represented a very different, though equally radical, avant-garde approach; and also Hijikata Tatsumi, progenitor of the Ankoku Butō (Dance of utter darkness, widely known as Butoh) dance/performance genre, a figure who was at once mysterious and omnipresent in the Tokyo scene.

Hijikata made a sensational debut in 1959 with *Forbidden Colors* (*Kinjiki*), the story of a hedonistic homosexual youth based on the 1953 novel of the same title by Mishima (who, along with Jean Genet and Surrealist literature, would provide much inspiration to the choreographer). Just as Yokoo was a ubiquitous presence in the cultural landscape of Tokyo beginning in the mid-1960s and for many decades to come, Hijikata too was a magnet exerting strong forces of attraction across the fields through the 1960s. Nakanishi was a particularly close collaborator,

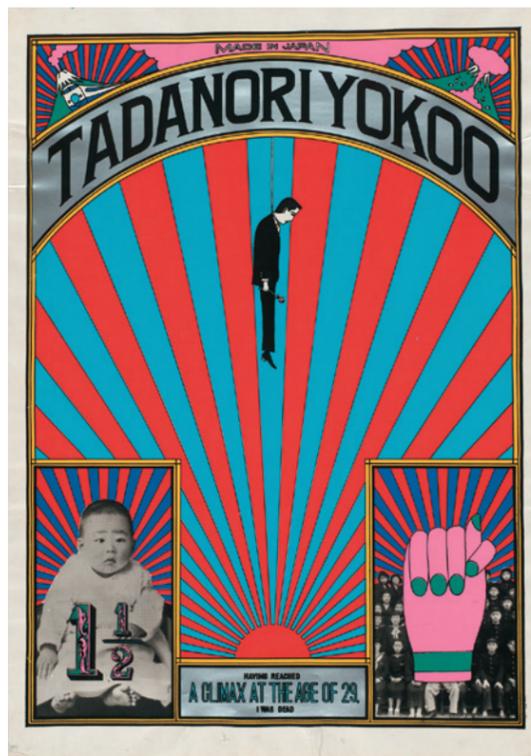


Plate 71
YOKOO TADANORI
Tadanori Yokoo (Matsuya)
1965
Screenprint
43 × 31 1/8" (109.2 × 79.1 cm)

art-directing several pieces by the choreographer. For Hijikata's final solo performance, *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Revolt of the Flesh* (*Hijikata Tatsumi to Nihonjin: Nikutai no hanran*, 1968; p. 109, fig. 10),⁶² the painter conceived reflective copper panels that were hung in the air above the stage; this notion inspired his 1965–71 series of semi-abstract paintings *Hopscotch at the Summit* (*Sanchō no ishikeri*), which are structured and composed around gravitational centers (plates 72, 73). Each of the ten works that constitute the series is structured around a heart shape supported by two equilateral triangles and features an unusual figurative motif, such as a flower or animal. The perceived images do not seem to have literary or allegorical meanings, however. Rather, the brilliantly colored works are ultimately concerned with the process of painting per se, laying bare the innumerable steps and decisions that go into creating a painting: for instance, making use of the back of the canvas but leaving it half-unfinished. In this sense, Nakanishi's *Hopscotch* paintings, made in the wake of the artist's collaboration with Hijikata, may be said to function as "anti-paintings," paralleling Hijikata's *Ankoku Butō*, which likewise defied the conventions of medium.

Photographer Hosoe Eikō was another important figure in Hijikata's universe; he documented many of the dancer's performances and also collaborated on a series of striking pictures collected and published under the title *Kamaitachi* (literally "sickle-toothed weasel," a mythical creature; plates 74, 75). For this project, Hosoe and Hijikata traveled to the dancer's home region, the northern Tōhoku area of the main island of Japan. In Hosoe's photographs, Hijikata is seen sprinting through a fallow field, perhaps screaming, arms stretched to the sky; crouching on top of the thatched roof of a farm hut, darkly ogling a geisha who seems unaware of his eerie presence; materializing in front of unsuspecting locals; leaping into the air half-naked over the heads of children watching him in awe; or stalking with his

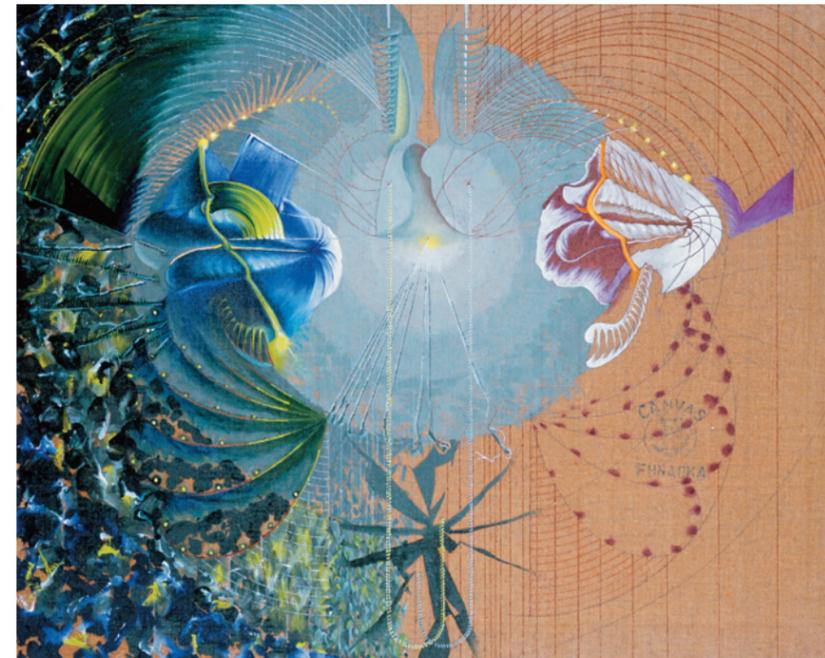


Plate 72
NAKANISHI NATSUYUKI
Hopscotch at the Summit, No. 0
(*Sanchō no ishikeri* No. 0)
1965
Oil on canvas
28 3/4 × 36" (73 × 91.5 cm)



Plate 73
NAKANISHI NATSUYUKI
Hopscotch at the Summit, No. 7
(*Sanchō no ishikeri* No. 7)
1971
Oil on canvas
28 9/16 × 35 9/16" (72.5 × 90.4 cm)

fingers stretched up to mimic a pair of demonic horns (like the fabled weasel).

It was perhaps natural that Hosoe, being intimate in the Hijikata circle, was also tapped to realize the fantasy alter ego of the notoriously extravagant Mishima: Saint Sebastian. Their collaborative 1961 project *Ordeal by Roses* (*Barakei*) was shot in Mishima's baroque-style mansion, the bodybuilder/writer flaunting his muscular physique framed by what he hoped was an unequivocally Western setting (plate 76).⁶³ Together, Hijikata and Mishima—haunting the farmlands, wilderness, and rural towns of Tōhoku, or ensconced in the overblown opulence of a Tokyo abode, respectively—represented the precipitous edges of Tokyo's avant-garde.

Metaphorically, if not literally, worlds away from these spaces, other photographers were confronting the reality of the street full-on at this time. Moriyama Daidō's Tokyo is populated by another society altogether, as seen in his *Japan Theater Photo Album* (*Nippon gekijō shashinchō*, 1965; plate 77) and *Baton Twirler* (*Baton towarā*, 1967; plate 78). This is a city of Americanized culture as well as of lingering impoverishment, which the quickly amassed prosperity of the 1960s could not completely erase or hide.

