

**JAPANESE ART AFTER 1945**

**SCREAM AGAINST THE SKY**

戦後日本の前衛美術  
空へ叫び

**ALEXANDRA MUNROE**

Sengo Nihon no zenei bijutsu  
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The Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe

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## PREFACE

The exhibition, "Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky," is an interpretive survey of the last fifty years of Japanese avant-garde art. It is a great pleasure for The Japan Foundation to be co-organizer of the American tour, which travels to the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in association with the Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens.

The Japan Foundation has worked for many years with leading American art institutions to introduce representative works of Japanese culture to the United States. We have focused on both classical Japanese and emerging contemporary art. An example of the former was an exhibition of traditional Japanese art organized by The Japan Foundation and held at the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. in 1988, entitled "The Shaping of the Daimyō Culture 1185–1868." A successful example of the latter was "Against Nature: Japanese Art in the Eighties," which opened in 1989 and toured for two years to seven major U.S. cities, including San Francisco and New York. These exhibitions enjoyed critical acclaim and performed a significant role in encouraging a deeper understanding of Japanese culture among Americans today.

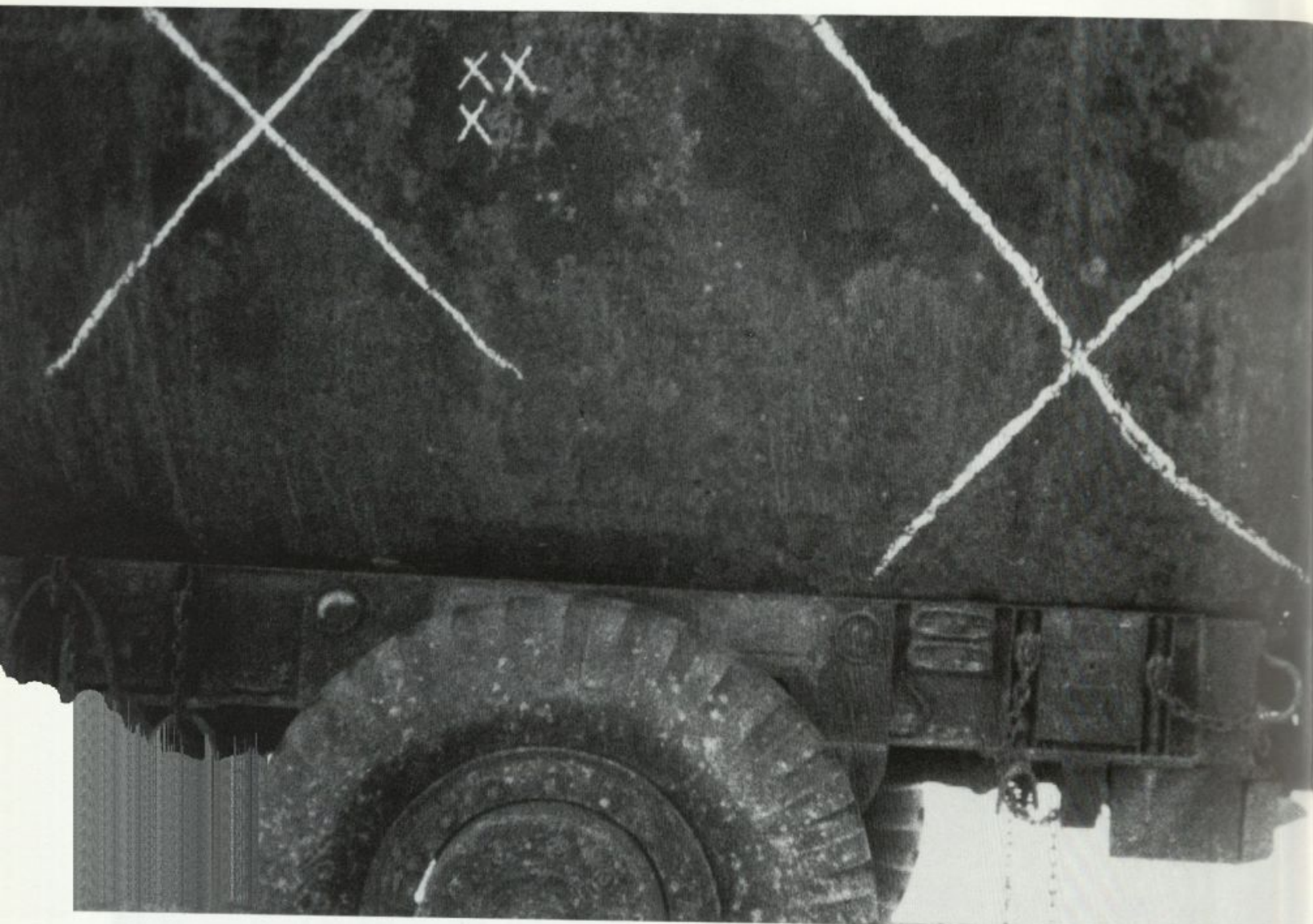
"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky" is the first exhibition devoted to the history of postwar Japanese avant-garde culture ever presented in the United States. Although the artists are of different generations and their works represent diverse styles of expression, a common element can be detected. While clearly demonstrating a departure from European and American modernism on one hand, these artists have sought innovative methods of expression that surpass the boundaries of established art forms and which are contemporaneous with some of the most experimental and radical international art movements of the postwar period.

The opening section of this exhibition presents the work of the Gutai group, arguably the first avant-garde movement to emerge in Japan after World War II. Yoshihara Jirō, the leading exponent of Gutai, encouraged his members, "Never imitate!" and "Create what has never existed before!" Yoshihara's words and spirit happen to extend beyond Gutai to inform many of the other artists' works in this exhibition, and convey a message that is still relevant to the contemporary art community in Japan.

As we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, the world of art today is rapidly changing and becoming more and more diverse. This exhibition is therefore very timely. It offers a revisionist view of recent Japanese art history and shows the passion of the artists who have sought to break through the boundaries of artistic self-expression.

This provocative exhibition was curated by art historian Alexandra Munroe of New York and Tokyo, who developed this project as guest curator of the Yokohama Museum of Art from 1991 to 1993. Under the museum's auspices, Ms. Munroe conducted research on postwar and contemporary Japanese art and subsequently presented her findings in the exhibition, "*Sengo Nihon no zen'ei bijutsu*," held at the Yokohama Museum of Art from February to March 1994. The present exhibition varies only slightly from the original show. Yokohama's project, which entailed a comprehensive reexamination of fifty years of postwar Japanese cultural history, had never before been attempted in Japan. It proved to be immensely popular and stirred a great deal of critical debate.





## CHAPTER 12

### X: EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO

BARBARA  
LONDON

During the second half of the nineteenth century, in its desire to strengthen itself and conquer new frontiers, Japan swiftly absorbed industrial and artistic practices from the West. When photography was introduced in the 1850s, the Japanese adapted a new, foreign technology to local conventions. A popular saying of 1872 included photographs in the "standard paraphernalia of civilization and enlightenment," along with newspapers, the postal system, gaslights, steam engines, exhibitions, and dirigible balloons.<sup>1</sup> Photojournalism arose in the early 1900s when it became possible to print photographs and type on the same page.

Western cinema reached Japan in the form of the Kinetoscope in 1896 and the Vitagraph in 1897. Audiences interested in the new technology and up-to-date Western film styles flocked to Tokyo's special film theater which opened in 1903. The first Japanese films resembled, and used familiar stories taken from, *Kabuki*. Other themes were drawn from *Shinpa* (new, Western-style theater), with its contemporary plots, and *Shingeki* (modern drama), which also borrowed its texts and techniques from the West.

Similar to *Bunraku* puppet theater, early Japanese film was accompanied by a live narrator who told the story and commented on the images. Standing in the theater beside the screen, the *benshi* (narrator) identified temporal and character shifts and frequently introduced a narrative parallel to the one that was shown. Subtitles were irrelevant. The *benshi* sheltered the Japanese cinema from the realism of Western film.

In 1923, Japan's strong, regional film industry was demolished by the Kantō earthquake. New sound technology was introduced during its reconstruction, and cinema changed dramatically. Directors like Murata Minoru, Mizoguchi Kenji, and Ozu Yasujiro developed detailed styles that faithfully illuminated the reality of daily life. As equipment

proliferated, the versatile camera arts gradually came to seem part of the fabric of Japanese life. Filmmaking reached a remarkable level of artistry, employing long takes, serene moments, and non-logical, intuitive editing. Atmosphere was more important than character, and linearity was not a concern.

The period that began with the American Occupation (1945–1952) after World War II saw the progress of science and technology, rapid economic growth, and the modernization of culture. Setting the tone for democracy in Japan, Occupation commanders prohibited the creation and viewing of period Japanese dramas that sanctioned feudal ways. They encouraged "enlightened" foreign films, and viewers began to follow and emulate American and European styles and fashions.

In the late fifties, eight millimeter (8-mm) home-movie technology was perfected, and film became a desirable and affordable form of expression for the general population. Artists experimented with the medium in this new form, developing strategies that often were derived from traditional contemplative methods of experiencing the arts. Film time was perfect since it slows down and makes the moment become all-absorbing.

#### SURREALIST/ABSURDIST AESTHETIC MOOD OF THE FIFTIES

The decade of the fifties was a transitional period: everyone was catching up, struggling to survive. The American Occupation ended in 1952 and left the Japanese people to sort through the many changes and new challenges to tradition. Experimental film gained a toehold among painters, poets, composers, photographers, and playwrights. Con-

12.1. TAKEMITSU Tōru and TANIKAWA Shuntarō. X (Batsu). 1960. Film





12.2. HOSOE Eikō. Navel and A-Bomb. 1960. Film



12.3. TERAYAMA Shūji. The Cage. 1962. Film

trary to Western filmmakers, who tended to probe psychological depths, Japanese artists adopted the style more than the content of Surrealism.

