gutai
splendid playground

MING TIAMPO
ALEXANDRA MUNROE

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GUGGENHEIM

Published on the occasion of the exhibition
Gutai: Splendid Playground
Organized by Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
February 15–May 8, 2013

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gutai art manifesto

YOSHIHARA JIRŌ

To today's consciousness, the art of the past, which on the whole presents an alluring appearance, seems fraudulent.

Let's bid farewell to the hoaxes piled up on the altars and in the palaces, the drawing rooms and the antique shops.

They are monsters made of the matter called paint, of cloth, metals, earth, and marble, which through a meaningless act of signification by humans, through the magic of material, were made to fraudulently assume appearances other than their own. These types of matter [*busshitsu*], all slaughtered under the pretense of production by the mind, can now say nothing.

Lock up these corpses in the graveyard.

Gutai Art does not alter matter. Gutai Art imparts life to matter. Gutai Art does not distort matter.

In Gutai Art, the human spirit and matter shake hands with each other while keeping their distance. Matter never compromises itself with the spirit; the spirit never dominates matter. When matter remains intact and exposes its characteristics, it starts telling a story and even cries out. To make the fullest use of matter is to make use of the spirit. By enhancing the spirit, matter is brought to the height of the spirit.

Art is a site where creation occurs; however, the spirit has never created matter before. The spirit has only created spirit. Throughout history, the spirit has given birth to life in art. Yet the life thus born always changes and perishes. To us today, the great lives of the Renaissance are nothing more than archaeological relics.

Today, it is only primitive art and various art movements after Impressionism that manage to convey to us a feeling of life, however inert. These movements extensively used matter—that is, paint—without distorting or killing it, even when using it for the purpose of naturalism, as in Pointillism and Fauvism. In any case, these styles no longer move us; they are things of the past.

Now, interestingly, we find a contemporary beauty in the art and architecture of the past ravaged by the passage of time or natural disasters. Although their beauty is considered decadent, it may be that the innate beauty of matter is reemerging from behind the mask of artificial embellishment. Ruins unexpectedly welcome us with warmth and friendliness; they speak to us through their beautiful cracks and rubble—which might be a revenge of matter that has regained its innate life. In this sense, we highly regard the works of [Jackson] Pollock and [Georges] Mathieu. Their work reveals the scream of matter itself, cries of the paint and enamel. These two artists confront matter in a way that aptly corresponds to their individual discoveries. Or rather, they even seem to serve matter. Astonishing effects of differentiation and integration take place.

In recent years, [critic] Tominaga Sōichi and [artist] Dōmoto Hisao introduced the activities of Art Informel by Mathieu and [Michel] Tapié. We found them quite interesting; although our knowledge is limited, we feel sympathetic to their ideas as have so far been introduced. Their art is free from conventional formalism, demanding something fresh and newborn. We were surprised to learn our aspiration for something vital resonated with theirs, although our expressions differed. We do not know how they understood their colors, lines, and forms—namely, the units of abstract art—in relation to the characteristics of matter. We do not understand the reason behind their rejection of abstraction. We have certainly lost interest in clichéd abstract art, however. Three years ago, when we established the Gutai Art Association, one of our slogans was to go beyond abstraction. We thus chose the word *gutai* [concreteness] for our group's name. We especially sought a centrifugal departure in light of the centripetal origin of abstraction.

We thought at the time—and still do—that the greatest legacy of abstract art is the opening of an opportunity to depart from naturalistic and illusionistic art and create a new autonomous space, a space that truly deserves the name of art.

We have decided to pursue enthusiastically the possibilities of pure creativity. We believe that by merging human qualities and material properties, we can concretely comprehend abstract space.

When the individual's character and the selected materiality meld together in the furnace of automatism, we are surprised to see the emergence of a space previously unknown, unseen, and unexperienced. Automatism inevitably transcends the artist's own image. We endeavor to achieve our own method of creating space rather than relying on our own images.

For example, Kinoshita Toshiko, who teaches chemistry at a girls' school, has created a marvelous space by mixing chemicals on filter paper. Even though the effect of chemical manipulation may be predicted to some degree, it cannot be seen until the next day. Still, the wondrous state of matter thus realized is her doing. No matter how many Pollocks have emerged after Pollock, his glory will not diminish. We must respect new discoveries.

Shiraga Kazuo placed a mass of paint on a huge sheet of paper and started violently spreading it with his feet. His method, unprecedented in the history of art, has been a subject of journalism for the past two years. However, what he presented was not a merely peculiar technique but a means he developed to synthesize the confrontation between the matter chosen by his personal quality and the dynamism of his own mind in an extremely positive way.

In contrast to Shiraga's organic method, Shimamoto Shōzō has focused on mechanistic methods for the past several years. When he threw a glass bottle filled with lacquer, the result was flying splashes of paint on canvas. When he packed the paint into a small handmade cannon and ignited it by an acetylene torch, the result was an instant explosion of paint in a huge pictorial space. They both demonstrate a breathtaking freshness.

Among other members, Sumi Yasuo deployed a vibrating device, while Yoshida Toshio created a lump of monochrome paint. It should be noted that all these activities are informed by serious and solemn intentions.

Our exploration into the unknown and original world bore numerous fruits in the form of *objets*, in part inspired by the annual outdoor exhibitions held in Ashiya. Above all, Gutai's *objets* differ from those of the Surrealists in that the former eschew titles and significations. Gutai's *objets* included a bent and painted sheet of iron (Tanaka Atsuko) and a hanging box like a mosquito net made of red plastic (Yamazaki Tsuruko). Their appeal lies solely in the strength of their material properties, their colors and forms.

As a group, however, we impose no rules. Ours is a free site of creation wherein we have actively pursued diverse experimentations, ranging from art to be appreciated with the whole body to tactile art to Gutai music (an interesting enterprise that has occupied Shimamoto Shōzō for the past few years).

A bridge-like work by Shimamoto Shōzō, on which the viewer walks to sense its collapse. A telescope-like work by Murakami Saburō, into which the viewer must enter to see the sky. A balloon-like vinyl work by Kanayama Akira, equipped with an organic elasticity. A so-called dress by Tanaka Atsuko, made of blinking electric bulbs. Productions by Motonaga Sadamasa, who uses water and smoke. These are Gutai's most recent works.

Gutai places an utmost premium on daring advance into the unknown world. Granted, our works have frequently been mistaken for Dadaist gestures. And we certainly acknowledge the achievements of Dada. But unlike Dadaism, Gutai Art is the product that has arisen from the pursuit of possibilities. Gutai aspires to present exhibitions filled with vibrant spirit, exhibitions in which an intense cry accompanies the discovery of the new life of matter.

Translated by Reiko Tomii. Originally published as "Gutai bijutsu sengen," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), pp. 202–04.

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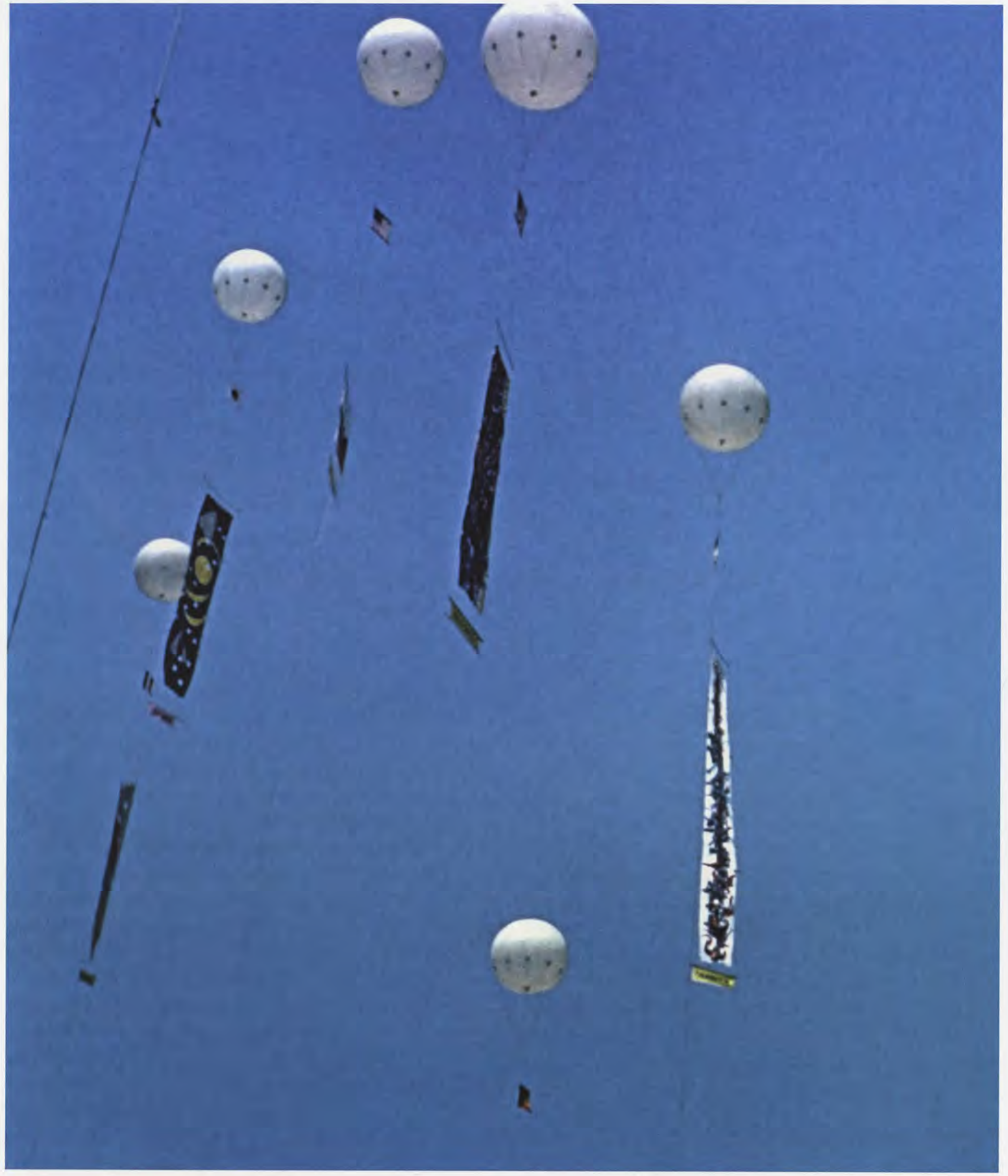


FIG. 1. Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival*, 1960, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 19–24, 1960

all the landscapes: gutai's world

ALEXANDRA MUNROE

We are following the path that will lead to an international common ground where the arts of the East and the West will influence each other. And this is the natural course of the history of art.

—Yoshihara Jirō, "A Statement by Jirō Yoshihara: Leader of the Gutai," 1958[1]

In politics, totalitarianism fails; in culture, that which is unfree and akin to totalitarianism must be purged. . . . If you believe that your art has a spiritual meaning and it helps you develop yourself, such art will truly be on the cutting edge of global culture.

—Shiraga Kazuo, "The Establishment of the Individual," 1956[2]

On February 25, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented the first Guggenheim International Award to British artist Ben Nicholson at the White House. This painting competition was noteworthy for its international focus and its promotion of abstraction as the lingua franca of modern art. Barely a decade after the Second World War, the Guggenheim created a prize exhibition with a genuinely idealistic aim: to repair the world's divisions through the unifying power of human expression. At this time, the museum's goals paralleled the American government's postwar cultural policies. Eisenhower had just won a second term, and the United States was on the offensive in an escalating Cold War that was not only a political and ideological struggle but a cultural struggle as well. Attempting to position America as the global cultural leader of the postwar era, such high-profile traveling exhibitions identified big, bold, free abstract painting with the triumph of American-style liberalism, individualism, and internationalism.[3]

The first Guggenheim International Award (GIA) exhibition opened at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris before moving on to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. An international jury selected works by artists from eighteen countries, including, significantly, former Axis states Austria, Italy, and Japan. Their inclusion was no happenstance, and Japan in particular was key to the internationalist vision of the U.S. cultural establishment.[4] After a century of projecting itself as a Pacific power both geopolitically and culturally, America no longer conceived the world in terms of Europe and the Americas alone. The time to bring the non-Western world into the purview of modern art had come, and Japan was well positioned to serve as ambassador; Japanese artists would be included in every iteration of the GIA show over its fifteen-year life span. Seeking artists who "break open and enlarge our artistic frontiers,"[5] Guggenheim director James Johnson Sweeney promoted the increasingly interconnected and mutually resonant currents of Abstract Expressionism in the U.S. and Art Brut, Cobra, and Art Informel in Europe while also following the work of Japanese painters like Okada Kenzō, who were developing styles of calligraphic abstraction, and Yamaguchi Takeo, whose ideogram-like painting *Work—Yellow (Unstable Square)* (1958) had a place of honor in the rotunda along with Constantin Brancusi's totem *King of Kings* (*Le roi des rois*, ca. 1938) in the Guggenheim's inaugural show at its Frank Lloyd Wright–designed home in 1959. Sweeney's perspective on contemporary abstract painting reflected the period's fascination with Asian art and philosophy; he enthused about the "frank adaptions of Oriental motives and calligraphic features" and wrote, "It is perhaps not going too far to see in this interest a straining towards the East, rather than to the magnetic center which held their predecessors for so long: Europe and Paris."[6]

Around the time Sweeney was constructing America's cultural internationalism with an eye to the East, the Gutai Art Association and its leader, Yoshihara Jirō, were reconstructing the Japanese art world and looking to the West. The influential artist, teacher, and critic Yoshihara founded Gutai in the well-to-do town of Ashiya, near Osaka, in 1954. The group included young artists who had gathered under his progressive tutelage and embraced others whom he met through various cultural activities during the postwar years. Against the backdrop of wartime totalitarianism, the American Occupation,

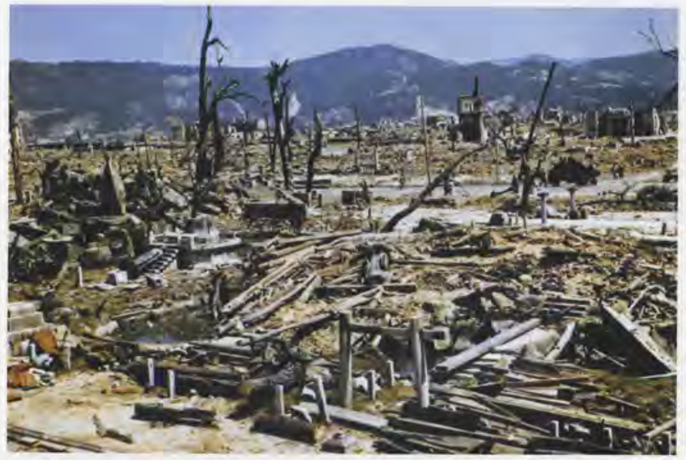


FIG. 2. The aftermath of the 1945 atomic bombing in Hiroshima

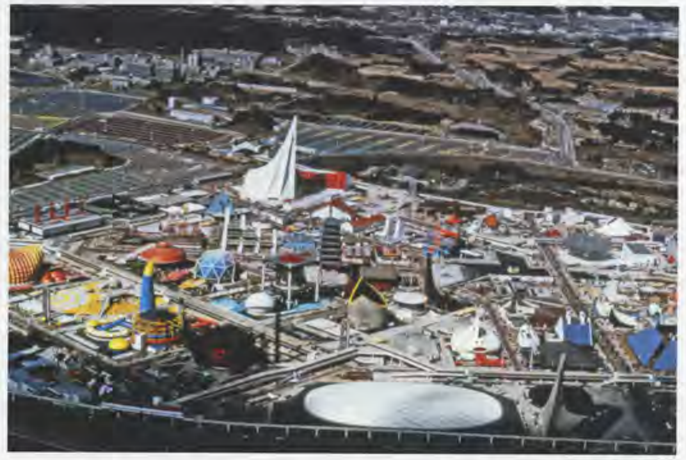


FIG. 3. Aerial view of Expo '70 fairgrounds, Osaka, 1970

and Japan's postwar renewal as a democratic state, Yoshihara directed Gutai as an experimental environment in which his protégés could explore the full potential of their individual creative free wills. Urging them, "Do what no one has done before!" he championed art making as an act of liberation, a gesture of individual spirit, a rite of destruction to create something new. This ethical stance, born from Yoshihara's prewar experience as a modernist painter in cosmopolitan circles and honed during the oppressive years of Japanese militarism, was closely aligned with his equally passionate belief in a shared community of interests among different nations. He found a resonance for his outlook in the liberal ideology of Japan's 1947 U.S.-drafted constitution and the Occupation era's cult of the new. At the same time, keenly aware of Gutai's peripheral status, he positioned the group as both a vital outpost of international tendencies and as antidote to narrow, exclusionary Western modernism. Yoshihara built Gutai as a means to "an international common ground" of transaction and mutual influence. As this essay will trace, over the course of the group's eighteen-year history, its network reached Jackson Pollock and American Abstract Expressionism, Michel Tapié and Art Informel, Allan Kaprow and Happenings, and the 1960s intermedia movements Nul, Zero, and Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.).

Given the cultural currents at work, the encounter between the New York museum and Japan's most internationalist avant-garde collective was perhaps inevitable. In 1963, Guggenheim curator Lawrence Alloway traveled to Japan to select artists for the following year's GIA exhibition (fig. 95). He met with Yoshihara and other Gutai artists at the Gutai Pinacotheca, the group's communal gallery in Osaka, and selected paintings by Yoshihara and Tanaka Atsuko to include in the show.[7] By this time, not yet a decade since Gutai had begun, Yoshihara's utopian notion of "an international common ground" was giving way to a more complex accommodation of pluralism in an era of rapid globalization. Communications, travel, and print media were expanding the channels of art's distribution and accelerating the traffic along them. The British-born Alloway, operating in the Kennedy era, was able to view the world with less of the Cold War lensing implicit in the GIA's earlier exhibitions. He found artists from Osaka to Cairo content with their positions on the periphery in a world where distance to the center mattered less and less. As Alloway's thinking evolved, it became clear that his curatorial challenge was to present paintings that shared a modernist expressionist language but whose meanings were specific to various national, cultural, and intellectual histories.

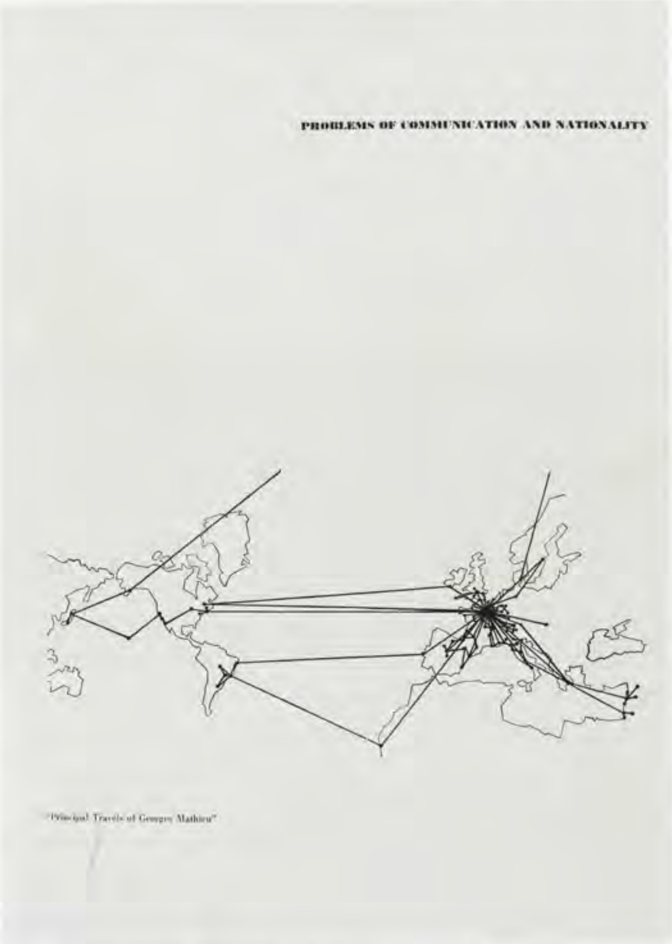
Dismissing "linear or hierarchic reductions of experience," Alloway proposed dialogue as a way to conceptualize the "points of unity and constancy" that emerge among the great varieties of art production "in widely separated places at the same time." In the catalogue to the 1964 show featuring Yoshihara and Tanaka, he wrote:

> When an exhibition is predicated on the fact of diversity, as this exhibition is, the notion of hierarchy in the arts becomes expendable; one can also dispense with some confidence in the universal status of art which former writers could express so cordially. The claim for art's universality usually involved its detachment from life and its contact with a realm above and beyond a changing world and the corruptible flesh. Now it is possible to value the artist not to the extent that he is the agent of power (platonic essence or whatever), but to the extent that he is himself. When one faces a work of art, what is extraordinary is the fact of its creation.[8]

Alloway's articulation of these quandaries seems strikingly farsighted. His attempts to reconcile the volatile paradoxes of non-Western modern art and local national identities in an increasingly global art world are as current now as they were fifty years ago. Yet despite the fissures he and others so thoroughly explored, the monolith of Western modernism has remained remarkably intact. The leading university textbook in use today, *Art since 1900*, reserves a scant five of its 816 pages to "the dissemination of modernist art through media and its reinterpretation by artists outside the United States and Europe."[9] The authors cite Gutai and the Brazilian Neo-Concretists but misread both as derivative, disregarding their critical agency. Indeed, their terms "dissemination" and "reinterpretation" preserve the construct of Euro-America as the dominant center and Western modernism as the master narrative, perpetuating a kind of canon that other disciplines have long since dismantled. Such closed, geocentric views of the history of modernism perpetuate the West's stronghold on avant-garde originality, relegating modern art made outside the putative centers as belated and derivative.

Gutai offers a paradigmatic example of a non-Western art movement and aesthetic discourse that was, as it saw itself, at the "cutting edge of world culture." Spanning Hiroshima and Expo '70 (figs. 2–3), Yoshihara's group arose from local, regional, and national conditions in Japan but also intersected with, co-produced, and stimulated developments in postwar international vanguard art. The exhibition *Gutai: Splendid Playground* and this accompanying catalogue draw on theories of transnationalism and "modernity at large"[10] to reconsider, through Gutai, the contemporaneity and multiplicity of modern cultural developments around the world. In a transnational reading, the conditions of modernity both in the West and non-West are defined by dynamic intercultural flows between peoples of different nations. To reconstruct history, we must narrate the political, cultural, and social interactions that cross borders, including wars, colonialism, migrations, and trade, and appreciate the movement and invention of culture through individual translations, imagination, and inspired creativity. Through the flows of artists and critics, works of art, illustrated books, rambunctious ideas, and imperfect translations between Japan, Europe, and the Americas, Gutai's history reveals the postwar project of late modernism not as a single story line but as an "interactive and refractive"[11] network crisscrossing the entire globe (fig. 4). The group's encounters with key European and American artists led to mutual, discursive constructions of identities and reciprocally shaped self-formation, aesthetic strategies, and ethical positions.

An apt emblem of a transnationalist reorientation lies at the heart of Gutai's corpus. At the 1956 *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Murakami Saburō hung an empty picture frame from the trees and wittily titled the work *All the Landscapes* (plate 53). The work continues to serve as a poetic reminder of how reality shifts according to the viewer, time, and place.



PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION AND NATIONALITY

"Principal Travels of Georges Mathieu"

FIG. 4. "Problems of Communication and Nationality." Illustration from *Guggenheim International Award 1964* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1963), with diagram of Georges Mathieu's travels

PLEASE FORGIVE OUR AUDACITY

Yoshihara's vision of the international art world as interconnected and contemporaneous drove his ambitions for Gutai. The scion of a successful food-oil manufacturer, and a successful businessman in his own right, he used his considerable financial resources and formidable connections with the cultural establishments in Tokyo and Osaka to further the group's contacts globally. He consciously constructed Gutai's identity as a distinct product of the Kansai region of Japan, and even more specifically of the Hanshin Belt, a stretch between Osaka and Kobe three hundred miles west of Tokyo, with the goal of creating a critical position within a dynamic network that extended through Japan and beyond. In his search for an artistic presence that would "appeal to people all over the world," Yoshihara used distance and difference to theorize Gutai's particular universalism as "a free site [that] can contribute to the progress of mankind."[12]

Confronting the challenges of Japan's peripheral position in the global cultural network, Yoshihara seized on the power of media to receive and to circulate ideas and foster international avant-garde camaraderie. A self-taught abstract painter with intellectual roots in both prewar European and Japanese modernism, Yoshihara avidly consumed publications such as the Taishō-era art journal *Shirakaba* (1910–23), the Surrealists' *Minotaure* (1933–39), and *Abstraction-Création* (1932–36), and accumulated a substantial art library over the years.[13] From such sources, he became versed in Futurism, for example, whose outlandish tactics as a peripheral vanguard with global aspirations to forge a new aesthetic for a new age resonated with Gutai's.[14] Not surprisingly, perhaps, his first act as leader of the Gutai Art Association was to orchestrate the publication of several hundred copies of a coterie bulletin to distribute worldwide. Dated January 1, 1955, the first issue of *Gutai* reproduced members' works alongside an introductory message by Yoshihara in English as well as in Japanese:

> This bulletin is issued to present the works by sixteen avant-garde artists residing in the Hanshin district. . . . What matters most to us is to ensure that contemporary art provides a site enabling people living through the severe present to be set free. . . . We never cease to pursue fresh emotions in all types of plastic arts . . . [and] hope to work closely with other genres in contemporary art such as children's art and literature, music, dance, cinema, theater and others.[15]

Over the next year, Gutai spectacularly fulfilled Yoshihara's call for new forms of interdisciplinary art in its first outdoor exhibition in Ashiya and first official group show in Tokyo, both duly recorded in ensuing issues of the *Gutai* journal. Engaging and optimistic, Yoshihara used the journal to connect to a global network of like-minded artists. In February 1956, the group sent *Gutai* 2 and 3 to Jackson Pollock, reaching his home in East Hampton, New York, with a cover letter asking "forgiveness for our audacity."[16]

Yoshihara's internationalist outlook reflected sweeping changes in postwar Japan as the country rebuilt its economy and sought to reform itself as a modern, secular, demilitarized, and democratic nation on the world stage. For the first time, Japan was invited to participate in the major biennials in São Paulo and Venice, compelling its art community to shed its insularity. Official cultural exchange between Japan and its new Western allies increased dramatically with the end of the American Occupation and signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, boosting participation in exhibitions abroad by Japanese artists; that very year, for example, Yoshihara took part in Paris's Salon de Mai and the Pittsburgh International.

While the expectation that Japanese artists contend in the global arena was liberating, it also exposed a challenge that had vexed Japanese artists since the late nineteenth century: as latecomers to modernity operating at the periphery, how could they create their own authentic culture of modern art? And now, amid rampant Americanization, how could they articulate an autonomous artistic identity and cultural values? The influential critic Takiguchi Shūzō, who had been arrested in wartime because of his affiliation with Surrealist writer André Breton, urged avant-gardism as the only way for Japanese artists to achieve "world relevance" (*sekai-sei*).[17] To do so required knowledge of one's original, individual being, he felt:

> Perhaps we haven't completely digested the movements and principles of Western art. Japanese contemporary art must exist in our guts and bones. This is where everything begins. Is it possible that we do not yet understand our very own substance?[18]

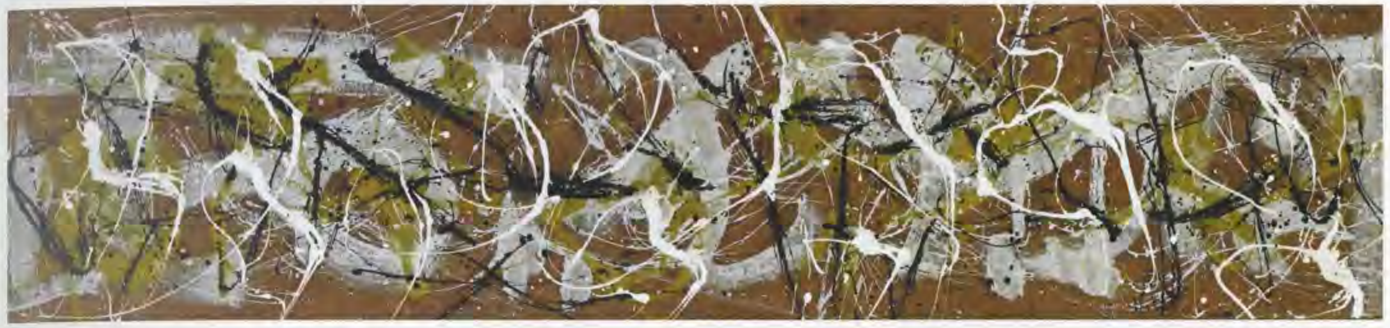
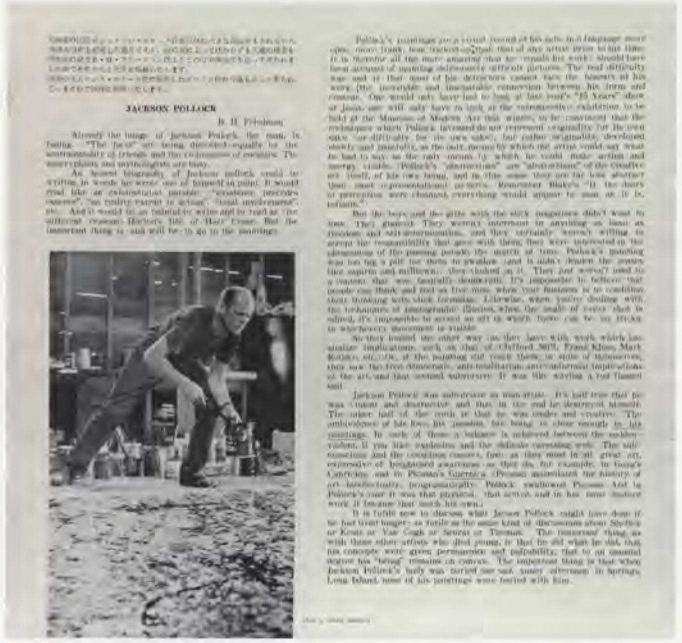


FIG. 5. **Jackson POLLOCK**, *Number 7*, 1950. Oil and synthetic paint on canvas, 58.5 × 268.6 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Sylvia Slifka in honor of William Rubin

For Yoshihara, Jackson Pollock provided the catalyst to overcome this impasse. Yoshihara had his first in-person encounter with Pollock's work thanks to an increase in loan exhibitions traveling to Japan from overseas. At the *3rd Yomiuri Independent Exhibition*, which opened in Tokyo and traveled to Osaka in 1951, he saw two of Pollock's drip paintings, *Number 11* (1949) and *Number 7* (1950, fig. 5). Struck by them, he was among the very first in Japan to articulate the radical import of Pollock's position as, he argued, the greatest living painter in the United States. Like humanism, painting was in crisis after the war, and Pollock's purity and directness inspired a way forward: "It might be called psychological realism," Yoshihara said in a roundtable discussion published in the art journal *Kansai bijutsu*. "I think contemporary American painting has spontaneously resolved the problem of humanism today, because it relates at a deep level to the psychological experience of the human being."[19]

Yoshihara not only conveyed Pollock's impact within Japan; he also felt it distinctly on his own thought. Bypassing the dialectic of Japanese and Western modernisms, he turned to substance itself, pursuing raw being, or "psychological realism," as the fundamental matter of art. The kinesthetic aspect of Pollock's work offered a means for forging a direct physical connection between artist, material, and viewer, thereby overcoming alienation. Yoshihara grasped the freedom of Pollock's leap into the concrete, where "drops of paint are more beautiful than that which they present."[20] He praised Pollock's brute materialism further in 1956's "Gutai Art Manifesto," writing how his drip painting "reveals the scream of matter itself, cries of the paint and enamel."[21] These remarks were in step with Pollock's own. He described his flowing skeins as "energy and motion made visible," something "concentrated—fluid" that arose from "human needs and motives."[22] For Yoshihara, this art, which centered around the individual artist, the process of creation, and matter itself, shaped his own ideas of an authentically humanist art for the "severe present."[23] Too, Yoshihara understood the value of Pollock's originality, the power of throwing the history of easel painting literally on the floor and tossing out the last vestiges of representation with it. It was never Pollock's style that impressed Yoshihara; it was his sheer abandon.

Pollock never answered Gutai's letter; he died in summer 1956. But his close friend, the critic B. H. Friedman, found the journals in the artist's library and sent a letter to Japan saying they "must have been loved by Jackson" because they are "concerned with the same kind of vision and reality."[24] *Gutai* ran an essay by Friedman on Pollock in their next issue, printed in English and Japanese alongside an iconic Hans Namuth photo of Pollock painting (fig. 6). Through such connections, the journal became a space for dialogue on the meaning of contemporary art, enabling a virtual global com-


JACKSON POLLOCK

B. H. Friedman

FIG. 6. Interior spread from *Gutai* 6 (April 1, 1957) featuring article by B. H. Friedman on Jackson Pollock's death and photograph of Pollock working in his studio by Hans Namuth. Private collection

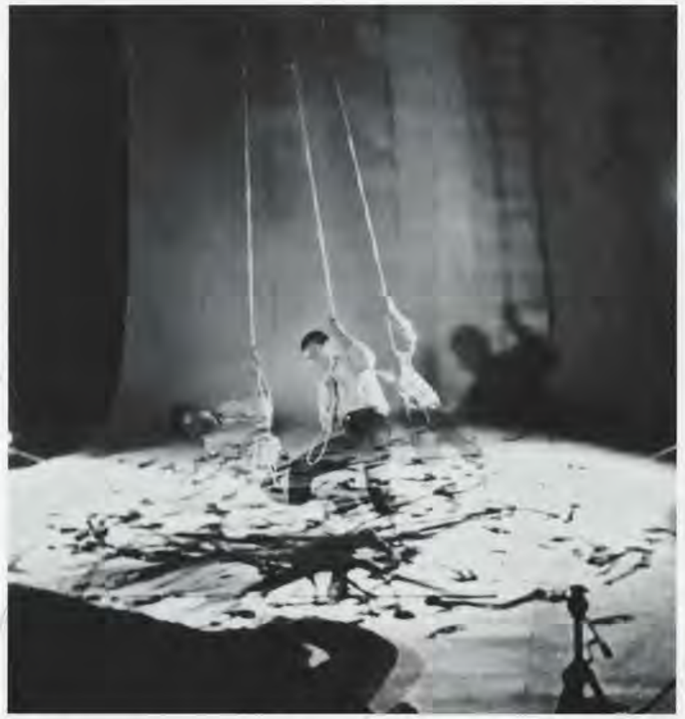


FIG. 7. Shiraga Kazuo swinging from a rope as he paints with his feet for *Life* magazine photographers, Yoshihara Oil Mill factory, Nishinomiya, Japan, ca. April 6–8, 1956

munity of like minds.[25] It demonstrated the potential for art to transcend national boundaries through a shared ethos of individualism and subjective free will, what Yoshihara called "spirit" (*seishin*).

When Gutai had their first American show at Martha Jackson Gallery in New York in 1958, critics largely dismissed the paintings as derivative of Pollock. Dore Ashton commented, "Automatism is rampant, and the young people who have put their faith squarely in unorthodoxy turn out to be completely orthodox in their devotion to what they believe Jackson Pollock represented."[26] Since then, commentary on Pollock's influence typically reinscribes modernism as a one-way distribution system from the West to subordinate geographies, marginalizing Gutai in the process. But Gutai's catharsis was not unique, and distance was not the issue. Harold Rosenberg famously wrote of Pollock's influence on American Action painters, "At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act."[27] And Allan Kaprow, anticipating his movement into environments and Happenings, stated that Pollock's art of concrete facts "left us at the point" where "substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch . . . all will become materials for this new concrete art."[28] Like artists everywhere, Gutai took what it needed from Pollock to solve its own crisis of representation in the aftermath of world war.

Gutai's early paintings, made by bodily processes, may look like Pollock's, but they are fundamentally different propositions.[29] In *Number 7*, Pollock displays the practice of drawing, respects the frame's sanctity, and manifests substantial compositional deliberation. His nine-foot-long horizontal format is structured around a first layer of broad aluminum-paint brushstrokes, vaguely letterlike, overlaid with applications of watery yellow oil paint and finally interwoven with cursive white and black enamel lines, all composed within rectilinear bounds. This kind of automatism is painterly and ordered compared to that of Gutai members like Sumi Yasuo, who worked by "going recklessly wild," splattering paint with vibrating devices to create self-described works of "ardent beauty gushing out from my disposition"[30] (plate 81). Despite the myth of Pollock acting "in" his painting, he actually painted *around* his canvases tacked to the floor. In contrast, Shiraga's action-packed foot painting uses the floor "as a physical location of his struggles" and is "a more radical manifestation" of the arena idea.[31] Shiraga Kazuo's kick-strokes through thick gobs of red, black, and ocher pressed straight from the tube produce paintings that are not so much traces of Pollock-like dynamic rhythm as visceral figures of ritual self-purging (plates 75, 78). Likewise, Shimamoto Shōzō's works made by smashing glass bottles of paint against canvases rely on chance to a radically different degree than did Pollock's. If the American's aim was to deconstruct the easel tradition to a point of no return, Shimamoto's was to create an artistic site of pure destruction: "Even though destruction itself may be the opposite of creation, in this age, the boundary between the two no longer exists."[32] By radicalizing Yoshihara's call for direct encounter between spirit and matter, Sumi, Shiraga, and Shimamoto shifted the locus of painting from the foreign, contested canvas to one's own present body and took Pollock's "psychological realism" to an unexpected end. Clearly, Gutai's reading of Pollock was not, as Ashton claimed, a simple, "orthodox" one.

Most radically, Gutai transfigured Pollock's "death of painting" into a new manifestation of lived reality itself. Expanding the definition of painting beyond a work on canvas, Murakami Saburō proposed "picturing " (*e*) to be "a work you experience with your whole body,"[33] anticipating moves in directions that Pollock himself could not have imagined and opening up the theoretical possibilities for painting to include any act of picture making in time and space. At the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1956, Motonaga Sadamasa tied polyethylene tubes loaded with colored water between the trees, making giant brushstrokes out of catenaries in the open air (*Work [Water]*, 1956, plate 10). Yamazaki Tsuruko created a room-size illuminated red vinyl cube that people could enter; inside, they were swathed in a field of pure red while animating a shadow play for those outside (*Work [Red Cube]*, 1956, plate 13). And indoors, at the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Tanaka Atsuko's *Work (Bell)* (1955, plate 44) reimagined painting as acoustic composition of living sound through a sequential ringing of electric alarm bells wired across forty meters of an exhibition space, moving first away and then back toward the visitor-activated switch. By making art that could not be defined by Western artistic categories, Gutai arrived at a new site of originality.

IMAGINING GUTAI: TAPIÉ AND KAPROW

Gutai flourished during an age of manifestos. Around the world, revolutionary artists, intellectuals, and philosophers called out the bankruptcy of Western civilization and declared the terms of a new culture. World War II had left countries across Europe and Asia in spiritual as well as physical ruin and cast a moral pall over the entire planet. The vast intellectual project of modernism had been torn asunder by Auschwitz, Nanking, and Hiroshima, brutally betraying the Enlightenment's promise of rationalism, technological progress, and international cooperation. The French literary critic Maurice Blanchot wrote that, after the atomic bomb, humankind had "departed historical space" and declared, "Henceforth the world is a barracks that can burn."[34] Artists everywhere who had survived the onslaught of fascism and totalitarianism saw the end of war as a means to expunge the past. "Man will take on a new psychic structure," Lucio Fontana predicted in 1946 from Buenos Aires, in his "Manifesto blanco."[35]

Like many observers, Fontana went on to draw conclusions about the future nature of art: "Painted canvas and standing plaster figures no longer have any reason to exist,"[36] he wrote. Others went further, calling for the liquidation of the foundations of figuration, narrative, and even abstraction. Jean Dubuffet lambasted the "dead language" of Renaissance humanism and advocated an art of "savagery . . . instinct, passion, mood, violence, madness."[37] Writing the "Gutai Art Manifesto" from his vantage in Osaka, Yoshihara exhorted Gutai to dispatch the "fraudulent" art of the past and embrace the "intense cry" that accompanies "the discovery of the new life of matter."[38] Renouncing Cartesian constructions *of* reality for phenomenological encounters *with* reality, the postwar declarations all announced the release from abstraction to concrete facts, from the static picture plane to a totally sensorial art of everyday existence. In 1959, Jean Tinguely

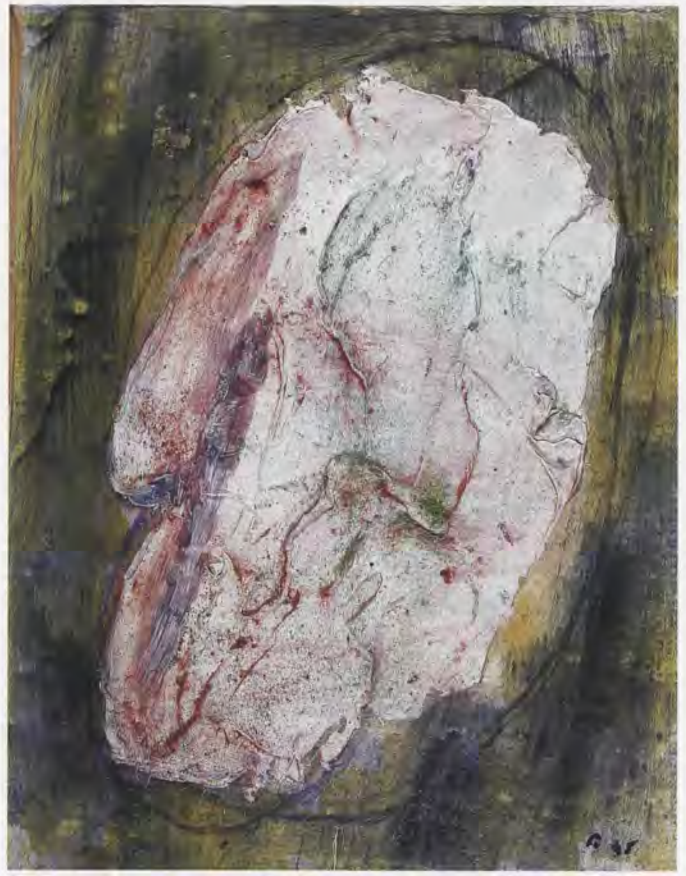


FIG. 8. **Jean FAUTRIER**, *Hostage #3* (*Otage n°3*), 1945. Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 35 × 27 cm (44.8 × 36.6 cm framed). Musée de l'Ile de France, Sceaux

scattered copies of his manifesto from an airplane over Düsseldorf: "Be free! Live!"[39]

Two of the most ardent and influential promoters of new art after the war were the French critic Michel Tapié and the American artist Allan Kaprow. Although Informel and Happenings arose from different contexts and involved experimentation with very different media, each constituted a radical avant-garde in terms of gesture, improvisation, and materiality. Each of the men sought to situate his movement, based in Paris and New York, respectively, in an international arena, affirming its cosmopolitan relevance. Once again, Yoshihara's targeted circulation of the *Gutai* journal made contact with Gutai's distant co-fraternities, and this time, interest was reciprocal.

While Tapié and Kaprow would serve Yoshihara's internationalist aspirations beyond his wildest dreams, they also skewed perceptions of the reality of Gutai and have for decades exerted an undue influence on its legacy. Nouveau Réaliste critic Pierre Restany criticized Tapié for promoting Gutai's affinity with Informel, which both misread Gutai art as if it were European and avoided dealing with the fact that its performance-based work actually predated New York Happenings.[40] Others, including Yoshihara, have refuted Tapié's Zen-arts rhetoric. Still worse, his distortions have been credited to his commercial interests as an art adviser.[41] Scholars have also been wary of Kaprow, who, conversely to Tapié, adopted Gutai only by focusing on the group's live events to the exclusion of painting, failing to recognize their conceptual coexistence. And while Kaprow gave Gutai cult status abroad, he also consigned their contributions to legend while the group was still very much alive. But such critical attempts to recuperate Gutai from the "Western gaze" tend to overlook the importance of mediation, imagination, and appropriation in the process of cultural history. From an inverted vantage, Gutai becomes critical to the discursive construction of Tapié's and Kaprow's own historically important movements, redefining Gutai's reception abroad as a culturally productive phenomenon rather than an instance of passive reception.

In prewar Europe, the Surrealists' anarchism sowed distrust in the formalist aspects of modern art. Postwar, art needed to prove its ethical worth to regain its stature. The Spanish intellectual José Ortega y Gasset condemned the modern artist in his 1948 treatise *The Dehumanization of Art*, observing that, nowadays, "art is a thing of no consequence."[42] Drawing on Heidegger's attack on reason and Husserl's emphasis on the "lived moment," French thinkers Albert Camus, Jean Paulhan, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, among others, began to reconsider man's being in the world in purely experiential terms. The new phenomenology upheld intuition and contingency over rational thought and fixed design. Paulhan urged artists: "Enough of spectacles, we need things / don't copy nature, do as she does / constitute a pictorial fact."[43] Postwar politics also contributed to the urgency artists felt to expel themselves from official culture; their disgust with French complicity with Nazism made them want to be "completely other, in a world completely other," wrote Michel Foucault.[44]

Two shows in Paris at the end of the war marked a watershed: the painter Jean Fautrier's *Les otages* in 1945 and Dubuffet's *Mirobolus Macadam & Cie: Hautes pâtes* the following year, both at Galerie René Drouin. Fautrier had begun the *Otages*, or "Hostages," series in 1943 while hiding from the Gestapo in an asylum outside Paris, where he reportedly heard the cries of civilians being tortured and executed by German soldiers. Struggling to express such horror without trivializing it through form, he built up a rough, loose impasto surface using a stuccolike matter over which he applied pale colors and ghostly shadows (fig. 8). Dubuffet's paintings were similarly about *matière.* Calling his enterprise "The Rehabilitation of Mud," the artist presented thick impasto surfaces mixed with "dirt, trash, and filth" incised with deformed human figures (fig. 9).[45] Tapié identified these painters as well as Wols, Hans Hartung, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Georges Mathieu, and Jean-Paul Riopelle as agents of a new avant-garde, calling it Art Informel in 1950 and publishing his polemic *Un art autre* in 1952. Overthrowing formalism and abstraction, Informel offered France an art sufficiently grounded in *realité.* By claiming a wide international allegiance—including Pollock, whom Tapié featured in his show *Véhémences confrontée* (Opposing forces) at Galerie Nina Dausset, Paris, in 1951—it could also restore the country's relevance to global culture.

Against this backdrop, artists in France resumed their long-established intellectual interest in the "other." Their purview included outsider art and art of the mentally ill; "primitive" cultures of Africa, Polynesia, and South America; and Zen Buddhist and literati traditions of China and Japan. By the early 1950s, China and Japan had become the "other" of choice among Tapié's expanding group of Informel painters in Paris. Seeking a radical ethics of being and authenticity, Pierre Alechinsky, Sam Francis, Henri Michaux, Pierre Soulages, and Mark Tobey, among others, undertook a concentrated if eclectic study of the arts and philosophies of "pure consciousness" and "unmediated experience." They equated the East's calligraphic gesture with an ethics of direct action, a way of mark making that sidestepped the suspect intellect and overcame the Western split between self and world. For example, Alechinsky made the influential film *Calligraphie japonaise* (1956) with the vanguard calligrapher Morita Shiryū, a friend of Yoshihara's who actively advanced a utopian vision of calligraphic abstraction as the shared supralanguage of East-West art.[46] At first, Tapié looked to a charismatic Japanese trio living in Paris, painters Dōmoto Hisao and Imai Toshimitsu and scholar Haga Tōru, as tutors in Informel's pursuit of an alternative philosophy of art. But with Gutai, he found a whole movement to legitimize his solution for Europe's postwar crisis. Introduced to the *Gutai* journal by Dōmoto in 1957, Tapié saw the collective as Informel's perfect complement—and, importantly, one that could extend its reach globally. He initiated a

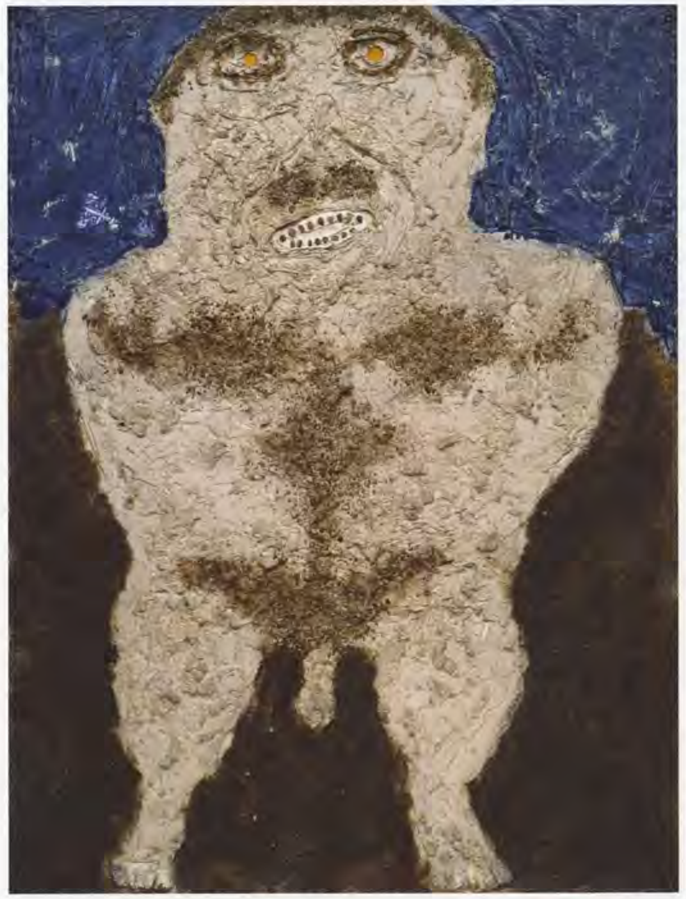


FIG. 9. **Jean DUBUFFET**, *Will to Power* (*Volonté de puissance*), January 1946. Oil with pebbles, sand, glass, and rope on canvas, 116.2 × 88.9 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

decadelong collaboration with Yoshihara that would include international exhibitions in Osaka, Tokyo, New York, Paris, and Turin, as well as several joint publications. Tapié promoted these projects, ambitious even by today's standards, to prove the ubiquity of gestural matter painting and the urgent humanity of an "international art of a new era," as the title of one of their joint endeavors put it. In the process, he hoped to revitalize Informel at a time when its relevance had begun to wane.

By appropriating Gutai as a Zenlike embodiment of "a different, unpredictable, unpredicted, totally other power,"[47] Tapié and his circle could construct a new cultural paradigm that was outside the West, outside modernity, and outside the teleology of Western rationalism, whose failure the war had exposed. Further, the resonances between Japanese and Western painters all tending to "this open, symbiotic, and dynamic vision, to this world of living interparticipation"[48] fulfilled the expectation for art in the reconstruction period to offer a redemptive humanism. In October 1957, after months of correspondence leading to the joint publication of *Gutai* 8, which celebrated "the Informel adventure," Tapié traveled to Osaka to meet with Yoshihara. The Gutai group greeted him with huge fanfare, setting in motion the patterns of spectacular homage that would characterize their public friendship over the following decade.

Yoshihara and Tapié's first exhibition collaboration was *The International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai* (fig. 10). Opening in 1958 at the Takashimaya department store in Osaka, this presentation of works by seventy-six artists from Japan, Europe, and America toured four cities in Japan and then headed to the U.S., where a smaller selection of Gutai works opened at Martha Jackson Gallery. Yoshihara praised Tapié's curatorial efforts, which "reached beyond racial differences and boundaries," and expressed hope that "these exhibitions would provide a stimulus to a broader international exchange of new arts throughout the world."[49] Paintings by Gutai artists were installed beside works by such artists as Karel Appel, Capogrossi, Kline, de Kooning, Mathieu, Joan Mitchell, Robert Motherwell, Pollock, and Antoni Tàpies, suggesting a shared language of gesture, material, and looseness of form that transcended nationality. "Art now cannot be considered other than on a global scale," Tapié proclaimed in the show's catalogue, a dedicated issue of the *Gutai* journal. "Basically, there is an agreement on a global scale about the new road of morphological possibilities."[50]

For all the rhetoric, however, the commonality between Informel and Gutai is valid only up to a point. In theory, both movements are engaged in the artist's gestural process of art making as a direct, phenomenological encounter with matter, using thick, impasto surfaces variously mixed with tar, sand, pebbles, and, in Gutai's case, glass shards, spent bullets, mounds of matchsticks, and even the caps of paint tubes. Gutai was interested in children's art as a means of nurturing free thought, while Informel drew from outsider art as a model of primal and untutored form. In his manifesto, Yoshihara praises Mathieu's works alongside Pollock's for revealing "the scream of matter itself" and, like Paulhan, refuses art that can be assimilated into any human concept, image, or symbol:

> When the individual's character and the selected materiality meld together in the furnace of automatism, we are surprised to see the emergence of a space previously unknown, unseen, and unexperienced. Automatism inevitably transcends the artist's own image. We endeavor to achieve our own method of creating space rather than relying on our own images.[51]

Shiraga Kazuo, who once floated cow livers in a formaldehyde-filled vitrine and made paintings on flayed boar skins (plate 60), comes closest to Fautrier and Wols in displaying grotesque matter as natural form. But if we look at the massive poured paintings by Motonaga Sadamasa, in which the artist pooled and dripped viscous paint mixed with pebbles over tilted canvas surfaces (plate 71), or Yamazaki Tsuruko's paintings on zinc, which are just stains on a slithery surface (plates 67–68), we find their approach is far less authorial than, say, Mathieu, whose studied "spontaneity" never abandons design. The paintings Yoshihara Michio made by ladling hot tar over sand spread across a wooden board (plate 62), or Murakami Saburō's "peeling paintings," which are left over time to decompose (plate 90), reveal how Gutai artists use the nature of materials to tap into chance and indeterminacy. By letting matter act through itself rather than their acting through matter, Gutai artists' "formless" works were fundamentally more deviant and "animalistic" than European Informel art. Ironically, these Gutai artists evoke Georges Bataille's "base materialism" more than the Informel artists who consciously drew from it. In his influential 1929 *Documents*, Bataille states, "The time has come, when employing the word *materialism*, to assign it to the meaning of direct interpretation, *excluding all idealism*, of raw phenomena."[52]

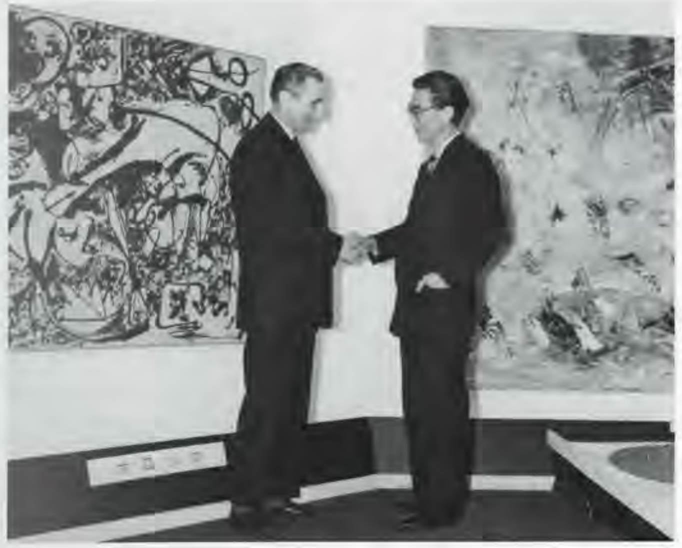
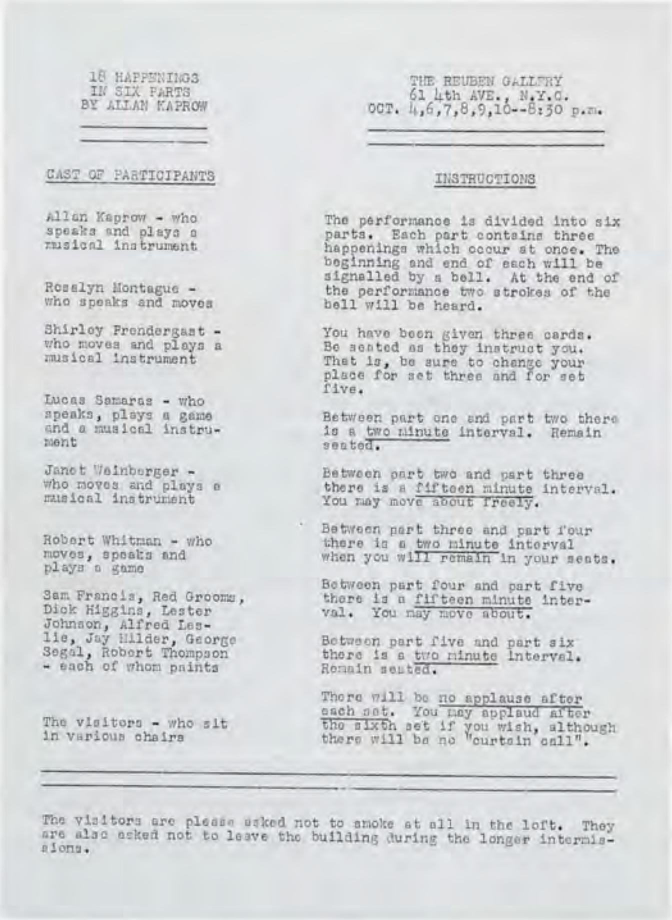


FIG. 10. Yoshihara Jirō and Michel Tapié shake hands in front of works by Jackson Pollock (left) and Yoshihara (right) at *The International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, ca. April 12–20, 1958

Much as Gutai became a touchstone for Informel's internationalist premise within the context of postwar France, Gutai played a role in Kaprow's construction of the American neo-avant-garde of the 1960s.[53] And once again, Gutai's Japanese identity supported the Westerner's claims for the international significance of his own movement, Happenings (fig. 11). In 1955, Kaprow stated, "[It] is no longer possible to exist purely as a nation and culture separate from other[s]."[54] But whereas Informel rose from the existential crisis of postwar France, his strategies responded to the rapidly advancing industrial complex and superpower status of Eisenhower's America.

The non-Western world, and Japan in particular, appealed to Kaprow and others who were skeptical of the U.S. government as a militarist and corporatist machine and who resisted the rising tides of American conformism and materialism. Implicit in Kaprow's mentor John Cage's radical proposition "to stop all the thinking that separates music from living"[55] was a critique of the West's doomed fixation on objectification and rationalism. His famous 1952 "silent" music composition, *4′ 33″*, opened the way for new structures of durational time, spatial transparency, and experiential being, allowing the accidental contents of sensory perception to become art itself. Taking Cage's proposition to its radical end, Fluxus founder George Maciunas called for the total elimination of Western cultural production in his 1963 "Fluxus Manifesto": "*Purge* the world of bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual', professional & commercialized culture, PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art,—PURGE THE WORLD OF 'EUROPANISM'!"[56]

Arising from this rupture, Kaprow set out to chart the theoretical terms and "international scope" of the emerging phenomena in his 1966 book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*. This pioneering publication expanded on Kaprow's idea that painting after Jackson Pollock was dead and articulated a legacy for Pollock of environmental art that was based on events and performance, incorporating chance, the everyday, duration, and audience interactivity. By featuring action shots of Gutai's intermedia performance paintings and stage events alongside those of event-based works by Kusama Yayoi in Milan, Kudō Testumi in Paris, Wolf Vostell in Cologne, and Milan Knížák and Sonia Švecová in Prague, Kaprow could demonstrate the far-reaching breakdown of Western formalism and classical plastic arts. Via Cage, his proposal for a set of "form-principles" that would render "*the line between art and life . . . as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible*," appropriated such Asian-derived concepts as "change," "chance," "accidents," and a notion of time that was "variable and discontinuous." Casting his new worldview as a "philosophical quest" rather than an "aesthetic activity,"[57] Kaprow was at the forefront of a cultural movement to deconstruct the certainties of Western



18 HAPPENINGS
IN SIX PARTS
BY ALLAN KAPROW

THE REUBEN GALLERY
61 4th AVE., N.Y.C.
OCT. 4,6,7,8,9,10--8:30 p.m.

CAST OF PARTICIPANTS

Allan Kaprow - who speaks and plays a musical instrument

Roselyn Montague - who speaks and moves

Shirley Prendergast - who moves and plays a musical instrument

Lucas Samaras - who speaks, plays a game and a musical instrument

Janet Weinberger - who moves and plays a musical instrument

Robert Whitman - who moves, speaks and plays a game

Sam Francis, Red Grooms, Dick Higgins, Lester Johnson, Alfred Leslie, Jay Milder, George Segal, Robert Thompson - each of whom paints

The visitors - who sit in various chairs

INSTRUCTIONS

The performance is divided into six parts. Each part contains three happenings which occur at once. The beginning and end of each will be signalled by a bell. At the end of the performance two strokes of the bell will be heard.

You have been given three cards. Be seated as they instruct you. That is, be sure to change your place for set three and for set five.

Between part one and part two there is a two minute interval. Remain seated.

Between part two and part three there is a fifteen minute interval. You may move about freely.

Between part three and part four there is a two minute interval when you will remain in your seats.

Between part four and part five there is a fifteen minute interval. You may move about.

Between part five and part six there is a two minute interval. Remain seated.

There will be no applause after each set. You may applaud after the sixth set if you wish, although there will be no "curtain call".

The visitors are please asked not to smoke at all in the loft. They are also asked not to leave the building during the longer intermissions.

FIG. 11. **Allan KAPROW**, cast and instructions for *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, 1959. Typescript on paper, 27.9 × 21.6 cm. Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

modernism, those "knots of 'knowables,' of groupings, relationships, and larger structures which have become obsolete."[58]

Kaprow's capacious narrative could not encompass the startling curiosity of Gutai's chronology, however. Works like Murakami Saburō's 1955 *Work (Six Holes)* (plate 57), where the artist flings himself through a series of taut paper screens to make art out of an act of performance, and Motonaga's 1957 *Smoke*, which literally dematerialized the art form in time and space, predated Kaprow's own experiments. "For the record," he wrote in his book's introduction to Gutai, "these dates seem to imply the precedence of the Japanese in the making of Happening-type performance."[59] He summarily declares that he "knew nothing of Gutai's activities" until 1959. Kaprow, the committed internationalist, could not fathom how the periphery could develop a trajectory other than a Western-centric one. However productive Kaprow's imagination of Gutai was for his own theorization of the neo-avant-garde, the untidy facts of Gutai's precedent remained unresolved.

Yves Klein went further in distancing himself from an unfavorable comparison to Gutai. Because Klein had lived in Japan between 1952–54 and presumably followed developments between Paris and Japan, some critics assumed his *Anthropometry* series (for example, fig. 12) using nude women "diving themselves into color and then rolling on their canvases"[60] was influenced by Shiraga Kazuo's foot painting. In his 1961 "Chelsea Manifesto," Klein dismissed those "deformed ideas spread by the international press—I speak of that group of Japanese painters who with great refinement used my method in a strange way." This potent intellectual problem, striking at the heart of modernism's geocentric claim to originality, and hence at the question of Gutai's reception, would require new art-historical tools to recuperate Gutai's critical and creative agency in an interconnected and contemporaneous history of ideas.

OPEN WORK

Gutai's second phase (1962–72) was marked by the opening of the Gutai Pinacotheca in 1962, the group's participation in the groundbreaking show *Nul 1965* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and its highly visible role in Osaka's World Exposition of 1970. Invigorated by the influx of younger members who thoroughly rejected the "Informel whirlwind," Gutai built on its experiments with environment art, technology, and intermedia throughout the 1960s. But whereas its earlier event-based works for the outdoors and stage sought to redraw art, its new directions sought to remake society. Gutai's sculptural installations incorporating sound, light, and motion, directly engaging the viewer through optical tricks, are a call to pacify technology and invoke the cosmic in the rapidly advancing space age. Corresponding to and connecting with the New Tendency movement in Europe, these conceptual shifts occurred in tandem with a complex collection of events that would make the 1960s the most philosophically revolutionary decade of the twentieth century. What Italian semiotician Umberto Eco called "open work" to describe how kinetic, contingent, and participatory art forms reveal "other ways of configuring reality"[61] also encompasses the collapse of high modernism and the emergence of radically pluralistic worldviews. In this context, Gutai's own internationalism and its reception abroad shift to what Japanese critic Haryū Ichirō would later in the decade term the global "consciousness of 'contemporary.'"[62]

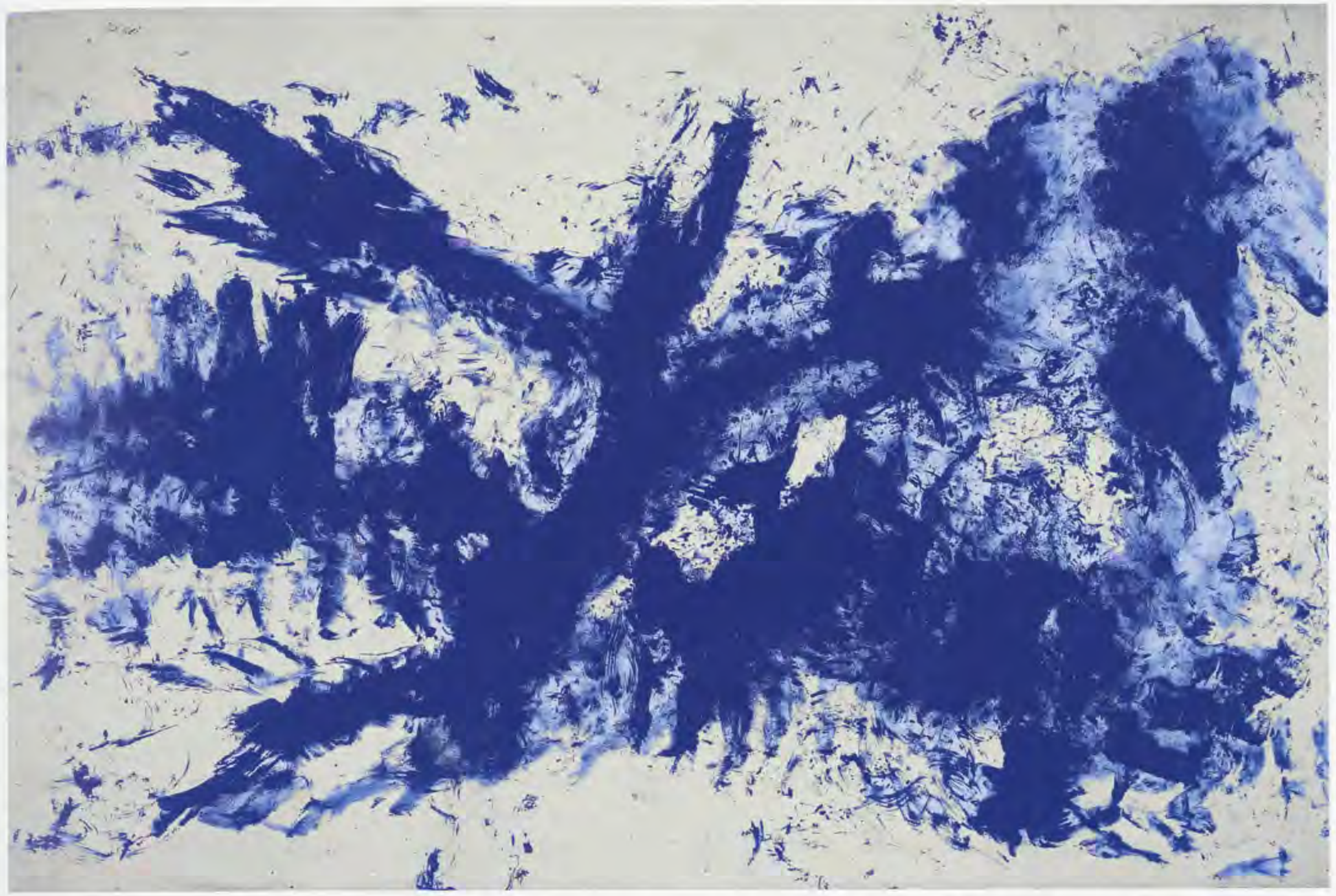


FIG. 12. **Yves KLEIN**, *Large Blue Anthropometry (ANT 105)* (*La grande Anthropométrie bleue [ANT 105]*), ca. 1960. Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper, mounted on canvas, 280 × 428 cm. Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa

Yoshihara's call to do what had never been done urged Gutai to transcend the conventional bounds of art and move into daily life. Gutai artists claimed the outdoors, theatrical stages, the pages of a printed journal, and the newly founded Pinacotheca as sites of production, not merely as sites of display. Perhaps the most spectacular event, and the most widely circulated internationally, was *The International Sky Festival*, in which paintings by thirty artists from America, Europe, and Japan were sent aloft in the urban sky over a department store in Osaka on banners tethered to huge advertising balloons, creating a vast, kinetic happening in open air. Gutai also followed a path of experimentation with both industrial and natural "found" materials like electric lights, cellophane, smoke, water, motorized devices, and concrete sound. Both strains in the group's work garnered international attention.

By 1959, Gutai's participation in such international group shows as *Arte nuova* at Turin's Circolo degli Artisti was continuing to challenge the status of New York and Paris as the presumptive centers of advanced art. Predicting a shift that would decenter metropolitan modernism through the 1960s, *Arte nuova* co-curator Luciano Pistoi wrote that "new forms of pictorial expression . . . [are] now emerging with equal force in France, America, Italy, and Japan."[63] In 1968, Jean Clay, prominent editor of the French art magazine *Robho*, wrote to Yoshihara proposing a special issue of the publication on Gutai. Directly challenging the ways that Tapié and Kaprow distorted Gutai to serve the narratives of Informel and Happenings, he set out to correct the historical record and prove Gutai had offered "prophetic . . . propositions" in experimental art.[64] The resulting issue of *Robho*, published in 1971, featured documentary photographs of Gutai's performance and event-based works with Yoshihara Jirō's explanations. In his introduction, Clay wrote:

> It took all of the Atlantic geocentrism of cultural Meccas and the high opinion that they have of their own importance for all of Gutai's prodigious creativity to pass almost unnoticed in the Occident.
>
> Gutai was the first to bring about the passage from an object-based art to a performance and event-based art on a large scale—several years before New York and Paris.[65]

Clay's attempt to adjust Gutai's place in Eurocentric art history arose from a burgeoning critique of the modernist discourse of originality. The idea of the "avant-garde" had defined art as a progressive chronology of innovations and discriminated against signs of influence or derivation. As a system of art, it also defined its operations in geographic terms rooted in the West. These entrenched ideas had long classified avant-gardism outside the West as derivative and hence inconsequential as formal or conceptual advances. Reflecting the poststructuralist critique of the metanarratives of history that developed among French intellectuals in the 1960s, challenging the political and social assumptions that underpinned such "regimes of domination" as colonialism, which had recently collapsed, Clay vehemently argued for Gutai's reevaluation.

Such thinking reflected larger intellectual currents, which were gradually eroding the hierarchies of geography and even of race in the telling of the history of modernity. The question that Japanese thinkers had investigated since the late nineteenth century—how to separate the "modern" from the "West"—was now relevant to poststructuralism. Gutai's reception abroad shifted accordingly. Postcolonial thought clarified differences between the *modern period* (characterized by international trade, imperialism, colonialism, and industrial and metropolitan development) and the *systems of modernism* (its philosophy, politics, ideology, and aesthetics, including avant-garde art). Likewise, mobility and intercultural contact were seen as the essential condition of modernity, meaning that transnationalism was basic to the process of modernization itself.[66] Considered within this evolving intellectual framework, Gutai's innovations were no longer subject to the West's geocentric narrative of avant-garde art, which could only construe the affinities between the group's early experimentations and kindred Western ideas as freak coincidence. As Alloway had predicted in 1963, hierarchies had outlived their usefulness; what mattered in the new world disorder was to "value the artist not to the extent that he is the agent of power (platonic essence or whatever), but to the extent that he is himself."[67]

Gutai's international profile during the course of the 1960s developed against the backdrop of tumultuous change in Japan. Despite the spectacular economic recovery and mobilization toward peace, prosperity, and progress, social and political turmoil rocked the tenuous foundation of the postwar Japanese "miracle." Renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, known as "Anpo," became a focal point. The agreement, ratified in 1952, gave the United States the right to develop Japan as a military base in the expanding East Asian front of the Cold War, implicating Japan in nuclear threat and regional conflict when it had accepted the terms of disarmament and was still recovering from the horrors of its own militarist past. Popular opposition culminated in a national crisis around massive demonstrations against Anpo's renewal in 1960 (which succeeded nevertheless) and again with violent antiwar and student protests in 1968, providing the key condition for Gutai's second phase. The anti-Anpo movement linked Japanese radicals, artists, and grassroots opposition groups to a transnational phenomenon emerging in opposition to the gathering peril of a worldwide military technocracy. The race for ever-deadlier nuclear arsenals, the race to land a man on the moon—and develop intercontinental ballistic missiles—and the environmental threat of industrial pollution for the first time made not just human but planetary survival a matter of manmade science and technology. But rather than retreat in the face of such threats, an emerging network of younger artists working around the world were emboldened to counter science and technology by harnessing their possibilities for art. Proposing that the exploding atom bomb would be "the most perfect kinetic sculpture, could we observe it without trembling," the founder of Düsseldorf's Zero group, Otto Piene, asked optimistically, "How big is art? How small is art?" For him and a coterie of like-minded artists around the world, the future of humanism depended on taking a hopeful outlook toward global society. "We want to exhibit in the sky," Piene dreamed, as if referring to the *Sky Festival*, "not in order to establish there a new art world, but rather to enter new space peacefully—that is, freely, playfully, and actively, not as slaves of war technology."[68]

Zero was part of a European group of New Tendency collectives that included the Parisian group GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel) and the Italian collectives Gruppo N and Gruppo T, all of whom would show alongside Gutai at the critically important exhibition *Nul 1965*. In 1962, GRAV, Gruppo N, and Gruppo T took part in the exhibition *Arte programmata* at the Olivetti showroom in Milan, and in its catalogue, Umberto Eco offered a cogent summary of what linked these movements. Rejecting Informel's expressionism, these artists experimented in a collaborative, scientific spirit to affect the viewer's perception of time, space, and even her own body through moving objects, geometric forms, and high-tech materials. Giving form to a philosophy, they used movement to show how "past, present, and future are present simultaneously," courted instability as "a visual equivalent of ambiguity," and involved the spectator not as "audience but participant."[69] Describing contemporary trends in kinetic and optical art in the terms of poststructuralist plurality—the condition of multiple, mutable, and ambiguous realities over fixed absolutes—Eco defined "kinetic movable structures" as a "field of events" revolving around the viewer. Employing light and motors to create the illusion of movement in space, these sculptures offered a new kind of "open work" proposing "other ways of configuring reality."[70]

Once again, Yoshihara's promotion of Gutai's activities sparked introductions to key actors in the international art community. A book he created with Tapié and scholar Haga Tōru, *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, published in Italy in 1961 and in the U.S. the following year, featured black-and-white photographs of Gutai's performances and installations in the context of Japanese aesthetics. Through Zero's Heinz Mack, Henk Peeters came upon the book and was struck by Gutai's prescient experiments.[71] A founder of the Nul group in Amsterdam in 1961, Peeters was investigating the emergence of similar postpainting practices across Europe and had established close ties with Mack, Piene, and Günther Uecker in Düsseldorf; with Piero Manzoni, Enrico Castellani, and their mentor, Lucio Fontana, of the Milan-based group Azimut; and with Yves Klein, whose mystical influence was felt everywhere but whose closest association lay with the Nouveau Réalistes in Paris. Beyond exploring synthesis through intermedia experiments in art, nature, and technology, these Nul/Zero artists also imagined synthesis as a social model of "internationalist collaboration" beyond "homogeneous or nationalist membership."[72] In the war's aftermath, it was liberating to build "new brotherhoods in the arts" and forge "bodily and cultural encounters with people who had been branded arch-enemies."[73] Determined to demonstrate that this positive phenomenon was consciously operating outside institutionalized politics and art-world centers, Peeters mounted the first Nul survey at the Stedelijk Museum in 1962. It featured twenty-five artists from eight countries. For its sequel, *Nul 1965*, Peeters wrote Yoshihara and invited Gutai to participate.