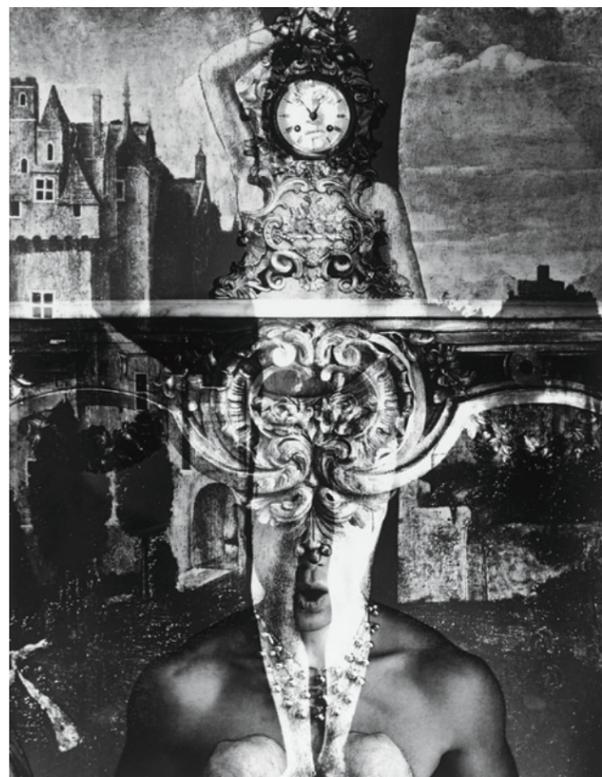
But Tokyo is not all about the gritty and the glittering. Ichimura Tetsuya reminds us of the contrast between the preserved-traditional and the modern-industrial—the old and the new—in *Nijūbashi, Imperial Palace, Tokyo, 1965* (*Nijūbashi, Tōkyō, 1965-nen*; plate 79). Fukase Masahisa evokes a sense of humanity through the figure of his subject "Yohko" and the often desolate urban landscapes she traverses (plates 80, 81). And Tōmatsu Shōmei brings us face to face with the painful and difficult truths of a postwar nation, where the wounds of the conflict and nuclear massacres were still evident (plate 95), and where young people revealed in the "cool" American culture that was invading Japan, brought in on the heels of the occupying Allied forces (plate 82).

Top:
Plate 74
HOSOE EIKŌ
Sickle-Toothed Weasel, No. 5
(Kamaitachi sakuhin 5)
 1968
 Gelatin silver print
 7¹⁵/₁₆ × 11¹/₂" (20.2 × 29.2 cm)



Bottom left:
Plate 75
HOSOE EIKŌ
Sickle-Toothed Weasel, No. 28
(Kamaitachi sakuhin 28)
 1968
 Gelatin silver print
 11⁷/₁₆ × 7⁷/₈" (26.5 × 20 cm)

Bottom right:
Plate 76
HOSOE EIKŌ
Ordeal by Roses, No. 29
(Barakei sakuhin 29)
 1961
 Gelatin silver print
 21⁵/₈ × 16¹/₂" (55 × 41.9 cm)



Top:
Plate 77
MORIYAMA DAIDŌ
Japan Theater Photo Album
(Nippon gekijō shashinchō)
 1965
 Gelatin silver print
 13 × 18¹/₄" (33.1 × 46.3 cm)

Bottom left:
Plate 78
MORIYAMA DAIDŌ
Baton Twirler (Baton towarā)
 1967
 Gelatin silver print
 18⁷/₈ × 14¹¹/₁₆" (48.1 × 37.4 cm)

Bottom right:
Plate 79
ICHIMURA TETSUYA
Nijūbashi, Imperial Palace,
Tokyo, 1965 (Nijūbashi,
Tōkyō, 1965-nen)
 1965
 Gelatin silver print
 13 × 8⁷/₈" (33 × 22.4 cm)





Top:
Plate 80
FUKASE MASAHISA
Yohko
1963
Gelatin silver print
13 × 19 1/2" (33 × 49.5 cm)

Bottom left:
Plate 81
FUKASE MASAHISA
Yohko
1963
Gelatin silver print
12 7/8 × 8 5/8" (32.9 × 21.9 cm)

Bottom right:
Plate 82
TÔMATSU SHÔMEI
Card Game, Zushi, Kanagawa
(Toranpu Kanagawa Zushi-shi)
1964
Gelatin silver print
12 15/16 × 18 3/4" (33 × 47.7 cm)

Plate 83
HARAGUCHI NORIYUKI
Ship 4
1963–65
Plexiglas, and lacquer on paper
and plywood
21 1/4 × 18 1/8 × 5 7/8" (54 × 46 × 15 cm)

III. Toward a Conclusion

CIRCA 1970

Zushi, in Kanagawa Prefecture, on the west side of Tokyo Bay, is a beach resort that was popular for fashionable Tokyoites in the 1960s. It is not far from Yokosuka, the home of a U.S. naval base. For Haraguchi Noriyuki, who is originally from Zushi (and still lives there), the experience of residing in the shadow of the American military presence was embodied in a

direct way as miniature paper battleships, which he made as a boy and which were clearly a point of departure for his later art (his *Ship 4*, 1963–65 [plate 83] was made when the artist was in his late teens). More than just adolescent fancies, these works speak to Japan's implication in the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, which would escalate in the later 1960s. They also evoke the American "black ships" and the gunboat diplomacy that opened the long-isolated nation in the 1850s. Further evincing his straightforward, unmanipulative approach to the reality surrounding him, Haraguchi's early painting *Tsumu 147* (1966; plate 84) employs a Pop art–like strategy: reproducing almost photo-realistically the wooden door of a freight train wagon.

In 1969 he was attending Nihon University, which was one of the fulcrums of student protest first ignited by the school administration's financial mismanagement, and soon expanding to broader political causes, including the renewal of the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty. That year, Haraguchi constructed a handmade, full-scale replica of the tail of the Douglas A-4E Skyhawk, a fighter aircraft that played a key role in the Vietnam War (fig. 30). Soon Haraguchi's work would transition away from figuration toward a unique, material-oriented Minimalist impulse, without relinquishing the significance of his approach from these formative years. Not long after, he would become associated with the Mono-ha (School of things) movement, which was just coming into existence and whose concerns, like his, were very much focused on materiality.⁶⁴

The turn of the decade witnessed not only the emergence of a new generation of artists such as Haraguchi, but also a shift in the work of a number of older artists. Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, for example, continued to experiment with different materials in the years after the dissolution of Jikken Kōbō in 1958. In 1961, using wire mesh planes, he produced a series of fascinatingly unidentifiable forms that constantly change depending on the standpoint of