The critic-poet Takiguchi Shūzō (1905–1979), who had studied with the poet Nishiwaki Junzaburō and the Marxist theoretician Tozaka Jun, was chiefly responsible for the wide dissemination of information about Surrealism in Japan. He was instrumental in the founding in 1951 of the Experimental Workshop (*Jikken Kōbō*), which explored new media and staged interdisciplinary events using photography and film in a kind of Bauhaus revival. Participants included composers Takemitsu Tōru and Suzuki Shin'ichi, kinetic artists such as Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, the music critic Akiyama Kunihiro, the performer Sonoda Takahiro, and the photographer Ōtsuji Kiyoji. The group promoted equality among members and dispensed with the traditional hierarchical student-teacher relationship, which requires that the student perpetuate the teacher's style.

Other experimental organizations emerged, including the Democratic Artists Association (*Demokurāto Bijutsuka Kyōkai*) which was composed of creative young artists and critics. Searching for values and subject matter that corresponded to their roles in a new Japan, the Democratic artists were drawn to the generosity and experience of the contemplative artist-photographer Ei-Kyū (1911–1960).<sup>2</sup> Their 1957 exhibition, "Eyes of 10," challenged photography and heralded a new, postwar era.<sup>3</sup>

Ankoku Butoh (Dance of Utter Darkness), a new kind of dance created by Hijikata Tatsumi, was influential in the stylistic and methodological development of Japanese photography and film (*Performance Plates 106 to 109*). In May 1959 Hijikata held his first solo performance in Tokyo. Based on Mishima Yukio's novel, *Forbidden Colors* (*Kinjiki*) that depicts sexual relations between men, the dance—more ambiguous than the book—featured a male dancer, a

young boy and a live chicken. As the piece reached its climax, Hijikata broke the bird's neck and splattered blood over the stage. This innovative new dance form arose from a search for something authentic to be made out of Japanese rather than Western culture.

Butoh touched the expressive part of life Hijikata felt had been lost in contemporary society since the sanitizing of Japanese popular culture began with the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Hijikata and emerging alternative theater groups like Kara Jūrō's Theater of Situations (*Jōkyō Gekijō*), Suzuki Tadashi's Waseda Little Theater (*Waseda Shō-Gekijō*), and Satō Shin's Black Tent (*Kuro Tendo*), looked back to primitive Japanese roots. Exploring the dark, obsessional, and banal, Butoh created images of a wasteland peopled by white-faced spastic beings who existed somewhere between reality and illusion. Hijikata and others also studied the raucous atmosphere of popular entertainment which they saw as the legitimate heir to *Kabuki*. They looked at Asakusa "opera," a kind of musical theater that incorporated both traditional and Western influences; *Misemono*, a form of theater that included acts comparable to ones in a circus sideshow; and *Yose* theater, that centered on comic monologue, similar to a vaudeville review.

The photographer Hosoe Eikō saw Hijikata's *Forbidden Colors*, and was inspired by the stark, fiendish figures. Hosoe took Hijikata and his group off the stage and with them constructed otherworldly dramas in film and photography. Hosoe also worked with Mishima Yukio—the writer was in Hijikata's studio so often he kept his own chair there—who posed for Hosoe in an erotic series, *Ordeal by Roses* (1963). Both Hijikata and Hosoe were born in the northern area of Tōhoku, where the harsh winters

are long and bleak. Tōhoku contains such frightening, volcanic landscapes as Osore Mountain, where people go annually to commune with the dead through the blind mystics that live there. In keeping with the Japanese people's reverence for the area where their ancestors lived, this remote environment permeated both Hosoe and Hijikata's work.

Commercial cinema was experiencing a ferment as well. Ōshima Nagisa was a novice when the commercial film studio, Shōchiku, asked him to direct *Town of Love and Hope* (1959). This and Ōshima's subsequent narratives dealt with such gritty subjects as young people's nihilistic questioning of the ways of their parents, and the plight of Koreans living in the slums of Japan. Ōshima was active in urging his colleagues to overthrow the conventions of traditional cinema in order to create a new, independent art form.

#### THE NEO-DADAIST PERIOD

Photographers and filmmakers were central figures in the Japanese neo-Dadaist movement. Like the original European movement of the 1920s from which it was derived, neo-Dadaism freed art from tradition by challenging old structures. Although it came at a time when leftist activity was disintegrating through political oppression, the movement was sustained by students who had been encouraged after the war to be unconventional by their progressive teachers. Artists used everyday, industrial objects and materials and such techniques as collage and assemblage which, unlike Japan's traditional arts and orthodox modern painting and sculpture, did not require years of training with a master.

It was a fertile time for Anti-Art. There existed a strong, anarchistic underground fueled by lively interdisciplinary exchange, and unusually forthright artistic dialogue. Rules were up for grabs. In October 1960, Hijikata, the poet-director Terayama Shūji, and the photographers Hosoe and Tōmatsu Shōmei created the Jazz Film Laboratory (*Jazzu Eiga Jikken-shitsu*), which embraced music, dance, film, and lighting. Anti-tradition, anti-authority, and opposed to Social Realism, they and their peers deliberately rejected common sense, as well as the conventions of a rigid society. Proceeding without established formulas, every means was possible—from the ludicrous to the political, from the derisive to the violent—and they produced artistic work that was exuberantly expressive.

*Navel and A-Bomb* (1960, figure 12.2), Hosoe's short black-and-white film, reflects the anguish of the period. The film mocks tradition with its nude male performers who stand in ritualistic poses on an empty beach beside a placid cow. The performers fight over an apple, and then a flapping chicken with its head cut off dies (reminiscent of the chicken in *Forbidden Colors*). The film concludes with an aerial shot of ten naked little boys scampering and crawling over the beach. They run in a circle, fall down, and pile up in a heap, their penises covered with sand. A man comes out of the ocean and draws a long rope from one boy's navel, which was marked by a large X. The concluding image is of an atomic bomb majestically exploding over the screen; this horrific shape is the subliminal leitmotif of the film.

Another well-known neo-Dadaist film, *X (Batsu)* (1960, figure 12.1), follows the progress of an everyman through an urban wasteland. It was made by the celebrated poet Tanikawa Shuntarō, who is a master of common language and wrote many film scripts and texts for photography books, with a soundtrack (subsequently lost) by the composer Takemitsu Tōru. This every-

man marks everything he encounters with an X, from telephone poles to fruit and books he fondles in markets to a woman he pursues who lies on the ground, first clothed, then unclothed. As he caresses her back, he puts X's along her spine. Later, when he draws an X on a storefront, he is beaten and dragged off by businessmen. The allegorical *batsu* can be either consent or rejection, or the mark of individualism, putting an identifying (or accepting) mark on the world.

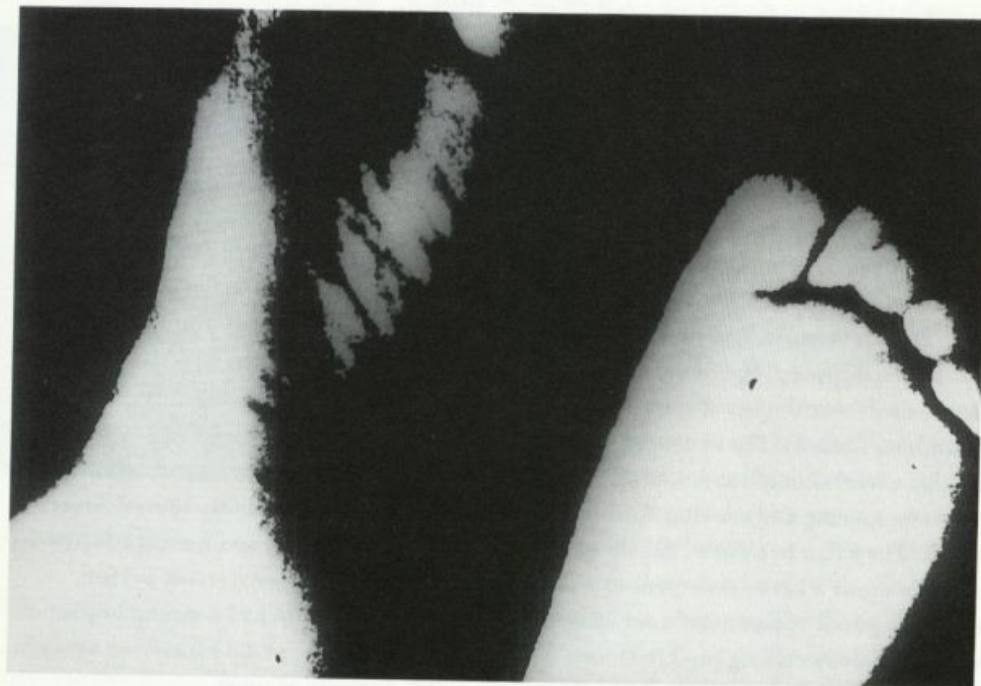
Terayama Shūji (1935–1983) was a central figure in Tokyo's underground, was widely published even during his teens, and revered as one of Japan's finest poets.<sup>4</sup> Out of his own Tōhoku childhood and his close rapport with Hijikata, Terayama joined innocence with the erotic and the grotesque. He looked to the Japanese popular culture of rural folk festivals and street theater for inspiration. He worked on the ambiguous edge between reality and fiction.

In 1967, Terayama founded the Tokyo Tenjō Sajiki Theater with designer Yokoo Tadanori and theater director Higashi Yutaka. He worked there with young performers, creating theater pieces for them and casting them in a variety of his films. Tenjō Sajiki attracted many artists from different disciplines and the group frequently toured America and Europe. Terayama's eccentric vision, reflected in his books, street performances, and films had a strong impact on younger artists, as did his encouragement and generosity of spirit.

In *The Cage* (1962, figure 12.3), Terayama transformed an ordinary pastoral scene into an enchanted garden. This magical film depicts a collection of solitary characters who come and go about their obscure business. It opens



12.4. TESHIGAHARA Hiroshi. *Woman of the Dunes*. 1964. Film



12.6. Donald RICHIE. *Boy with Cat*. 1966. Film



12.5. Takahiko IIMURA. *On Eye Raft*. 1962. Film

with a naked figure who runs up and peers through an ornate door, trying to get in (or out). Two men exercise and flex their muscles, then a woman holding a goat runs past. An older woman in a flowered print dress appears with a large pendulum clock, which is later cast aside, as if murdered.