Yoshihara and his son Michio arrived in the Netherlands with a suitcase full of paintings, sketches for new installations, and Kanayama Akira's vinyl inflatable air sculpture, *Balloon* (1956, plate 109). Yoshihara was surprised when Peeters rejected the paintings as overly Informel and asked him instead to reconstruct Gutai's most experimental installations dating to a decade before (fig. 100). Once on site, Yoshihara and Michio furiously refabricated several works from the group's 1955 and 1956 exhibitions. These included Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)*, whose suspended plastic tubes filled with colored water resonated with Zero's interest in combining natural and industrial elements, and sheets of plain fabric by Tanaka Atsuko resembling her earlier *Work (Yellow Cloth)* (1955, plate 38), which blew in the wind of a fan and underscored Gutai's affinity with kinetic art. Yoshihara Michio created a new work composed of lightbulbs shining through mounds of sand on the floor, alluding to his *Discovery* (plate 11) and linking the group's early use of light to Zero's. Nearby, Mack's crystalline structure of reflective and perforated metal sheets, *Light Carousel* (ca. 1965), was suspended from the ceiling and lit from below, creating an immersive environment in continual spatial flux as its planes dissolved in light and shadow, and Uecker's spinning totems punctured with hundreds of nails conjured whirling rockets (fig. 14). The most significant juxtaposition was Kanayama's amorphous white vinyl *Balloon* installed beside iconic *Anthropometry* and monochrome works by Klein (plate 109), suggesting that the late Klein, Nul/Zero's most revered friend, was in fact artistically connected to the Gutai group whose influence he had disavowed. Such pairings delighted Yoshihara. Reporting on the Amsterdam show in the *Gutai* journal (fig. 13), he described

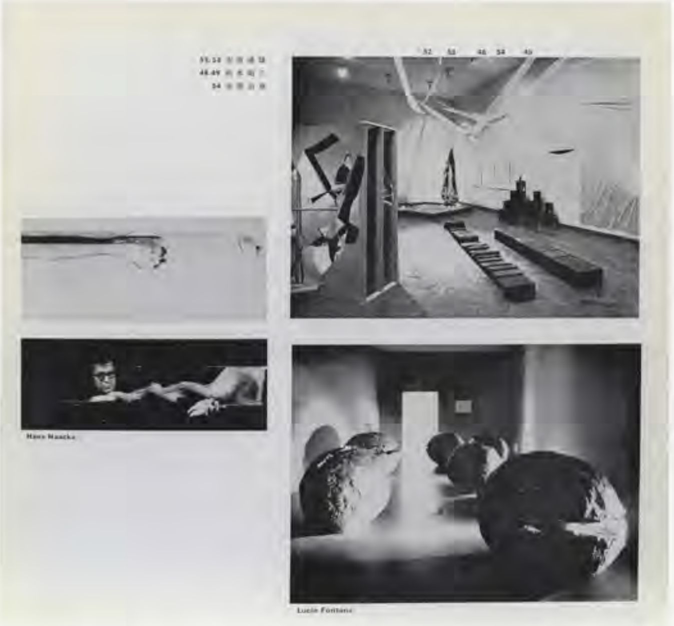


FIG. 13. Interior spread from *Gutai* 14 (October 1965) featuring the *Nul 1965* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965. Installation views, clockwise from upper right: Gutai works, works by Lucio Fontana, and works by Hans Haacke

the effects of highlighting Gutai's precedence over the European movement:

> I was able to vividly sense the amazement that those artists felt from Gutai's works, which were first created ten years ago. The works of [Hans] Haacke and Peeters extensively utilize water in this exhibition, but Motonaga began using water way before them; Haacke's present work has close resemblance with Tanaka's wind-based work, which was created ten years ago. Gutai's manifestations (that I referred to as "the fruits that should be picked" in the *Gutai* journal published at the time), which were presented ten years ago in a pine grove in Ashiya as well as at various theater halls, were "picked" by . . . the art museum in the Netherlands.[74]

Unlike Tapié, Kaprow, or Klein, whose defenses distorted Gutai's critical reception, Peeters and his Nul/Zero colleagues recognized that Japan was ahead in precisely the kind of experiments that they themselves, as Western vanguard artists, were pursuing. To Mack, "this unbelievable coincidence"[75] called for a new kind of mapping of contemporary art. In his *Diagram* (1970, fig. 15), which spatially maps the transnational dynamics that produced Zero, Mack draws a two-way arrow to Gutai. Another visualization of Gutai's "international contemporaneity"[76] is Peeters' photomontage of the unrealized outdoor extravaganza *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*, 1966, fig. 16). Conceived as a huge artistic event on Scheveningen pier in The Hague, *Zero on Sea* would have involved a confluence of art, nature, technology, and urban design among some fifty artists from more than ten countries. Gutai artists, including several younger members substantially engaged in environment art, contributed more drawings for *Zero on Sea* installations than any other participating group (1965–66, plates 112–13), engineering kinetic systems for large-scale sculptures of bubbling detergent foam, motorized disks of blinking lights, propeller-operated plastic shafts blowing confetti, and triangular multicolored rafts at sea.[77] In Peeters's photomontage, Gutai is fully integrated into the most far-reaching proposition for avant-garde art anywhere in the world at the time.

GUTAI AS METHOD

By the mid-1960s, what Lawrence Alloway had disparaged as the "cordial language of universalism" had begun to appear bankrupt. The rise of dictatorships in postcolonial Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as the American war in Vietnam, had undercut earlier hopes for liberal internationalism and its instruments like the United Nations. The dominant mood was protest. In Japan, university students mobilized massive, frequently violent anti-U.S. demonstrations against the impending 1970 renewal of Anpo and, more widely, against the Vietnam War, global corporatism, and entrenched authoritarianism in education and government, linking themselves to the campus protests and Third World revolutionary fervor sweeping Europe and the United States in 1968–69.

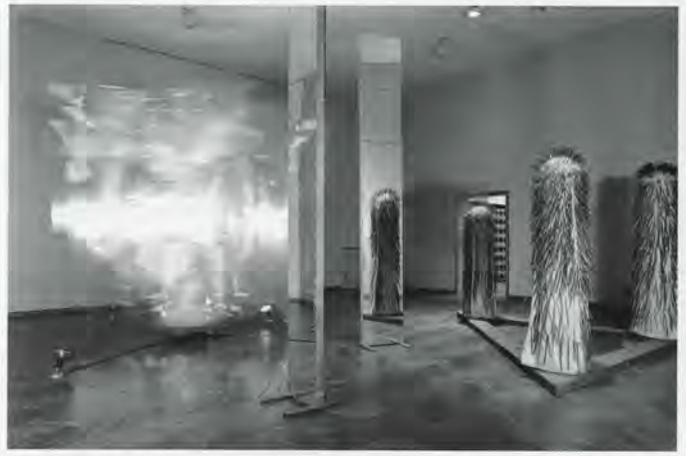


FIG. 14. Installation view of *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965. Left: Heinz Mack, *Light Carousel* (*Lichtkarussel*, ca. 1965); right: Günther Uecker, *New York Dancer* (1965)

In this context, even the most internationalist artists moved away from the postwar liberation rhetoric. This critical distance launched a trend to relocate "universalism" in Japan's own intellectual and cultural history. The popularity of such thinkers as Yanagita Kunio, whose writings on Japanese folklore sought to define a unique Japanese mentality through its ethnic traditions, stimulated a renewed discourse on nativism and on historical perspectives grounded in the periphery. The literary scholar Takeuchi Yoshimi theorized how Japanese modernism could be emancipated from "simple binary oppositions" with the West and instead be "grounded in Asian principles."[78] If the goal of Japanese modernization was to achieve global equality, it had to universalize its cultural values, an approach that Takeuchi called "Asia as method." He wrote:

> The Orient must change the West in order to further elevate those universal values that the West itself produced. This is the main problem facing East-West relations today, and it is at once a political and cultural issue. . . . When this rollback takes place, we must have our own cultural values. . . . I suspect that they are possible as method, that is to say, as the process of the subject's self-formation.[79]

Yoshihara's response to these changing attitudes was twofold. He embarked on a series of works that sought to unify and equalize Eastern and Western painting, and he turned to strengthening Gutai's base in Osaka, promoting the Pinacotheca as a platform for Japanese contemporary art to be seen within its own local yet cosmopolitan context. Yoshihara's internationalism had always veered between the center and periphery, Kansai and New York/Paris. He variously promoted exchange and interconnections, struggled against Western critical bias, and celebrated the periphery as a freer, more experimental space than the art world's centers, whose power actually endorsed conservatism. With Expo '70 coming to his hometown, he eagerly supported Osaka's having achieved the status of an important hub of transnational contact and exchange. After Alloway's visit to the Pinacotheca in 1964, he realized that the notion of a geographic center had been superseded by a "state of knowledge" mediated by increasing mobility and faster distribution systems.[80] Yoshihara also grasped that networks, not centers, were the key to the flow of ideas, and Osaka had become a node in the global circuit.

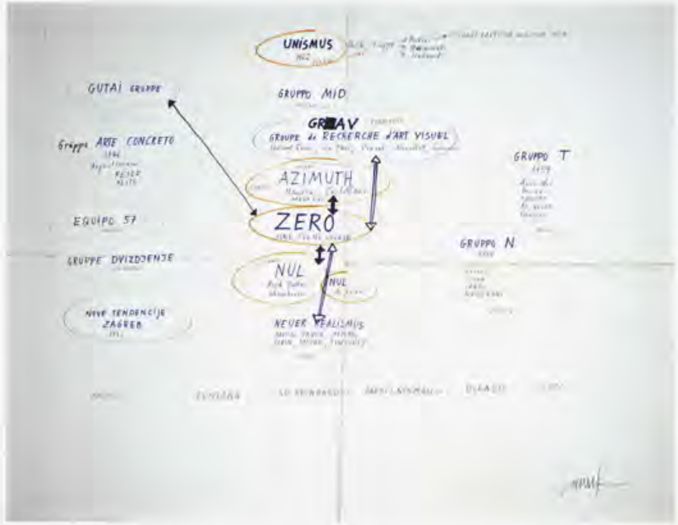


FIG. 15. **Heinz MACK**, *Diagram*, 1970. Ink on paper, 50 × 65 cm. Zero Foundation, Düsseldorf

For Yoshihara, the Zero projects and Gutai's success in intermedia art ended any lingering nostalgia for the "Informel adventure." From the mid-1960s, his long-term devotion to gestural abstraction and rich, impasto surfaces evolved into his *Circle* series (1965–72), hard-edge black-and-white paintings of a single circular form floating on a flat, matte surface. In the tradition of Japanese Zen painting, the *ensō*, or circle, brushed in a single act of ink on paper or silk is the highest and most essential expression of the "empty mind" (*mu shin*). Yoshihara translates this cultural sign, so charged with aesthetic and philosophical power, into a minimalist object signifying "zero." In a 1971 *Circle* (plate 126), he dilutes the oil paint to make it as fluid as ink but inverts the evoca-

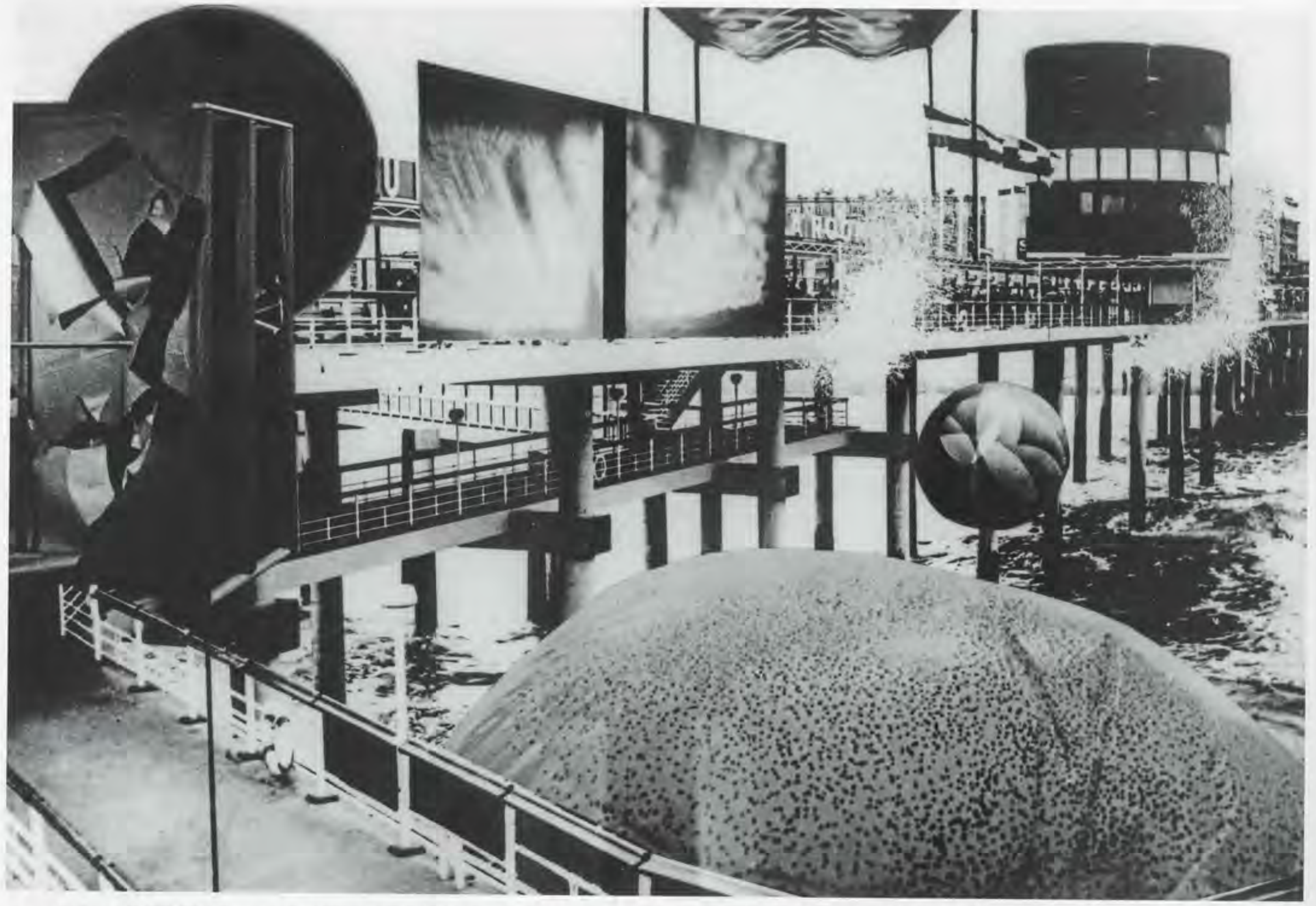


FIG. 16. **Henk PEETERS**, *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*) photomontage using works by Murakami Saburō, Pol Bury, Otto Piene, Henk Peeters, Gianni Colombo, Hans Haacke, and Kanayama Akira, 1966. Zero Foundation, Düsseldorf

tion of calligraphy by reversing the composition to white form on a black ground. Like the work of American painter Ad Reinhardt, who came to Asian aesthetics from the West, Yoshihara's *Circle* project could also be cast as a "logical development of personal art history and the historic traditions of Eastern and Western pure painting."[81] Yoshihara, now in his sixties, had found an application for "Asia as method."

Gutai's multiplatform participation in Expo '70 was Yoshihara's final experiment. It fulfilled the two criteria he had set for the group since its inception: bold innovation expressing the "spirit of the age" and connection to contemporaneous international artistic movements. The exposition certified the shift in the global status of Japan, no longer a defeated nation in the throes of postwar reconstruction but an emerging technological superpower leading humanity to the world of robotics and computers. Isozaki Arata, who worked on the fairgrounds as a master designer under architect Tange Kenzō, envisioned a "post-industrial" exposition, "initiating a new century of design and planning and visitor participation."[82] Leftist groups criticized the artists who took part in the Expo, including Gutai members, equating their work on this national project with the wartime mobilization of artists for war propaganda. While the critique devalued Gutai's contributions, both in Japan and abroad, the exposition's significance as a site of extraordinary experiments in art and technology deserves its recent reappraisal.[83]

Expo '70 culminated the group's second phase and featured several of a younger cohort of twenty-four members who joined after 1961. Imai Norio, Imanaka Kumiko, Kikunami Jōji, Matsuda Yutaka, Nasaka Senkichirō, and Yoshida Minoru, among others, constructed their "dreams for a new society"[84] through optically dazzling participatory environments, often motorized, illuminated, and wired for sound. Gutai's collaborative environment in the lobby of the Midori Pavilion presented a zigzagging structure of gleaming aluminum pipes that served as a giant armature for their optical, kinetic, and electric-light sculptures as well as geometric paintings (1970, fig. 47, plate 123). The mirrorlike pipes, ten centimeters in diameter, distorted visitors' reflections, altered their sense of space, and broadcast an electronic sound recording through a sequence of punctures. Likewise, the theatrical spectacle *Gutai Art Festival* (1970, plate 125) immersed the audience in a cacophony of stimuli, culminating in figures flying from helium balloons in the vast reaches of Isozaki's Festival Plaza while fire engines spewed foam on stage and Motonaga's iconic smoke machine puffed clouds into the strobe-lit atmosphere.

Gutai's intermedia ambitions resonated with the American installation designed by E.A.T. for the Pepsi Pavilion.[85] Organized by E.A.T. founders Billy Klüver and Robert Whitman and housed in a structure like a geodesic dome, the project was a multidisciplinary collaboration among some seventy-five visual artists, composers, choreographers, scientists, and engineers, including the core team of Robert Breer, Frosty Myers, and David Tudor (who had visited the Gutai Pinacotheca with John Cage in 1962). The dominant feature was the Mirror Dome, a ninety-foot-diameter spherical inflated mirror made of aluminized Mylar whose reflections created the optical effect of holograms. Using sophisticated electronics, E.A.T. conceived the space as a totally immersive, interactive environment of moving sound and light. Although the science and engineering of the Pepsi Pavilion were superior to those of Gutai's spectacles, both sought to transport the viewer into technologically mediated environments. In so doing they jointly harkened back to Gutai's initial and ultimate internationalist vision: to create art at the cutting edge of world culture that would "contribute to the progress of humanity."[86]

The postwar reconstruction cultures of Japan, the United States, and Europe were driven by a liberal internationalism and a prevailing optimism about their shared future of globalism. However suspect their underlying ideologies, they were confident of their ethical projects' ability to forge authentic subjectivity as resistance against the legacies of wartime totalitarianism. Allan Kaprow's sentiments were typical: "[It] is no longer possible to exist purely and simply as a nation and culture separate from other nations and cultures. . . . We can only guess at the next step: a non-national language of painting, perhaps of speaking too, in which a 'world style' is given variety and richness by a range of accents modifying it in each country where it is practiced."[87]

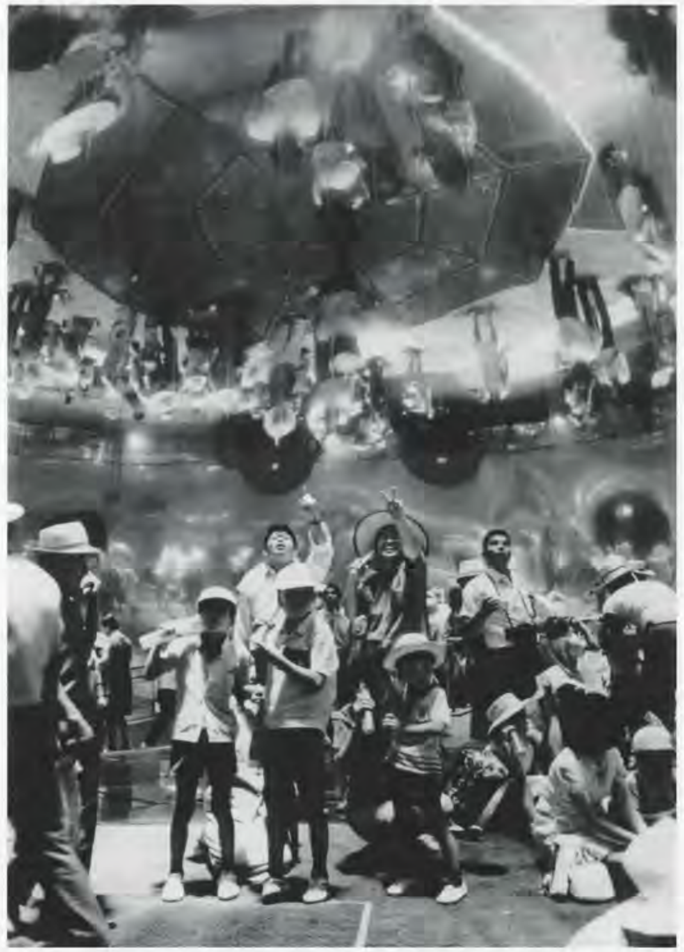


FIG. 17. **Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.)**, Pepsi Pavilion for Expo '70, 1970. Interior view

The Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and the 1973 oil shock eroded these internationalist visions. By the time of Yoshihara Jirō's death and Gutai's dissolution in 1972, America's aspirations for a vanguard "world style" had come to be dismissed as regressive imperialism, and adventurous museum exhibitions seeking to map the "variety and richness" of contemporaneous artistic developments around the world were largely abandoned in a mind-set of overall retrenchment. (As a case in point, the Guggenheim's own International Award ended in 1971.) Conceptual art grounded in "institutional critique" dominated museum programs of contemporary art for the following decades, and the 1980s' critical discourse on the political uses of Abstract Expressionism, focusing on the Museum of Modern Art's International Council's touring exhibitions during the Cold War, further discredited the kind of internationalism that had animated such impresarios as Yoshihara, Tapié, Peeters, or, for that matter, Alfred Barr. As a certain American parochialism set in, and with Yoshihara gone, Gutai, like other outsider modernisms, was sent to art history's cold storage.

Subsequently, after the Berlin Wall's collapse, the development of postcolonial theory and new forms of global arts study provided fresh impetus and new tools for examining art beyond Western Europe and America. But these exercises have been biased toward contemporary art and, like the prevailing international biennials, often end up positioning "diversity" in a model that flattens out differences. When they address art of the modern or late-modern periods, the approach tends to view non-Western modernism as a mere translation of established historical movements from the center to the periphery. *Gutai: Splendid Playground* and this essay argue that Gutai is a potent and original movement and critically relevant to a broader appreciation of the modernist project.

Until recently, Gutai's critical legacy in the West (and in Japan) was determined by terms set forth by Tapié with Informel, Kaprow with Happenings, and, to a lesser extent, Peeters via Zero. These intermediaries' assimilation of Gutai's "coincidental" experiments are significant for how they demonstrate the ways vanguard positions based on internationalism were constructed in postwar Europe and America. But new perspectives on Gutai in keeping with a more contemporary logic are long overdue; for, as globalization theorist Arjun Appadurai has written, "Culture does imply difference, but the differences are now no longer taxonomic; they are interactive and refractive." It is instructive that Yoshihara avoided the terms "modern" and "avant-garde" and that he used *seishin*, or "spirit," to describe Gutai's aesthetic attitude not as a system but rather an ethics of subjective individualism acting in the world. He and the rest of the group saw themselves as part of a great human project, one capacious and perceptive enough to encompass distant views.

NOTES

My first chance to work on Gutai was made possible by the Yokohama Museum of Art in the early 1990s. I offer thanks to my Japanese colleagues, especially Amano Tarō, for his early encouragement of my research. The field of postwar Japanese art history, and Gutai and transnational art studies in particular, has advanced tremendously since then thanks to my colleagues on this project, Ming Tiampo and Reiko Tomii. I offer deepest thanks to Reiko for intellectual camaraderie that has sustained and pushed my own engagement. Ming's study of Gutai as a transnational phenomenon in the history of modernism, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism*, inspired many conversations that have found their way into this book, and her joyful spirit infused the entire project team. I would like to thank Chief Exhibition Designer Melanie Taylor for giving shape to our curatorial vision and Senior Editor Domenick Ammirati for his insightful honing of our written ideas.

1. Yoshihara Jirō, "A Statement by Jirō Yoshihara: Leader of the Gutai," Martha Jackson Gallery press release, September 17, 1958, Archives of the New Gallery, Bennington College, Bennington, Vt.

2. Shiraga Kazuo, "Kotai no kakuritsu," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956), p. 6; trans. as "The Establishment of the Individual," this volume, p. 279.

3. Revisionist critiques of the political uses of Abstract Expressionism to advance U.S. democracy at home and abroad developed in the 1980s. Key texts include Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), and Ann Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). More recently, this analysis has in turn been questioned by several critics, including Robert Burstow, "The Limits of Modernist Art as a 'Weapon of the Cold War': Reassessing the Unknown Patron of the Monument to the Unknown Political Prisoner," *Oxford Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (1997), pp. 68–80; Michael Kimmelman, "Revisiting the Revisionists: The Modern, Its Critics, and the Cold War," in Francis Frascina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 294–306; and Irving Sandler, "Abstract Expressionism and the Cold War," *Art in America* (June/July 2008), pp. 65–74.

4. By the mid-1960s, major American museums were organizing survey exhibitions devoted to contemporary Japanese art. See, for example, *Contemporary Japanese Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1964) and *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture* (New York; Museum of Modern Art, 1965), the latter of which toured the U.S. through 1967. The annual Japan Art Festival exhibition, organized by Tokyo's quasi-governmental Japan Art Festival Association from 1966, also presented surveys that toured U.S. museums, including the Guggenheim, which hosted the *Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibtion* in 1970.

5. James Johnson Sweeney, "Guggenheim Museum Head Raps 'Tastemakers,'" clipping from an Ann Arbor, Mich., newspaper, April 14, 1960, Solomon R. Guggenheim Archives, New York, Estate of James Johnson Sweeney, M0006; quoted in Megan Fontanella, "Tastebreakers of the 1950s: An Introduction," in *Art of Another Kind: International Abstraction and the Guggenheim, 1949–1960* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2012), p. 13.

6. James Johnson Sweeney, *Introduction to Younger American Painters: A Selection*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1954), unpaginated; quoted in Tracey Bashkoff, "Aftermath Trash: The Acquisitions of James Johnson Sweeney," in *Art of Another Kind*, p. 43.

7. This was the first time the Guggenheim organized the GIA independent of the international panel, which was henceforth responsible for selecting the award recipients rather than for proposing the artists and artworks. Alloway selected eighty-two artists from twenty-four countries and organized the catalogue bibliography by a set of categories that hint at his curatorial approach: "Problems of Communication and Nationality" (fig. 4); "Old World, New World"; "Cobra"; "East-West"; and national styles by country. See Lawrence Alloway, *Guggenheim International Award 1964* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1963). I am indebted to Francine Snyder for her archival research on the Guggenheim International Award.

8. Ibid., p. 24.

9. See Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, and David Joselit, *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, vol. 2 (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011), pp. 411–16. Pedro Erber touches on this topic in "Gutai and Brazilian Concrete Art," this volume, pp. 270–75.

10. My concept of "modernity at large" and modern cultural formation as "transnational flows" is indebted to the work of globalization theorist and cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai; see his *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). Other key texts may be found in James Elkins, Zhivka Valiavicharska, and Alice Kim, eds., *Art and Globalization* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections and Innovations* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Kobena Mercer, ed., *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005); and Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee, eds., *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008).

11. Arjun Appadurai, "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology," in *Modernity at Large*, p. 60.

12. Yoshihara Jirō, "On the Occasion of the Publication of the Bulletin, *Gutai*," *Gutai* 1 (January 1955), unpaginated.

13. For a list of the magazine collections from Yoshihara Jirō's library in the Yoshihara Jirō Papers at the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, see Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 184–85. See also *Botsugo 20 nen Yoshihara Jirō ten/Jirō Yoshihara*, exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992).

14. I am indebted to Vivien Greene for this insight.

15. Yoshihara, "On the Occasion of the Publication of the Bulletin, *Gutai*."

16. Shimamoto Shōzō, letter to Jackson Pollock, Feb. 6, 1956; repr. in Tetsuya Ōshima, "'Dear Mr. Jackson Pollock': A Letter from Gutai," in Ming Tiampo, *"Under Each Other's Spell": The Gutai and New York* (East Hampton. N.Y.: Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, 2009), p. 14.

17. Takiguchi Shūzō, "Muhankyō no jujitsu o seishi seyo: Biennāre kokusaiten shuppin o megutte" [Confront the fact of being ignored: On the works sent to the *International Biennale Exhibition*], *Yomiuri shinbun*, September 16, 1952; cited in Reiko Tomii, "Historicizing 'Contemporary Art': Some Discursive Practices in *Gendai Bijustu* in Japan," *Positions* 12, no. 3 (2004), p. 616.

18. Takiguchi Shūzō, "Sengo bijutsu no ayumi: Dai 5-kai shūsaku bijutsu ten" [Steps in postwar art: *5th Excellent Works Exhibition*] (1954), in Takiguchi, *Ten* [Points] (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1983), p. 212; quoted in "To Challenge the Midsummer Sun: The Gutai Group," in Alexandra Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004), p. 86.

19. Yoshihara Jirō and Nakamura Shin, "America no kindai kaiga" [Modern painting in America], *Kansai bijutsu* 13 (May 1951), p. 12; quoted in Natsu Oyabe, "Human Subjectivity and Confrontation with Materials in Japanese Art," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, p. 93. Trans. adapted by author.

20. Ibid.

21. Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai bijutsu sengen," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), pp. 202–04; trans. as "Gutai Art Manifesto," this volume, pp. 18–19.

22. Jackson Pollock, repr. in Francis O'Conner and Eugene V. Thaw, *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), vol. 4, p. 253, docs 89, 90; quoted in Stephen Polocari, "Pollock and America, Too," in Joan Marter, ed., *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007), p. 189.

23. Yoshihara, "On the Occasion of the Publication of the Bulletin, *Gutai*."

24. B. H. Friedman, quoted in "Jackson Pollock's Obituary," *Gutai* 5 (October 1956), unpaginated.

25. See Ming Tiampo, "Lines of Flight: The Gutai Journal," *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 75–97, and Katō Mizuho, "A Bridge to the World: *Gutai*, 1956–1959," in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010), pp. 100–07.

26. Dore Ashton, "Art: Japan's Gutai Group," *New York Times*, September 25, 1958, p. 66; quoted in Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 109. That Ashton seemed unaware of Gutai's radical experiments using nature and nonart materials to create outdoor environments, making interactive installations using electricity, sound, and light, and doing action events on stage, explains some but not all of her critical misreading.

27. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Art News* 51, no. 8 (December 1958); repr. in Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Horizon, 1959), p. 25.

28. Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Art News* 57, no. 6 (October 1958), pp. 24–26, 55–57; repr. in Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 7–9.

29. For analyses of the relationship between Pollock and Gutai, see Joan Kee, "Situating a Singular Kind of 'Action': Early Gutai Painting, 1954–1957," *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2003), pp. 121–40; Osaki Shin'ichiro, Augusta Monferi, and Marcella Cossu, *Giappone all'avanguardia: Il gruppo Gutai negli anni cinquanta* (Milan: Electa, 1990); Osaki Shin'ichiro, *Kaiga ron o koete* [Painting theory and after] (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 1999); Reiko Tomii and Fergus McCaffrey, *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades* (New York; McCaffrey Fine Art, 2009); Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*; Tiampo, *"Under Each Other's Spell"*; and Tōno Yoshiaki, "Jackson Pollock et le Group Gutai," in *Jackson Pollock* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1982), pp. 83–92.

30. Sumi Yasuo, "Ōtomachizumu ni yoru byōga" [Drawing by automatism], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

31. Kee, "Situating a Singular Kind of 'Action,'" p. 137.

32. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Buttai no dakai" [Material destruction], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated; quoted in Mika Yoshitake, "Breaking Through: Shōzō Shimamoto and the Aesthetic of *Dakai*," in Michael Darling, ed., *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949–78* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 2009), p. 104.

33. Murakami Saburō, "Gutai to Gutai-go: Sono 2, Murakami Saburō Intabyō"/ "Gutai and After Gutai: No. 2, Guest Saburō Murakami," *Jam & Butter*, no. 17 (May 1, 1973), p. 22; quoted in Reiko Tomii, "Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind," in *Murakami Saburō: Through the '70s* (Osaka: ArtCourt Gallery, 2012). For more on *e*, see Katō Mizuho, "Abstract Space in Concrete Terms: Reconsidering Gutai Painting," this volume, pp. 254–58; Ming Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," this volume, pp. 45–79; Tomii, "Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind"; and Yamamoto Atsuo, "Space, Time, Stage, Painting," trans. Ming Tiampo, in *Gutai: Moments de destruction, moments de beauté/Gutai: Moments of Destruction, Moments of Beauty*, ed. Florence de Mèredieu (Paris: Blusson, 2002), p. 31.

34. Maurice Blanchot, "On a Change of Epoch" (1960), in Michael Holland, ed., *The Blanchot Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp. 179–80.

35. Lucio Fontana, "Manifesto blanco" (1946), in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Source Book of Artists Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 48.

36. Ibid.

37. Jean Dubuffet, "Anticultural Positions" (1951), in Stiles and Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, p. 192.

38. Yoshihara, "Gutai Art Manifesto," pp. 18–19.

39. Jean Tinguely, "Für Statik" (1959), reproduced on http://www.tinguely.ch/en/museum_sammlung/sammlung.1954-1959_019.pdf. Accessed October 15, 2012.

40. Pierre Restany, "Le groupe Gutai ou le Japon précurseur," *XXe siécle*, no. 46 (September 1976), pp. 96–103. Gutai's relationship with Informel is central to its multilingual historiography. For key texts in Western languages, see Mirella Bandini, ed., *Tapié: Un art autre: Torino Parigi New York Osaka* (Turin: Edizioni d'Arte Fratello Pozzo, 1997); Alfred Pacquement, Yvonne Brunhammer, et al., *Japon des avant gardes 1910–1970* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1986); *Le Grand Geste: Informel and Abstract Expressionism* (Düsseldorf: Stiftung Museum Kunst Palast, 2010); Munroe, *Scream Against the Sky*; Osaki, Monferi, and Cossu, *Giappone all'avanguardia*; Ming Tiampo, "Gutai and Informel: Postwar Art in Japan and France, 1945–1965," Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2003; Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*; and Bonnefoy, Clément, and Savoy, *Gutai*.

41. Tapié organized exhibitions for Galerie René Drouin, Galerie Nina Dausset, and Galerie Rive Droit among others before serving as artistic adviser to Galerie Stadler from circa 1955 to 1970, where he presented Gutai artists in exhibitions in 1959, 1962, and 1965. See *Au Art Autre? Artistes autour Michel Tapié, une exposition* (Paris: Christie's, 2012).

42. José Ortega y Gasset. *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Paperbacks, 1956), p. 46.

43. Jean Paulhan, *Peinture sacreé* (Caen, France: L'Echoppe, 1989), p. 42; quoted in Dore Ashton, "À rebours: La rebelión Informalista/À rebours: The Informal Rebellion," in Ashton, ed., *À rebours: La rebelión Informalista/À rebours: The Informal Rebellion, 1939–1968* (Las Palmas de Gran Canária, Spain: Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno; Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1999), p. 29.

44. Michel Foucault, "Conversazione con Michel Foucault," in *Foucault: Dits et écrits*, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. 49; quoted and trans. in ibid., p. 18.

45. Jean Dubuffet, "Rehabilitation of Mud" (1946); quoted in *Art since 1900*, pp. 369–370.

46. One of Morita's forums was held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1954: Franz Kline, Joseph Albers, Hasegawa Saburō, and Morita participated in a panel discussion, "Abstract Art around the World Today," in conjunction with a show of contemporary Japanese calligraphy that Morita organized. Intent on constructing a broad humanist aesthetic founded on the principles of ink painting and calligraphy, he wrote: "For us, expression directly linked to life and the actualization of a life-filled universe are a return to our native way, but for Europeans and Americans, this represents the creation of a new dimension of art. Here we have the construction of the true meeting place for shared humanity." Morita Shiryū, "Gen shodan no tenbō" [The outlook for the contemporary calligraphy world], *Bokubi* 48 (September–October 1955), p. 33; quoted in Bert Winther-Tamaki, "The Asian Dimensions of Postwar Abstract Art: Calligraphy and Metaphysics," in Alexandra Munroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2009), p. 154.

47. Michel Tapié, "Hommage a Gutai," *Gutai* 8 (September 1957), pp. 4–44.

48. Haga Tōru, "The Japanese Point of View," in *Avant-Garde Art in Japan* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1962), unpaginated.

49. Yoshihara Jirō, "On 'The International Art of the New Era' dedicated to "Osaka International Festival," *Gutai* 9 (April 1958), p. 7.

50. Michel Tapié, "The International Art of a New Era, U.S.A., Japan, Europe," in *Gutai* 9 (April 1958), unpaginated.

51. Yoshihara, "Gutai Art Manifesto," p. 19.

52. The full sentence reads: "The time has come, when employing the terms *materialism*, to assign it to the meaning of direct interpretation, *excluding all idealism*, of raw phenomena, and not of a system founded on the fragmentary elements of an ideological analysis elaborated under the sign of religious ties." Georges Bataille, "Matérialisme," in *Documents*, no. 3 (1929); trans. John Harman in Alastair Botchie, ed., *Encyclopaedia Acephlica* (London: Atlas Press, 1995), p. 58; quoted in Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), p. 53.

53. One of the artists in *International Art of a New Era* was the New York painter Alfred Leslie. One year later, he appeared in Kaprow's historic *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben Gallery in 1959. Leslie's enthusiasm for Gutai impressed Kaprow, who cited the "Gutai group in Osaka" in an *Art News* piece on Happenings in 1961.

54. Allan Kaprow, script of "The International Set in Painting," an episode of *Rutgers Report on World Affairs* radio program (1955); quoted in Judith Rodenbeck, "Communication Malfunction: Happenings and Gutai," this volume, pp. 265–69. See also Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 89–92.

55. John Cage, "Julliard Lecture" (1952), in Cage, *A Year from Monday* (Midddletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), p. 97.

56. George Maciunas, "Manifesto" (1963), repr. in Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss, *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, exh. cat. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993), p. 25.

57. Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966), pp. 151–208. Italics in original.

58. Ibid., p. 181.

59. Ibid., p. 212.

60. Yves Klein, "Chelsea Manifesto," manuscript, 1961. http://www.yveskleinarchives.org/documents/chelsea_us.html. Accessed October 15, 2012.

61. Umberto Eco, "Arte programmata," in *Arte programmata* (Milan: Olivetti at Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, 1962), unpaginated; repr. in Massimiliano Gioni and Gary Carrion-Murayari, *Ghosts in the Machine* (New York: Skira Rizzoli and New Museum, 2012), pp. 239–42.

62. Haryū Ichirō, "Hihyō no yori takai kinō o" [Wishing art criticism to have a more functional role], *Geijutsu Shinchō* (January 1968), p. 15; quoted in Reiko Tomii, "'International Contemporaneity' in the 1960s: Discoursing on Art in Japan and Beyond," *Japan Review* 21 (2009), pp. 126.

63. Luciano Pistoi, *Arte nuova* (Turin: Circolo degli Artisti, 1959), p. 11; quoted in Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 114.

64. Jean Clay, letter to Yoshihara Jirō, October 13, 1968, in Yoshihara Jirō Papers, Ashiya Museum of Art & History, Ashiya, Japan; quoted in Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 94.

65. Jean Clay, "Hommage à Gutai," *Robho* 5/6 (1971), p. 54; quoted in Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 95.

66. Susan Standford Friedman, "Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no. 3, pp. 493–513.

67. Alloway, "Introduction," in *Guggenheim International Award 1964*, p. 24.

68. Otto Piene, "Light Ballet," in *Piene: Light Ballet*, exh. brochure, Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1965; quoted in João Ribas, *Otto Piene: Light Ballet* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT List Visual Arts Center, 2011), pp. 29–39.

69. Gruppo N manifesto (1962); quoted in George Rickey, "The New Tendency (Nouvelle Tendance—Recherche Continuelle)," *The Art Journal* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1964), pp. 277–78; repr. in Gioni and Carrion-Murayari, *Ghosts in the Machine*, p. 243.

70. Eco, "Arte Programmata," pp. 239–42.

71. For Nul and Zero's relationship with Gutai, see Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 128–37; Yamamoto Atsuo, "ZERO/Gutai/ZERO," and Caroline de Westenholz, "Zero on Sea," in Colin Huizing and Tijs Visser, eds., *Nul=O: The Dutch Nul Group in an International Context* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 2011), pp. 76–83 and pp. 92–117; and Tijs Visser, "Mal Communication," in *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space* (Lugano: Museo Cantonale d'Arte; Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2010), pp. 14–24.

72. Otto Piene, "ZERO is the incommensurable zone in which the old state turns into the new," *ZERO: Property from the Sammlung Lenz Schönberg* (London: Sothebys, 2010), p. 17.

73. Otto Piene, interview with the author, Valerie Hillings, and M. Schavemaker, New York, July 19, 2012.

74. Yoshihara Jirō, "Fūgawarina sakuhin gun (Amusuterudamu bijutsukan)," *Gutai* 14 (October 1965); trans. as "The Outlandish Group of Works: Amsterdam Art Exhibition," this volume, pp. 281–82.

75. Heinz Mack, interview with the author, Valerie Hillings, and M. Schavemaker, New York, July 17, 2012.

76. Reiko Tomii has theorized the idea of "international contemporaneity," discussed by Japanese critics in the late 1960s, as a construct for assessing the tensions between local and international sites of "contemporary art." See Tomii, "International Contemporaneity in the 1960s," pp. 123–47.

77. See de Westenholz, "Zero on Sea." I am grateful to Nina Horisaki-Christens for helping decipher and translate the instructions on several Gutai sketches for the *Zero on Sea* project.

78. "Asia as Method," in *What is Modernity? Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, trans. and ed. Richard F. Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 149–65. See also Munroe, *The Third Mind*, p. 27.

79. Ibid., p. 165.

80. Alloway, "Introduction," in *Guggenheim International Award 1964*, p. 15.

81. "Ad Reinhardt: Three Statements" (1966), in Barbara Rose, ed., *Art-as-Art: The Selected Writings of Ad Reinhardt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 84.

82. Nilo Lindgren, "Into the Collaboration," in Billy Klüver, Julie Martin, and Barbara Rose, eds., *Pavilion by Experiments in Art and Technology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), p. 4.

83. See Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," and Midori Yoshimoto, "Limitless World: Gutai's Reinvention in Environment and Intermedia," this volume, pp. 45–79 and pp. 259–64.

84. Kikunami Jōji, "Tekunorojī ga semaru mono," in "Ningen to tekunorojī" [Humankind and technology], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 313 (May 1969), p. 127; excerpted and trans. as "What Technology Demands," this volume, pp. 283–84.

85. With regard to the international and intermedia ambitions of this project, see Hiroko Ikegami, "'World Without Boundaries'?: E.A.T. and the Pepsi Pavilion at Expo '70, Osaka," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 23, guest ed. Midori Yoshimoto (December 2011), pp. 174–90.

86. Appadurai, "Global Ethnoscapes," p. 60.

87. Kaprow, "The International Set in Painting." See Rodenbeck, "Communication Malfunction: Happenings and Gutai," this volume, pp. 265–69.

gutai

splendid playground

MING TIAMPO ALEXANDRA MUNROE

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Organized by Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe

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Notes to the Reader:
Japanese names are written according to Japanese convention, with surname first, followed by given name. Exceptions were made for individuals living or working abroad.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations by the author. Author's translations from *Gutai* journal occasionally differ from those in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010).

Frontispiece: Yoshihara Jirō and Gutai members at *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, 1956. Top row, from left: Tanaka Atsuko, Murakami Saburō, Yamazaki Tsuruko; middle row, from left: Mizuguchi Kyōichi, Kanayama Akira, Shimamoto Shōzō; bottom row, from left: Yoshihara Jirō, Motonaga Sadamasa, and Horii Nichiei

Endpapers, front: detail of model for Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)* (1956/2013) for *Gutai: Splendid Playground*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011; back: Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival*, 1960, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 19–24, 1960

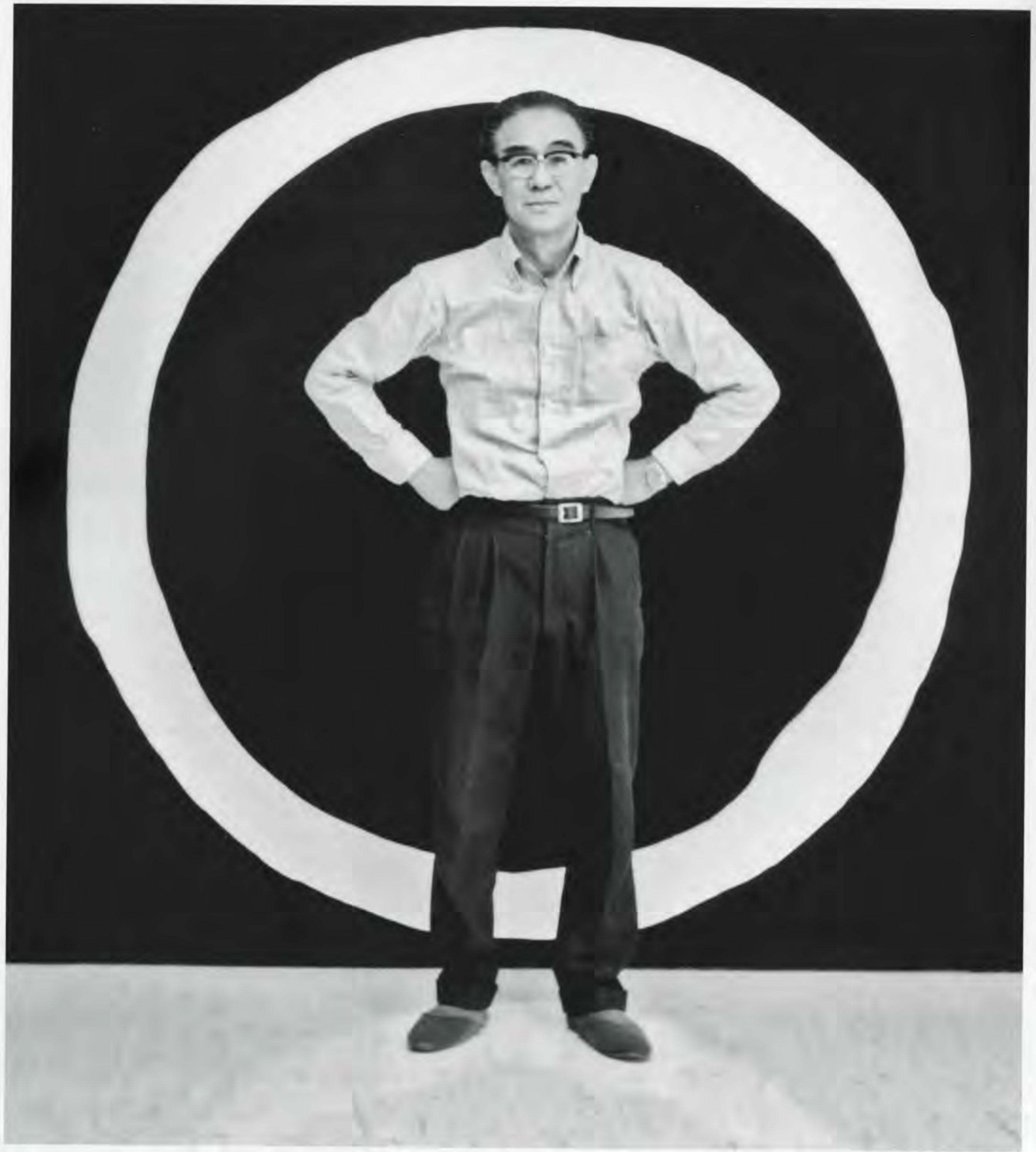

FIG. 18. Yoshihara Jirō in front of one of his *Circle* paintings at his studio, 1970

please draw freely

MING TIAMPO

The most important thing for us is to make contemporary art the freest site for people living in today's trying reality, and for creation in such a free site to contribute to the progress of humanity.

—Yoshihara Jirō, "For Publishing This Pamphlet," *Gutai* 1, 1955[1]

"Do what no one has done before!"[2] With this single declaration, Yoshihara Jirō steered the Gutai Art Association through two decades of innovation. From 1954 to 1972, Gutai artists leaped through paper screens, struggled against mud, wore dresses made of lightbulbs, flew paintings in the sky, invented fantastic (but thoroughly useless) robots, and dreamed up environments with rotating walls, filled with foam, and covered in painted symbols. Although these madcap experiments have long been received with skepticism,[3] Gutai's commitment to freedom and the individual had deep ethical origins that were expressed in both its art and its writing.

The Gutai group was unique in postwar Japan in that it spanned both the optimistic but raw period of postwar reconstruction during the 1950s and the disillusioned but prosperous period of rapid growth of the 1960s. Responding to its changing context, Gutai transformed itself continuously, taking on fresh artistic challenges as well as a new generation of artists. The group comprised a total of fifty-nine members, twenty-five of whom joined after 1961. Gutai's history may be divided into two phases, using the establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca in 1962 and the attendant changes in the group's institutionalization, membership, style, and international stature as a turning point.[4]

During its first phase (1954–61), Gutai construed artistic self-expression to be an assertion of the individual against the mind-set of "total unity"[5] that made wartime totalitarianism so easy to impose. Leading by example, performing powerful acts of self-expression, they also sought to develop autonomy in others—their audience, the general public, and especially children—by provoking them to think, create, and imagine for themselves. In addition to mounting public exhibitions and writing about their own work, Gutai artists taught children's art classes, held art workshops for ordinary people, and wrote about art education, both in their own *Gutai* journal (1955–65, plates 18–33) and elsewhere.

During the group's second phase (1962–72), Gutai positioned its ethics of freedom against the reasserted conformism of GNP-ism and a nation in the throes of rapid economic expansion. They assessed and experimented with the new technologies and materials that were being introduced in the 1960s, seeking ways of countering the dehumanization of Japan's rapid growth and evaluating its cultural impact. In particular, Gutai artists sought to free themselves and their audiences from the culture of passivity fostered by Japan Inc. Writing about the controversial world's fair that took place in Osaka in 1970, Imai Norio remarked,

> Expo '70, touted as the showcase of future cities, offers very little to cheer us, let alone freedom of viewing. I wonder whether we *see* Expo '70 or we are *made to see* it. . . . What is *not* lacking at Expo '70 is an imposition by things, as well as our effort to comprehend things; what is lacking is a refreshing encounter between things (objects, or "nature" in a new sense) and humans (the spiritual structure).[6]

Distancing themselves from their previous claims of existential self-expression, which by the 1960s had come to appear solipsistic, Gutai in its second phase sought to engage more fully in the public sphere, envisaging environments and other works that could provide active experiences to those who encountered them and provoke real intersubjective encounters. In addition to staging exhibitions in more conventional sites such as department store galleries, museums and galleries abroad, and its private museum, the Gutai Pinacotheca (plate 37), the group worked to colonize commercial spaces ranging in size from a café to Expo '70 itself in order to disrupt the total commodification of experience and to bring their emancipatory message to a broad general audience.

Throughout its eighteen-year history, Gutai worked actively to maintain a dialogue with its international contemporaries and engage issues of global relevance, creating intellectual propositions that were open-ended in their reach.[7] Although in its first phase Gutai's ethics of subjective autonomy were a direct response to Japan's totalitarian past, they had global correspondences with the existentialist reflections of such postwar artists as Jean Fautrier and Jackson Pollock. In

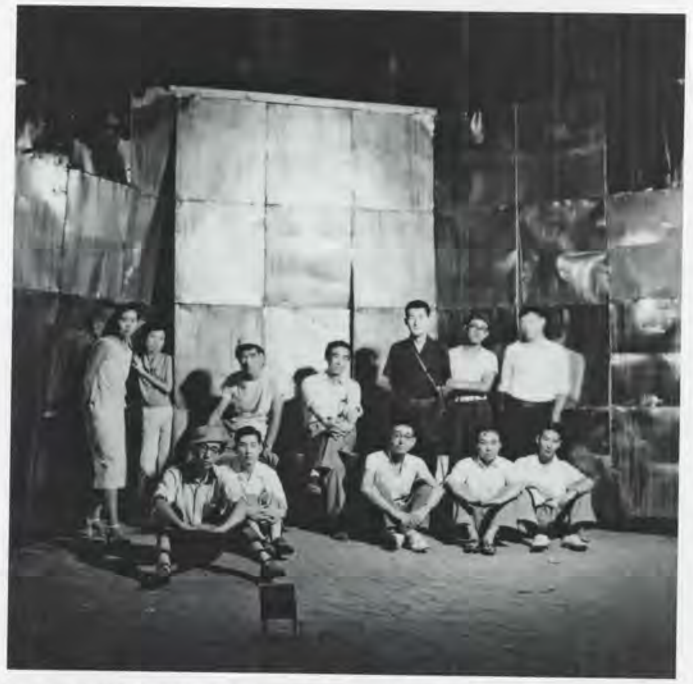

FIG. 19. Gutai members in front of Yamazaki Tsuruko's *Three-Sided Mirror* at *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956. Front row, from left: Yoshida Toshio, Mizuguchi Kyōichi, Kanayama Akira, Sumi Yasuo, and Shibata Ken; back row, from left: Yamazaki, Tanaka Atsuko, Motonaga Sadamasa, Yoshihara Jirō, Shimamoto Shōzō, and Satō Seiichi

its second phase, Gutai's principles of emancipation from the dehumanization of rapid industrial growth in the context of advanced capitalism were specific to the "Japanese Economic Miracle," but they resonated with the high economic growth of other postwar economies and addressed concerns relevant to diverse artists and thinkers of their generation worldwide, including Allan Kaprow, the Situationist International, the Dutch group Nul, and the Brazilian Neo-Concretists.

GUTAI PREHISTORIES (1): 1905–45

A generation older than the rest of Gutai's members, Yoshihara Jirō provided a vision for the group that had its origins in the individualist, cosmopolitan air of the Hanshin area in Kansai, where he came of age as an artist. The development of the suburban Hanshin belt, which stretched some twenty miles between Osaka, then Japan's most prosperous economic center, and Kobe, then Asia's biggest port, began the year of Yoshihara's birth, 1905, with the inauguration of the Hanshin Electric Railway's Main Line. The Hanshin line was soon followed by the Minō Arima Electric Railway (now the Hankyū Railway), making the verdant space between the two metropolises more accessible for urban development. Before long, the area began attracting industrialists, collectors, the intelligentsia, designers, artists, and the theater world.[8] Within this context, the young Yoshihara, growing up the scion of a prosperous food-oil manufacturer in the well-to-do town of Ashiya, was steeped in a culture as individualist as that of his adolescent "gods" Cézanne and van Gogh and was mentored by artists Kamiyama Jirō and Fujita Tsuguharu, both returned from sojourns in Paris.[9] Fujita, a member of the vanguard Abstraction-Création group in Paris in the 1930s, left a particularly lasting impression on Yoshihara when he criticized the young artist's work for being derivative, setting the stage for Yoshihara's famous insistence on the new.

The war intervened in Yoshihara's nascent career. In 1931, the Japanese military established the puppet state of Manchukuo in mainland China, and by 1937, the Sino-Japanese war began in earnest. As Japan's war effort in Asia intensified, the militarist government took steps to consolidate its control over every aspect of daily life. In the cultural field, the Army Art Association (Rikugun Bijutsu Kyōkai) was launched in 1939 with the mandate of sending artists to the front, organizing war art exhibitions, and controlling the allocation of materials so that all cultural production contributed to the quest for victory. In his "Autobiography of My Soul," published in 1967, Yoshihara recalled, "When only war-themed paintings were allowed, any other works were deemed mere 'play,' a deplorable act in the national emergency."[10]

Under this pressure, Yoshihara flirted with meeting the demand for war paintings. For much of the war, the established salon exhibitions of the Japanese art world, or *dantaiten*, were turned to propagandistic ends. In 1941, at the 28th exhibition of Nika-kai (Second Section Society), he showed a painting of an airplane titled *Airplane in a Storm* (fig. 21). That same year, he also showed *Camouflage (Three-Dimensional Design Plan)* (fig. 55) in the *Aviation Art Exhibition* of the relatively more avant-garde Kyūshitsu-kai (Room Nine Society) collective within Nika.[11] In the following year's Nika exhibition,

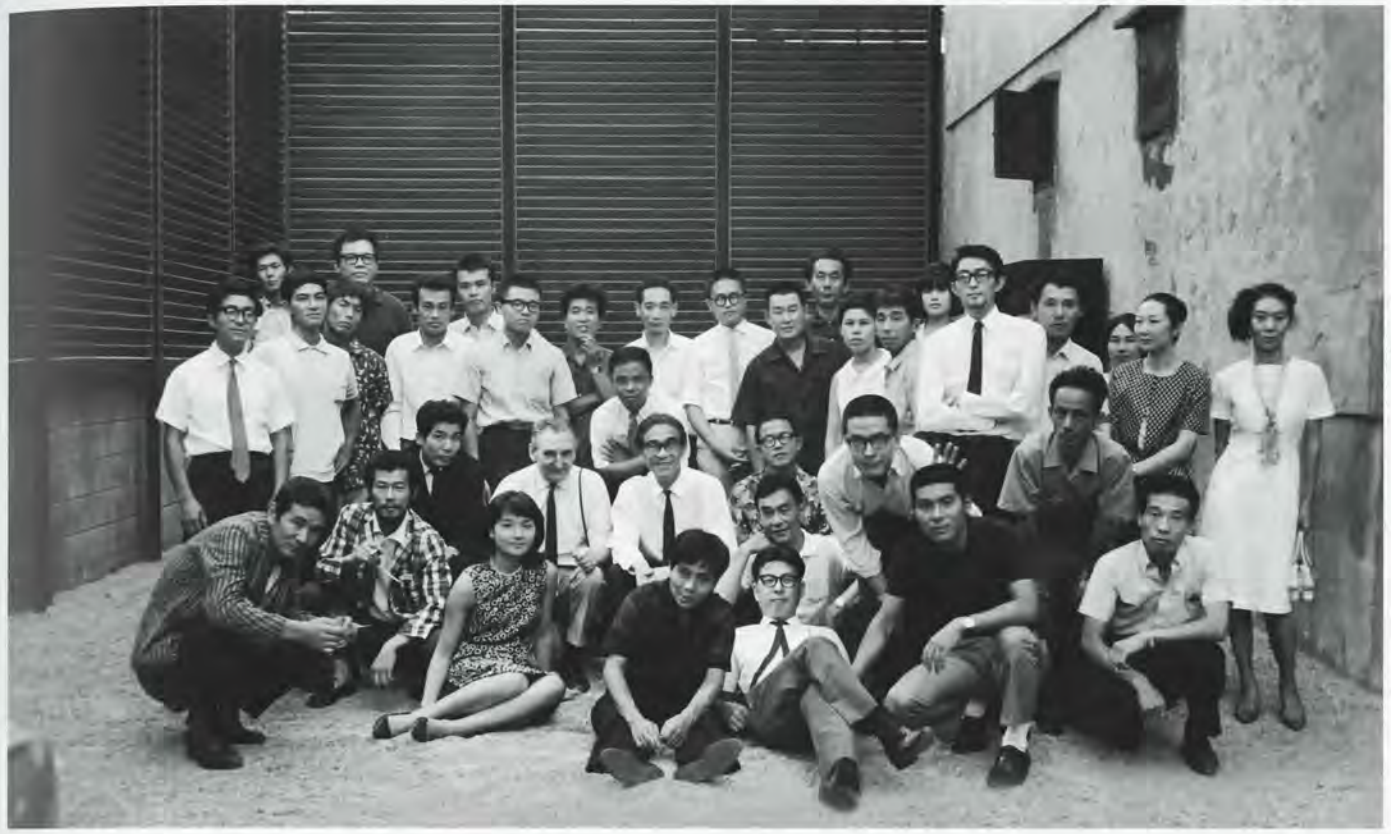

FIG. 20. Gutai members at Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1965. From left, front row: Motonaga Sadamasa, Yoshida Minoru, unidentified person, Sakamoto Masaya, Yoshida Toshio, Matsutani Takesada, Onoda Minoru; middle row: Maekawa Tsuyoshi, Michel Tapié, Yoshihara Jirō, Yoshihara Michio, Shimamoto Shōzō, Mukai Shūji, and Masanobu Masatoshi; back row: Nabekura Takehiro, two unidentified persons, Kitani Shigeki, Kinashi Aine, Horio Sadaharu, Narahara Michimasa, Imai Norio, Tanaka Ryūji, two unidentified persons, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, Nasaka Senkichirō, Ōhara Kimiko, Uemae Chiyū, Nasaka Yūko, Tai Satoshi, Sumi Yasuo, Imanaka Kumiko, unidentified person, and Yamazaki Tsuruko

he showed two paintings of chrysanthemums, a symbol of the emperor (fig. 22). In the last Nika-kai exhibition before it was shut down for the remainder of the war in 1943, Yoshihara showed two heavily abstracted landscapes, one titled *Sky* (fig. 23) and the other *Volcanoes*.

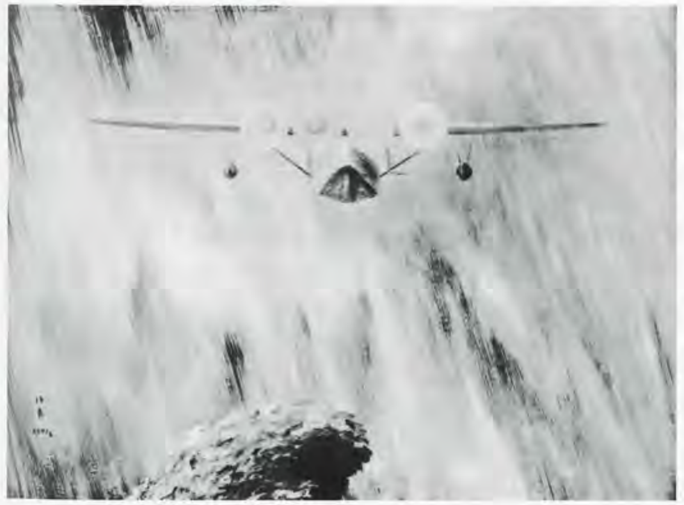

FIG. 21. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Airplane in a Storm*, 1941. Lost. Medium and dimensions unknown

Although, like most other Japanese artists,[12] Yoshihara at first willingly contributed in this way to the war effort, his paintings became less and less compliant with each passing year. *Airplane in a Storm* is a fairly straightforward depiction of an aircraft, with some artistic investment in the repeated circles on the wing and the optical effects of rain. *Camouflage* is an attempt to make abstraction militarily useful, part of a series of graphic designs by Yoshihara that employ landscape-scaled abstract forms to conceal strategic structures with the intention of confusing enemy aircraft. Here, black painted bars are designed to mislead bombers about the placement of munitions. By 1942, however, one begins to sense Yoshihara's discomfort with the war project, a sentiment echoed in his autobiography. The flower in his painting *Chrysanthemum (A)* (fig. 22) of that year is spindly, almost sickly, and the form resembles not that of the imperial crest but rather one of Yoshihara's signature wheel-like shapes from the mid-1930s. Below the chrysanthemum, the forms are so abstracted as to be unrecognizable, and the circles and triangles make direct reference to a reproach that he received from an Army Art Association critic the previous year for creating "circles and triangles that look as if they were drawn by lunatics."[13] Indeed,

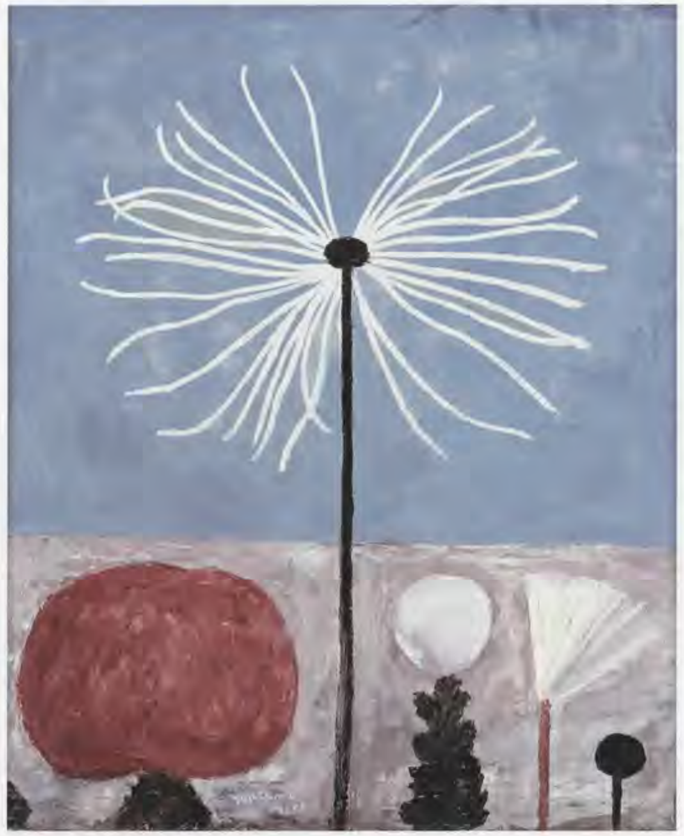

FIG. 22. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Chrysanthemum (A)*, 1942. Oil on canvas, 72.7 × 60.7 cm. Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

this passage of abstraction, defined against a tipped-up ground that deliberately resists perspective, flew in the face of calls to realism that dominated national art discourse from 1940 until the end of the war.[14]

In such an environment, Yoshihara realized that he "couldn't do serious work."[15] For him, the purpose of art was the expression of self, not nation, and his works from the period drift farther and farther from the example of his prewar hero Fujita, who became the most prominent war painter in Japan. Yoshihara's 1943 *Sky* could not be more distant from Fujita's *Last Stand on Attu* from that same year (fig. 24). Fujita's work commemorates the 1943 battle of Attu, fought between Japan and the United States in the Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska. By depicting a mass of intertwined bodies striving to sacrifice together, the painting portrays death as a collective and honorable martyrdom. The limited palette of browns, blacks, and dark reds creates an overall sense of unity, an embodiment of the wartime slogan "One hundred million hearts beating as one." Although Yoshihara's *Sky* is also characterized by the use of dark colors and a somber mood, the work focuses on a solitary sailboat, whose red sail and light gray body stand out against the dark sky and blood-red ocean. The boat, rendered at a slight angle, looks as if it is being buffeted by the storm raging above, which is punctuated by a violent arc of lightning. With its simple title, the work makes no reference to a particular place or time, emphasizing the futility of its struggle. Rather than fighting, for or against, Yoshihara retreated in 1943 to his father's ancestral village in Sanda, a mountainous region north of Kobe. He was exempted from conscription due to tuberculosis and spent the remainder of the war in the countryside, growing his own food and painting with the limited materials available.[16]

Yoshihara was not the only Gutai artist who participated in the war. Shiraga Kazuo was drafted to help with rescue operations at Osaka Castle but never reached active duty. Motonaga Sadamasa joined the Imperial Navy but was rejected for combat due to health problems and worked in a munitions factory. Uemae Chiyū was drafted into a machine-gun company in Kyoto; Ukita Yōzō was drafted to the air force at Kakamigahara in Gifu Prefecture, where he did aircraft maintenance. Nasaka Senkichirō was a relatively highly ranked radar commander who served for a short time with Shiraga. Takasaki Motonao was drafted into the navy at the end of the war when "the defeat of Japan was already certain," receiving training in meteorology and sent to work as a meteorologist at a naval air force base in Hokkaidō.[17] Due to their active involvement in the war, Gutai members saw up close the expectations of Japanese militarism and the totalitarian culture that it nurtured and thrived on. It was against this backdrop that they would later assert an ethics of freedom and individualism in Gutai.

GUTAI PREHISTORIES (2): RECONSTRUCTING THE ART WORLD

After the war, Yoshihara returned to Ashiya to rebuild his life, his home, his career—and the art world. What he sought was nothing short of artistic revolution. "An innovative idea not seen in the prewar period must rise in the painting world," he wrote, "something akin to Dada that emerged after World War I."[18] The ideas that he would usher in grew out of his activism and engagement with the world beyond his studio. He used his artistic skills to contribute to reconstruction efforts, collaborating on architectural projects as well as taking on design-related work such as posters, window displays, and stage sets, laying the foundations for Gutai's engagement with theater and design. He taught classes and took on students, some of whom, such as Yamazaki Tsuruko and Shimamoto Shōzō, eventually became Gutai members.[19] Perhaps most important, Yoshihara emerged as a leader in the art scene of the Kansai region, playing a major role in the revival of old-guard *dantai* such as Nika-kai as well as the postwar establishment of new collectives.[20] Yoshihara's role in nurturing Kansai's artistic infrastructure was instrumental to the formation of Gutai, as the group grew out of the many small clusters of local artistic activity that he helped establish and put in dialogue.

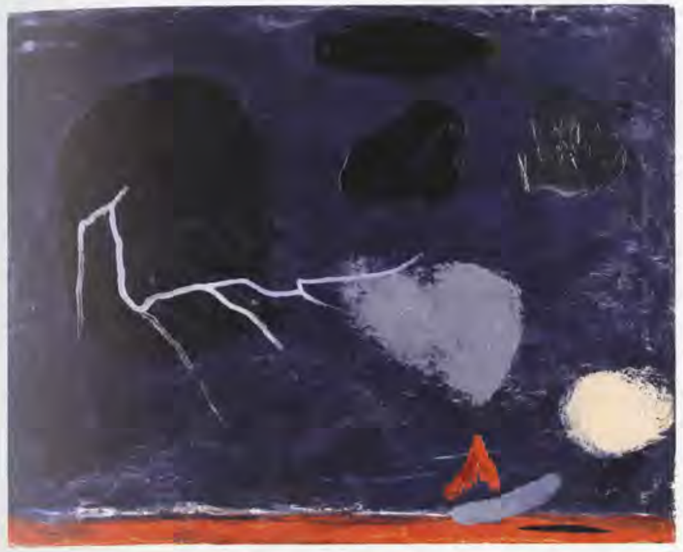

FIG. 23. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Sky*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 72.3 × 91.3 cm. Osaka City Museum of Modern Art

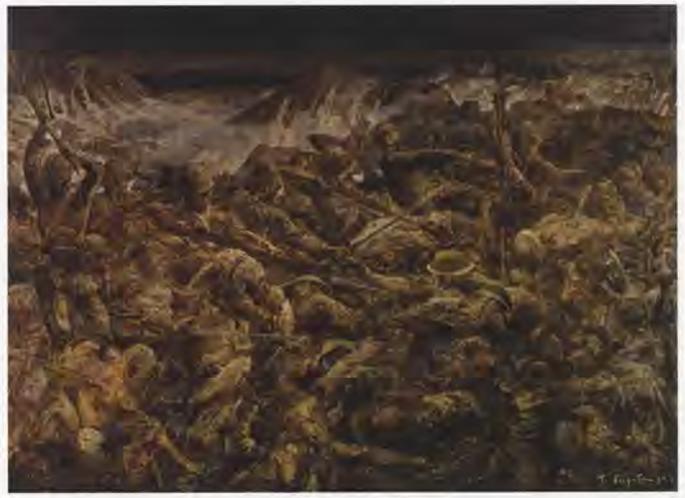

FIG. 24. **FUJITA Tsuguharu**, *Last Stand on Attu*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 193.5 × 259.5 cm. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

The first of these institutions was the *Ashiya City Exhibition*, which Yoshihara helped launch in 1948 with artists Ito Tsugurō and Yamazaki Takao and photographer Nakayama Iwata.[21] Although strictly speaking a juried salon exhibition, which in the Japanese system tended toward conservatism, the show became a hotbed of avant-garde activity and a recruiting ground for Gutai. Some notable members who first tested their wings at the *Ashiya City Exhibition* include Motonaga Sadamasa, Yoshida Toshio, Mukai Shūji, and Nasaka Yūko.

Also important to the development of Gutai was Genbi (Gendai Bijutsu Kondankai, or "Contemporary Art Discussion Group"), an interdisciplinary association founded in 1952 by Muramatsu Kan, an art journalist in the Osaka office of the *Asahi* newspaper.[22] Yoshihara was one of the most important voices in the group, a founding member also serving on the steering committee. Central concerns for Genbi were the questions of how to modernize the Japanese traditional arts and how to achieve world relevance. Yoshihara in particular stressed the international, seeking to participate in a discourse that he viewed as anterior to national boundaries. In 1954, Yoshihara founded the Gutai Art Association (Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai), which would eventually include thirteen former Genbi members.[23] He best articulated his underlying reason for taking this step a few years later, on the occasion of Gutai's first exhibition abroad, at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York: "We are following the path that will lead to an international common ground where the arts of the East and the West influence each other. And this is the natural course of the history of art."[24]

Perhaps the best known of the smaller collectives that contributed to the success of Gutai was Zero-kai (Zero Society).[25] The group, consisting of some fifteen artists and established in 1952, was highly conceptual and conceived around the notion that "every work of art begins from nothing."[26] Zero-kai occupied a middle ground between emotion and intellect, which were identified respectively with the group's poles, Shiraga and Kanayama.[27] Although it was the least developed of the vanguard associations that fed into Gutai, it was also the most radical, seeking "to invent a new painting."[28] With just one exhibition to its name and no publications, the group contributed four of Gutai's most important and discursive thinkers, Kanayama Akira, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Tanaka Atsuko, all of whom joined in 1955 after being invited by Shimamoto Shōzō on Yoshihara's behalf.

GUTAI PREHISTORIES (3): RECONSTRUCTING THE INDIVIDUAL

A much greater task than reconstructing the art world was reconstructing the individual, working to transform a society that had experienced total mobilization for war into a nation of independent, democratic subjects. While this objective was on the American Occupation agenda, and executed within the context of a military alliance with the United States that arguably constrained Japan's freedom at the national level, there was also a democratic movement within Japan that had its origins in both the modernism of the Taishō period (1912–26) and lessons learned from the terrible mistakes of the war. Political scientist Maruyama Masao was the first to argue, in 1946, that totalitarianism took root in Japan due to an absence of widespread democratic subjectivity.[29] In 1956, literary critic Odagiri Hideo linked the trait to group psychology: "Feudalism penetrates even the small corners of our sensibility in daily life. Therefore, we can fight against it only by conquering what is feudalistic within ourselves."[30]

In this intellectual context, the establishment of the individual, or *kotai*,[31] became a central theoretical discourse in the early years of Gutai, posited in opposition to wartime notions of the national body, or *kokutai*, its "hundred million hearts beating as one." The choice of vocabulary to denote the individual here is critical. *Kotai*, 個体, is a compound that includes the Japanese character for "body" (体, *tai*, also used in *Gutai*, 具体), conjuring and critiquing its opposite, *kokutai*. The discourses of individualism, located in the carnal body (*nikutai*) as a site of resistance against the abstractions of wartime ideology, are articulated most vociferously by Shiraga but are also addressed by Motonaga, Shimamoto, Sumi, and Yoshihara in their writings.[32]

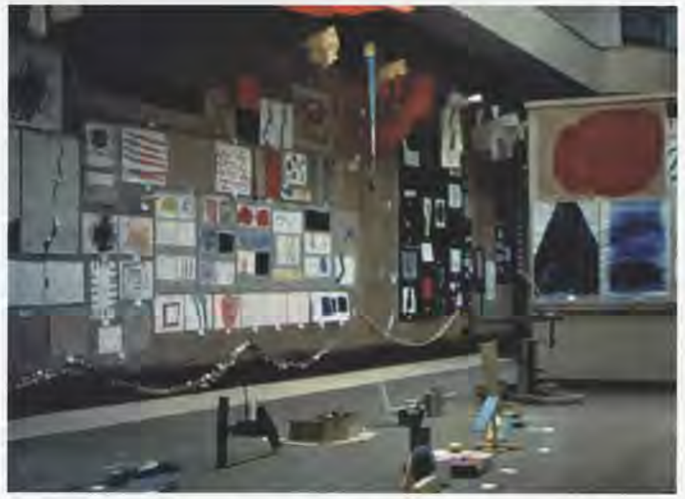

FIG. 25. Installation view of a *Kirin* exhibition, featuring works made by young students of Gutai members, Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, December 1955

Less known are the origins and practical applications of that discourse within Gutai, which extended to education reform, children's art, and the involvement of Gutai artists with *Kirin*, a children's poetry magazine published in Osaka and circulated in the Kansai area (plates 2–4). *Kirin* was part of a larger movement in postwar children's art education that sought to liberate pedagogy from militarist methodologies.[33] The magazine was started by Inoue Yasushi, a well-known writer, and employed future Gutai artist Ukita Yōzō. In 1948, with Ukita at the helm, the magazine began running artworks on its cover, both commissioning artists and selecting works done by children. That year, Ukita approached Yoshihara to be the magazine's first commissioned artist, beginning a dialogue with him about children's art and art education that became a fundamental part of the Gutai conversation once the group was founded. Between 1954 and 1962, around the time that the magazine changed publishers, Gutai members wrote more than sixty articles for *Kirin*.[34] Many of the Gutai artists taught art to children for a living and were committed to art education as an agent of change. They used *Kirin* and its annual exhibition of children's art (fig. 25) as important forums for shaping young minds.

Kirin was directed at a general audience and written in clear, simple language such that it could be read and understood by children. As a result, it is in *Kirin* that Gutai's postwar ethical project is most plainly presented.[35] Unlike the Surrealists or Cobra, who examined children's art in hopes of better understanding the origins of creativity and genius, Gutai focused on children as the most fundamental building block of humanity and of society. The group thus focused on education as a means to cultivate emancipation as a habit of mind, nurturing children to think for themselves and pursue their own creative impulses. Flying in the face of conventional child-rearing wisdom, Tanaka wrote in "To Mothers, 1956" (plate 4), "Even if you think your children are doing something ridiculous, please be patient and carefully watch them. I beg you to create an environment in which they can grow up without pressure and constraint."[36] This approach was echoed by Shimamoto, who encouraged "mischief" as a means of fostering independence:

> I myself wonder if good kids who always do what grown-ups tell them can lose the ability to decide right and wrong on their own. Of course it is important to listen to opinions of people respected in society. But at the same time, we cannot overlook the importance of making up what you like and doing it yourself. In this sense I would like you to make a lot of mischief.[37]

Ultimately, Shimamoto focused his mischief making on the artistic sphere, as he recounted tales of the Gutai art exhibitions to his young readers and advocated "good mischief" (the above quote continues, "Mind you, mischief like making graffiti on other people's walls or ruining the calligraphy and drawings made by your older brothers and sisters is no good").

The need for independent critical thinking was one that was repeated over and over in *Kirin* by Gutai artists. Infused with the reflections of artists who had enough war experience to understand the significance of what they were writing, this little magazine fleshed out the ethical consequences of Yoshihara's mandate of originality. In the context of a group whose early experiments were misunderstood and badly received by critics, words by Shimamoto on following one's own compass give their seemingly playful work profound meaning:

> And if you become used to thinking independently, you can become very strong inside, and you won't have to depend on other people for everything. We must try to do what we think is right even if other people speak ill of us.[38]

PHASE ONE (1954–62)
Building Democratic Capacity

> You must first understand your inborn quality. This quality represents your difference from others, manifesting itself when you see and feel something, talk, draw, and make sounds. . . . The stronger your will, the more resilient you will be when faced with all nonhuman forces. Today's intelligence must be neither escapist nor content with limited freedom, unlike the consciousness of the early twentieth century, which longed to escape the pitch-dark world and reach one filled with light.
>
> —Shiraga Kazuo, "The Establishment of the Individual," 1956[39]

In 1955, at the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Shiraga Kazuo shocked onlookers with his work *Challenging Mud* (plate 59), in which he stripped down to his underwear and leaped into a soft mound of *kabetsuchi* wall mud, cement, rocks, gravel, and sand, punching, whirling, rolling, and kicking in the mutilated earth. When he emerged, bruised and cut, he had a nameplate placed at the site of the struggle and a postcard portrait of himself taken standing next to it (fig. 54), marking the muck itself as a work of art. *Challenging Mud*, a more fully corporeal extension of his foot paintings, was the ultimate embodiment of his philosophy, which privileged self-expression and self-cultivation above all else and made the body the locus of the self. He made this individualist stance and its ethics clear in the *Gutai* journal, where he juxtaposed photographs of *Challenging Mud* with his text "The Establishment of the Individual." For Shiraga, then, the piece was not just an experiment in self-expression but a statement about the importance of the individual as a fortification against the "darkness of the first half of the 20th century" that was the mass psychology of totalitarian politics.