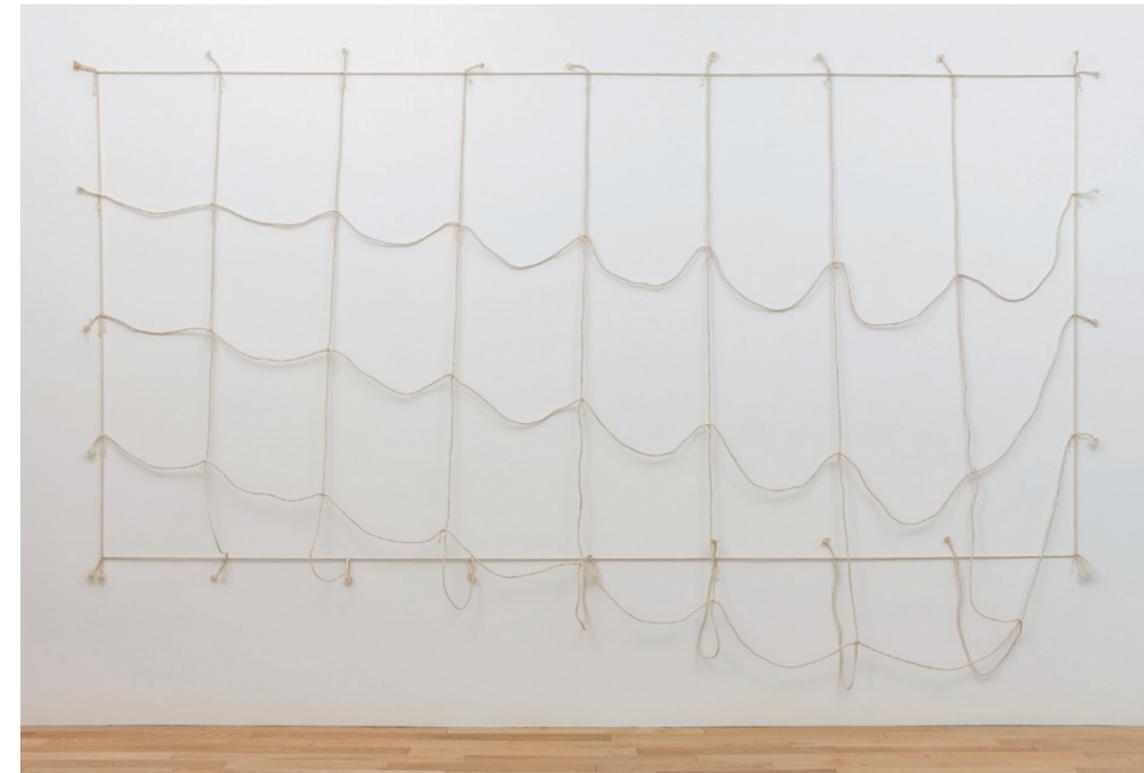
Top:
Plate 84
HARAGUCHI NORIYUKI
Tsumu 147
 1966
 Mixed media on panel
 52³/₄ × 66¹⁵/₁₆" (134 × 170 cm)

Bottom left:
Fig. 30
HARAGUCHI NORIYUKI
A-4E Skyhawk
 1969/1995
 Lacquer on plywood and aluminum
 14'7" × 17'10" × 11'7"
 (4.4 × 5.3 × 3.52 m)
 Courtesy Miyake Fine Art, Tokyo,
 and McCaffrey Fine Art, New York

Bottom right:
Fig. 31
TAKAMATSU JIRŌ
Shadow of the Baby No. 122
 (Akanbo no kage no. 122)
 1965
 Acrylic on canvas
 71⁵/₈ × 89³/₈" (181.9 × 227 cm)
 Toyota Municipal Museum of Art



Plate 85
TAKAMATSU JIRŌ
Slack of Net (Netto no yurumi)
 1969
 Tied cotton rope
 Dimensions variable; approx.
 71¹/₄ × 144" (181 × 366 cm)



the viewer (plates 43, 112), and in 1962–63 he transformed salvaged fabrics into sometimes humorous sculptures by stretching them over wire constructions (plate 44). Takamatsu Jirō, post-Hi Red Center, produced a wide-ranging and constantly morphing oeuvre, including conceptually oriented works and photographs, which formed a major contribution during the late 1960s. Among his works of this period are the Shadow (Kage) painting series, begun in 1965, in which double shadows of an object or person overlap, decentering and confusing the viewer's relationship to the pictorial surface and space (fig. 31). Takamatsu's interest in visual trickery also took three-dimensional form, as in his *Slack of Net* (*Netto no yurumi*, 1969; plate 85), in which the artist appropriates the Minimalist grid, but the squares within the perimeter of right angles droop into unstable catenaries pulled down by gravitational force.

In the late 1960s Yamaguchi and another artist, Kawaguchi Tatsuo, explored optical limits and perceptual unreliability with sculptures that incorporate light. These concerns are evident in Yamaguchi's *Sign Pole* (1968; plate 86), as well as in Kawaguchi's *Interrelation of Object and Image in Infinite Space*,

or *Sphere in Eight Colors* (*Mugen kūkan ni okeru obu je to imēji no sōkan kankei mata wa 8 shoku no kyūtai*, 1968; plate 87). While Yamaguchi's unflagging interest in trying out new materials and forms led to his working with acrylic and fluorescent lights in his late 1960s series of light sculptures, which alternately illuminate and reflect the viewer and the surroundings, Kawaguchi's work presents a mesmerizing optical trickery, in which the colors of the spheres suspended in the mirror cube continuously change as the viewer circumambulates it.

A distance had been traveled since sculpture was undeniably corporeal and the body often "became" sculpture and vice versa. Vision was now a dominant concern.⁶⁵ The figure-as-subject was no longer so energetically engaged, and the body-as-agent was deployed with less frequency as the decade drew to a close. Instead, artists began to turn with increasing focus to issues of perception. As vanguard artistic practices became with time increasingly mainstream and even institutionalized—or were abandoned altogether—multisensory, technologically mediated "environments" overtook exhibition spaces and the streets that had formerly been the sites of guerrilla-like events and strategies.

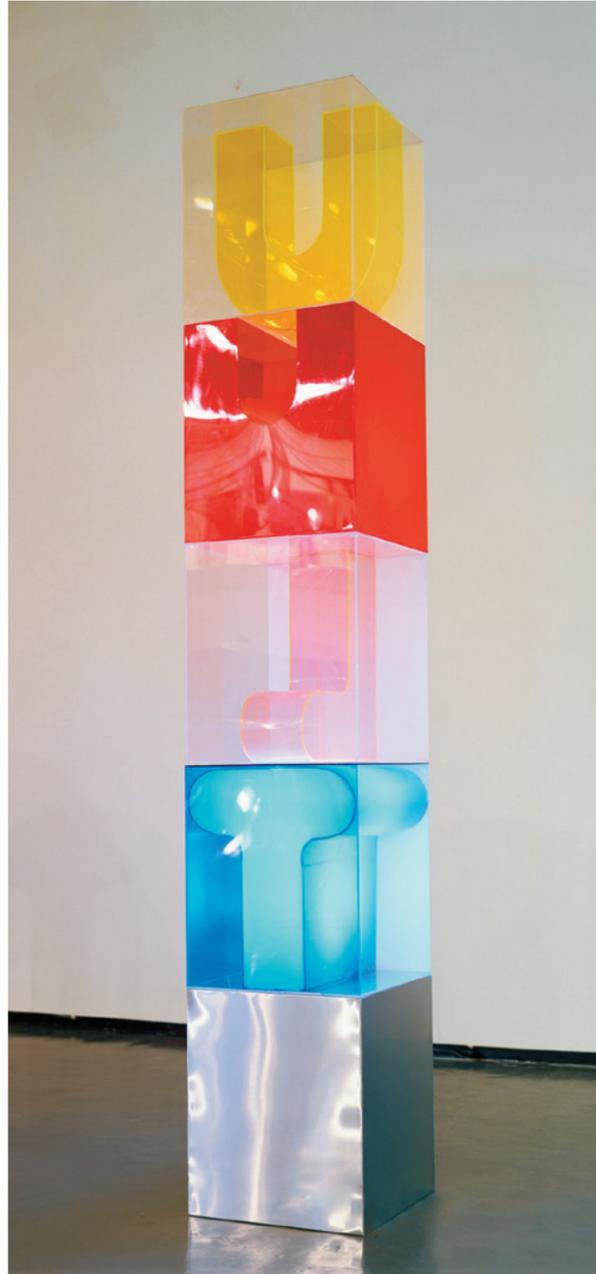


Plate 86
YAMAGUCHI KATSUIRO
Sign Pole
1968

Acrylic, plastic, and fluorescent lamp
Four cubes, each: $21\frac{5}{8} \times 21\frac{5}{8} \times 25\frac{9}{16}$ " ($55 \times 55 \times 65$ cm)