Despite the existence of places like Tenjō Sajiki and the intense creativity of this period, the field of experimental film was threatened by various outside forces. The influence of television expanded exponentially after many households bought television sets to watch the live broadcast of the Crown Prince Akihito's wedding in 1959. Film audiences were dropping in number, so many film companies invested in television stations. Filmmakers, seduced by broadcasters' need to fill up air time, began to make television movies, documentaries, and commercials.

Struggling to portray their own vision, avant-garde filmmakers turned to the example of the West. They presented their work in basement cafes and such unlikely places as Naiqua Gallery, which was housed in a former medical clinic in the Shinbashi section of Tokyo and presented the experimental film of Takahiko Iimura and Ōbayashi Nobuhiko in 1963. The most active alternative site was the Sōgetsu Art Center, established by the celebrated sculptor and *ikebana* master Teshigahara Sōfū, and run by Nara Yoshimi and Igawa Kōzō, with Sōfū's son, Teshigahara Hiroshi as director.<sup>5</sup> Sōgetsu subsidized local performance artists and filmmakers by donating production funds and exhibition space. The center quickly became the focal point for avant-garde activities, from interdisciplinary events staged around Hijikata's dance to screenings of the films of D.W. Griffith and Sergei Eisenstein, as well as American underground and French New Wave cinema. The inauguration of the

Cine Club Research Group gave artists direct access to foreign films. A wide range of artists were active at the Sōgetsu Art Center, including the musician-composer Takemitsu Tōru (who, like Ichihyanagi Toshi and Takahashi Yūji, was trying every imaginable way of making new music), the architect Isozaki Arata, and the sculptor Miki Tomio.

Teshigahara Hiroshi is considered an authentic "auteur" director, representative of the New Wave in Japan. His accomplishment was fueled by the international stimulus provided by the Sōgetsu Art Center. Initially a painter, Teshigahara shifted to film and made his first documentary in 1953 on the late-eighteenth-century artist Katsushika Hokusai. In the late fifties he worked as an assistant to Kamei Fumio, the leftist documentary filmmaker who had graduated from the Leningrad Motion Picture Institute and brought Russian Socialist-Realist filmmaking techniques to Japan. After making several anti-war films during the war (financed by the army), Kamei was persecuted by the Japanese police. He directed the provocative (and eventually censored) documentary *The Japanese Tragedy* in 1946. Teshigahara was impressed by the older director's techniques as well as by the humanistic message of Japan's Communist Party. Yet he was more interested in psychology and atmosphere than in politics. In his dramatic films, he turned to the novelist Abe Kōbō, fascinated by the writer's baroque, psychological symbolism. He set his probing camera to reveal microscopic detail and to make emotions feel tangible. Westerners found *Woman in the Dunes* (1964, figure 12.4) wildly sensual and mysteriously beautiful. The Japanese felt the artistry was too obvious.

Also active at the Sōgetsu Art Center was the American expatriate writer and filmmaker Donald Richie, who had a catalytic effect on experimental filmmaking in Japan. After receiving a degree in film from Columbia University on the GI Bill, he returned to Tokyo where he had been stationed. His 8-mm films from the

mid-fifties inspired many artists with his personal approach to cinema, broad experience, and direct response to other artists' experiments. He shot *Human Sacrifice* (1959) in an abandoned factory in Tokyo's Shinagawa area with Hijikata and his dancers, and recorded one scene of *A Couple* (1963) at the Sōgetsu Art Center. Richie's films were included with the Japanese entries at the "3rd Experimental Film Festival" in Brussels in 1964.

The role of documentary and art films was discussed in the many film journals that appeared at this time,<sup>6</sup> as well as in the art magazine *Bijutsu techō*. The Sōgetsu Art Center's *FILM* quarterly, among other publications, devoted pages to the meaning of "independent production," "independent" exhibition, and the "Old Left" notion of "independence." It encouraged film artists to move away from the restriction of making public-relations films, which for many years had been their source of livelihood.

Takahiko Iimura's low-budget films followed extemporaneous methods. For one project he took found footage of an American sex education film, scratched the emulsion and reedited the film, calling it *On Eye Raft* (1962, figure 12.5). Another work, *Onon* (1963), which is accompanied by a music score by Yasunao Tone, turned film into an interactive medium: he played the projector like a musical instrument, going backward and forward, stopping and freezing frames. The result was a lively kind of junk art, the everyday given another context.

More iconoclastic young filmmakers banded together in groups. Adachi Masao, then studying film at Nihon University (said to have later joined the



Palestine Liberation Organization) founded the Nichidai Group with Wakamatsu Kōji, Hirano Kanbara, and Jōnouchi Motoharu. The name is an abbreviation of *Nihon Daigaku* (Nihon University). Adachi's expressionist film *Closed Vagina* (Sain, 1962) was his metaphor for the political situation in Japan. Jōnouchi made "abstract" documentaries by using a fish-eye lens to film student protests. His impressionistic film, *Hi Red Center's Shelter Plan* (1964, Plate 73), scans the photographs from this Hi Red Center absurdist performance at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel. Often, Nichidai audiences would be taken to a dark room expecting to see a film, but the room would remain pitch black—the cinematic equivalent of John Cage's concerts.<sup>7</sup>

After graduating, Adachi and his group founded the Van Film Institute and worked out of a small studio in Shinjuku. They combined fact and fiction in *Document June 16*, a documentary about the student movement and the death of martyr Kanba Michiko. Yasunao Tone, Yōko Ono, and Ichiyangi Toshi provided a semi-improvised sound track.

The Korean artist-musician Nam June Paik is closely connected to the multifarious cultures in which he has lived. During the fifties, he completed a degree in aesthetics at the University of Tokyo, then studied music in Germany, where he joined Fluxus, the international movement that sought to erase the distinction between art and everyday life. He returned to Tokyo in 1963 to develop a robot with engineer Abe Shūya. His performance of the music of John Cage at the Sōgetsu Art Center was one of the first Fluxus events in Japan. He left Tokyo for New York, where he and the

robot could frequently be seen together walking down Canal Street and at Fluxus events. In 1984, he was the first video artist to be given a retrospective in Japan.

Fluxus included many Japanese artists, including Shiomi Mieko and Yōko Ono. In the early sixties, Ono became an active participant in and instigator of proto-Fluxus events, performing her distinctive style of Happenings in Tokyo, New York, and London. She made a series of formalist films which have been shown in experimental circles in the West more often than in Japan. Interested in the representation of the body, Ono emphasized stylistic and abstract concerns. *Bottoms* (1966) is a whimsical series of close-ups of peoples' naked posteriors, recorded as they walked in place in front of the camera.

#### MINIMAL ABSTRACTION

By the late sixties, neo-Dadaism in Japan had played itself out. At this time Minimalism was starting to take hold in America, inspired in part by a rediscovery of Zen Buddhism and Asian art. Many North American filmmakers were interested in the structural possibilities of the camera and the recording process. Japanese artists embraced Minimalism as a return to aesthetic issues. Despite the fact that Minimalism came from America, many of its tenets were familiar to Japanese artists since appreciation of the traditional Japanese arts had trained them to look at the abstract qualities of materials. Exposed form was a goal.

For Minimal filmmakers, formal considerations counted for everything. They dealt with art's processes—the film emulsion as a material to be drawn on or scratched, the frame as information to be broken down and separated into colors, the projected image as a landscape-like field of color. Film was considered a progression of stills. Works emphasized a state of being rather than an action, each moment separate from the next.

Hagiwara Sakumi's *Mist* (1971) was recorded from one stationary camera position. It shows a black-and-white landscape in which, over a span of eight minutes, the misty clouds obscuring nearby trees gradually lift to reveal distant mountains. Viewers become contemplative as their own time slows down, in the same way they would look at an ink drawing of a similar landscape.

Andō Kōhei sculpts with time. He based a series of short films on the suburban train that rattles past his house. In *Like a Train Passing #2* (1979), the camera set on a tripod records family members standing in front of the train that rumbles through cherry blossoms, autumn leaves, and snow. Gradually the scene fades to dark red, and the camera moves closer to the family members. By this time, the train's unbroken motion and sounds have become a mechanized lullaby.

In Yamazaki Hiroshi's work, time and space belong to the same continuum. In *Heliography* (1975), he recorded the motion of the winter sun over a thirty-day period. As a projected image, the rays of the sunlight glimmer, twinkle, and disappear.

A more technically-based Minimal work is Matsumoto Toshio's *Ātman* (1975, Plate 161). The title comes from the Sanskrit word meaning *self*, which the artist contrasts with *Brahma*, the concept of the cosmos as described in the *Upanishad* texts. Matsumoto wrote that he "tried to focus on some kind of paradoxical struggle between Ātman and Brahma." He dressed his actor in traditional *Nō* costume with a devil mask, and used *Nō* music as the film's score. The film is a structural masterpiece. Matsumoto shot the film frame by frame, recording from 480 camera positions around his subject. He alternates between close-up views and a lateral

motion created by a zoom lens. As he cuts between the two points of view, he simultaneously modifies the landscape, building in increasingly faster momentum to the film's crescendo.

In addition to his important contributions to experimental film, Matsumoto has produced numerous feature films, starting with *Funeral of Roses* (1969). The film is an Oedipal story that deals with transvestism. A television-style host poses rhetorical questions to the viewer. An avowed disciple of Bertholt Brecht, Matsumoto clarified the confrontation between Japanese culture and Western materialist theories of representation.