The Tokyo art world was not, to put it mildly, ready to understand this—or Murakami Saburō's paper-breaking *Work (Six Holes)* (plate 57), or Tanaka Atsuko's sound piece *Work (Bell)* (plate 44), or any of the other radical gestures presented at the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*. Despite Yoshihara's strategic decision to hold the exhibition not in Osaka but rather in Tokyo (the nation's art capital as well as its political one) and

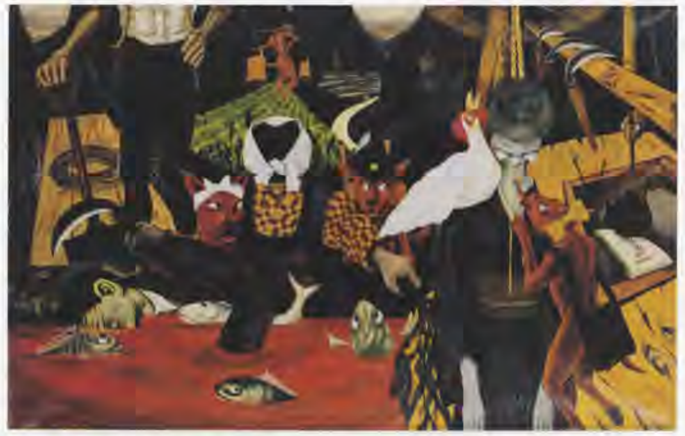

FIG. 26. **YAMASHITA Kikuji**, *The Tale of Akebono Village*, 1953. Oil on canvas, 137 × 214 cm. Nippon Gallery, Tokyo

his careful timing of the show to coincide with the major *dantai* exhibitions in the Tokyo fall art season, the exhibition received a scant two reviews, both of which were lukewarm to negative. The critic Segi Shin'ichi mocked Gutai for their claims to originality and accused them of using "recycled methods,"[40] while Murai Masanari, a painter friend of Yoshihara's, strained to say something positive but conveyed his true feelings through quoted pronouncements by other Tokyo artists: "Sensation alone is meaningless. . . . This is a new manifestation of Dada. . . . Dada is meaningless in today's world."[41] Perhaps responding to *Challenging Mud*, another artist was quoted as saying, "The male works were purely physical," lacking the "remarkable unity [that] occurred between the depiction of human figures and political resistance" that characterized the sort of paintings that were valued in Tokyo.[42]

Gutai was, in short, seen as not serious enough in the capital, where the Reportage movement and its emphasis on revealing social injustice and political wrongs through Marxist critique and Social Realism was dominant. For example, Yamashita Kikuji's scathing *The Tale of Akebono Village* (1953, fig. 26), perhaps the most representative work of the Reportage movement, exposed the perpetuation of prewar land-distribution policies and power structures in the rural areas of Japan through a horrific figural narrative.[43] Gutai, in contrast, was adamantly abstract, and usually refused to affix a title any more descriptive to a piece than "Work." In this environment, Gutai members recall being accused of engaging in "bourgeois play"[44] and creating works in which "content [was] lacking."[45] Gutai's critique of the psychological structures that made wartime totalitarianism so effortless to implement, however, operated on a more fundamental level than the censorious narratives forwarded by Tokyo artists, who Shimamoto publicly accused of didactically asserting their politics rather than nurturing democratic capacity: "Even while they are advocating populism, these people always have to be leaders and awe-inspiring heroes. At the same time, they turn into defenders of a privileged class."[46] Rather than framing themselves as political leaders and telling people what to think, Gutai artists attempted to give people the tools that they needed to think for themselves.

A cornerstone of Gutai's assertion of artistic freedom—and, therefore, its promotion of individualism—was a shift in terminology; for, in the 1950s, literally no vocabulary existed for what the group sought to do. In a world before conceptual art, performance art, interactive art, and installation art, they opened up the field of artistic expression with a single word, *e*. Translated as "picture" or "picturing,"[47] *e* denotes the group's wide range of artistic activities, from performance to installation to painting. In Murakami's words:

> [Gutai] did not limit *e* to painting on canvas but interpreted it in an expanded manner. For example, Shimamoto Shōzō's *Please Walk on Here*, a work you experience with your whole body, and Tanaka Atsuko's work by sound alone [*Work (Bell)*] were both considered *e*.[48]

With *e*, "picture," Gutai freed itself from the ossified idea of *kaiga*, "painting" in the Euro-American sense, which was becoming the privileged internationalist language of art in the postwar period.[49] Although the word *kaiga* had long existed, it only became used as a translation for "painting" in this fashion, separate from other mediums and from life, in 1882.[50] This change in usage was ushered in by the Meiji project of "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*), which, in light of the looming threat of Western imperialism, offered resistance by acquiring the scientific and philosophical tools of its adversaries. *Kaiga* (絵画) is a compound word whose first character is actually the word *e* (絵). *E*, in turn, is composed of two parts, "thread" and "meeting," which together refer to colorful textiles, and the most fundamental meaning that this character conveys is that of color.[51] The second character in *kaiga*, *ga* (画), also used in the words for "movie" (*eiga*) and "print" (*hanga*), derives from the character for "rice field" and implies flatness. The classical form of the character also incorporates the radical for "writing" (*sho*), which indicates a close etymological relationship between *ga*, sumi ink, and brushes. In the context of Meiji reforms, *kaiga* thus became a translation for "painting" as understood in the West: a flat field of brushed-on color.

By the postwar, late-modernist period, this definition of painting had come to stifle artists in the West as well as in Japan. Allan Kaprow famously wrote in "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" that Pollock "destroyed painting," leaving artists with the choice of making "near-paintings" or "[giving] up the making of paintings entirely."[52] Similarly, in the "Gutai Art Manifesto" Yoshihara demanded we "bid farewell to the hoaxes piled up on the altars and in the palaces, the drawing rooms and the antique shops" and "lock up these corpses in the graveyard."[53] In practice, Gutai chose a more subtle path: by adopting the freer vocabulary of *e*, it could respond to the crisis in painting while still addressing the concerns of *kaiga*. Straddling two worlds, two art histories, and two languages, Yoshihara remained ever clear with regard to his goals: "We are certain that these works, and the format in which they are presented, will be revolutionary for the entire world—East and West."[54]

Phase One of Gutai was indeed revolutionary. The period is defined on one end by the founding of the group in 1954 and on the other end by the establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca in 1962, which utterly transformed the terms of Gutai's engagement with the art world. In the interim, Gutai artists used the concept of "picturing" to break open the frame to create the freest possible site for experimentation. Phase One is characterized by an emancipation from the boundaries of medium, by free experimentation in the zones between painting and what later became known as interactive art, installation, and performance in landmark exhibitions such as the 1955 *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, the 1956 *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition* (plates 8–13), and the *Gutai Art on the Stage* exhibitions of 1957 and 1958 (plates 99–103).

Phase One was also distinguished by its ambitious internationalism, a trajectory launched by the founding of the *Gutai* journal in 1955 to, as Yoshihara put it, "introduce our works to the world."[55] As early as 1956, the group sent copies of the *Gutai* journal to Pollock and by 1957 to French critic Michel Tapié. The latter contact sparked one of the most important relationships of the period, Gutai's decadelong collaboration with Tapié. This milestone was followed by others: the *International Art of a New Era* show, which toured Gutai alongside Abstract Expressionism and Informel throughout Japan in 1958; the group's first exhibition abroad, that same year at Martha Jackson Gallery in New York; and the *International Sky Festival* of 1960 in Osaka (plates 34–36). Thus placed in an international context, Gutai's picturings pose a critical theoretical problem about writing a world art history that is both integrative and contextual. An additive approach is simply not enough; augmenting the existing canon with artists from beyond Euro-America cannot be done without rethinking the theoretical underpinnings of art and art history. *E*, for example, which opened up the artistic field to make anything possible for Gutai, is a concept that responds to issues emerging out of a Western context but employs intellectual frameworks that are both foreign to and contradict that context. Within a Western modernist teleology, where experimental art spells the death of painting, Gutai's paintings have been repeatedly understood as a move backward. For Gutai, however, not being able to choose one's means of expression would be the retardataire position. Incorporating Gutai's experiments in picturing into a world art history therefore requires us to rethink the logic of late modernism.[56]

Set against the memory of the totalitarian war years, Gutai's Phase One acts of emancipation were not just exhilarating but essential. They were also in line with the liberal values promulgated by the American Occupation—the "virtues of 'freedom of expression' in an 'open and free society'"[57] that the U.S. promoted throughout the Cold War. But as early as 1947, the Occupation had already reversed course, stressing economic and regional stability above liberal ideals. In this context, Gutai's advocacy of democratic individualism as embodied in acts of artistic freedom and self-expression was ever more relevant and necessary. Using the concept of *e* as a means of transgressing the boundaries of painting, Gutai artists "pictured" interactivity, matter, the individual, painting, and even time and space to free their audiences, materials, the individual, and painting from all restriction.

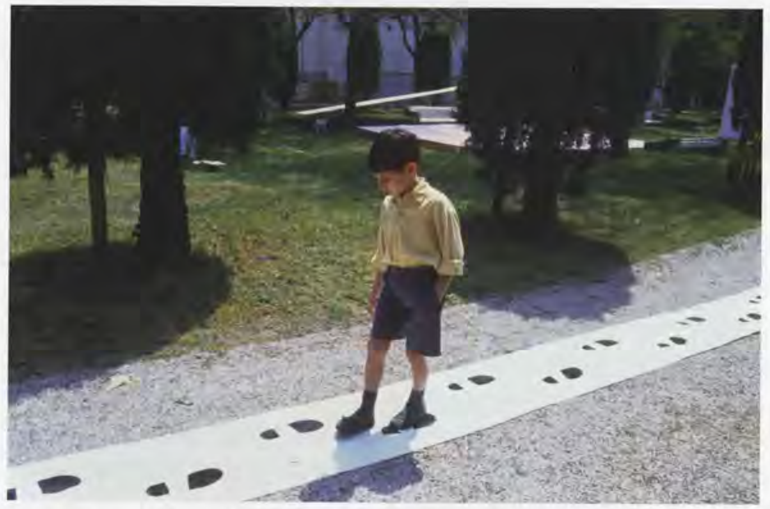

FIG. 27. **KANAYAMA Akira**, *Footprints*, 1956 (refabricated 1993). Paint on plastic, dimensions vary with installation. Installation view: *Passage to the Orient*, Israeli Pavilion, 45th Venice Biennale, 1993

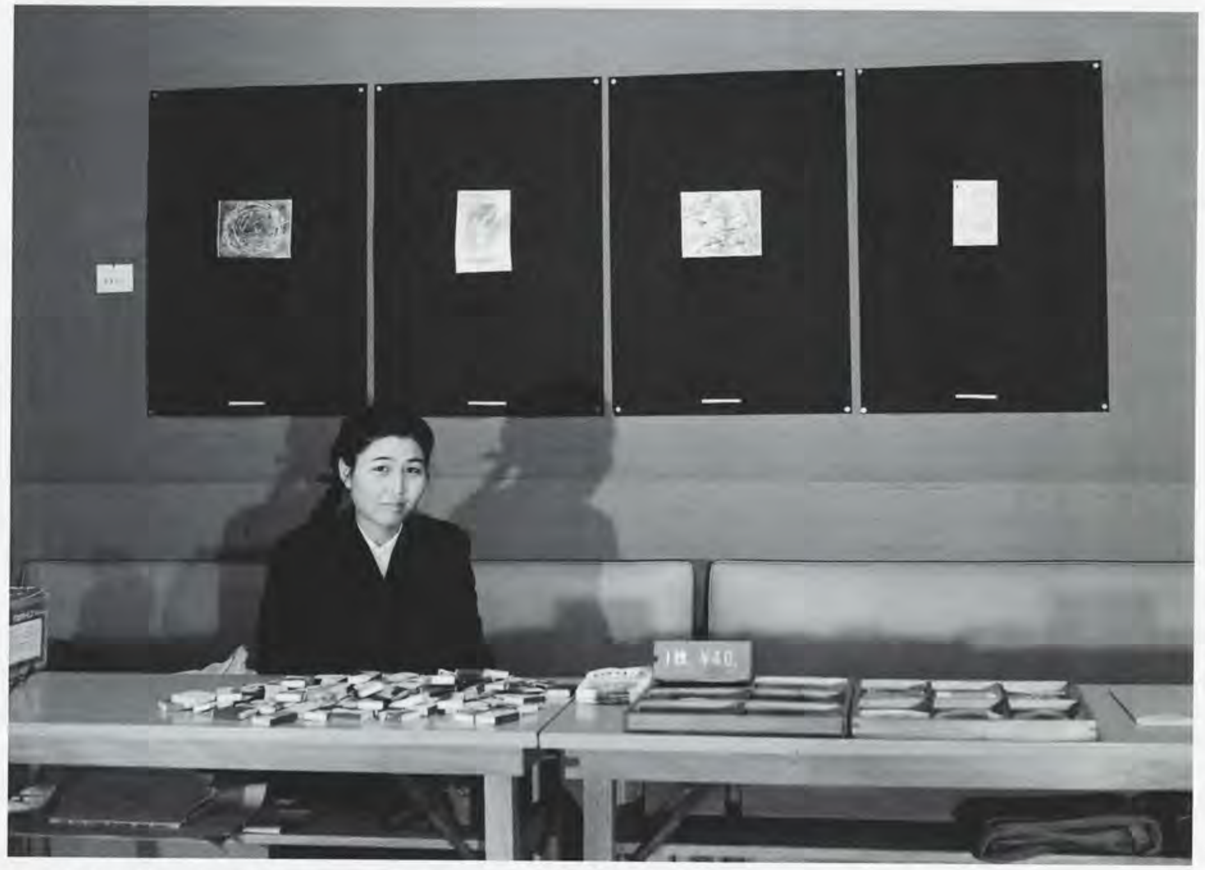

FIG. 28. Gutai's handmade matchboxes on reception desk at *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, ca. October 19–28, 1955. On wall: works by Shimamoto Shōzō

PICTURING INTERACTIVITY

What I consider avant-garde is the involvement of ordinary people in the production of a work of art.
—Shimamoto Shōzō, "The Mambo and Painting," 1956[58]

Gutai's most poetic expression of its commitment to building democratic capacity can be found in its interactive works, which attempted to make art more engaging and more in the public eye while sowing the seeds of individualism. During Gutai's first phase, two exhibitions in particular emphasized interactivity, the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition* and the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*.

Visitors arriving at the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition* found themselves addressed by works of art with titles that requested active responses rather than passive viewing. Outside the Ohara Kaikan hall in Tokyo, they were greeted by Shiraga's *Please Come In* (plate 55), an open cone comprising ten logs painted red. If they accepted the invitation to enter the work, they would see that inside the logs were scarred, chopped violently with an ax. The scars drew the eye upward, until the viewer, looking overhead, saw the sky as framed by the piece, as if it were itself a work of art (fig. 48). Inside the exhibition hall, paintings and the remnants of various performances were accompanied by a number of interactive pieces. Shimamoto's *Please Walk on Here* (plate 9) tempted viewers to transgress the codes of museum spectatorship by inviting them to step on a work of art. Shimamoto's composition of firm and wobbly boards could only be "seen" by walking on it. A contribution by Yamazaki (1955, plate 51), a black-and-white striped canvas with mirrors collaged along the edges, allowed viewers to see themselves in the work. At the exhibition exit, the group offered handmade matchboxes in a pile for visitors to take home (fig. 28), a democratic gesture toward making art accessible to all, the giving of a gift that created a social bond with the viewer and demonstrated how art might be incorporated into everyday life.[59]

Of all of the works in the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, perhaps Tanaka's *Work (Bell)* went furthest in combining interactivity and a mandate for a stronger sense of self. On approach, the piece exists simply as a line of silent bells, wires, and switches, waiting to be activated. When the viewer responds to Tanaka's simple handwritten sign, "Please push this button," the work comes alive, a thrilling dance of sound as the bells ring sequentially around the room for as long as the button is held down. If there are others in the vicinity, of course, the viewer must weigh the pleasure of experiencing the work against the possible displeasure of other artgoers, who are presumably visiting the exhibition according to the norms of quiet and contemplation. *Work (Bell)* thus forces the viewer to steel the self against the group in order to experience it, encouraging acts of transgression and individualism.

The interactive tendency in Phase One Gutai reached its zenith at the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*. In addition to reprising and revising several works from the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, including Shiraga's *Please Come In* and Shimamoto's *Please Walk on Here*, the show featured masterful new contributions. Kanayama's *Footprints* (fig. 27) responded to *Please Walk on Here* with a visual cipher for the act of walking. Kanayama's meters-long canvas strolled through the park grounds and up into the trees, inviting viewers to walk on it but also transforming the instruction into an imaginary act that could only be completed in the mind. Yamazaki's *Work (Red Cube)* (plate 13) was a simple, room-size cube made of red vinyl stretched over wood, hung from trees and lit from inside. Suspended about forty inches off the ground as a way of beckoning viewers to enter, the work provided a space of play, an immersive experience of the materiality of *red* comparable with Yves Klein's *Void Room* (*Raum der Leere*, 1961) at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany, which provided an experience of the materiality of *white*. The crucial difference between the two pieces, however—aside from the obvious one of color—is that Yamazaki's is a social work, allowing multiple people to enter at once and providing an opportunity for participants to create shadow plays for spectators standing on the outside. Similarly, in *Work (Water)* (plate 10), Motonaga Sadamasa created a three-dimensional picture that could be entered by the visitor. In this spectacular piece, plastic tubes are suspended and filled with colored water, giving the impression of giant gestural marks in space glinting with rainbow jewels. As viewers walk through the work, they frame their own views, changing the juxtapositions of color and geometry with a tilt of the head.

While viewer agency is implicit in *Water*, in Murakami's *All the Landscapes* (plate 53), audience empowerment is central. With an echo of Shiraga's *Please Come In*, Murakami hung an empty frame from a tree, inviting viewers to frame what they saw or even themselves as art, in either case encouraging them to take control of their aesthetic experiences. It was Yoshihara himself, however, who made perhaps the most eloquent work in the vein, *Please Draw Freely* (plate 1). The blank, freestanding signboard invited exhibition visitors to contribute to a collective drawing using provided markers. Going one step further than any of the other interactive pieces, this work transformed viewer into producer in a literal, material sense.

PICTURING MATTER

> Gutai Art does not alter matter. Gutai Art imparts life to matter. . . .
>
> In Gutai Art, the human spirit and matter shake hands with each other while keeping their distance.
>
> —Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai Art Manifesto," 1956[60]

The publication of Yoshihara's "Gutai Art Manifesto" in 1956, followed by the meeting of Yoshihara and Michel Tapié in 1957, foregrounded a gestural and materials-based practice of abstraction as Gutai's most visible mode. These works probed the limits of painting by considering the space between abstraction and representation, seeking to embody both the exterior world and the interior subjectivity of the artist. As in Europe and North America, where gestural painting was theorized by critics such as Jean Paulhan and Francis Ponge as a more authentic form of expression, in opposition to the rationalism that they blamed for the Second World War, Gutai also embraced gestural abstraction. Wiping the slate clean, they accused works that came before of being "fraudulent," and proposed an alternative that "imparts life to matter," ends the oppression of material by the spirit, and unleashes the forces of freedom.[61]

Gutai's engagement with matter, or *busshitsu*, was a refusal to force materials to "fraudulently assume appearances other than their own," revealing instead the "scream of matter itself."[62] Again, the artists sought to counteract the dishonesty of wartime "realism." Shiraga presented mud as mud; in a pair of works using water (1955, fig. 75, and 1956, plate 10), Motonaga lets that element appear as and speak for itself. Uemae Chiyū's *Work* (1960, plate 63) consists of layer upon layer of matchsticks stuck to a board with paint, sawdust, and glue, creating encrusted strata of refuse glazed in a tender pink paint that recalls comments by Gutai's contemporary, Jean Dubuffet: "Shouldn't dirt, trash and filth, man's companions throughout his lifetime, be more precious to him, and shouldn't he do them the service of making a monument to their beauty?"[63] Similarly, building on his 1956 work *Discovery* (plate 11), a hole dug straight into the ground and illuminated from below, Yoshihara Michio (Jirō's son) created a work of earth, sand, gravel, and rocks on wood panel (*Work*, 1959, plate 62) that, like Dubuffet's *haute pâte* works, first exhibited in 1946 (fig. 9), presented scorched earth rather than representing it. Unlike Dubuffet, however, who presented detritus as a retort to the perceived failure of humanism, Gutai artists sought to free matter from the tyranny of human hierarchies and binary thinking that labeled it either sacred or base. Nowhere is this new relationship between matter and spirit more distinct than in the work of Motonaga, whose fluid abstractions belie an intimate partnership between human and *busshitsu* that explores the limpid beauty of quotidian materials. Resonating with his *Water* pieces, Motonaga's *Work* (1960, plate 69) was, like most of his paintings from early Gutai, house paint poured on muslin that was allowed to pool, drip, and flow as the artist manipulated the canvas. The resultant forms are organic, almost erotic, and reveal the intricacies of fluid in motion, here resembling two rivers flowing into one.

Motonaga's poured works constitute one of the most elegant examples of Gutai's experiments with technique. According to Gutai's critique of *kaiga*, the paintbrush had historically subjugated paint, "like the tragic story of factory girls being dragged around machines and wearing out their youth," as vividly argued by Shimamoto in an essay titled "Killing the Paintbrush." Paint, he extolled, was not a mere agent of color but rather had its own texture and materiality that Gutai sought to set free by discarding brushes: "It is only once the paintbrush has been discarded that the paint can be revived."[64] Thus Sumi Yasuo painted with a vibrating device, an umbrella, and an abacus, creating pulsating dances of paint on paper, canvas, fabric, and netting (plate 81); the net works in particular were truly liberated from traditional constraints, exhibited unstretched and floating in the outdoors. Shimamoto himself painted with an acetylene-powered cannon and by throwing bottles filled with paint and rocks onto canvas (fig. 29, plates 76, 80). Yoshihara Michio painted with a bicycle, making marks with the tire as he rode (plate 74), and Yoshida Toshio with a watering can, standing on a ladder to give the paint droplets more freedom to disperse in the wind as they cascaded down. Kanayama painted with an automatic toy car (plate 77), and most famously, Shiraga with his feet (plate 75).

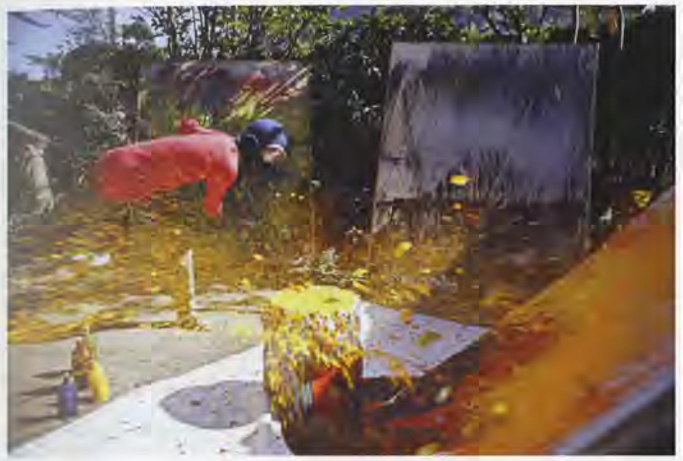

FIG. 29. Shimamoto Shōzō hurling bottles filled with paint at canvas, 1963

The scream of the material, as elicited by Gutai artists, sometimes evoked the violence of the recent war. In Shiraga Fujiko's *Work* (1961, plate 66), ripped Japanese *washi* paper was layered with wax and shattered glass to suggest the fragility of a ruin, a torn page, or a broken window. Shiraga Kazuo's *Wild Boar Hunting II* (1963, plate 60) also evocatively juxtaposed materials to suggest violence, coming—like Jean Fautrier in his *Hostage* (*Otage*) paintings of the 1940s (fig. 8)—almost too close to the qualities of actual flesh. The work is a flayed boar hide mounted on a porous, flesh-colored board stained with splashes of red and brown paint. The pelt's stiff hairs are smeared with layers of translucent, dark-red oil paint that are concentrated in a long diagonal pool anchored near the center of the work. The paint no longer functions as paint, instead taking on the haptic quality of drying blood in a sticky wound. If one looks closely, one finds shotgun pellets embedded in the hide, further blurring the distinction between embodiment and representation. At the top left corner of the work, however, the illusion is broken, as Shiraga's painterly voice returns with a striated arabesque. At the bottom left corner, in the only relatively unmarked place on the work, the artist's signature further brackets what we are looking at as a painted narrative.

At other times, violence was actually enacted against the picture plane, as Gutai artists smashed, pierced, (figuratively) bloodied, and burned the surfaces of paintings. Evoking firebombed architecture, Yoshida used fire to sear his mark into his *Burn by CF* works (for example, plates 88–89, both 1954). Like a scar or a welt, the work indexes the material's history, its physical response to the artist's assault. Shimamoto's attack on the picture plane was even more aggressive.[65] In *Work* (1954, plate 65) he tore into the support, a fragile cushion of what he called "paper-vas" made by gluing together layers of newspaper and finishing it with a layer of paint. As he made marks on the surface, he pierced it, revealing a palimpsest of material, time, and history. With a deafening crash, Murakami Saburō's *Passing Through* (1956, plate 58) paper-breaking work was perhaps the most literal evocation of the material's voice, as the artist battled his way through twenty-one screens stretched tight with kraft paper, collapsing at the end of the performance with a concussion.

PICTURING THE INDIVIDUAL

> Unless a spiritual egoism is established, a fine overall culture cannot be formed. As totalitarianism fails in politics, in culture, too, anything inconveniently totalitarian should disappear.
>
> —Shiraga Kazuo, "The Establishment of the Individual," 1956[66]

Discovering and expressing one's individual disposition (*shishitsu*) was one of the most pressing tasks for Phase One Gutai artists. Its most vocal proponent was Shiraga Kazuo, who, in addition to articulating a muscular, corporeal language of radical individualism in his foot paintings and performances, wrote a series of important articles in the *Gutai* journal advocating individualism as an ethical stance against totalitarianism.[67] Understanding, defending, and expressing one's unique disposition was a political act—an act of strength, endurance, and courage that "acts as a guide to prevent human beings from drowning or being swept irresistibly by the current of the times"[68] and thus provides resistance to mass political movements. Shiraga's 1957 oil-on-paper *Untitled* (plate 78) is the physical embodiment of this argument. As with most of his paintings throughout his long career, the work was made with his feet, a technique he began using in 1954 because he felt his hands were too well trained. Removing entirely the mediation of the brush in order to establish as physical a connection as possible between support, paint, and body, Shiraga aimed for the direct expression of self.

Stepping back from embodiment, other works in Shiraga's oeuvre engage more with art-historical questions, confronting the interwoven legacies of Informel, Abstract Expressionism, and East Asian calligraphy. For Informel and Abstract Expressionist artists, calligraphy was an important influence that provided alternative models of both abstraction and spiritualism.[69] Conversely, for Japanese artists such as Morita Shiryū and the Bokubi group, engaging with abstraction through calligraphy was both a means of renewing tradition and seeking world relevance.[70] In *Work II* (1958, plate 79), Shiraga faced these discourses head on, creating a work that both referred to calligraphy and radically departed from it. The powerful ovoid in black makes reference to the intersection between calligraphy and painting, but the obvious traces of toes in the long diagonal strokes resist calligraphy's pull toward the sublime. Further, this form is laid on top of a ground of crimson lake (a signature color for Shiraga) rather than bare paper, and the oil stains at the edges of the paint eloquently remind the viewer of the medium as matter. Adamantly not a work of sumi ink on paper, *Work II* positions itself to be in dialogue with world abstraction. Despite this positioning, the painting also explores the expressive potential of gesturality, creating a persuasive work of self-expression.[71]

In Yoshihara's *Untitled* (1962, plate 85), the same questions of gesturality, painting, calligraphy, and international contemporary art come to the fore. From the very inception of Gutai, when Yoshihara planned for the journal to include both Japanese and English texts, the group's leader was thinking about the grand arc of art history from an international perspective, and this piece, exhibited in 1965 in *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, situates itself at the boundary between East and West. A white circular gesture on black—inverting the appearance of ink on a white ground—the piece takes up ink tradition while challenging it to enter into dialogue with international currents in painting, a stance that resonated with MoMA's decision not to include any works in traditional Japanese media in this exhibition.[72] Meanwhile, Yoshihara maintains a link with Japanese tradition in the form of the *ensō*, or Zen circle, a painting practice believed to free the monk-artist's mind to allow the body and spirit to create at the limits of pure expression.

PICTURING PAINTING

Can a Piece of Cloth Be a Work of Art?
—Shimamoto Shōzō, title of an essay in *Gutai* 4, 1956[73]

Attempting to philosophically define painting, the conceptually driven Zero-kai artists experimented with its minimum conditions. In a number of works (see, for example, plate 45, ca. 1952, and plates 46–47, both 1954), Kanayama Akira references Piet Mondrian's red, blue, and black vocabulary in an attempt to pare painting to its essence. In one of the 1954 pieces (plate 47), the canvas is almost a monochrome, with only five black lines extending in from its perimeter. Tanaka took these investigations one step further, with experiments in material, mark making, and monochrome. Her *Work (Yellow Cloth)* (1955, plate 38) consists of three rectangular pieces of cotton whose only alterations are tiny incisions that have been cut then mended with glue. The fabric is not stretched, nor is it gessoed or in any way painted. *Work (Yellow Cloth)* resonates with both Robert Rauschenberg's 1951 *White Paintings* and Yves Klein's first monochrome, the 1955 *Expression of the World of the Color Lead-Orange* (*Expression de l'univers de la couleur mine orange*). For those two artists, however, the medium and the support—oil and canvas—proved to be the painting's irreducible absolute. *Work (Yellow Cloth)* eschewed essentially all the signifiers of painting, stripping away stretcher, frame, paint, and signature, to create something separated from the objects of everyday life by only a few seams and its inclusion in an art exhibition.

In "picturing" painting, Tanaka also considered questions of space and movement. *Work (Bell)*, for example, is not just an interactive work but a work with formal properties that Tanaka understood as linked to picturing. Once activated, the bells ring sequentially, defining an architectural space and, as Motonaga observed, drawing "a line . . . clearly within one's inner vision."[74] As the bells ring one by one, the closest ring most loudly and the farthest are heard most faintly. Tanaka herself remarked, "It was my intension to create an acoustic composition with the differing loudness of the bell sounds."[75] With *Bell* and the subsequent *Electric Dress* (discussed below) as starting points, Tanaka developed a sophisticated but simple vocabulary of lines and circles that defined new ways of articulating movement and space in painting.[76]

Perhaps the most fundamental conundrum pictured was that of authorship itself. Set against Shiraga's fiery rhetoric of self-expression, Murakami and Kanayama experimented with reducing authorship to zero. Murakami made *Work Painted by Throwing a Ball* (1954, plate 49) by dipping a rubber ball in sumi ink and bouncing it against a paper support. A counterpoint to Shiraga's direct bodily transmission of self into matter, such work asked whether authorship could be accomplished at a distance. Kanayama's toy-car paintings took an even more extreme approach, their skeins of paint alluding critically to Pollock's drips. Unlike Jean Tinguely's Metamatic drawing machine (1959), which with similar intent produced small-scale works in felt-tip pen, the car method resulted in paintings such as *Work* (1957, plate 84), monumental in scale and executed in dripped enamel to directly confront Pollock's claims to diaristic heroism.

PICTURING TIME AND SPACE

Discarding the frame, getting off the walls, shifting
from immobile time to lived time, we aspire to create
a new painting.
—Murakami Saburō, "On Gutai Art," 1957[77]

Freeing themselves from *kaiga* in favor of *e*, which embraced the full dimensionality of life, Gutai artists tore the frame off the canvas (and, in the case of Murakami, literally leaped out of the picture plane). The fact remains, however, that until 1969, when Mukai Shūji staged his *Happening: Burning All My Works*—a massive bonfire of his canvases—Gutai performances were not a negation of painting but a liberation of it, creating paintings that used time and space as a medium. What might otherwise be described as performance in this context becomes what scholar Reiko Tomii calls "performance painting."[78]

The practice of Gutai performance emerged out of the *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, organized by Yoshihara Jirō for the *Ashiya City Exhibition* in July 1955. By breaking down the conventional relationships between artist, artwork, and viewer with a festive atmosphere and highly interactive works, the exhibition encouraged a performative tendency in both the creation and the experience of art; Shiraga's *Please Come In* is a prime example. At the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition* (1955), where he presented *Challenging Mud* and Murakami presented *Six Holes*, a critical link was made between performance and painting that would ultimately form the basis for the theory of *e* and open up painting's boundaries. Following demonstrations for the press, both Shiraga's worked mud and Murakami's torn screens were left on display throughout the exhibition, underscoring that the artists viewed these remnants, as well as the acts that yielded them, as *e*.

The following year, Gutai staged the extraordinary *One Day Only Outdoor Art Exhibition* solely for an audience of two *Life* magazine photographers, who had been invited by Kanayama Akira as a part of the group's strategy of internationalization (plate 56).[79] The result was the appearance of Gutai performance practices unconnected with the creation of a physical object. Although many of the artists demonstrated their characteristic-but-unusual painting practices for the photographers—Michio painted with a bicycle, Kinoshita Toshiko painted with chemical reactions, and Shiraga painted with his feet—many others departed from the painted object. This was the first time that Gutai artists had to think purely in terms of photography, with no public exhibition to follow. Thus transforming their work from object to event and then into image, photography and the promise of publication in an international forum changed the stakes for Gutai. The artists stopped thinking about their work residing solely in physical objects and had to imagine its mediatized existence on the world stage. In response, Motonaga created a composition of smoke rings using a purpose-built machine; Murakami created a large yellow cube that he floated in an enormous water-filled oil tank as Yoshihara drifted by in a yellow rubber dinghy; Yamazaki scattered pink paper confetti into the wind to create an ephemeral installation; and Yoshihara painted a half-dozen live chickens with primary colors (fig. 30), creating kinetic poultry art as they scuttled through the exhibition space, clucking. Again, the members of Gutai considered all this work painting in their expanded sense. Performance thus became a key element in the ongoing expansion of painting's field.

With the *Gutai Art on the Stage* exhibition in 1957, performance painting reached a theoretical and artistic maturity. In this celebrated and historic show at the Sankei Kaikan halls, first in Osaka then in Tokyo, Gutai artists extended their pursuit of liberation from the boundaries of medium to music, theater, and film. In the accompanying special issue of the *Gutai* journal, Gutai artists reflected on the conceptual underpinnings of their stage work, enunciating many issues that had until that point only been implicit. Yoshihara Michio, for example, wrote,

> "Expulsion of the frame," this indeed indicates the direction in which new art should proceed universally. Be it art or music, I believe that the fundamental starting point must be that, to begin with, it is not restrained.[80]

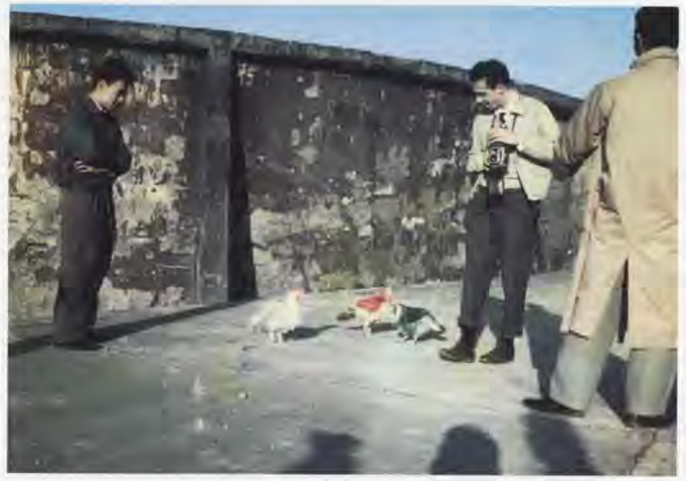

FIG. 30. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Work (Colored Chickens)*, 1956. Performance view: *One Day Only Outdoor Art Exhibition*, near Muko River, Amagasaki, April 9, 1956

Yoshihara *fils* (who himself played guitar in a jazz band) as well as Shimamoto and Motonaga created concrete sound compositions for *Gutai Art on the Stage*, with Shimamoto's consisting of "not actual sounds but electric sounds heavily amplified, contracted, strengthened or weakened"[81] that he envisioned as music beyond structure, citing the example of boys imitating the sound of a train rather than singing a song. Similarly, Michio sought to create "frameless music" by shaking tubes filled with rocks and sand, buckling sheet metal, striking and scratching electrical microphones, and using other handmade, improvised instruments.[82]

The trappings of theater also came into question. The *Gutai Art on the Stage* project emerged in part from Yoshihara's experience as a set designer and his desire to free stage design from its service to theater. In *Two Spaces*, Yoshihara turned the spotlight on the stage, literally: a ray of light illuminated its empty expanse to capture the "several seconds from when the curtain rises in the dark until the lights are turned on":[83] the stage stripped of its theatrical function and presented in its own concrete materiality. Similarly, Yoshida Toshio explored the materiality of the shadows cast by theatrical lighting, exploiting the show's revolving stage to alternately stretch and compress them. Yamazaki Tsuruko's *Film of Lights* referred to stage lighting as well as to the projected image. It consisted of two parts: a light "detached from all figuration with no shape or color"[84] and a film projection of an empty film similar to Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film* (1964). Shimamoto's *Work* (1958, plate 107), completed the year after *Gutai Art on the Stage*, deepens the group's inquiry into that medium's materiality and its intersection with painting. In this work, Shimamoto acted directly on the delicate emulsion of a newsreel, scratching, drawing, and painting in such a way that only some of the original images and sound come through. The result is an elegy of color layered over black-and-white footage that hovers between abstraction and figuration and highlights the materiality of the painted interventions.

But regardless of the apparent affiliations of medium, the subject always returned to painting. In the *Gutai Art on the Stage* issue of the journal, Murakami theorized the group's painting in time and space:

> Up until now, painting has not contained time as a concrete element. . . . Time is expressed as no more than an image of itself. . . . Gutai's will for discovery demands not only spatiality but also temporality in order to give a full aesthetic impact.[85]

What Murakami's text underscores is that even the most seemingly "theatrical" works in *Gutai Art on the Stage* were conceived of as extensions of painting—that is, as "picturing." Shiraga's *Ultramodern Sanbasō* (1957, plate 99), a contemporary update of the Shinto purification ritual that traditionally opened Noh performances in which the artist performed a slow, undulating dance in a red costume with long, pointy red sleeves and a pointy red hat, was conceived of as a picture of a red line in motion. So too was the composition that he and his assistants created as part of the piece by shooting arrows into a white board at the back of the stage. Tanaka's *Stage Clothes* (1957, plate 100), a quick-change performance in which the artist revealed one outfit after another by detaching trick sleeves and unrolling hems, was a moving composition of color and form articulated through clothing, and her *Electric Dress* (1956, fig. 31, plate 92), a psychedelic picturing of flashing electrical lights.

While overt "content" may have been limited, the performances did play allusively with materials, movements, and bodies. Here, as in Gutai's painted and drawn works, destruction and violence remained recurring themes, foregrounded in examples by Shiraga, Shimamoto, and Murakami. In particular, Shimamoto's *Material Destruction* (1957, fig. 32), a piece in which the artist smashed two large illuminated lightbulbs hanging from wires and plunging the audience into darkness, would have aroused memories of wartime bombings. With a more forward-looking perspective, Shimamoto wrote, "Even though destruction itself may be the opposite of creation, in this age, the boundary between the two no longer exists. . . . Despite our refusal to empathize with destruction, we must consider it as a constructive site in order to move on."[86] Tanaka was similarly focused on the future, seizing on the epochal changes occurring in the postwar moment. *Stage Clothes* cleverly implied the new possibilities of self-construction in women's identities, while the burning, flashing bulbs of *Electric Dress* suggested, with a hint of Icarus, its inherent risks. *Electric Dress* was ultimately hopeful, however, pursuing beauty and radiating potential at a time when women had just received an expanded package of rights in the American-drafted constitution.

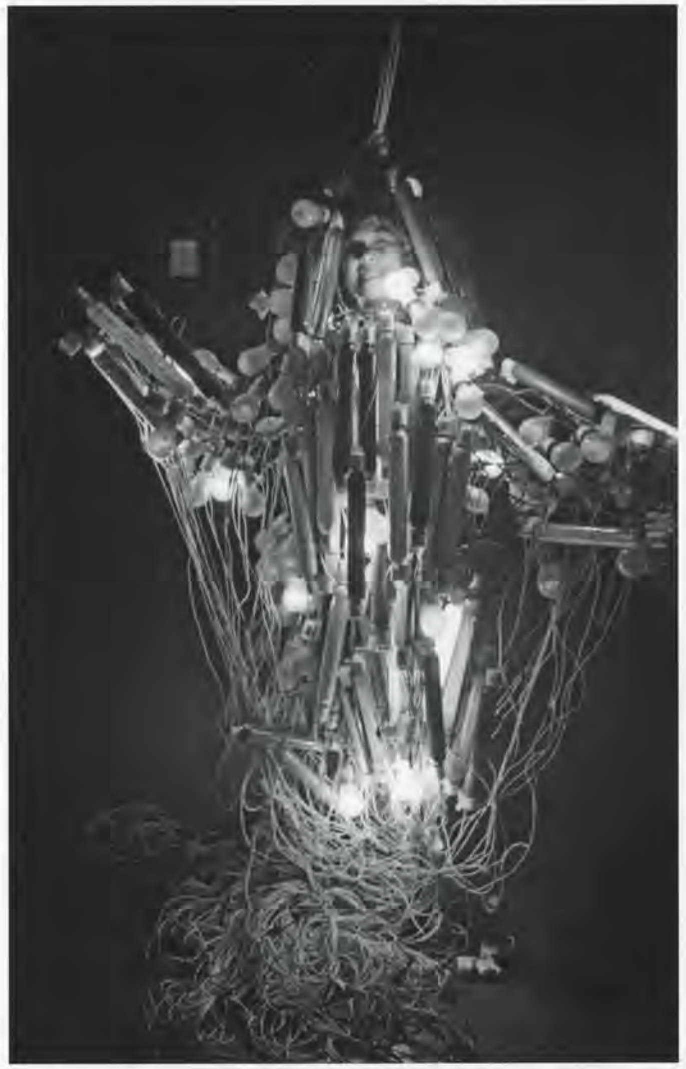

FIG. 31. Tanaka Atsuko wearing *Electric Dress* (1956) at *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, ca. October 1956. Photo: Ōtsuji Seiko Collection, Musashino Art University Museum & Library, Tokyo

These experiments in performance painting were followed in 1958 by the *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage* exhibition (fig. 33) and a 1962 collaboration with the Morita Modern Dance Company titled *Don't Worry, the Moon Won't Fall Down!* Perhaps the most successful "performance painting" by early Gutai, however, was 1960's spectacular, headline-grabbing *International Sky Festival* (plate 34), an outdoor exhibition of paintings by thirty artists from five countries floated from advertising balloons over the Takashimaya department store in

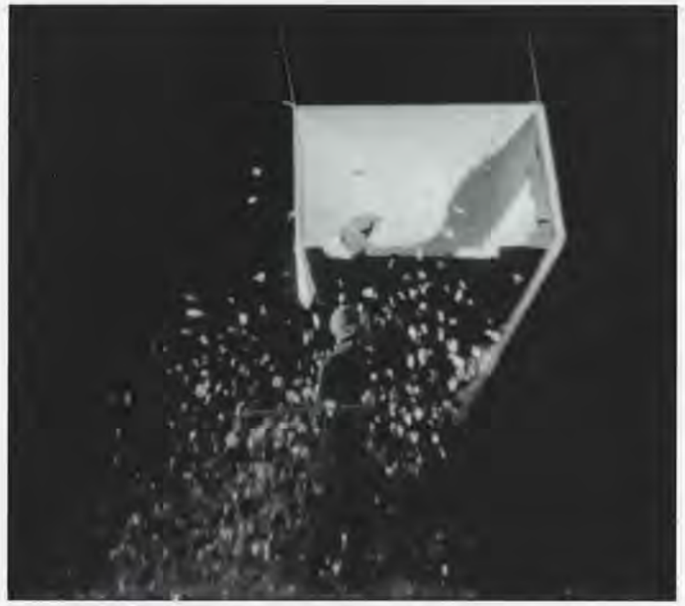

FIG. 32. **SHIMAMOTO Shōzō**, *Material Destruction*, 1957. Performance view: *Gutai Art on the Stage*, Sankei Hall, Tokyo, July 17, 1957. Photo: Ōtsuji Seiko Collection, Musashino Art University Museum & Library, Tokyo

Osaka. Hovering ten stories in the air for five days, the *Sky Festival* functioned as a poetic guerilla art action, inserting itself into the everyday lives of unsuspecting passersby. The exhibition also had important implications for authorship and the status of art object, since the works were actually painted on banners by Gutai artists, based on sketches submitted by a roster of international artists. News of this unprecedented exhibition reached Gutai's interlocutors abroad through the beautifully produced *Gutai* 11 (plates 27, 35), a special issue of the journal on the festival that was sent to all participants and passed around in artist circles, as well as through exhibition reviews in both domestic and international publications. The show created such a reputation for Gutai in Europe that when they presented a painting exhibition at Galerie Stadler in Paris in 1965, a reviewer lamented, "To experience the reality of this group, one would have had to organize a festival, commandeering the Rue de Seine with a parade of banners."[87]

PHASE TWO (1962–72)

Humanizing Japan's Economic Miracle

With postwar GNP increasing at 10 percent per year, Japan's economy grew from being smaller than all major European economies in 1955 to being the world's second largest in 1973. In 1960, Japan Air Lines began its first transpacific flights, and in 1964, a resurgent Japan "came out" to the world, hosting the Tokyo Olympics and unveiling the technologically advanced Shinkansen bullet train. New economic muscle and mobility translated into greater artistic confidence and visibility on the world stage.

Japan's new prosperity and international confidence came, however, at the price of domestic harmony. The flip side of the rapid economic growth was widespread political turmoil. The year 1960 saw the most turbulent protests in Japan's history, demonstrations in Tokyo against the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Anpo) and the Miike coal mine strikes in the northern Kyūshū Prefecture. The renewal of Anpo confirmed Japan's place in America's sphere of influence, securing access to markets, technology, and financial benefits for Japan at the cost of maintaining the nation as an anticommunist bulwark in Asia. The strikes at Miike, the largest coal mine in Japan, were a "total war between labor and capital"[88] that represented the last time that the left wing of labor unions prevailed internally. Following government victories in both of these divisive, sometimes violent confrontations, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party opted to follow a more diplomatic route of strategically distributing financial incentives, with Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato launching the "income-doubling plan"[89] for the entire nation. As the decade progressed, work became the country's raison d'être. Students learned to toil for long hours in order to pass entrance exams to elite high schools and then universities, salarymen sacrificed their lives to the company, and housewives, working under the direction of the government-sponsored New Life Movement, labored to provide a "bright cheerful home,"[90] all striving together for a place in the swelling middle class.

Set against a society that was becoming increasingly homogenized, disciplined, and managed, Gutai's commitment to freedom, play, and creativity took on renewed significance as a site of resistance. The decade between 1962 and 1972 was marked by the group's critical engagement with the rapid changes in Japan's geopolitical status and economic power, focusing in particular on the transformation of the country's material and social cultures. Gutai's response was complex, as its ambitions for internationalism aligned with those of the nation while its ethics of individualism clashed with the values of Japan Inc.

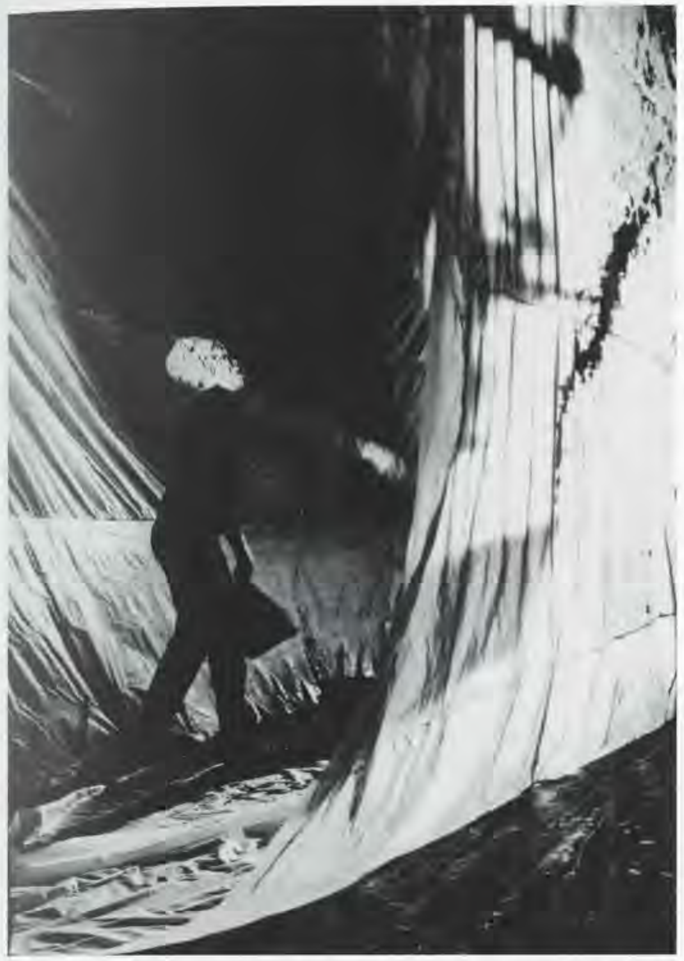

FIG. 33. **SUMI Yasuo**, *Painting in Space*, 1958. Performance view: *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage*, Asahi Kaikan, Osaka, April 4, 1958. Pictured: Ōhara Kimiko

Like the rest of the country, Gutai in the 1960s was increasingly linked into a global system. In Phase Two the group's travel increased considerably, and the nature of its internationalism transformed, shifting away from the hub-and-spoke model prevalent during its years of intense collaboration with Michel Tapié.[91] A turning point came with the 1962 establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca. The venue was three turn-of-the century storehouses on Osaka's small, central island of Nakanoshima, joined together and restored to create a chimera of architectural references—its original Meiji architecture, the white cube of the international art world, and, in its gate and courtyard, the outdoor experimentalism of Phase One Gutai.[92] This highly successful architectural platform increased the group's international profile, and the Pinacotheca became an important stop on the itineraries of artists, curators, and critics traveling through Asia. Between 1962 and 1970, the group was visited by John Cage, Peggy Guggenheim, Yoko Ono, and Pierre Restany (1962); Lawrence Alloway, Roland Gibson, and Jean Tinguely (1963); Alice Baber, Merce Cunningham, Sam Francis, Paul Jenkins, Jasper Johns, William Lieberman, Isamu Noguchi, and Robert Rauschenberg (1964); Clement Greenberg (1966); Geoff Hendricks (1968); Billy Klüver (1969); and Willem de Kooning (1970), among others.

By the late 1960s, Japanese contemporary art had begun to see itself as one of a number of competing voices in an international forum, supported in part by a growing roster of Japan-focused exhibitions abroad at venues including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Kunsthaus Zürich, and the Museum of Modern Art, as well as in international forums both major and minor in Paris, Buenos Aires, Lausanne, and Milan. In 1964, both Tanaka and Yoshihara were included in the Guggenheim International Award exhibition; in 1971, at the Second India Triennial of World Art, Yoshihara was awarded a gold medal. Much of the attention received by Gutai was directed toward its painting, still the group's hallmark outside Japan, and alongside this recognition, the painting practices of Gutai artists evolved, in dialogue with their international contemporaries. After 1965 they pursued, almost without exception, a cleaner, more hard-edged aesthetic that regarded the possibility of self-expression and existential heroics with critical distance. The seeds of critique were planted in Phase One, with Kanayama and Tanaka's early stances against gestural painting. By the beginning of Phase Two, other members such as Yamazaki Tsuruko and Motonaga Sadamasa had begun to depart from their gestural past. Even Shiraga and Yoshihara, the artists most invested in phenomenological embodiment through gesture, sought to develop new ways of working. In the 1965 work *Red Fan* (fig. 34), Shiraga achieved a modicum of distance between himself and his painting, interrupting the chain of relation between body, paint, and painting with a long stick that he pushed sideways along the surface of the canvas with his foot like a ski. The result was a work possessing mechanical rather than organic velocity, whose shimmering red and gold surface departed from the corporeal quality of *Wild Boar Hunting II*. The year 1965 also marked the beginning of Yoshihara's iconic circle series. Painted on flat, monochromatic grounds of black, blue, red, or white with sharply contrasting colors in a hard yet still organic line, paintings such as *Circle* (1971, plate 126) comment on gesture while departing from the expressive painterliness of his previous work.

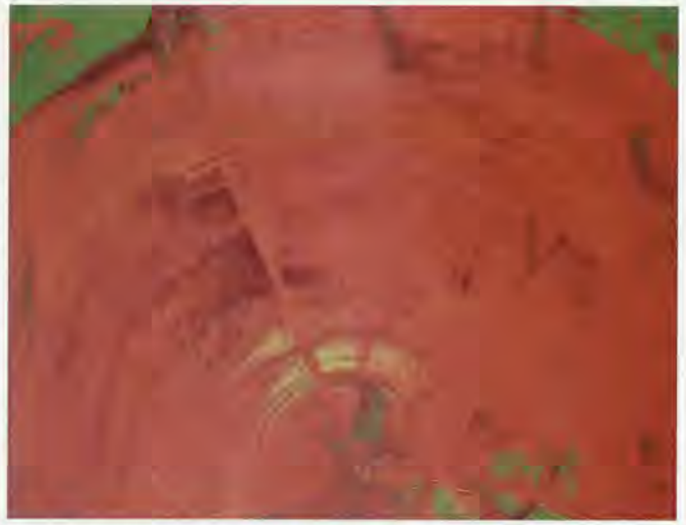

FIG. 34. **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, *Red Fan*, 1965. Oil on canvas, 210 × 270 cm. Private collection, courtesy Hauser and Wirth, New York

Attention to Gutai's painting did not mean, however, that Gutai's early experimental work outdoors and onstage was being ignored; it too became increasingly recognized internationally, exemplified by two key events: the group's inclusion in the exhibition *Nul 1965* (figs. 14, 100, plate 109) at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and its stage works' citation in Allan Kaprow's groundbreaking 1966 book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*.[93] While Kaprow's approbation clearly inspired the group to revisit performance, the encounter with Nul was of particular significance. It launched an elaborate dialogue that infused new life into Gutai after 1965 while also convincing Yoshihara in no uncertain terms that gestural painting was dead.

Smaller and younger than Gutai, Nul was a Dutch movement whose visionary leader, Henk Peeters, shared the Japanese movement's internationalist vision and saw in their pioneering outdoor experiments a precedent and a kindred spirit. Like Gutai, Nul was situated on the art world's periphery and actively sought out exchange, fueling two large-scale exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum, *Nul Exhibition* (1962) and *Nul 1965*. At the latter, Yoshihara woke up to Gutai's importance to a younger generation of experimental artists that included Azimut, Gruppe T, Nul, and Zero and returned to Japan with connections to some and a renewed vision for Gutai's future. Even local critics noticed the surge of energy and talent into the group around this time. In his review of *Nul 1965*, critic Akane Kazuo wrote, "Gutai's teamwork centering on Yoshihara is brilliant; however, I am now seeing an effort to nurture new talent. I have great hope for Gutai's future direction."[94] Once placed in an international context, the experimental works of Phase One Gutai were praised for trailblazing in the fields of installation and performance art and seen as springboards for the new environmental works of the 1960s. These experimental directions continued in exhibitions at home and abroad, including a series of four exhibitions in the Netherlands and Austria.

Although in its Phase Two years Gutai clearly benefited from Japan's increased economic and geopolitical power, its members were ambivalent about the transformations produced by the country's fast-paced industrialization. Taking a stance against the government's uncritical attitude toward runaway economic and technological growth as well as its coordinated efforts to rationalize everything from markets and corporations to personal hygiene, education, and domestic relations, Gutai artists sought freedom not from a militaristic, totalitarian regime but from a dehumanizing administered society. Like political philosopher Yoshimoto Takaaki, Gutai fought against the "continually increasing burden of a sensibility gripped with an amorphous sense of boredom, enjoying a bloated material life and a relatively improved standard of living, but an absolute impoverishment."[95] Shimamoto expressed Gutai's position best in a three-part 1962–63 series of essays in *Kirin*, "Let's Think More about Useless Things," in which he stressed the importance of individual pursuits beyond the national corporate productivity stream. He targeted education reform, writing, "If classes taught at school are all for something useful, what kind of dull people it may produce." Criticizing the Tokyo Olympics craze for feeding into the society of discipline, he wrote, "I don't dislike the Olympic Games per se. However, I cannot collaborate with those who make such a simplistic claim that tramples on the feeling of each individual as though we still lived in wartime Japan." He concluded by encouraging readers to act more autonomously, to "think more and do more."[96]

Shimamoto was not alone in his analysis of contemporary Japan and the social changes wrought by the 1960s. Imai Norio, the most prominent voice of Phase Two Gutai, articulated a younger generation's fears about a dawning era dominated by mass media. Echoing Guy Debord's concern in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) that "all that

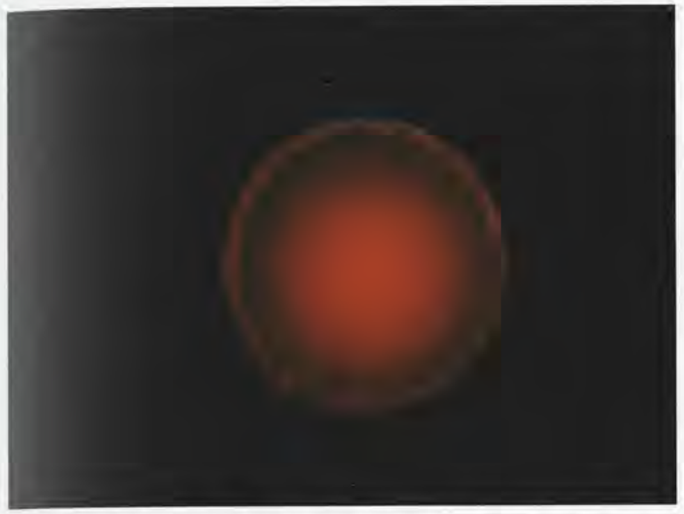

FIG. 35. **KIKUNAMI Jōji**, unidentified work, ca. 1967. Installation view: *Gutai Art for the Space Age*, Hanshin Amusement Park, Nishinomiya, Japan, April 1967

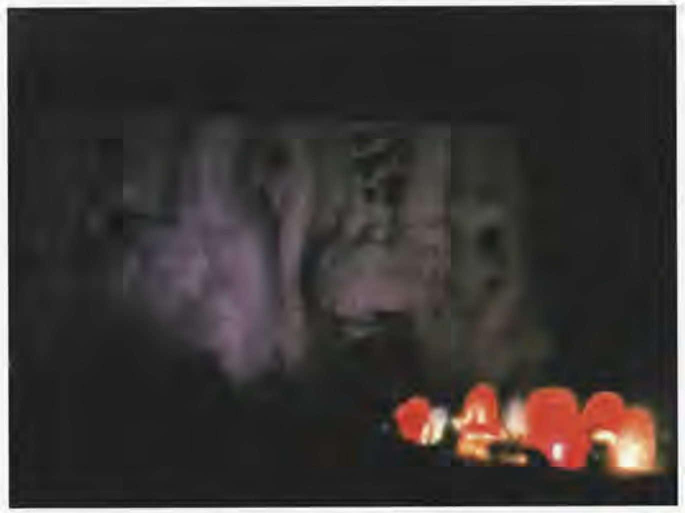

FIG. 36. **YOSHIDA Toshio** and **SAKAMOTO Masaya**, unidentified works, ca. 1967. Installation view: *Gutai Art for the Space Age*, Hanshin Amusement Park, Nishinomiya, Japan, April 1967

was once directly lived has become mere representation,"[97] he wrote:

> In the current age, how often do we have truly moving encounters with things and events? . . .
>
> Information overload may be the consequence of indirectly experienced information. In our everyday life, it not only makes us forget the true encounter but also buries us in the emptiness of everyday life. It is no overstatement that this will inevitably result in utter dehumanization.[98]

Taking a stand against this specter, Gutai artists in Phase Two used their writing and art to counter the evacuation of authenticity from social life in advanced capitalism, creating works that resonated worldwide. Their efforts fell into interwoven strands of interest in three problematic sectors of contemporary life—technology, systems, and social space.

HUMANIZING TECHNOLOGY

Before the flash of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima cast an extraordinary anxiety and distrust over technology, science and technology from the Renaissance to the heat engine intersected with art, offered discoveries and methods useful for art, inspired courage in the human spirit, and even themselves became the dream for a new society, while at the same time recognizing, resisting, and confronting the violence brought about by their double-edged nature.

—Kikunami Jōji, "What Technology Demands," 1969[99]

The 1967 exhibition *Gutai Art for the Space Age*, mounted at an amusement park near Osaka, comprised work by eight members of the group and was singular in its exclusive focus on technological works as well as for its dark, ominous chill.[100] The exhibition was held just three months after three astronauts died in the highly publicized Apollo 1 space capsule fire and in context of an escalating space race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Taking place in the world's only country to have experienced the effects of an atomic bomb attack firsthand, the exhibition was dominated by an atmosphere of portent. Works made of burnished metals, transparent plastics, and glossy synthetic materials pulsed unrelentingly like emergency transponders, foaming, glowing, and spinning in the darkness of the exhibition space. Kikunami Jōji's light installation (fig. 35) explored the optical effects of interfering grid systems to create strobing moiré patterns. Yoshida Toshio's large-scale soap-bubble sculpture seethed and boiled with the slow ooze of biological propagation that, when lit by Sakamoto Masaya's adjacent crystalline sculptures, took on the character of an alien hatchery (fig. 36). Imai's internally illuminated spheres evoked spacecraft. Named after Tanku Tankurō, the first robot superhero in Japanese manga, the work evoked the abandoned prewar confidence in the promise of technological progress.[101] The vision of the future proposed here was dystopian: there was no human presence, no imagined lives to improve or engage, just a warning.

Technology's potential to dehumanize was an issue of profound importance for the technologically engaged artists

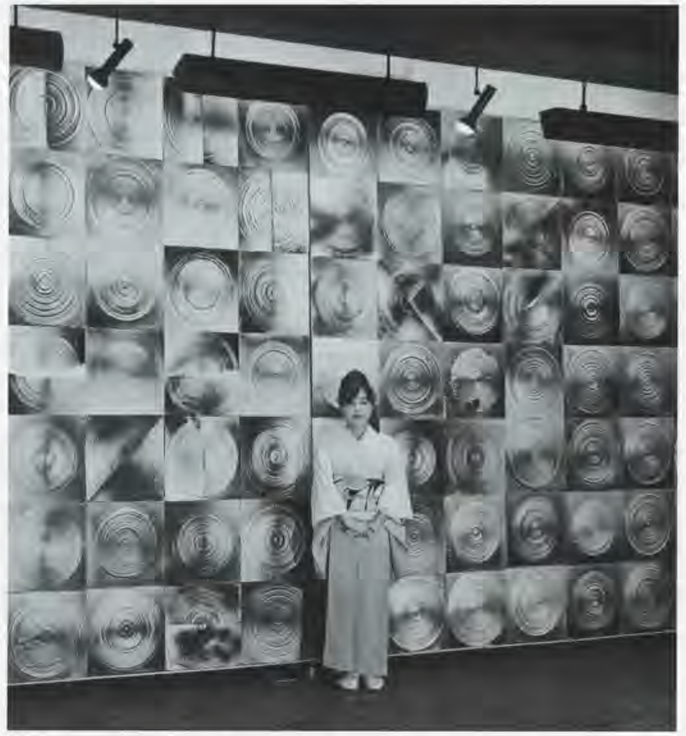

FIG. 37. Nasaka Yūko in front of her *Work* (1964) at *Nasaka Yūko*, Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, ca. November 1–10, 1964

from Gutai's second phase. "Computer technology has made brisk progress as an automated calculator for warfare," Kikunami wrote. "By shifting from analog to digital, it has coldly confronted and repudiated humanity."[102] In response, Gutai advocated cultural engagement with technology, searching for ways to humanize it. Despite this critical perspective, however, Gutai's technological work from this period has long been misunderstood by art historians and critics, who associated it with GNP-ism and the war machine without examining the positions articulated by the artists themselves.[103] Outside Japan, other technologically minded work from this period was similarly rebuffed as "mass entertainment or . . . failed high art" and "tarred with military associations."[104]

Refusing to retreat from the front lines of progress, these artists confronted technology head on, seeing themselves in the Renaissance tradition between art and science. Kikunami's *Work 2-7-67* (1967, plate 118) consists of a white painted board covered with silver striped polyester film across which nine rows of clear acrylic discs are suspended with fishing line. The discs magnify the stripes underneath, and the shapes perceived by the viewer change according to his or her height and location. As the viewer moves, the work appears to move, as in lenticular photography. By appropriating materials developed for commerce and war and deploying them in a nonfunctional, aesthetic context, Kikunami's work both provides a space for reflection on technology's impact and subverts the original functions of the materials. The work emphasizes its relation to the viewer as an embodied being, demonstrating that technology need not flout humanity.

Continuing a tradition of Gutai artists experimenting with new materials that began with Yoshihara's *Light Art* (1955, plate 12) and Tanaka's hypermodern *Electric Dress*, Nasaka Yūko and Matsutani Takesada made works that employed novel postwar industrial materials. Nasaka's *Work* (1964) is a modular series of square wooden panels coated with a thin layer of glue, plaster, and clay and placed on a homemade mechanical turntable. As the panel rotated, she used a palette knife to carve intricate patterns into the material, a gesture she compared to working on a potter's wheel. She finished the panels with a fine spray of car lacquer, misted with an auto-factory air compressor, to create surfaces that look like photographs of the surface of the moon. As if accumulating data or manufactured products, she then displayed the paintings in grids, some as large as the mural she created for her solo show at the Gutai Pinacotheca in 1964 (fig. 37).[105]

Matsutani, meanwhile, experimented with Elmer's glue, the famous nonorganic adhesive introduced by the Borden Company in 1947. The polyvinyl acetate emulsion, derived from petrochemical sources, struck Matsutani as iconically new and American, and he began using it as a material in 1962, developing a technique of drying the surface of the glue with a hairdryer, inserting a straw into the skin, and inflating it to create an organic-looking protuberance on the canvas.[106] Although at first the forms simply gave a third dimension to modified gestural abstraction, they quickly took on lives of their own, transforming his works into something akin to living beings: sagging skins, pregnant bellies, swelling breasts, ecosystems of rapidly dividing single-cell lifeforms, rain-forest floors littered with seed pods. The elegant *Work, 66-2* (1966, plate 73), which won him a scholarship to study in Paris, and *White Circle* (1966, plate 72) foreground the unexpected beauty of the medium and its play with opposites—black and white, inside and outside, organic and industrial. They also foreshadow his later oeuvre, which comprises a restrained crossbreeding of the glue works and an obsession with graphite that together develop a sophisticated relationship between calligraphy (as a site of intersection between East and West), the body (as contingent being), and time (as captured in the indexical traces of his pencil).

The body was a subject Matsutani shared with Matsuda Yutaka, with the latter in particular interested in the body in motion. Although on first glance Matsuda's white boxes fitted with kinetic elements may seem cold and technocratic, the way they are animated displays warmth and humor. In *Cho-Picture* (1965), the movement of the pendulum reveals with each swing a family portrait behind it, and *CRU • PIKA* (1968, plate 119), pierced with six rows of six round holes each and illuminated from inside, contains a small rotating mirror that allows the viewer to see her own reflection as she approaches. In his post-Gutai career, Matsuda heightened the interactive aspects of his work, creating paintings fitted with strings that allow the viewer to manipulate its composition and large-scale kinetic sculptures that viewers could shift with the touch of a hand.

Appropriating technology to humanistic and poetic ends motivated much of Yoshida Minoru's practice. He dreamed of harnessing technology in the service of his fictional, utopian Third Earth Power (EP3): "The Old Power is so intent on emphasizing capital, it inputs its capital in computers in order to produce outputs of profit tens of times larger. EP3, in contrast, empowers even artists."[107] *Love Love Love No. 2* (1967) was a small device of futuristic green and clear Plexiglas that lit up and made sound when it was held by two people, serenading human connection. Yoshida also had a taste for the absurd, and he used acerbic humor both to question the ambitions of science and to revel in an unbridled fantasy world that spanned the camp of *Barbarella* and *Planet of the Apes* and high aspirations of the Apollo program. *Bisexual Flower* (1969, plate 124), his most spectacular work, is a room-size techno-organism resembling an out-of-control science experiment on carnivorous plants. Six bulbous Plexiglas "leaves" with spherical heads attach to bases containing black lights; these bases connect to a hub that houses a rotating pink Plexi fan. In each leaf-arm, pumps draw neon-green liquid from a reservoir in the base and spray it into the head, causing the head to snap down ominously when it fills. In this resting position, the juices drain back down into the reservoir until the head rises again for the next cycle. All the while the work glows, trickles, screeches, and grinds with an overpowering sensory intensity. At once a splendid vision and a portentous comment on science taken one step too far, the work provokes the viewer to evaluate his own critical positions vis-à-vis technology and progress. Exhibited at Expo '70 (of which more below), whose controversial theme "Progress and Harmony for Mankind" was criticized for whitewashing the 1970 extension of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and taking an unreflective stance toward the social, cultural, and environmental costs of progress, *Bisexual Flower*'s ambivalence stood out as a critical, radical gesture.

Expo '70 also featured a live *Gutai Art Festival* (plate 125), which took place in Isozaki Arata's overbearing Metabolist-school Festival Plaza (and at the foot of Okamoto Tarō's subversive *Tower of the Sun*, fig. 105).[108] Defiantly human scale in a space that demanded the outsize—and all credited to the group as a whole rather than to individual artists—the performances make poetic gestures of resistance against the architecture's dehumanizing bombast. In *Yarn People*, a dancer wearing a long knitted dress tethered by a single rogue thread twirled through the space as she unraveled her garment line by line. *Parachute Men* enacted a child's fantasy of leaping through the air tied to enormous helium-filled balloons. *101 Dogs* poked fun at Japan's manufacturing prowess by releasing 101 walking, barking toy dogs onto the stage. Even the large-scale finale revealed a sense of unbridled play, filling the stage with foam sprayed out of a fire truck. Perhaps the performance's most telling gesture was *Parent and Child Robot* (fig. 38), which created a baby robot for the Festival Plaza's much-vaunted automaton, *Deme*, whose state-of-the-art technology was designed to add a futuristic air to the venue. With a mischievous robot-child placed in relation to it, *Deme* was humbled to the point of seeming almost human, losing all the gravitas the Expo's organizers had intended for it.

HUMANIZING SYSTEMS

> Beautiful patterns do not come from reason. They arise out of tranquility. Things born this way contain an unknown logic.
>
> —Kanno Seiko, 1988[109]

One key innovation of the 1960s was not a material or a microprocessor but an intellectual paradigm: systems theory.

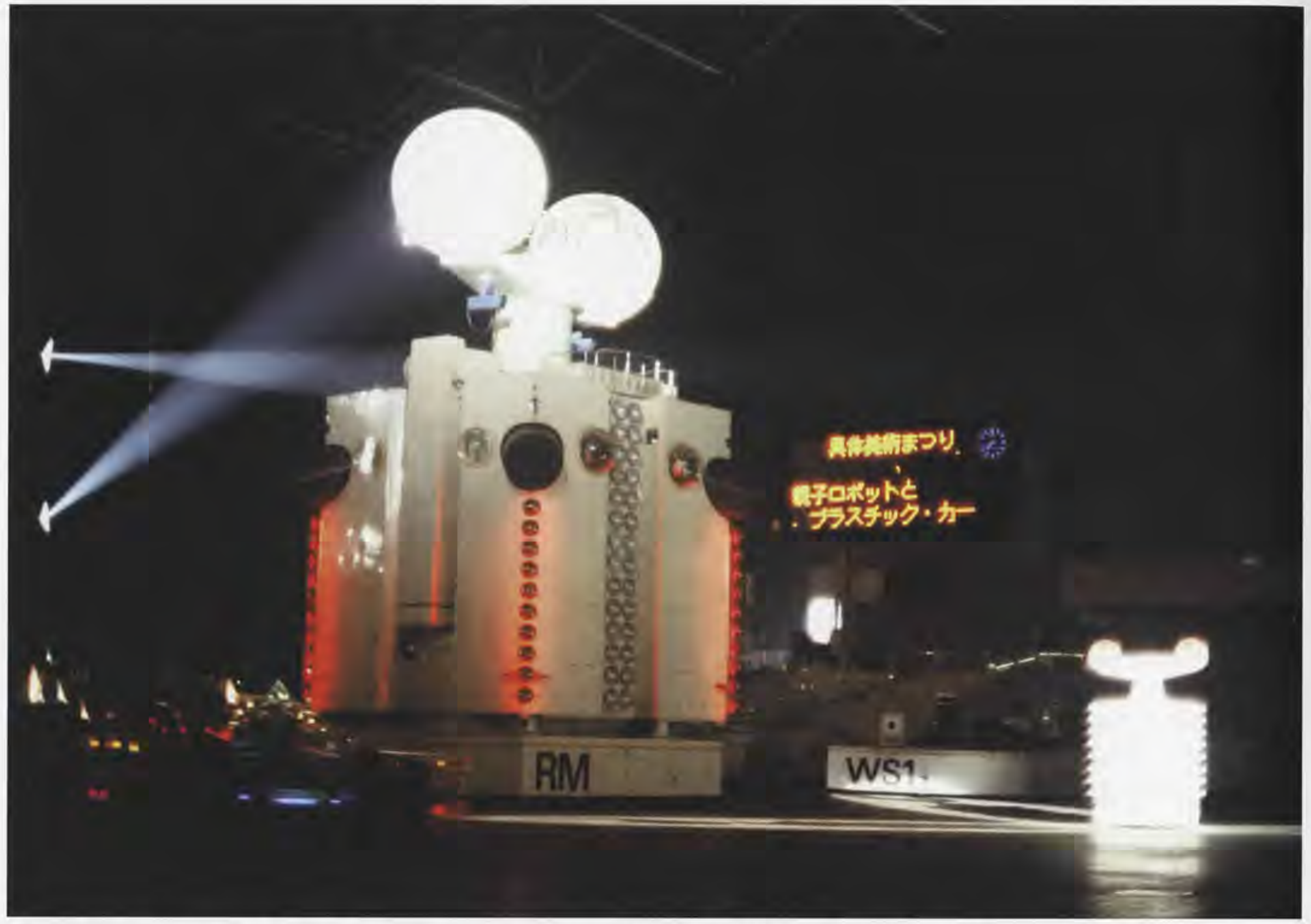

FIG. 38. **Gutai Art Association**, *Parent and Child Robot* (center and lower right), and **YOSHIDA Minoru**, *Plastic Car* (lower left), both 1970. Performance view: *Gutai Art Festival: Drama of Man and Matter*, Festival Plaza, Expo '70, Osaka, ca. August 31–September 2, 1970

With the increasingly widespread use of the computer in finance, warfare, and scientific research, artists and cultural critics began reflecting on the social and cultural consequences of this shift. Defining systems aesthetics in 1968, Jack Burnham wrote that "we are now in transition from an *object-oriented* to a *systems-oriented* culture" and described a number of conceptually based practices, including Gutai, that did advanced critical work on established concepts of authorship, the art object, and the relationship between viewer and environment.[110] Much of Phase Two Gutai can be understood within this expansive conception of systems aesthetics, but the most salient treatment of systems as systems can be found in the work of Kanno Seiko, Takasaki Motonao, and Onoda Minoru.

For Kanno, systems could be used equally to understand the connections between poetry, painting, and music and to universalize everything from language to human relations. Beginning in 1967, she began using the Go board as a structure for her paintings, allowing its mathematical logic to guide her explorations.[111] The boldly titled *From Alpha to Omega I* (1970, plate 114) goes beyond her concern with the human, aiming at the visual precision of scientific graphs but also grasping at divinity itself. The navy ground is completely uniform, and the precise, systematic lines drawn in aqua, yellow, and white are applied using a *karasuguchi* drafting pen, showing only the faintest trace of the human hand.[112] The work also gestures toward the infinite: it bleeds to the edge of the canvas, as if suggesting that its boundaries are artificial, and the optical vibrations caused by the rhythmic repetition of line reverberate into an immaterial realm. *From Alpha to Omega I* (which was displayed at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as part of the 1970 *Japan Art Festival*) makes a poetic claim to universalism in the context of an art world that locked artists from the periphery into a limited set of culturally specific issues and exhibitions. Kanno's vision found purer expression still in the series "The World of Lévi-Strauss," executed the following year, in which she turned her attention to abstracting the most fundamental structures of humanity. These intricate grid works in black on white acrylic further suggest the visual language of scientific knowledge and in so doing conjure the rejection of ethnocentrism and nationalism implied by structuralism, the intellectual movement popularized by Claude Lévi-Strauss that argued that a universal human culture may be revealed by uncovering the underlying systems that guide us all, regardless of ethnicity or national origin.