Plate 87
KAWAGUCHI TATSUO
*Interrelation of Object
and Image in Infinite Space,
or Sphere in Eight Colors*
(*Mugen kūkan ni okeru obu-
je to imēji no sōkan kankei mata
wa 8 shoku no kyūtai*)
1968

Plaster, mirror, glass,
and fluorescent lamp
 $24\frac{3}{16} \times 38\frac{3}{16} \times 38\frac{3}{16}$ "
($61.5 \times 97 \times 97$ cm)

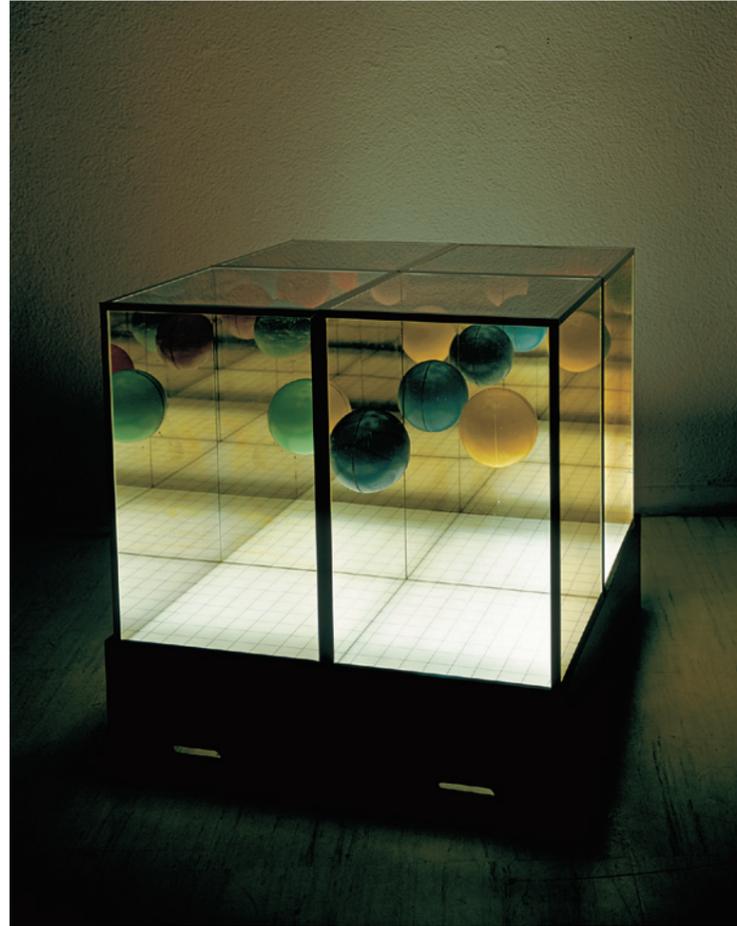


Plate 88
TŌMATSU SHŌMEI
Untitled, from the series *Protest,
Tokyo* (Purotesuto Tōkyō)
1969

Gelatin silver print
 $16\frac{1}{8} \times 23\frac{1}{8}$ " (40.9×58.7 cm)

Fig. 32
Mishima Yukio addressing
the troops on the balcony of
the headquarters of the
Eastern Command of Japan's
Self-Defense Forces, Tokyo,
November 25, 1970

Significant artistic, cultural, and social events seemed to culminate in 1970, just as 1964, the year of the Olympics in Japan, had been a moment of almost uncanny convergences and transitions. The 1970 Tokyo Biennale, titled *Between Man and Matter* (*Ningen to busshitsu*), brought together many important American and European artists working in the schools of (post-)Minimalism, Arte Povera, Conceptual art, and Process art, along with a group of groundbreaking Japanese artists, and showcased Tokyo as a viable node in the network of international art.⁶⁶ In the same year Osaka, the nation's second-largest city, hosted Expo '70, which drew Metabolist architects and numerous artists—including Okamoto, Ichiyanagi, and Yamaguchi, as well as Yokoo, Yoshimura, and many Anti-Art proponents as well. Their creative outputs were bolstered with corporate sponsorships and national promotions.⁶⁷ At the same time, despite crackdowns, Japan witnessed a flare-up of anti-government protests, incited in part by the second renewal of the Anpo agreement, as evocatively captured by photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei in the series *Protest, Tokyo* (Purotesuto Tōkyō, 1969; plate 88).



On November 25, 1970, Mishima and four members of his private militia Tate no Kai (Shield society) entered the headquarters of the Eastern Command of the Self-Defense Forces in Ichigaya, central Tokyo. Throughout the previous decade, Mishima had increasingly embraced radically right-wing ideologies, openly advocating emperor-worship and expressing a desire to return Japan to its prewar glory. His plan on that fateful day was to incite the Japanese soldiers into a coup d'état and restore military imperialism (fig. 32). When his speech was met with contemptuous jeers, Mishima retreated with his cohort of young cadets and committed suicide by seppuku, ritual self-disembowelment. Thus concluded the turbulent 1960s of Japan, spectacularly, with the death of this literary and cultural phenomenon and social maverick par excellence.

A NEW AVANT-GARDE?

Back in the pivotal year 1964, no one anticipated the visit of the American triumvirate of Cage, Cunningham, and Rauschenberg with more eagerness than Shinohara Ushio, former member of the Neo Dada group. Known throughout the Tokyo art scene for his outrageous proclamations as much as for his signature Mohawk haircut, Shinohara declared—perhaps in an echo of Akasegawa's *Model 1,000-Yen Note*—that *imitating* the work of other artists (in his case mostly American artists) was far more interesting, and even revolutionary, than creating original works.⁶⁸

Soon Shinohara's theory would be tested, as he was visited in 1964 by none other than Rauschenberg himself—an artist whose work he had been assiduously mimicking at the time. At their first meeting the young Japanese provocateur presented his imitations of works by the well-established American artist, who reacted positively to them (fig. 33 and plate 89). Upon subsequent interactions, however, and after learning that Shinohara had created multiple copies of his own artistic efforts, Rauschenberg was clearly disenchanted, perhaps sensing the danger of his works' commodification.⁶⁹

When the American artist presented a public lecture titled "Twenty Questions to Bob Rauschenberg" on November 28, 1964, at the Sōgetsu Art Center, his interlocutors were art critic Tōno Yoshiaki, along with Shinohara and Kojima Nobuaki. The two artists brought onto the stage their own works—Shinohara's no-longer-extant *Marcel Duchamp Thinking* (*Shikō suru Maruseru Dyushan*, 1963) and Kojima's signature figures draped with flags: *Untitled (Figure)* (1964; see p. 224). Instead of answering the questions of his Japanese interviewers, however, Rauschenberg spent the lecture time silently creating a Combine, *Gold Standard* (1964; fig. 34), using detritus he had collected from the streets of Tokyo. At one point he took Shinohara's written English questionnaire and pasted it into the work he was creating on the spot.⁷⁰