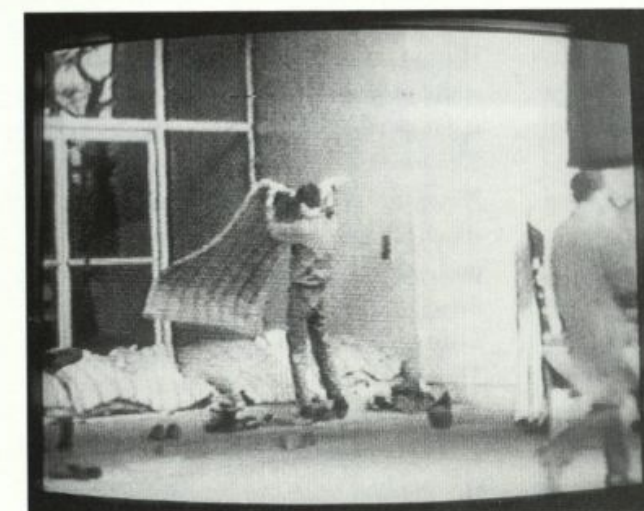
#### THE ELECTRONIC ARTS

When the Sony Corporation introduced the first portable video equipment in Japan in the mid-sixties, some artists immediately began to experiment with it. Japanese video art was launched with a 1968 event called "Say Something Now, I'm Looking for Something to Say," organized by the critic Tōno Yoshiaki and former Experimental Workshop member Yamaguchi Katsuhiro. Since the early fifties, when he covered his paintings with lenses whose refracted images shifted as the viewer moved, Yamaguchi has been involved with kinetic art and electronic media. In his video work, he has concentrated on multi-monitor installations. His elegant constructions are the embodiment of good Japanese design. For many years he was an influential professor at Tsukuba University, and he continues to be an effective advisor to corporate and government leaders.

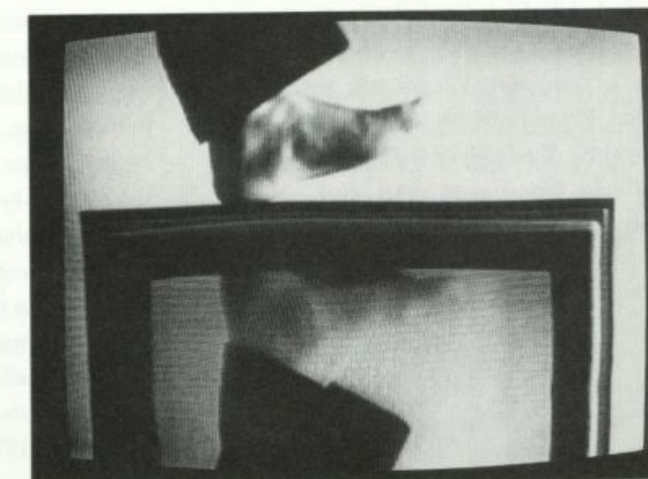
In 1969, the "Cross Talk Intermedia Festival" took place at Tokyo's Yoyogi Stadium, attracting an audience of 11,000 people over three days. American electronic composers David Tudor and Robert Ashley performed along with filmmakers Stan Vanderbeek and Matsumoto Toshio. In the same year, Miyai Rikurō experimented with multiple television sets



12.7. YAMAGUCHI Katsuhiro. *Las Meninas*. 1974–75. Video installation



12.8. NAKAYA Fujiko. *Friends of Minamata Victims*. 1972. Videotape. Photo by Barbara London



12.9. YAMAMOTO Keigo. *Foot No. 3. Part 1*. 1977. Videotape. Photo by Barbara London



in an intermedia presentation, and Jimura made *Man and Woman*, in which the front and back of a naked couple were shown through two video monitors. Jimura's video performances analyzed the relationships between subject and viewer, and between live and recorded action. His works consisted of statements and actions overlapping identical statements and actions on a prerecorded tape. They were lengthy and repetitive, tedious in the same way as Andy Warhol's film *Empire* (1964).

The spirited Kyoto artist Ida Shōichi, who is known primarily as a printmaker, added the elements of space and time to his large, site-specific installations of handmade paper of the late sixties and early seventies. He projected film and video directly onto *washi* (Japanese paper) surfaces. In *Conception* (1970–1985, *Plate 162*) he combined silkscreen, lithography, offset, etching, video, film, and slides. He explored the surface as the “between,” especially as that thing between his own life and that of someone else.

The first international exhibition to feature video installations was the “10th Tokyo Biennale” with the theme “Between Man and Matter,” held in 1970. Organized by the art critic Nakahara Yūsuke, the show examined the theories behind contemporary experimental art activity and presented work by many conceptual artists from the United States and Europe. Its special video section included Nakaya Fujiko's *Statics of an Egg*, Yamaguchi's *Las Meninas* (*figure 12.7*), Yamamoto Keigo's star-tracing game, Komura Masao's junked car, and works by Wada Morihiro, Kobayashi Hakudō, Matsumoto Shōji, and Shigeko Kubota.

Vancouver videomaker Michael Goldberg visited Tokyo in 1972 on a fact-finding trip for his *Video Exchange Directory*. He had expected to find a thriving community of video artists, but found little organization. He subsequently worked with Nakaya and Yamaguchi in organizing workshops and the exhibition, “Video Communications: Do-It-Yourself Kit” at the Sony Building in Tokyo's Ginza section. The same year, the Japanese artists involved in the show formed the group, Video Hiroba.<sup>8</sup> Its members came to video from various disciplines, including graphic art, theater, cinema, and music. Many of them were the disenfranchised—dissident art students and women.

The thirteen members of Video Hiroba jointly purchased a black-and-white portable video camera, and rented it out to members for the equivalent of \$3.50 a day. Nakaya made *Friends of Minamata Victims* (1972, *figure 12.8*), which recorded the demonstration protesting a Japanese factory's negligent disposal of mercury and the ensuing poisoning of the residents of Minamata. The tape became part of the protest it documented.

Fukui artist Yamamoto Keigo approached video in a formalist manner (*figure 12.9*). He used it to express the Japanese concepts of *ma* (the interval or space between people and objects) and *ki* (the energy that emanates from the spirit). Capitalizing on video's live aspect, he employed feedback and visual interference, the electric “aura” of video equipment, and the body's spirit. In one performance, he interacted with a prerecorded image of his foot.

In Osaka, Nomura Hitoshi used video and photography to make abstract projects based on Minimalism. He concentrated on ordinary actions and natural phenomena, avoiding craft. Video's immediacy allowed him to see results directly, as in his gestural “action” tape, *Age: M→F* (1978, *figure 12.10*).

Shigeko Kubota moved to New York in 1964. She was led to her exploration of video by her association with Fluxus and her marriage to Nam June Paik, and she later organized several “video exchange” exhibitions between New York and Tokyo. In 1970, she created a *Video Self-Portrait* and by 1975 was making sardonic video sculptures. (From 1974 to 1982, she was Curator of Video at Anthology Film Archives, New York.) Interested in craft, she combined man-made and natural materials and the stationary object with temporal video images. Her earliest pieces cry with feminist anguish; others pay homage to Marcel Duchamp, whose work is revered in Japan. Kubota's later sculptures reach back to her Japanese roots. In *River* (1979–1981, *Plate 163*), running water and video reflections shimmer like the seasons.

Idemitsu Mako is an artist out of step with convention. Born into a cultured and traditional family, she studied film at Columbia University and lived for a while in California. She experimented with film and video, and returned to Japan to become a founding member of Video Hiroba at a time when the women's liberation movement was active in Japan.<sup>9</sup> Idemitsu's early video sketches reflect an effort to address her country's patriarchal society. In *Another Day of a Housewife* (1978), she recorded her daily routine in the kitchen, all the while watched by an eye on the television set on the counter. Her *Great Mother* series (1983–1989, *Plate 164*) scrutinizes the emotional interactions of mother-child relationships, revealing the underlying volatility of seemingly placid households. This series took advantage of the “live” feeling of video and the apparent candidness of people talking on camera. Idemitsu's complicated scripts and use of plot are distinctive in the context of

Japanese video. She also addresses the constraints of social conventions and the conflicts caused by living in a hybrid Japanese-and-Western culture.

Traditional Japanese homes contain a consecrated place where photographs of ancestors are respectfully set. Today, in most Japanese households, the television fills this place. Idemitsu's videotapes often depict the claustrophobic rooms of modern homes, and each interior contains a television set. Her silent close-up shots of various members of a family are a counterpoint to the tense dramas of the room. The television screen is a window into the darker, often more destructive aspects of her characters' minds. Her sound tracks are based exclusively on dialogue and ambient noise; her videotapes seem more like documentaries than dramas.

Inexpensive video cameras made way for a literary video genre—and one of the most lauded Japanese videotapes, the 1982 collaboration between the well-known poets Tanikawa Shuntarō and Terayama Shūji. These longtime friends had worked extensively with film and other artistic means before they tried video. In their *Video Letter* (*figure 12.11*), made with the aid of Image Forum, they updated a venerated literary form, the collaborative *renga* (linked verse). They exchanged electronic “letters”—extemporaneous monologues recorded on camera with a theatrical sense of timing and a poetic command of language. Each ruminative “letter” reflected a particular moment, yet each was connected to the preceding one. *Video Letter* has a particular poignancy

because of Terayama's fatal illness, which brought the project to an end. His death is acknowledged in the last “letter.” Completed and edited by Tanikawa, the work became a powerful elegy to Terayama.

In addition to Video Hiroba, other artists' collectives survived the early and difficult experimental days. Video Earth, founded toward the end of 1971 by film animator Nakajima Kō (*Plate 165*), united cable programmers in rural Japan who were interested in alternative, public-access television. The Video Information Center was another grass-roots organization that was founded in 1972 by Tezuka Ichirō and used video as a cultural tool to embrace home viewers. The group also taped Butoh performances (*figure 12.12*) and Mono-ha's site-specific installations for archival purposes. A similar media center was founded in Sapporo by Yazaki Katsumi.

At this time American subculture was being introduced by the “flower child” experimental filmmaker Kanesaka Kenji. He wrote the Japanese subtitles for the film *Easy Rider* and introduced the notion of an experimental film co-op. The idea was realized in 1971 by experimental filmmakers Kawanaka Nobuhiro (*figure 12.13*) and Nakajima Takashi, with organizer Tomiyama Katsue, who founded a screening organization called the Underground Center. Renamed the Underground Cinematheque, it presented experimental films and then video on a regular basis, bringing the work of such American artists as Stan Brakhage and Michael Snow to Japan. Renamed Image Forum in 1977, it offered production classes as well as screenings, and in 1980 founded a monthly film and art magazine of the same name. It holds an annual experimental film-video festival and continues to be a focal point and prime mover in spreading information internationally.

In 1980, Nakaya founded Video Gallery Scan in Tokyo to be a distribution service, archive, and screening studio for video. Run by a young and energetic staff, this informal space has promoted the medium through its newsletter, competitions, and international festivals, held most recently in 1992.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The most notable and innovative theme of the last decade through much of the world is perhaps appropriation. Artists extract visuals and ideas from many different sources, often to make a critical statement about the material they have borrowed. This type of work evolved as a reaction to the daily surfeit of mass-media images in which data and time are fragmented.