For Takasaki, systems thinking provided an opportunity to shift from the monadism of the heroic Abstract Expressionist artist to an encounter with the materials, the environment, and the viewer, not unlike that envisioned by Robert Smithson or Lee Ufan. His *Apparatus* series (plate 120), begun in 1966, indicates the interconnectedness of all components of society. The series originated in an experiment the artist conducted by affixing small squares of canvas painted on both sides to a board with a dab of glue in the center of each patch. Over time, and depending on the humidity of the environment, the squares would curl differently, literally enacting the ecological relationship between artist, viewer, and environment. Inspired by seeing row upon row of computers lined up, the series also refers metaphorically to the systems that govern us. In 1978, after Gutai's dissolution, Takasaki took his work with systems one step further, creating *Collapse* (fig. 39) at the Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe. This monumental installation at the museum's entrance consisted of a grid of cinder blocks, each fractured over a period of three days. At the end of that process, visitors were invited to walk over the installation, reducing the blocks to rubble over time and collectively completing the work with gentle but unrelenting footsteps. Takasaki said that *Collapse* issued from "my own place of weakness," and in ceding artistic agency to the viewing public, it comes to terms with individual impotence and places hope in the possibility of collective action, a reflection of the American withdrawal from Vietnam and Japan's slow response to the environmental toll of unbridled growth.[113]

The endless proliferation of manufactured goods as well as their systematized means of production and distribution was a fundamental issue for Onoda, whose repetitive circle paintings captured the zeitgeist of the era, transforming the organizational forms that disciplined and administered society into a psychedelic language of circles, appropriated for aesthetic ends. Transfixed by a newsreel about Japanese manufacturing that depicted thousands of identical products being churned out en masse,[114] Onoda began to think about the relationship between the individual and the mass, about systems and mechanization. The characteristic *Work 66-14* (1966, plate 116) is a relief of concentric circles with an orange skin dotted in pink, red, blue, and green painted circles that respond to the work's topography. The relief circles, made of a mixture of glue and calcium carbonate, establish the work's basic parameters. The painted circles, meanwhile, are produced according to a system that evaluates their placement on the relief, the "valleys" filling with minuscule dots and the "hills" straddled by large, confident circles. "The canvas can be viewed from any direction, and my 'circles' can be extended from any point of the canvas to outside. They may be painted not only on walls and ceilings but also on streets, automobiles, and whatnot," wrote Onoda, resonating with Kusama Yayoi's works and writings of the same period. Critiquing Japan Inc. while also reflecting on its logic, Onoda dreamed of his circles proliferating endlessly: "Idly looking up at the sky, I dream of my 'circles' densely covering this sky, this earth with no room left to fill."[115]

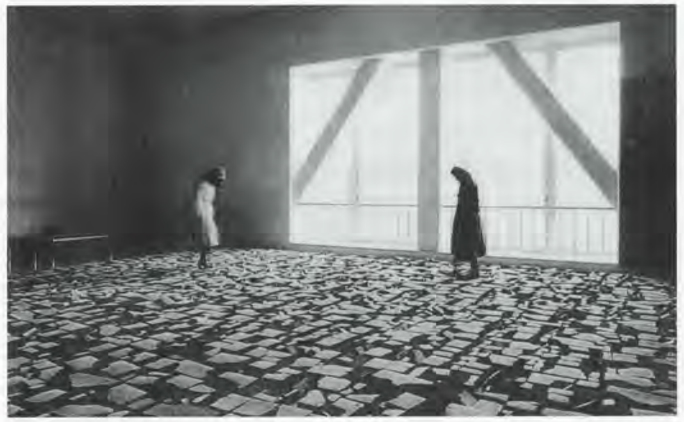

FIG. 39. **TAKASAKI Motonao**, *Collapse*, 1978. Concrete blocks. Installation view: *Art Now*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe, 1978

HUMANIZING SOCIAL SPACE

What, then, is the role of art in a commercial or public space? It is the task for individual artists to answer this question, and their answers can only be given in the form of their works. However, one thing I can say is that their answers must provoke direct experiences, encourage

> unmediated encounters. They must offer not illusory but real communication.
>
> —Imai Norio, "Between Concept and Everyday," 1970[116]

In addition to provoking artists to think creatively about new materials and technologies, the 1960s also spurred a reevaluation of the artist's role in society. In Japan, the public sphere became an important site for artistic activity. The decade's political turmoil contributed to a shift in the focus of artistic intervention from that of self-expression, which predominated in the 1950s, to public engagement. Anti-Anpo organizing played a key role. Despite its failure, the movement made clear that action could no longer be "performed" for a select audience but rather had to reach out to a larger public. In Tokyo, ordinary citizens became the audience of choice for Hi Red Center's *Cleaning Event* (1964, fig. 40), a critique of the "civilizing" preparations for the 1964 Olympics; the *Walking Open Air Gallery* exhibition (1964) of the Sightseeing Art Research Institute (Kankō Geijutsu Kenkyūjo), staged outside Tokyo Station; and the *Anti–Vietnam War March* ritual (1968) of Zero Jigen (Zero Dimension).

In this context, Gutai's long-standing commitment to reaching a broad public took on new significance. The *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibitions* of 1955 and 1956, the 1960 *International Sky Festival*, and 1962's creation of the Gutai Pinacotheca as a total environment had all posed questions about the relationships between artwork, viewer, and site. Building on these forays into interactive art and art outdoors as the 1960s went on, Gutai sought increasingly to humanize social space and to provoke unmediated social encounters and communication with the viewer.

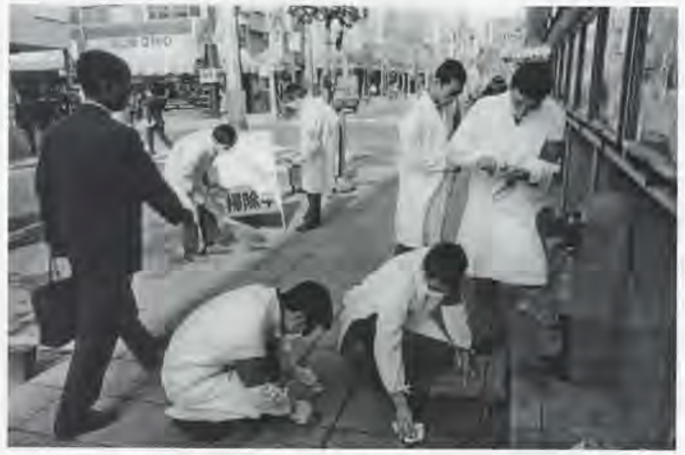

FIG. 40. **Hi Red Center**, *Cleaning Event* (aka *Be Clean! Campaign to Promote Cleanliness and Order in the Metropolitan Area*), Tokyo, October 16, 1964. Photo: Hirata Minoru

The starting point for Gutai's Phase Two environments, as a practice distinct from painting and focused on interaction, was Mukai Shūji's 1966 *Modern Jazz Café "Check"* (plate 105). At the beginning of the decade, Mukai had experimented with creating a three-dimensional installation in *Room of Signs* (1961), covering an entire room and his own body with his signature symbols. Set into a wall and separated from the exhibition space, the work was still embedded in the rhetoric of *e* and read as a three-dimensional painting. Five years later, Mukai created the extraordinary *Jazz Café*, an immersive, interactive environment blanketed with symbols. Mukai covered every inch of his habitual watering hole in Osaka with black-and-white markings: the chairs, the tables, the windows, the floors, the ceilings, the cups, the saucers, the bottles, even the waitstaff—exposed skin included. Against the syncopated rhythms of jazz, visitors were encouraged to eat, drink, and live with art, and even contribute to the creation of their own environment by themselves painting on the *Jazz Café* walls.[117] By 1969, the canvas no longer held any meaning for him, and with the purgative *Happening: Burning All My Works* (plate 106), Mukai freed himself from it.

That same year, another key moment occurred when three Gutai artists, Imai, Kikunami, and Matsuda, participated in *From Space to Environment*, a Tokyo exhibition organized by the short-lived Environment Society (Enbairamento no Kai). Although their contributions to this exhibition were more technological than environmental, their participation catalyzed a movement within Gutai to think more seriously about environment (*kankyō*), which the Environment Society theorized as the "actually occurring, dynamic relationship between a human and his or her surroundings."[118] This was conceived of as distinct from space (*kūkan*), which suggested a passive, structured relation.[119]

Perhaps the most potent catalyst for Gutai's renewed interest in environment was their dialogue with Nul in the late 1960s. After the success of *Nul 1965*, the group was again invited to collaborate with Nul on *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*, 1967). This project, organized for a real estate firm by Leo Verboon and Albert Vogel of the Internationale Galerij Orez (that is, Zero spelled backward), was to be an outdoor festival in The Hague that would "turn the Scheveningen pier into a great work of art" and include artists from Europe, Japan, and the United States.[120] Unfortunately, the exhibition was never realized, for financial and practical reasons. The plans were exhibited at Orez, however, and published in a special edition of the Dutch architectural journal *Forum* in June 1967, which framed the planned interventions in terms that resonated with the ethical ambitions of Gutai. "It would have been a remarkable experience to be able to observe the interaction between architecture and free art on an architectural scale," wrote the magazine's editors, envisaging what it would have been to "see 'Homo Ludens' take possession of a piece of real estate."[121] The imagined projects captured this sense of the carnivalesque, in the hopes of provoking direct interpersonal experiences. In beautiful drawings, Yoshihara Michio directly referenced Shinto shrines, proposing a work that suggested the *shimenawa* enclosing rope hung at the entrance to the sacred site (fig. 41). Like *shimenawa*, Michio's rope was to be made of hemp, and its tassels, while departing from the typical white paper *shide*, referred to the threshold, the red *torii* gate. This simple gesture, like a curtain drawn across the pier, would have consecrated the space, demarcating everything within as a zone of play.

The water surrounding the pier was also the subject of great attention. Another of Michio's proposals floated a red carpet into the middle of the harbor that connected the pier with a fountain (plate 112), while Imai proposed a school of multicolored plastic jellyfish-like sculptures (plate 113). Shimamoto imagined a raucous fleet of remote-control floating sculptures composed of toy boats wrapped in colored plastic, skidding across the surface of the water like dragonflies (fig. 42). Yoshida Toshio planned to create a giant soap-bubble sculpture, and Maekawa Tsuyoshi dreamed up a clear plastic cylinder three meters tall filled with flying colored confetti. Situated in public, with no objectives other than to create an atmosphere of spontaneity, the projects provided models for environmental interventions other than those, as the editors of *Forum* put it, "generally used by associations of shopkeepers or municipal agencies to honor Santa Claus or members of the Royal Family"[122]—that is to say, human relationships beyond commercial and state interests.

In the lead-up to Expo '70, Gutai artists created a number of additional public projects within Japan that took over social spaces and creating an environment of play. In 1968, Yoshida created a series of *FOAM* works for amusement parks, bars, and even roadside parks (fig. 43). These whimsical bubble sculptures, part of a series he had begun in 1965, lured children and adults alike with their glistening, endlessly fluctuating effervescence. That same year, Mukai created *Signs and Light* (fig. 44), a sound-sensitive sculpture that he installed under a Plexiglas staircase in a nightclub. Equally alluring, it flashed and grooved to the ambient sound, creating a contagious dance of musical movement.

Expo '70 presented Gutai with a very different set of challenges than *Zero on Sea*. For Yoshihara, the Expo was the crowning achievement of his career, an acknowledgement of the group's accomplishments as well as of his steadfast efforts since the end of the war to create "an international common ground," as he wrote in his 1958 Martha Jackson Gallery press release. Given his status not only as leader of Gutai but also as president of Yoshihara Oil Mill, a successful food-oil company, Yoshihara was invited to serve on the museum display committee, and Gutai was included in many aspects of the exposition's programming. Yoshihara, Shiraga, and Motonaga were triumphantly acknowledged as major international figures in the *Contemporary Art Movements* exhibition, and *Garden on Garden* (fig. 62), a collaborative outdoor kinetic sculpture by the group, showcased newer members. Horio Sadaharu, Kikunami Jōji, Nasaka Senkichirō, and Yoshida Toshio collaborated on a five-channel film for the spherical screen in the Astrorama dome. Most spectacularly, the group also collaborated on performances comprising the *Gutai Art Festival* (plate 125) that moderated the vastness of Isozaki's Festival Plaza through human-scale interventions.[123]

Although Yoshihara was fully committed to Expo '70, some members were less sure. For them, Expo '70 posed major challenges as well as major opportunities. Foremost,

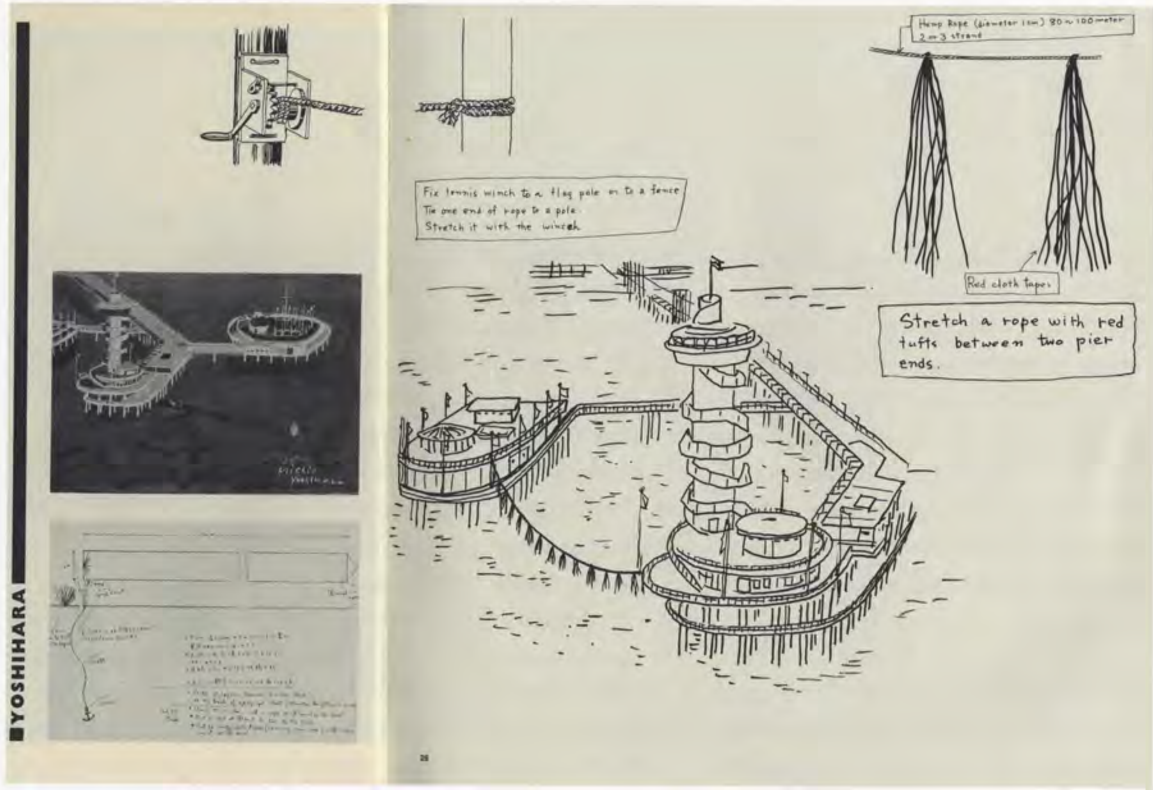
YOSHIHARA
Hemp Rope (diameter 1cm) 80 ~ 100 meter 2 ~ 3 strand
Fix tennis winch to a flag pole or to a fence
Tie one end of rope to a pole.
Stretch it with the winch.
Red cloth tapes
Stretch a rope with red tufts between two pier ends.

FIG. 41. **YOSHIHARA Michio**, proposal for *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*), *Forum* magazine, 1967

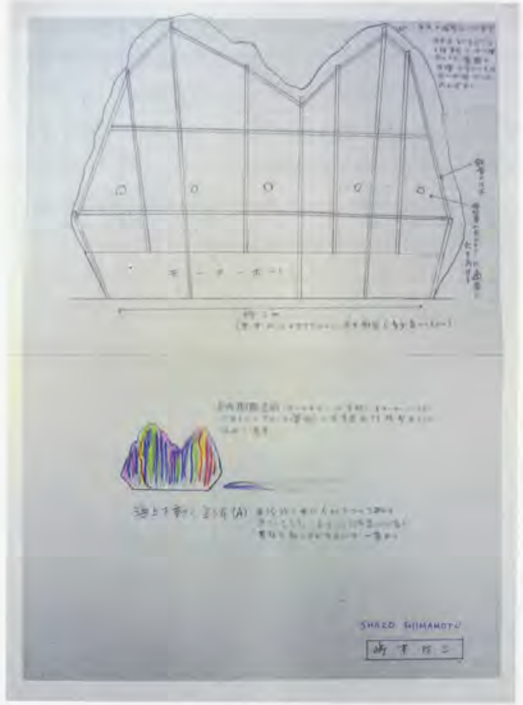

FIG. 42. **SHIMAMOTO Shōzō**, proposal for *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*), 1966. Graphite, ink, and colored pencil on paper, 38 × 27 cm. Collection of Caroline de Westenholz, courtesy Albert Vogel Archive, The Hague City Archives

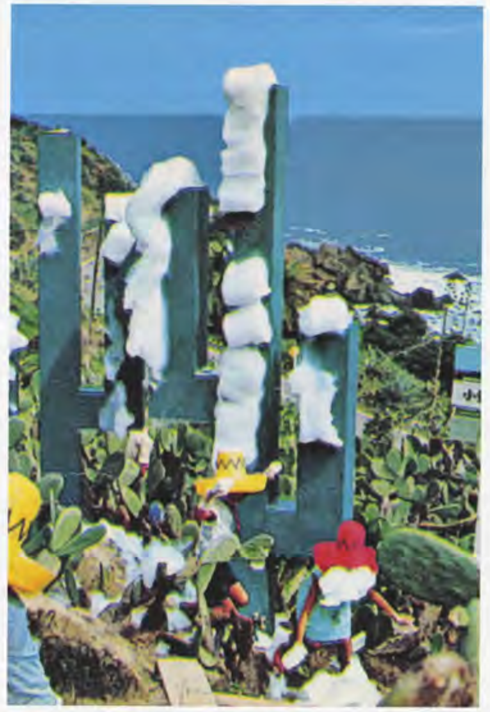

FIG. 43. **YOSHIDA Toshio**, *FOAM-Y (Bubble-Blowing Towers)*, 1968. Installation view: Cactus Herb Park, Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan

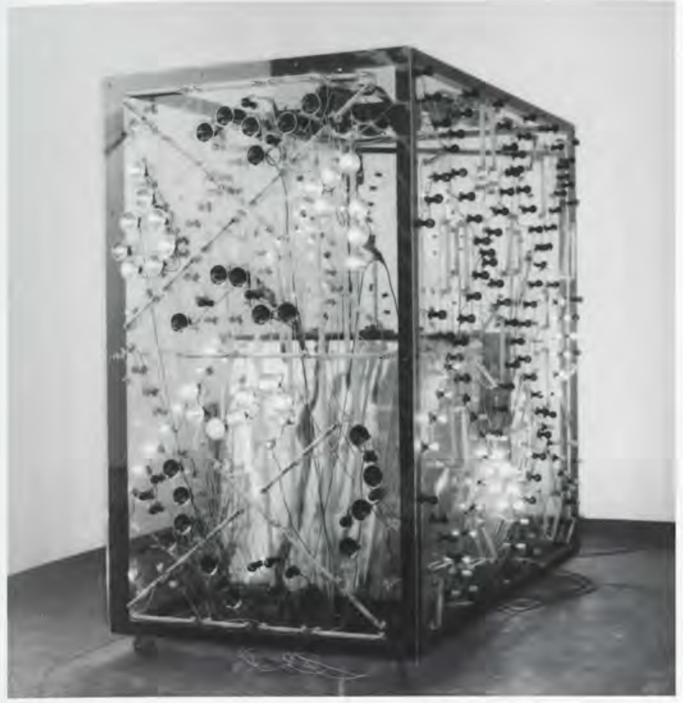

FIG. 44. **MUKAI Shūji**, *Signs and Light*, 1968. Installation view: *20th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, July 1–20, 1968

from the moment it was announced, Expo '70 was the subject of tremendous criticism from the Left, who saw the event as a large-scale promotion of Japan's administered society of rapid industrial growth. Some figures, such as intellectuals Haryū Ichirō and Taki Kōji, went even further in their critique, accusing the government of using Expo '70 "to distract the nation from the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty."[124] Seen from another perspective, however, this large-scale, populist event provided a useful if treacherous ground for experimentation, offering artists the possibility of undermining the fair's disciplining objectives from within.

As with *Zero on Sea*, many of the proposals submitted by Gutai artists in the end went unrealized. Much of what was suggested, however, consisted of environmental work, and frequently of a character that diverged from the Expo's technological showboating, instead using simple technologies to create aesthetic experiences and sites of interaction. With great attention to the physical relationships between viewer, object, and space, Imai Norio's drawing for "Floating Room" (ca. 1967–69, plate 122) delineates seven spherical *Tankurō* sculptures hanging from the ceiling of a room sparsely populated by four figures. Minimal in its intervention, the environment creates a contemplative atmosphere, a whiff of the future so faint that it provokes the viewer to stop and think. In a statement published at the time, Imai wrote,

> Information overload may be the consequence of indirectly experienced information. Still, in our everyday life, it not only makes us forget the true encounter but also buries us in the void of everyday life. It is no overstatement that this will inevitably result in utter dehumanization.[125]

This was the opposite of the flashing, colorful, cacophonic future proposed by Expo '70, a future of easy consumption and little reflection or intersubjective experience.

Like Imai's environment, Onoda Minoru's proposals were similarly pared down, dominated by a single intervention that aimed to induce a heightened self-consciousness and consciousness of space in the viewer. "Multiple Rotating Dome Room" (fig. 45), crowned with a multilayered roof made of patterned materials of different transparencies, is entirely empty, leaving the viewer to focus on his subtly changing surroundings and the human interactions taking place. In "Rotating Room," an escalator rises up through two rotating tunnels, one cylindrical and the other rectangular, creating an eerie sense of space in flux, of moving walls and dissolving floors. "Sound and Moving Pictures" (fig. 46) would perhaps have offered the most potential for provoking encounters with strangers, and for fun. This synaesthetic environment involved a light on one side of a room projected onto a light-sensitive screen that would transform shadow into sound and sound into shadow.

Ultimately, the allotted space could accommodate only one environmental piece. The work selected was that of Nasaka Senkichirō, and in itself was extremely simple: a tube of polished metal with a 10 cm diameter that meandered through the exhibition space, on which works of art were affixed for display. Some simple rules were followed, but the tube's itinerary was otherwise spontaneous and aesthetically responsive to the exhibition's rhythm and geometry; the tube bent at right angles, and it never exceeded human scale. Installed in the Midori Pavilion, it subtly restructured the exhibition space. Works were installed on the tube, framed by the tube, and echoed by the tube (figs. 47, 104). At irregular intervals, small holes pierced its joints, through which played a concrete sound piece at a very low level so that visitors would have to approach the pipe to investigate after noticing whispers from afar.[126]

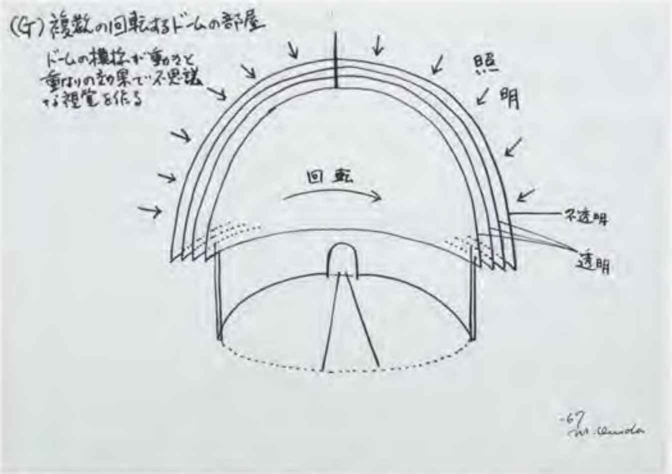

FIG. 45. **ONODA Minoru**, proposal for "Multiple Rotating Dome Room," Expo '70, 1967. Ink and graphite on paper, 19 × 27 cm. Private collection

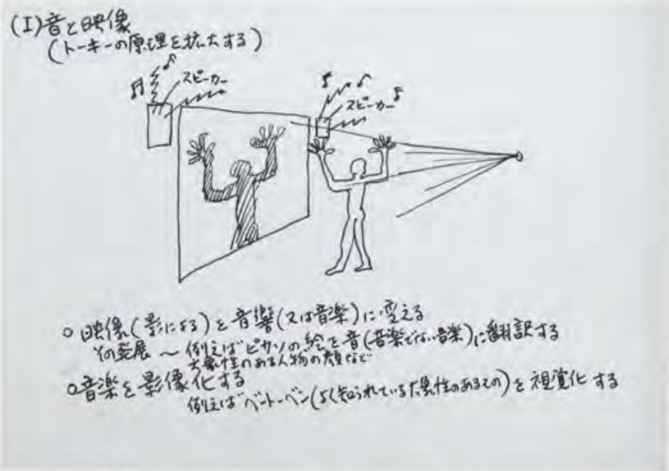
(I) 音と映像
(トーキーの原理を拡大する)
スピーカー
スピーカー
○映像（影による）を音響（又は音楽）に変える
その発展 〜 例えばピカソの絵を音（音楽でない音楽）に翻訳する
○音楽を影像化する
例えばベートーベン（よく知られている抽象性のあるもの）を視覚化する

FIG. 46. **ONODA Minoru**, proposal for "Sound and Moving Pictures," Expo '70, 1967. Ink and graphite on paper, 19 × 27 cm. Private collection

LEGACIES OF GUTAI

After Expo '70, Gutai entered a period of exhaustion. The fair, dominating the group's focus for several years, had drained its artistic and intellectual resources, and the disbursement of funds and the management of the Expo projects caused some internal dissent, prompting Motonaga, Shimamoto, and Murakami to leave. An additional blow occurred with the demolition of the Pinacotheca in April 1970 as part of an urban redevelopment project. The group relocated to a smaller and more conventional space, the Mini-Pinacotheca. With it came smaller, less ambitious works. A general sense of decline took hold.

On January 23, 1972, Yoshihara suffered a stroke while on the phone with the Dutch ambassador, discussing plans to stage a Gutai Sky Festival at Floriade, an outdoor flower and art festival in the Netherlands.[127] He passed away on February 4. A month later, on March 6, the group met one last time and voted to dissolve Gutai.

In the wake of the movement's disbanding, the former members, who had cultivated artistic rebellion in their work, tried to escape the constraints of themselves having become the establishment. They struck out on their own, and new challenges gave their work new vigor. They led new populist collectives, such as the Artists' Union, organized by Shimamoto Shōzō, and Bonkura!, led by Horio Sadaharu; they became instructors at high schools, art schools, and universities; they taught children; and they cultivated their own disciples. They continued to paint while also venturing afield: the creative experimentalism that made up their "Gutai DNA," as Imai Norio put it, took their post-Gutai work in many directions.

The 1979 exhibition *Jiro Yoshihara and Today's Aspects of the "Gutai"* at the Museum of Modern Art, Hyōgo, was the first museum show devoted to Gutai after its dissolution and as such served as an important moment of stocktaking for the group's ex-members.[128] Although it featured a modest retrospective of Yoshihara's work and seized the chance to historicize Gutai, the exhibition did not dwell on the past. Highlighting their "cultural aggressiveness" and the lingering importance of Gutai to the Kansai art scene, the exhibition featured almost exclusively new work, indicating fresh directions in painting as well as strong performance and conceptualist works. Matsutani Takesada showed elegant new graphite works, contributing two monochrome canvases covered in lustrous pencil that registered the passage of time and the movements of the body on its surface. Yoshida Minoru returned from an eight-year sojourn in New York to present *UFO's Window? Part 3 "The Muffler,"* a live performance. Imai presented *Performance by Videotape*, in which, as he videotaped himself, the tape on which his image was being recorded was being wrapped around him, creating a *mise en abyme* of material reality and its representation. Murakami returned to his conceptualist origins by presenting his 1974 *Water*, which featured the artist engaging in the ordinary activity of pouring water from one bowl to another whenever a spectator entered the gallery. Also highlighting a conceptualist bent, Tsubouchi Teruyuki departed from painting with his series *40* (1972), in which he declared all 40 kph speed limit signs within Japan as his works of art. Takasaki Motonao's 1978 *Collapse* appeared in the form of a photograph.

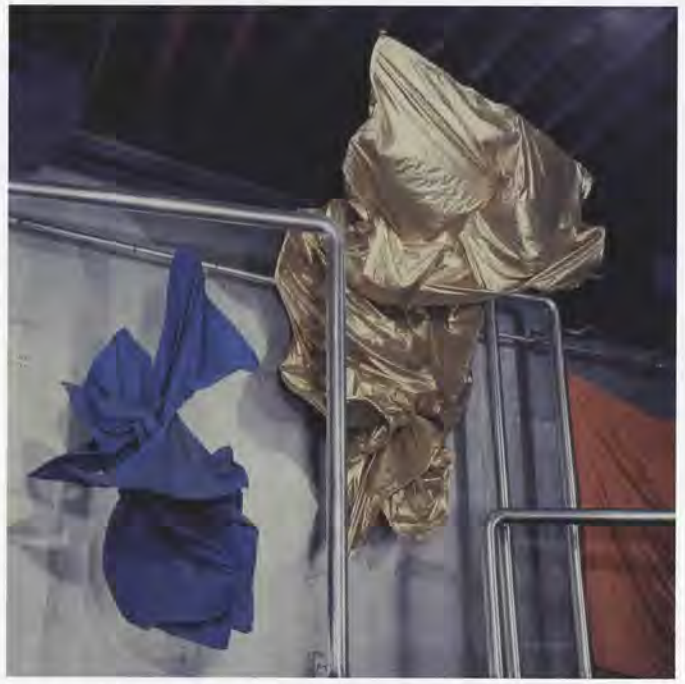

FIG. 47. **HORIO Sadaharu**, *Work*, 1970. Fabric, wire, and mixed media. Installation view: *Gutai Group Exhibition*, Midori Pavilion, Expo '70, Osaka, March 15–September 13, 1970. Installed on Nasaka Senkichirō's *Work* (1970)

Gutai's legacy in Japan is one of almost inexpressible importance. It not only formed the bedrock of the Kansai art scene; it was also foundational for postwar Japanese art overall, providing artists and art historians with "a restarting point of Japanese contemporary art."[129] An understanding of the collective's significance was articulated soon after it disbanded, with a one-two punch in the May 1972 issue of the art magazine *Bijutsu techō*, which featured the milestone "Chronology: Five Decades of Contemporary Art, 1916–1968" by musician-theorist Tone Yasunao and Bikyōtō artist Hikosaka Naoyoshi, and Hi Red Center artist Akasegawa Genpei's manga epic, "Great Battles of the World of *Geijutsu* in Japan: A Heroic Pictorial Album."[130] In both, Gutai is represented as a turning point. Indeed, in Tone and Hikosaka's chronology, the contemporary literally begins with Gutai, a place of honor that has endured in the historiography of Japanese contemporary art.[131]

Throughout its eighteen-year existence, Gutai consistently pursued freedom in its artistic expressions, theoretical writings, and pedagogy. In the context of the 1950s, their individualist rhetoric took an ethical stance against the totalitarian politics of the Second World War, seeking to build an individualist, democratic society from the ground up. In its early years, Gutai used the concept of *e*, or picturing, to liberate painting from its historical constraints, freeing it to embark on a sophisticated series of experiments in interactivity, matter, the individual, painting, and time and space to take audiences, materials, the psyche, and artistic expression beyond all boundaries. In the 1960s, with Japan's all-encompassing focus on rapid economic expansion, Gutai's emancipatory spirit took on a different valence, seeking to free society from the shackles of GNP-ism. In Phase Two Gutai, its artists confronted the cultural consequences of advanced capitalism by creating works that humanized technology, systems, and social space.

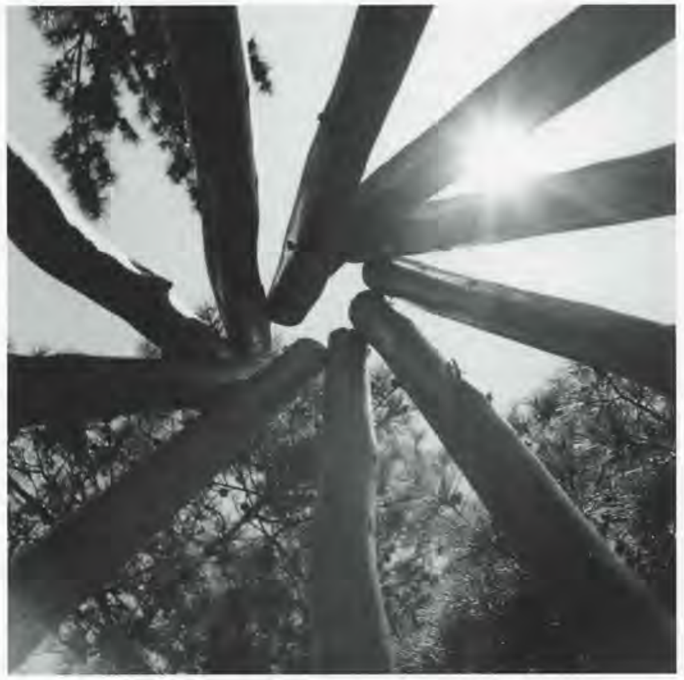

FIG. 48. **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, *Please Come In* (interior detail), 1955. Installation view: *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, July 25–August 6, 1955

From today's perspective, Gutai's artistic experiments appear prescient, engaged with issues that have become only more important with time, using artistic strategies that have now become common. Although now a part of history, Gutai poses challenges to us in the present day, artists, critics, curators, historians, and the general public alike, asking fundamental questions about democratic citizenship in an age of political apathy, education in an age of "teaching to the test," and capitalism in an age of material insatiability. The freedom that Gutai inspires us to pursue is to remember what it is like to create; to speak freely, to act freely, to live freely.

Please Come In.
Please push this button.
Please Walk Here.
Please Draw Freely.

NOTES

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Domenick Ammirati, Alexandra Munroe, and Reiko Tomii for their contributions to this essay. Domenick's gift with language and tough-love approach ensured that this essay was completed elegantly and on time. Reiko worked magic with her special brand of intellectual "talk therapy" to structure this essay and subtly reveal its theoretical objectives. I would also like to especially thank Director of Exhibition Design Melanie Taylor for teaching me how to express my ideas architecturally. My greatest thanks go to Alexandra, the commissioning curator of this exhibition. Her intellectual vision has been an inspiration to me since her historic *Scream Against the Sky* exhibition, which opened up the field of postwar Japanese art in the anglophone world. It has been an honor, a pleasure, and an education to work with her in this splendid playground.

1. Yoshihara Jirō, "On the International Art of a New Era: Dedicated to 'Osaka International Festival,'" *Gutai* 9 (1958), pp. 6–7.

2. Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai Gurūpu no 10 nen: Sono ichi" [10 years of the Gutai Group: Part one], *Bijutsu jānaru* 38 (March 1963), pp. 3–5; repr. in *Gutai shiryōshū: Dokyumento Gutai, 1954–1972/Document Gutai, 1954–1972*, trans. Moriguchi Madoka, Simon Scanes, and Shiraha Keiko (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1993), p. 324. There are several versions of this statement, probably Yoshihara's most famous.

3. Shiraga and Motonaga recall being accused of "publicity stunts" and "bourgeois play." Shiraga Kazuo, "Bōken no kiroku: Episōdo de tsuzuru Gutai gurūpu no jūninen 3" [Document of an adventure: Twelve years of the Gutai group, part 3], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 287 (September 1967); repr. in *Document Gutai*, p. 343. Motonaga Sadamasa, Osaki Shin'ichirō, and Yamamura Tokutarō, "Motonaga Sadamasa intabyū" [Motonaga Sadamasa interview], in *Document Gutai*, p. 394.

4. My periodization of Gutai departs from the tripartite convention established by the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History in *Gutai I*, *Gutai II*, and *Gutai III*, a series of three pivotal Gutai exhibitions that took place there in 1992–93. In this framework, early Gutai (1954–58) is defined on one end by the selection of the name "Gutai" and on the other by the encounter with Michel Tapié; middle Gutai (1959–65) ends with the publication of the last *Gutai* journal; and late Gutai (1965–72) terminates with the death of Yoshihara and the group's dissolution. With early and middle Gutai divided by Tapié's arrival, this periodization unfortunately produced a discourse of authenticity about early Gutai and a dismissal of their work after their "contamination." Late Gutai, meanwhile, has until now been rarely scrutinized. I have taken 1962 rather than 1965 as a dividing line, demarcating what I call Phase One and Phase Two, because the changes that took place after 1965 had their origins in that year's establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca.

Although the previous periodization became the norm in Gutai studies, the three-part division grew out of purely practical considerations. The museum did not have enough room to present Gutai in two sections, as they also wanted to show works from the years prior to Gutai's founding. For that reason, 1958 was chosen as a threshold year. Kawasaki Kōichi, former head curator of Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, telephone interview with the author, June 24, 2012.

5. Michael Lucken, "Total Unity in the Mirror of Art," in Asato Ikeda, Aya Louisa Macdonald, and Ming Tiampo, eds., *Art and War in Japan and Its Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 72–81.

6. Imai Norio, "Kannen to nichijō no aida," *Ōru Kansai* (June 1970), pp. 138–40; excerpted and trans. as "Between Concept and Everyday," this volume, p. 285.

7. The group's internationalism in context of more recent transnational perspectives is examined by Alexandra Munroe in her essay for this catalogue, "All the Landscapes: Gutai's World," pp. 21–43, and in my book *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

8. See Hirai Shōichi, "Prewar Kansai Cosmopolitanism and Postwar Gutai," this volume, pp. 243–47.

9. For a further account of Yoshihara's youth, in his own words, see Yoshihara, "Waga kokoro no jijoden" [Autobiography of my soul], *Kobe shinbun*, June 11, 1967; repr. in *Botsugo 20 nen Yoshihara Jirō ten/Jirō Yoshihara*, exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992), pp. 196–201.

10. Yoshihara, "Autobiography of My Soul," p. 200.

11. All wartime activities were expected to contribute to the nation, and art was no exception. A percentage of the profits from Kyūshitsu-kai's *Aviation Art Exhibition* were donated to the war effort.

12. Lucken, "Total Unity," pp. 72–81.

13. Yoshihara, "Autobiography of My Soul," p. 200.

14. Ishii Hakutei, *Bijutsu no ikusa* (Tokyo: Hōunsha, 1943).

15. Yoshihara, "Autobiography of My Soul," p. 200.

16. For more on Yoshihara's painting while in Sanda, please consult my *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 37–43.

17. Shiraga Kazuo, interview with the author, December 11, 1998, Ashiya; Motonaga Sadamasa, "Waga kokoro no jijoden" [Autobiography of my soul], *Kobe shinbun*, August 24, 2003; Uemae Chiyū, *Jigadō* [My painting road] (Kobe: Printed privately, 1985), pp. 52–58; Ukita Yōzō, telephone interview with Izumi Nakajima, May 2012; Nasaka Senkichirō, "Kinetikku āto no shikikan" [The kinetic art commander], in *Gutai: A New Perspective*, ed. Fujino Tadatoshi (Miyazaki, Japan: Kōmyaku-sha, 2011), p. 126; and Nagano Hiroko, Sekida Takashi, and Takasaki Motonao, *Chit-Chat* (Kōchi, Japan: Ajia Shobō, 1997), pp. 188–204. I am grateful to Izumi Nakajima for helping me research the war records of Gutai members.

18. Yoshihara, "Autobiography of My Soul," p. 201.

19. Yamazaki Tsuruko began studying with Yoshihara in 1947. Shimamoto met Yoshihara that same year.

20. On Japanese collectivism, see Reiko Tomii, "After the 'Descent to the Everyday': Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1964–1973," in *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, ed. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 44–75. For more on Yoshihara and collectivism, see Tomii, "An Experiment in Collectivism: Gutai's Prewar Origin and Postwar Evolution," this volume, pp. 248–53.

21. For more on the *Ashiya City Exhibition*, see *Ashiya shiten 1948–1997/ The History of Ashiya City Exhibition, 1948–1997*, exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1997).

22. For more on Genbi, see Alexandra Munroe, "*Circle*: Modernism and Tradition," in Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), pp. 125–37; and *Tsutaka Waichi to Genbi no sakkatachi: 1950-nendai no modanizumu* [Tsutaka Waichi and the artists of Genbi: 1950s modernism], exh. cat. (Kobe: Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, 1995).

23. The thirteen members of Genbi who became Gutai members are Hashigami Yoshiko, Kanayama Akira, Kinoshita Toshiko, Okada Hiroshi, Ōno Itoko, Sakamoto Masaya, Sekine Yoshio, Shiraga Kazuo, Sumi Yasuo, Tanaka Keizo, Uemae Chiyū, Yoshida Toshio, and Yoshihara Michio.

24. Yoshihara Jirō, "A Statement by Jirō Yoshihara: Leader of the Gutai," Martha Jackson Gallery press release, September 17, 1958, Archives of the New Gallery, Bennington College, Bennington, Vt.

25. For more on Zero-kai, see Alexandra Munroe, "*To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun*: The Gutai Group," in *Scream Against the Sky*, pp. 87–89; and Tatehata Akira, "The Eve of Gutai," trans. Reiko Tomii, in *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan* (Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1996), pp. 67–74.

26. Munroe, ibid., p. 89; and Reiko Tomii, "Shiraga Paints: Toward a 'Concrete' Discussion," in Tomii and Fergus McCaffrey, *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades*, exh. cat. (New York: McCaffrey Fine Art, 2009), p. 15.

27. Tomii, "Shiraga Paints," p. 15.

28. Munroe, "*To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun*," p. 89.

29. Maruyama was one of the first to critically analyze the rise of militarism in Japan. Maruyama Masao, "Chōkokkashugi no ronri to shinri" [The logic and psychology of ultranationalism], *Sekai* (May 1976); repr. as "Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism," in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, trans. and ed. Ivan Morris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 1–24.

30. Odagiri Hideo in Ara Masato et al., "Zadankai: Bungakusha no sekimu" [Roundtable: The writers' responsibility]; repr. in Usui Ysohimi, ed., *Sengo bungaku ronsō* [Controversies of postwar literature], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Banchō Shobō, 1972), pp. 65–67; excerpted and trans. in Victor Koschmann, "The Japan Communist Party and the Debate over Literary Strategy under the Allied Occupation of Japan," in *Legacies and Ambiguities: Postwar Fiction and Culture in West Germany and Japan*, eds. Ernestine Schlant and J. Thomas Rimer (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 180.

31. Shiraga Kazuo, "Kotai no kakuritsu," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956), p. 6; trans. as "The Establishment of the Individual," this volume, p. 279.

32. For a longer discussion of the subject, see Ming Tiampo, "'Create what has never been done before!' Historicising Gutai Discourses of Originality," *Third Text* 21, no. 6 (November 2007), pp. 689–706.

33. Children's art education as it developed after the end of World War II in liberal Japanese circles stressed the importance of *zōkei asobi*, artistic play unrestricted by theme, technique, or medium. Conceived as distinct from but important to the making of art works, *zōkei asobi* sought to teach freedom and personal expression as an ethical principle and challenged even the most fundamental principles of art. Yoko Hino, "Restriction and Individual Expression in the 'Play Activity/Zokei Asobi,'" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2003), pp. 19–26. *Zōkei asobi* was officially incorporated into the national curriculum in 1977.

34. *Kirin* changed publishers from the Japan Children's Poetry Institute to the Tokyo-based Riron-sha after the Ministry of Education began designating all required textbooks, making it difficult for teachers to choose *Kirin* as a teaching alternative and significantly reducing its market.

35. Kawasaki Kōichi, "Gutai: The Purity of the Early Period," in *La Biennale di Venezia: XLV Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte: Punti cardinali dell'arte*, exh. cat. (Venice: Marsilio, 1993), vol. 2, p. 519; Katō Mizuho, "Kirin to Gutai bijutsu" [Kirin and Gutai art], *Narihira* 14 (June 1995), pp. 2–4; Katō, ed., *Dobiten 1948–2000* [Children's art exhibition, 1948–2000] (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 2008); and Ukita Yōzō, Katō, and Kurashina Yūzō, *Kirin no ehon* [The picture books of Kirin] (Osaka: Association of Kirin, 2008).

36. Tanaka Atsuko, "*Kirin* kodomo bijutsu ten kara: Okāsama gata e" [From *Kirin* children's art exhibition: To mothers, 1956], *Kirin* 9, no. 3 (March 1956); trans. Reiko Tomii, in Ming Tiampo, ed., *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka 1954–1968*, exh. cat. (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia; New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2004), pp. 101–02.

37. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Itazura o shimashō," *Kirin* (February 1956), pp. 18–21; excerpted and trans. as "Let's Make Mischief!", this volume, pp. 276–77.

38. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Chikyū wa maruku nai," *Kirin* (December 1956), p. 36; excerpted and trans. as "The Earth Is Not Round," this volume, pp. 278–79.

39. Shiraga, "The Establishment of the Individual," pp. 279–80.

40. Segi Shin'ichi, "Kotenhyō: Gutai ten" [Reviews of solo shows: Gutai exhibition], *Mizue*, no. 605 (December 1955), p. 66; repr. in *Gutai shiryōshū: Dokyumento Gutai, 1954–1972/Document Gutai*, p. 77.

41. Murai Masanari, "Kansai bijutsuka no kōsei," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 6, no. 12 (December 1955), pp. 264–67; repr. in *Document Gutai*, pp. 79, 81; trans. as "Attack of the Kansai Artists," in Bruce Altshuler, *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions That Made Art History, 1863–1959* (New York: Phaidon, 2008), pp. 348–49.

42. Ibid.

43. For further analysis of Yamashita's *The Tale of Akebono Village*, see Justin Jesty, "Art and Activism in Postwar Japan: The Culture of Grassroots Democracy between 1945 and the Early 1960s" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2009), pp. 74–83.

44. Motonaga, Osaki, and Yamamura, "Motonaga Sadamasa intabyū," p. 394.

45. Yamazaki Tsuruko, "Tokyo no Gutai-jin," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956), p. 32; trans. by Reiko Tomii and excerpted as "Gutai Artists in Tokyo," in Munroe, *Scream Against the Sky*, p. 373.

46. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Manbo to kaiga" [The mambo and painting], *Gutai* 3 (October 1955), p. 22.

47. See Reiko Tomii, "Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind," in *Murakami Saburo: 70-nendai o chūshin ni/Murakami Saburō: Through the '70s*, exh. cat. (Osaka: ArtCourt Gallery, 2012). Tomii's new translation of *e* as "picture" and "picturing" rather than as "painting" emerged out of a long discussion at a Gutai workshop hosted coorganized by Harvard University and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in fall 2011. My sincere thanks go to Yukio Lippit for his role in bringing this important event to fruition. This translation marks a significant theoretical step forward in a decadelong debate that has been central to Gutai studies both in Japan and abroad. Curator Yamamoto Atsuo first identified *e* as a crucial theoretical concept in his 2002 essay "Space, Time, Stage, Painting," trans. Ming Tiampo, in *Gutai: Moments de destruction, moments de beauté/Gutai: Moments of Destruction, Moments of Beauty*, ed. Florence de Mèredieu (Paris: Blusson, 2002), p. 31.

48. Murakami Saburō, "Gutai to Gutai-go: Sono 2, Murakami Saburō intabyū"/ "Gutai and After Gutai: No. 2, Guest Saburō Murakami," *Jam & Butter*, no. 17 (May 1, 1973), p. 22; quoted in Tomii, "Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind."

49. For a longer, more detailed discussion of *e* and *kaiga*, see my *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 51–54.

50. *Kaiga* first appeared by itself to mean *painting* in 1882 at *Dai ikkai naikoku kaiga kyōshinkai* (First domestic painting competitive exhibition).

51. Satō Dōshin, "'Nihon bijutsu' tanjō: Kindai Nihon no 'kotoba' to senryaku" [The birth of "Japanese art": Modern Japan's words and strategies] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1996), p. 18.

52. Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Art News* 57, no. 6 (October 1958), pp. 24–26, 55–57; repr. in Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 7.

53. Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai bijutsu sengen," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), pp. 202–04; trans. as "Gutai Art Manifesto," this volume, pp. 18–19.

54. Yoshihara Jirō, "Butai o tsukau Gutai bijutsu" [Gutai art on the stage], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

55. Yoshihara Jirō, "Hakkan ni saishite"/"For Publishing This Pamphlet," pp. 1, 32.

56. This is the central polemic of my book *Decentering Modernism*.

57. Alexandra Munroe, "Avant-garde Art in Postwar Japan: The Culture and Politics of Radical Critique 1951–1970" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2004).

58. Shimamoto, "Manbo to kaiga," p. 22.

59. For a longer discussion of how the gift operates in Gutai, see my discussion of *nengajo* New Year's cards in *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 55–63.

60. Yoshihara, "Gutai Art Manifesto," p. 18.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Jean Dubuffet, "L'auteur répond à quelques objections," in *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants*, vol. 2, ed. Hubert Damisch (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), pp. 61–62; originally published in the catalogue for Dubuffet's exhibition *Mirobolus, Macadam & Cie: Hautes* pâtes (Paris: Galerie René Drouin, 1946).

64. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Efude shokei ron" [Killing the paintbrush], *Gutai* 6 (April 1957), unpaginated.

65. Mika Yoshitake, "Breaking Through: Shōzō Shimamoto and the Aesthetic of *Dakai*," in Michael Darling, ed., *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949–78* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 2009), p. 104. A very special thank you to Mika Yoshitake.

66. For a different translation, see Shiraga, "The Establishment of the Individual," p. 279.

67. These essays by Shiraga include "Kōi koso" [Action only], *Gutai* 3 (October 1955), unpaginated; "Kotai no kakuritsu"; "Shishitsu ni tsuite" [On our dispositions], *Gutai* 5 (October 1956), unpaginated; and "Kankaku no ryōkai" [The realm of the senses], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

68. Shiraga, "Shishitsu ni tsuite."

69. Alexandra Munroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2009).

70. See Alexandra Munroe, "*To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun*" and "*Circle*: Modernism and Tradition," pp. 83–137, and Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

71. Shiraga believed himself to be a reincarnation of the Tang Dynasty Buddhist "mad monk" calligrapher Huaisu, known for calligraphy taken to the point of pure bodily expression. Interview with the author, December 1998, Ashiya.

72. Traditional Japanese media—the materials of *nihonga* and calligraphy—are sumi ink and mineral pigments on paper or silk.

73. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Ichi-mai no nunokire demo geijutsu sakuhin ka," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956); excerpted and trans. as "Can a Piece of Cloth Be a Work of Art?", this volume, pp. 280–81.

74. Motonaga Sadamasa, "Gutai-ten kanshō no tebiki" [A guide to the Gutai Art Exhibition], exh. brochure, *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1955; trans. Christopher Stephens in Bruce Altshuler, *Salon to Biennial* (London: Phaidon, 2008), pp. 346–48.

75. Tanaka Atsuko, interview with the artist, *Asahi shinbun*, evening edition, November 24, 1955.

76. Tanaka's work is discussed in depth in Katō Mizuho, "Abstract Space in Concrete Terms: Reconsidering Gutai Painting," this volume, pp. 254–58.

77. Murakami Saburō, "Gutai bijutsu ni tsuite" [On Gutai art], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

78. Reiko Tomii coined this term in her essay "Shiraga Paints." This represents a major step forward in theorizing Gutai performance, which was a subject of major debate concerning the question of "action vs. painting" in Gutai in the late 1980s. See Katō, "Abstract Space in Concrete Terms," for a fuller explanation.

79. Kanayama Akira, interview with the author, Vancouver, January 20, 2005.

80. Yoshihara Michio, "Waku no nai ongaku" [Frameless music], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

81. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Hajime mo owari mo nai ongaku" [Music without start or end], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

82. Teraoka Masami, interview with the author, April 3, 2011, Honolulu.

83. Yoshihara Jirō, "Sakuhin 7: Futatsu no kūkan" [Work 7: Two spaces], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

84. Yamazaki Tsuruko, "Sakuhin 2: Hikari no firumu" [Work 2: Film of lights], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated.

85. Murakami, "Gutai bijutsu ni tsuite."

86. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Buttai no dakai" [Material destruction], *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated. This translation from Mika Yoshitake, "Breaking Through," p. 104.

87. J. J. Leveque, "Gutai," *Arts*, December 8, 1965.

88. Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 277.

89. Economic Planning Agency, *New Long-Range Economic Plan of Japan*, pp. 8–10, 85–89; repr. in Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume 2, 1600–2000*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 1103–05.

90. Quoted in Andrew Gordon, "Managing the Japanese Household: The New Life Movement in Postwar Japan," *Social Politics* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1997), p. 247.

91. For a detailed treatment of these subjects, see *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 121–45.

92. For more on the Gutai Pinacotheca, see ibid., pp. 122–27.

93. For more on the connection between Kaprow and Gutai, see Judith Rodenbeck, "Communication Malfunction: Happenings and Gutai," this volume, pp. 265–69.

94. Akane Kazuo, "Nuru 1965 kokusai ten to Gutai" [*Nul 1965* international exhibition and Gutai], *Gendai bijutsu*, no. 6 (August 1965), p. 49.

95. Yoshimoto Takaaki, "The End of a Fictitious System," trans. Andrew Gordon, in de Bary, Gluck, and Tiedemann, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, p. 1099.

96. Shimamoto Shōzō, "Motto yaku ni tatanai koto o kangaeyō (3)," *Kirin* (April 1963), pp. 18–19; excerpted and trans. as "Let's Think More about Useless Things, part 3," in this volume, pp. 278–79.

97. Guy Debord, *La société du spectacle* (Paris: Éditions Buche-Chastel, 1967), Thèse 1, unpaginated.

98. Imai, "Between Concept and Everyday," p. 285.

99. Kikunami Jōji, "Tekunorojī ga semaru mono," in "Ningen to tekunorojī" [Humankind and technology], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 313 (May 1969), p. 127; excerpted and trans. as "What Technology Demands," this volume, pp. 283–84.

100. These artists were Yoshihara Jirō, Imai Norio, Imanaka Kumiko, Kikunami Jōji, Sakamoto Masaya, Nasaka Senkichirō, Yoshida Toshio, and Yoshida Minoru.

101. Imai Norio, telephone interview with the author, May 21, 2012. Tanku Tankurō, first appearing in 1934, was one of the most famous manga characters of his time. For an English translation of the comic, see Gajo Sakamoto, *Tank Tankurō: Prewar Works 1934–1935* (Tokyo: Presspop, 2011).

102. Kikunami, "What Technology Demands," p. 283.

103. Sawaragi Noi, *Sensō to banpaku/World Wars and World Fairs* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 2005), p. 69; and Thomas Havens, *Radicals and Realists in the Japanese Nonverbal Arts: The Avant-Garde Rejection of Modernism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), p. 207.

104. Judith Rodenbeck, "In This Issue: Not Your Daddy's Servo," *Art Journal* 67, no. 3 (Fall 2008), p. 5. Rodenbeck refers in particular to the 1968 *Cybernetic Serendipity* exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, as well as the second-generation discourse of cybernetics propounded by Gregory Bateson, Francisco Varela, Humberto Maturana, Gordon Pask, and others in the 1960s.

105. Nasaka Yūko, telephone interview with the author, February 21, 2012.

106. Matsutani Takesada, conversations with the author, 2011–12.

107. Yoshida Minoru, "EP3: Dai-3 chikyū seiryoku," *Bijutsu techō*, no. 313, p. 126; excerpted and trans. as "EP3: The Third Earth Power," this volume, p. 284.

108. Bert Winther-Tamaki argues that Okamoto's *Tower of the Sun* works to subvert Isozaki Arata's Festival Plaza in his "To Put on a Big Face: The Globalist Stance of Okamoto Tarō's *Tower of the Sun* for the Japan World Exposition," *Josai Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 23, guest ed. Midori Yoshimoto (December 2011), pp. 81–101.

109. Kanno Seiko, unpublished document, 1988. Quoted in Katō Mizuho, "Seiko Kanno: Between Poetry, Painting, Music, and . . . ," trans. Simon Scanes, in *Seiko Kanno: A Retrospective*, exh. cat. (Ashiya and Miyagi: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History and The Miyagi Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 6, 18.

110. Jack Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (September 1968), pp. 30–35.

111. This section on Kanno is indebted to the excellent scholarship in Katō, "Seiko Kanno," pp. 6–29.

112. Wada Kōichi, "The Painting of Seiko Kanno: The Interval between Composition and Feeling," in *Seiko Kanno: A Retrospective*, p. 106.

113. Takasaki Motonao, interview with the author, Kōchi, Japan, July 9, 2010.

114. Onoda Isa, interview with the author, Himeji, Japan, February 18, 2012. Onoda also refers to this obsession in his essay "Hanshoku kaiga," *Himeji bijutsu*, no. 1 (December 1961); excerpted and trans. as "On Breeding Painting," this volume, p. 283.

115. Onoda, "On Breeding Painting," p. 283.

116. Imai, "Between Concept and Everyday," p. 285.

117. Mukai Shūji, telephone interview with the author, May 20, 2012.

118. Enbairamento no Kai, "Kūkan kara kankyō e ten shushi" [The concept of the exhibition *From Space to Environment*], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 275, special issue (November 1966), p. 118; quoted in Midori Yoshimoto, "Limitless World: Gutai's Reinvention in Environment Art and Intermedia," this volume, p. 261.

119. For images and more discussion of this exhibition, see Midori Yoshimoto, "From Space to Environment: The Origins of *Kankyō* and the Emergence of Intermedia Art in Japan," *Art Journal* 67, no. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 24–45, and her "Limitless World," pp. 259–64.

120. "Beeldende Kunst: Een doodvermoeiende reis" [Visual arts: A totally exhausting trip], *Haagspost*, September 25, 1965.

121. "Introduction," *Forum* 20, no. 3 (June 1967), unpaginated.

122. Ibid.

123. For a fuller discussion of Gutai in Expo '70, please consult *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 161–69.

124. Taki Kōji, quoted and trans. in Midori Yoshimoto, "Expo '70 and Japanese Art: Dissonant Voices: An Introduction and Commentary," *Josai Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 23 (December 2011), p. 3.

125. Imai, "Between Concept and Everyday," p. 285.

126. Previous accounts have reported that a concrete sound piece by Yoshihara Michio was played through Nasaka's pipe, but Nasaka recalls that it was a piece that he had created by playing Beethoven backwards. Interview with the author, Ibaraki, Japan, February 4, 2012.

127. According to Imai Norio, the artists had already prepared sketches for the Sky Festival at Floriade. Interview with the author, June 10, 2012.

128. *Yoshihara Jirō to Gutai no sono go/Jiro Yoshihara and Today's Aspects of the "Gutai,"* exh. cat. (Kobe: Museum of Modern Art, Hyōgo, 1979). This museum is now the Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art.

129. Nishihara Min and Miki Akiko, eds., *Gutai 1955–56: Nihon gendai bijutsu no risutāto chiten/The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point of Japanese Contemporary Art* (Tokyo: Penrose Institute, 1993).

130. For more on Tone and Hikosaka's "Chronology," see Reiko Tomii, "Historicizing 'Contemporary Art': Some Discursive Practices in *Gendai Bijutsu* in Japan," *Positions* 12, no. 3 (2004), pp. 626–29. For more on Akasegawa's epic, see Tomii, "*Geijutsu* on Their Minds: Memorable Words on Anti-Art," in Charles Merewether and Rika Iezumi Hiro, eds. *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), pp. 44–49.

131. Of numerous other sources giving Gutai pride of place in Japanese contemporary art, perhaps the most influential have been Chiba Shigeo's *Gendai bijutsu itsudatsushi 1945–1985* [A history of deviation in contemporary art, 1945–1985] (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1986), and *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, organized by the Yokohama Museum of Art in 1994 and traveling to the Guggenheim Museum SoHo and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1994–95.

gutai

splendid playground

MING TIAMPO ALEXANDRA MUNROE

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GUGGENHEIM

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Gutai: Splendid Playground
Organized by Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe

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Notes to the Reader:
Japanese names are written according to Japanese convention, with surname first, followed by given name. Exceptions were made for individuals living or working abroad.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations by the author. Author's translations from *Gutai* journal occasionally differ from those in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010).

Frontispiece: Yoshihara Jirō and Gutai members at *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, 1956. Top row, from left: Tanaka Atsuko, Murakami Saburō, Yamazaki Tsuruko; middle row, from left: Mizuguchi Kyōichi, Kanayama Akira, Shimamoto Shōzō; bottom row, from left: Yoshihara Jirō, Motonaga Sadamasa, and Horii Nichiei

Endpapers, front: detail of model for Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)* (1956/2013) for *Gutai: Splendid Playground*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011; back: Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival*, 1960, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 19–24, 1960

具体 gutai

play

an uninhibited act

Uninhibited by ideology, medium, or social convention, Gutai artists built a postwar world that put unbridled creativity and independence of thought above all else. Against the backdrop of the total unity imposed under military rule during World War II, Gutai stressed the development of the self, originality, and creativity as existential issues. For Gutai, play was a vehicle for democratic capacity building, a means of encouraging audiences to think and act freely.

Children in particular were viewed as the critical foundation of a future free from totalitarianism and the manipulations of mass psychology; thus, unlike the Surrealists and Cobra, who looked to children's art for keys to understanding human creativity, Gutai artists tried to nurture children's creative abilities as a way of teaching them to think and act for themselves. As a result, members of the group were highly involved with art education on multiple levels, teaching art to children, organizing an annual children's art exhibition (fig. 25), and contributing regularly to *Kirin*, a children's poetry magazine (plates 2–4). Of all of the venues in which they published their writing, Gutai artists conveyed their ethical positions most clearly in *Kirin*, which was written in simple prose for a general audience of children, parents, and teachers. Shiraga Kazuo wrote about art as existential trace in "The Baby and Milk" (1956), Murakami Saburō wrote about art as a space of freedom in "Speed Violation" (1961), and Yamazaki Tsuruko wrote about the fun of active challenges rather than passive pursuits in "Extremely Interesting" (1956).[1] In "To Mothers, 1956" (plate 4), Tanaka Atsuko at once addressed Gutai's conceptual rethinking of the boundaries of art and advocated a child-centered approach to parenting. Praising her third-grade niece for tying together some bricks—creating in her words, a work "with no aesthetic consideration"—she encouraged parents to raise children "without pressure and constraint," allowing them to follow their impulses without being subjected to adult notions of art or beauty.[2]

To demonstrate that the "mischief" they promoted in their articles was appropriate to adults as well as to children, Gutai artists also published images of their own art in *Kirin*, often on the journal's cover: Shiraga's curious *Lens* (ca. 1956, plate 3), for example, appeared there in 1956. In "Let's Make Mischief!" Shimamoto Shōzō sought to inspire children to productive tomfoolery using both descriptions and photographs of works from the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition* (1955). The paintings by Motonaga Sadamasa that appeared in *Kirin* took a different tack, employing a clear, simple visual vocabulary like that of children's art (plates 5–7).

Gutai's commitment to building the foundation of a strong democracy through play was not limited to children, however. In particular, the 1955 *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*[3] and the 1956 *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition* were crucial sites of articulation for the important connections between play, interactivity, and the development of the individual. Staged in a park along the Ashiya River, these exhibitions were, like *Kirin*, designed to engage a general audience. Passive spectatorship and contemplation were shoved aside for ebullient romping in the sunshine, with the artworks serving as invitations to enter, walk around, touch, and poke as well as reflect, just as the artist had in the work's creation.

A decade later, in a gesture of admiration for their Japanese contemporaries, the Nul group, from the Netherlands, invited Gutai to participate in a key exhibition in Amsterdam, *Nul 1965*—this despite the fact that Gutai's focus on play as a source of liberation philosophically distinguished their interactive works from the installations of the Nul group. Gutai's contributions included Yoshihara Jirō's eloquent *Please Draw Freely* (1956, plate 1), a signboard with markers that invited adults and children alike to shed their inhibitions and express themselves, transforming viewers into producers and fostering creativity in ordinary people. Shimamoto encouraged "mischief" in exhibitiongoers with *Please Walk on Here* (1956, plate 9), which required them to step on the piece in order to experience its composition of variously firm and wobbly boards. The work embodied his views on interactivity: "What I consider avant-garde is the involvement of ordinary people in the production of a work of art."[4] Yamazaki Tsuruko's *Work (Red Cube)* (1956, plate 13) invited viewers to enter it, soak in the direct experience of color it allowed, and enact a kind of shadow puppetry for viewers outside.

In the 1960s, direct human relationships became another central concern for Gutai as a site for resistance against the growing alienation of contemporary life in the era of the Japanese "economic miracle." *Gutai Card Box* (1962, plate 14) was a vending machine for art that held an actual person inside it, distributing original works in exchange for donations to a children's charity. A gift for a gift, this noncommercial interaction posed as a commercial exchange, reminding viewers of the enduring pleasure of human relationships in a capitalist economy.

MING TIAMPO

NOTES

[1] For translations of these and selected other texts from *Kirin*, please refer to Artists' Writings, this volume, pp. 276–79.

[2] Tanaka Atsuko, "From *Kirin* Children's Art Exhibition: To Mothers, 1956," trans. Reiko Tomii, in Ming Tiampo, ed., *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka 1954–1968*, exh. cat. (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia; New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2004), p. 101. Originally published as Tanaka, "*Kirin* kodomo bijutsu ten kara: Okāsama gata e," *Kirin* 9, no. 3 (March 1956).

[3] This was not, strictly speaking, a Gutai exhibition.

[4] Shimamoto Shōzō, "The Mambo and Painting," in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010), p. 19. Originally published as "Mambo to kaiga," *Gutai* 3 (October 1955), unpaginated.

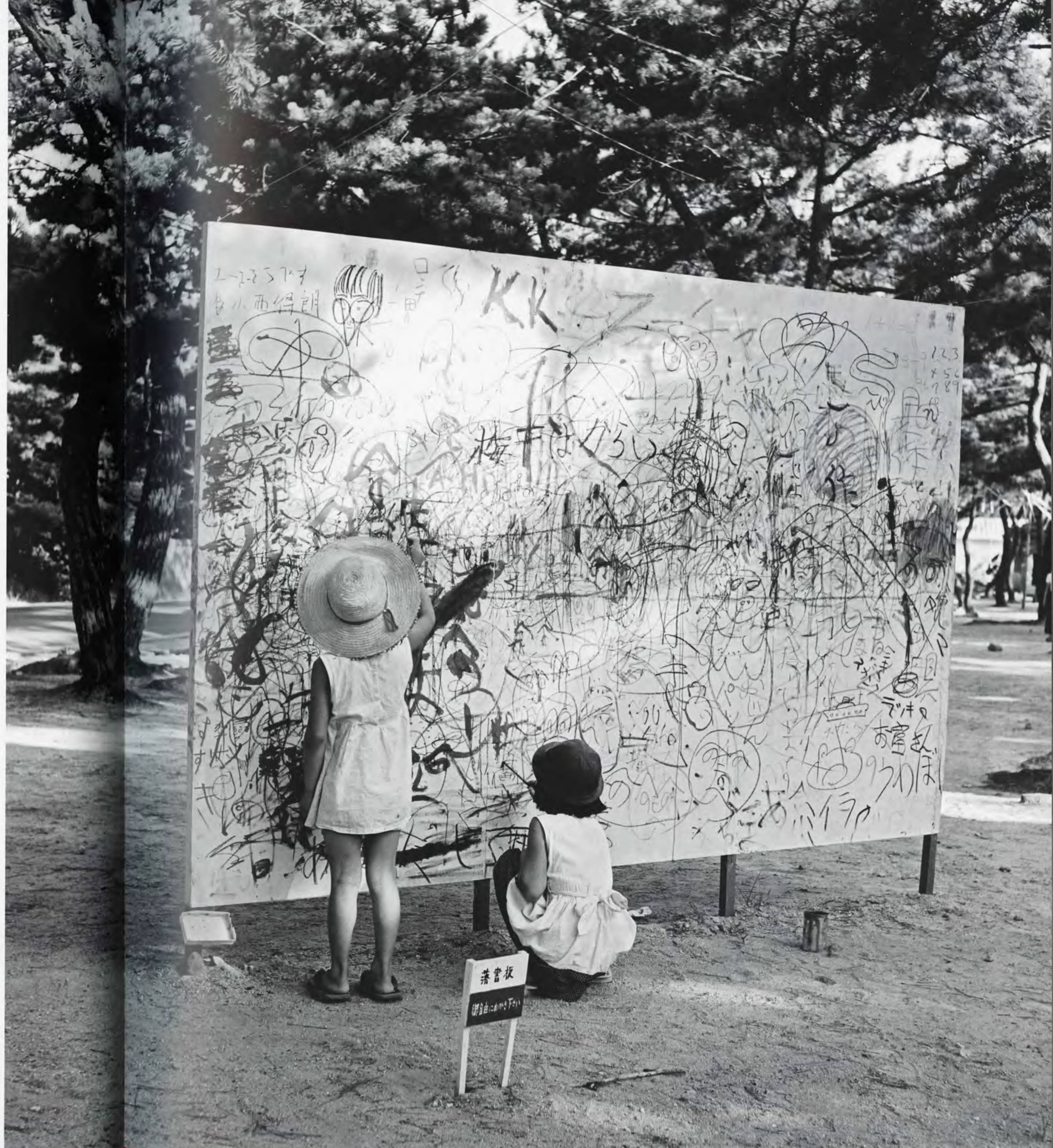
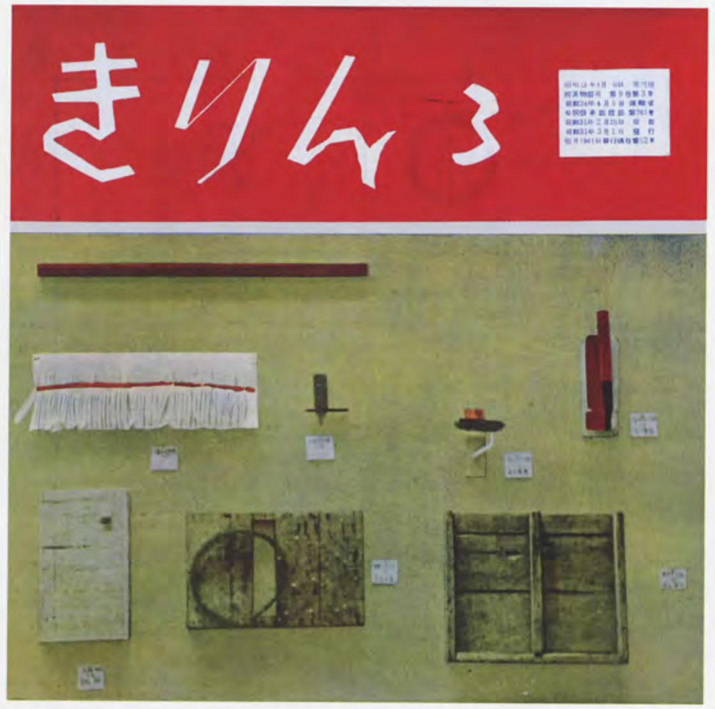
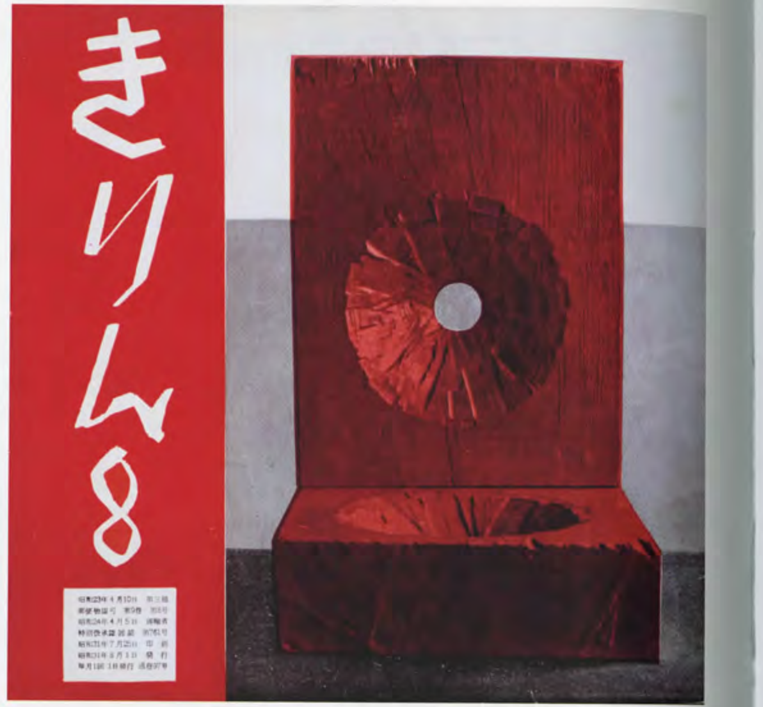


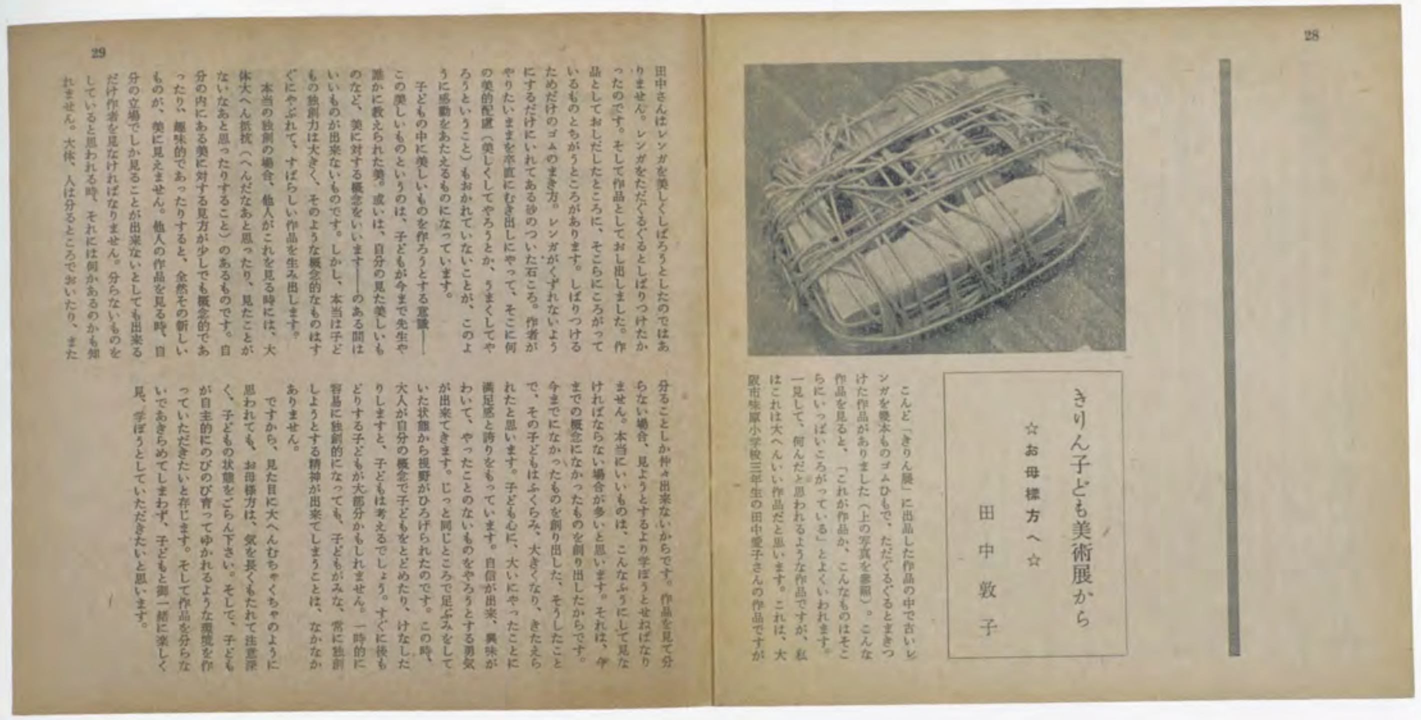
PLATE 1. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Please Draw Freely*, 1956. Paint and marker on wood, approximately 200 × 450 × 3 cm. Installation view: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, July 27–August 5, 1956

Visitors to the exhibition were invited to create a collective artwork on a blank board.

kirin magazine







28

きりん子ども美術展から

☆お母様方へ☆

田中敦子

こんど「きりん展」に出品した作品の中で古いレンガを幾本ものゴムひもで、ただぐるぐるとまきつけた作品がありました（上の写真を参照）。こんな作品を見ると、「これが作品か、こんなものはそこらにいっぱいころがっている」とよくいわれます。一見して、何んだと思われるような作品ですが、私はこれは大へんいい作品だと思います。これは、大阪市味原小学校三年生の田中愛子さんの作品ですが

29

田中さんはレンガを美しくしばろうとしたのではありません。レンガをただぐるぐるとしばりつけたかったのです。そして作品としておし出しました。作品としておしだしたところに、そこらにころがっているものとちがうところがあります。しばりつけるためだけのゴムのまき方。レンガがくずれないようにするだけにいれてある砂のついた石ころ。作者がやりたいままを卒直にむき出しにやって、そこに何の美的配慮（美しくしてやろうとか、うまくしてやろうということ）もおかれていないことが、このように感動をあたえるものになっています。

子どもの中に美しいものを作ろうとする意識——この美しいものというのは、子どもが今まで先生や誰かに教えられた美。或いは、自分の見た美しいものなど、美に対する概念をいいます——のある間はいいものが出来ないものです。しかし、本当は子どもの独創力は大きく、そのような概念的なものはすぐにやぶれて、すばらしい作品を生み出します。

本当の独創の場合、他人がこれを見る時には、大体大へん抵抗（へんだなあと思ったり、見たことがないなあと思ったりすること）のあるものです。自分の内にある美に対する見方が少しでも概念的であったり、趣味的であったりすると、全然その新しいものが、美に見えません。他人の作品を見る時、自分の立場でしか見ることが出来ないとしても出来るだけ作者を見なければなりません。分らないものをしていると思われる時、それには何かあるのかも知れません。大体、人は分るところでおいたり、また分ることとしか仲々出来ないからです。作品を見て分らない場合、見ようとするより学ぼうとせねばなりません。本当にいいものは、こんなふうにして見なければならない場合が多いと思います。それは、今までの概念になかったものを創り出したからです。今までになかったものを創り出した、そうしたことで、その子どもはふくらみ、大きくなり、きたえられたと思います。子ども心に、大いにやったことに満足感と誇りをもっています。自信が出来、興味がわいて、やったことのないものをやろうとする勇気が出来てきます。じっと同じところで足ぶみをしていた状態から視野がひろげられたのです。この時、大人が自分の概念で子どもをとどめたり、けなしたりしますと、子どもは考えるでしょう。すぐに後もどりする子どもが大部分かもしれません。一時的に容易に独創的になっても、子どもがみな、常に独創しようとする精神が出来てしまうことは、なかなかありません。

ですから、見た目に大へんむちゃくちゃのように思われても、お母様方は、気を長くもたれて注意深く、子どもの状態をごらん下さい。そして、子どもが自主的にのびのび育ってゆかれるような環境を作っていただきたいと存じます。そして作品を分らないであきらめてしまわず、子どもと御一緒に楽しく見、学ぼうとしていただきたいと思います。

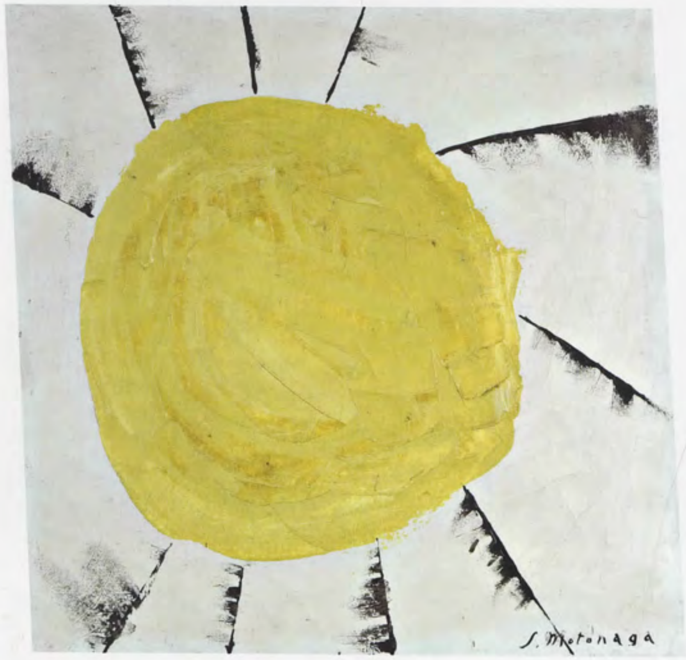
Kirin (Giraffe) was a children's poetry and art magazine founded in 1948 by leading Kansai intellectuals and managed by Ukita Yōzō, a founding member of Gutai. *Kirin* became an important forum for Gutai artists, who believed children's unbridled creativity could be the means by which freedom of thought and action could be developed in a new, postwar generation. Until a change in management in the early 1960s, members of the collective contributed cover art, illustrations, and essays promoting experimentation and freedom from societal strictures. Essays on children's art were also included in the *Gutai* journal, including a special feature on the subject in the second issue. This interest in children's art went hand in hand with the pursuit of originality that Yoshihara championed.