Fig. 33
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
Coca-Cola Plan
1958
Combine: pencil on paper, oil on three Coca-Cola bottles, wood newel cap, and cast metal wings on wood structure
26³/₄ × 25¹/₄ × 5¹/₂"
(68 × 64 × 14 cm)
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. The Panza Collection

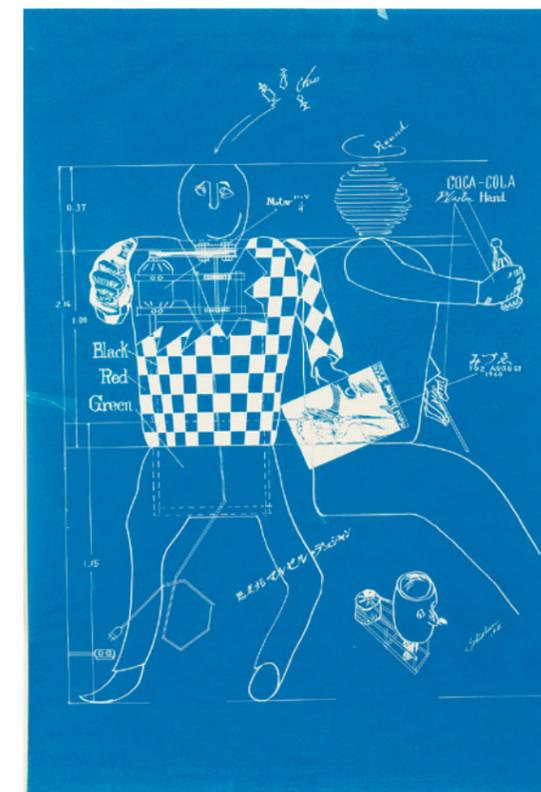
Plate 89
SHINOHARA USHIO
Coca-Cola Plan
1964
Paint, glass bottle, plaster, metal fittings, and wood
28³/₁₆ × 26³/₁₆ × 3¹/₂"
(71.5 × 66.5 × 9 cm)

Fig. 34
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
Gold Standard
1964
Combine: oil, paper, printed reproductions, clock, cardboard box, metal, fabric, wood, string, shoe, and Coca-Cola bottles on gold folding Japanese screen, with electric light, rope, and ceramic dog on bicycle seat and wire mesh base
84¹/₄ × 142¹/₈ × 51¹/₄"
(214 × 361 × 130.2 cm)
Glenstone

Plate 90
SHINOHARA USHIO
Marcel Duchamp
(*Maruseru Dyushan*)
1965
Blueprint
Composition (irreg.): 25⁹/₁₆ × 20³/₈"
(65 × 51.7 cm); sheet: 31¹¹/₁₆ × 21⁷/₈" (80.5 × 55.5 cm)



By 1966, after viewing *Twenty Years of American Painting*, an exhibition organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and presented at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, Shinohara had lost much of his enthusiasm for American art. Just a few years earlier, American art had seemed to him to be "marching toward the glorious prairie of the rainbow and oasis of the future, carrying all the world's expectations of modern painting"; now, however, seeing the works of his former idols such as Jasper Johns and James Rosenquist, he felt "their glory [had] receded into the distance."⁷¹ This disillusionment was perhaps exacerbated by his disappointment at being excluded from the earlier MoMA exhibition *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, which toured to nine North American venues in 1965–66. William S. Lieberman, the exhibition curator, had asked to include Shinohara's *Duchamp Thinking*, but the plan was thwarted because the work was too fragile to travel. Only a print based on the sculpture now remains of the piece (plate 90). That print and a print version of his *Coca-Cola Plan* "imitation," now both part of the Museum's collection, serve as reminders of this charged period of the artist's life and the encounter and discourse between the Tokyo avant-garde and its New York counterpart.



In the 1950s, Europe, especially France, still held sway over Japanese artists. Many of Jikken Kōbō's programs and inspirations, as well as Gutai's intimate relationship with Michel Tapié, make this abundantly clear. At the same time, these groups could not ignore the United States. Their everyday reality and the overall topography of international art had changed; the focus had shifted decisively to New York. In fact, information about modern art available to artists like Yamaguchi and Kitadai in the early postwar years was provided by the Civil Information and Education sector of the Allied occupation authority.⁷² The *Gutai* journal was strategically distributed to the United States; copies were regularly mailed to important American critics and artists (Jackson Pollock among them). The group also managed to secure an exhibition at New York's Martha Jackson Gallery in 1958, and a work by Gutai's leader, Yoshihara Jirō, was acquired by the Carnegie Museum of Art. Still, major critical attention proved elusive in the United States.⁷³

The influence of American art grew steadily through the late 1950s and into the first half of the 1960s. At the same time, with international travel becoming an easier prospect, and numerous artists hoping to test their luck in the international arena, many Japanese artists began to emigrate to the United States—and especially to New York. Arakawa Shūsaku moved to the city in 1961, followed soon by others such as Shigeo Kubota and Shiomi Mieko, who arrived in 1964. Several figures whose names are now well known to U.S. audiences, such as On Kawara and Yayoi Kusama, had already been in New York for some time, as was Yoko Ono, whose principal residence before and after her sojourn in Japan from 1962 to 1964 was New York. Shinohara finally arrived in 1969.

Did the diverse range of experimental positions and gestures that blossomed in Tokyo in the 1950s and 1960s collectively constitute a new avant-garde? This question might be answered in many different ways, none of them straightforward or comprehensive, let

alone correct. The best we may do—this is certainly the position of this exhibition and publication—is to suggest a complicated array of conditions, which the artists and creators responded to and worked with or against. One of these was the new artistic and cultural plane, constructed from a field that had been virtually leveled in the destructive late period of the war and was now ready for recultivation. Other crucial components were the country's dizzying new economic prosperity and concomitant regrowth, and the persistent lack of systems and infrastructures of art during the period under consideration, which did not match the brisk pace and the sweeping extent of the reconstruction and reshaping of Japanese society as a whole. Finally this sixteen-year period was marked by an incommensurability between massive international ciphers of success—such as the 1964 Olympics and Expo '70—and the still-lopsided reception of artistic endeavors by Japanese artists in relation to their foreign (read American and European) counterparts, despite (or perhaps because of) their distinctive, even idiosyncratic, and often untranslatable achievements.

The artists featured in *Tokyo 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde* confronted these conditions and pressed on in what they believed to be the most radical and innovative—though at times self-destructive—directions. Whether utilizing creative tools that were age-old (traditional art mediums, and the body itself) or brand-new (technologies that had only just come to the fore), the artists of this period gave themselves the liberty to deploy them, adjoin them, and intermingle them in ways that would not have been possible in any other temporal or spatial conditions. That is one answer of certitude that may be offered about the art from this remarkable time and place.