In Japan, where appropriation in fact has a long tradition, younger artists tend to use this “international” trend to make stylistic rather than political work. (Most are even unaware that multimedia artists Hijikata and Terayama paved their way during the sixties with their methods of pastiche, freely borrowing from modern and premodern dance and theater techniques and elite and popular art forms.) The use of electronic media has perpetuated such techniques as collage and unconventional juxtapositions. The current generation in Japan is computer-literate and often works with desktop video. Perhaps the best representative of their time, Dumb Type is an interdisciplinary arts collective based in Kyoto, formed in 1984 while members were students at Kyoto City University of the Arts (*Kyoto Shiritsu Geijutsu*



*Daigaku*). The group takes an irreverent look at popular culture and society's rigid stratification.

Dumb Type's performance/installation *Pleasure Life* (1987–1988) is an ironic, hypothetical view of the near future. It depicts a mélange of new and old Japan that resembles an integrated circuit suffering from urban sprawl. The English title conjures up both the dispassionate routines of daily life and the refined culture of Kyoto's *geisha* houses. The capital of Japan for a thousand years, Kyoto is still governed by time-honored ways and a strong sense of the past. Dumb Type's performances evoke its antiquated pleasure world, where music, poetry, conversation, and cuisine were relished as sophisticated conventions, and the electronic environment of *karaoke* bars, fast-food restaurants, and celebrity talk shows that have diluted and transformed it.

With *pH* (1990–1991, *Plate 168*, *figure 14.5*), Dumb Type depicted the impersonal and repressive aspects of metropolitan-city life, exposing the way electronic tools are used as status symbols. The title is meant to imply measurement—a litmus test as it were—for modern life. The performance presents robotized actions and wistful comments enclosed in a mechanized environment on which are projected weather maps, corporate logos, and monetary symbols, as well as a film that seems to flow out of the characters' minds.

Their next work, *S/N* (1993–1994, *Plates 199-1 to 199-3*), addressed what it means in Japan to function outside the norm, specifically examining gender issues: the sexual identities of a gay man

and a divorced woman—not particularly unusual people by Western standards, but pariahs in Japan. Although the title conjures up such phrases as serial number, sex/neuter, somewhere/nowhere, and signal/noise, the work concentrates on life's ambiguities. It implies that by rigidly classifying information in categories, the elusive areas where creativity and magic exist are lost.

Tsukamoto Shin'ya also addresses the sexual realm where reality and fantasy merge. While a student at Nihon University, Tsukamoto founded Kaijū Theater (Sea Creature Theater) with a group of friends. His film, *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989, *figure 12.14*), is a black-and-white home movie that he made practically single-handedly: as writer, actor, director, and cameraman, he worked with a very small team of young artists from other areas of experimental theater. The film is a parody of the horrific *manga* comic books, which convey cathartic violence and frank sexuality and are extremely popular in Japan today. *Tetsuo* is a caricature of a businessman whose life goes awry. After deserting a young man he hit with his car (a fetishist who inserts scrap metal into a gash on his leg, and who later becomes the businessman's nemesis), he finds a metal thorn sticking out of his own cheek. His world suddenly becomes a violent mine field of metal. While making love to his girlfriend, his phallus mutates into a drill, and although he tries to run away, eventually they reach a dismembered climax after which she stabs him in the neck. Tsukamoto ends his film with the businessman and the fetishist merging into a wild, two-headed monster that stalks Tokyo's streets. The film has become a cult movie and still plays in art theaters.

Fukuhara Shinji is a television producer and director who is reaching a new generation of Nintendo-playing viewers by pushing the limits of broadcast television. He belongs to the first generation

who grew up with computers, and with Sakurai Ikuko directs *Ugo Ugo Lhuga* (*Plate 166*), Fuji Television's early-morning children's program that blends live computer animation with live action. The program, whose title is gibberish, is a parody of the ribald adult shows that nightly Japanese television thrives on. In the show, two children engage in shenanigans with a cast of outlandish animated characters which include a talking, motherly television set and a rakish, Parisian-style *artiste*. Many adults watch the show, attracted to its youthful innocence.

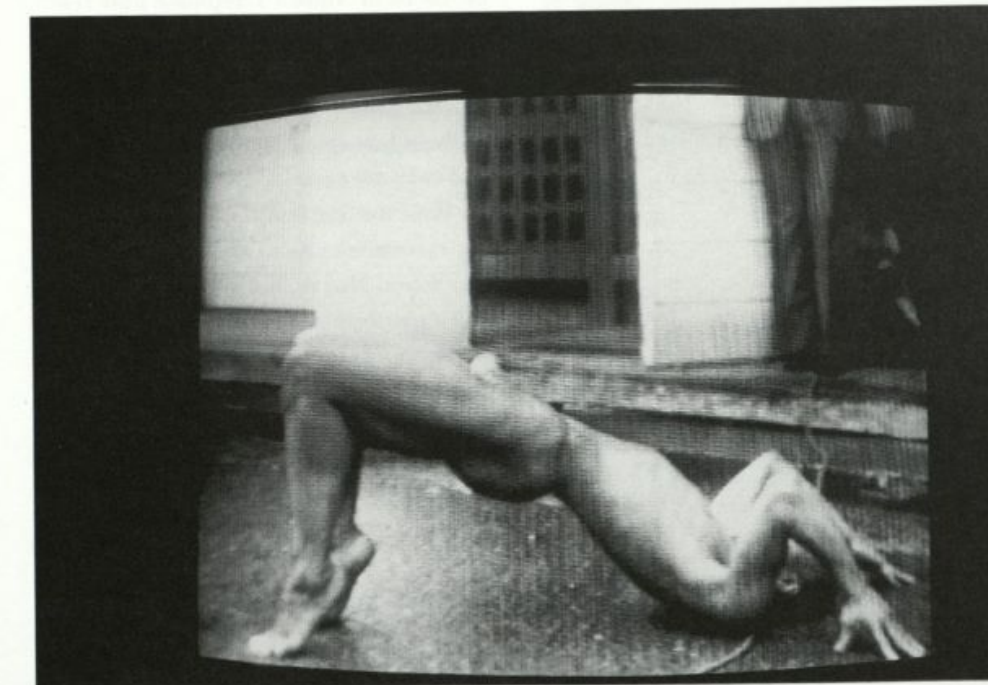
Technology is changing faster than most artist-users can keep up with, and the situation is as confused in Japan as in North America and Europe. With the media arts still in their infancy, artists who use the new technology are often incapable of taking a critical stance to the equipment and software packages. The problem is compounded when corporations hire artists to show off new products. Art becomes consumed by the technological advances.

In 1990, Canon Inc. established a creative laboratory called Art Lab, that made available computers and photographic, print, and copier machines to artists interested in exploring new technologies. The company produces several artists' projects each year and organizes special exhibitions. Mission Invisible is a collaborative team from Osaka that created an elegant installation in 1991 at Art Lab (*Plate 167*), in which the artists appropriated technology to probe the philosophical differences between the Japanese and English languages. Their project centered around a pair of large, tastefully designed panels that hung on opposite walls. Each panel had separate but overlapping texts written in the two languages. A video camera in a metal

12.10. NOMURA Hitoshi. Age: M→F. 1978. Videotape. Photo by Barbara London



12.11. TANIKAWA Shuntarō and TERAYAMA Shūji. Video Letter. 1982–83. Videotape



12.12. VIDEO INFORMATION CENTER. Dance No. 7 (Performance by Tanaka Min). 1976. Videotape. Photo by Barbara London





12.13. KAWANAKA Nobuhiro. Kick the World. 1976. Videotape. Photo by Barbara London



12.14. TSUKAMOTO Shin'ya. Tetsuo: The Iron Man. 1989. Film

frame skated across the smoothly printed surface. Viewers could control the camera's vertical and horizontal motion and "zooms" by using a "track ball," the simplest computer control device. Unfortunately, most only scanned the typography and stayed on the periphery of the work rather than participating in it.

Okazaki Kenjiro uses the computer as a useful editing device. He collaborated with Tsuda Yoshinori, and as the group Bulbous Plants they made *Random Accident Memory* (1993, *Plates 201 and 202*). The installation combined videotapes, photographs, and diaries taken from the artists' families. Usually concealed from outsiders, these confidential, ancestral stories reflect the sadness of a less than perfect world. Viewers roam freely through this private, digitized archive and create their own montages, unleashing their own sagas.

Today, Japanese intellectuals are pondering characteristically Asian applications of computers and the camera arts, again looking to such iconic forms as ink painting for local strategies and viewpoints. Such a proposal is not a simple one, given the fact that people worldwide use similar computers and ISDN and fiber-optic telephone lines, and are moving globally toward new kinds of commercial, consumer, and artistic interchanges. This new global project will be the focus of Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT)'s art and technology museum scheduled to open in Tokyo in 1995.

In Japan new technologies—especially video—have pervaded daily life. Not only are taxis, trains, elevators, and doctor's waiting rooms equipped with flat-screen televisions showing the news and visual Muzak, but billboard-size video projections of soft drink and fashion commercials that seductively sell a "life-style" light up thoroughfares in

major urban shopping and nightlife districts. Video has become as common and disposable as wooden chopsticks.

Although Japanese artists have been experimenting with film and video for over four decades, like their foreign colleagues, they have been constrained by the expense of making innovative art with these new tools, and the difficulty of finding an audience. There is little corporate tax incentive in Japan to encourage companies to support either artists or non-profit arts organizations, and when they do purchase art, they tend to buy an expensive Van Gogh or a *Raku* tea bowl. Until recently, Japanese government agencies have also been conservative, directing their monies toward "national living treasures" who practice traditional crafts or established forms of theater. The corporate giants, such as Sony, Matsushita, and Sharp give only occasional free access to hardware for younger, experimental artists.

Exhibition opportunities in Japan are far more limited than in North America or Europe, where experimental film and video have a support network of museums and alternative galleries. Compared with their Western colleagues, Japanese film and videomakers receive little support from the Japanese culture establishment. They operate in a twilight zone between the fine arts and the commercial world, and their work lacks the prestige afforded conventional art objects and mass-entertainment products. Still, the field is fertile with ideas, because film and video artists have autonomously found their way.