Unless otherwise noted, the journals are printed matter, 17.6 × 17.6 cm, and drawn from a private collection.

PLATE 2. *Kirin* 9, no. 3 (March 1956). Cover: installation view of *Kirin* exhibition, Osaka City Museum of Art, September 12–18, 1955. Photo: Shiraga Kazuo

PLATE 3. *Kirin* 9, no. 8 (August 1956). Cover: installation view of Shiraga Kazuo, *Lens*, ca. 1956, *Shinkō Independent Exhibition*, Shinkō Newspaper Building, Kobe, May 1–8, 1956

PLATE 4. Interior spread from *Kirin* 9, no. 3. Tanaka Atsuko's essay "From *Kirin* Children's Art Exhibition: To Mothers, 1956"



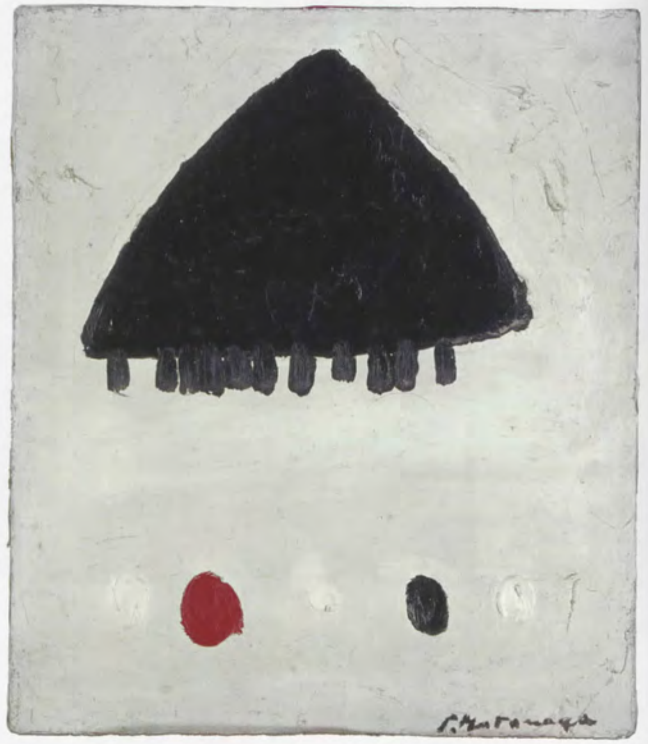


PLATE 5. **MOTONAGA Sadamasa**, *Work*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 44.8 × 45.1 cm, irregular.
Collection of Barbara Bertozzi Castelli, New York

PLATE 6. **MOTONAGA Sadamasa**, *Work*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 53 × 45.3 cm.
Collection of Motonaga Nakatsuji Etsuko, Japan

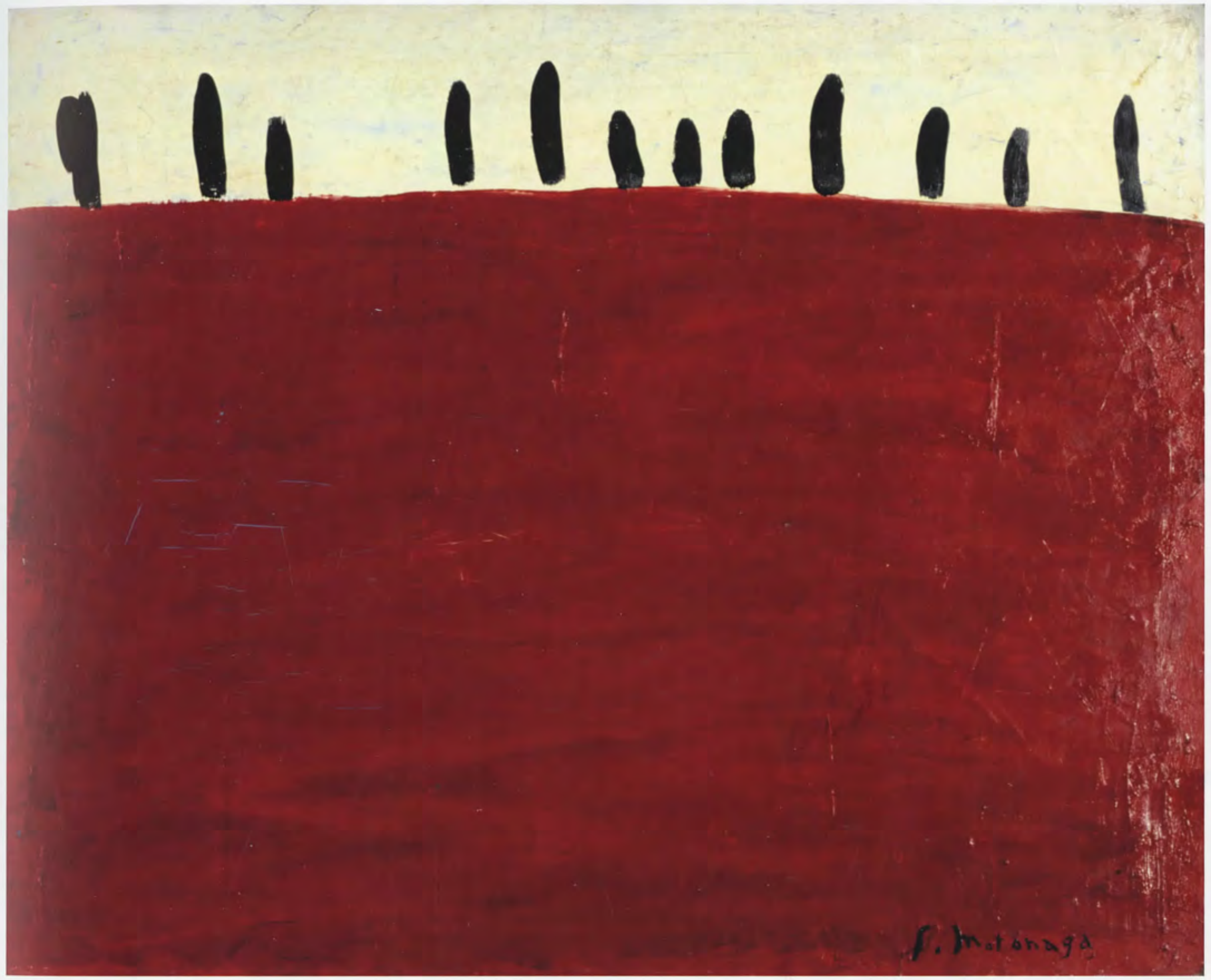
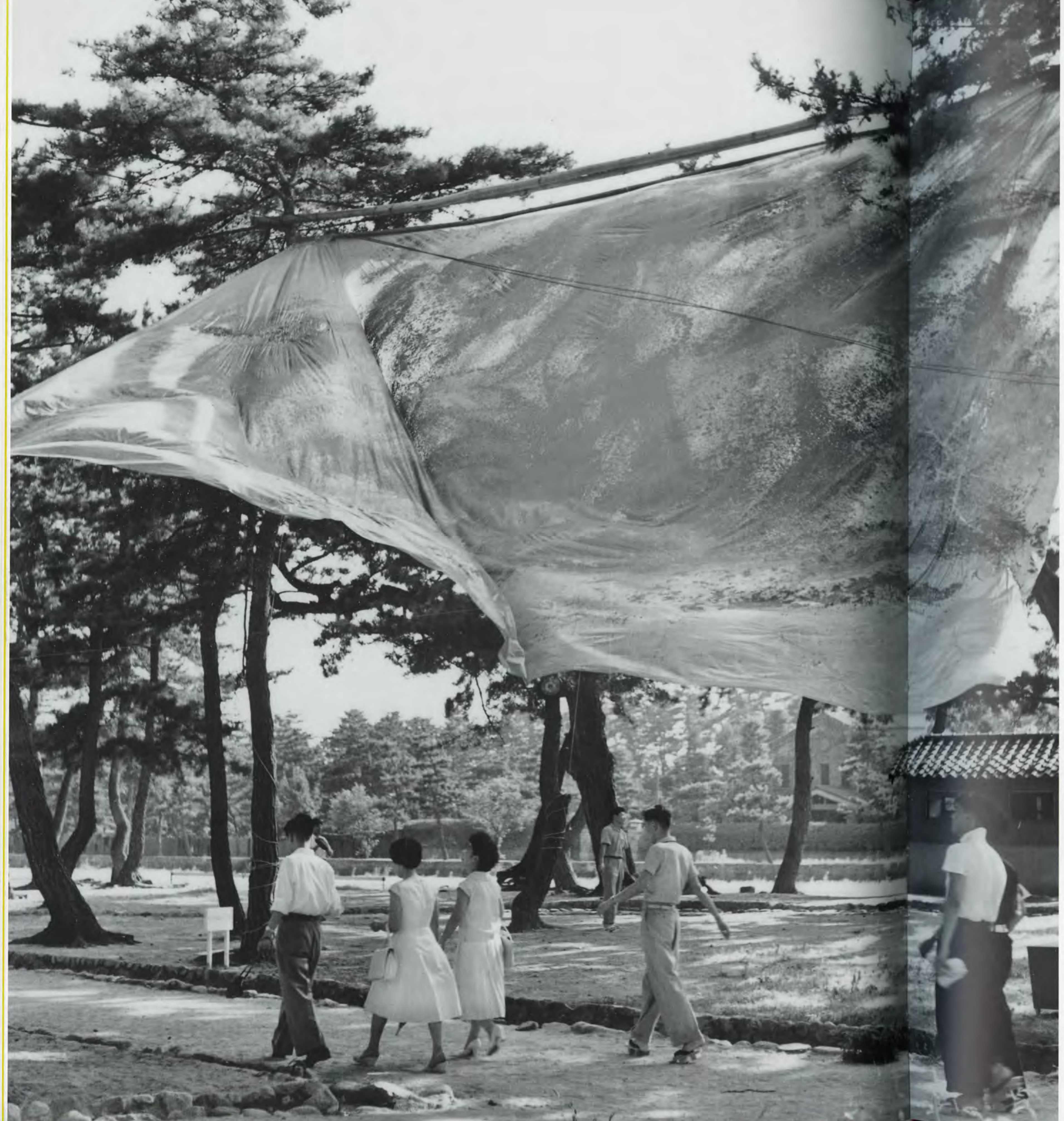


PLATE 7. **MOTONAGA Sadamasa**, *Work*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm.
Collection of Motonaga Nakatsuji Etsuko, Japan



experimental outdoor exhibition of modern art to challenge the midsummer sun

outdoor gutai art exhibition

The exhibition debut of the Gutai Art Association, the *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, took place July 25–August 6, 1955, in a spacious pine-grove park in the suburban town of Ashiya. Yoshihara, who organized the show for the Ashiya City Art Association, declared in the *Yomiuri shinbun* newspaper that its goal was "to take art out from closed rooms into the open air . . . exposing the works to the natural forces of sun, wind, and rain." Encouraged by its success, the group itself presented a sequel in Ashiya Park the following summer, the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, July 27–August 5, 1956. The outdoor setting again stoked Gutai's inventiveness, inspiring experiments with industrial materials like electric lights and natural materials like earth and water. Many works took the form of ephemeral, site-specific installation art, such as Kanayama's 100-meter-long strip of white vinyl marked with black footprints that meandered through the entire grounds and ended up in a tree. Others were designed to be interactive, such as Shimamoto's catwalk of timber planks arranged on uneven springs, which Yoshihara described as having to be "walked" rather than "watched" to experience. Characterized by a sense of festivity, the outdoor exhibitions established the idea that art could be a participatory event.

PLATE 8. **SHIMAMOTO Shōzō**, *Work Created Using a Cannon*, 1956. Paint on vinyl, approximately 10 × 10 m. Installation view: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956

Made by using acetylene gas to explode paint from a steel pipe onto a large, translucent vinyl sheet, this work was hung in the trees and allowed to blow in the wind like a sail.

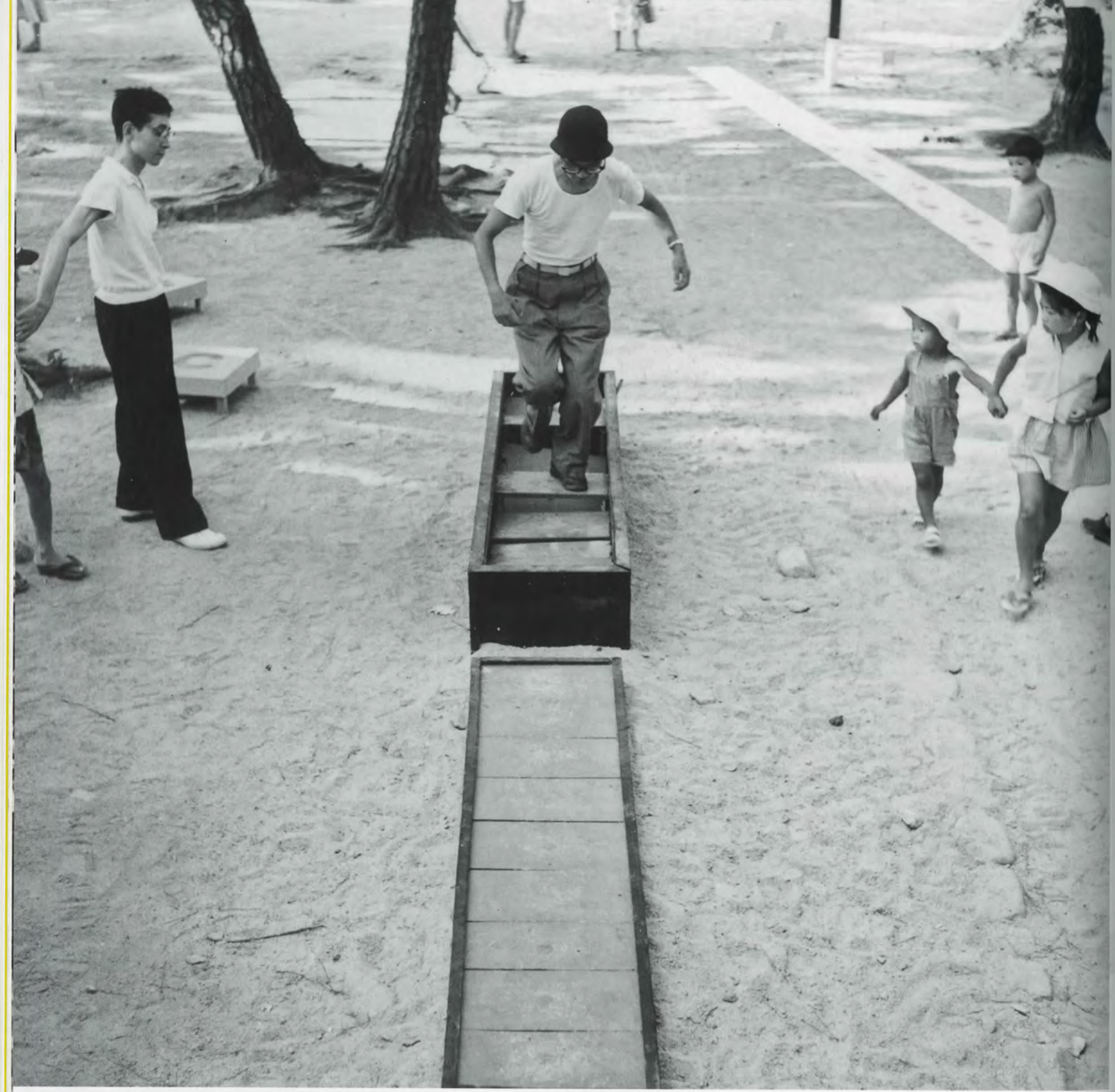


PLATE 9. **SHIMAMOTO Shōzō**, *Please Walk on Here*, 1956. Wood, paint, springs, and nails, two parts, each approximately 361 × 48.5 × 50 cm. Installation view: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956

A visitor walking the length of the work experiences a "composition" of firm and springy wooden slats.

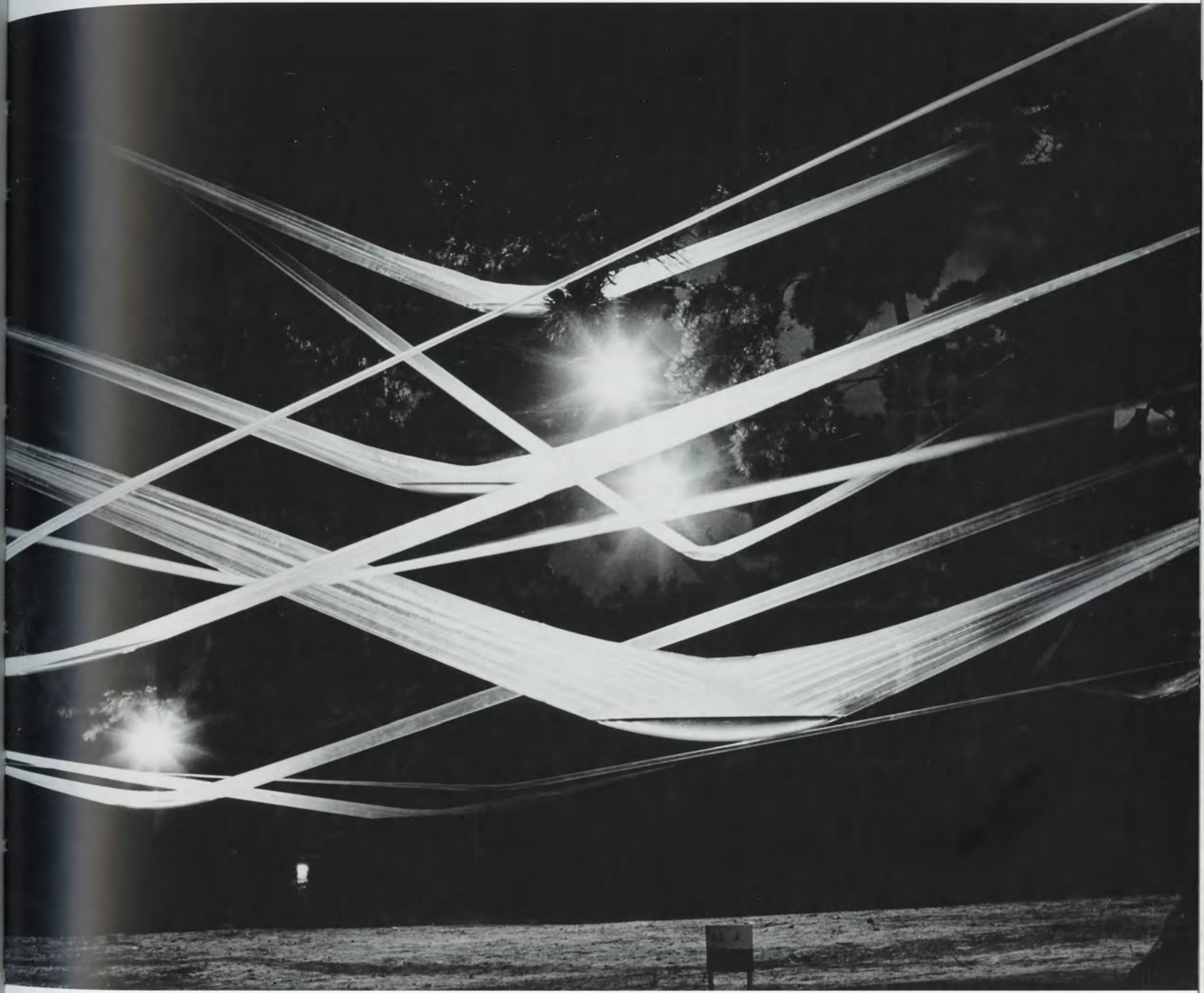


PLATE 10. **MOTONAGA Sadamasa**, *Work (Water)*, 1956. Polyethylene, water, dye, and rope, dimensions variable. Installation view: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956

Plastic tubes designed for industrial use, filled with colored water, are suspended between the trees.

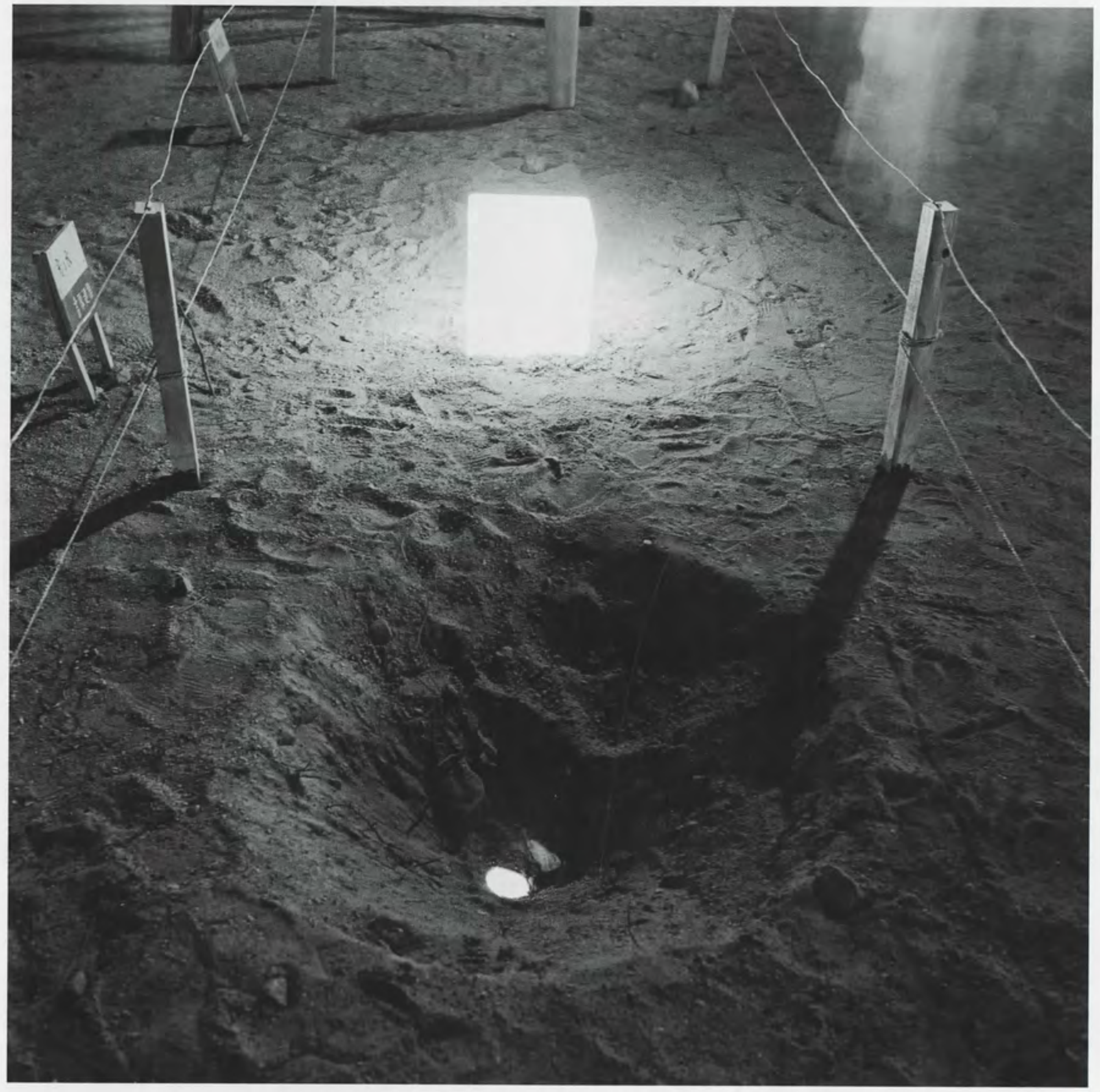


PLATE 11. **YOSHIHARA Michio**, *Discovery* (foreground) and *Shining Water* (background), both 1956. *Discovery*: Water, acrylic, and lightbulb; *Shining Water*: Wood, glass, lightbulb, and water. Installation view: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956

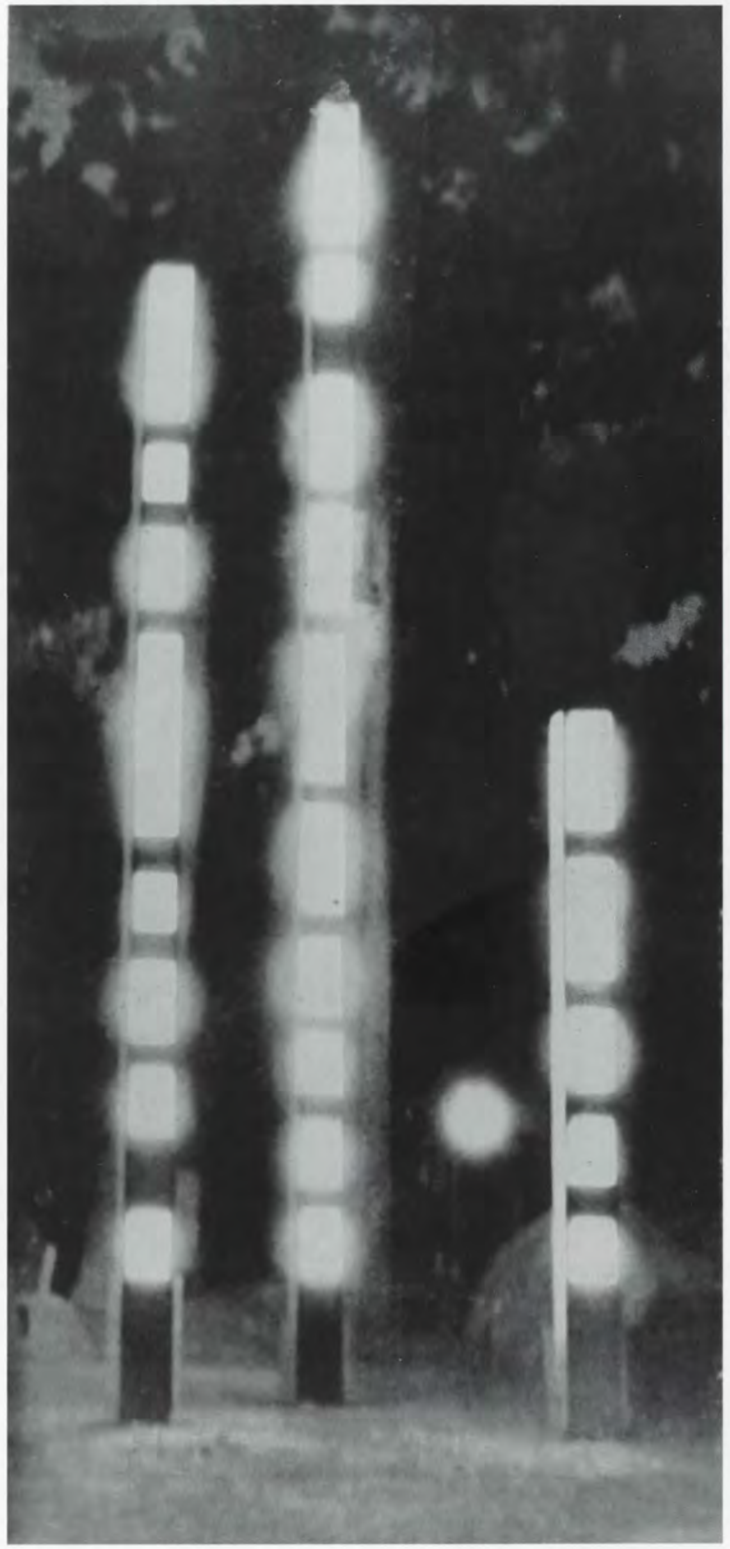
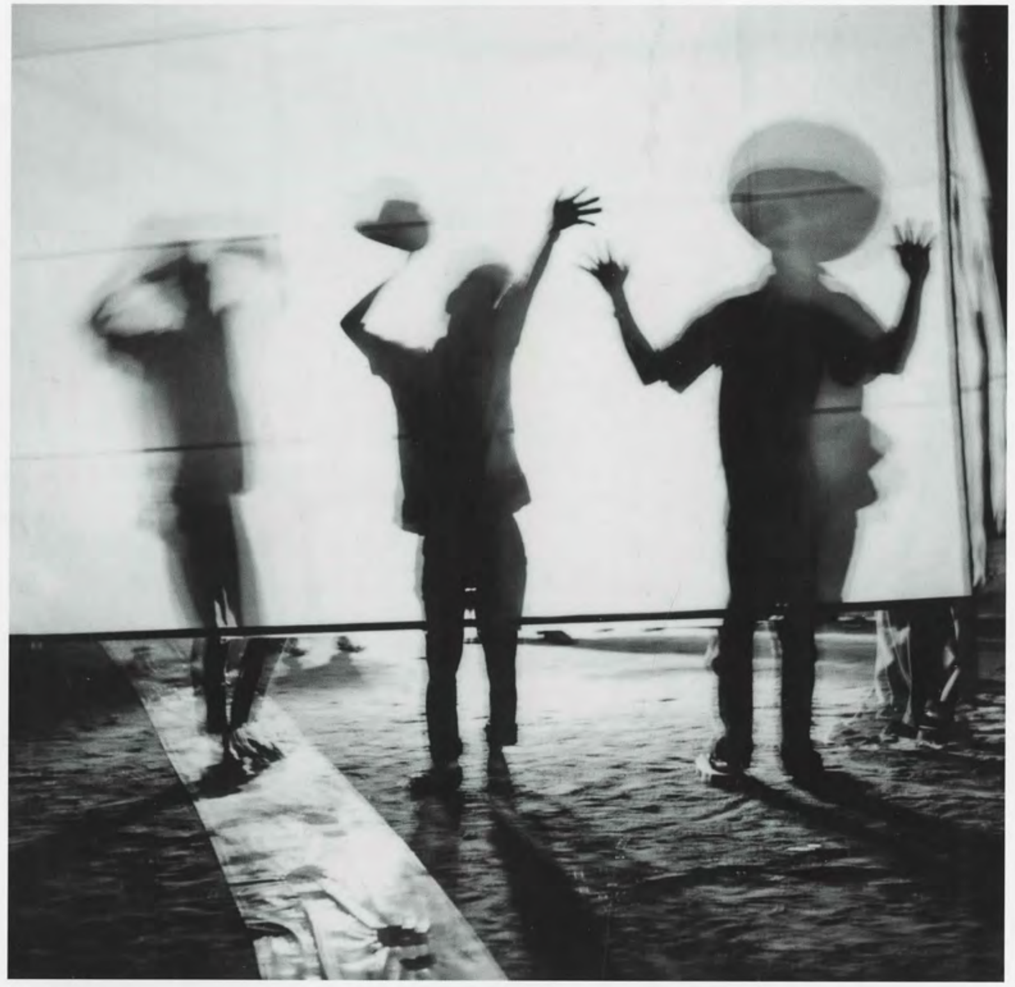


PLATE 12. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Light Art*, 1955. Medium and dimensions unknown. Installation view: *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, 1955



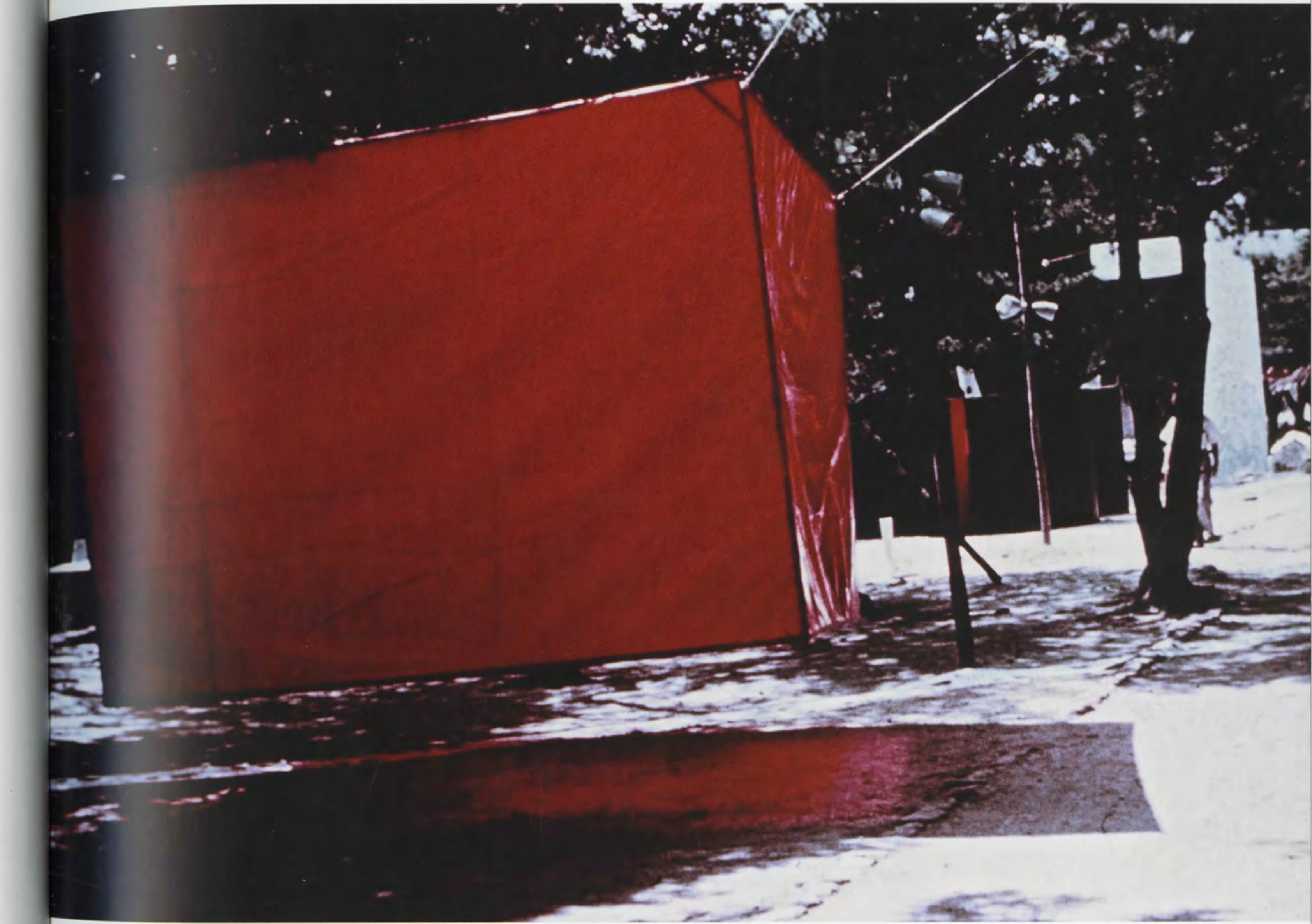
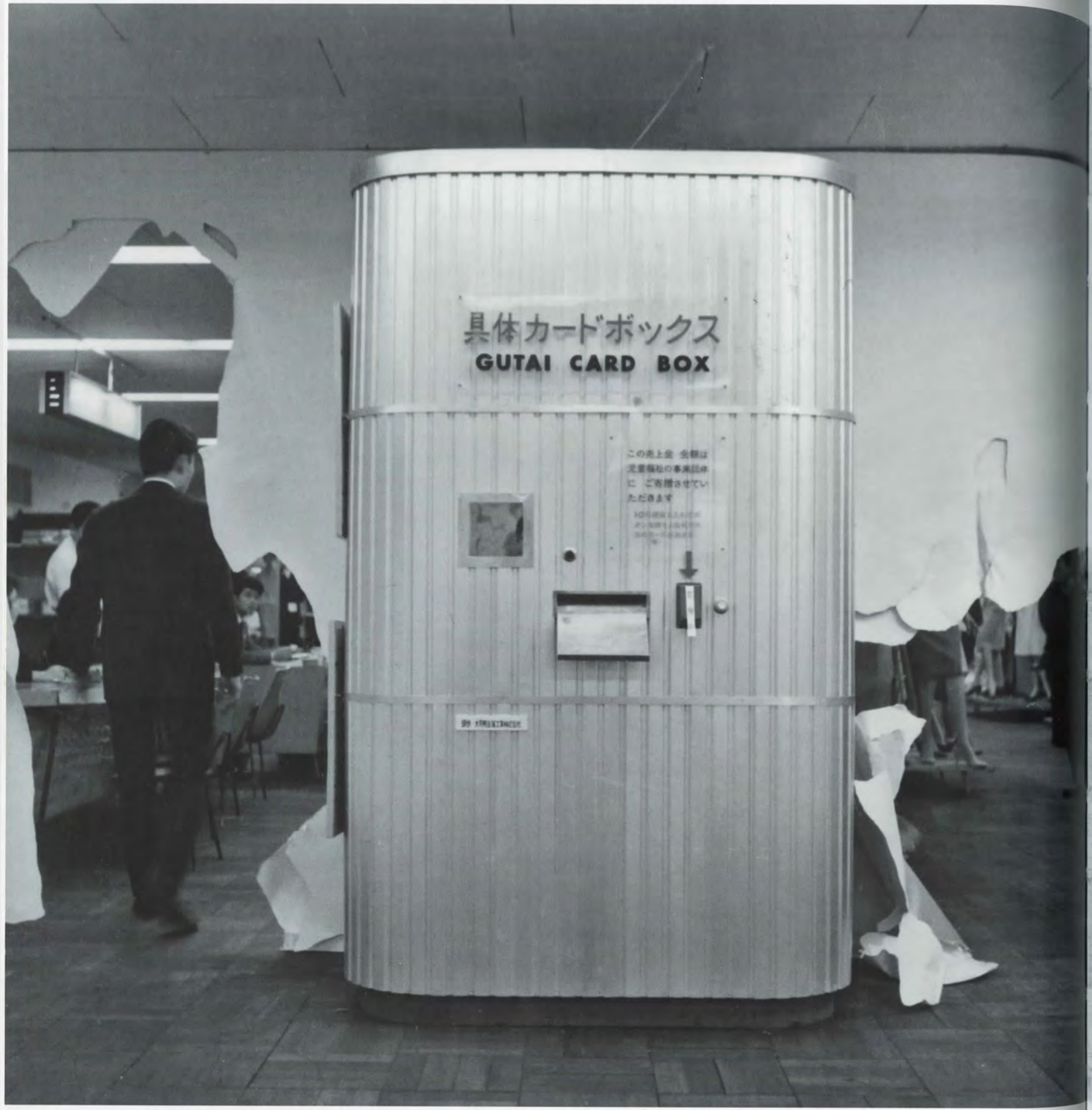
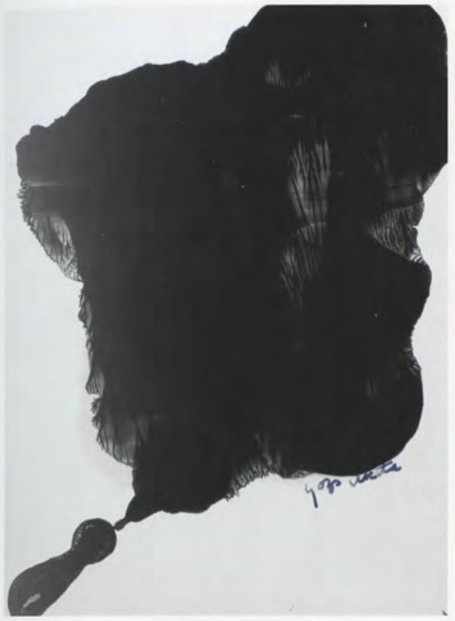


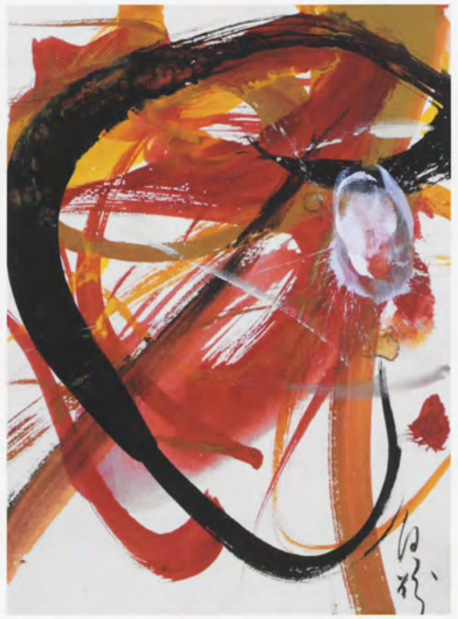
PLATE 13. **YAMAZAKI Tsuruko**, *Work (Red Cube)*, 1956. Wood, vinyl, and lightbulbs, 300 × 400 × 400 cm.
Installation views: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956

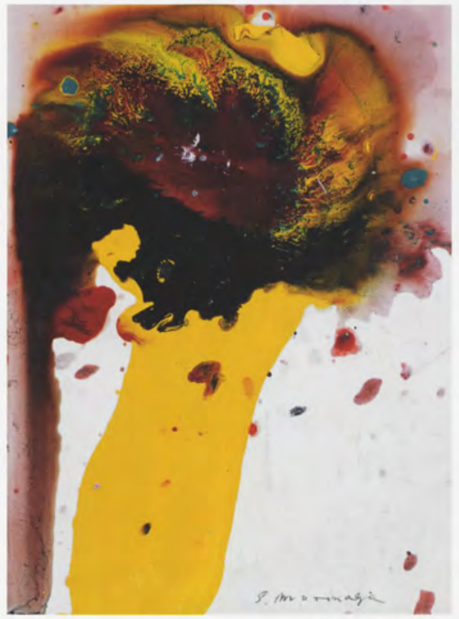
Above: Visitors create shadows inside the illuminated structure. Opposite: *Work (Red Cube)* suspended from trees in Ashiya Park.



gutai card box







Gutai Card Box is an interactive vending machine that dispenses original artworks in the form of hand-painted cards. At the *11th Gutai Art Exhibition*, visitors were invited to deposit a ten-yen coin in exchange for a premade postcard-size work by a Gutai member, which one of the group waiting inside would select and present through a slot. *Gutai Card Box*, conceived as a comment on increasing automation in society, sought to democratize art. Proceeds were donated to a children's charity.

PLATE 14. **Gutai Art Association,** *Gutai Card Box*, 1962. Wood, aluminum, acrylic board, and buzzer, 182.9 × 91.4 × 91.4 cm. Installation view: *11th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 17–22, 1962. Fondazione Mudima, Milan

PLATE 15. **UKITA Yōzō**, untitled work created for *Gutai Card Box*, ca. 1962. Synthetic paint on paper, 14.2 × 10.3 cm. Private collection

PLATE 16. **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, untitled work created for *Gutai Card Box*, ca. 1962. Watercolor on paper, 14.2 × 10.2 cm. Private collection

PLATE 17. **MOTONAGA Sadamasa**, untitled work created for *Gutai Card Box*, 1962. Synthetic paint on paper, 14.2 × 10.2 cm. Private collection

network

to introduce our works to the world

Gutai was based in Ashiya, a small but cosmopolitan city located between Osaka and Kobe in western Japan. It thus operated at a remove from Tokyo, home of Japan's primary art scene, not to mention from New York and Paris, the dueling centers of postwar culture. Following the isolation of the wartime years, Gutai used the modern means at their disposal—publications, telecommunications, air travel—to create and sustain a network of like-minded friends that extended to France, Holland, Italy, South Africa, and the United States. Its members participated in exhibitions abroad, invited artists from around the world to take part in its exhibitions at home, hosted residencies, and even built its own museum in an effort to advocate for an "international art of a new era." Highly aware of the power of the media, Gutai also sought publicity as a means to promote connections with an audience that extended outside the art world per se. All these steps toward creating an international network were not only vital to the group's success; they were part and parcel of Gutai's repudiation of Japan's wartime isolation and its embrace of postwar liberal ideals.

Even before its first official exhibition, the group created the *Gutai* journal (1954–65, plates 18–33), which functioned as a platform for artistic exchange both domestically and internationally. Yoshihara was explicit about the magazine's purpose: "This publication has been created to introduce [our] works to the world."[1] The journal featured photographs of Gutai exhibitions and artworks, articles by Gutai artists, and photographs of work by their international peers. *Gutai* also explored the magazine as medium and exhibition space, with forays into artist multiples, concrete poetry, and graphic cutouts. Inspired by prewar avant-garde journals such as the Surrealists' *Minotaure* (issues of which Yoshihara owned) and the partially multilingual *Kyūshitsu* (published by another Yoshihara-led artist collective, Kyūshitsu-kai), *Gutai* journal took the coterie magazine to a new level of internationalism and formal innovation comparable to little magazines from the 1960s and '70s such as *Aspen*, *0 to 9*, *Avalanche*, and *Interfunktionen* that were based in the United States and Western Europe.[2]

From the start, the journal was published in Japanese and partially translated into English or French in order to reach audiences around the world. Sent across oceans and passed from hand to hand, issues were distributed to an ambitious list of peers and soon gained a cult following. One set, sent to Jackson Pollock in 1956, was discovered by writer and eventual Pollock biographer B. H. Friedman as he was helping Lee Krasner with the artist's affairs after his death. Friedman subscribed to the magazine and introduced Gutai to Helen Frankenthaler, Sam Francis, and the then-unknown Ray Johnson, as well as to the bookseller George Wittenborn, who purchased copies to sell at his shop. Another set landed in Paris the following year, initiating a decadelong partnership between Gutai and the critic Michel Tapié.

Following their first exhibition abroad, in 1958 at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, Gutai exhibited across the United States as well as in Paris, Turin, Amsterdam, and Johannesburg, among other cities. Their participation in the exhibition *Nul 1965* (figs. 14, 100; plates 109–11) developed into a creative relationship with the Dutch Nul group and The Hague's Internationale Galerij Orez, which resulted in further exhibitions in the Netherlands and Austria throughout the rest of the decade. Gutai often organized solo or two-person exhibitions for international artists in Japan and, more important, devised extravagant international group shows on their home turf. The 1960 *International Sky Festival*, in Osaka (plates 34–36), was perhaps the most significant of these, bringing together thirty artists from three continents in a spectacular forum that captured the imaginations of the participants and their local presses both in Japan and abroad.

Gutai also recognized the importance of a physical presence to situate its professed internationalism within a decidedly local context. In 1962, the group inaugurated the Gutai Pinacotheca (plate 37). This private museum showing Gutai members as well as international artists gave the group both an architectural identity and institutional visibility worldwide. It operated as a physical hub for their networking, becoming a must-see destination on the itineraries of artists, critics, collectors, and curators touring Japan. Visitors to the Pinacotheca in its eight years of existence included Lawrence Alloway, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Willem de Kooning, Clement Greenberg, Peggy Guggenheim, Geoffrey Hendricks, Paul Jenkins, Jasper Johns, William Lieberman, Isamu Noguchi, Yoko Ono, and Robert Rauschenberg. Their trips helped establish Gutai as an agent in the larger, transnational project of contemporary avant-garde art.

MING TIAMPO

NOTES

[1] Yoshihara Jirō, "Hakkan ni saishite"/"For Publishing This Pamphlet," *Gutai* 1 (January 1955), pp. 1 and 33.

[2] For more on artists' journals as exhibition spaces, see Gwen Allen, *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011).

gutai journal

Publication of Gutai's eponymous journal was the group's first official activity. A sporadically self-published bulletin that continued through fourteen issues (though issues 10 and 13 were never published), *Gutai* was created in the tradition of avant-garde publications to promote the group's activities beyond its local context. By circulating *Gutai* to Tokyo, Europe, the United States, and even South Africa, Gutai artists could participate in the transnational conversation of the postwar avant-garde. Gutai approached the magazine as both a record of the group's activities and as a medium itself, experimenting with layout, typography, and materials. Contents variously included artist essays, reproductions of artworks, and photographic documentation of the group's outdoor exhibitions, stage performances, and special exhibitions, including international projects with American and European artists. It also invited submissions by artists from abroad and ran news items, including obituaries of Jackson Pollock and the calligraphic artist Hasegawa Saburō. It was the primary vehicle by which Jean Clay, Martha Jackson, Ray Johnson, Allan Kaprow, and Michel Tapié, among others, learned about Gutai.

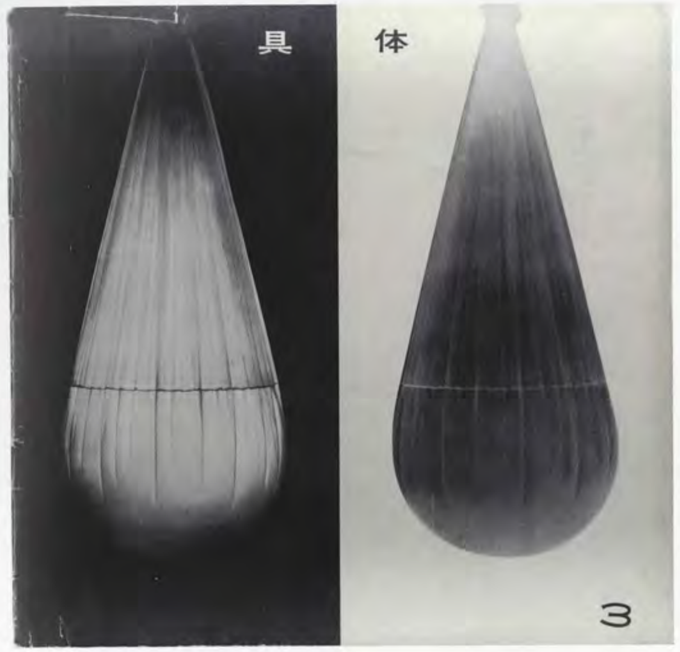
Gutai 1 is hand-printed and its dimensions are 26.0 × 19.2 cm; all other issues are printed matter and measure between 24.2 and 25.8 cm in height and between 25.8 and 27 cm in width. Unless otherwise noted, the journals are drawn from a private collection.

PLATE 18. *Gutai* 1 (January 1, 1955). Cover designed by Yoshihara Jirō. Works by sixteen Gutai artists and Yoshihara's introductory essay in Japanese and English

PLATE 20. *Gutai* 3 (October 20, 1955). Cover: two views of Motonaga Sadamasa, *Work (Water)* (1955). Special issue dedicated to *Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*; essays by Motonaga, Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga Fujiko, and Shiraga Kazuo

PLATE 19. *Gutai* 2 (October 10, 1955). Cover designed by Yoshida Toshio. Chemical paintings by Kinoshita Toshiko, essays on elementary-school student Inui Michiko's abstract painting by Ukita Yōzō and Shimamoto Shōzō, artwork and essays by new members Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, and others, and signed multiple by Kanayama Akira (plate 46). The Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, N.Y.

PLATE 21. *Gutai* 4 (July 1, 1956). Cover: detail of unidentified painting by Shiraga Kazuo, ca. 1956. Special issue dedicated to *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*; introduction by Yoshihara Jirō, essays by Kanayama Akira, Motonaga Sadamasa, Murakami Saburō, Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga Fujiko, Shiraga Kazuo, Ukita Yōzō, Yamazaki Tsuruko, and Yoshida Toshio, and reproduction of review in the regional edition of U.S. Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* titled "Art Is a Hole in the Ground"



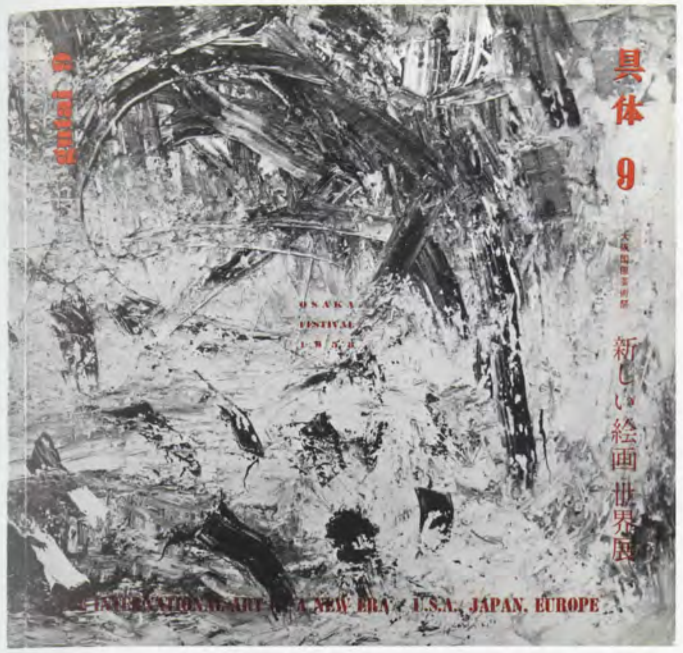
gutai 8
michel tapié
l'aventure informelle

PLATE 22. *Gutai* 5 (October 1, 1956). Cover: detail of Kanayama Akira, *Footprints* (1956). Special issue dedicated to *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*; introduction by Yoshihara Jirō, essays by Shiraga Kazuo and Yamazaki Tsuruko, and a notice of Jackson Pollock's death

PLATE 24. *Gutai* 7 (July 15, 1957). Cover: finale of *Gutai Art on the Stage*, 1957. Documentary photographs of *Gutai Art on the Stage* and *3rd Gutai Art Exhibition*; introductions to both productions by Yoshihara Jirō, artists' descriptions of their stage work, and essays by Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Sumi Yasuo

PLATE 23. *Gutai* 6 (April 1, 1957). Cover: unidentified painting by Shimamoto Shōzō, ca. 1957. Special issue dedicated to *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*; introduction by Yoshihara Jirō, essays by B. H. Friedman, Motonaga Sadamasa, Shimamoto, Shiraga Kazuo, and Sumi Yasuo, and motico artworks by Ray Johnson

PLATE 25. *Gutai* 8 (September 29, 1957). Cover: detail of unidentified work by Lucio Fontana, ca. 1957. Special issue edited by Michel Tapié and Yoshihara Jirō titled "L'aventure informelle"; selection of paintings by sixty-five non-Gutai artists and sixteen Gutai artists and essays by Tapié and Yoshihara positioning Gutai as part of the international Informel phenomenon



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11
gutai 11
THE INTERNATIONAL SKY FESTIVAL
OSAKA 1960

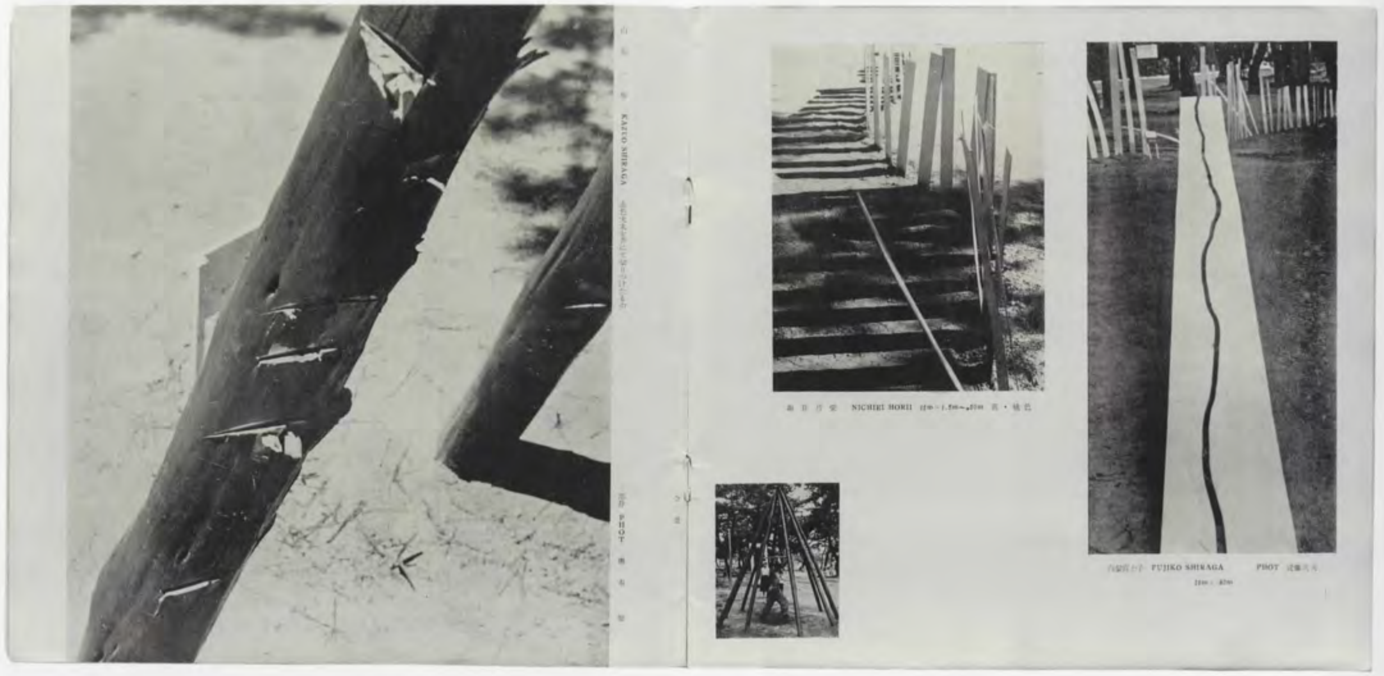
具体 14
GUTAI 14
15th GUTAI ART EXHIBITION

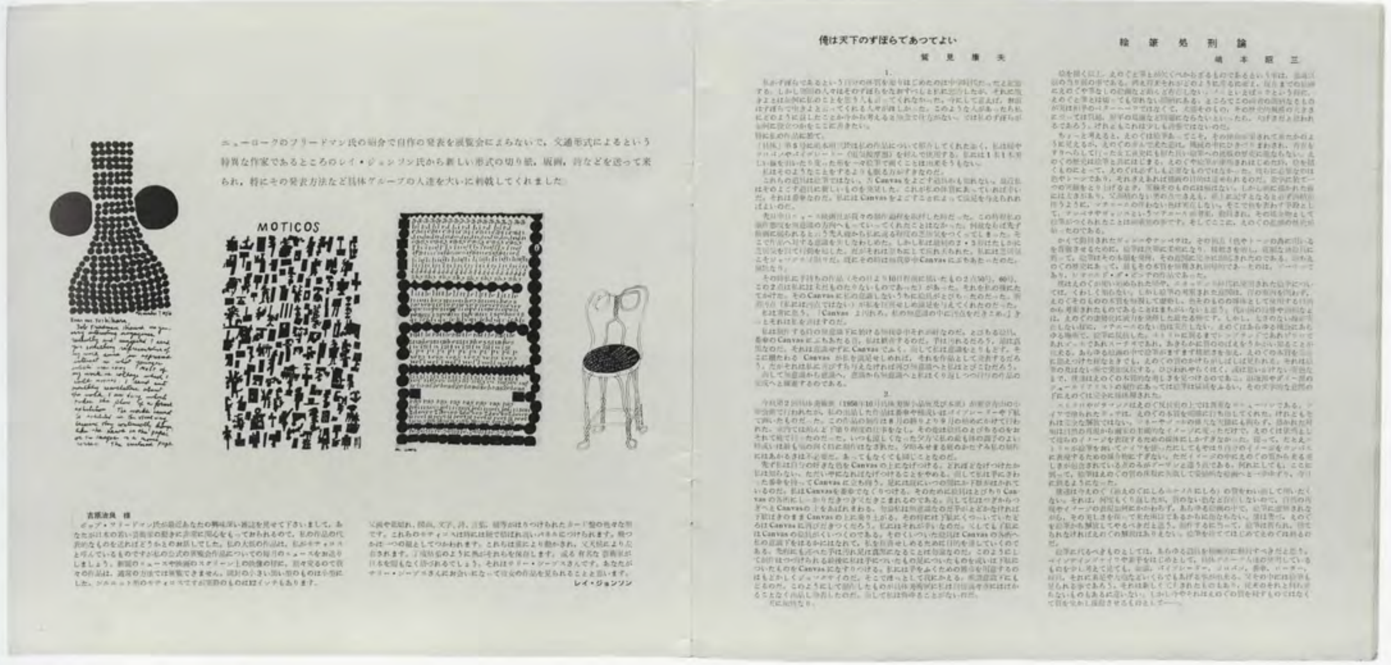
PLATE 26. *Gutai* 9 (April 12, 1958). Cover: detail of unidentified work by Yoshihara Jirō, ca. 1958. Special issue edited by Michel Tapié and Yoshihara that served as the catalogue for the exhibition *International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai*, which featured 120 works by eighty-five artists from Europe, the United States, and Japan; introductions by Yoshihara and Tapié

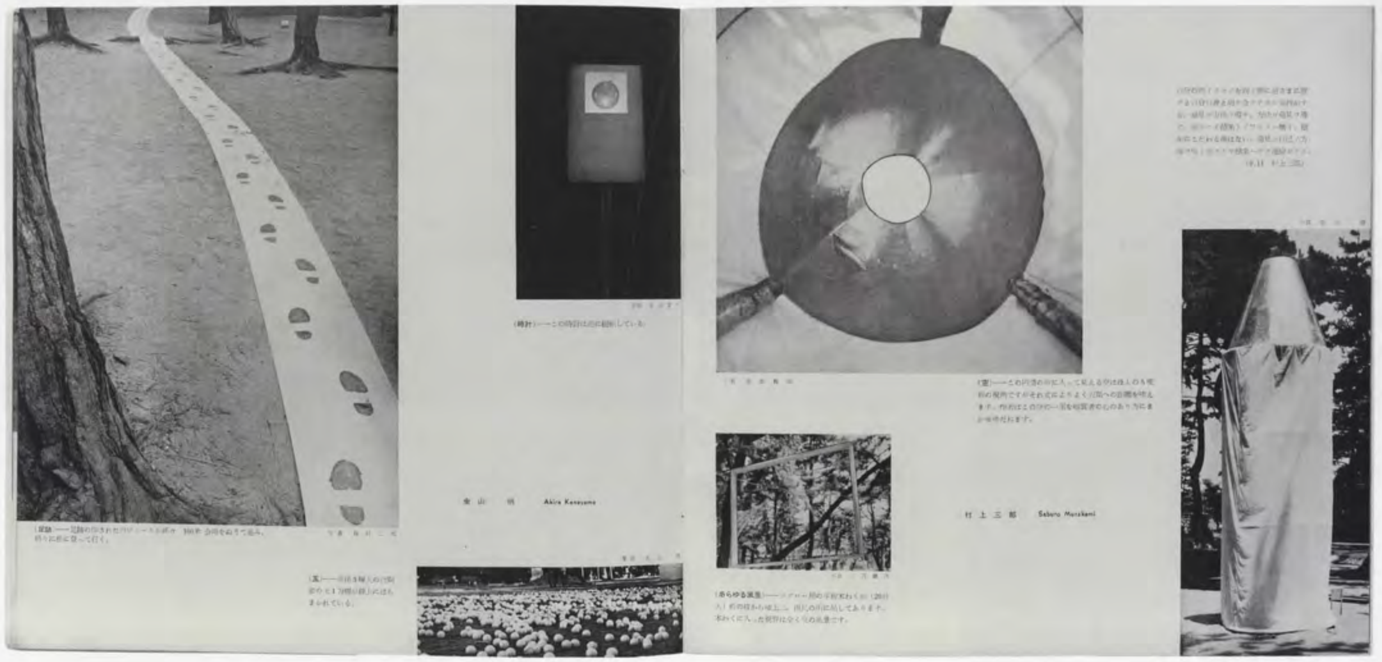
PLATE 28. *Gutai* 12 (May 1, 1961). Cover: detail of unidentified work by Yoshihara Jirō, ca. 1961. Special issue dedicated to *10th Gutai Art Exhibition*; Yoshihara's text "Gutai's First 10 Years" and essay by Murakami Saburō

PLATE 27. *Gutai* 11 (November 11, 1960). Cover: *The International Sky Festival*, Osaka, 1960. Special issue edited by Michel Tapié and Yoshihara Jirō that served as catalogue for *The International Sky Festival* and *9th Gutai Art Exhibition*; introduction by Tapié

PLATE 29. *Gutai* 14 (October 1965). Cover: detail of unidentified work by Yoshida Toshio, 1965. Special issue dedicated to *15th Gutai Art Exhibition* and *Nul 1965*; introduction by Yoshihara Jirō and chronology of Gutai activities, 1955–65







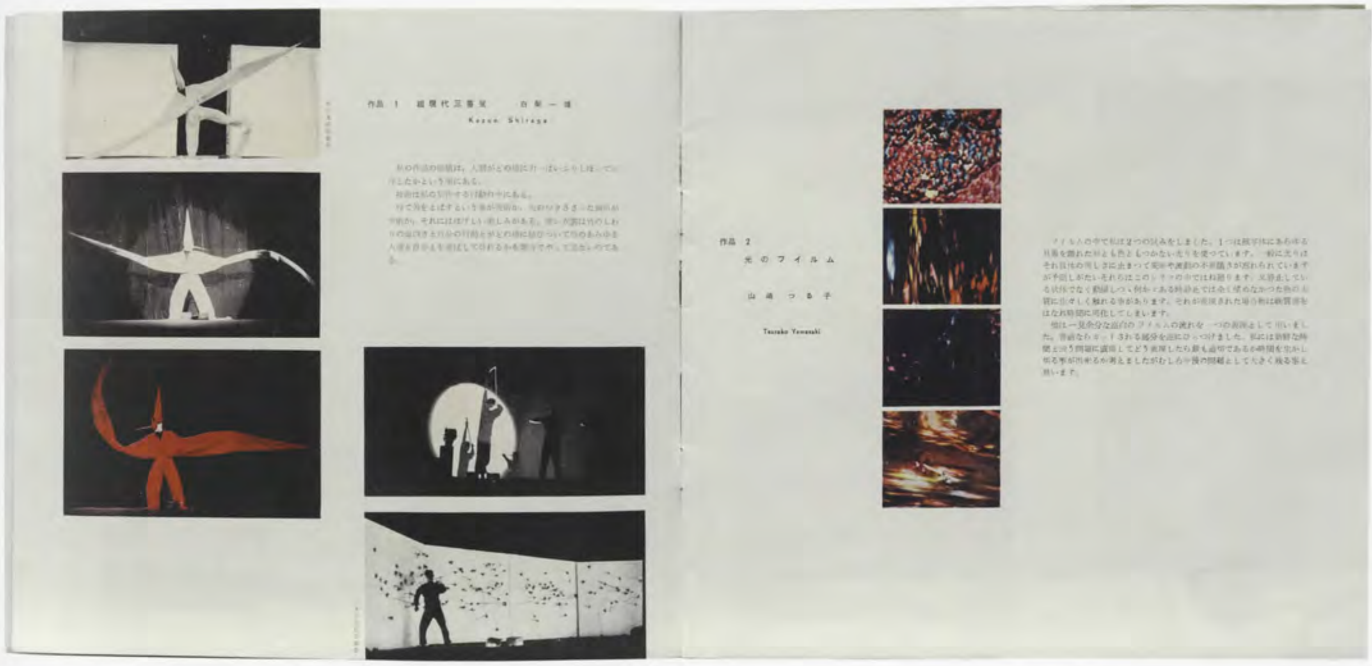


PLATE 30. Interior spread from *Gutai* 3. Installation views of *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, 1955; left page: Shiraga Kazuo, *Please Come In* (detail); right page, clockwise from upper left: Horii Nichiei, *Work (Yellow, Pink)*, Shiraga Fujiko, *White Plank*, and Shiraga Kazuo, *Please Come In*

PLATE 31. Interior spread from *Gutai* 5. Installation views of *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956; left page, clockwise: Kanayama Akira, *Footprints*, *Clock*, and *Balls*; right page, clockwise from upper left: Murakami Saburō, *Sky* (interior and exterior) and *All the Landscapes*

PLATE 32. Interior spread from *Gutai* 6. Text by Yoshihara Jirō and Ray Johnson and motico artworks by Johnson

PLATE 33. Interior spread from *Gutai* 7. Performance views of *Gutai Art on the Stage*, 1957; left page: Shiraga Kazuo, *Ultramodern Sanbasō*; right page: Yamazaki Tsuruko, *Light Film*

the international sky festival

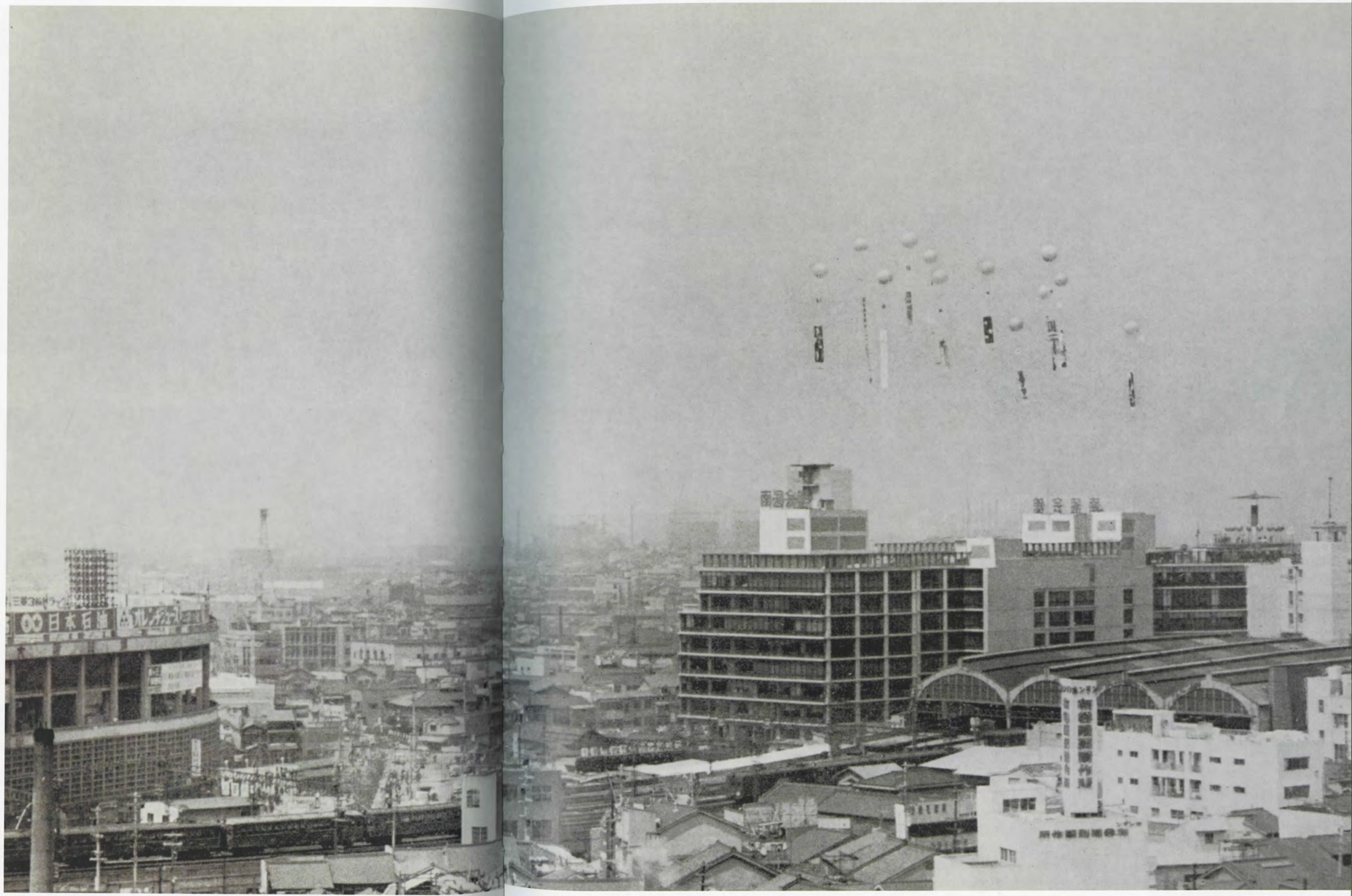
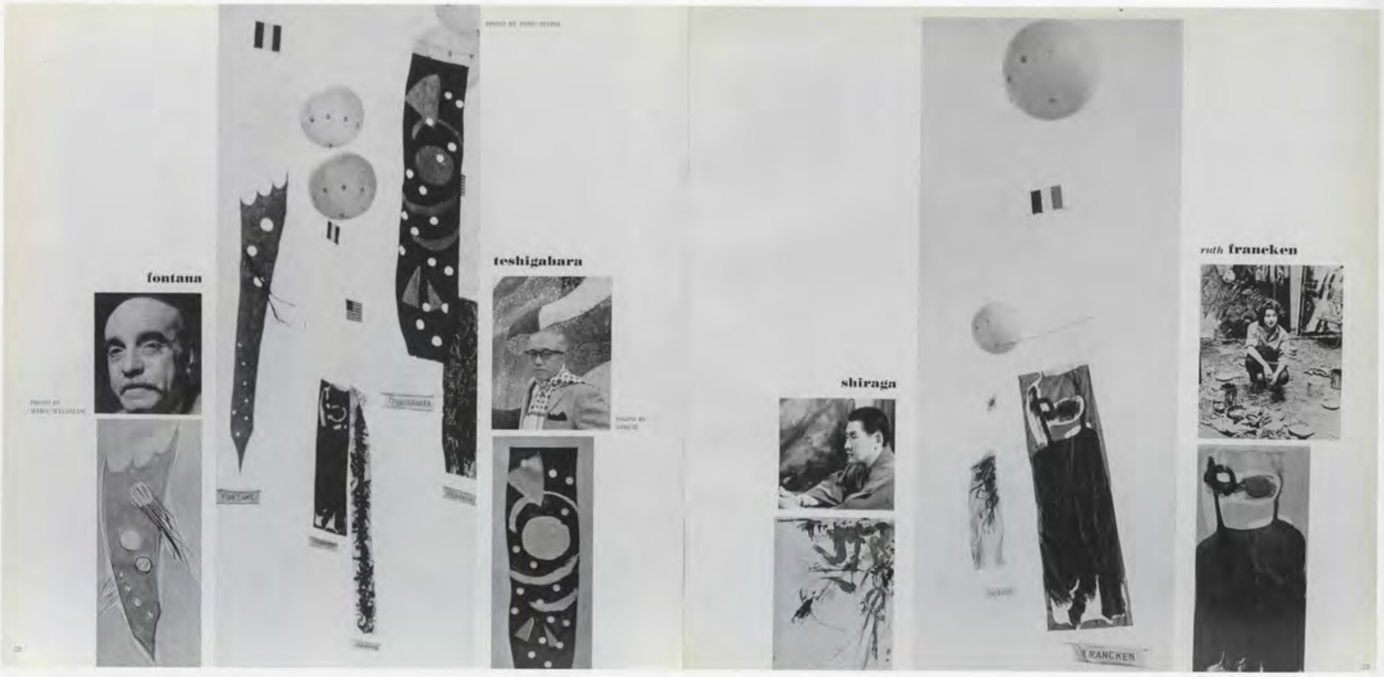


PLATE 34. *The International Sky Festival* visible over Osaka skyline, April 1960



Presented by the Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival* was held April 19–24, 1960, over the Takashimaya department store in Osaka in conjunction with the *9th Gutai Art Exhibition* being held on the store's third-floor gallery that month. French critic Michel Tapié and Yoshihara Jirō invited thirty Abstract Expressionist and Informel artists from Europe, the United States, and Japan to participate in a "formula . . . for an international confrontation." Participating artists included Franco Assetto, Luigi Boille, and Lucio Fontana from Italy; Antonio Saura from Spain; Claire Falkenstein, Albert Leslie, and Alfonso Ossorio from the U.S.; Teshigahara Sōfū and Dōmoto Hisao from Japan; and Gutai artists including Motonaga, Shimamoto, Shiraga, Sumi, Yamazaki, and Yoshihara. Artists submitted sketches to the festival organizers that Gutai members then enlarged and painted on calico banners, each some ten meters long. The banners were suspended on 80-meter cables from the roof of the department store using the helium balloons typically used in Japan for advertising. Display of the paintings rotated, with twelve banners aloft on any given day. Documentation of the event and profiles of the participating artists appeared in *Gutai* 11, where Yoshihara described the spectacle: "High, trembling, swaying, low, sometimes leaning on the strong wind . . . until at last one of them flew away and never returned."