NOTES

1. The most comprehensive account of the event can be found in Akasegawa Genpei, *Tōkyō mikisā keikaku: Hai Reddo Sentā chokuseitsu kōdō no kiroku* (Tokyo mixer plan: Records of Hi Red Center's direct actions; Tokyo: PARCO, 1984). For *Yamanote Line Incident*, see chapter 1, "Yamanote-sen no tamago" (Eggs on the Yamanote line). Akasegawa himself did not participate in the *Incident*, which included two collaborators in addition to Nakanishi and Takamatsu. For more on Hi Red Center (discussed further here), see Michio Hayashi, "Tracing the Graphic in Postwar Japanese Art"; Mika Yoshitake, "The Language of Things: Relation, Perception, and Duration"; and Miryam Sas, "Intermedia, 1955–1970," all in this volume.
2. The map was included in *Fluxus 1* (New York: Fluxus Editions, 1965).
3. Tokyo itself is not the largest city in the world; it is significantly smaller in terms of both population and area than cities such as Shanghai, Istanbul, and Mumbai. When the whole metropolitan area—as contiguous urban area—is considered, however, Tokyo surpasses all other cities in the world.
4. Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). Barthes visited Tokyo in 1966, and the book was published in French in 1970: *L'Empire des signes* (Geneva: Skira).
5. For a magisterial account of the history of postwar Japan, see John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat* (New York: Norton, 1999).
6. Published in July 1956 by the Economic Planning Agency (Keizai Keikakuchō), the "White Paper on Economy" (Keizai hakusho)—subtitled "Growth and Modernization of Japanese Economy" (Nihon keizai no seichō to kindai)—declared that the reconstruction effort following the end of the war was complete and that "it is no longer postwar." The idea quickly became fashionable, but even before the publication of the white paper, it was used as the title of an essay by Nakano Yoshio, critic and scholar of English literature, in the February issue of *Bungei shunju* (Spring and autumn in literature and arts; published January 10). See Handō Kazutoshi, *Shōwashi: Sengohen, 1945–1989* (History of Showa: Postwar, 1945–1989; Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2006), chapter 12.
7. The full name of the agreement in Japanese: *Nippon-koku to Amerika-gasshūkoku to no aida no sōgo kyōryoku oyobi anzen hoshō jōyaku* (Treaty of mutual cooperation and security between the nation of Japan and the United States of America). It is customarily shortened as *Nichi-bei anzen hoshō jōyaku* (Japan-U.S. Mutual Security Treaty), and further as Anpo.
8. See Rem Koolhaas and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, *Project Japan: Metabolism Talks...* (London: Taschen, 2011).
9. "A Plan for Tokyo, 1960—Toward a Structural Organization" from "Section 2-1: Cities Become Architecture: Megastructures" in Yatsuka Hajime, Kikuchi Makoto, Yamana Yoshiyuki, et al., eds., *Metabolism: The City of the Future*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2011), p. 63.
10. Publications on postwar Japanese art include the following important exhibition catalogues: Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Abrams, 1994); Charles Merewether and Rika Iezumi Hiro, eds., *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007); Iwona Blazwick, ed., *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis* (London: Tate, 2001); Françoise Bonnefoy, ed., *Japon des avant-gardes, 1910–1970* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1986); Jane Farver, ed., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999; in particular "Concerning the Institution of Art:

Conceptualism in Japan," by Reiko Tomii in cooperation with Chiba Shigeo, pp. 15–30, 151–60, 223–24). Other sources of reference are "1960s Japan: Art Outside the Box," special issue guest edited by Reiko Tomii, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 17 (December 2005); and "Expo '70 and Japanese Art: Dissonant Voices," special issue of *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 23 (December 2011), both published by Jōsai International Center for the Promotion of Art and Science, Jōsai University, Sakado. While all these publications take Tokyo into consideration because of its central place in the Japanese art world, their main focus is not on the city per se. An exception is Blazwick, ed., *Century City* (in particular the chapter "Thought Provoked: Ten Views of Tokyo, circa 1970 [1967–73]," by Reiko Tomii, pp. 198–223), the timeframe of which overlaps with that of *Tokyo 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde*.

11. Well-known cinematic and literary works located in Tokyo include Japanese films such as Ozu Yasujiro's *Tokyo Story* (1953) and, more recently, Hollywood productions like Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003). Tokyo also plays a prominent role as the site of battles and destructions in science fiction and futuristic films and animations from *Godzilla* (1954) to *Akira* (1988). Murakami Haruki's three-volume novel *1Q84*, set in 1980s Tokyo, is, as I write, something of a global phenomenon; the book has been translated into more than twenty-five languages (in English, trans. Jay Rubin and Philip Gabriel, New York: Knopf, 2011).
12. When the fishing boat *Dai-Go Fukuryū-maru* (Lucky dragon no. 5) was exposed to radiation, its twenty-three crew members were contaminated. All were later diagnosed with acute radiation syndrome; the boat's chief radio operator died just months later of the syndrome. The tragedy gave rise to major antinuclear protests in Japan.
13. In 1948 Okamoto and critic Hanada Kiyoteru were the main organizers of the Yoru no Kai (Night society), which also included prominent figures such as writer Abe Kōbō. The society served as a venue for important debates and conversations on various topics of avant-garde art. It was instrumental in the formation of subsequent groups—such as Avangyarudo Geijutsu Kenkyūkai (Avant-garde art research society) and Seiki no Kai (Century society); these groups in turn served as important incubators for artists such as Ikeda Tatsuo, Katsuragawa Hiroshi, and Teshigahara Hiroshi, as well as critics such as Haryū Ichirō and Segi Shin'ichi. For more on Okamoto's important role in fostering the younger generation, see Hayashi, "Tracing the Graphic," p. 104.
14. When the American military base located in Tachikawa in the western part of Tokyo planned to expand, farming residents of the nearby Sunagawa assembled in protest and were strongly supported by labor unions and student activists from Zengakuren (short for Zen-Nihon Gakusei Jichikai Sōrengō, or All-Japan league of student self-government), leading to collisions with the police in charge of land survey. In October 1956, hundreds of protesters were injured. See Kenji Hasegawa, "In Search of a New Radical Left: The Rise and Fall of the Anpo Bund, 1955–1960," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 79. At twenty-three, as a student at Nihon University, Nakamura participated in the protest. See *Nakamura Hiroshi: Zuga jiken, 1953–2007* (Hiroshi Nakamura: Pictorial disturbances, 1953–2007), exh. cat. (Tokyo: Tokyo Shimbun, 2007), p. 188.
15. Hamada served in northern China and Yamashita in southern China and Taiwan during the war, while Ikeda was drafted and trained to be a *tokkōtai* (special attack unit, also popularly known as kamikaze), though he was never deployed.
16. In 1939 Yamashita was sent to Taiwan, where he was trained for three months, and then was stationed in what is now known as



North Vietnam. There, he witnessed atrocities committed by the Japanese military, which deeply impacted him. After being discharged in 1942 and returning to Japan, Yamashita resumed his artistic work. In the final years of World War II he created war paintings—as practically all working artists were forced to at the time. See Haryū Ichiro, “Kakegae no nai gaka: Yamashita Kikuji no sei to shi” (An irreplaceable artist: Yamashita Kikuji’s life and death), in *Yamashita Kikuji gashū/The Works of Kikuji Yamashita, 1919–1986* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1988), pp. 100–102.

17. One of the villagers, protesting against a cruel and wealthy land-owner, ended up drowning in a river while being pursued. In the painting, the body of the agitator is joined by that of an old woman who hanged herself after losing her savings to the tyrannical rich man. **18.** Haryū said of Yamashita’s *Akebono Village*: “Being as messy as it is, it’s certainly not a great success. But it is unusually graphic and raw in the way it portrays the complex tangle of feudalism and exploitation in rural villages by mingling fantasy with realism. It might well be that this method will lead the way to works which bitterly expose the crushed and oppressed life and psyche of Japan, and the drama of a reality overrun by feudalism and false democracy.” Cited in Justin Jesty, “Casting Light: Community, Visibility and Historical Presence in Reportage Art of the 1950s,” *Quadrante: Areas, Cultures, and Positions*, no. 10 (March 2008), Institute of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies: 205.