## NOTES:

I would like to thank the following individuals for their generous cooperation in my research for this essay: Endō Sumiko, Fukada Hitori, Peter Grilli, Ida Shōichi, Hasegawa Roku, Kyōko Hirano, Kamanaka Hitomi, Kinoshita Kyōko, Kogawa Tetsuo, Nakajima Takashi and Image Forum, Nakamura Keiji, Nakaya Fujiko, Ralph Samuelson, and Yasunao Tone.

1. John W. Dower, *A Century of Japanese Photography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 9.

2. Ei-Kyū had survived considerable difficulties during World War II through his determined power of creation and his critical edge. He was extremely helpful and supportive of younger artists.

Participating in the Democratic Artists Association were Toshiko Aohara (Uchima), Ay-O, Hayakawa Yoshio, Hosoe Eikō (Eikoh), Ikeda Masuo, Izumi Shigeru, Katō Tadashi, On Kawara, Kubo Teijirō, Miki Hideo, Onosato Toshinobu, Takiguchi Shūzō, Toneyama Kōjin, and Yamashiro Ryūichi.

3. Participants in the show were Ishimoto Yasuhiro, Kawada Kikuji, Kawahara Shun, Satō Akira, Tanno Akira, Tōmatsu Shōmei, Tokiwa Toyoko, Nakamura Masaya, Narahara Ikkō, and Hosoe Eikō. The group that exhibited established the photo agency VIVO. Members of VIVO were Kawada, Satō, Narahara, Tanno, Tōmatsu, and Hosoe. VIVO held a revolutionary series of "NON" exhibitions from 1957 through 1962. These participants included the six VIVO group members and Ishimoto Yasuhiro, Imai Hisae, Hayasaka Osamu, and Nakamura Masaya.

4. Partly raised by a great-uncle who owned a film theater, Terayama grew up watching often six movies a day, even sleeping behind the screen or in the projection booth. Winning literary prizes as a teenager, he attended Waseda University before being hospitalized for three years with a chronic kidney ailment. He then lived on the streets and worked in Shinjuku, Tokyo's closest equivalent to New York's Greenwich Village. When he died in 1983, he was mourned by friends on every continent.

5. The Sōgetsu Art Center sponsored a wide range of programs, including Wada Ben's "Images of New TV" in 1961, a performance by Merce Cunningham, John Cage's concert with David Tudor, and Nam June Paik's Cage concert in 1964 (see Chapter 10). "Twenty Years of American Short Films" in 1966 was jointly held in Tokyo by Sōgetsu with The National Museum of Modern Art and the Asahi Auditorium. Films by Stan Vanderbeek, Bruce Bailie, Bruce Connor, Len Lye, Paul Sharits, Clifford Harrington, Ed Emshwiller, Robert Breer, Maya Deren, and Kenneth Anger were shown for the first time. The Tokyo Film Art Festival in 1968 included Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise*, Michael Snow's *Wavelength*, Tony Conrad's *Flicker*, Paul Sharits's *Razor Blade*, Takahiko Imura's *Three Colors*, and Jud Yalkut's *Beetles Electronics*. Subsequently, the Festival was closed down by the radical student movement in the late sixties.

6. These included *Eizō geijutsu* (Image Arts), the journal of the Image Arts Society (*Eizō Geijutsu no Kai*). Members were Kuroki Kazuo, Tsuchimoto Noriaki, Noda Shinkichi, and Ogawa Shinsuke. The group disbanded around 1968 over theoretical differences with those who sought more avant-garde expression. Matsumoto Toshio edited another film magazine, *Kiroku eiga* (Documentary Film). The short-lived Film Indépendant group was founded with members Takahiko Imura; Ōbayashi Nobuhiko; Takabayashi Yōichi; Kanesaka Kenji; Adachi Masao; and Ishizaki Kōichirō, who translated P. Adams Sitney's *Film Culture Reader*. The group broke up in 1965.

7. In his own distinctive way, the Tokyo artist Gulliver (Azuchi Shūzō) was making abstract films and videotapes about light and the formal qualities of the media. In the late sixties, he showed these at such Tokyo discotheques as L.S.D. and Killer Joe's, at Nikkei Hall, and on Nihon Television.

8. Members included Nakaya, Tōno, and Yamaguchi, as well as Idemitsu Mako, Kawana Nobuhiro, Kobayashi Hakudō, and Yamamoto Keigo.

9. After the student movement in the sixties, most men slipped back into society and married their female colleagues, who had played lesser roles. The more outspoken women felt they needed to do something positive against the tendency to repress individuality. Inspired by the writings of Kate Millet and Betty Friedan, such magazines as *Onna Eros* were started. Instead of wanting to change all of society, women wanted to change their own lives. They believed that if they began living by their own principles, society would be changed. They occasionally confronted the system directly, opposing an abortion law in 1972. By 1975, the movement had lost its momentum.





Plate 161  
MATSUMOTO Toshio  
*Atman*  
1975  
Film



Plate 162  
IDA Shōichi  
*Conception*  
1970-85  
Multimedia installation



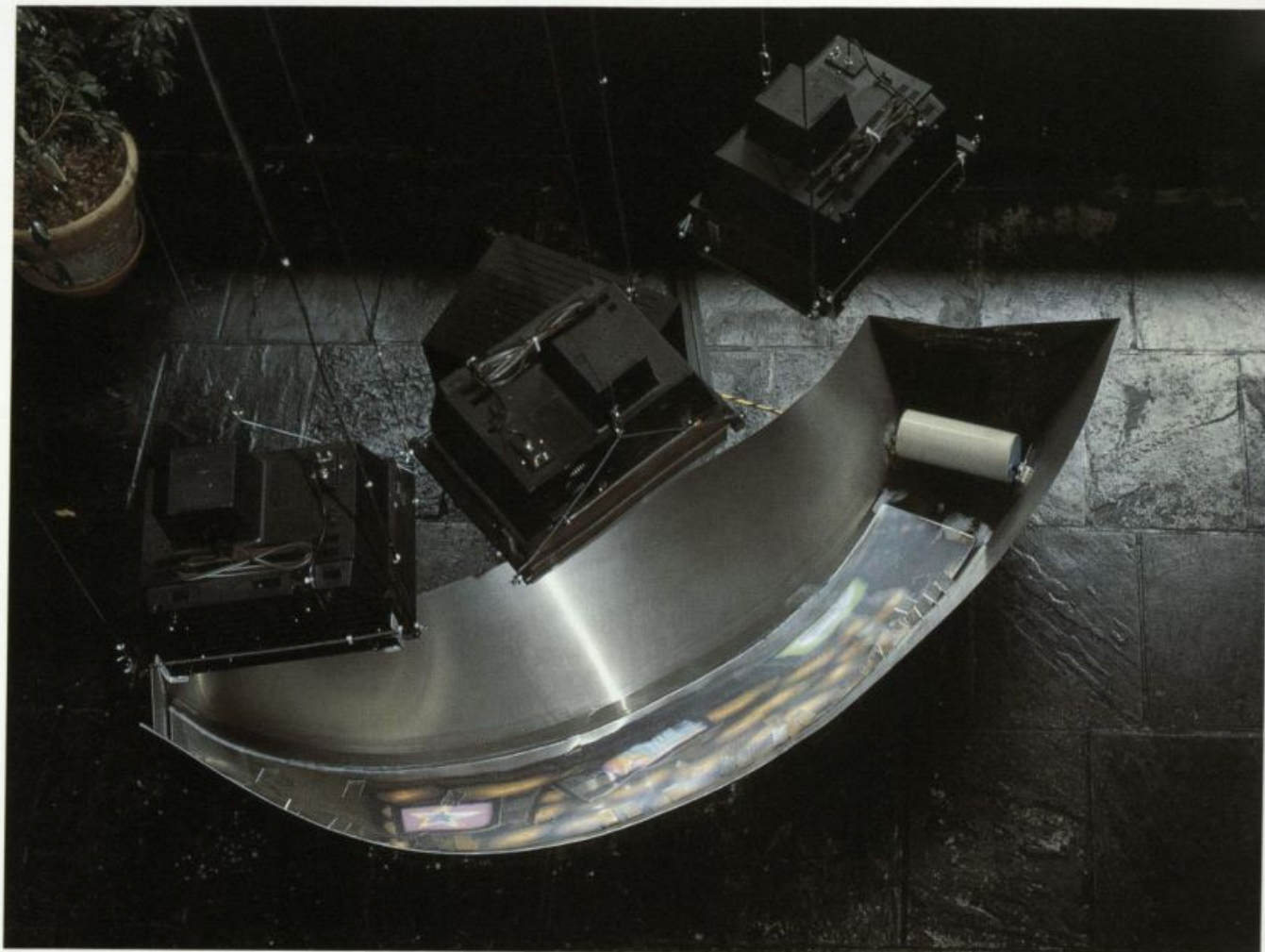


Plate 163  
Shigeo KUBOTA  
*River*  
1979-80  
Three 17" monitors, steel trough, mirrors, and water  
Photo by Peter Moore



Plate 164  
IDEMITSU Mako  
*Hideo, It's Me, Mama*  
1983  
Videotape  
Photo by Kira Perov