PLATE 35. Interior spread from *Gutai* 11. *International Sky Festival* banner paintings by Lucio Fontana, Teshigahara Sōfū, Shiraga Kazuo, and Ruth Francken

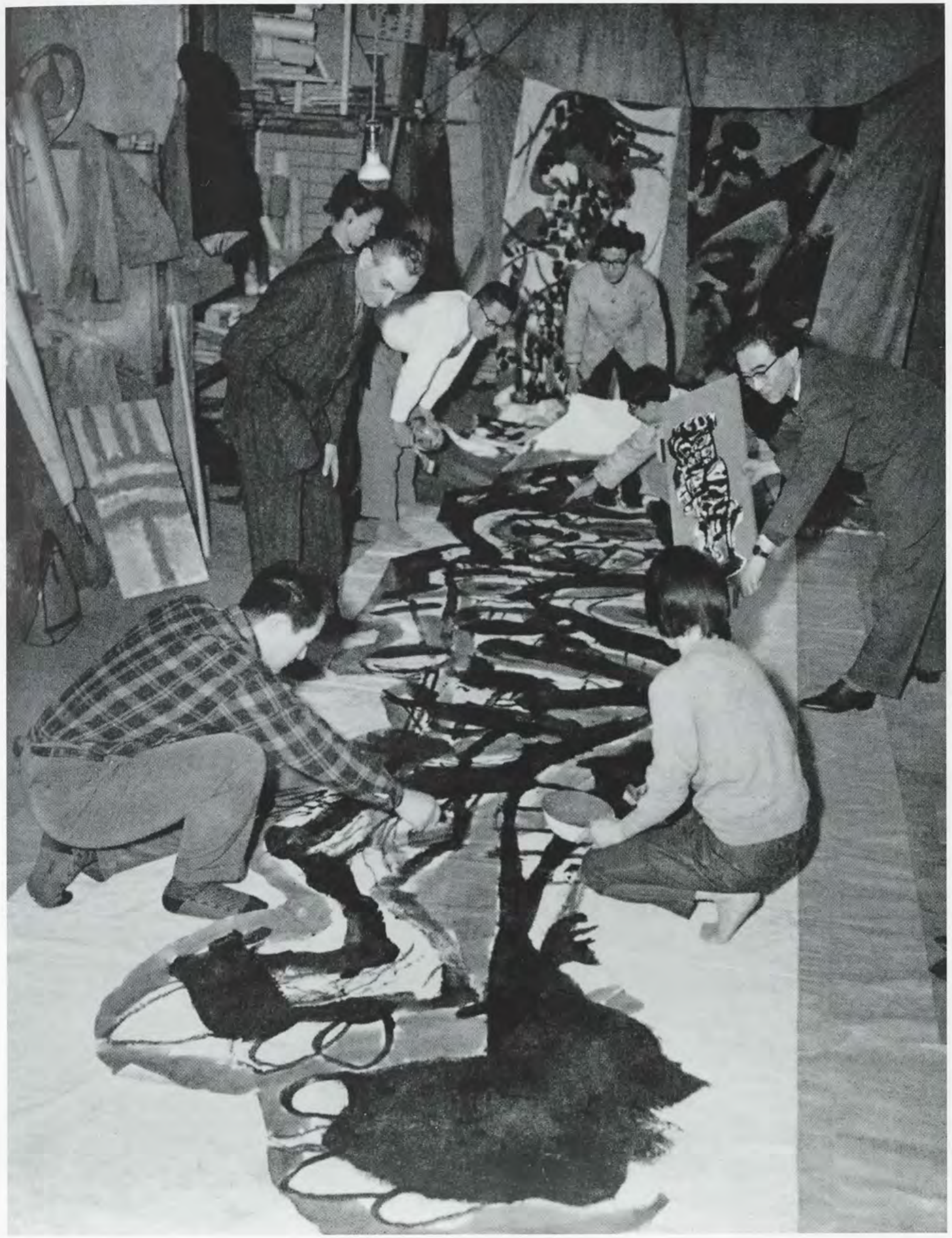
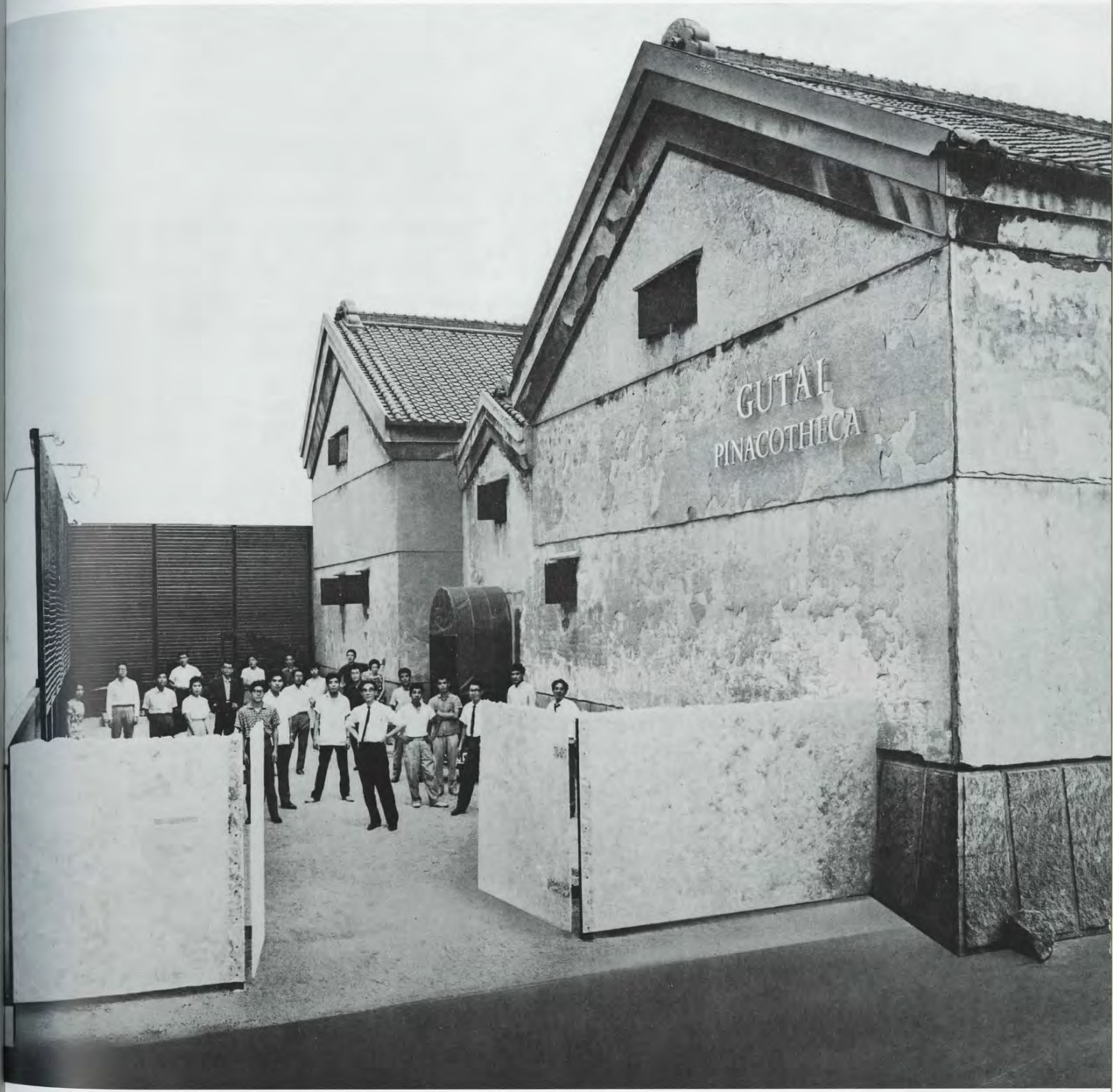


PLATE 36. Gutai artists, overseen by Michel Tapié and Yoshihara Jirō (both standing, center), preparing for *The International Sky Festival*, ca. April 1960

gutai pinacotheca

The Gutai Pinacotheca opened in September 1962 in the Nakanoshima area of central Osaka. Converted from three Meiji-era storehouses, the new gallery building with an enclosed courtyard lent architectural and institutional identity to Gutai, serving as its "manifesto-museum," in the words of Michel Tapié. As the group's first headquarters, the Pinacotheca became the primary site for members to exhibit their work, to present work by other Japanese and foreign artists, and to socialize and engage with visiting artists, critics, collectors, curators, and gallerists from around the world. As Expo '70 approached, the Pinacotheca helped establish Osaka as a cosmopolitan hub for the international avant-garde, presenting the 15th and 18th–21st *Gutai Art Exhibitions* as well as solo and group exhibitions featuring Giuseppe Capogrossi, Enrico Castellani, Karl Gerstner, Lucio Fontana, Sam Francis, and Paul Jenkins, among others. The Pinacotheca closed in April 1970 to make way for urban redevelopment, ending a rich era in Gutai's history. Although a new Mini-Pinacotheca opened not far from the site of the original in October 1971, it closed in April 1972, following Yoshihara's death in February and the official disbanding of the group in March.

PLATE 37. Gutai Art Association members in front of Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1962



concept

can a piece of cloth be a work of art?

In its early years, Gutai faced hostility from Tokyo critics who dismissed its works as empty. But they misread Gutai's basic claims—to reject content and representation. On the one hand, Gutai artists were deeply engaged with matter itself, unshackled from "meaning"; on the other hand, they favored creating actions, objects, and installations whose meaning would be completed in the mind of the viewer, moving from the tangible art object toward the invisible realm of concept (*kannen*) and idea (*kangae*). Yamazaki Tsuruko defended the artistic potential of this emptiness: "That is where implications and revelations are lurking."[1]

Gutai's protoconceptualist tendencies are credited to its cross-pollination with Zero-kai (Zero Society), which was founded in 1952 on the premise that "every work of art begins from nothing."[2] Zero-kai members Kanayama Akira, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Tanaka Atsuko explored concept-based art both prior to and after their joining Gutai in 1955. Kanayama's "trans-Mondrian" series of paintings (1952, plate 45, and 1954, plate 47), which display a minimal number of straight, nearly mechanical blue and red lines on a white ground, reject artistic subjectivity and objectify the idea of art itself. By 1955, this course of development had led him to the radical gesture of proposing a blank canvas for inclusion in a show. Kanayama's interest in cool concept over emotion and expression also inspired wry experiments with automation, such as his paintings made with an automatic toy car (1957, plate 84).

Tanaka's conceptual works from 1955 won praise for pushing the limits of painting and refiguring beauty. At the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, she presented her interactive sound-art installation *Work (Bell)* (1955, plate 44), in which visitors switch on a mechanism that activates the sequential ringing of electric alarm bells laid across forty meters of an exhibition space. She conceived of the wired bells as an acoustic "hem" encircling the galleries and approached the installation as a painting incorporating time and space. At this same show, Tanaka presented two installations composed of large sheets of factory-made cloth simply cut and tacked to the walls, where they fluttered as visitors passed by: a four-meter-square sheet of pink rayon at the entrance to the exhibition hall; and *Work (Yellow Cloth)* (1955, plate 38), comprising lengths of yellow cotton hung as though they were paintings, their edges occasionally cut and reglued in a minimal act of artistic intervention. Tanaka's plain fabrics assumed the status of art by the artist's simply displacing them from their everyday context and designating them as art within the heightened environment of the exhibition hall, producing the simple amazement Yoshihara so highly praised.

Gutai's appropriation of the everyday inspired viewers to mentally reframe the commonplace and shift their habits of thought. Gutai also enlarged the possibilities for art to include chance, sound, unaltered factory-made materials, mechanical reproductions, and technical drawings. With influences including prewar Dadaist calls to transgress the boundary between art and life, this experimentation presaged international developments that came to represent conceptualist practice, namely, the shift from the static, fine-art object to the dematerialized, social, and ephemeral conduct of art within a given environment.

Murakami's work in particular makes witty yet eloquent statements in favor of unshackling art from "content." At the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, in 1956, he showed an empty picture frame hanging from tree branches, titled *All the Landscapes* (1956, plate 53), that granted the artistic act of "framing" to any passerby. The first of his so-called "Box" series of plywood structures (which includes *Work (Box)* [1956], plate 52), meanwhile, invited visitors to both view and sit on the works around them, likewise serving as a way to frame a provisional exhibition space. Yoshihara indicated that he well understood the work's effect when later that same year he asked Murakami to create a larger version, *Box (Please Sit Here)*, for the *One Day Only Outdoor Art Exhibition* staged on the banks of Muko River. Of the piece, Murakami "recalled that the leader was 'extremely delighted,' saying, 'With this alone, all around here becomes a work.'"[3]

Gutai was also inspired by children's art, finding in their pre-adult cognition a means to arrive at fresh ways of seeing the world. When a third-grader submitted old bricks tied with rubber bands to a *Kirin* children's art exhibition in 1956, Tanaka explained the conceptualist transformation that made it art: "Because she presented it as a work, it became different from things we see around us."[4]

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NOTES

1. Yamazaki Tsuruko, "Tokyo no Gutai-jin," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956); trans. Ogawa Kikuko and repr. as "The *Gutaians* in Tokyo," in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010), p. 32.
2. Shiraga Kazuo, "Bōken no kiroku: Episōdo de tsuzuru Gutai gurūpu no jū-ninen 1" [Document of an adventure, No. 1: Twelve years of Gutai group], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 285 (July 1967); repr. in *Gutai shiryōshū: Dokyumento Gutai 1954–1972/Document Gutai 1954–1972*, trans. Moriguchi Madoka, Simon Scanes, and Shiraha Keiko (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1993).
3. "Murakami Saburō-shi intabyū" [Interview with Murakami Saburō], in *Document Gutai*, p. 376. See also Reiko Tomii, "Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind," in *Murakami Saburō: 70-nendai o chūshin ni/Saburo Murakami: Focus on the '70s*, ed. Ikegami Tsukasa and Tomii, exh. cat. (Osaka: ArtCourt Gallery, 2012).
4. Tanaka Atsuko, "From *Kirin* Children's Art Exhibition: To Mothers, 1956," trans. Reiko Tomii, in *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka 1954–1968*, ed. Ming Tiampo, exh. cat. (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia; New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2004), p. 101. Originally published as "*Kirin* kodomono bijutsu ten kara: Okāsama gata e," *Kirin* 9, no. 3 (March 1956).

one day only outdoor art exhibition

Yoshihara used media strategically to present Gutai to international audiences and understood the importance of recording its live activities. Photographers were always present at Gutai events, and, inspired by the impact of Jackson Pollock's famous coverage in *Life* magazine, Gutai contacted *Life* with an invitation to do a photo essay on its own experimental activities. The group staged an exhibition for photojournalists Jean Launois and William Payne, performing and making works April 6–8, 1956, at a beachfront edible-oil refinery in Nishinomiya owned by Yoshihara, then on April 9 organizing a one-day outdoor installation of these works at the ruins of another Yoshihara factory on the banks of the Muko River in nearby Amagasaki that had been bombed by U.S. forces during the war. The *One Day Only Outdoor Art Exhibition* presented some re-creations of works from previous outdoor art exhibitions, such as Shiraga's *Please Come In,* a physically exhausting performance in which the artist hacked the interior of a conical structure composed of red-painted logs with an ax; afterward, visitors were invited to enter in order to confront up close the violence of his marks on the material. The photo session also prompted the creation of several new works that would later appear in *Gutai Art on the Stage*, including Motonaga's pumping of large smoke rings into the air and a performance by Tanaka marked by the unfurling of layered costumes to evoke a sequential color composition in space. The photo essay was never published in *Life*.

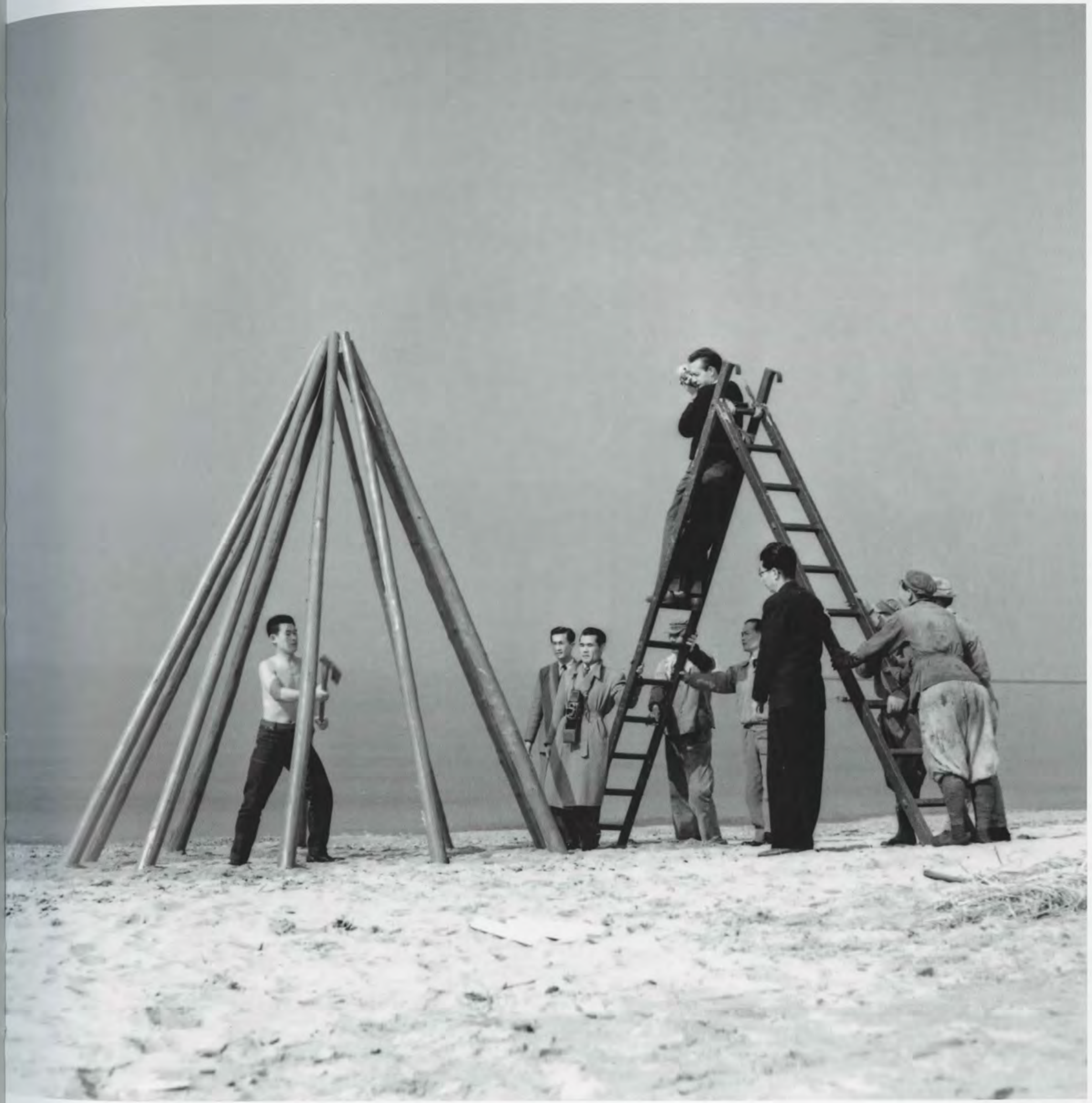

PLATE 55. Shiraga Kazuo performing *Please Come In* for *Life* magazine photographers, Imazu Beach, Nishinomiya, ca. April 6–8, 1956

the concrete

the scream of matter itself

The word *gutai* means "concreteness." It is composed of two characters: *gu*, signifying "tool" or "means," and *tai*, signifying "body" or "substance." Like its English equivalent, *gutai* expresses a physical embodiment or actualization of substance, as opposed to the abstractions of thought. The group's name captured the kind of direct engagement with materials its members were experimenting with around the time of its founding in 1954 and predicted Gutai's most spectacular characteristic: the reciprocity between physical action (throwing, thrashing, breaking, exploding, tearing, pouring) and raw matter (wet paint, sand, tar, mud, smoke, chemicals).

In his "Gutai Art Manifesto" (1956), Yoshihara Jirō dismisses art since the Renaissance for its habit of lifeless mimicry, "the pretense of production by the mind."[1] Rejecting metaphor, figure, theme, morphology, and even meaning, Yoshihara calls for an end to any art that aims to resemble or idealize something. Liberated, Gutai art thus becomes a new site for creativity that embraces the interaction between the human spirit (*seishin*) and matter (*busshitsu*, also translated as "substance" or "material"). For Yoshihara, Gutai art, like decaying ruins, revels in the beautiful "scream of matter":

> Gutai Art does not alter matter. Gutai Art imparts life to matter. Gutai Art does not distort matter.
>
> In Gutai Art, the human spirit and matter shake hands with each other while keeping their distance. Matter never compromises itself with the spirit; the spirit never dominates matter. When matter remains intact and exposes its characteristics, it starts telling a story and even cries out.

Shiraga Kazuo's iconic *Challenging Mud* (1955, plate 59), staged in an outdoor lot at Ohara Kaikan in Tokyo for the opening of the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, demonstrates the collective's approach to making pictures using the whole body. Crawling half naked into a pile of mud, Shiraga wrestled, kicked, thrashed, and squeezed the clay beneath him while invited journalists looked on. He then left the mass on the ground as an artwork for the duration of the exhibition. For Murakami Saburō's performance at the same opening (1955, plate 57), the artist flung himself through huge kraft-paper screens, releasing the material's concrete properties to the explosive sounds of taut paper bursting. Moving from what Yoshihara decried as fraudulent appearances to lived reality, Gutai artists invented ways to go beyond abstract painting into concrete pictures, abandoning the boundaries of canvas to become an encounter with the substance of matter itself.

Gutai's interest in materiality also inspired explorations into the creation of form through destruction. The tactile qualities of matter often came to the fore through violent processes of deformation, erasure, or obliteration, as with Shimamoto Shōzō's series of glued-together and painted-over newspaper surfaces punctured by flurries of cuts and marks (1954, plate 65) and Shiraga Fujiko's collages composed of broken panes of glass layered over torn Japanese *torinoko* paper (1961, plate 66). Gutai's second-phase artists interpreted the group's mandate by pushing industrial or synthetic materials to their physical limits. Matsutani Takesada's bloated sacs made of Elmer's glue inflated with air, for example, sometimes rupture like sores on colorless skin (1966, plates 72–73).

Gutai's concretism was part of a larger discourse of the concrete in the postwar era. Deeply affected by the world's moral and physical ruin, artists around the world repudiated intellectualism and visual aesthetics for a physical embrace of everyday existence, finding authenticity in the denial of symbolism, the freedom of pure gesture, and the materiality of either paint itself or such nonart materials as sand, plaster, sawdust, and dirt. Jean Dubuffet and Yoshihara Michio (1959, plate 62) do not depict gravel and tar; their paintings are *made of* gravel and tar. Like Art Brut, Informel, and Cobra, Gutai rejected psychic automatism and utopianism for material, corporeal acts in the real world. Yoshihara's involvement with revitalizing Japanese traditional arts, specifically Zen calligraphy, also informed his idea of art making as an unmediated encounter between artist, gesture, and material. Purging formalism, Gutai appropriated a variety of gooey, dirty, shiny, rubbery, and grotesque materials—even slaughtered boar, in Shiraga Kazuo's *Wild Boar Hunting II* (1963, plate 60)—to enact rites of "giving life" to visceral matter.

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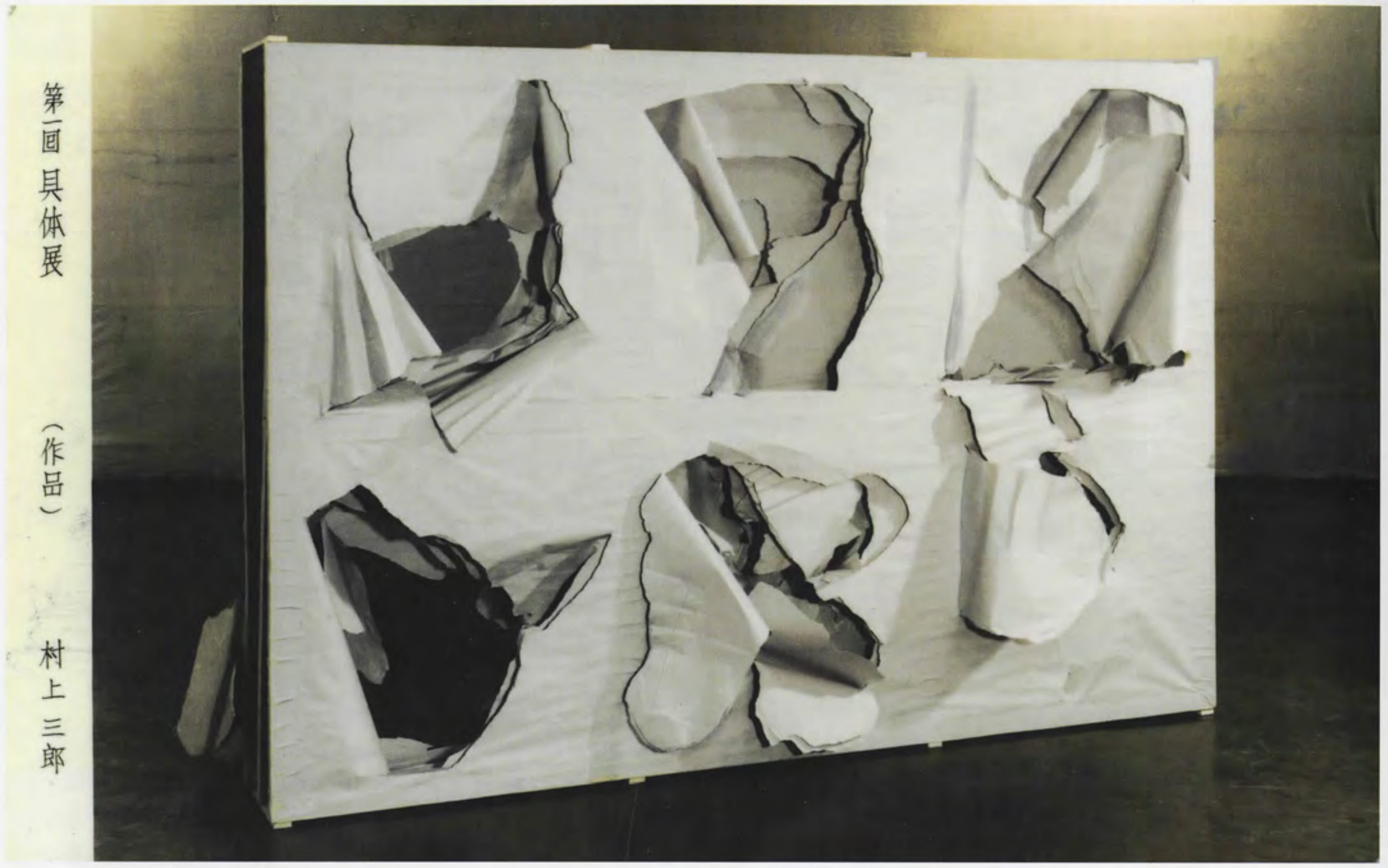
NOTES

[1] All quotes Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai Art Manifesto" (1956), trans. Reiko Tomii, this volume, pp. 18–19.

1st gutai art exhibition



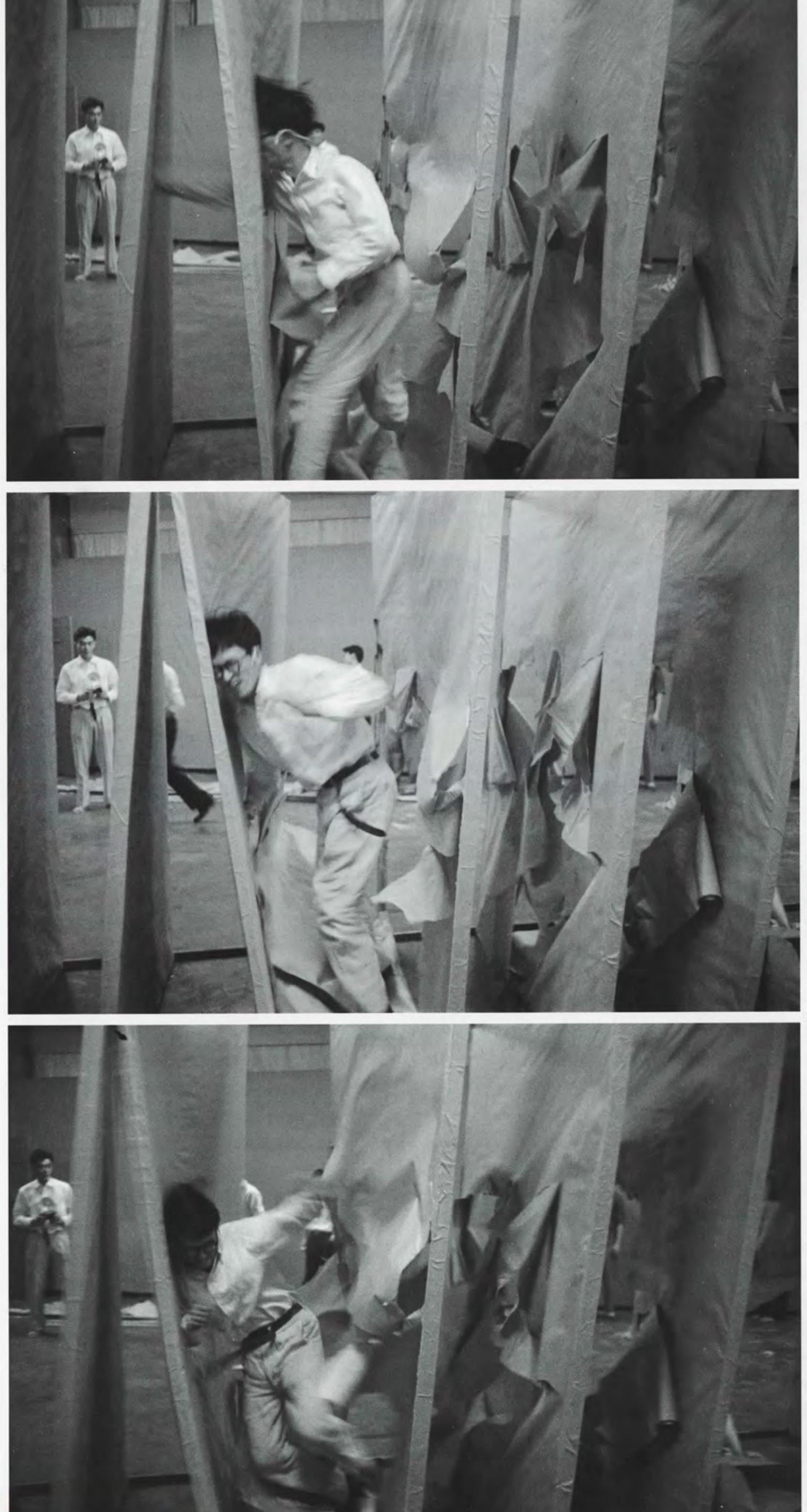
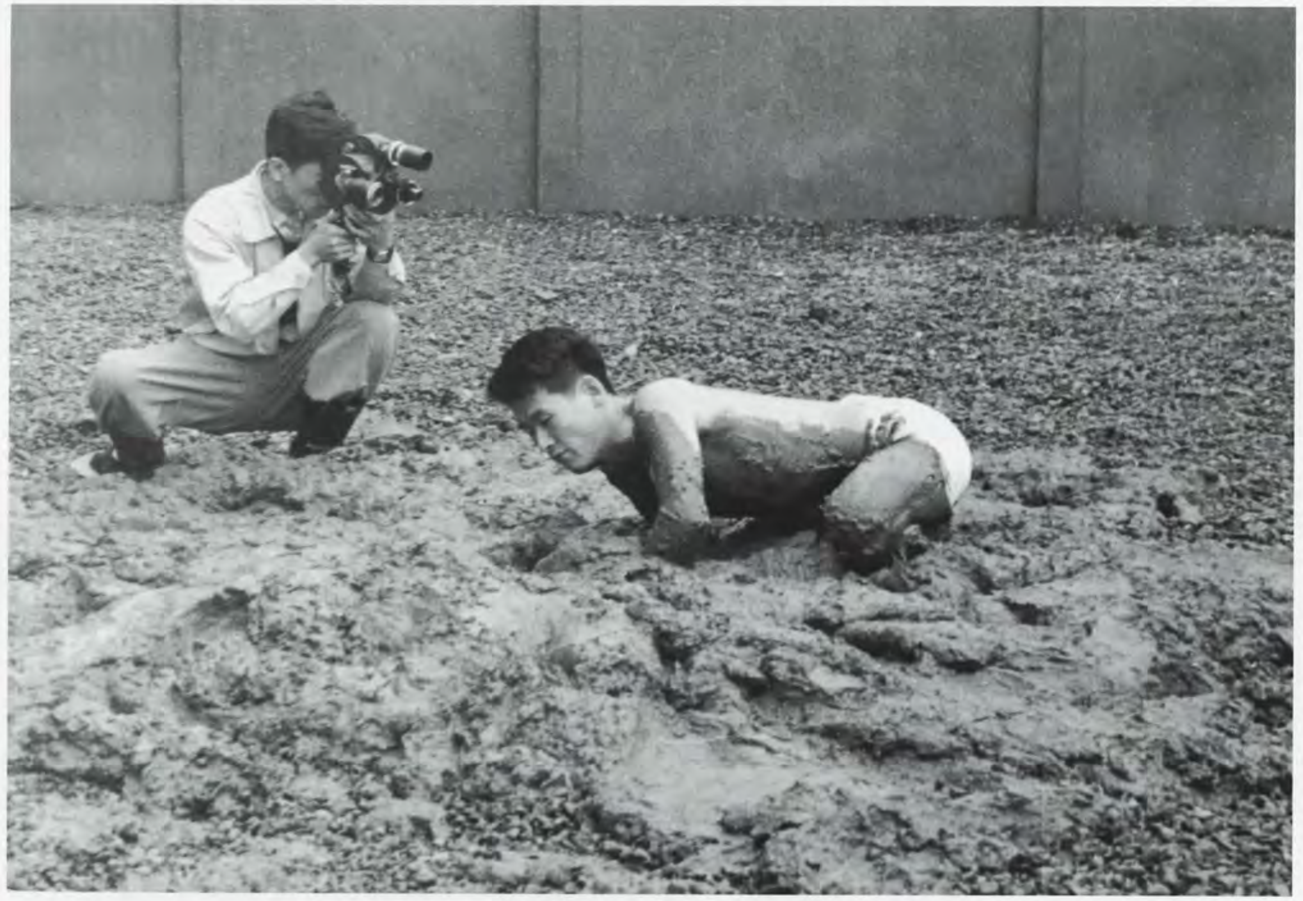


PLATE 57. **MURAKAMI Saburō**, *Work (Six Holes)*, 1955. Kraft paper and wood frames. Installation view: *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1955

At the exhibition opening, Murakami dramatically burst through three paper screens. The torn results were left on view as both a remnant of the action and a composition in their own right.

PLATE 58. **MURAKAMI Saburō**, *Passing Through*, 1956. Performance view: *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, ca. October 11–17, 1956. Photo: Ōtsuji Seiko Collection, Musashino Art University Museum & Library, Tokyo

In this performance, Murakami broke through twenty-one paper screens before collapsing with a concussion.



The Gutai exhibitions held in Tokyo in 1955 and 1956 offered a formal setting for Gutai artists, inspiring the creation of some of the group's most iconic works. Staged in Japan's capital city and cultural center rather than in the group's home Kansai region, the shows took place at the Ohara Kaikan, the headquarters of the vanguard Ohara Ikebana School, whose leader, Teshigahara Sōfū, offered Yoshihara use of the space after seeing the *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun* in July 1955. The *1st Gutai Art Exhibition* (which implemented the numbering system common to the recurring exhibitions held by more conventional Japanese art collectives) broke new ground by staging actions that used the body as a medium, such as Shiraga's *Challenging Mud* and Murakami's *Work (Six Holes)*. The relics of these performances—a pile of mud, torn paper screens—were left on view as artworks in their own right for the duration of the show, expanding the borders of what could constitute painting. The show also featured Tanaka's *Work (Bell)*, a work fusing time, space, and sound, as well as re-creations of Shiraga's *Please Come In*, Motonaga's *Work (Water)*, and Shimamoto's *Please Walk on Here*. Hints of future works appeared in Kanayama's installation *Work*, a large balloon marooned on the gallery floor, and Yamazaki's rearrangeable *Tin Cans*.

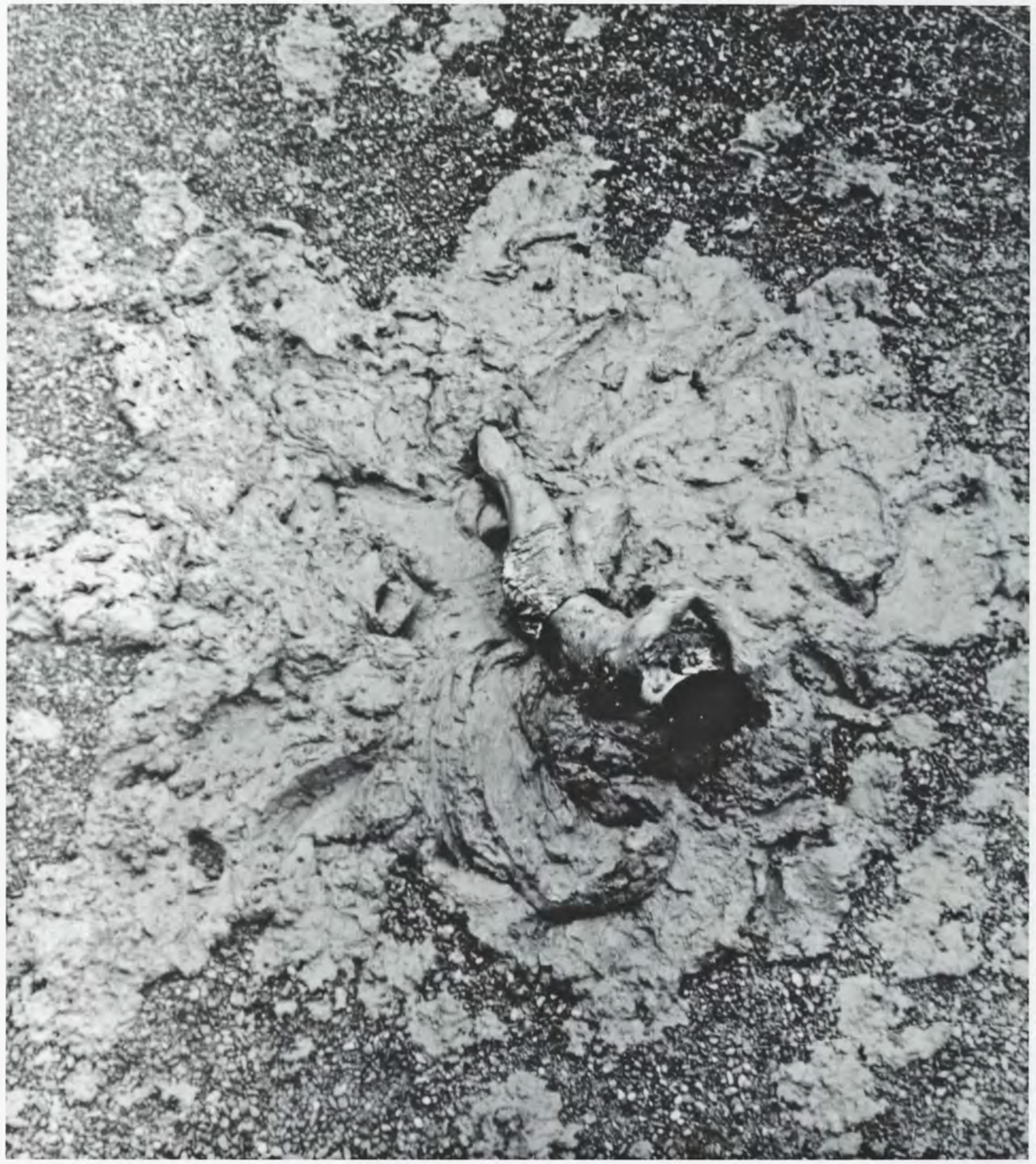
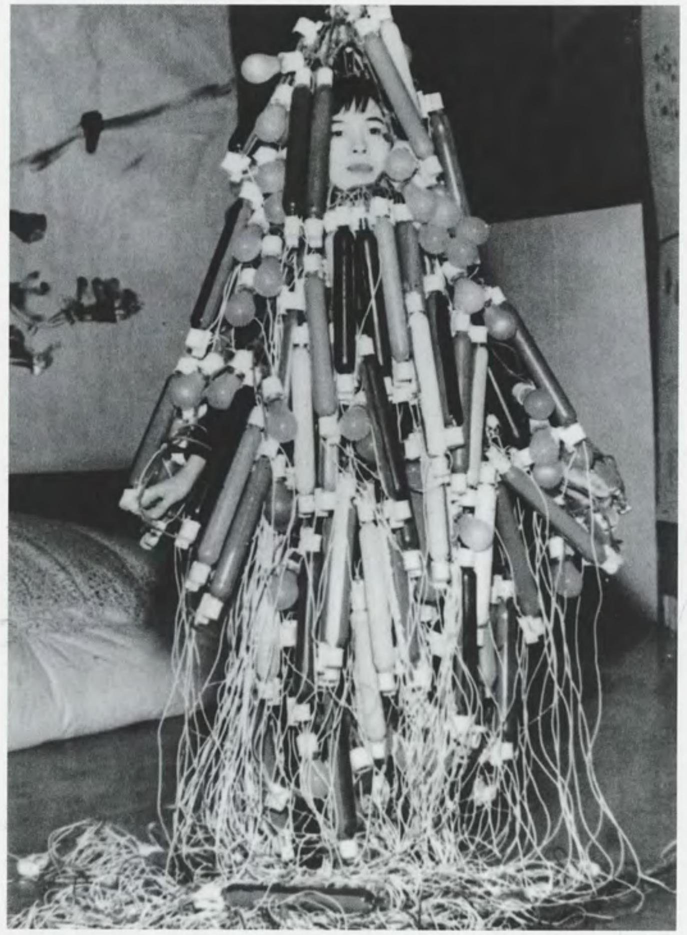


PLATE 59. **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, *Challenging Mud*, 1955. Performance views: second execution (this page) and third execution (opposite page), *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, ca. October 19–28, 1955

tanaka's electric dress and related works



Tanaka Atsuko's interests in schematic and technical representation, wiring systems, lights, and the human form reached their pinnacle in her best-known work, *Electric Dress*, created in 1956 for the *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition* at Ohara Kaikan in Tokyo. Showcased alongside drawings that recall wiring diagrams, this spectacular costume was made of flashing incandescent lightbulbs painted bright yellow, green, red, and blue. Designed to be worn in performance—potentially giving an electric shock to its wearer—Tanaka's machine-dress was inspired by Japan's new neon-saturated urban environments and is an early example of Gutai's fusion of art and technology. *Electric Dress* was also featured in *Gutai Art on the Stage*, in 1957, where it was paired with Tanaka's crosslike, blinking-light costume sculptures from the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition* of 1955. The work also appeared in a collaborative finale with Motonaga's *Smoke*.

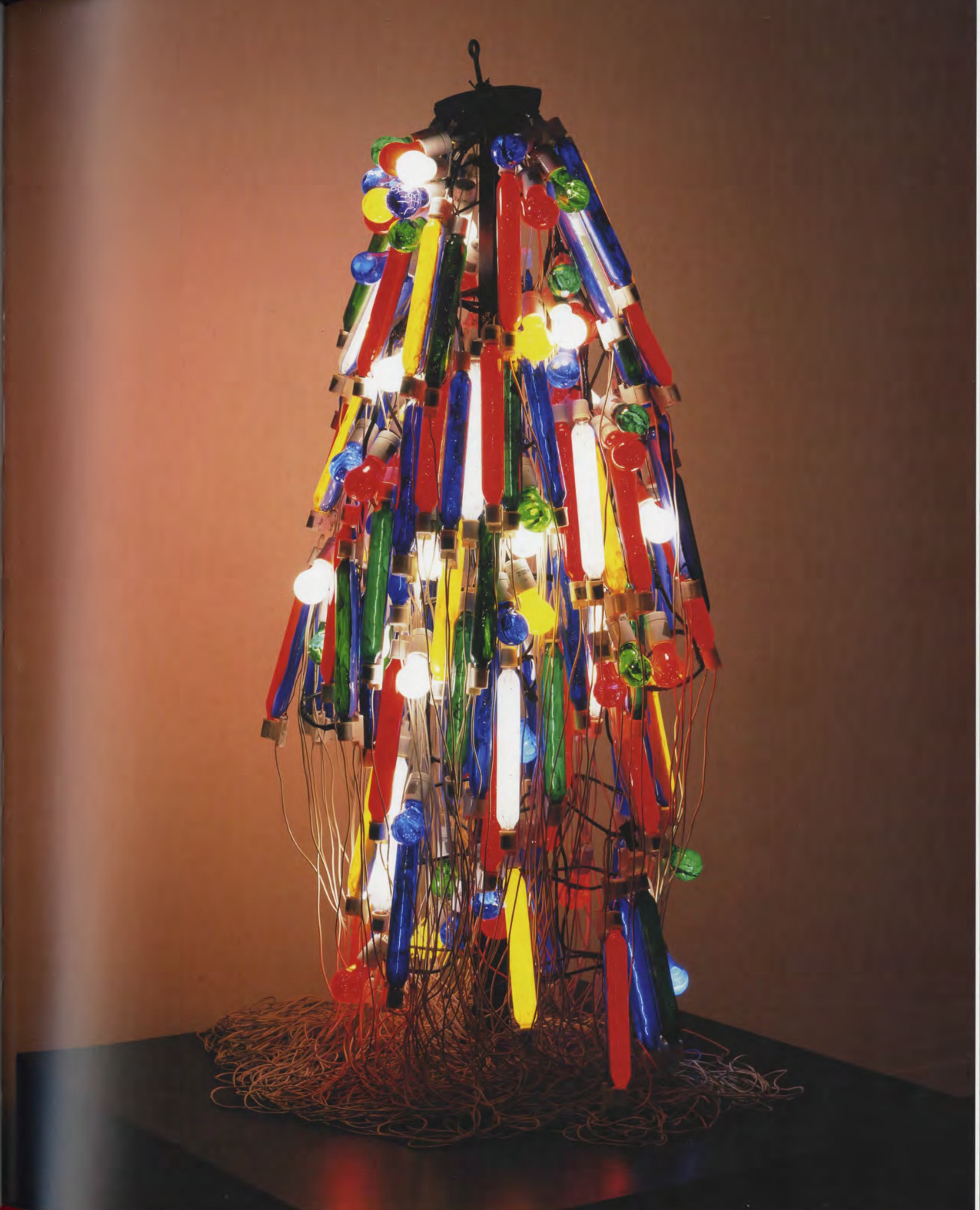


PLATE 92. **TANAKA Atsuko**, *Electric Dress*, 1956 (refabricated 1986).
Synthetic paint on incandescent lightbulbs, electric cords, and control console, approximately 165 × 80 × 80 cm. Takamatsu City Museum of Art, Japan

Above: Tanaka wearing *Electric Dress* at *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, ca. October 11–17, 1956

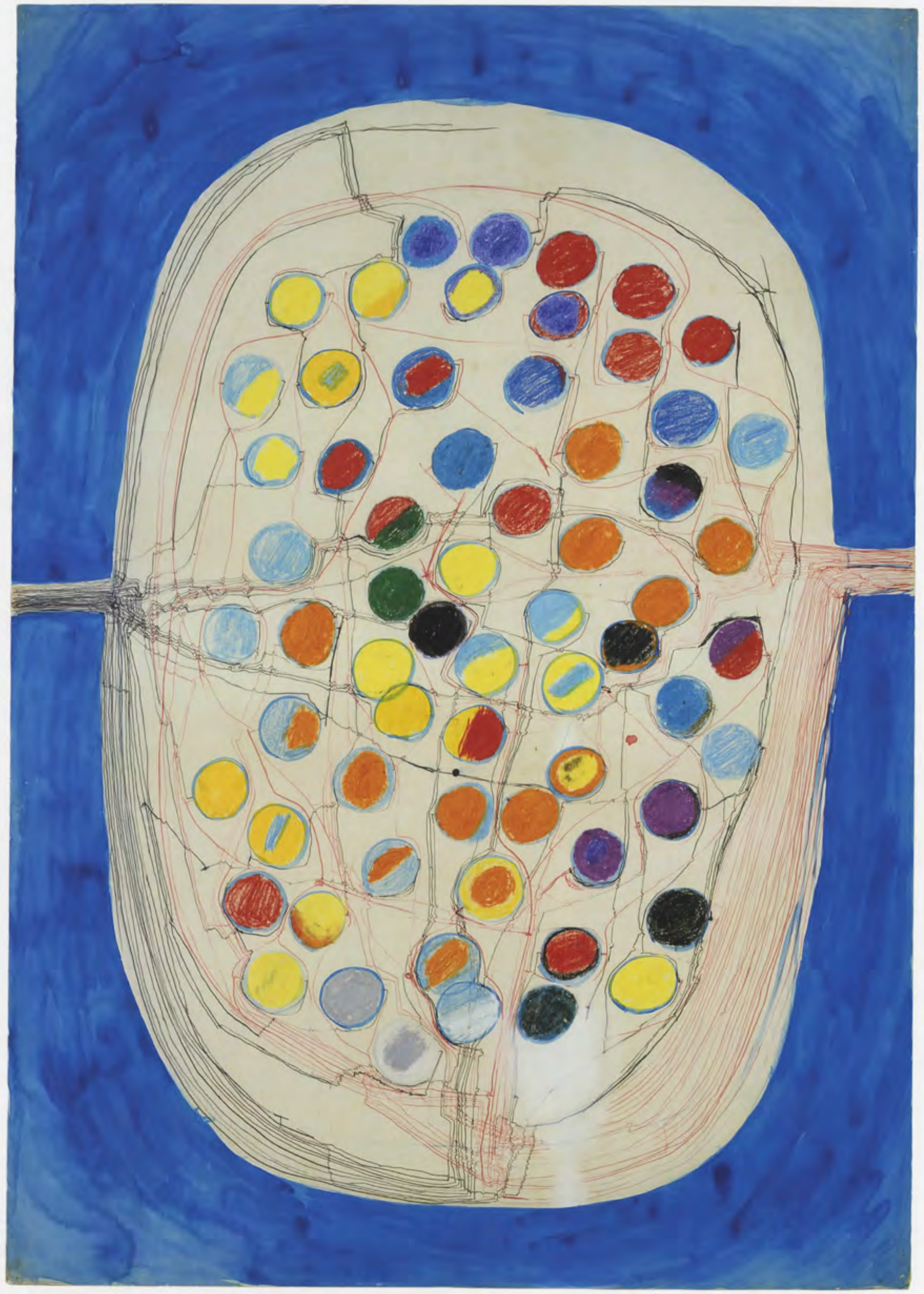
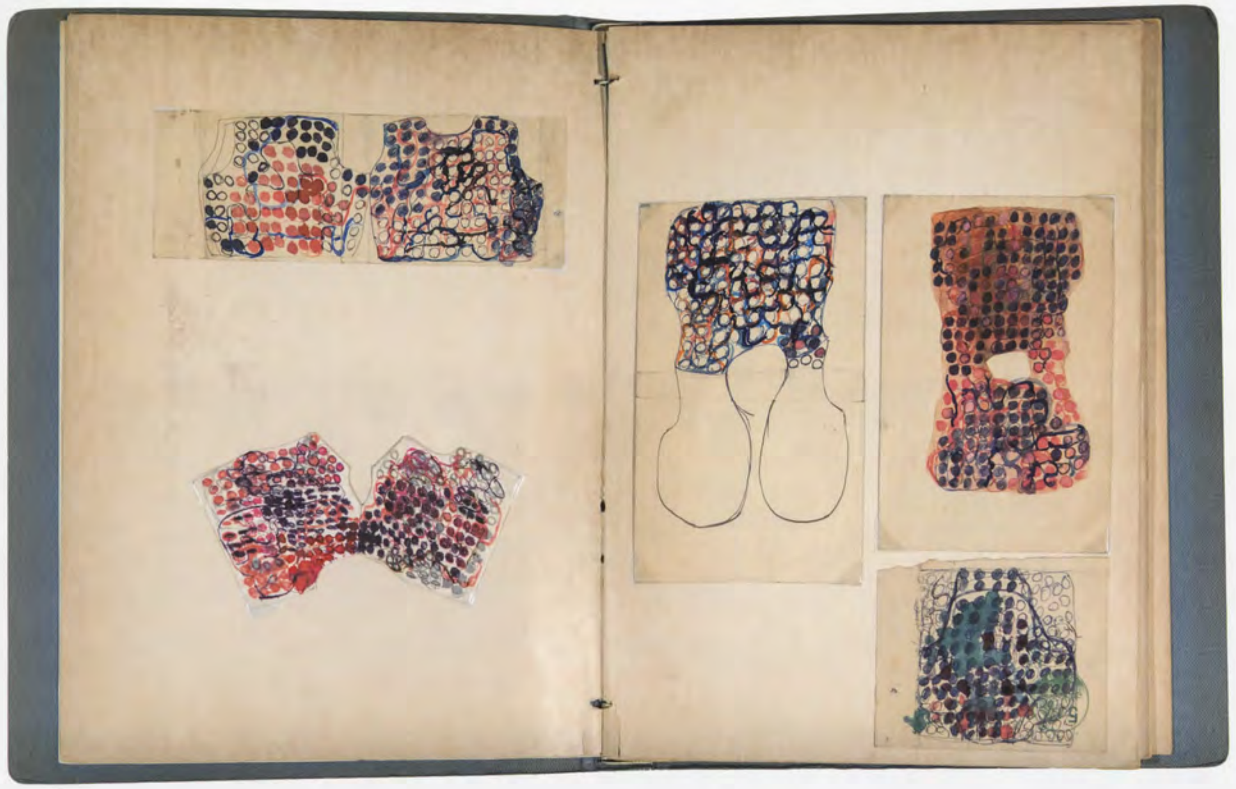


PLATE 93. **TANAKA Atsuko**, *Drawing after Electric Dress*, 1956. Ink, crayon, and watercolor on paper, 109 × 77 cm. 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan



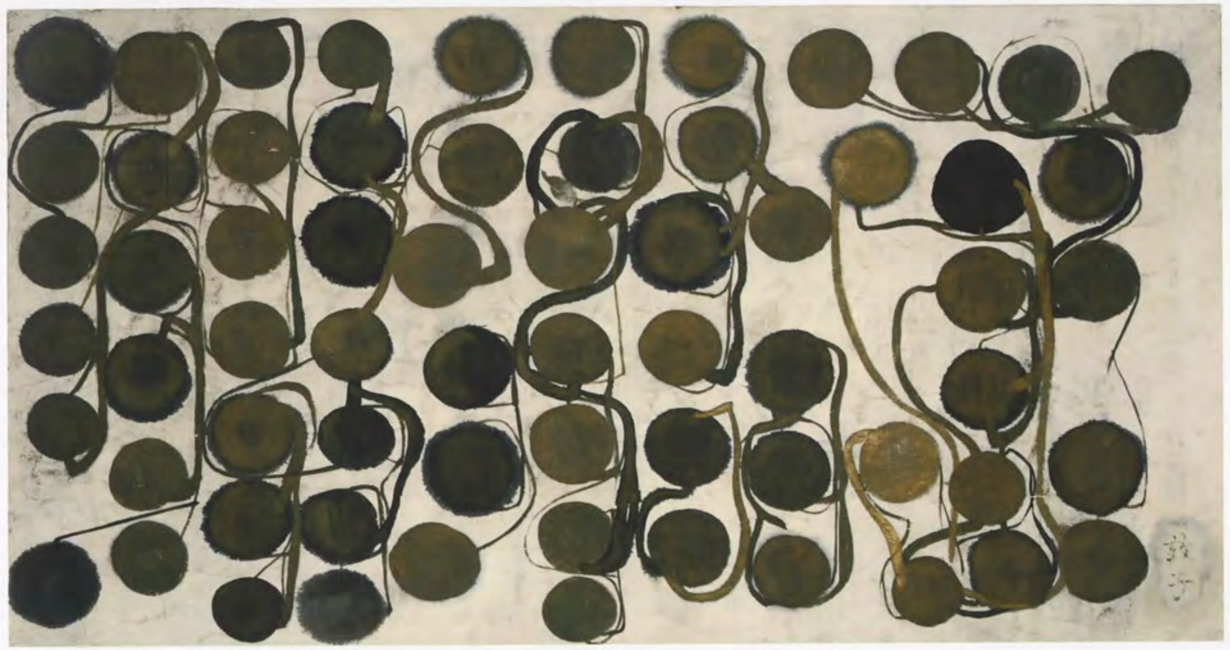
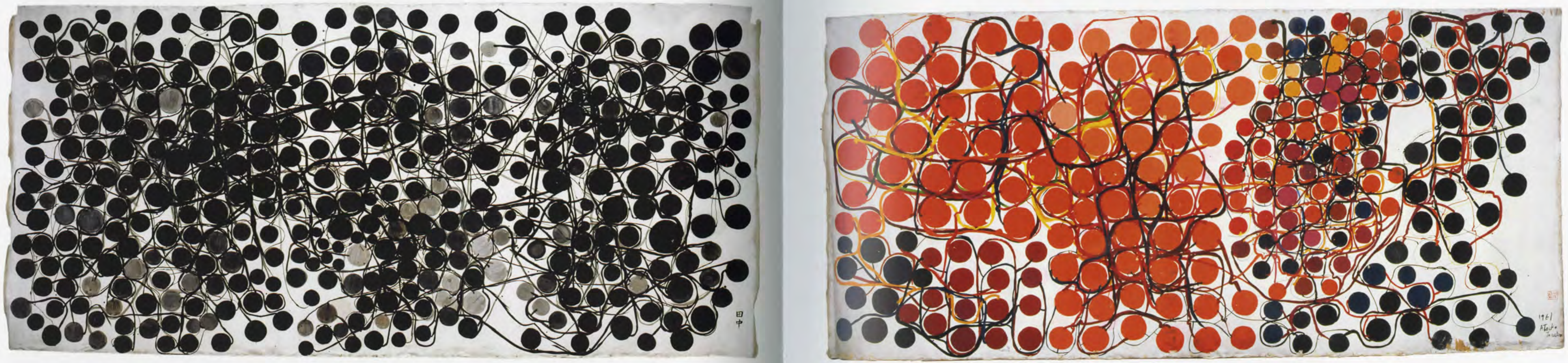


PLATE 94. **TANAKA Atsuko**, sketchbook, 1956–63. Sixty-two drawings in ink, graphite, and crayon, 30.2 × 23 cm each. Private collection, New York

PLATE 95. **TANAKA Atsuko**, *China Ink, Gold*, 1957. Ink and watercolor on paper, 33.5 × 63.2 cm. Private collection, Japan



recto

verso

PLATE 96. **TANAKA Atsuko**, *Work*, 1961. Synthetic paint on canvas, 175 × 388 × 7.5 cm.
Osaka City Museum of Modern Art

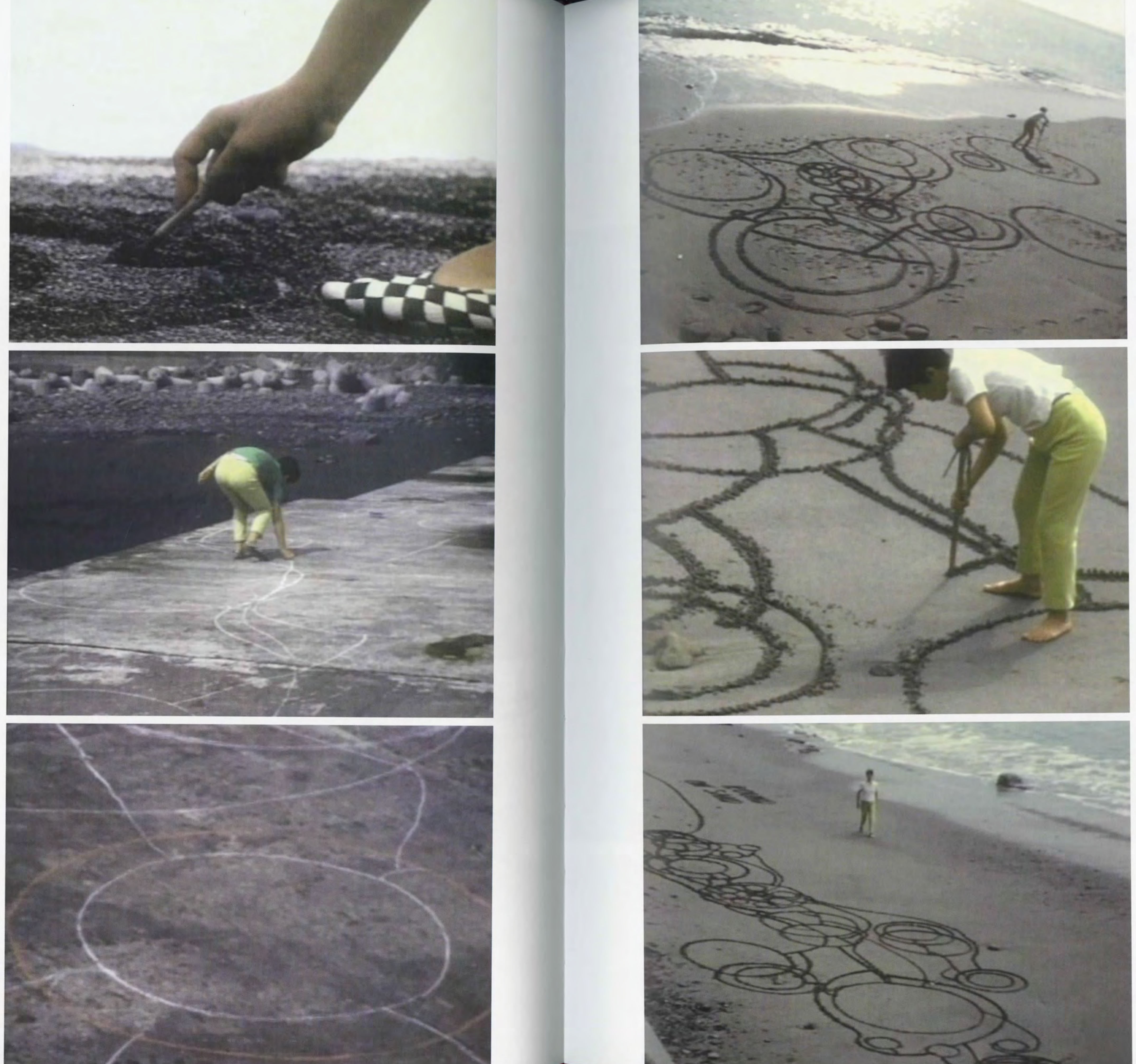


PLATE 97. **TANAKA Atsuko**, *Round on Sand*, 1968. 16 mm color film, with sound, 9 minutes 44 seconds. Filmed and produced by Fukuzawa Hiroshi. Private collection

gutai art on the stage

Inspired by the theatricality and spectacle of Gutai's outdoor exhibitions, and by how far the group had gone beyond conventional formats of painting and sculpture, Yoshihara Jirō proposed live performance as the natural next step in the group's innovations, organizing *Gutai Art on the Stage* at Sankei Kaikan in Osaka on May 29 and Sankei Hall in Tokyo on July 17, 1957, and its sequel, *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage*, at Asahi Kaikan in Osaka on April 4, 1958. In *Gutai 7*, he wrote, "Gutai Art is constantly seeking ways of creating new, unknown, and unexplored beauty. . . . We are certain that these works, and the format in which they are presented, will be revolutionary for the entire world—East and West." Composed as a sequence of performances by Gutai members, each demonstrating the act of making a picture, *Gutai Art on the Stage* combined action, material, object, sound, light, and projection into a literal spectacle of "pictures with time and space." Through these boundary-defying experiments, Yoshihara sought to create a new art form that "takes a step away from conventional fine arts . . . [but] does not yet belong to traditional stage art."

The twelve pieces presented in the first *Gutai Art on the Stage* included Shiraga Kazuo's *Ultramodern Sanbasō* (plate 99), Yamazaki Tsuruko's *Light Film*, Shimamoto Shōzō's *Material Destruction* (fig. 32), Nakahashi Kōichi's *Painting Using Automatism*, Kanayama Akira's *Giant Balloon* (plate 101), Yoshihara Jirō's *Two Spaces*, Yoshihara Michio's *Hand-Drawn Slides*, Yoshida Toshio's *Image*, Murakami Saburō's *Wrestling with Folding Screen*, Tanaka Atsuko's *Stage Clothes* (plate 100), and Motonaga Sadamasa's *Smoke*. The second iteration consisted of eleven works: Murakami Saburō's *Broom*, Shiraga Kazuo's *Two Fans*, Shimamoto Shōzō's *Concrete Film*, Sumi Yasuo's *Painting in Space*, Tanaka Atsuko's *Shining Discs and Clothing*, Shiraga Fujiko's *Wall*, Motonaga Sadamasa's *Stretch*, Kanayama Akira's *Biological Balloon*, Yoshihara Michio's *Rock around the Clock* (plate 102), Yoshida Toshio's *Ceremony by Cloth* (plate 103), and Yoshihara Jirō's *Strange Thing*.

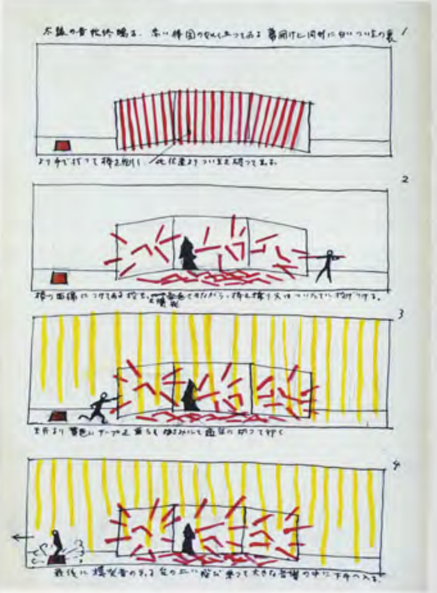


PLATE 98. **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, notebook page with sketch for *Ultramodern Sanbasō*, ca. 1957. Ink and watercolor on paper, approximately 25.2 × 17.7 cm. Private collection, Japan

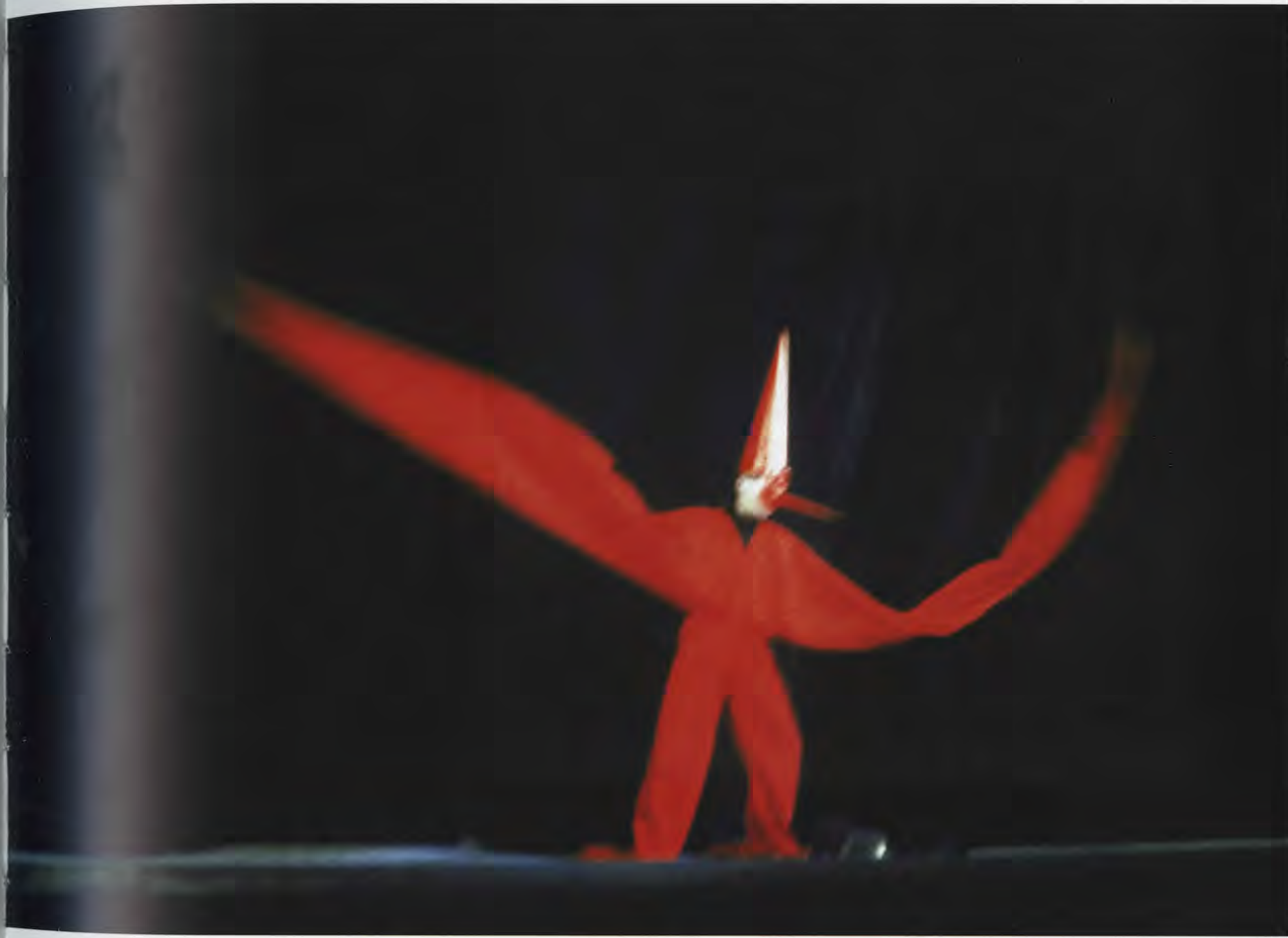


PLATE 99. **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, *Ultramodern Sanbasō*, 1957. Performance view: *Gutai Art on the Stage*, Sankei Kaikan, Osaka, May 29, 1957

environment

gutai art for the space age

New directions in environment art[1] marked Gutai's second phase (1962–72), and in retrospect, it inspired some of the group's wildest and most innovative "dream[s] for a new society."[2] From its inception, Gutai gaily took art outside gallery confines to engage with the public in ordinary outdoor spaces like parks, making the dynamic realm of the everyday part of their exhibitions. They transcended convention through their means of art making as well, incorporating sound, motion, and light to expand an artwork from a static object to a spatial field. Abroad, vanguard artists active with Happenings and the German Zero and Dutch Nul groups recognized Gutai for these kindred experiments in color, light, and movement.

From the mid-1960s, Gutai actively participated in the dominant public discussion on art, science, and technology leading up to Japan's Expo '70, which was held in its hometown of Osaka. In an age marked by rapid industrialization, the rise of robotics and computers, and a Cold War space and nuclear arms race, artists such as Gutai's youngest member, Imai Norio, reimagined art as a catalyst for society's "direct experiences" and "unmediated encounters" with the built environment in all its urgent complexity.[3] Gutai's humanizing impulse toward the use of new technologies also stemmed from an international discourse that envisioned "a new global culture"[4] sustained by art forms that were radically postpainting and philosophically postatomic. This utopian/dystopian transnational vantage originated in Gutai's participation in the *Nul 1965* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1965 (plates 110–11) and the related, unrealized *Zero on Sea* project, envisioned for a huge pier in The Hague in 1966 (plates 112–13).

Gutai's environment art was in great measure driven by its second-phase artists, who showed in the 15th through 17th *Gutai Art Exhibitions* held in Osaka and Tokyo in 1965 and 1966. The group included Imai, Imanaka Kumiko, Kikunami Jōji, Nasaka Senkichirō, Matsuda Yutaka, Mukai Shūji, and Yoshida Minoru. In 1967, Imai, Kikunami, and Matsuda showed their sculptures in the interdisciplinary, non-Gutai exhibition *From Space to Environment* in Tokyo. This exchange linked Gutai to the latest thinking about environment as a symbiotic interaction between artwork, site, and viewer, an innovation that bridged the fields of visual art, performance, and urban design.[5] Energized by the times, Gutai's participatory environments took the form of organic or geometric abstract sculptures incorporating kinetic, light, and sound elements. Brightly colored, metallic, or stark white, they were made of new plastics, rubbers, and reflective metals, either by the artist's hand or commercial fabricators. Exploring a phenomenological matrix, the works played with optical illusion, light projection, and movement. Artists frequently motorized their sculptures, turning exhibition spaces into chaotic dens of screeching, pulsing, machinelike organisms. Yoshida Minoru's erotic machine-sculpture *Bisexual Flower* (1969, plate 124) mines the psychedelic effects of this approach and demonstrates how Gutai artists sought to humanize technology through animating it. Gutai's exhibition display also drew on contemporary architecture, technology, and urban design to promote a futuristic, space-age aesthetic. In 1967, for example, the group organized the exhibition *Gutai Art for the Space Age* in a suburban amusement park outside Osaka, playing up the science-fiction qualities of its contraptions.

Gutai's activities culminated with its multiplatform participation in Expo '70. This extravaganza offered itself as an international testing ground for the future city. Its organizers called for "modern art" that would display "the elimination of the border between art and the environment and use of light, sound, color, and movement, not separately, but linked in a synthesis together with technology."[6] What would turn out to be Gutai's last group exhibition was a collaborative work by its members, who installed their foaming, blinking, and rotating optical, kinetic, and electric-light sculptures, as well as paintings, on Nasaka's giant armature in the lobby of the Midori Pavilion (1970, plate 123). Composed of aluminum pipes punctured with holes that emitted music by Yoshihara Michio, this gleaming structure zigzagged through the darkened exhibition hall, transforming the entire area into one interactive and expanded sound and light environment. The Guggenheim commissioned Nasaka, at age eighty-eight, to re-create this work for the 2013 *Gutai: Splendid Playground* exhibition.

ALEXANDRA MUNROE

NOTES

[1] *Kankyō geijutsu* (environment art) is the Japanese equivalent of intermedia. Here, however, I am using the term "environment art" more generically. See Midori Yoshimoto, "Limitless World: Gutai's Reinvention in Environment Art and Intermedia," this volume, pp. 259–64.

[2] Kikunami Jōji, "What Technology Demands" (1969), this volume, pp. 283–84.

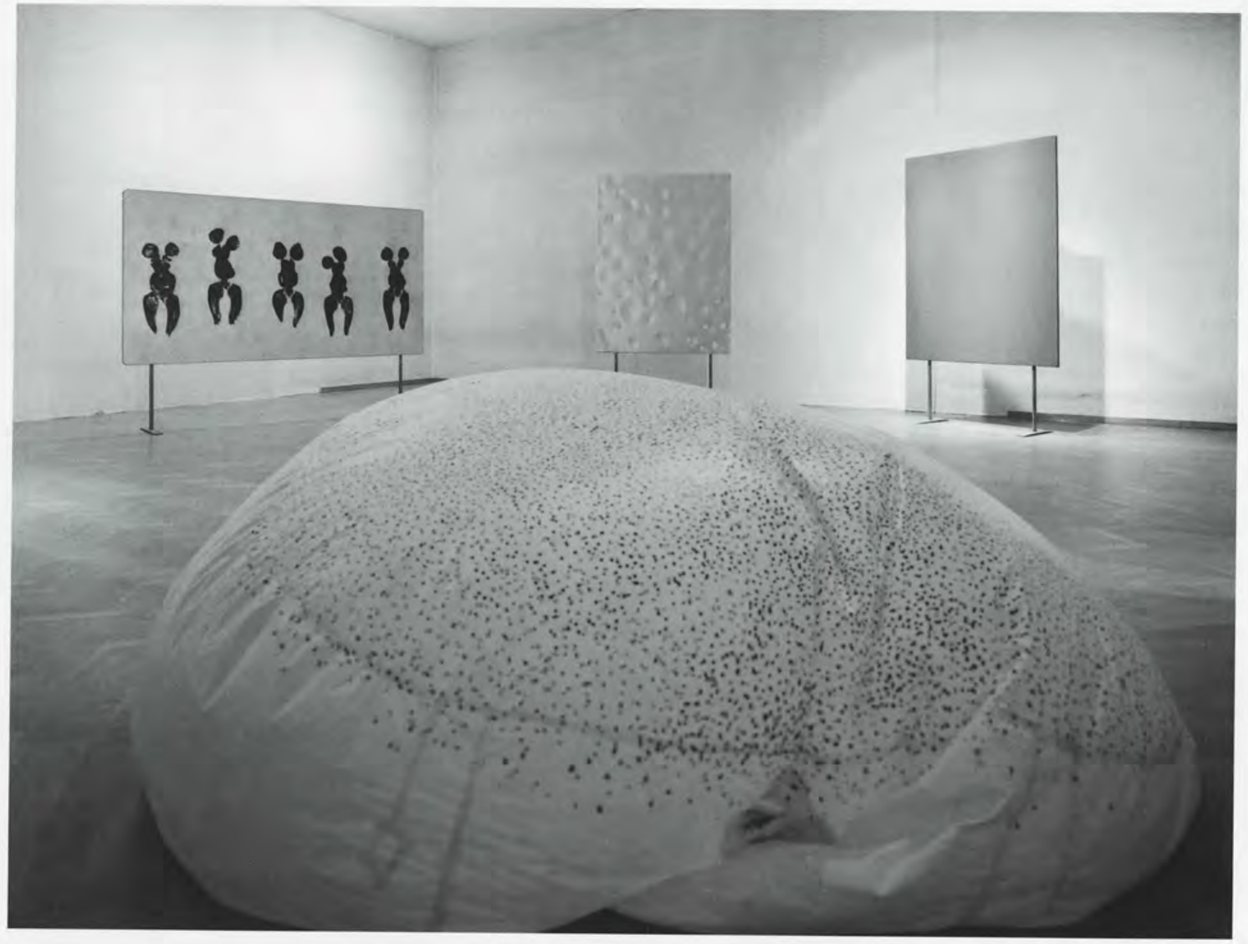
[3] Imai Norio, "Between Concept and Everyday" (1969), this volume, p. 285. The notion of Gutai's "humanizing" approach toward technology is argued further by Ming Tiampo in her essay "Please Draw Freely," this volume, pp. 45–79.