19. See Kazu Kaido, “Reconstruction: The Role of the Avant-Garde in Post-War Japan,” in Kaido and David Elliott, eds., *Reconstructions: Avant-Garde Art in Japan, 1945–1965*, exh. cat. (New York: Universe; Oxford, U.K.: Museum of Modern Art, 1987), p. 19.

20. “Kindai geijutsu e no ketsubetsu” (Farewell to modern art), from “Kaiga wa doko ikuka” (Where is painting headed?), special issue of *Bijutsu hihyō* (Art criticism) January 1957: 19, 21. Cited in Kaido, “Reconstructions,” p. 19. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this essay are the author’s.

21. Madokoro participated in a number of group exhibitions with these artists from 1956 to 1957, including a four-person exhibition at Satō Gallery with Ikeda, Kawara, and Yoshinaka Taizō. See Kudō Kasumi and Sugiyama Shōko, “Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori nenpyō” (Akutagawa [Madokoro] Saori chronology), in *Akutagawa Saori-ten* (Akutagawa Saori exhibition), exh. cat. (Yokosuka: Yokosuka Museum of Art, 2009), pp. 91–93.

22. Kusama was introduced to Surrealism through critic Takiguchi Shūzō, who also wrote a preface for her second solo exhibition. See Midori Yamamura, “Rising from Totalitarianism: Yayoi Kusama, 1945–1955,” in Frances Morris, ed., *Yayoi Kusama*, exh. cat. (London: Tate, 2012), pp. 168–75.

23. Kaido connects On Kawara’s shaped canvas *Black Soldier (Kokujinhei, 1955)* to the work of David Alfaro Siqueiros, and notes that Kawara saw the Mexican artist’s work in an exhibition of Mexican art at the Tokyo National Museum in 1955. That exhibition, including works representing the strong Socialist Realist tradition in Mexico, is often cited as an important influence on many artists of that generation. See Kaido, “Reconstruction,” p. 19.

24. Ming Tiampo, “*Under Each Other’s Spell*”: *Gutai and New York*, exh. cat. (New York: Stony Brook Foundation, 2009). Other important publications on Gutai include Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Françoise Bonnefoy, Sarah Clément, and Isabelle Sauvage, eds., *Gutai*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume/Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999); and Barbara Bertozzi and Klaus Wolbert, eds., *Gutai: Japanische Avantgarde, 1954–1965*, exh. cat. (Darmstadt: Mathildenhöhe, 1991). See also Munroe, *Scream Against the Sky*, and Paul Schimmel, ed., *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979*, exh. cat. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998).

25. Yoshihara made a point of debuting their namesake Gutai Art Exhibition (Gutai bijutsu-ten) in Tokyo, not in Kansai, after warming up outside Tokyo’s gaze for nearly half a year. I am grateful to Reiko Tomii for sharing this information.

26. E-mail exchange with Ming Tiampo, May 25, 2012.

27. The Picasso exhibition was organized and sponsored by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (newspaper) and was presented at Takashimaya department store in Nihonbashi, August 27–September 2, 1951.

28. The most important sources to date on the group include *Jikken Kōbō: Dai-11-kai Omōju Takiguchi Shūzō-ten/The 11th Exhibition Homage to Shuzo Takiguchi: Experimental Workshop*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Satani Gallery, 1991), and Miwako Tezuka, “Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop): Avant-Garde Experiments in Japanese Art of the 1950s,” Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, New York, 2005.

29. Fukushima, Kitadai, and Yamaguchi came to know each other through the Modan Āto Kaki Kōshūkai (Modern art summer study group), organized in 1948 by Okamoto and others. Another visual artist in the group was Komai Tetsurō, primarily a printmaker, but his involvement was comparatively brief and limited.

30. For more on the Vitrine series, see Sas, “Intermedia,” p. 147. Also see *Media āto no senkūsha Yamaguchi Katsuhiro-ten: “Jikken Kōbō” kara teatorīnu made/Pioneer of Media Art, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro: From “Experimental Workshop” to Teatrīne*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Japan Association of Art Museums, 2006).

31. *Sōgetsu to sono jidai, 1945–1970* (Sōgetsu and its era, 1945–1970), exh. cat. (Ashiya City Museum of Art & History/Chiba City Museum of Art, 1998), p. 47.

32. Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, “Experimental Workshop and the Deterritorialization of Art,” in *Jikken Kōbō: Dai-11-kai Omōju*, p. 27.

33. The invitation came from Iizawa Tadasu, the chief editor of *Asahi gurafu*. The artists who participated in the commission were Komai Tetsurō (printmaker and a member of Jikken Kōbō) and older artist Saitō Yoshishige (who also made constructions), in addition to Yamaguchi and Kitadai. At a later stage, Teshigahara Sōfū, Hasegawa Saburō, and Hamada Hamao contributed work to the project.

34. To be more precise, the project was presented in three phases, each featuring a different group of artists: the first phase (January–June 1953, twenty-four issues), the second (June 1953–February 1954, thirty-one issues), and the final phase (February–May 1954, sixteen issues). The last phase involved only Hamada’s constructions, photographed by Ōtsuji.

35. The fourth auto-slide show, *Lespugue (Resupyūgu)*, by Komai and Yuasa, said to have been based on a poem by Robert Ganzo, and the only one in color, is currently missing.

36. See Sas, “Intermedia,” p. 147.

37. The composition of *L’Ève future* was by Kawaji Akira, with choreography by Matsuo Akemi. The sound was by Takemitsu and Mayuzumi. In *Pierrot Lunaire*, musicologist and Jikken Kōbō member Akiyama Kuniharu took on the translation of the original poems, and the costumes were by Fukushima. The lighting designer for both pieces was Imai Naoji.

38. For a thorough analysis of *Pierrot Lunaire*, see Miwako Tezuka, “Experimentation and Tradition: The Avant-Garde Play *Pierrot Lunaire* by Jikken Kōbō and Takechi Tetsuji,” *Art Journal* 70, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 64–85.

39. “*Anpan*” is shorthand for *andepandan*, the Japanese transliteration of the French word *independent*.

40. “Kudo’s search for ways to ‘emancipate humans from this state of enslavement to the preservation of seeds’ and his attempt to render humanity impotent—that is, free from sex and from the idea of the beauty of sex—constitute a ‘philosophy for fundamental freedom.’ This was Kudo’s ‘Philosophy of Impotence.’ What he hoped to convey was the need to ‘find the ground zero of sex, the ground zero of culture.’ Despite the many misunderstandings about his art that would exist for years to come, Kudo’s philosophy was from the beginning less erotic than ascetic.” Doryun Chong, “When the Body Changes into New Forms: Tracing Tetsumi Kudo,” in Chong, ed., *Tetsumi Kudo: Garden of Metamorphosis*, exh. cat. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2008), p. 29.

41. See Chong, “When the Body Changes,” and Hiroko Kudo, “Chronology of Selected Works,” pp. 212–15, both in Chong, *Tetsumi Kudo*.

42. Tōno Yoshiaki, “Yomiuri andepandan-ten kara 1: ‘Zōshokusei rensa hannō B’—Kudō Tetsumi garakuta no geijutsu” (At the Yomiuri Indépendant, Report 1: “Proliferating Chain Reaction”—Tetsumi Kudō, the art of junk), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 2, 1960, evening edition.

43. For a thorough explanation of the emergence and course of Anti-Art, see Reiko Tomii, “Geijutsu on Their Minds: Memorable Words on Anti-Art” in *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art*, pp. 35–62.