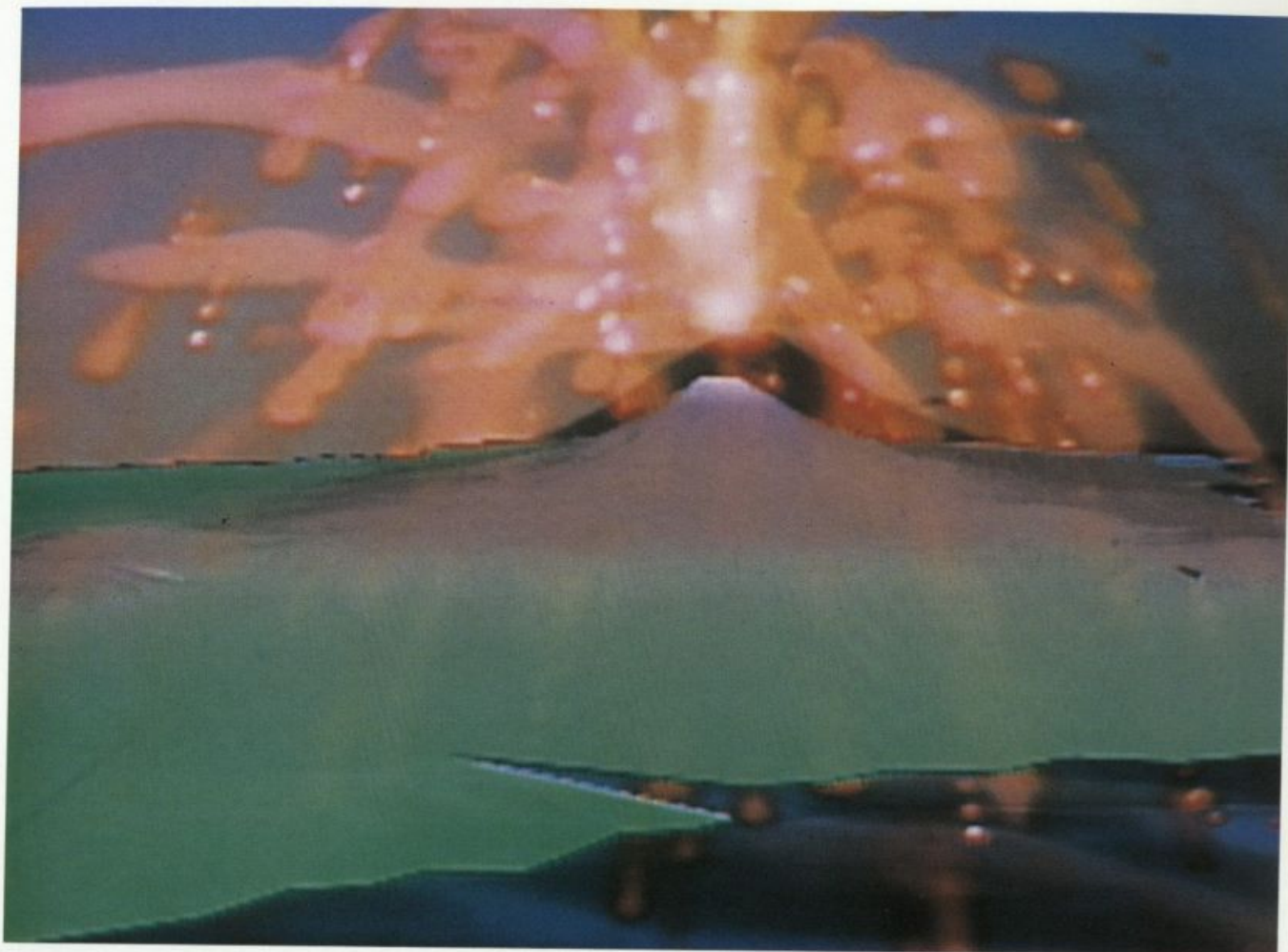


Plate 165  
NAKAJIMA Kō  
*Mt. Fuji*  
1985  
Videotape

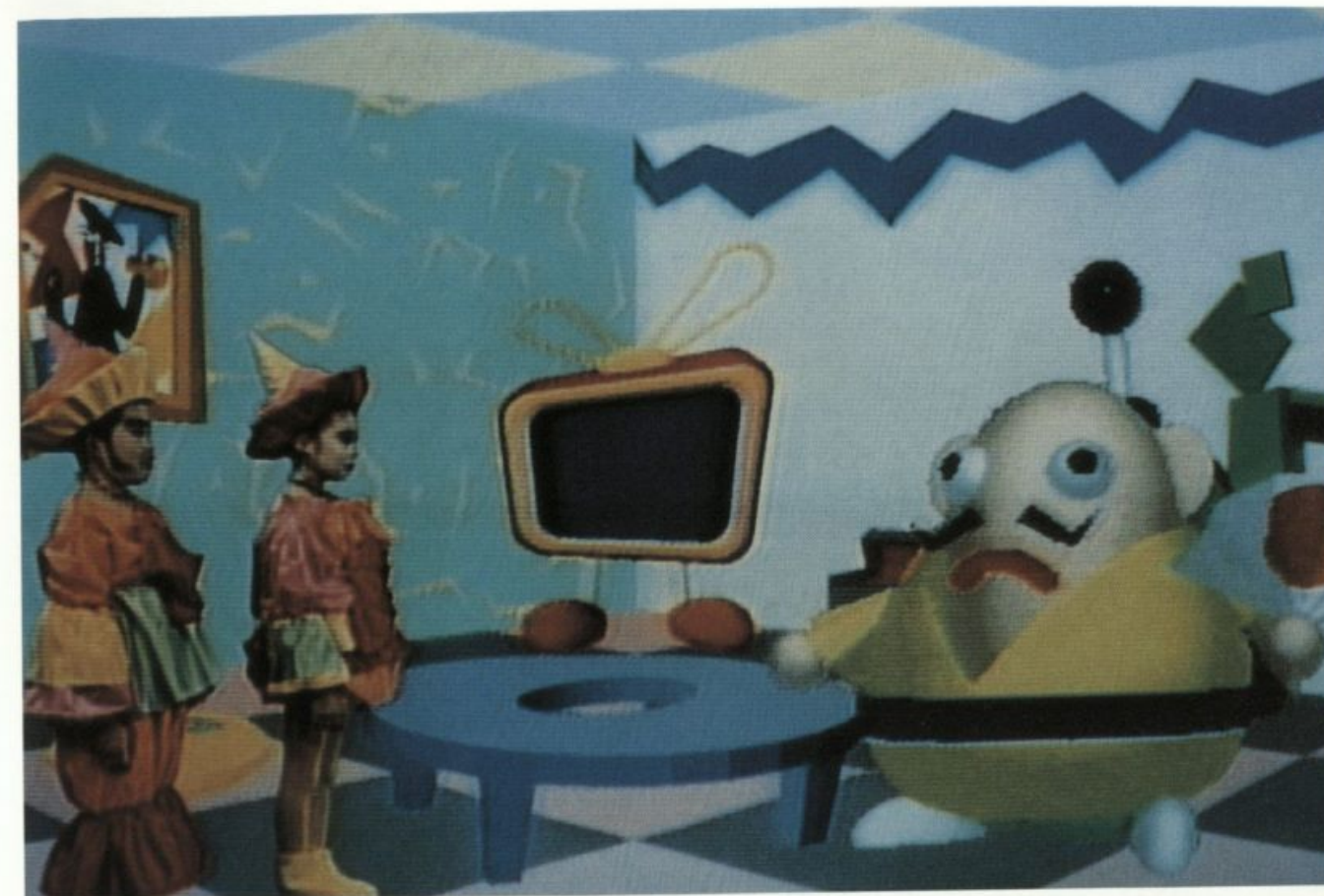


Plate 166  
FUKUHARA Shinji  
*Ugo Ugo Lhuga*  
1993-94  
Television program





Plate 167  
MISSION INVISIBLE  
*Untitled Installation*  
1992  
Multimedia installation



Plate 168  
DUMB TYPE  
*pH*, performance at the Brooklyn Bridge  
Anchorage  
1991  
© Dumb Type 1991; photo by Takatani Shiro



activities—intensified, and the entire nation was thrown into turmoil. In April, faced with certain members' delay tactics, the Diet extended its session, in order to accommodate Prime Minister Kishi Shinsuke's pro-American policy of ratifying the renewal. Labor, Socialists and students expressed their opposition through massive general strikes and violent demonstrations. The June 15 demonstration around the Diet was the most brutal and tragic, with hundreds of students and riot police injured and a twenty-year-old female student, Kanba Michiko, killed. Despite all the protests, the renewal was automatically ratified on June 19. Kishi immediately resigned and the opposition movement, including the "Old Left," lost its momentum.

At the time of the Treaty's next renewal in 1970, Japan was serving as a base for America's Vietnam campaign; furthermore, it coincided with the vehement student movement that paralyzed the nation's universities during 1968–69. However, the opposition to the renewal never gathered an energy equal to the decade before. The Treaty's renewal was again automatically ratified in 1970. Since then, the Treaty has gained automatic ratification every ten years without significant opposition.

#### Yōga (Western-style painting)

Yōga, literally "Western painting," is a form of painting created by using Western media, typically oil on canvas. Broadly speaking, the term refers to works created in Western media in Japan after the late Edo period as well as to the entire tradition of Western painting. In the strictest sense, yōga means oil painting, executed often in the manner of current Western styles, in Japan after the Meiji period. Painting created using Western materials and/or techniques (such as modeling and perspective) from pre-Meiji Japan is called *yōfuga* (literally, Western-style painting).

Western painting techniques were introduced to Japan along with Christianity in the late sixteenth century and practiced during the Momoyama and the early Edo periods, until Christianity was banned and the country entered its isolationist period in the early seventeenth century. A second wave of interest came with the increasing enthusiasm over Dutch studies, particularly science, in the late eighteenth century, when several regional schools, such as Akita, Edo (Tokyo), and Nagasaki, emerged. Scientific perspective and modeling, both powerful tools for rendering the subject realistically, also influenced traditional painting schools such as *Maruyama-Shijō-ha* and *Ukiyo-e*.

After Meiji, the introduction and study of yōga became part of the national agenda of Westernization: The Ministry of Industry and Technology founded the Technical Art School (*Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*) in 1876 and invited an Italian Barbizon painter, Antonio Fontanesi, to teach there. However, the fervent nationalist movement forced the school to close in 1883, which, in turn, led Western-style painters to found the first yōga association, Meiji Art Society (*Meiji Bijutsu-kai*) in 1889. It was around this time that the term yōga, as well as *Nihonga*, became firmly imbedded in the Japanese art vocabulary.

By 1896, Japan's yōga movement re-secured its place in the official art establishment: The Tokyo School of Fine Arts finally established a department of Western-style painting, where Kuroda Seiki, the influential pleinairist, taught after he returned from France in 1893. After several decades of adapting various European styles such as Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism, yōga in the post-war period connotes "academic practice," while contemporary painting (mostly abstraction) is more commonly referred to as "*gendai kaiga*" (contemporary painting).