[4] Henk Peeters, interview with Ming Tiampo, October 4, 2007, Hall, Netherlands. Quoted in Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 128.

[5] This thinking was influenced in part by the Metabolists, a group of Japanese architects and designers who envisioned futuristic city structures based on models of organic growth. See Midori Yoshimoto, "From Space to Environment: The Origins of *Kankyō* and the Emergence of Intermedia Art in Japan," *Art Journal* 67, no. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 24–45.

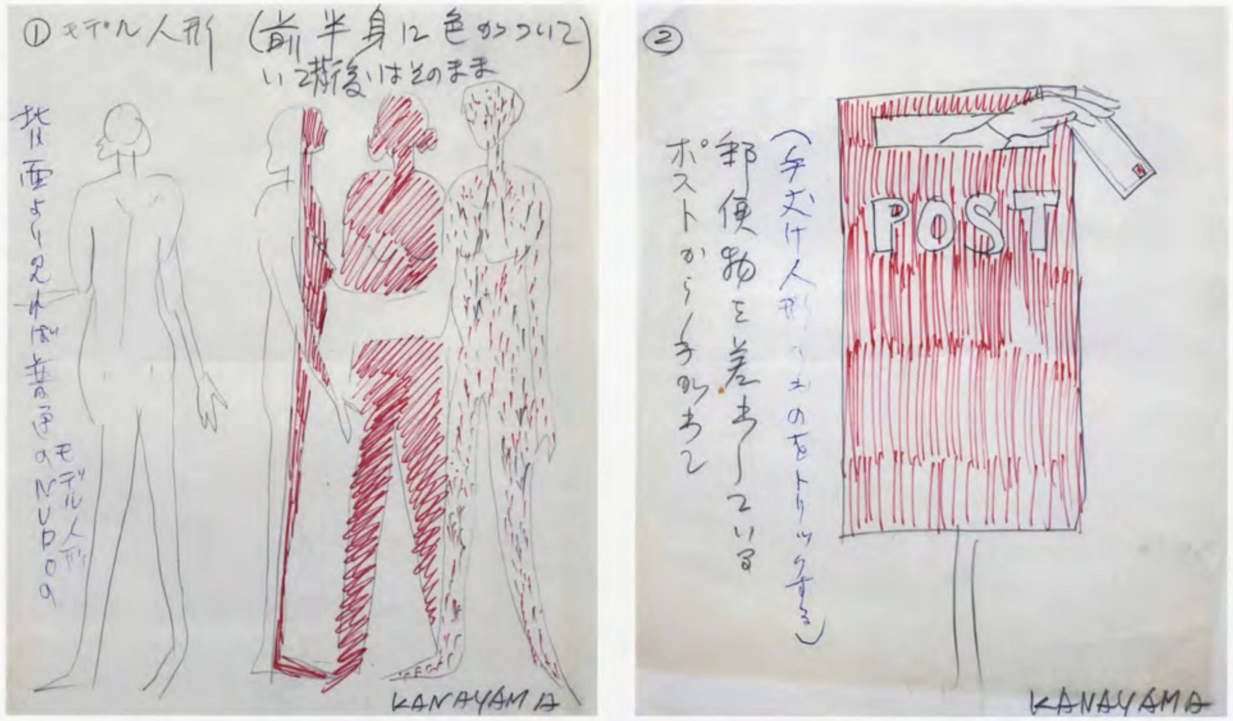
[6] "Reportage = Japan World Exposition: What role does modern art play?", *Bijutsu techō*, no. 283 (June 1967). Quoted in Yamamoto Atsuo, "Gutai: 1954–1972," in *Gutai ten I, II, III/Gutai I, II, III* (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1994), p. 41.

nul 1965



The increasing international interest in Gutai reached the Dutch artist-curator Henk Peeters in 1961. The group's environmental installations using natural elements such as water, wind, and light as well as movement and sound resonated with Peeters and other artists active in the collectives Nul, based in the Netherlands, and Zero, based in Germany. Fascinated by the transnational coincidences in the various groups' experiments and committed to fostering a "new global culture," Peeters invited Gutai to participate in the historic *Nul 1965* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, April 15–June 8, 1965. On site, Yoshihara and his son Michio reconstructed several Gutai installations of 1955–57 and created new ones based on sketches by Gutai members. The exhibition positioned Gutai as a forerunner of contemporary tendencies. Participants in *Nul 1965* included Arman, Armando, Pol Bury, Enrico Castellani, Hans Haacke, Yves Klein, Yayoi Kusama, Lucio Fontana, Heinz Mack, Otto Piene, George Rickey, Jesús Soto, and Günther Uecker, among others.

PLATE 109. **KANAYAMA Akira**, *Balloon*, 1956. Plastic, ink, and air, 100 × 260 × 440 cm (inflated). Installation view: *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Background: three works by Yves Klein


① モデル人形 （前半身に色がついていて後はそのまま）
背面より見れば普通のモデル人形のNUDOの
KANAYAMA
②
（手だけ人形の方をトリックする）
郵便物を差し出している
ポストから手が出て
POST
KANAYAMA

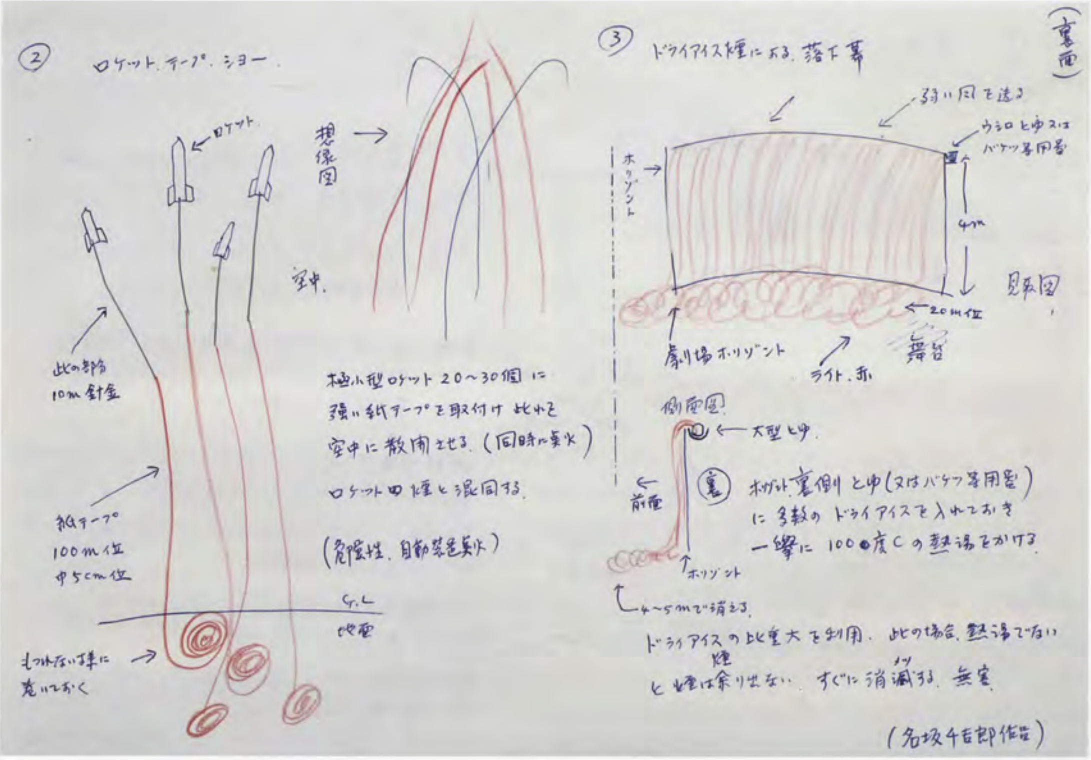
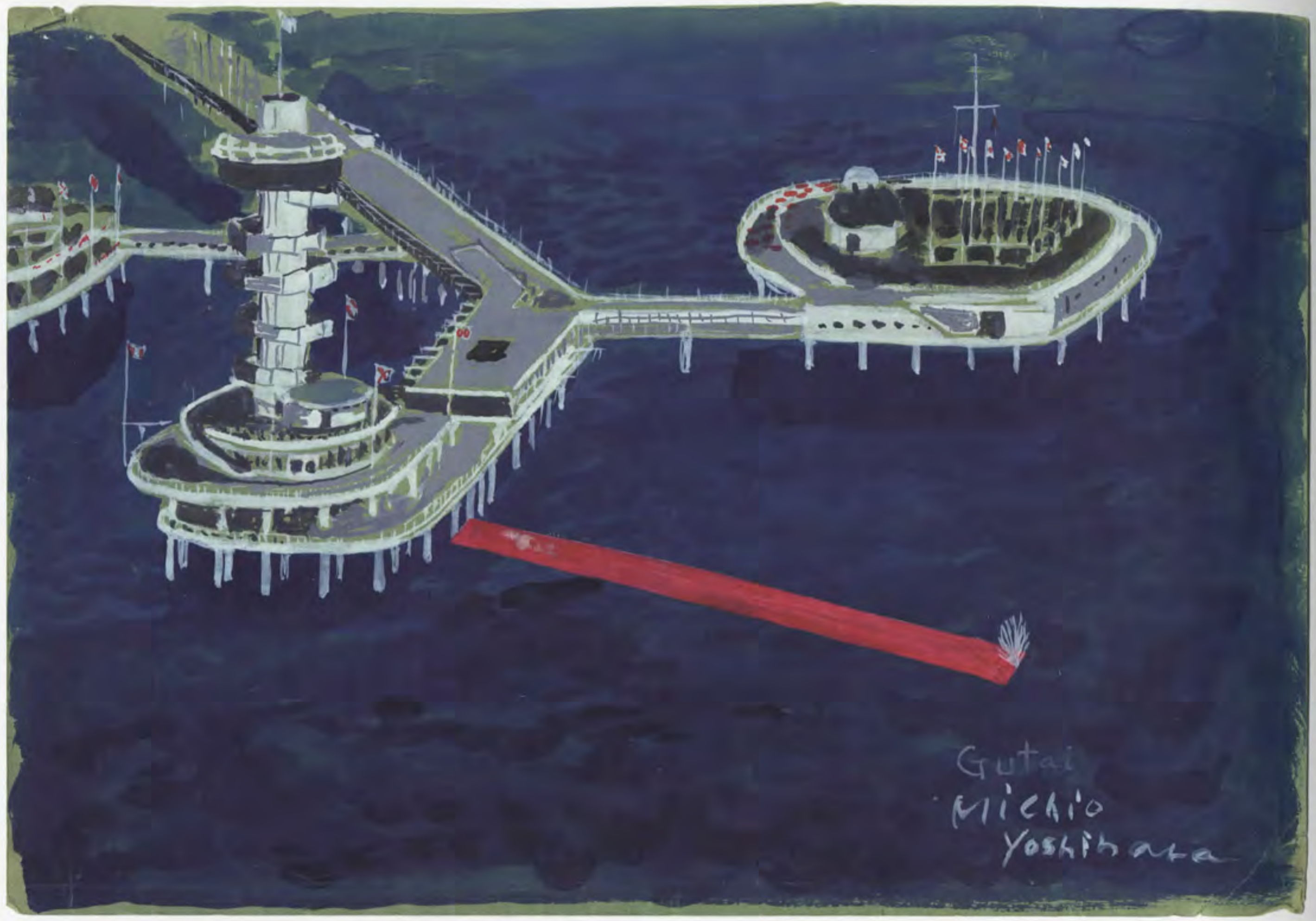

② ロケット、テープ、ショー.
←ロケット
想像図 →
空中.
此の部分 10m 針金
紙テープ 100m位 巾5cm位
もつれない様に巻いておく
G.L
地面
極小型ロケット 20〜30個 に 強い紙テープを取付け 此れを 空中に散開させる. （同時に点火）
ロケットの煙と混同する.
（危険性. 自動発点火）
③ ドライアイス煙による. 落下幕
（裏面）
弱い風を送る
ウシロ とゆ又は バケツ等用意
ホリゾント →
4m
見取図
←20m位
劇場ホリゾント
ライト. 赤
舞台
側面図
←大型とゆ.
←前面
㊞ ホリゾント裏側 とゆ（又はバケツ等用意）に多数のドライアイスを入れておき 一挙に 100度C の熱湯をかける.
↑ホリゾント
4〜5mで消える.
ドライアイスの比重大を利用. 此の場合, 熱湯でないと煙は余り出ない. すぐに消滅する. 無害
（名坂千吉郎作品）

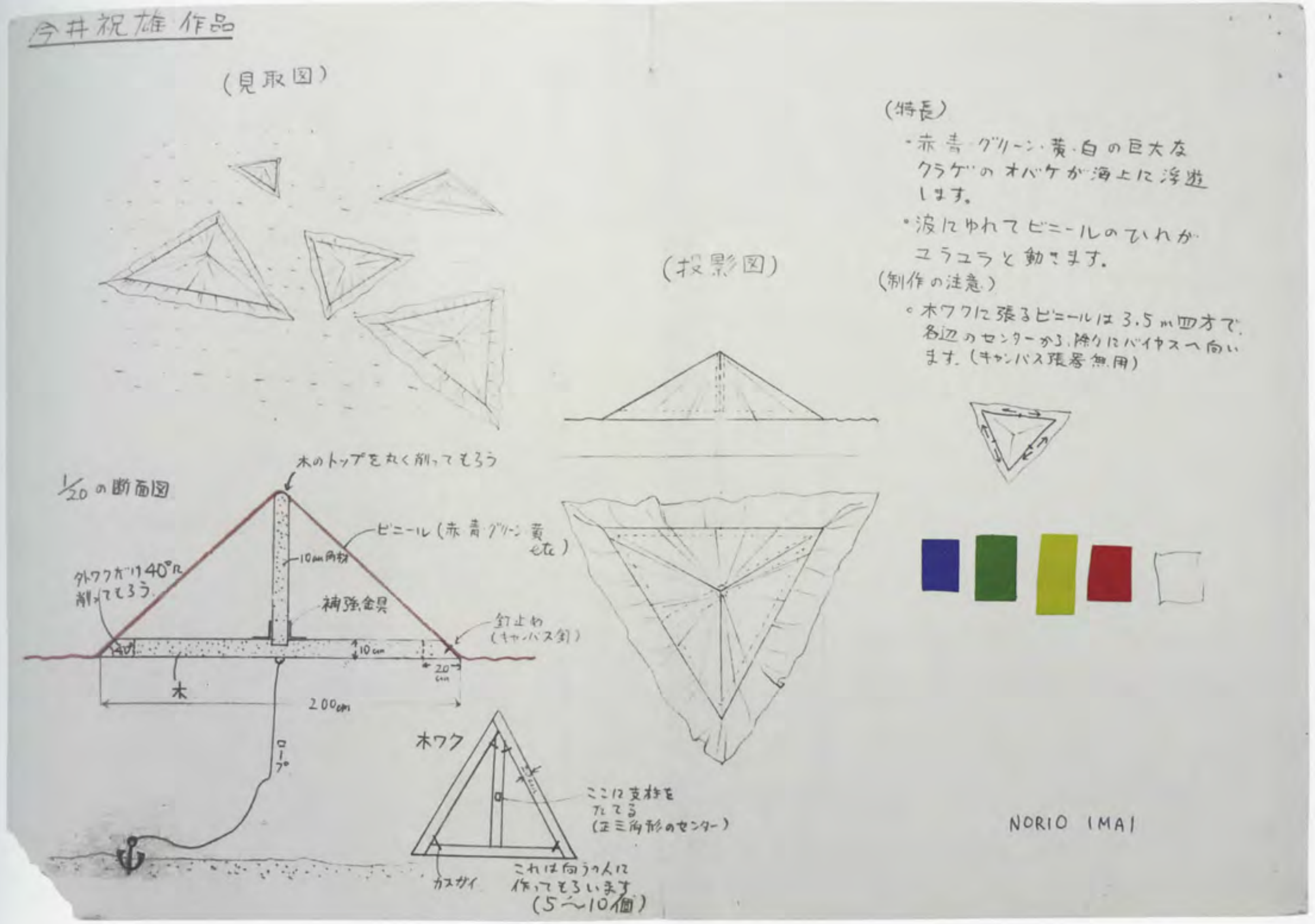
PLATE 110. **KANAYAMA Akira**, two sketches for *Nul 1965*, ca. 1965. Graphite, ballpoint pen, and felt-tip pen on paper, 25.0 × 20.8 cm each. Private collection

PLATE 111. **NASAKA Senkichirō** and **NASAKA Yūko**, sketch for *Nul 1965*, ca. 1965. Ballpoint pen and colored pencil on paper, 25.4 × 35.8 cm. Private collection

zero on sea


Gutai
Michio
Yoshihara

Zero on Sea (*Zero op Zee*) was an ambitious international art event planned for Scheveningen Pier in The Hague in fall 1965, soliciting proposals for site-specific projects from some fifty artists from more than ten countries that would harness the elements and transform the pier structure into a single vast outdoor *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Initiated by the pier's private owner to publicize the new landmark, the project was organized by art gallerists Albert Vogel and Leo Verboon of The Hague's Internationale Galerij Orez ("Zero" spelled backward) in collaboration with Henk Peeters. Vogel and Verboon travelled the world to select artists for the event and in August 1965 met with Yoshihara Jirō in Osaka. A number of Gutai artists, including several younger members, proposed projects for *Zero on Sea*, making it one of the most vibrant and experimental platforms for later Gutai art. Due to practical and financial challenges, however, *Zero on Sea* was never realized. Many of the artists' designs were exhibited at Orez in April 1966 and published in the June 1967 issue of the Dutch architectural journal *Forum*.


今井祝雄 作品
(見取図)
(投影図)
1/20の断面図
木のトップを丸く削ってもろう
ビニール(赤 青 グリーン 黄 etc)
10cm角材
外ワクが40°に削ってもろう
40°
補強金具
釘止め(キャンバス釘)
10cm
20cm
木
200cm
ロープ
木ワク
ここに支柱をたてる(正三角形のセンター)
カスガイ
これは向うの人に作ってもろいます(5〜10個)
NORIO IMAI

(特長)

・赤・青・グリーン・黄・白の巨大なクラゲのオバケが海上に浮遊します。

・波にゆれてビニールのひれがユラユラと動きます。

(制作の注意)

・木ワクに張るビニールは3.5m四方で、各辺のセンターから、除りにバイヤスへ向います。(キャンバス張器無用)

PLATE 112. **YOSHIHARA Michio**, proposal for *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*), ca. 1966. Watercolor on paper, 24.5 × 35 cm. Collection of Caroline de Westenholz, courtesy Albert Vogel Archive, The Hague City Archives

PLATE 113. **IMAI Norio**, proposal for *Zero on Sea* (*Zero op Zee*), ca. 1966. Ink and graphite on paper, 25 × 35.5 cm. Collection of Caroline de Westenholz, courtesy Albert Vogel Archive, The Hague City Archives

gutai

splendid playground

MING TIAMPO ALEXANDRA MUNROE

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GUGGENHEIM

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Organized by Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe

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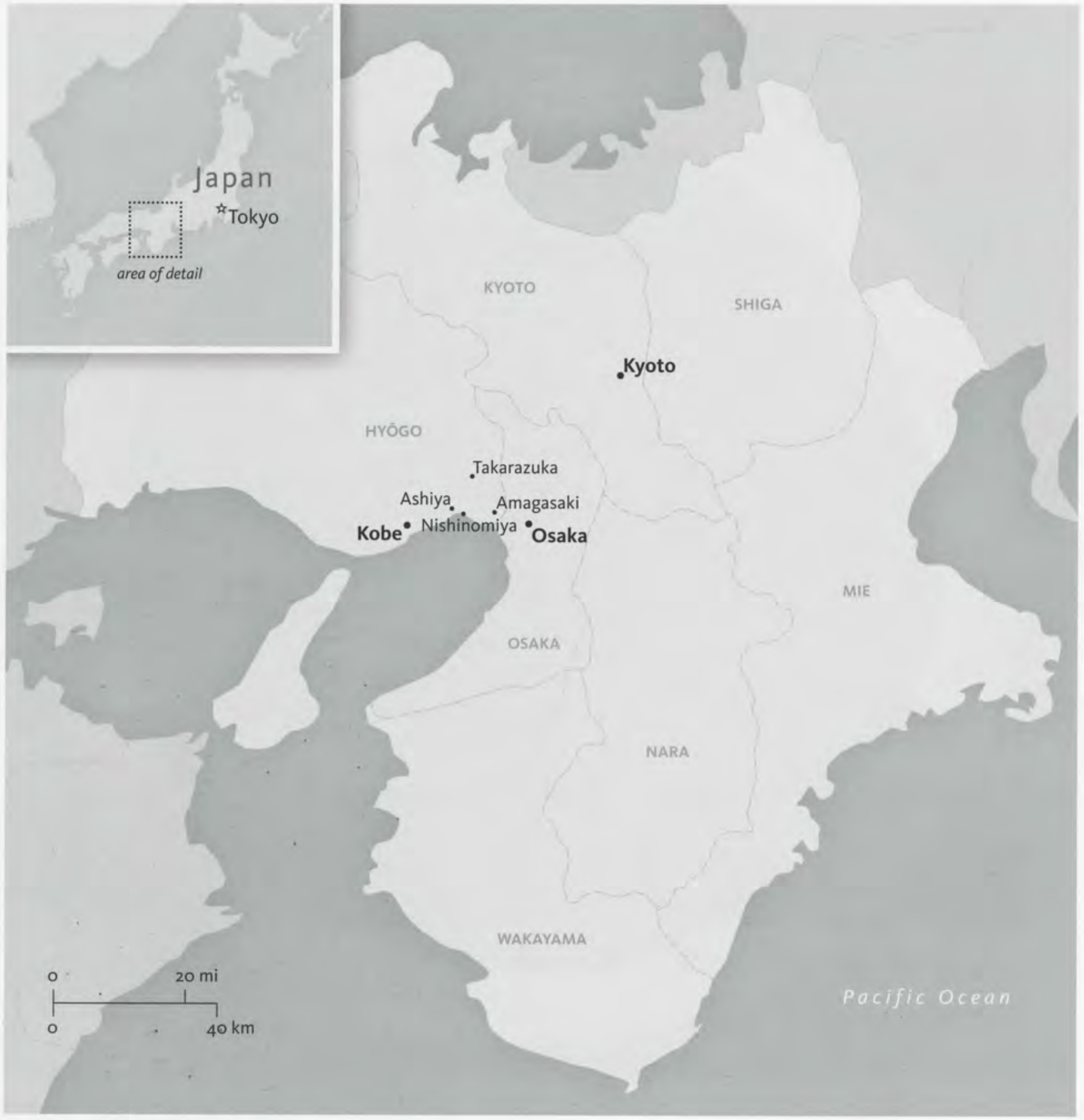
Notes to the Reader:
Japanese names are written according to Japanese convention, with surname first, followed by given name. Exceptions were made for individuals living or working abroad.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations by the author. Author's translations from *Gutai* journal occasionally differ from those in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010).

Frontispiece: Yoshihara Jirō and Gutai members at *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, 1956. Top row, from left: Tanaka Atsuko, Murakami Saburō, Yamazaki Tsuruko; middle row, from left: Mizuguchi Kyōichi, Kanayama Akira, Shimamoto Shōzō; bottom row, from left: Yoshihara Jirō, Motonaga Sadamasa, and Horii Nichiei

Endpapers, front: detail of model for Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)* (1956/2013) for *Gutai: Splendid Playground*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011; back: Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival*, 1960, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 19–24, 1960

new perspectives on gutai



Kansai region and its prefectures

prewar kansai cosmopolitanism and postwar gutai

HIRAI SHŌICHI

For nearly a quarter of a century, Gutai has been evaluated in Japan and in the West with a particular focus on the group's first phase, from 1954 to 1961, and on the extent to which Gutai was a pioneering, innovative, and original movement with a wide-reaching international influence. To one degree or another, these approaches share the common notion that Gutai simply emerged from a tabula rasa in the postwar era, in the wake of Japan's military defeat. But is it accurate to say that the group had no historical link to the prewar era? And more critically, why did Gutai emerge from Ashiya, a small city located between Osaka and Kobe, instead of from Japan's cultural center, Tokyo?

It is well known that Gutai was controlled by its founder and leader, Yoshihara Jirō. Yoshihara was born in 1905 to a wealthy merchant family in Osaka, which at the time was the center of commerce and industry in Japan. In the mid-1920s, the family moved to Ashiya. The area had been an agricultural community prior to the modern era, but the construction of the Hanshin Electric Railway in 1905 and the Minō Arima Electric Railway (now the Hankyū Railway) in 1920 (both of which run between Osaka and Kobe), and their accompanying housing developments, transformed Ashiya into a highly desirable residential district for affluent families seeking a suburban environment away from the increasingly overcrowded and polluted conditions of the city. This urbanized stretch extending from Kobe to Kyoto in western-central Japan comprises the Kansai region, which was known for its diverse local culture, dialect, cuisine, and character.

In the 1920s and 1930s, an alternative culture, heavily influenced by modern Western architecture, art, and lifestyle, flourished in the area, which encompassed not

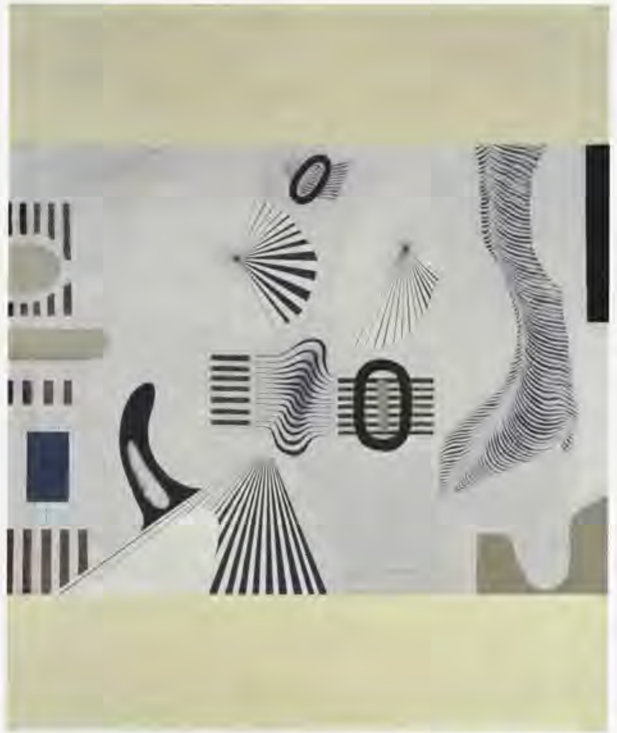


FIG. 49. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Illustration*, ca. 1934. Oil on canvas, mounted on board, 158.8 × 133.5 cm. Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

only Ashiya but also similarly upscale developments such as Nishinomiya and Takarazuka.[1] Yoshihara typified this Kansai cosmopolitanism. Having first studied art while living in Osaka, he gradually took an interest in European avant-garde art of the era against the backdrop of the new and hopeful cultural climate in Ashiya. He began in the mid-1930s to paint in a manner reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico but soon shifted his focus to abstraction (fig. 49), and in 1937, he received his first attention from the Tokyo art world when he showed abstract paintings in the annual exhibition hosted by Nika-kai (Second Section Society), the leading modernist art group, known for its opposition to academism. Yoshihara's voluminous library holdings reveal that he acquired a large number of Western art books, magazines, and exhibition catalogues from the 1930s onward. It is evident that his progression toward abstraction at this time was influenced by his avid study of a variety of styles depicted in the reproductions of modern paintings in these publications.[2] His Western-language collection consists of some three hundred volumes, an astounding number that includes comprehensive publications on contemporary European modes of abstraction.[3] In contrast to other prewar avant-garde artists, who were able to learn of new artistic expressions only from the small number of reproductions of abstract paintings printed in Japanese art magazines, Yoshihara could obtain more up-to-date materials from the West with greater speed and in larger quantity. In addition to new painting styles, Yoshihara also observed from these publications what seemed to be a unique sensibility shared by artists living in modern cities, regardless of their national or ethnic origin, and he became convinced that abstraction was the optimal way of expressing this common spirit.

Yoshihara's modern sensibility, international perspective, and devotion to abstraction, born out of the cultural climate of the prewar Kansai region, came to serve as the foundation for Gutai's postwar activities. This influence is particularly evident in the group's use of the stage as a means of presenting artwork. Gutai's onstage experiments were shown at the *1st* and *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage* exhibitions in 1957 and 1958 in Osaka, and in collaboration with the Morita Modern Dance Company in *Don't Worry, the Moon Won't Fall Down!*, in Osaka in 1962. Although the *Gutai Art on the Stage* exhibitions are often seen as a direct precursor to performance art, which became established as an art form in the 1960s, the idea of integrating the body with objects, lights, and sound and presenting that union as a single work on the stage had been explored in Japan as early as the mid-1920s.

Influenced by Dada and Futurism, a group called Sanka presented *Sanka in the Theater* at Tokyo's Tsukiji Little Theatre in May 1925. Among the participants were the artists Asano Mōfu and Okamoto Tōki, who had been involved in various art activities in Tokyo since the early 1920s.[4] Following the Great Kantō Earthquake in September 1923, however, Asano and Okamoto had evacuated to Kobe but maintained their association with Sanka. The area where the two lived in eastern Kobe was also home to Kwansei Gakuin University, a school founded by American missionaries. Attracting a group of younger people from the university who had similar interests in new forms of artistic expression, Asano, Okamoto, and *Sanka in the Theater* inspired the students in February 1926 to stage their own performance, *Amazing Futurist Theater: Conscription Examination*, as part of the university's first culture festival.[5] Unfortunately, there are no extant scripts or photographs of the show, but we do have the account of Hayashi Yoshiki, who attended the event:

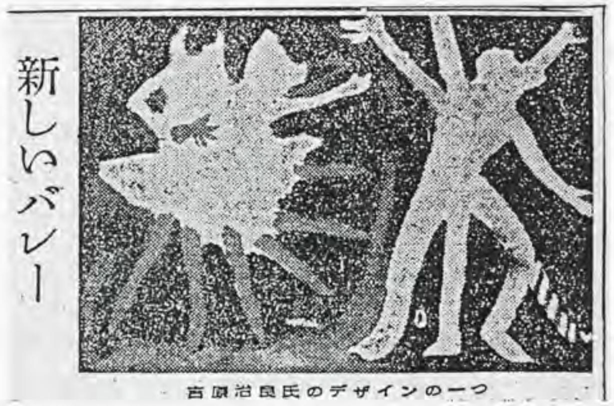
> The only things visible were several people's feet moving this way and that beneath a black curtain that hung across the stage. [The performers] would go back and forth in greater or lesser numbers, and though they were engaged in a strange dialogue, [the audience] couldn't make out what they were saying. Eventually, a wedding ceremony was about to begin, but a key player in the event, the bride, was nowhere in sight. The moving feet grew increasingly hurried, and the performers' voices grew louder as they searched for the bride. Throughout the hall, there were also utterances from the audience such as "What happened to the bride?" "Where did the bride go?," and "Bring out the bride!" The performers and the audience were unified in the clamorous situation. Just before things got completely out of hand, we caught a glimpse of a slender, white-gloved hand clutching the bride's bouquet at the edge of the stage. A man who appeared to know the bride attempted to pull the bouquet. Amidst the continued jeering of "Show us the bride's face!" and "Come out!," the spotlight was turned on the bride's white hand. Then, the lights suddenly fell, leaving the stage pitch black, and the curtain came down.[6]

From Hayashi's description, we can imagine that, as the title suggests, the students were strongly influenced by the Italian Futurists' challenging stage works, in which the artists attempted to draw the audience into the performance. Yoshihara at this time was enrolled in Kwansei Gakuin's college of commerce. Although there is no firm evidence that he saw *Amazing Futurist Theater*, he was acquainted with Takenaka Iku, a future modernist poet who participated in the show.[7] *Sanka in the Theater* was also covered in nationally published art journals, so there is a strong possibility that Yoshihara was aware of these examples of expressive stage presentations prior to the war.[8]

Although Yoshihara did not have an opportunity to create a performance work of this kind at the time, he showed an interest in the medium as an opportunity to achieve the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in part through his role as a set designer for *Twilight Concerts*, an outdoor program held at Hankyū Nishinomiya Stadium not long after the war, in August 1949.[9] Launched by the Asahi newspaper company in 1948 and continued through 1956, this series of midsummer outdoor entertainment featured a variety of performances, including jazz, classical music, and ballet, every Saturday night. The program typically featured Western music and dance, and it was thus natural that Yoshihara, an artist embodying modern aesthetics, became involved.

Following this endeavor, Yoshihara created a series of stage designs for ballet and modern dance concerts and fashion shows in Osaka and Tokyo (fig. 50), before he conceived the first *Gutai Art on the Stage* in 1957.[10] Yoshihara mostly oversaw stage design for fashion shows, which, unlike set design for ballet, in which the scenes are largely predetermined, allowed for abstraction and freedom of expression. All the fashion shows Yoshihara designed for during this period featured the work of fashion designer Tanaka Chiyo.

The oldest daughter of a Tokyo baron, Tanaka studied fashion in Switzerland, Germany, and the United States in the 1930s. After returning to Japan, she opened the Tanaka Chiyo Dressmaking Institute in the Motoyama district of eastern Kobe in 1937 and became one of



新しいバレー

吉原治良氏のデザインの一つ

FIG. 50. Newspaper clipping of **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, set design for Komaki Ballet Company, *America*, 1950. Performance view: Asahi Kaikan, Osaka, March 12, 1950

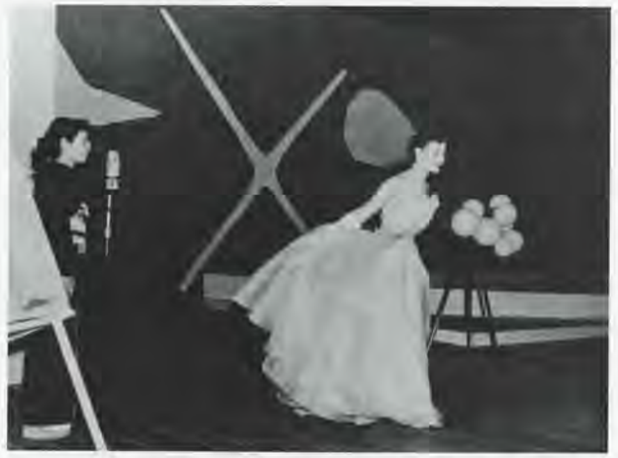


FIG. 51. **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, set design for *Tanaka Chiyo: Grand Fashion Show*, 1952. Performance view: location unknown. Left: Tanaka Chiyo

Japan's pioneering female fashion designers, thereby contributing to prewar Kansai cosmopolitanism. After the war, Yoshihara oversaw the stage design for at least six of her fashion shows between 1952 and 1955.[11] Most notable were the *Tanaka Chiyo: Grand Fashion Show* (fig. 51), held in April 1952, and the *Sankei International Grand Fashion Show*, held later that same year, which included seven models invited by the Sankei newspaper company from the John Robert Powers Modeling School in New York, and traveled to large venues such as the Imperial Garden Theater in Tokyo and the Kabuki-za Theater in Osaka. Both shows represented the vanguard of the industry at the time. Crowds of people packed into the performance halls, which were filled with a high level of energy and excitement. It is possible that Yoshihara's experience stage designing for these fashion shows, which were conceived as single, unified events that were unconstrained by a narrative and encouraging interaction among the body, objects, lights, music, and audience, was essential in forming his concept for *Gutai Art on the Stage*.[12]

In examining Yoshihara's gradually deepening relationship to the stage as an expressive format, it is evident that *Gutai Art on the Stage* grew out of the cultural roots of prewar Kansai cosmopolitanism and that it was no accident that Gutai emerged from this unique context in Ashiya. The group was formed by the combination of the fertilizing modernization of the prewar Kansai region and the youth and sensitivity of the postwar generation. The two-tiered approach of Yoshihara with the younger Gutai artists—that of a pre- and a postwar sensibility—gave Gutai a unique quality that set it apart from other Japanese avant-garde groups of the period, which primarily arose out of more conventional peer groups.

The polarity between Yoshihara's experience and that of the younger Gutai artists both hindered and expanded the group's overall modes of expression. Yoshihara's foundational model for Gutai's activities, for example, hampered the potential for expressive expansion concerning performance. A progression from the stage as an appointed site for the presentation of art to an everyday environment, in the vein of a Happening, would have been an obvious step for the group, but this notion fell outside Yoshihara's view that art and artistic concepts must not endanger or discomfit the viewer.[13] On the other hand, if Gutai's membership had consisted only of young postwar artists, the group may never have considered using the media to transmit information about their activities to the West, and without this diversity, which manifested itself in friendly rivalries and critiques, the artists would not have been able to produce work with the quality and power to withstand more pointed evaluation from abroad.

Situating Gutai's activities and works within the context of contemporary Western trends is an important task, but this synchronic focus alone is unlikely to present a true picture or convey the essential nature of the group. Examining the group's activities based on a broader historical perspective on modernism that stretches back to the beginning of the twentieth century and closely considers Yoshihara's early explorations of abstraction, performance, and stage works, which presented the amalgamation of performers, objects, lights, sound, and audience, provides a richer understanding of the group's progression, which led to their pioneering and innovative works and international influence.

Translated by Christopher Stephens

NOTES

1. For more on the prewar cultural development of this region, see Hanshinkan Modernism Exhibition Executive Committee, *Hanshinkan modanizumu* [Hanshinkan modernism], exh. cat. (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1997).
2. The findings of my research on his library can be found in Hirai Shōichi, "Yoshihara Jirō no 1930-nendai no chūshō kaiga: Sobyō to zōsho ga monogataru koto" [Yoshihara Jirō's abstract paintings of the 1930s: What his drawings and book collections tell us], in *Yoshihara Jirō kenkyū ronshū* [Essays on Yoshihara Jirō] (Ashiya: Yoshihara Jirō Kenkyūkai, 2002), pp. 23–40.
3. Highlights of Yoshihara's library include Herbert Read, ed., *The Modern Movement in English Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture* (London: Cassell, 1934); Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936); Herbert Read, *Art Now: An Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936); J. L. Martin, Ben Nicholson, and N. Gabo, eds., *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937); and periodicals such as *Abstraction-Création*, nos. 1–3 and 5 (1932–36); and Myfanwy Evans, ed., *Axis: A Quarterly Review of Contemporary "Abstract" Painting & Sculpture*, nos. 2–8 (London: A. Zwemmer, 1935–37).
4. For details on *Sanka in the Theater*, see Omuka Toshiharu, *Taishō-ki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū/The Japanese Modern Art Movement and the Avant-Garde 1920–1927* (Tokyo: Skydoor, 1995; rev. 1998), pp. 594–607.
5. For information on the avant-garde art movement in Kobe centering on Asano Mōfu and Okamoto Tōki's activities in the 1920s, see Hirata, "Okamoto Tōki, Asano Mōfu to Kobe ni okeru Taishō-ki shinkō bijutsu undō" [New art of the Taishō era in Kobe related to Okamoto Tōki and Asano Mōfu], in *Hyōgo Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan kenkyū kiyō/Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, Hyōgo*, no. 5 (1996), pp. 1–17; no. 6 (1997), pp. 31–45.
6. Hayashi Yoshiki, "Miraiha kyōgaku geki" [*Amazing Futurist Theater*], in *Kobe bungei zōhyō monogatari* [Tales of the rank and file in literary Kobe] (Kobe: Tōjakubō, 1986), pp. 54–55.
7. The fact that the friendship between the two men dated to the prewar years is evident from the cover illustration that Yoshihara provided for the poetry magazine *Rashin*, no. 5 (1934), which was edited by Takenaka.
8. See Yokoi Kōzō, "'Gekijō no Sanka': (Ankēto) Tenrankai no Sanka to Gekijō no Sanka" [*Sanka in the Theater*: (Questionnaire) Sanka in the exhibition and Sanka in the theater], *Mizue* (July 1925), pp. 31–38.
9. Based on *Asahi* articles from the period and photographs from Yoshihara's archive, I was able to determine that the artist oversaw the stage sets from at least 1949 to 1951.
10. In addition to the *Twilight Concerts* and the fashion shows, it is evident, based on photographs and drawings from Yoshihara's archive, that he was involved in the Komaki Ballet Company's *America* (Asahi Hall, Osaka, March 12, 1950), and the Eguchi Otoya and Sumiko Dance Company's *Timpani* (Sankei Hall, Tokyo, April 25, 1950, and other venues), prior to producing the first *Gutai Art on the Stage*.
11. According to information provided by the Tanaka Chiyo Fashion College, I was able to determine that Yoshihara oversaw the set designs for the following events: *Tanaka Chiyo: Grand Fashion Show* (Tokyo Metropolitan Hibiya Public Hall, April 18, 1952, and other venues), *Sankei International Grand Fashion Show* (Imperial Garden Theater, Tokyo, September 28–30, 1952, and other venues), *20th Anniversary Grand Fashion Show* (Sankei Hall, Osaka, March 18 and 19, 1953), *Kobe Silk Festival Fashion Show* (Asahi Hall, Kobe, October 3, 1953), *Works by Tanaka Chiyo on Three Themes* (Imperial Hotel Hall, Tokyo, November 15, 1953, and other venues), and *Nippon Designer Club 1955: Summer Top Model Show* (Sankei Hall, Osaka, May 23, 1955).
12. For more on Gutai and its works for the stage, see Hirai Shōichi, "Yoshihara Jirō to butai" [Yoshihara Jirō and the stage], in *Botsugo 20-nen Yoshihara Jirō-ten/Jirō Yoshihara* [Twenty years after Yoshihara Jirō's death], exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992), pp. 185–89.
13. Based on the recollections of the former Gutai member Uemae Chiyū in *Jigadō* [My painting road] (privately printed, 1985), p. 280.

an experiment in collectivism: gutai's prewar origin and postwar evolution

REIKO TOMII

> These people began such a project because they know they have gained deep sympathy and friendship toward each other through their works. I, too, have found great joy to be part of this circle of friendships.
>
> —Yoshihara Jirō, 1955[1]

Gutai leader Yoshihara Jirō wrote these words in the first issue of the *Gutai* journal, summoning the spirit of collectivism that would animate the group's activities over the following eighteen years (fig. 52). Although art historians often look to the works of individual members—such as Shiraga Kazuo's combative action *Challenging Mud* (1955, plate 59)—attention has seldom been paid to Gutai's collectivist nature.[2] The members themselves were the first to acknowledge how important being part of this group was to their artistic development. Especially significant was Yoshihara's unique leadership style, which constituted a chief motivation for members' experimentation.[3] Shiraga, for instance, likely would not have "challenged mud" if he had not joined Gutai.

What, then, was Gutai like as a collective? Gutai was an "assignment-based" collective, whose members evolved under a forceful leader. Born in 1905, Yoshihara was forty-nine at the time of Gutai's founding. Senior to most members by fifteen years or more, he acted as an inspirational mentor and strict taskmaster, in pursuit of art that was original and internationally relevant. On the expressive front, Yoshihara's overall assignment was radical yet simple: "Never imitate others! Make something that has never existed!"[4] To unlock creativity and nurture experimentation in his young charges, he devised new presentation formats, outside the conventions for exhibitions, which in effect constituted new assignments: to come up with works to be shown outdoors, on the stage, and in front of the press. Further, writing for the group's journal served as yet another assignment that stimulated members to articulate the significance of their own and one another's works. Shiraga, for example, who decided to move from using his feet to paint to using his entire body in *Challenging Mud*, laid out this thought process in the pages of *Gutai*.[5]

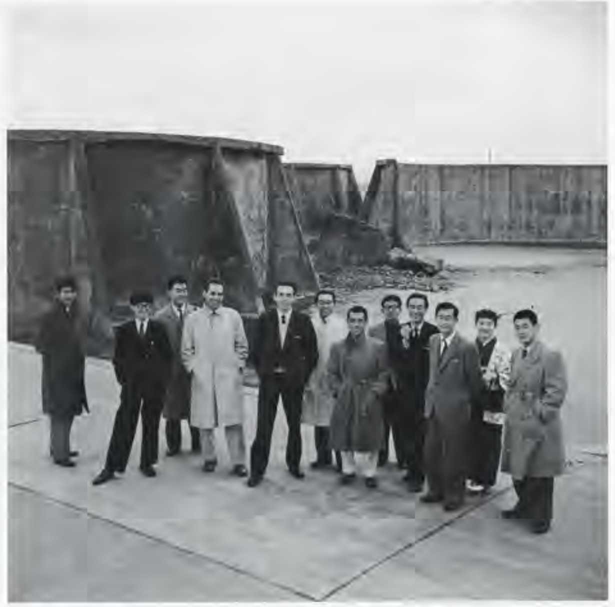


FIG. 52. Gutai members with *Life* magazine photographers Jean Launois and William Payne (center) at the ruins of a U.S.-bombed Yoshihara Oil Mill factory, Amagasaki, April 1956

Gutai as we know it emerged from the union of Yoshihara's creative leadership and the inspired inventiveness of its members. If either were lacking, Gutai would not have been Gutai. Thus, one key to unlocking Gutai's history is Yoshihara's leadership and his collectivist management.

Since the late nineteenth century, collectivism has been a source of vitality, ingenuity, and creativity in Japanese artistic production. The practice functions from the bottom up as a force for change, in a do-it-yourself spirit wherein artists are the principal transformative agent, seeking alternative modes of expression and alternative sites of operation. To a great extent, it was artists' collectivist and organizational interventions that made it possible for Japan to explore and disseminate modernism.[6]

In this history, Yoshihara bridged prewar and postwar collectivism. Prewar collectivism was defined by *bijutsu dantai* (artists' organizations), which essentially functioned as exhibition societies, many holding annual, juried "open call" exhibitions modeled after the government salon, which had been established in 1907 under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and thereafter undergone several reorganizations. Stylistic evolution more or less paralleled the flux of banding together and disbanding of *dantai*, with some surviving to form the stable core of the art world.

Yoshihara's thorough familiarity with the workings of *dantai* is evident from his biography. He was a member of a prestigious, salon-based *dantai* of oil painters, Nika-kai (Second Section Society, founded 1914), one of the oldest groups that went against the government salon, and one that still exists today. He also managed Kyūshitsu-kai (Room Nine Society, founded 1938, fig. 55), a small, non-salon-based *dantai* of abstract and Surrealist painters, which formed within Nika-kai. Finally, in the postwar period, he began participating in the regional salon movement when he helped establish the Ashiya City Art Association, which began hosting the annual *Ashiya City Exhibition* in 1948 (fig. 53). Through these experiences, he learned the benefits and the limitations of not only large organizations but also small collectives, and the advantages of different types of networking on varying national, regional, and generational levels. Together with the senior status he achieved in the art world, his *dantai* experiences would prove useful in his postwar vanguard endeavors.

In postwar Japan, two things were clear to Yoshihara: *dantai* like Nika-kai had become a hindrance to new art movements, as had Tokyo's inextricably *dantai*-centered art world.[7] Yoshihara was not alone in pondering the limitations of *dantai*. Takiguchi Shūzō, a revered art critic with prewar collectivist experience, wrote in 1952:

> We must see the growth of small movements with independent artistic programs and strongly rooted public appeal. Some may say that this is no more than a dream, and that the necessary social conditions do not exist, but I am not pessimistic. On the contrary, I am filled with hope.[8]

Takiguchi's hopes for "small movements" perhaps derived from his association with Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop), a multidisciplinary collective active in Tokyo from 1951 to 1957. Like Jikken Kōbō, these small movements, or collectives (*shūdan*),[9] operated within a less formal structure than did *dantai*. The phenomenon of small collectives, which focused on membership exhibitions and often eschewed salon-style exhibitions, was not a new development of postwar Japan. In fact, the prewar avant-garde was partly driven by such *shūdan*, ranging from the Dadaist-Constructivist collection Mavo (1924–25) in the Taishō period to the exhibition society Kokushoku Yōga-ten (Black Western-Style Painting Exhibition, 1935–37) in the early Shōwa era.[10] Yet these groups tended to operate between the gaps of the larger *dantai*, and were sometimes absorbed by, or evolved into, larger and more stable *dantai*. The postwar rise of small collectives was informed by the widely shared desire to create a new art for a new democratic society.[11]

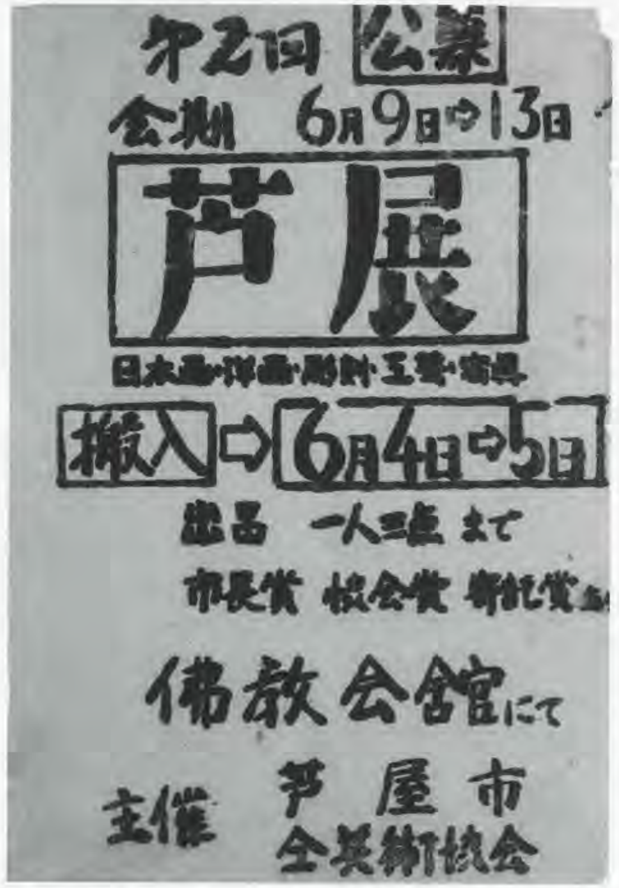

第2回 公募
会期 6月9日⇨13日
芦展
日本画・洋画・彫刻・工芸・書道
搬入⇨6月4日⇨5日
出品 一人三点まで
市長賞 協会賞
佛教会館にて
主催 芦屋市
全美術協会

FIG. 53. "Call for Works" poster for *2nd Ashiya City Exhibition*, 1949

The situation in the 1950s, when Gutai emerged, differed vastly from the following decade, when vanguard collectives made transgressive headway in forging new art, as seen in the Anti-Art (*Han-geijutsu*) groups, such as Kyūshū-ha, Hi Red Center, and Zero Jigen (Zero Dimension), and Non-Art (*Hi-geijutsu*) groups, such as Mono-ha, GUN, and the Play.[12] In contrast, the art world in the 1950s was still dominated by the logic of *dantai*, whose social presence, for better or worse, defined "today's art" for the general public. The challenge for Yoshihara was to find a way to make his aspirations for new art take root in this climate.

After a few false starts, including membership in Genbi, an interdisciplinary contemporary-art discussion group in Osaka, and a brief exchange with Bokujin-kai, a Kyoto group of avant-garde calligraphers, Yoshihara found an answer to his search in the Gutai collective, which he began with younger artists rather than with artists of his own generation. He strategically adopted certain *dantai* conventions in the founding and practices of Gutai. Given the conservatism and feudalism that marked *dantai* collectivism in postwar Japan, this in and of itself was a radical move, seemingly unthinkable for any avant-garde group that embraced democracy. Yoshihara cunningly exploited *dantai* collectivism to nurture his nascent group. In this respect, Gutai departs from expectations of what constitutes an avant-garde, but its unique cultural circumstance complicates the general narrative of the international avant-garde.

First, the group's name, Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai (Gutai Art Association), and specifically the construct *bijutsu kyōkai* (art association), shared in a long-established naming convention of *dantai*, with examples ranging from the conservative Nihon (Japan) Bijutsu Kyōkai of *nihonga* painters (founded 1879) to the radical Mirai-ha (Futurist) Bijutsu Kyōkai (1920–23). The group's namesake exhibition, *Gutai Art Exhibition*, was numbered, from first to twenty-first, in the *dantai* manner. On the occasion of its first exhibition, held in October 1955, the group even produced *dantai*-style postcards of select works on display, including Shiraga's *Challenging Mud* (fig. 54, plate 59).[13] The timing of the exhibitions was also highly strategic, as fall was (and still is) the prime season of *dantai* exhibitions throughout Japan. In fall 1955, following the *dantai* exhibition calendar, Yoshihara dutifully showed in the Nika-kai exhibition in September,[14] and Gutai's first exhibition was held in October, before the former government salon Nitten would take all the media attention in early November.

The *Gutai Art Exhibition*, however, was not a *dantai* salon but rather a membership exhibition, in which all members could show their work. By eschewing the juried system, in which high-ranking members select works to be shown and administer awards, Yoshihara relinquished the system of creating a social presence and retaining a ready training and recruiting ground for potential members (as a juried salon is open to any artist seeking to enter). Yet it can be argued that Yoshihara had a Gutai salon of sorts, in the form of the *Ashiya City Exhibition*. As residency in Ashiya was not required, Gutai members regularly submitted their works for consideration for the show, and later served as judges. Yoshihara was known to advocate a very progressive selection standard during the judging process and would sometimes single-handedly reinstate certain off-the-wall works rejected by other judges. Among those reinstated was a 1955 series of fabric works by Tanaka Atsuko, who had just joined Gutai.[15] Members recruited from the city salon included Motonaga Sadamasa in the 1950s and Mukai Shūji and Nasaka Yūko in the 1960s. Yoshihara thus enjoyed the benefits, without having to shoulder the physical and financial burdens, of mounting a juried salon.

Another important training ground for his members was Yoshihara's early experiment the *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, which, held in late July 1955, closely followed the city exhibition. Rather than presenting this exhibition under the banner of his new group, he chose to test his idea for an outdoor exhibition as a program of the city artists association, which hosted the city salon. This was a success, as seen in the participation of twenty-three Gutai members out of some forty participants, and in the unmistakable impression made by their innovative works, establishing the exhibition as a de facto Gutai enterprise.

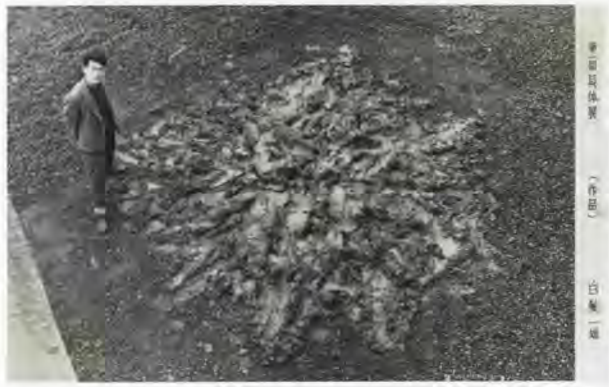

第一回具体展
（作品）
白髪一雄

FIG. 54. Postcard for **SHIRAGA Kazuo**, *Challenging Mud*, 1955. Produced in conjunction with *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, October 19–28, 1955. Private collection

The *Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun* attracted the attention of Teshigahara Sōfū, the head of a vanguard *ikebana* (flower arrangement) school, who offered Yoshihara the use of his school's Tokyo headquarters for the very first *Gutai Art Exhibition* and contributed a text to the exhibition brochure. This first group exhibition, at a prime venue, became another "assignment" for the young artists, as a large gallery space demanded the members produce in a larger scale.[16] After the two trial runs in Ashiya, Gutai was ready to face the momentous occasion of officially debuting as a group in Tokyo.

At the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Shiraga's *Challenging Mud* was conceived as part of the press presentation, which was a practice that came from Yoshihara's *dantai* experiences. As recounted in his autobiography,[17] Yoshihara had devised a publicity stunt when he took a large picture frame from the exhibition and used it as a "stage" for entertainment at an after-party for a Nika-kai exhibition in Kansai, where reporters were in attendance. Yoshihara thought this freewheeling gesture might have inspired Nika-kai to take such private entertainment and make it public, as seen in the group's postwar popularization program, the Opening Eve Festival, begun in 1948 under Tōgō Seiji, a pioneering Cubo-Futurist who believed that art must be for the masses. The program first took the form of outrageous entertainment aimed at the general public, including a parade of seminude models marching through the busy Ginza district of Tokyo. Soon after, Nika-kai's opening-eve festivities were toned down, but they continued through 1975, incorporating such activities as audience-participation games.[18] Gutai's interactive, audience-participatory works, such as Yoshihara's *Please Draw Freely* (plate 1) and Shimamoto Shōzō's *Please Walk on Here* (plate 9), both made for the

1956 *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, and *Gutai Card Box* (1962, plates 14–17), can be considered an extension of Nika-kai's populist programs, and the practice of engaging viewers became an essential part of Gutai artwork. Like Tōgō, with whom he had worked closely in the postwar reconstruction of Nika-kai, Yoshihara wanted to involve the general public to stimulate its everyday aesthetic sensibility.[19]

Yoshihara and Gutai members crossed the threshold that separated pranks or play (for example, mud wrestling) from art when they declared that what they presented in front of the press were in fact processes integral to creating artworks. If this element of their works was misunderstood as mere play in Tokyo, we need to take into consideration the nature of the Kansai brand of humor and sophistication, which vastly differed from that of Tokyo. This set Gutai's demonstrations apart from Nika-kai's pre-exhibition activities, which at best amounted to entertainment. In this sense, Yoshihara went beyond the limitation of *dantai* exhibitionism with Gutai's experimentalism. At the same time, as an old hand of *dantai* art, Yoshihara could not have been indifferent to the need for his members to become viable working artists once they found their voices through experimentation, which in his mind was a means to an end. In this light, the regularity, stability, and longevity of the *Gutai Art Exhibition* assumes a new meaning, comparable to *dantai* salons in prewar Japan: the exhibitions created legitimacy through social presence at a time when there was little support for artists unaffiliated with *dantai*. In this respect, the Gutai Pinacotheca, inaugurated in 1962, afforded the group not only a gathering place for international visitors but also an indispensable gallery space, which further enhanced Gutai's social presence.

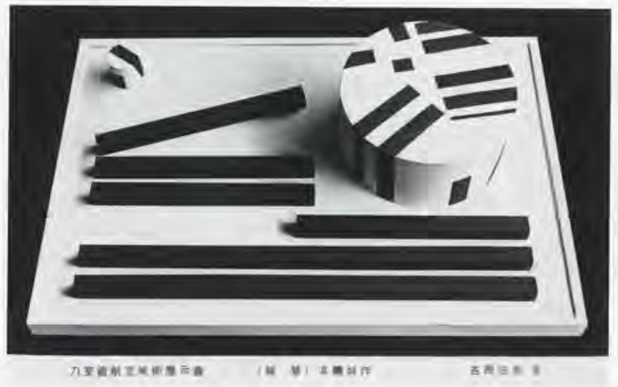


FIG. 55. Postcard for **YOSHIHARA Jirō**, *Camouflage (Three-Dimensional Design Plan)*, 1941. Produced in conjunction with Kyūshitsu-kai's *Aviation Art Exhibition*, Ginza Mitsukoshi department store, Tokyo, September 1941. Library of Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūjo

A mentor is only as good as his mentees. If Shiraga and other notable artists, such as Tanaka and Murakami Saburō, had not joined Gutai, would Gutai have existed as we know it today? Something truly extraordinary happened with Gutai in its formation and development, and the fact remains that, as a collective, Gutai was wholly original. In this sense, by forming Gutai, Yoshihara achieved his own credo, "Do what no one has done before!" Arguably, Gutai was the best and most important "work" Yoshihara created in his long career.

NOTES

I would like to acknowledge my mother, Miwako, the original inspiration for this essay. An Ashiya native, she taught me that Yoshihara is as much Nika-kai's Yoshihara as Gutai's. I am also invigorated by the camaraderie of fellow scholars, especially two longtime colleagues and the instigators of this project, Alexandra Munroe and Ming Tiampo.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations by the author.

1. Yoshihara Jirō, "Hakkan ni saishite"/"For Publishing This Pamphlet," *Gutai* 1 (January 1955), p. 1.

2. Ming Tiampo's study "Gutai Chain: The Collective Spirit of Individualism," to be published in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* in spring 2013, is a rare exception, with its focus on the individual experiences of Gutai members and relationships within the group.

3. For Gutai members' recollections, the best source is the member interviews in *Gutai shiryōshū: Dokyumento Gutai, 1954–1972/Document Gutai, 1954–1972*, trans. Moriguchi Madoka, Simon Scanes, and Shiraha Keiko (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1993).

4. These two phrases are generally accepted as Yoshihara's motto, although it is hard to pinpoint a single source. Variations can be found in his "Waga kokoro no jijoden" [Autobiography of my soul], six weekly installments, *Kobe shinbun*, June 4–July 9, 1967; repr. in *Botsugo 20-nen: Yoshihara Jirō-ten/Jirō Yoshihara* [Twenty years after Yoshihara Jirō's death], exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992), pp. 196–201. The variations include "the importance of originality and personality," instilled by Kamiyama Jirō, a senior painter he respected as his teacher (p. 198); a criticism that his "paintings showed too much influence of other artists," given by Fujita Tsuguharu, his mentor (p. 199); his encouragement to Gutai members to "make *e* (pictures) that have never existed" (p. 200); and "Never imitate others," as the word of Fujita (p. 200).

5. Shiraga Kazuo, "Kōi koso," *Gutai* 3 (October 1955); repr. as "Action Only," trans. Reiko Tomii, in Tomii and Fergus McCaffrey, *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades*, exh. cat. (New York: McCaffrey Fine Art, 2009), pp. 60–61. For more on Shiraga's transition, see also Tomii, "Shiraga Paints: Toward a 'Concrete' Discussion," ibid., pp. 11–18.

6. For more about collectivism in twentieth-century Japanese art, see Reiko Tomii, "Collectivism in 20th-Century Japanese Art: An Introduction with Operational Observations of Dantai," special issue, *Positions* (spring 2013, forthcoming).

7. Yoshihara Jirō, interview by Fujisawa Tsuneo, "Osaka no bijutsukai" [Osaka's art world], *Kansai bijutsu*, November 15, 1950; quoted in Yamamoto Atsuo, "Yoshihara Jirō to Gutai" [Yoshihara Jirō and Gutai], in *Botsugo 20-nen*, p. 190.

8. Takiguchi Shūzō, "Geijutsu to jikken" [Art and experimentation], *Bijutsu hihyō* (June 1952); repr. as "Art and Experimentation," in *Dai 11-kai omāju Takiguchi Shūzō ten: Jikken Kōbō to Takiguchi Shūzō/The 11th Exhibition Homage to Shuzo Takiguchi: Experimental Workshop*, trans. Lewis Cook, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Satani Gallery, 1991), p. 11.

9. *Shūdan*, which literally means "groups," with a less formal connotation than *dantai*, is my terminology to differentiate small vanguard groups from salon-based organizations.

10. For more on prewar *shūdan*, see "Gendai bijutsu no paionia-ten" [The exhibition *Pioneers of Contemporary Art*], special issue, *Furusawa Iwami Bijutsukan geppō* 25 (1977), and *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925–1945/Surrealism in Japan, 1925–1945*, exh. cat. (Nagoya: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1990).

11. For more on this subject, see Ming Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," in this volume, pp. 45–79.

12. See Reiko Tomii, "After the 'Descent to the Everyday': Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1964–1973," in *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, ed. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 44–75.

13. I owe this observation to Kawasaki Kōichi.

14. Like other *dantai*, Nika-kai has an "exclusivity" clause in its exhibition guidelines: if an artist shows in other *dantai* exhibitions, he or she may not enter work in Nika-kai's. Yoshihara's gradually diminishing involvement with Nika-kai at this time stands in marked contrast with the departure of Okamoto Tarō, a Tokyo avant-gardist whose abrupt exit from Nika-kai made sensational news in the early 1960s.

15. *Ashiya shiten/Ashiya City Exhibition 1948–1997* (Kyoto: Kōrinsha, et al., 1997), p. 53.

16. Each *Gutai Art Exhibition* took place at a major venue, which Yoshihara likely secured by capitalizing on his senior status and connections in the art world. Sites included the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Takashimaya department stores in Osaka and Tokyo, and the group's own Gutai Pinacotheca in Osaka, which was inaugurated in 1962.

17. Yoshihara, "Waga kokoro no jijoden," in *Botsugo 20-nen*, p. 200.

18. Taki Teizō, "Nika 70-nenshi: Monogatari-hen" [Seventy years of Nika-kai: A narrative], in *Nika 70-nenshi* [Seventy-years of Nika-kai] (Tokyo: Nika-kai, 1985), pp. 27–28.

19. Natsu Oyobe perceives Yoshihara's sympathetic awareness of the general public in a roundtable discussion between Yoshihara Jirō and others, "Modan āto fea o kataru" [Talking about *Modern Art Fair*], *Bokujin* 26 (June 1954), p. 11. See Oyobe, "Human Subjectivity and Confrontation with Materials in Japanese Art: Yoshihara Jirō and Early Years of the Gutai Art Association, 1947–1958," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2005, pp. 77–78.

abstract space in concrete terms: reconsidering gutai painting

KATŌ MIZUHO

In Japan and the West, Gutai painting has largely been understood and discussed in terms of its violent physicality and heavy materiality. *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979* (1998) and *Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void, 1949–1962* (2012), exhibitions organized by Paul Schimmel at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, are but two prominent examples of this interpretation.[1] If we carefully examine Yoshihara Jirō's 1956 "Gutai Art Manifesto," however, it becomes clear that, in the same text in which he enunciates the famous dialectic between human spirit and matter, he also advances a significant, yet historically neglected, idea that greatly influences how we might reconsider the question of painting in Gutai. Yoshihara writes: "We thought at the time—and still do—that the greatest legacy of abstract art is the opening of an opportunity to depart from naturalistic and illusionistic art and create a new autonomous space, a space that truly deserves the name of art. . . . By merging human qualities and material properties, we can concretely apprehend abstract space."[2] This "abstract space in concrete terms" is the space of Gutai, and a look at works by one of the most prominent members of the group, Tanaka Atsuko, as well as those by Mukai Shūji, helps to clarify how that space is defined.

Tanaka joined Gutai in 1955, when Yoshihara extended invitations to the members of the avant-garde artist group Zero-kai (Zero Society): Kanayama Akira, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Tanaka herself. Tanaka is widely recognized as having been a core Gutai member throughout her association with the group. Her *Electric Dress* (1956, plate 92), made up of some one hundred eighty flickering, multicolored lightbulbs, is an icon of early Gutai, and practically every book on the group touches on it. But Tanaka also made more than four hundred two-dimensional works subsequent to *Electric Dress* that have historically been presented as by-products of that work, little more than indications of Gutai's heterogeneity. These two-dimensional works depart in several ways from Gutai-style gestural abstraction, encompassing a motif of distinct circles and tangled lines, a deliberate arrangement of elements, and the application of paint in a flat, careful manner, with little sign of facture.

There is more to Tanaka's two-dimensional works than the simple incorporation of lightbulbs and electrical cords. When Tanaka referred to them, she, like many other Japanese artists, used the word *e*, which predates Japan's Westernizing Meiji period and refers to "pictures" generally, in contrast to the word *kaiga*, a more restricted, modern term that suggests "painting" in a Western sense.[3] Like other Gutai artists, Tanaka applied the term *e* in the sense of "picture" or "picturing" to works that went well beyond the application of paint to a flat surface. She called *Electric Dress e*, for example, and she used the same term to describe *Work (Bell)* (1955, plate 44), which comprises twenty alarm bells connected by long electrical cords spaced at two-meter intervals. Even earlier, before her Gutai period, she applied *e* to a series of drawinglike works created between 1953 and 1955, including those now titled *Calendar*, in which she inscribed numbers in pencil and ink onto collaged paper or fabric surfaces.[4] Tanaka thus subscribed to a radical redefinition of *e*, and her interest in the conversion from one structure to another was linked to an awareness of the body, and rooted in an intention to conceive the visual in terms of the physical.[5]

The twenty works on paper that Tanaka showed alongside *Electric Dress* at the *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition* (1956) varied in overall appearance. In some works, numbers inscribed around circles and rectangles suggest irregular flashing, while in others a concentration of circles at the center reveals no readily describable figuration, surrounded by bundles of fine lines. For decades, scholars believed these works to be studies for *Electric Dress*. In fact, as Tanaka revealed in 2004, these works were made after *Electric Dress* was produced, and resulted from attempts to convert the distinctive features of that work, with its multicolored, erratically blinking lights and tangle of connecting wires, into a flat picture plane.[6] With this in mind, it is impossible to describe the resultant works as attempts to represent the mechanism of *Electric Dress*. They are rather *e*, in Tanaka's sense of the term. With these works, she managed to define the direction she would follow in pursuit of the "abstract space in concrete terms" that Yoshihara had articulated.

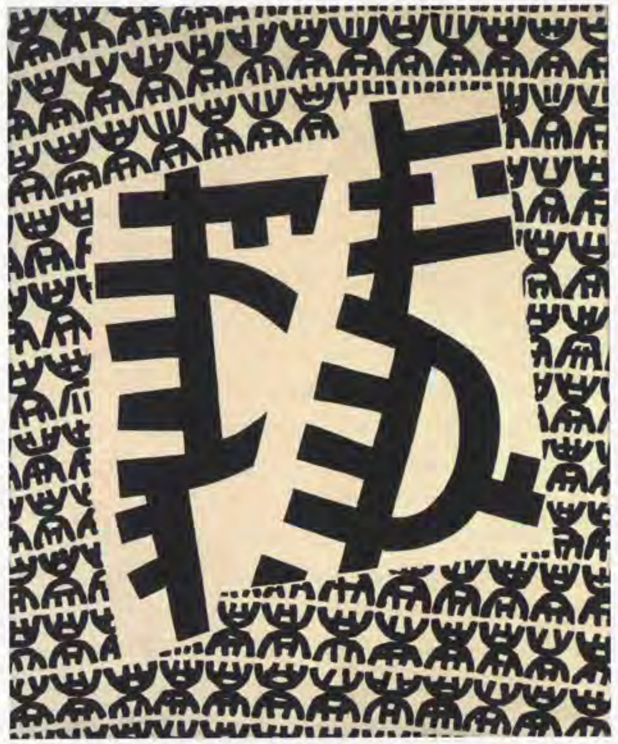


FIG. 56. **Giuseppe CAPOGROSSI**, *Surface 274* (*Superficie 274*), 1958. Oil on canvas, 195 × 160 cm. Private collection

Throughout her career, Tanaka would continue to devote herself to creating two-dimensional works that were intended to realize this conversion; but significantly, she refrained from creating a pictorial space clearly separate from reality in the manner of Abstract Expressionism or Art Informel. For the artists of these movements, trapped between Leon Battista Alberti and Clement Greenberg, the rational expression of space and its negation was an inescapable theoretical conundrum. Of the artists that Michel Tapié included in the category of Art Informel, one might best compare Tanaka to Giuseppe Capogrossi, whose works, like Tanaka's *e*, are structured around the repetition of symbols, and avoid emphasizing both the traces of an action and a heavy sense of materiality. Having devised a unique letter-like symbol that resembles a deformed, rounded letter *E*, Capogrossi varied the mark in its proliferation by altering its size and orientation. Though the paintings are not based on perspective, they ultimately function as an expanse of illusionistic space. In his series *Surface* (*Superficie*) from the 1950s and early 1960s, the rear of the picture plane creates an expansive space by means of contrast with the larger symbols that appear closer to the viewer, as evident in *Surface 274* (*Superficie 274*, 1958, fig. 56), which was featured in the exhibition *Lucio Fontana and Giuseppe Capogrossi* at the Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, in 1964. In that space, where an organic quality suggesting living cells prevails, the symbols seemed to float, as if bobbing on waves, moving from front to back and from side to side.

In Tanaka's two-dimensional works from the same period—such as *Thanks Sam* (1963, fig. 57), considered to be one of her most significant works of the 1960s—it is difficult to detect a similar quality of space, despite the comparable repetition of a single element. The tangle of circles and lines that functions as figure in this work appears to move toward the front of the canvas and even press outward at the viewer. Tanaka achieves this effect, in part, because the figure is created with the use of smooth brushstrokes on a flat, monochrome ground, to which it appears to be affixed. More significant is her use of vinyl paint. With a slick, fluid quality that surpasses that of oil paint, the material allows the artist to produce an even, homogeneous form that seems to be stuck to the surface of the canvas, like a vinyl appliqué. Its flatness and materiality obstruct the line of sight to the rear of the picture plane and bounce it toward the front, which causes the plane to emit a wide range of colors. The smooth, glossy quality of the vinyl paint prompts an almost haptic sensation, helping imbue Tanaka's two-dimensional works more with the quality of an object than that of a painting.

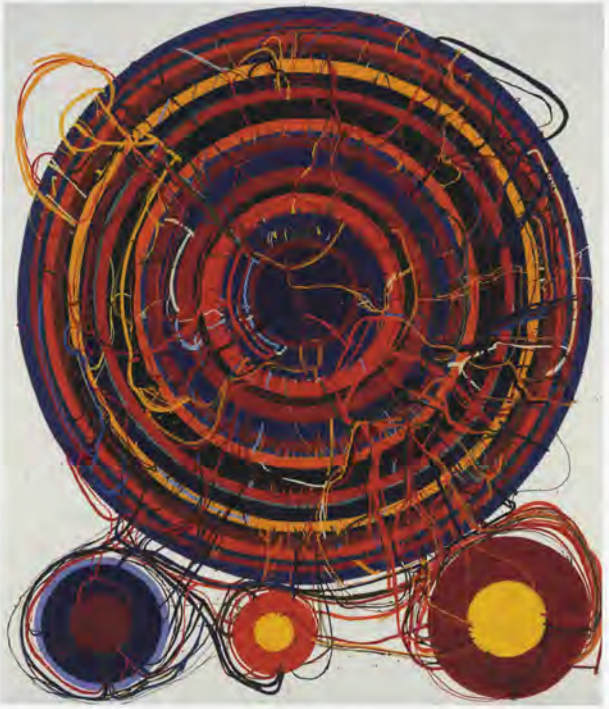


FIG. 57. **TANAKA Atsuko**, *Thanks Sam*, 1963. Synthetic paint on canvas, 194 × 131.5 cm. Chiba City Museum of Art, Japan

Where Tanaka's two-dimensional works do retain a connection to painting is in her vivid use of color. Especially after 1962, her works became multicolored, and at no point was her approach simply repetitive; rather, she created countless differences in chromatic valence, to heighten the dynamism of the light that emanates from the pictures. Nevertheless, the space that seems to rise out of the canvas toward the viewer differs in nature from the space created by Capogrossi. In his *Surface* series, a pictorial illusion occurs based on the contrast in the size, arrangement, or color of the symbols, and the substance of paint functions as a transparent, ultimately minor element that exists merely to support the images. In Tanaka's *e*, on the other hand, the visual phenomenon of luminescence and the emergence of a protuberant space from the picture plane are functions of the vinyl paint, as well as of the relationships among the colors. That is to say, the materials, not being merely the expression of form, exert an effect through their physical presence and cause the viewer to perceive a space in front of the canvas. It is an individual, phenomenological experience directly linked to the actual space that the viewer occupies, and it cannot be captured in a photograph, in print, or on a computer screen. The paint serves dual functions: while building relationships between form and color, the material, which never becomes completely transparent, also forms the core of an experience that is directly connected to the viewer. By functioning as a structural element that is not only visual but also broaches the tactile, the paint evokes both form and its own presence.

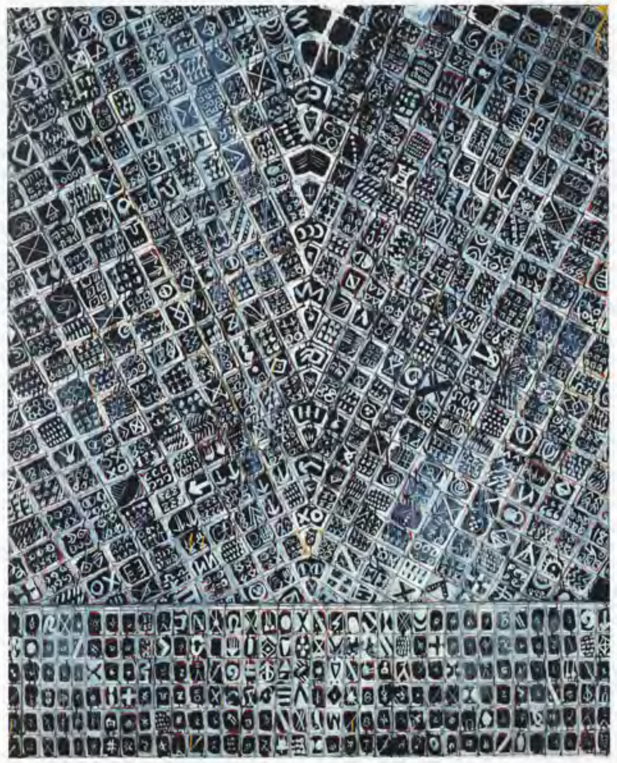


FIG. 58. **MUKAI Shūji**, *Work*, 1963. Oil and string on plywood, 227.5 × 184 cm. Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, The Yamamura Collection, Kobe

Tanaka was not the only member of Gutai to use such repetition as a fundamental aspect of art making. Mukai Shūji, who became a leading figure after participating in the *8th Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1959, is known for reiterating a variety of self-created symbols throughout each of his works, primarily in black and white. This apparent similarity to Capogrossi in fact gives way to a substantial difference: Mukai's works possess a sense of space and motion that diverges from that of Capogrossi. In a number of Mukai's works from the 1960s, such as *Work* (1963, fig. 58), the repeated marks appear to extend outward from the canvas and exude a force beyond it. This is not only due to the homogenous quality of the symbols that function as the figure, nor merely to the flatness of the ground, but also in large part to the physical characteristics of the support medium itself. The symbols lie within divisions created by paper strings or bamboo sticks that stretch across the work. Physically jutting out of the picture, the symbols yield an uneven quality unlike lines painted with a brush. Mukai also created three-dimensional passages in the support, which was made out of boards. As a result, as in Tanaka's two-dimensional works, the materiality Mukai creates appeals to the viewer's sense of the here and now—of presence—and induces a phenomenon in which the elements seem to extend outward from the picture while also functioning as a systematic language in the form and color of the painting.