44. The “official” Neo Dada group exhibitions—three in all—took place in 1960 (April 4–9, Ginza Gallery; July 1–10, White House; and September 1–7, Hibiya Gallery). The members and associates of the group, however, were active participants in the Yomiuri Indépendant before and after 1960, as well as many other events and exhibitions. For the most comprehensive records of Neo Dada and its members’ activities, see *Neo Dada Japan, 1958–1998—Isozaki Arata to Howaito Hausu no menmen/Neo-Dada Japan, 1958–1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of “White House”* (Oita: Oita City Board of Education, 1998).

45. Hi Red Center is named after the first kanji characters of the surnames of the three main members: *taka* (high) from Takamatsu, *aka* (red) from Akasegawa, and *naka* (center) from Nakanishi.

46. The *Yamanote Line Incident* was carried out by two figures identified as “Urobon K” and “K Murata,” in addition to Takamatsu and Nakanishi. Izumi Tatsu was listed on the business cards that Hi Red Center made for the occasion of *Shelter Plan*, as well as on the Hi Red Center map (plates 1, 2). Artist Kazakura Shō was another frequent collaborator. See also the discussion of *Let’s Participate in the HRC Campaign*... in Hayashi, “Tracing the Graphic,” in this volume: p. 103, fig. 5, and n. 27.

47. For further discussion of Hi Red Center’s *Shelter Plan*, see Sas, “Intermedia,” pp. 150–52. See also Akasegawa, *Tōkyō mikisā keikaku*, chap. 8, “Teikoku Hoteru no nikutai” (Bodies at the Imperial Hotel).

48. For detailed descriptions and analyses of the incident, see Reiko Tomii, “State v. (Anti-)Art: *Model 1,000-Yen Note Incident* by Akasegawa Genpei and Company,” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 141–72; and William Marotti, “Simulacra and Subversion in the Everyday: Akasegawa Genpei’s 1000-Yen Copy, Critical Art, and the State,” *Postcolonial Studies* 4, no. 2 (2011): 211–39.

49. Kuroda Raiji (KuroDalaiJee), “The Rituals of ‘Zero Jigen’ in Urban Space,” *R*, no. 2 (2003): 36.

50. Two important sources on the Sōgetsu Art Center are: *Sōgetsu to sono jidai, 1945–1970*, and *Kagayake 60-nendai: Sōgetsu Āto Sentā no zenkiroku* (Brilliant ‘60s: Complete records of the Sōgetsu Art Center; Tokyo: “Sōgetsu Āto Sentā no kiroku” kankō iinkai, 2002).

51. Akiyama Kuniharu, “Soko wa 60-nendai zen’ei geijutsu no shingen-chi datta” (That place was the epicenter of 1960s avant-garde arts), in *Kagayake 60-nendai*.

52. The Sakkyokuka Shūdan also included such composers as Akutagawa Yasushi, Moroi Makoto, Matsudaira Yoriaki, Miyoshi Akira, and Mamiya Yoshio.

53. Yayoi Uno Everett, “‘Scream Against the Sky’: Japanese Avant-Garde Music in the Sixties,” in Robert Adlington, ed., *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music in the Sixties* (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 195.

54. Ibid.

55. For a thorough account of Ono’s first return visit to Japan, see Alexandra Munroe, “Spirit of YES: The Art and Life of Yoko Ono,” in Munroe with Jon Hendricks, eds., *Yes Yoko Ono*, exh. cat. (New York: Abrams, 2000), pp. 10–37.

56. Works by Cage were: *Aria with Fontana Mix; Music Walk; Atlas Eclipticalis* with *Winter Music, 0’00”; 26’55,988”*.

57. The Japanese title of the exhibition was *Bauhausu 1919–1933-nen no aida no ninen to seisaku seishin to seikatsu o shimesu tenrankai*

(Bauhaus: An exhibition that shows the ideology, creative spirit, and life between 1919 and 1933).

58. For more on *Expose 68*, see Sas, “Intermedia,” pp. 141, 153.

59. The so-called sailor dress or outfit is a common uniform worn by female secondary-school students in Japan, and was introduced in the early 1920s. It is often featured in popular culture and sub-cultures as a “fetish item.”

60. Interview with the artist, November 2011.

61. *Yōjinbō* (or *Yojimbo*), meaning “bodyguard,” is the title of Kurosawa’s 1961 period drama, in which Mifune Toshirō, one of the most celebrated actors in Japanese cinematic history, played the eponymous *rōnin* (masterless samurai). Kurosawa is said to have been influenced by the American Western genre; *Yojimbo* in turn was reconceived by Sergio Leone as the 1964 Spaghetti Western classic *A Fistful of Dollars*, starring Clint Eastwood.

62. *Nikutai no hanran—butō 1968/sonzai no semioroji/Hijikata Tatsumi’s Rebellion of the Body: Imagery and Documents of Butoh, 1968* (Tokyo: Research Center for Arts and Arts Administration, Keiō University, 2009), p. 24. *Nikutai no hanran* has been translated as *Rebellion of the Body* as well as *Revolt of the Flesh*.

63. John Nathan’s *Mishima: A Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), based on the writer’s close relationship with his subject, is full of fascinating information but tends to be scandalizing, perhaps over-psychosexualizing Mishima.

64. For more on Mono-ha, see Yoshitake, “The Language of Things,” pp. 127–31.

65. For more on vision and optics, see ibid.

66. Organized by Nakahara Yūsuke and held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exhibition, also known as the Japan International Art Exhibition (Dai-jukkai Nihon Kokusai Bijutsu-ten) under the title *Between Man and Matter (Ningen to busshitsu)*, featured forty artists, including, from the United States, Carl Andre, Hans Haacke, Stephen Kaltenbach, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, and Sol LeWitt; Arte Povera artists such as Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Gilberto Zorio, and Giuseppe Penone; and other Europeans such as Christo, Jan Dibbets, Daniel Buren, Reiner Ruthenbeck, and Panamarenko. The Japanese artists included Kawaguchi, Nomura Hitoshi, Takamatsu, and several artists associated with Mono-ha: Enokura Kōji, Koshimizu Susumu, and Narita Katsuhiko. On Kawara also participated with his Today series of paintings.

67. For more on Expo ‘70, see Sas, “Intermedia,” pp. 141–43, 156.

68. See Midori Yoshimoto, “*Some Young People—From Nonfiction Theater*: Transcript of a Documentary Film Directed by Nagano Chiaki,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* (December 2005): 101.

69. Hiroko Ikegami notes that upon learning that there were multiple copies of his works, Rauschenberg was “disturbed.” She writes: “Perhaps Rauschenberg acutely sensed that multiple copies could turn the original—his work, that is—into a mere commodity.”

Ikegami, *The Great Migrator: Robert Rauschenberg and the Global Rise of American Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010), p. 181.

70. The question read: “Everybody has a right to a pure creative act. Everybody, even a so-called ‘Sunday painter.’ Nevertheless, only artists are required to make an original creative act. For instance, if someone paints a Marilyn Monroe on canvas, they say it is a creative work of art. And if I paint ‘Mona Lisa,’ they say it is an imitation. Why?” Ibid., p. 184.

71. Ibid., pp. 197, 200.

72. “Mining the Postwar Japanese Vanguard: Miwako Tezuka Speaks with Doryun Chong,” *Art Journal* (web version), <http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=2394>, accessed May 2012.

73. For a discussion of the Martha Jackson Gallery exhibition and its aftermath, see Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism*, pp. 105–13.



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