#### Yomiuri Indépendant Exhibitions (Yomiuri andependan-ten)

The Yomiuri Newspapers sponsored the annual no-jury/no-prize "independent" exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1949 to 1963. Originally entitled "Nihon Indépendant Exhibition," it was informally called "Yomiuri Indépendant" or even affectionately abbreviated as "*Anpan*," in order to differentiate it from another exhibition with the same title. Eventually, the newspaper officially appropriated the title of "Yomiuri Indépendant Exhibition" in 1958.

Modeled after the French "*Salon des indépendants*," the exhibition was conceived in an attempt to further democratize the art establishment. It was also an occasion for Yomiuri to launch a major media campaign, taking advantage of its newspaper circulation. In line with Yomiuri's publicity strategy, the first few exhibitions showcased what may be called "all-star" casts from the establishment. Toward the late fifties, however, it became the hotbed of emerging artists without any affiliation: In 1957, the "*Informel* whirlwind" hit the 9th exhibition, and the next year Anti-Art tendencies flooded the 10th exhibition. Among Anti-Art groups emerging from this exhibition were Neo-Dada Organizers and Hi Red Center. The Gutai group also exhibited in the "Indépendant," and many memorable events in the late fifties and early sixties were staged here.

By 1963, the unconventional and anarchistic Anti-Art trend became exceedingly "out of hand" in the eyes of the museum officials, who first removed certain works from the 1962 exhibition and eventually instituted museum regulations to ban unusual works. The list of unacceptable kinds of work indicates the extremity of Anti-Art that stormed the "Yomiuri Indépendant": "work that generates unpleasant or loud noise, that uses material with a foul smell or of perishable nature, that uses cutlery and is therefore potentially dangerous, that gives the viewer a very unpleasant impression and possibly violates public sanitation ordinances, that spreads gravel or sand directly on the floor, and that hangs from the ceiling."

In 1964, Yomiuri announced the end of its "Indépendant," claiming that it achieved the initial goal of fostering new talent. Two artist-organized exhibitions, "Indépendant '64" and "All Japan Indépendant," were held that year in its stead. (See Chapter 8.)

#### Zōkei (form-creation)

Zōkei is one of many foreign-derived terms, such as *bijutsu* (art), that were introduced to Japan in the process of Japan's Westernization after 1868. The term "*zōkei geijutsu*," originally translated from the German "*bildende Kunst*," the French "*art plastique*," and the English "plastic art," serves as a general term referring to art forms of spatial representation (painting, sculpture, architecture, and craft). In the 1960s, such multi-media artists as Yamaguchi Katsuhiro chose to call themselves "*zōkei*" artists as opposed to the more specific "painter" or "sculptor."

Zōkei, separated from the word "*geijutsu*," came to assume a life of its own in the history of modern Japanese art discourse: With *zō* signifying "to make" and *kei* signifying "form," "*zōkei*" generally means "creation/making of form." In such specific usages as "*zōkei-shugi*" (*zōkei*-ism; the emphasis on the form-creation aspect of art) and "*zōkei-sei*" (aspect/quality of form-creation), *zōkei* virtually stands for "formal." In this context, the antonym of *zōkei* is "*shudai*" (subject matter). The importance of the term in this sense is twofold in postwar Japanese art. Firstly, the concept of "*zōkei*" played a crucial role when traditional arts such as calligraphy, ceramics, and *ikebana* were reexamined and revitalized in a modern context. It served as the crucial link between these art forms and modernist abstraction. (See Chapter 7.) Secondly, the emphasis on "*zōkei*" (*zōkei-shugi*) increasingly became one of the establishment attributes that avant-garde artists renounced. Anti-*zōkei*-ism (anti-formalism) was one common cause shared by the Gutai group of the fifties, the Anti-Art artists of the sixties (such as Neo-Dada Organizers and Hi Red Center), and Mono-ha and Conceptual artists in the seventies. Critic Haryū Ichirō, reflecting on his generation's inability to recognize Gutai's significance when they first emerged in the mid-fifties, wrote: "At that time, trapped in the straitjacket of '*zōkei*,' we had no concept or foundation from which to comprehend [Gutai's] work—as if we had met creatures from Mars."

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### COMPILED BY KASHIWAGI TOMOO

### EDITED AND EXPANDED BY REIKO TOMII

### WITH THE COOPERATION OF NAKAJIMA MASATOSHI

This bibliography is organized as follows:

- General References in Western Languages
  - Books
  - Exhibition Catalogues
  - Magazine Articles and Special Issues/Features
- General References in Japanese
  - Books
    - Dictionaries and Directories
    - Series (*Zenshū*)
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    - Annuals and Biennales
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Entries are arranged chronologically, unless otherwise noted. Bibliographic citations may also be found in the Notes to each chapter and in Critics' Biographies in Chapter 15.

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## C. MAGAZINES

### 1) ART MAGAZINES

(Listed alphabetically)

For organs of the important artists groups, see Glossary. In addition to the following magazines, many Japanese museums publish newsletters: The most notable include *Gendai no me* (Contemporary Eye; The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) and *Miru* (To See; The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto). Unless otherwise noted, all magazines listed here are/were published in Tokyo.

Art Vivant, 1980–1989.

Atorie (Atelier), 1924–present.

Bijutsu hihyō (Art Criticism), 1952–1957.

Bijutsu jōnaru (Art Journal), 1959–1967.

Bijutsu shihyō (History and Criticism of Art), 1971–1972 (1st period) and 1972–1978 (2nd period).

Bijutsu techō (Art Notebook), 1948–present.

Bijutsu techō nenkan (Bijutsu techō Annual); published as supplementary issues of *Bijutsu techō*.

Contemporary Artists Review, 1991–present.

Dezain hihyō (Design Criticism), 1966–1970.

Geijutsu hyōron, 1983–present.

Geijutsu kurabu (Art Club), 1973–1974.

Geijutsu seikatsu (Artistic Life), 1962–1980.

Geijutsu Shinhō (New Trends in Art), 1950–present.

Gekkan imējifōrum (Image Forum Monthly), 1980–present.

Gendai bijutsu (Contemporary Art), 1965–1967.

Gendai chōkoku (Contemporary Sculpture), 1972–1988.

Hi (Non); published in Toyama, 1988–present.

Kikan (Organ); originally published as *Keishō* (Form) until 1963; 1958–present.

Kikan geijutsu (Art Quarterly), 1967–1979.

Kōzō (Structure), 1981–present.

Me (Eye); newsletter of Ogikubo Gallery, Tokyo, 1965–1968.

Mizue (Watercolor), 1905–1992.

Nihon bijutsu nenkan (Japanese Art Annual); published by Department of Fine Arts, Tokyo National Institute of Cultural Properties, 1936–present.

Ragan (Naked Eye); published in Aichi Prefecture, 1986–present.

Sansai (Three Colors), 1946–1993.

Satō Garō geppō (Monthly Newsletter of Satō Gallery, Tokyo), 1955–1968.

Sōgetsu, 1970–present.

### 2) SPECIAL ISSUES/FEATURES

Art magazines in Japan routinely carry special features (*tokushū*) on specific themes or individual artists, as well as serialized essays. The following selection attempts to give American readers a sense of art discourse in Japan: Many special features included here reflect critical and journalistic interest of the time. Those marked with a dagger (†) are of particular importance, giving a good general overview of postwar Japanese avant-garde art. Unless otherwise noted, entries are all “special features.”

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“Gendai kaiga to machiēru” (Contemporary Painting and Matière). *Bijutsu techō*, no. 193 (September 1961).

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“Anforumeru igo no Nihon no bijutsu” (Japanese Art After Informel). Special supplementary issue. *Bijutsu techō*, no. 227 (October 1963).†

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“Densetsu sengo bijutsu no 12” (Twelve Legends of Postwar Art). *Bijutsu techō*, no. 240 (August 1964).

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“Bijutsu: Sengo 20-nen” (Two Decades of Postwar Art). *Sansai*, no. 181 (January 1965).†

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“Hyōgen, jōkyō: 60-nendai bijutsu wa dō ugoita-ka” (Expression, Situations: The Development of Sixties Art). *Bijutsu techō*, no. 349 (December 1971).†

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#### KAWAGUCHI Tatsuo

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#### KAWAMATA Tadashi

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#### KAWANAKA Nobuhiro

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#### KIKUHATA Mokuma

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#### KOBAYASHI Hakudō

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#### KOSUGI Takehisa

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#### LEE U Fan

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#### MATSUMOTO Toshio

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#### MIYAJIMA Tatsuo

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#### MIYAWAKI Aiko

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## MORITA Shiryū

Born in Toyooka, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1912; lives in Kyoto.

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See also *Bokuin-kai*.

## MOTONAGA Sadamasa

Born in Ueno, Mie Prefecture, 1922; lives in Ueno, Mie Prefecture.

Haga Tōru. “Motonaga Sadamasa: Kono karei-na chi to niku no senretsusai!” (How Fresh This Bright Blood and Flesh Is!). *Bijutsu techō*, no. 196 (November 1961), pp. 28–35.

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See also *Gutai Art Association*.

## MURAKAMI Saburō

Born in Kobe, 1925; lives in Nishinomiya.

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See also *Gutai Art Association*.

## MURAOKA Saburō

Born in Osaka, 1928; lives in Kyoto.

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## NAKAGAWA, Naoto

Born in Kobe, 1944; lives in New York.

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## NAKAHARA Kōdai

Born in Kurashiki, 1961; lives in Nagaokakyō.

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## NAKAJIMA Kō

Born in Kumamoto Prefecture, 1941; lives in Tokyo.

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## NAKAMURA Kazumi

Born in Chiba Prefecture, 1956; lives in Kawagoe.

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## NAKANISHI Natsuyuki

Born in Tokyo, 1935; lives in Tokyo.

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## NAKAYA Fujiko

Born in Hokkaidō, 1938; lives in Tokyo.

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## NARITA Katsuhiko

Born in Pusan, Korea, 1944; died in Tokyo, 1992.

See *Mono-ha*.

## NEO-DADA ORGANIZERS

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#### TSUDA Yoshinori

Born in Maizuru, 1961; lives in Tokyo.

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