In addition to Mukai's two-dimensional efforts, the artist made installation and performance works, such as *Room of Signs* (1961, fig. 59), in which he covered the entirety of a temporary room with his signature symbols, covered himself with symbols, and sat inside the structure; *Faces and Signs* (1962, plate 104), which was one of the performances in *Don't Worry, the Moon Won't Fall Down!*, a stage collaboration with the Morita Modern Dance Company; and an ambitious project in which he painted signs all over the interior of a modern-jazz coffee shop in Osaka (*Modern Jazz Café "Check,"* 1966, plate 105). While all of these works adopted the structure of painting by emphasizing the contrast between black and white, as in Mukai's two-dimensional work, they also functioned as an event in which the viewer could participate in real time and space. By altering the degree to which he emphasized the matter's visual or

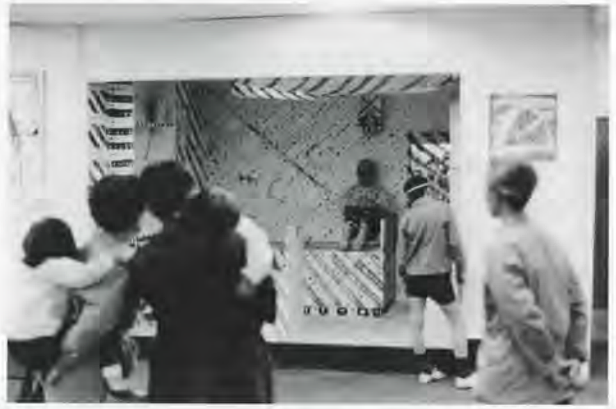


FIG. 59. **MUKAI Shūji**, *Room of Signs*, 1961. Installation view: *10th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 11–16, 1961

tactile qualities, Mukai was able to move freely between two-dimensionality, three-dimensionality, installation, and performance, and embody the notion of *e* in line with the way Tanaka did.

In the latter half of 1980s, art historians and critics Tatehata Akira and Osaki Shin'ichirō theorized that Gutai was looking for painting from the beginning. Tatehata wrote: "Early Gutai evidently consisted of a group of painters. At the center of its activities there always were paintings."[7] Osaki pushed the point further: "It would appear then that the actions and objects were transitional phenomena leading towards painting."[8] In 2002, Yamamoto Atsuo, curator of several Gutai-related exhibitions at the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, shifted the terms of the debate slightly, arguing that Gutai tried to enlarge the field of painting beyond its boundaries, referring to Murakami Saburō, who called all of Gutai's activities, including performance, objects, and paintings, *e*.[9] Yamamoto concluded that *e* represented "a guarantee of freedom, the certainty of being able to do everything."[10] It should be noted, however, that Murakami's conception of *e* also includes Tanaka's model, which incorporated her engagement with "abstract space in concrete terms." The creation of this unprecedented space, which combines human spirit and matter, is not only central to Tanaka and Mukai's works but also key to a new viewpoint from which to reconsider Gutai.

NOTES

1. See Paul Schimmel, "Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object," in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979*, ed. Paul Schimmel, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), pp. 25–29. He writes: "Yoshihara encouraged his students to transform painting into a more process-oriented and theatrically inspired improvisational medium." And: "At their very best, the most richly evocative Gutai works are both objects and actions."
2. Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai Art Manifesto," trans. Reiko Tomii, this volume, p. 18. Originally published as "Gutai bijutsu sengen," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), p. 203.
3. For an in-depth discussion of *e* and *kaiga*, see Ming Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," this volume, pp. 45–79, and Reiko Tomii, "Murakami Saburō's 'e' no kokoro"/"Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind," in *Murakami Saburō: 70-nendai o chūshin ni/Saburo Murakami: Focus on the '70s*, ed. Ikegami Tsukasa and Tomii, exh. cat. (Osaka: ArtCourt Gallery, 2012).
4. *Tanaka Atsuko—Mō hitotsu no Gutai* [Tanaka Atsuko—Another Gutai], directed by Okabe Aomi (Kyoto: Ufer! Art Documentary, 1998), DVD. See also Kanayama Akira and Tanaka Atsuko, interview by Nakamura Masato, *Bijutsu to kyōiku, 1997* [Art and education, 1997] (Tokyo: Ueno Royal Museum, 1997), pp. 291–97; Tanaka, "Seisaku ni atatte" [Concerning the creative process], in *Kokuritsu Kokusai Bijutsukan geppō* [Monthly newsletter of the National Museum of Art, Osaka] 81, June 1, 1999, p. 3; and Tanaka, "Jisaku o kataru" [Talking about her own works], in *Tanaka Atsuko ten fukyū puroguramu kirokushū* [Tanaka Atsuko exhibition outreach program records] (Shizuoka, Japan: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2003), p. 7. In addition, when this author interviewed Tanaka on April 26 and May 4, 2000, regarding fabric collages and works with number motifs, Tanaka described these works as *e*.
5. See Katō Mizuho, "Kyōkai no tansaku" [Searching for a boundary], in *Tanaka Atsuko: Michi no bi no tankyū, 1954–2000/Atsuko Tanaka: Search for an Unknown Aesthetic, 1954–2000*, ed. Katō and Miyuki Minami, exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History; Shizuoka, Japan: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2001), pp. 15–25.
6. Tanaka Atsuko (artist talk, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, April 15, 2001). Presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Tanaka Atsuko: Michi no bi no tankyō, 1954–2000*, March 3–May 6, 2001.
7. Tatehata Akira, "Seiseisuru taburō, Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai no 1950-nendai" [Creating paintings: 1950s Gutai Art Association], in *Kaiga no arashi 1950-nendai: Anforumeru, Gutai bijutsu, Kobura/Action et emotion, Peintures des Années 50: Informel, Gutaï, Cobra* [Action and emotion: Painting in the '50s, Informel, Gutai, Cobra], ed. Tatehata, exh. cat. (Osaka: National Museum of Art, Osaka, 1985), p. 14.
8. Osaki Shin'ichirō, "Gutai, kaiga e itaru akushon"/"Art in Gutai; Action into Painting," in *Gutai shiryōshū: Dokyumento Gutai, 1954–1972/Document Gutai, 1954–1972* (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1993), p. 16.
9. Yamamoto Atsuo, "Space, Time, Stage, Painting," in Florence de Mèredieu, Ming Tiampo, and Yamamoto, *Gutai: Moments de destruction, moments de beauté/Gutai: Moments of Destruction, Moments of Beauty* (Paris: Blusson, 2002), p. 30.
10. Ibid., p. 32.

limitless world: gutai's reinvention in environment art and intermedia

MIDORI YOSHIMOTO

Gutai's manifold presentations at Expo '70 in Osaka marked the apex of the collective's intermedia activities. The unprecedented scale of the production, however, took a toll, causing an internal schism that led a few early members, such as Motonaga Sadamasa, Murakami Saburō, and Shimamoto Shōzō, to leave the group. After the Gutai Pinacotheca exhibition space closed in 1970, the collective's organized activities virtually ceased, and the group officially dissolved after the death of its leader, Yoshihara Jirō, in 1972. These events, and the political outcry surrounding the Expo, have cast a shadow over assessments of Gutai's second phase (1962–72),[1] especially regarding the group's experiments in intermedia and its Japanese equivalent, environment art (*kankyō geijutsu*).[2] After four decades, it is time to lift this veil in order to properly reexamine Gutai's reinvention in the late 1960s, with a focus on artist Imai Norio, a key figure in the group's engagement with intermedia.

In 1964, at age seventeen, Imai became the youngest person to join Gutai. He first encountered the group unexpectedly, through a limited-run television program, *Limitless World*. Over five consecutive days, in fifteen-minute segments, a different Gutai member demonstrated his outside-the-box art making on the program. Watching it at a coffee shop during his lunch break from high school, Imai became so hooked by the artists' boundary pushing—for example, Yoshihara Michio created a "painting" by wrapping a stretcher with colored vinyl tape—that he soon began frequenting exhibitions at the Pinacotheca. Inspired by Gutai's experimentalism, Imai created his earliest works, which varied from newspaper collage and assemblages made from wooden crates to white shaped canvases. Unexpectedly, he was asked by the owner of Nunu Gallery in

Osaka to fill in a canceled slot in his exhibition schedule and thus held his first, precocious solo exhibition, featuring these early works. The show caught Yoshihara Jirō's attention, and Imai was duly recruited into the group. Gutai became his university and Yoshihara his professor. For a second-phase member like Imai, Gutai was already considered the establishment, even equipped with its own exhibition space; but all the same, what Imai called the "Gutai DNA" of the group's early, foundational experimental activities inspired a "limitless world" that thrived in the intermedia experimentalism that marked its output leading up to Expo '70.[3]

The term "intermedia" was coined by the Fluxus artist Dick Higgins in 1965, in reference to a "location in the field between the general area of art media and those of life media,"[4] but it gradually took on technological connotations in the late 1960s and became conflated with technology art. Gutai's pioneering role in intermedia has long been internationally acknowledged: during the group's first phase (1954–61), it incorporated natural elements, such as gravity, light, water, and wind, and technological components like electric light and sound, into art making, all in an effort to brook active interaction with viewers. Gutai's two outdoor exhibitions, in 1955 and 1956, in the pine forest on a bank of the Ashiya River, were filled with playful experiments in this previously unexplored terrain. Among the works on view in 1955 was Yoshihara's *Light Art* (plate 12), which was the group's earliest exhibited piece to make use of electric light.[5] This outdoor work, along with such technology-based works as Tanaka Atsuko's *Electric Dress* (1956, plate 92) and Kanayama Akira's paintings executed by a mechanical toy car (1957, plates 82–84), formed Imai's notion of Gutai "DNA" in intermedia and paved the way for the developments of the late 1960s.

Imai was among a number of members Yoshihara recruited in the mid-1960s whose work displayed an inclination toward science, technology, and industrial aesthetics. In 1965, for example, Imai presented two versions of a kinetic sculpture titled *White Event*, which housed internal mechanisms that had been constructed by a commercial manufacturer according to Imai's detailed design. These works represent his first foray into so-called made-to-order art (*hatchū geijutsu*), a term popularized in Japan beginning in late 1966.[6] Approximately three feet on each side, each cubic *White Event* sculpture (for example, fig. 60) contained a motor-and-pulley assembly that rhythmically pushed a rounded protrusion against a rubber membrane, producing forms at once erotic and robotic.

The transformation that Gutai art underwent in the mid-to-late 1960s resonated with the broader current of environment art, which was driven by the approach of Expo '70. Announced in 1965, the Expo took up the theme "Progress and Harmony for Mankind" and was designed as a model city of an information society, an idea that derived from both futures studies and science fiction.[7] In order to give the Expo a futuristic appearance, Japan's Ministry of International Trade hired not only architects but also artists, designers, writers, and critics to conceptualize and design its various aspects. In retrospect, Expo '70 marked the height of the exceptional collaborations between vanguard artists and the industrial and commercial sectors in Japan.[8]

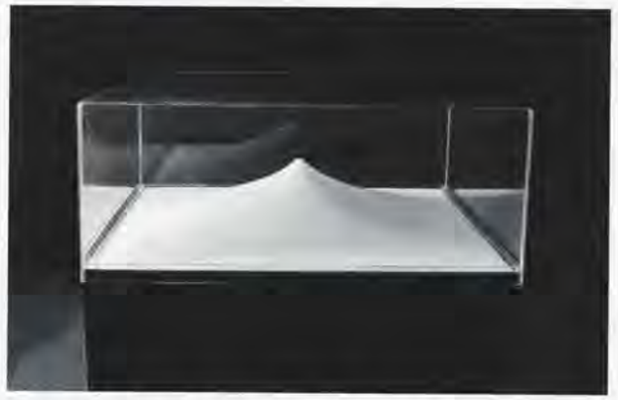


FIG. 60. **IMAI Norio**, *White Event I*, 1965. Installation view: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, December 1–10, 1965. Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

In this context, artists were called on to interact with their surroundings and audience in innovative ways. In 1966, a dozen future Expo participants organized a prototype exhibition of interdisciplinary art, titled *From Space to Environment*, at the Matsuya department store in Tokyo.[9] The artists and critics who spearheaded the show called themselves the Enbairamento no Kai (Environment Society), in celebration of the idea of *kankyō* (environment), defined as an "actually occurring, dynamic relationship between a human and his or her surroundings," as opposed to its counterpart, *kūkan* (space), which implies a relatively fixed and harmonious relationship.[10] Drawing on the internationally popularized concept of environment in urban design, cybernetics, and communications theory,[11] *From Space to Environment* posited "environment" as a socially relevant concept, promoting a new relationship between spectator and artwork across visual art, music, design, urbanism, and architecture.

Significantly, *From Space to Environment* included Imai and two other Gutai members, Kikunami Jōji and Matsuda Yutaka, adding an Osaka influence to a roster of thirty-eight participants who were predominantly based in Tokyo. The three were invited by the artist Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, who, Imai recalls, frequently visited the annual *Gutai Art Exhibition*.[12] Imai contributed a new, vertical version of *White Event*. In this iteration, four boxes were piled in a grid against a wall, with their pulsating rubber surfaces facing the viewer. These rippling surfaces interacted with photographic images projected onto the piece, which were contributed by such photographers as Tōmatsu Shōmei and Ōtsuji Kiyoji, who were also participating in the exhibition.[13]

After *From Space to Environment*, Imai and other Gutai artists continued to participate in environment art exhibitions. Kikunami and Yoshida Minoru became regulars in these non-Gutai exhibitions, while Imai, together with Kikunami, Yoshida, and others, exhibited work in *Light and Environment*, curated by Nakahara Yūsuke and Akane Kazuo at Sogō department store in Kobe in 1968.[14] When Gutai made its own collective effort in environment art under the title *Gutai Art for the Space Age* at Hanshin Amusement Park in Nishinomiya in 1967, Imai displayed *Tankurō*, which consisted of five white plastic spheres containing circular holes, installed on a white platform in the shape of an irregular hexagon. Evoking extraterrestrial life, the spheres emitted eerie light in the darkness, yet they automatically turned dark when a spotlight was shone on them.[15] With a nod to science fiction, the title was derived from a wartime manga character, Tanku Tankurō (Tankuro the Tank), whose head and limbs emerged from holes in his spherical steel body.[16] This exhibition, which featured many kinetic and light works in a darkened space, clearly anticipated Expo '70 while also demonstrating Imai's and other Gutai members' use of new plastics, metals, and electric light, as well as their engagement with a space-age aesthetic.[17]

By 1969, a backlash against environment art and intermedia had emerged as some Tokyo-based artists and critics accused its practitioners of selling out for the money and fame brought on by large-scale commissions. Critics frequently derided Expo '70 as a government ploy to distract attention from the automatic renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which in their eyes made Expo artists complicit with national and corporate agendas. The Expo artists were even compared to war propaganda painters, who had dutifully promoted the imperialist ideology.[18] The Expo's host town, Osaka, however, appeared unconcerned with such criticism and, aside from a small group of activists, Expo participants, including Gutai artists, believed in the positive economic and cultural effects of the Expo.[19] However, Imai recalls receiving a New Year's card from the anti-Expo activist group in Osaka, which contained the message "While you are discussing your dreams from the top lobby of a skyscraper, our comrades are in prison."[20]

For Gutai, the opportunities provided by the Expo were almost a dream come true, providing the Osaka-based collective full engagement with "interlocutors from around the world" and giving it the ability to demonstrate its "international contemporaneity."[21] Yoshihara even served on the display committee of the Expo Museum of Fine Arts.[22] Gutai members were proud to take part, since they had pioneered interactive and performance art in their *Gutai Art on the Stage* projects in 1957 and 1958. The group's accessibility (and playfulness) was an extension of its respect for children's art and the fact many members taught art to children.

The performance program presented at the three-day *Gutai Art Festival* at the Expo's Festival Plaza was subtitled "Drama of Man and Matter," in reference to Gutai's aspiration to make the "human spirit and matter shake hands with each other."[23] This concept was realized as a series of performances that utilized eye-catching colors and forms to appeal to a broad range of audiences. Several earlier works were reinvented in larger scale. Shiraga Kazuo's *Ultramodern Sanbasō* (plate 99), originally performed by the artist for *Gutai Art on the Stage* in 1957, was presented as *Red People*, in which three persons in red costumes moved their long, extended sleeves. Yoshida Toshio's soap suds, used in his kinetic sculptures from the 1960s, were blown over the entire floor, burying the performers in a sea of foam for the program's finale (plate 125). The dreamlike, futuristic ambiance was further enhanced by such new group works as *Flying*, which featured men suspended from white balloons, simulating astronauts on the moon, and *Spangle People*, in which performers covered in shiny metallic fabric evoked aliens. These performances complemented the futuristic appearance of the Festival Plaza and its accompanying robots, Deme and Deku, designed by the plaza architect Isozaki Arata (figs. 38, 105). Newer members made several distinct contributions: during the intermissions of major works, Imai presented a six-foot cube derived from *White Event*, inside which a student was hidden, manually poking the five visible sides of the cube's fabric surfaces with a pole (fig. 61).

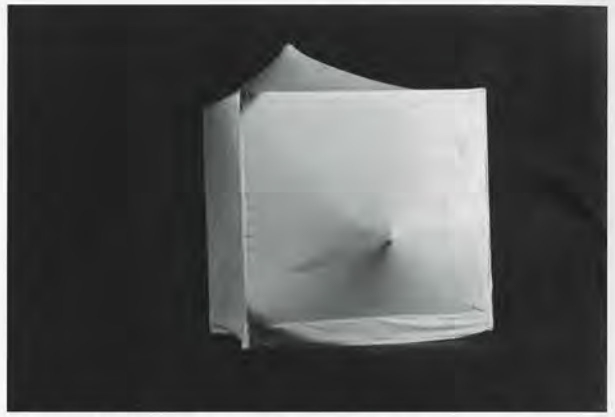


FIG. 61. **IMAI Norio**, *Kinetic Art and Plaza of Light*, 1970. Performance view: *Gutai Art Festival: Drama of Man and Matter*, Festival Plaza, Expo '70, Osaka, ca. August 31–September 2, 1970

In addition to these performances, Gutai produced a collective sculpture display, *Garden on Garden* (fig. 62), as a part of the outdoor section of the Expo '70 art exhibition. As a more technological counterpart to the group's earlier outdoor exhibitions in the late 1950s, the work consisted of fourteen members' contributions on a single platform, many of which were kinetic and motorized, such as one work that featured a ball moving slowly along a circular passage, with water dripping from a nozzle protruding from its base.[24] Imai's contribution was a stone that dragged rough concrete diagonally across one side of the metal platform, defying gravity, which seemed to deface the otherwise orderly, man-made structure with natural elements and implied his growing skepticism toward the utopian scheme of the Expo. Because Gutai's presentations at Expo '70 stressed collectivity, the individual artists became less visible, which dissatisfied some members.[25] In the case of Imai, he had grown critical of Expo '70 by the time of its opening, in part through his interest in Mono-ha, which emerged partly in response to environment art. To mark his aesthetic turn, he completely abandoned his original plan for the Expo's *Invitational Competition of Contemporary Sculpture for Landscaping the Japan World Exposition* installation: instead of a spaceshiplike sculpture, he decided to show an enormous stone splashed with white paint. Sited in front of the Furukawa Pavilion, which was modeled after a Buddhist pagoda, his *Three-Ton Boulder* (fig. 63) stood as a unique form of protest against the Expo's naive futurism.[26]

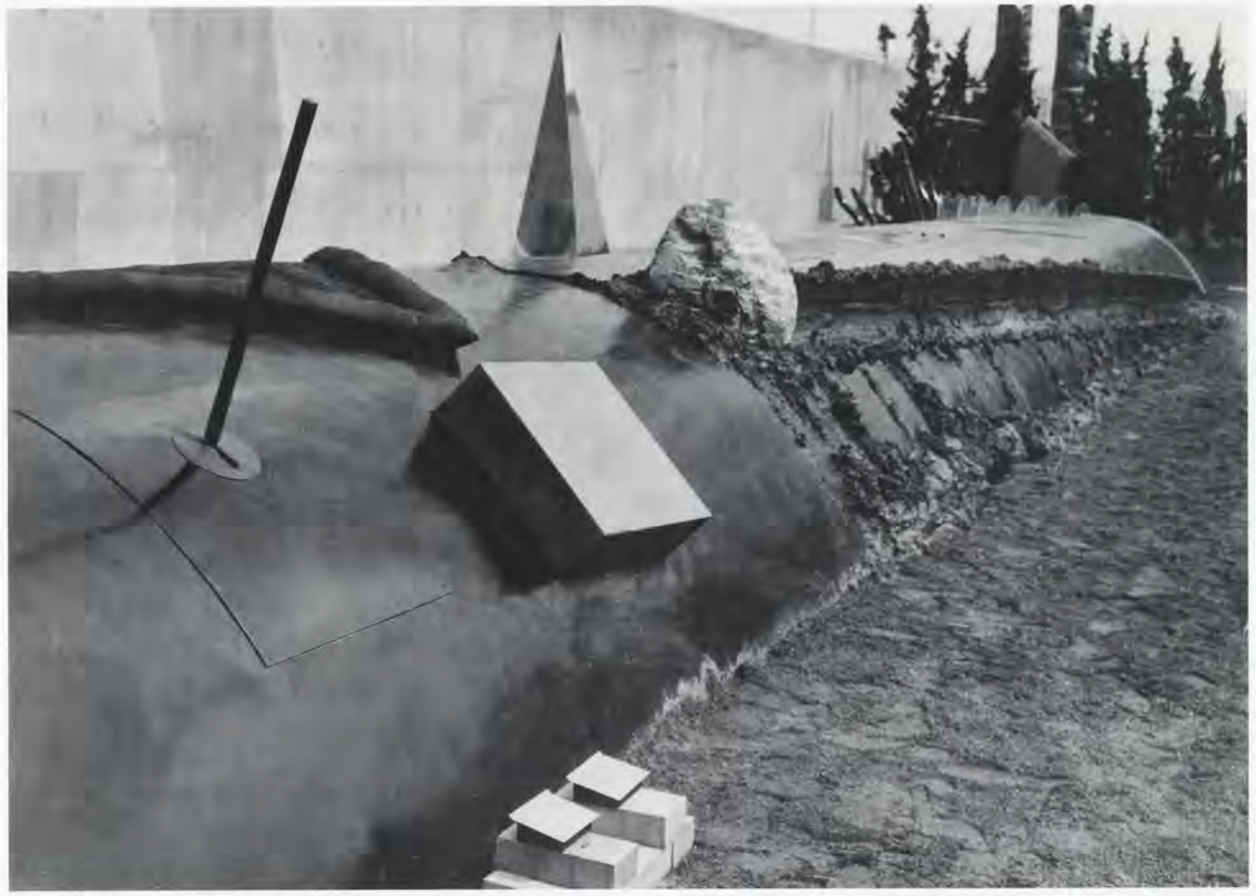


FIG. 62. **Gutai Art Association**, *Garden on Garden*, 1970. Installation view: *Art Exhibition of the Universal Exposition*, Expo '70, Osaka, March 15–September 13, 1970

Second-phase Gutai artists like Imai, who joined the group during its critical transitional period after 1962, helped it realize foundational aspects that have long been overlooked because of the critical focus on Gutai's painting, both at the time and in the years since. But contrary to the assumption that Gutai poured most of

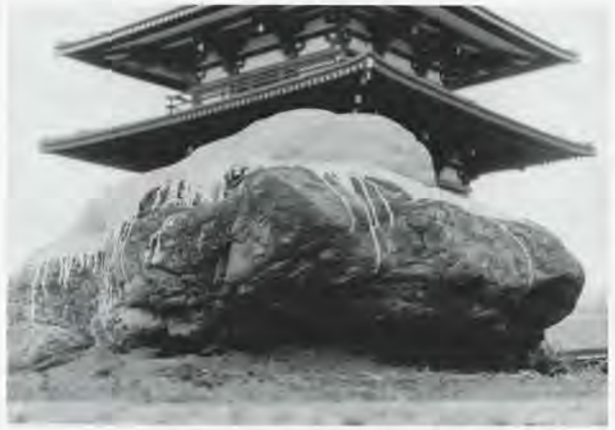


FIG. 63. **IMAI Norio**, *Three-Ton Boulder*, 1970. Paint and rock. Installation view: *Invitational Competition of Contemporary Sculpture for Landscaping the Japan World Exposition*, Expo '70, Osaka, ca. March–September 1970

its energy into painting after its liaison with Michel Tapié in 1957, the group's tendencies toward intermedia continued and grew in its works of the late 1960s, in particular due to the arrival of new members. In the years since Gutai, its "DNA" has thrived in the work of those who once comprised it, as well as in the group's revolutionary methods in art and pedagogy. These have been passed on to younger generations of artists who will in turn pass the torch of limitless experimentation into the future.

NOTES

1. Here I employ a newer, two-part periodization of Gutai, as opposed to the familiar division into three parts. For a discussion of this subject, see Ming Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," this volume, pp. 45–79.
2. On the politics of Expo '70, see Midori Yoshimoto, introduction to "Expo '70 and Japanese Art: Dissonant Voices," special issue, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 23 (December 2011), pp. 1–12.
3. Imai Norio, *Shiro kara hajimaru: Watashi no bijutsu nōto* [It begins with white: My notes on art] (Osaka: Brain Center, 2001), pp. 18–33.
4. Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *Something Else Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (1966), p. i; repr. in Higgins, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 18–21.
5. These outdoor works have been so highly regarded that some were re-created for *Nul 1965* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and, more recently, at the 1993 and 2009 Venice Biennale. See Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 129, and Hirai Shōichi, *Gutai te nanda?/What's Gutai?*, trans. Christopher Stephens (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 2004), p. 159.
6. Imai, *Shiro kara hajimaru*, p. 43. The art critic Tōno Yoshiaki first mentioned *hatchū geijutsu* in the catalogue essay he wrote for the exhibition *Colors and Space*, which he curated at the Minami Gallery, Tokyo, September 1966.
7. See William O. Gardner, "The 1970 Osaka Expo and/as Science Fiction," in "Expo '70 and Japanese Art: Dissonant Voices," pp. 26–43.
8. See Osaka University 21st Century Kaikokudo, ed., *Natsukashiki mirai "Osaka Banpaku"/Nostalgic Futures of Expo '70* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 2012), pp. 28, 113.
9. For further discussion of this exhibition, see Midori Yoshimoto, "From Space to Environment: The Origins of *Kankyō* and the Emergence of Intermedia Art in Japan," *Art Journal* 67, no. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 24–45.
10. Enbairamento no Kai, "Kūkan kara kankyō e ten shushi" [The concept of the exhibition *From Space to Environment*], special issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 275 (November 1966), p. 118.
11. Among the most important communication theories of the time was Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), which was published in Japanese in 1967.
12. Imai Norio, conversation with the author, Osaka, August 4, 2008.
13. The influential Tokyo critic Takiguchi Shūzō had introduced Tōmatsu and Ōtsuji to Imai for this project. Imai Norio, e-mail to the author, October 24, 2011.
14. For a list of exhibitions related to environment art in which Gutai members participated, see Yamamoto Atsuo, "Gutai 1954–1972," in *Gutai ten I, II, III/Gutai I, II, III*, exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1994), p. 26.
15. Imai Norio, unpublished diagram for *Gutai Art for the Space Age*, 1967, collection of the artist.
16. Imai Norio, e-mail to the author, October 26, 2011.
17. Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 157–59. See also Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," this volume, pp. 45–79.
18. On various criticisms of the Expo, see Yoshimoto, "Expo '70 and Japanese Art: Dissonant Voices," pp. 2–4.
19. On the Hanpaku (Anti-Expo) movement, see Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 166.
20. Imai Norio, "Osaka Banpaku and Art," in *Nostalgic Futures of Expo '70*, ed. Osaka University 21st Century Kaikokudo, pp. 55–56.
21. Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 167.
22. Hirai, *What's Gutai?*, p. 139.
23. Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai Art Manifesto," trans. Reiko Tomii, this volume, pp. 18–19. Originally published as "Gutai bijutsu sengen," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), p. 203.
24. See Christian and Michael Blackwood, *Japan: The New Art* (Cologne: Westdeutcher Rundfunk, 1970), filmstrip, 24 min. This film includes footage documenting the installation of *Garden on Garden*.
25. Yoshida Minoru, for example, was unhappy about not receiving credit for his *Plastic Car*, shown as part of the *Gutai Art Festival*. Shinohara Ushio, conversation with the author, June 8, 2012.
26. Imai Norio, "Kannen to nichijō no aida," in *Ōru Kansai* (June 1970), pp. 138–40; excerpted and trans. as "Between Concept and Everyday," this volume, p. 285. See also Imai, "Osaka Banpaku and Art," pp. 53–54.

communication malfunction: happenings and gutai

JUDITH RODENBECK

How might we understand the sudden and international proliferation of performative practices in the visual arts in the 1950s and 1960s? One hint may be present in something the American artist Allan Kaprow wrote in 1955 in the script for one of his regular radio addresses at Rutgers University, where he was then teaching art history while cultivating his artistic practice. Originally an Expressionist painter, he was rapidly evolving the environmental and performative scale of his work in a far different direction; by 1959 this development would crystallize in a new genre: the "Happening."

In the address, Kaprow observed that, in the aftermath of two world wars and the founding of the United Nations, with international travel, communications, and trade ever increasing, "it is no longer possible to exist purely and simply as a nation and culture separate from other nations and cultures." In the realm of art making, he said, the implication was less a potential universalism than a dynamic cosmopolitan system of exchange. "We can only guess at the next step: a non-national language of painting, perhaps of speaking too, in which a 'world style' is given variety and richness by a range of accents modifying it in each country where it is practiced, where the only mark an old culture will have on art is to slightly color something that does not belong to it alone."[1] If what strikes the contemporary reader first is Kaprow's evocation of a nascent globalism, the assumption that style and form have ways of circulating that escape the limits of geography and culture provides a refreshing tonic to the paranoid and isolationist narratives of the Cold War era.[2] Kaprow himself would play a key role in one such moment of "variety and richness," in which the perception of simultaneous artistic developments across continents would leave

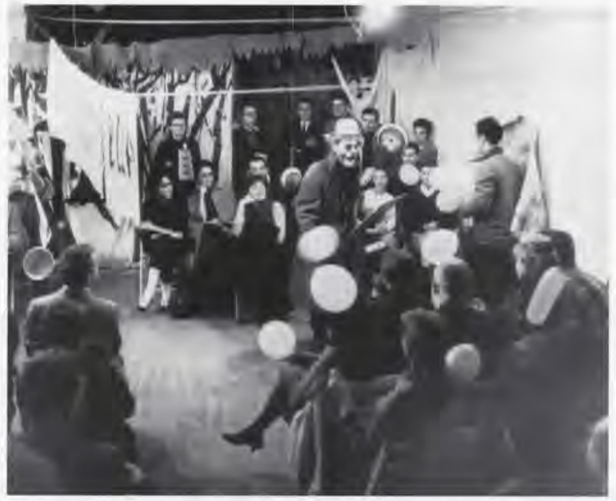


FIG. 64. **Allan KAPROW**, *The Big Laugh*, 1960. Performance view: Reuben Gallery, New York, January 9, 1960. Center: Jim Dine

the impression of a developing "world style." Kaprow's encounter with Gutai, and his assimilation of its practices to his account of the artistic vanguard, would code the American reception of Gutai for years to come.

By 1961, Happenings had exploded on the New York art scene. They ranged from the poetic, dreamlike productions of Jim Dine or Robert Whitman to the honking, anarchic antics of Red Grooms or Al Hansen to Kaprow's own explorations of chance composition and simple activities. In an article published that year in *Art News*, Kaprow teased out some possibilities for the then-developing performative form.[3] Already he had located a genealogy for these events reaching back, on the one hand, to a recently rediscovered twentieth-century European avant-garde performance tradition and, on the other, through the quasi-Bakhtinian carnivalesque "all the way to medieval mystery plays and processions."[4] His selective categorization distinguished three types:

> The sophisticated, witty works put on by the theater people; the very sparsely abstract, almost Zen-like rituals given by another group (mostly writers and musicians); and those in which I am most involved, crude, lyrical, and very spontaneous. This kind grew out of the advanced American painting of the last decade, and those of us involved were all painters (or still are).[5]

Though he was writing about the New York art world, Kaprow went on to cite an international array of activities related to those in his hometown in cities such as Chicago, Cologne, Milan, Paris, and San Francisco. Pride of place was given to Osaka, which appears first in the list, and Gutai is the only group mentioned by name.[6]

It is not entirely clear how or when Kaprow first learned of Gutai. A show at the Martha Jackson Gallery in fall 1958 introduced the collective in New York.[7] Kaprow's epochal essay "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" (1958), which forcefully argued for the radical extension of the "action" in Action painting in performative and environmental directions—indeed, for the abandonment of "painting," as traditionally understood—had just been published in *Art News*.[8] He could have seen the Gutai exhibition but claimed to have missed it; in any case, he likely would have read Dore Ashton's review in the *New York Times*, in which she describes an "ebullient, cheerfully aggressive collection of young people known as the Gutai group" whose work "has startled most of Japan."[9] And if he did read the review, he surely would have felt the sting of familiarity in her remark that Gutai painting, while casting out old conventions, belabored the "young but just as tired convention" of "gesture painting," for his own works in this Expressionist mode had received similar critical reception.[10] At some later point, perhaps while researching his 1966 book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*, he may have gone to the Martha Jackson Gallery to look through its records—for while Ashton dismissed the paintings, she singled out documentary photographs of Gutai activities as indicators of "truly revolutionary" practice.[11] Kaprow also could have heard about Gutai from the composer Ichiyanagi Toshi, with whom he attended John Cage's classes at the New School in 1957. But when asked directly, Kaprow said he had first encountered Gutai in 1959 through a friend, the painter Alfred Leslie, who kept a newspaper clipping about Gutai in his wallet and enthusiastically shared it with Kaprow.[12] The article in question was not Ashton's generally acerbic review of the Martha Jackson show but rather a piece that had appeared in the Sunday Arts section of the *New York Times* almost a year prior. Titled "Japanese Innovators," it provides a telegraphic description of the recent Gutai activities in Osaka.[13]

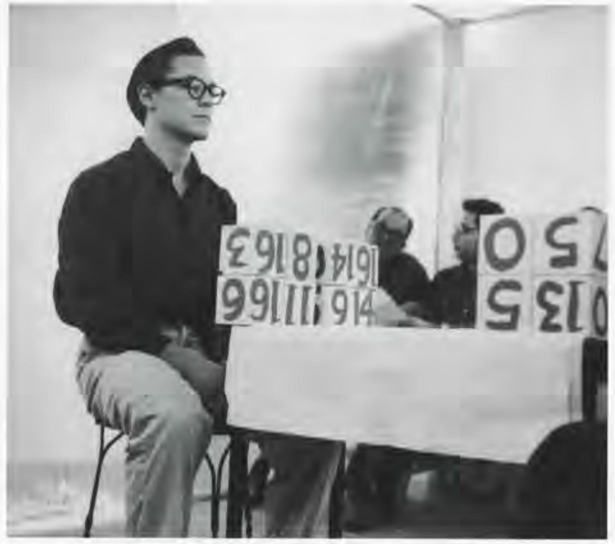


FIG. 65. **Allan KAPROW**, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, 1959. Performance view: Reuben Gallery, New York, October 4, 1959. Foreground: Robert Whitman

Whether Kaprow first learned of Gutai in 1957, 1958, or 1959, by March 1961 he had incorporated it into his lexicon. In the movement he found a search for the "new" that was both like and unlike the "shock of the new" that art critic Harold Rosenberg famously ascribed to Euro-American modernism. The duality is logical: Gutai constructed itself, on the one hand, on a rigorous parsing of that very modernism and its disseminatory strategies—including the U.S.-organized international exhibitions of advanced American art (excoriated by populists stateside but presented abroad as demonstrations of American freedom), *Life*-magazine triumphalism, and the network of critics writing in, reading, and mailing to one another little magazines. On the other hand, the movement was also built on the embodied, deliberate, and to some extent legislated experience of life under American occupation, with its contradictory imposition of liberalism and democracy. That is, Gutai emerged in the early 1950s not simply as a mimetic repetition or critical reappraisal of Abstract Expressionism, but as, among many other things, a profound critique of the artistic conformism of wartime Japan and, implicitly, of the nation's militarism, posed in terms of embodiment and the concrete.[14]

Initially, Kaprow would have noted Gutai's radical experimentation with materials, form, and gesture, which is detailed in the clipping Leslie had kept, along with the group's implosion of distinctions between the space of production and the space of exhibition. The article was not illustrated, and only later would Kaprow have seen images like those he eventually included in his highly influential *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*. Those images, obtained by Kaprow from Yoshihara Jirō in 1963, include several dramatic reconsiderations of painting from 1955, such as Murakami Saburō breaking through paper screens and Shiraga Kazuo "challenging mud"; more theatrical presentations from the *Gutai Art on the Stage* and the *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage* events in 1957 and 1958, respectively; photographs of Tanaka Atsuko animating her extraordinary *Electric Dress* (1956, plate 92) and of Shimamoto Shōzō dropping thousands of Ping-Pong balls onstage in *Material Destruction* (1957, fig. 32); and documentary photographs of the 1960 *International Sky Festival* (plate 34), showing banners of paintings, including one by Leslie, floating over the Osaka skyline tethered to giant advertising balloons.

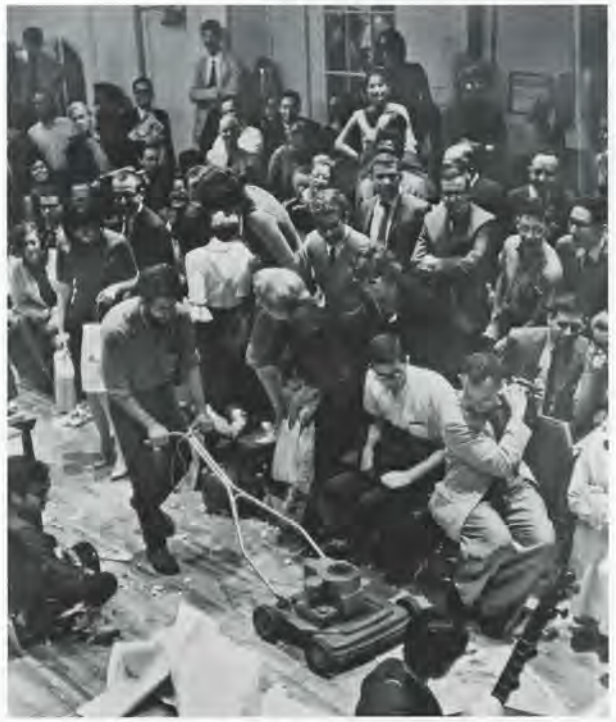


FIG. 66. Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Originale* (1961), directed by **Allan KAPROW**, September 8, 1964. Performance view: *Second Annual Avant Garde Festival*, Judson Hall, New York. Center: Kaprow shredding paper with a lawn mower

In 1958, in a description in an *Arts & Architecture* article that maps quite neatly onto the early New York Happenings, Ashton had singled out photographs of Gutai, such as those sent to Kaprow by Yoshihara, of "uproarious public 'performances' in which theatre and 'painting' were provocatively combined. Artists doubled as actors, calling on their senses to inspire three-dimensional settings for the 'performances.'" But Ashton also astutely noted: "In these sketches, the concentration is on the image at work in a spatial environment"; that is, the works were fundamentally conceived imagistically.[15] Though the material, formal, gestural, and performative dimensions of these works resonate with the Happenings that emerged in New York in the 1960s, they are structurally quite different. While his initial manifesto for Happenings had originated from a consideration of Pollock's painting, in theorizing these performances, Kaprow left picture making behind. The following formulation by Kaprow, also from 1966, provides a description of the outer limits of the form as he conceived it:

> A Happening is an assemblage of events performed or perceived in more than one time and place. Its material environments may be constructed, taken over directly from what is available, or altered slightly; just as its activities may be invented or commonplace. A Happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of rags, and in a friend's kitchen, either at once or sequentially. If sequentially, time may extend to more than a year. The Happening is performed according to plan but without rehearsal, audience, or repetition. It is art but seems closer to life.[16]

This paradigm of an aleatoric performance structured by a score, with varied options for roles, site, and props, is quite distinct from the relative presentational formality of Gutai; yet Happenings and Gutai performance do bear a family resemblance. Like the Gutai performances, action in Happenings was task driven and discrete rather than narrative. And like Gutai performances, Happenings put into play the tension between the variability of abstraction and concrete actuality, the latter apprehended not just visually but through the entire sensorium. The nature of the participatory aspect, which in Happenings was so often manifest by the performative surround and, in Kaprow's most adventurous projects, by a kind of guerilla insertion into the everyday—*Calling* (1965), for instance, included one movement that involved dropping a body wrapped in tinfoil at the information booth in Grand Central Station—is a major difference between the two. Gutai's performed works for the most part took place in theatrical settings, with clear distinctions between audience and performers.

In the space of a few years, between his initial formulations and his book, Kaprow developed a typology that ranged from the highly orchestrated and scored "something to take place" of his own *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959, fig. 65) to a radically dispersed, self-reported execution of various structured (that is, scored) activities. Audience participation in Happenings was a key concern for Kaprow, and it extended from the simplistic interiority put into relief by Cage's *4' 33"* (a work from 1952 that predates the term "Happening" but that served as a crucial model), in which audience members experienced themselves and their surroundings as coextensive with and therefore part of a visually cued time frame, to the imaginative co-creation of a score's enactment. For Kaprow, the most ambitious of the Happenings presented a radically spatialized and temporalized collage of concrete actions assembled in an abstract composition; in the ideal, there would be no audience, only participants. If the performative results occasionally bore some resemblance to Gutai projects, the procedural terms were radically distinct. The chief incommensurability lies in Gutai's relative attachment to painting, or, more properly, to picturing.[17] Nevertheless, in 1966 it seemed the Happening as a form and definition was open enough to encompass the precise event style of Dick Higgins, the quasi narrative of Dine, the lyricism of Kaprow or Carolee Schneemann (fig. 67), and the improvisation of Jean-Jacques Lebel or Hansen—and, it seemed to Kaprow, based on written accounts and photographs, the actions of Gutai.

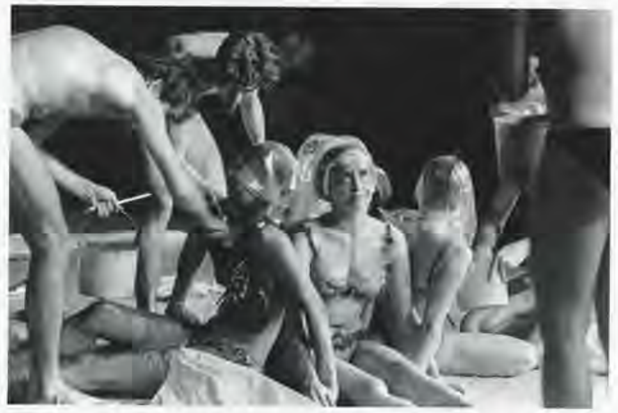


FIG. 67. **Carolee SCHNEEMANN**, *Meat Joy*, 1964. Performance view: Judson Memorial Church, New York, November 1964

In *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*, Kaprow lists seven rules of thumb, "conditions" that should be understood to be "not iron-clad rules but fruitful limits":

> A) The line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible. B) Therefore, the source of themes, materials, actions, and the relationships between them are to be derived from any place or period except from the arts, their derivatives, and their milieu. C) The performance of a Happening should take place over several widely spaced, sometimes moving and changing locales. D) Time, which follows closely on space considerations, should be variable and discontinuous. E) Happenings should be performed once only. F) It follows that audiences should be eliminated entirely. G) The composition of a Happening proceeds exactly as in Assemblage and Environments, that is, it is evolved as a collage of events in certain spans of time and in certain spaces.[18]

The points of intersection with Gutai seem clear: a limpid formalism, an interest in multimedia, an engagement with popular forms of entertainment, and an expansion out of Action painting. "For the record," Kaprow acknowledges in the book, "the dates accompanying these photographs [of Gutai projects] seem to indicate the priority of the Japanese in the making of a Happening type performance." He added: "This is a rare case of modern communications malfunctioning." [19] It is an oddly hedging remark, pointing at once to the failure of those very disseminative strategies that had been integral to the spread of Abstract Expressionism, to Gutai's own transnationalist ambitions, and to the predictive effect of Kaprow's essay on Pollock, yet hinting also at those difficulties of translation encountered when a predictive theory meets concrete objects that predate it.

NOTES

I am indebted to Ming Tiampo, Reiko Tomii, and Midori Yoshimoto, for a rich and generous collegial dialogue that we have now carried on for nearly a decade—and for which I must also thank Alexandra Munroe, whose groundbreaking 1994–95 exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, served as the catalyst.

1. Allan Kaprow, "The International Set in Painting," *Rutgers Report on World Affairs*, 1955, Allan Kaprow Archives, box 46, folder 4, Getty Research Institute, Santa Monica, Calif. See also Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 90.
2. For another important contemporary account of form and its geocultural circulation, see George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).
3. Allan Kaprow, "Happenings in the New York Scene," *Art News* 60, no. 3 (March 1961), pp. 36–39, 58–62; repr. in Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, expanded edition, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 15–26.
4. Ibid., p. 16. Though Mikhail Bakhtin could not have been in Kaprow's tool kit until the late 1970s, the evocation of medieval mystery plays, seventeenth-century processions, circuses, and so on, was fully within the repertoire of a vanguardist (as well as a populist) theater discourse. This litany, too, takes some theoretical distance from the simplistic popularizing of Happenings as "painters' theater."
5. Kaprow, "Happenings in the New York Scene," p. 16.
6. See Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, p. 88, for a discussion of this passage.
7. See ibid., pp. 105–13, for an extensive critical discussion of this exhibition and its reception, including of the complex double bind in which Gutai found itself with respect to Abstract Expressionism.
8. Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Art News* 57, no. 6 (October 1958), p. 24ff. Kaprow had already begun working on this essay in 1956, while many of its formal observations appear in his writing as early as 1950; see Judith Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), p. 8n12.
9. Dore Ashton, "Art: Japan's Gutai Group," *New York Times*, September 25, 1958, p. 66.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Allan Kaprow, conversation with the author, October 29, 1996.
13. Ray Falk, "Japanese Innovators," *New York Times*, December 8, 1957, p. D24.
14. *Gutai* of course means "concrete." See Tiampo, *Decentering Modernism*, pp. 21–22. On embodiment, see Michio Hayashi, "The Occupied Subject: Painting and Body in Postwar Japan," in *À rebours: La rebelión informalista, 1939–1968/À rebours: The Informal Rebellion, 1939–1968*, ed. Dore Ashton (Las Palmas de Gran Canária, Spain: Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno; Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1999), pp. 55–68.
15. Dore Ashton, "Japanese Avantgardism," *Arts & Architecture* 75, no. 8 (August 1958), p. 11. This point is elaborated in Reiko Tomii's discussion of *e* (picture) in "Murakami Saburō's 'Picture' Mind," in *Murakami Saburō: 70-nendai o chūsh in ni/Saburo Murakami: Through the '70s*, ed. Ikegami Tsukasa and Tomii, exh. cat. (Osaka: ArtCourt Gallery, 2012).
16. Allan Kaprow, *Some Recent Happenings*, Great Bear Pamphlet (New York: Something Else Press, 1966), p. 3.
17. For more on the conception of "picturing," see Ming Tiampo, "Please Draw Freely," pp. 45–79, and Katō Mizuho, "Abstract Space in Concrete Terms: Reconsidering Gutai Painting," pp. 254–58, both in this volume.
18. Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966), pp. 207, 188–99.
19. Ibid., p. 212. Kaprow also notes John Cage's even earlier 1952 *Untitled Event*, as well as his own first Happenings, performed in Cage's class at the New School in 1957.

gutai and brazilian concrete art

PEDRO ERBER

A striking similarity between Gutai and Brazilian Concretism has long piqued the interest of art historians and critics. Since the Japanese word *gutai* is translated as "concrete," Gutai and Concretism share a name. Some have perceived, in this terminological convergence, the sign of deeper parallels between the groups' theories and works.[1] The highly influential *Art since 1900* (2004) explains the affinities between Gutai and the Concretist offshoot Neo-Concretism in terms of the "dissemination of modernist art through the media and its reinterpretation by artists outside the United States and Europe."[2] The chronologies of the two movements add to the intrigue, insofar as the founding of Gutai in 1954 coincides roughly with the rise of Concrete art in Brazil in the wake of the first São Paulo Biennial in 1951. But is this convergence of terminology and synchrony indicative of a deeper affinity, or is it merely coincidental?

With the benefit of hindsight, certain incontestable affinities between Gutai and Brazilian Concretism become clear. Both movements emerged out of the turmoil of World War II, in rapidly growing economies. Both groups were situated on the margins of the international art scene and engaged in dialogue with the artistic centers and cultural capitals of Euro-America. Most significantly, both Gutai and Brazilian Concretism/Neo-Concretism crossed the boundaries of painting, object-based art, and visual poetry, and both shaped a generation of younger artists in the 1960s who produced works that engaged performance and interactivity. Contemporaneous to Murakami Saburō's dramatic rupture of the picture plane in *Work (Six Holes)* (1955, plate 57), Lygia Clark's *Cocoons* (*Casulos*, 1959, fig. 68) and Hélio Oiticica's *Spatial Reliefs* (*Relevos espaciais*, 1960, fig. 69) brought painting into three-dimensional space. The act of wearing art, and the relationship among color, movement, and the human body, which defined Oiticica's *Parangolés* (1964–65, fig. 70), was likewise crucial in Tanaka Atsuko's *Stage Clothes* (1957, plate 100). The incorporation of visual poetry into the works of members of both groups constitutes a further point of comparison.

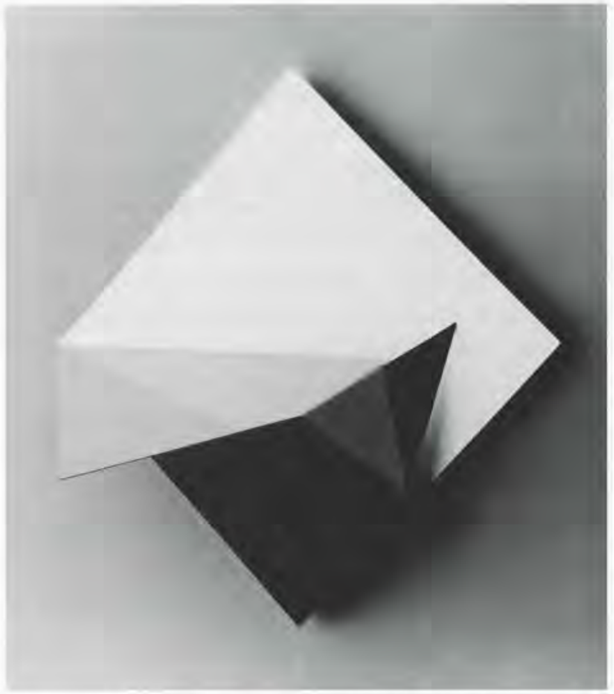


FIG. 68. **Lygia CLARK**, *Cocoon* (*Casulo*), 1959. Acrylic on aluminum, 42.5 × 42.5 × 5.5 cm. Private collection

The members of Gutai and the Brazilian Concretists never interacted directly or directly referenced one another's works, and their resemblances cannot be simply explained in terms of common influences and origins in Euro-American modernism. A closer look at both movements reveals that they converged to the degree that they did because each took an attitude of antagonism toward its art-historical starting point. Ultimately, Gutai and Brazilian Concretism/Neo-Concretism meet precisely insofar as the two movements challenged and disrupted the aesthetic tendencies with which they were primarily associated.

A 1958 text by Mário Pedrosa, chief theorist of Concrete art in Brazil, provides a cogent record of the aesthetic and political chasm between Gutai and Brazilian Concretism in the movements' early stages. Temporarily stationed in Tokyo as a UNESCO fellow and visiting researcher at the National Museum of Modern Art, Pedrosa attended *International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai*, a joint exhibition of Gutai members and a select group of European and North American painters, organized by Gutai's leader and founder Yoshihara Jirō and the French critic Michel Tapié. In his weekly column for the Rio-based daily newspaper *Jornal do Brasil*, Pedrosa reported:

> Now I want to talk about one of the latest exhibitions I visited so far. Its title: nothing less than "International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai." The exhibition was organized by Mr. Michel Tapié, from Paris. Tapié, as we know, is one of those smart Parisians who, associated with *marchands de tableaux*, invent "isms" and discover "geniuses" every other day, simply because this is their job. . . . Associated with Mr. Tapié and his "other art," there is a group of young artists, the Gutai group, under the leadership of Mr. Jirō Yoshihara. Gutai is defined in the dictionary as "concretion"—the word combined to the suffix *teki* meaning "concrete." So, Gutai would be a "concretion" but still not "concrete." . . . Be that as it may, Gutai has nothing to do with the Concrete group from [Brazil]. They are tachists,[3] and search for purportedly informal origins, rather than attempting to define new structures. The exhibition was the weakest among those I have seen in Tokyo.[4]

Regarding the terminological similarity between Gutai and Concrete art, Pedrosa's position is unequivocal:

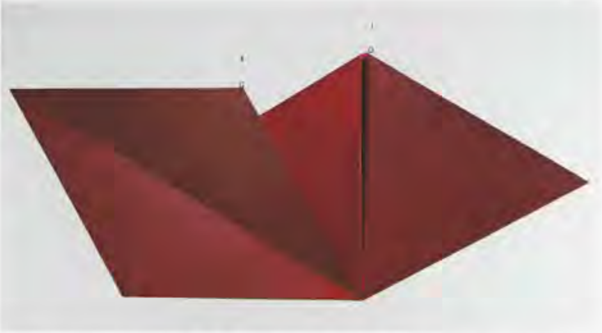


FIG. 69. **Hélio OITICICA**, *Spatial Relief (Red)* (*Relevo espacial [Vermelho]*), 1960. Polyvinyl acetate resin on plywood, 62 × 149 × 8.5 cm. César and Claudio Oiticica Collection, Rio de Janeiro

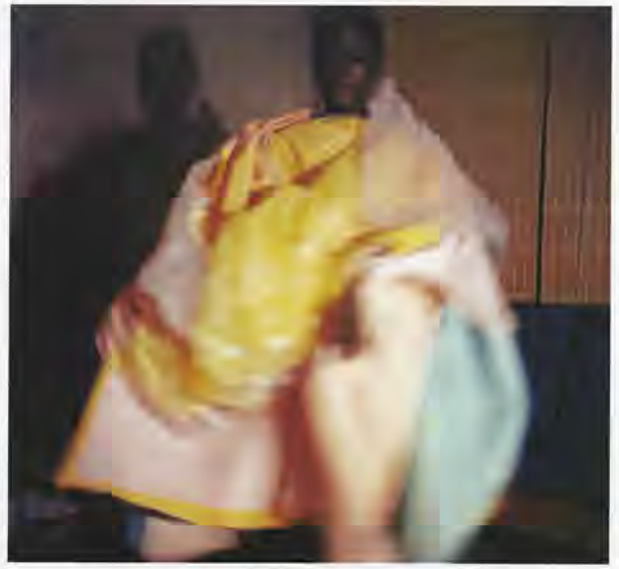


FIG. 70. **Hélio OITICICA**, *Parangolé P7 Cape 4 "Clark,"* 1964–65. Paint, canvas, burlap, and vinyl, 131 × 98.5 × 6 cm. Worn by Jerônimo da Mangueira. César and Claudio Oiticica Collection, Rio de Janeiro

mere coincidence. His comments disguise neither his unreserved support for Brazilian Concretism nor his contempt for Tapié and Informel painting. Yet it is crucial to note that, more than personal taste or stylistic allegiances, Pedrosa's criticism of Gutai was grounded in an aesthetic project with far-reaching political implications. In brief, what stood between Pedrosa and the Gutai paintings in 1958 were the cultural politics of the Cold War.

The transnational discourse of art in the 1950s established abstract painting as a privileged site for ideological contention.[5] The choice between lines and geometric shapes versus stains of paint carried the weight of a political statement. Curiously, Pedrosa's unforgiving appraisal of Gutai resonates with the condescending comments by American critic William Rubin, who described Gutai's "overtly derivative Abstract Expressionist paintings"[6] as a (to him, positive) sign of Japanese acceptance of American values in the postwar era. On the other hand, one cannot fail to notice the blatant homology between Pedrosa's judgment and Museum of Modern Art, New York, founding director Alfred Barr's dismissal of Brazilian Concretism as mere "Bauhaus exercises"[7] during the 1957 São Paulo Biennial, and his praise of Brazilian artists whose work seemed somewhat more aligned with Abstract Expressionism. In each case, a fundamentally political understanding of the significance and future of modernist painting overdetermined the opposition between old and new, innovation and derivation.

The origins of Gutai and Brazilian Concretism are deeply inscribed in this politics of abstraction, which characterized the discourse on painting in the 1950s. The concept of Concrete art, coined in 1930 by the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg[8] and elaborated in the postwar era by the Swiss sculptor Max Bill, attained unprecedented currency in 1950s Brazil.[9] The geometric objectivism of Concrete art was highly attractive to a young generation of painters in São Paulo—many of them working concomitantly as industrial designers. Rio-based artists such as Amílcar de Castro, Clark, Oiticica, and Lygia Pape were also on board early on, albeit less strictly devoted to the principles of Concrete art; led by the poet and theorist Ferreira Gullar, they would constitute the core of the Neo-Concrete movement founded in 1959.[10]

The momentous rise of Concretism in Brazil cannot be dissociated from the economic stability, rapid industrialization, and, most importantly, the developmentalist ideology that marked the country's cultural and political life in the 1950s.[11] Among politically engaged artists and critics, the embrace of the constructive impetus of Concrete art and the dismissal of informal tendencies amounted to a fundamental choice regarding the future of the nation. Pedrosa, a former Trotskyist activist and Brazil's most prominent art critic of the mid-twentieth century, played a crucial role in this debate.[12] He embraced Concretism as the perfect fit for the ideological demand for an aesthetic of development and construction, and rejected "informalism" as irrelevant and inadequate for the immediate needs of Brazilian culture.

Meanwhile, in Japan, the antagonism between Constructivism and informal abstraction played a much less divisive role. The concept of Concrete art had so little currency in 1950s Japan that neither Gutai members nor Japanese art critics at the time commented on the obvious similarity between the notion of Concrete art (*gutai geijutsu*) and the name of the avant-garde Gutai Art Association (Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai). Not that Constructivist tendencies were entirely absent from the local art scene. In fact, even certain Gutai artists created Constructivist-inflected works: Kanayama Akira's attempts to reduce painting to its absolute minimum resulted in Piet Mondrian–inspired works that feature only red, blue, and black geometric forms on canvas and paper (plates 45–47). Yamazaki Tsuruko's geometric tendencies and Tanaka's textile works (see plates 38–39, 41) also resonate. As aesthetic and political discourses, however, Constructivism and Concrete art never came close in Japan to the hegemonic role they assumed in Brazil.

Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism, on the other hand, were tremendously influential not only among the members of Gutai but also in the 1950s Japanese art scene as a whole. The effect of Informel was such that critics coined the expressions "Informel typhoon" and "Informel whirlwind" to describe the unprecedented impact of the new painterly trend.[13] Written in 1956, the "Gutai Art Manifesto" reflects the strong presence of Informel in Yoshihara's outlook on the international art scene during Gutai's early phase. To some extent, it is plausible to think of the Gutai Manifesto as Yoshihara's response to a specific brief, a request by the editors of the art journal *Geijutsu Shinchō* for a statement of Gutai's position in relation to Art Informel.[14] Yoshihara was quick to incorporate the idea of a liberating relationship between the human spirit (*ningen seishin*) and matter (*busshitsu*) that framed the debates concerning Informel painting in 1950s Japan as a guiding principle of Gutai's artistic practices.[15] Regardless of the circumstances of the manifesto's writing, such principles do indeed resonate with the works of the Gutai group. It is possible to read many of their early works, and Shiraga Kazuo's experiments in particular, in terms of this direct confrontation between the human spirit and the resistance of matter.

The emphasis on setting matter free, and letting matter speak for itself, which directly links the Gutai Manifesto to Informel, also differentiates it fundamentally from the principles and attitudes of Concretism. In the brief list of principles of Concrete art published in 1930, Van Doesburg writes, "The work of art must be entirely conceived and formed by the spirit before its execution."[16] Years later, Bill explained the creative process of Concrete art in the following terms: "Abstract ideas which previously existed only in the mind are made visible in a concrete form."[17] The concrete, for Bill, was thus above all "the concretion of an idea."[18] Following this emphasis on the mathematical character of artistic composition, members of the São Paulo–based collective Ruptura, including Waldemar Cordeiro and Lothar Charoux, proposed an entirely objective, mechanical conception of painting as the pure expression of the intellect. Color itself, they argued, should be reduced to the role of mere visual aid to the intellectual apprehension of form. As the controlled and planned creation of concrete reality, art was meant to follow a set of "clear and intelligible principles" with "great possibilities of practical development."[19] No work is more characteristic of this highly intellectual process of artistic creation than Cordeiro's 1956 painting *Visible Idea* (*Idéia visível*, fig. 71), whose mathematical composition—not to mention its title—displays strict allegiance to the principles of Concrete art. Diametrically opposed to the expressive impetus of Informel, Concrete art seemed closer to the very target of Yoshihara's criticism in the Gutai Manifesto: an art in which "matter, all slaughtered under the pretense of production by the mind, can now say nothing."[20] Clearly, spirit and matter do not "shake hands" here—and the human intellect does not hesitate to make matter submit to it.

The political aesthetics of 1950s art, which framed abstract painting in terms of spirit versus matter, discipline versus freedom, and ultimately, socialism versus capitalism, placed Gutai and Brazilian Concretism on opposite ends of the spectrum. In view of such radical oppositions, Pedrosa's verdict in 1958 that the Gutai group "has nothing to do" with Brazilian Concretism is hardly surprising. Yet, despite their widely divergent starting points, the two movements do converge in a

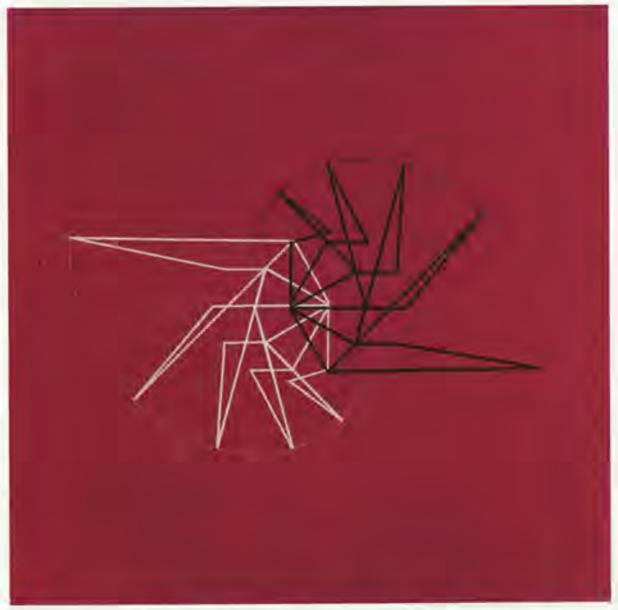


FIG. 71. **Waldemar CORDEIRO**, *Visible Idea* (*Idéia visível*), 1956. Acrylic on Masonite, 59.9 × 60 cm. Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros

thorough questioning of the status of art through performance, interactivity, and the rupture of pictorial space. Gutai and Neo-Concretism disrupted not only the aesthetic and ideological trends from which they emerged but also the politics of abstraction that framed the transnational discourse on painting throughout the 1950s. Only in this examination does a deeper parallel, the fundamental contemporaneity between their divergent ways of searching out concreteness, reveal itself.

NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Japanese and Portuguese are by the author.

1. For example, see Marc Dachy, *Dada au Japon: Segments dadas et néo-dadas dans les avant-gardes japonaises* [Dada in Japan: Dada and Neo-Dada segments in the Japanese avant-gardes] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), p. 120.

2. Gutai and the Brazilian Neo-Concretist group are the only postwar avant-gardes from outside Euro-America included in *Art since 1900*. They are discussed under the same heading, which reads: "1955a. The first Gutai exhibition in Japan marks the dissemination of modernist art through the media and its reinterpretation by artists outside the United States and Europe, also exemplified by the rise of the Neoconcretist group in Brazil." See Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and David Joselit, *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, vol. 2, *1945 to the Present* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), pp. 411–16. Although the heading refers specifically to the Neo-Concretist group (1959–61), the narrative focuses on the development of Lygia Clark's work between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, hence beyond the proper year span of Neo-Concretism.

3. The term "tachism" (*tachismo* in Portuguese), from the French *tache*, meaning "stain," is used in reference to informal abstract painting, frequently with a pejorative connotation.

4. Mário Pedrosa, "Arte: Japão e Ocidente" [Art: Japan and the West], *Jornal do Brasil*, September 17, 1958; repr. in *Modernidade cá e lá: Textos escolhidos IV* [Modernity here and there: Selected texts IV], ed. Otília Arantes (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2000), p. 311.

5. The importance of North American Abstract Expressionism as a cultural weapon in the 1950s has been widely documented. See, for instance, Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War," in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Frascina (Harper and Row, 1985).

6. William Rubin, quoted in Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 111.

7. Lourival Gomes Machado, "Conversa de Barr" [Barr Talks], *O Estado de São Paulo*, October 19, 1957; quoted in Ana Cândida de Avelar, "Controversies of a Juror," *Third Text* 26, no. 1 (January 2012), pp. 29–39.

8. See Theo van Doesburg, "Base de la peinture concrete" [Basis of Concrete painting], *Art Concret* 1 (April 1930), p. 1.

9. Bill's *Tripartite Unity* was awarded the international prize for sculpture in the first São Paulo Biennial in 1951.

10. On the significance of the Neo-Concrete rupture and the importance of phenomenology for the theoretical framework of Neo-Concretism, see Ronaldo Brito's groundbreaking *Neoconcretismo: Vértice e ruptura do projeto construtivo brasileiro* [Neo-Concretism: Peak and rupture of the Brazilian Constructive project] (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1985). See also Mari Carmen Ramírez, "The Embodiment of Color—'From the Inside Out,'" in Ramírez and Luciana Figueiredo, *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* (London: Tate, 2007), pp. 27–73.

11. The works of intellectuals involved in Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB, 1955–64), such as Hélio Jaguaribe, Álvaro Vieira Pinto, and Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, constitute a central piece in the elaboration of Brazilian developmentalist ideology in the 1950s. Following the nationalist trend of interpretation of the Brazilian economic and political reality, initiated by the Itatiaia Group (founded 1952) and the communist group Liga de Emancipação Nacional, and highly influenced by the work of economists of the United Nations Commission for Latin America (ECLAC, or CEPAL) such as the Argentinean Raúl Prebisch and the Brazilian Celso Furtado, ISEB took over the position of a think tank of the Juscelino Kubitschek presidency (1956–60) in addition to influencing a whole generation of intellectuals in a wide range of fields including economics, sociology, education, and literature. On the history of ISEB, see Caio Navarro de Toledo, *ISEB: Fábrica de ideologias* [ISEB: Factory of ideologies] (São Paulo: Ática, 1977). See also Daniel Pécaut, *Entre le peuple et la nation. Les intellectuels et la politique au Brésil* [Between people and nation: Intellectuals and politics in Brazil] (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1989), pp. 83–125.

12. See José Castilho Marques Neto, *Solidão revolucionária. Mário Pedrosa e as origens do Trotskismo no Brasil* [Revolutionary Solitude: Mário Pedrosa and the origins of Trotskyism in Brazil] (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1993).

13. Informel attracted not only internationally minded artists like Yoshihara but also appealed to leftist intellectuals disillusioned with the Social Realist program, such as the Marxist art critic Haryū Ichirō, who discerned in Informel's revolutionary usage of painterly *matière* the emergence of a new paradigm of artistic expression. Regarding the question of materiality in the Japanese reception of Informel, see Haryū Ichirō, "Ningen to busshitsu" [Man and matter], *Mizue*, no. 618 (January 1957), pp. 43–47. See also Miyakawa Atsushi, "Henbō no suii: Montāju-fū ni" [A history of change: In montage-like compilation], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 227, supplementary issue (October 1963); repr. in *Miyakawa Atsushi chosakushū* [Writings by Miyakawa Atsushi], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 1980), pp. 48–66.

14. See Hirai Shōichi, *Gutai te nanda?/What's Gutai?*, trans. Christopher Stephens (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 2004), p. 87.

15. See Yoshihara Jirō, "Gutai Art Manifesto," trans. Reiko Tomii, this volume, pp. 18–19. Originally published as "Gutai bijutsu sengen," *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), p. 203.

16. Theo van Doesburg, "Base de la peinture concrete," p. 1.

17. Max Bill, "Concrete Art" (1936–49), trans. Peter Selz, in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 74.

18. Ibid.

19. Waldemar Cordeiro et al., "Manifesto Ruptura" (1952), in *Projeto construtivo brasileiro na arte (1950–1962)*, ed. Aracy A. Amaral (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro; São Paulo: Secretaria da Cultura, Ciencia e Tecnologia do Estado de São Paulo, Pinacoteca do Estado, 1977), p. 69.

20. Yoshihara, "Gutai Art Manifesto," p. 18.

gutai

splendid playground

MING TIAMPO   ALEXANDRA MUNROE

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GUGGENHEIM

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Organized by Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe

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Notes to the Reader:
Japanese names are written according to Japanese convention, with surname first, followed by given name. Exceptions were made for individuals living or working abroad.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations by the author. Author's translations from *Gutai* journal occasionally differ from those in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010).

Frontispiece: Yoshihara Jirō and Gutai members at *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, 1956. Top row, from left: Tanaka Atsuko, Murakami Saburō, Yamazaki Tsuruko; middle row, from left: Mizuguchi Kyōichi, Kanayama Akira, Shimamoto Shōzō; bottom row, from left: Yoshihara Jirō, Motonaga Sadamasa, and Horii Nichiei

Endpapers, front: detail of model for Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)* (1956/2013) for *Gutai: Splendid Playground*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011; back: Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival*, 1960, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 19–24, 1960

appendices

artists' writings

COMPILED AND TRANSLATED BY REIKO TOMII
WITH MING TIAMPO AND ALEXANDRA MUNROE

This anthology of writings by Gutai members consists of four sections: texts that appeared in *Kirin*, a children's poetry and art magazine; writings from the group's journal, *Gutai*; texts that appeared in the special Gutai issue of the Italian art magazine *Notizie: Arti figurative*; and texts related to Gutai's Phase Two period (1962–72). Other translator credits noted where applicable.

kirin

Let's Make Mischief!

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

"Let's make mischief": this must sound like a strange title. Some of you may even have thought it was supposed to say, "Let's *not* make mischief" but that it somehow had been changed. . . .

I want to explain the relationship between a new kind of painting and mischief. . . . We tend to see things from only one point of view. As you grow older, you will have to consider difficult things. I hope you can learn to see correctly from all points of view, not just one, as one way of thinking about difficult things. . . .

But what does it mean to see things from various points of view? I want to explain it by going back to where we began: "Let's make mischief." Everybody knows mischief is no good. I think so, too. If we want to look at it from the other side, we have to ask why some people wreak havoc when everyone knows it is wrong. There are many kinds of mischief. Stealing persimmons or eggs from other people's yards benefits you. If you hate somebody and destroy his fence or mess it up, that's vindictive. In these cases, we know the reasons why. But how about tearing up a poster or writing graffiti [on a newly painted white] wall?

You do not benefit from such mischief. Your mother might rap your forehead with a smile on her face, or you might punch your best friend in the back and run away, even though you don't mean to hurt him. Why? I think this type of mischief, which is different from stealing or getting even with other people, happens like this: At your age, you have to remember many things and do many things that your fathers, mothers, and teachers tell you to do. As you learn difficult things like grown-ups and your older siblings, it becomes hard for you to behave spontaneously like you did before. That means that you are becoming a good person, but sometimes you might feel not entirely satisfied. Once in a while you may want to do what you want without anybody telling you how to behave, because you are always being given instructions by your fathers and teachers. One way you might satisfy this desire is mischief.

I myself wonder if good kids who always do what grown-ups tell them can lose the ability to decide right and wrong on their own. Of course it is important to listen to opinions of people respected in society. But at the same time, we cannot overlook the importance of making up what you like and doing it yourself. In this sense I would like you to make a lot of mischief. Mind you, mischief like graffiti on other people's walls or ruining calligraphies and drawings made by your older brothers and sisters is no good.

How then do you make good mischief? The only way is to make your own tools for it. For example, you can build a paper screen and break it, or buy a huge sheet of white paper and smear on different colors randomly. Some of you may say, "That sounds very interesting, but if I start doing that at home, they will surely think I'm going crazy or I'm acting like a baby."

In order to encourage those of you who worry, I would like to tell you about how some grown-up painters I know have fun. In October of this year, these painters had an exhibition at the Ohara Kaikan in Tokyo. One of them, Murakami [Saburō], thought this up: He blocked the entrance to the exhibition with a huge sheet of paper so that nobody could enter. Then he ran toward it from twenty meters or so away, broke it, and went through. When I heard about it, I thought, "It is really amazing to break through a crisp sheet of paper in an instant—an act that would blow away the blues!" . . .

I know of many more mischievous acts like this. While reading, some of you must have thought, "That sounds pretty good, but I can come up with even better mischief!" If you have any ideas, I suggest you act on them. And if you come up with any good mischief, please let me know, too.

Why do I promote mischief like this? Because grown-ups also enjoy making this kind of mischief from the bottom of their hearts. Just hearing about it, I want to do it myself. I can't stand people who draw just to show off their skills or beg teachers to teach them just so they can get good grades.

Now that you and your mothers understand what kind of mischief I recommend, you may have a question: haven't we always believed that only with a lot of skill and effort can you make a masterpiece? In fact, if I say this kind of mischief can be art, you will be surprised.

What moves people's minds has long been called "art" and embraced not because it is skillfully made but because it enthralls us, as though we can enter inside it. Let's compare ballet and the circus. Between the two, the circus seems more difficult in terms of skill. But ballet is called "art" and the circus is not, because circus acts try to perform difficult feats for the sake of difficulty while ballet dancers try to move your soul rather than simply performing intricate steps. That is to say, the latter have the power to make you feel like dancing yourself.

If you discover an interesting kind of mischief and show it to your friends and you make them think, "I want to do it, too!" that's great art. I want to recommend this kind of mischief rather than a carefully drawn picture. Because when you see your best friend, you will surely not pat his head but hit it.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Itazura o shimashō," *Kirin* (February 1956), pp. 18–21.

The Baby and Milk, or Proof of Life

SHIRAGA Kazuo

Why does art exist? Certain kinds of art make the world more beautiful and dazzle people. Lately in the adult world, however, art is seen as the proof of life.

A baby cries when she needs milk. This signals that the baby is alive, because she will die without milk.

So if you want to do something, that means you are alive. If you do it, then that proves that you are alive. . . .

Speaking of doing what you want do to, there is one method you can always count on that uses only what you have in front of you. Think hard.

You can do many things when you are given a piece of paper or a box. What do you do if you don't have crayons or paint? You can make a hole in the paper, tear it, or stick a torn-off piece into a hole you make. You may find it more beautiful than you expected. It may even seem to be proof that you have been alive.

Let's look at our faces and compare them. They're all different. In the same way, what you want to do or what you think up is different for everybody. If you do what you come up with yourself, it will naturally express your feelings at the time. . . . This method is different [from the usual way of making art]. Everyone does it enthusiastically, once she gets started. And when I see you work this way, I can certainly tell that you are alive. So I encourage you to turn what you want to do and what you think up into your work of art.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Akachan to miruku: Ikigai to iu koto," *Kirin* (May 1956), p. 1.

Extremely Interesting

YAMAZAKI Tsuruko

When you wake up Sunday morning, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Do you think, "I want to do something boring today"? Do you think of something scary? I believe that everybody thinks, "I want do something interesting." That way when you go to bed, you can say to yourself, "Ah, it was interesting today," and close your eyes with satisfaction.

As you can see, you might use the word "interesting" ten or twenty times a day. But can you explain what "interesting" means? Have you thought about what it feels like to be "interesting"? . . . When did you feel truly "interesting"? And how did you feel then? Please think about it with me. . . .

A: When watching a baseball game
B: When playing baseball
A: When playing a game that you've played many times before
B: When making up a new game and playing it
A: When doing something easy and ordinary
B: When doing something difficult or thrilling
A: When coming back early from playing
B: When playing too much, maybe even forgetting dinner, and getting scolded by your mother

I think the Bs are more interesting. Which do you think more interesting, the As or the Bs? I bet your answer is the same as mine.

Which is to say, what is really interesting is to do something yourself, to invent something yourself, to try even when something is difficult and you don't know whether you can do it well, to do something to your satisfaction.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Tobikiri omoshiroi koto," *Kirin* (July 1956), p. 1.

The Earth Is Not Round

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

The earth is not round. The earth is flat like your *shitajiki*,[1] and the sun moves from east to west. If you heard me saying such a thing, you would laugh at me. The earth is indeed round, and it revolves around the sun. Several hundred years ago, however, everybody believed the earth was flat and stationary. When Galileo started saying that the earth is round and moves around the sun, everyone scorned him. But now no one thinks the earth is flat. . . .

In everything, it takes a great effort to think up something new. And even if something is good, it takes time for other people to appreciate it. So if you are not strong enough, when you think up something new and important and nobody praises it, you may give it up, and instead you will start thinking up things that are not so new but that please everybody. Galileo and Picasso were not discouraged by the scorn they received and proved that they were right. That is why today people all over the world understand and respect their ideas.

Japanese people are very good at imitating, but they seem not as good as the people of advanced Western countries at inventing something new that nobody has ever known before. There must be many reasons it's that way, but among them is the lack of training in childhood to think for yourself without being told what to think.

Look at the pencil drawings that illustrate this month's issue. When you look at them closely, you can see that each of them creates interesting forms like nothing you have ever seen before, or it uses unusual lines. If we can make new pictures like these with just an ordinary pencil, we can create pictures you have never imagined when we use other materials, like watercolor and crayon. And if you become used to thinking independently, you can become very strong inside, and you won't have to depend on other people for everything. We must try to do what we think is right even if other people speak ill of us.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Chikyū wa maruku nai," *Kirin* (December 1956), p. 36.

Speed Violation
MURAKAMI Saburō

Follow the rules. . . .

Rules between nations. Traffic rules. Rules for Diet members. Rules about money. We must all follow them. . . .

It is interesting that every country on the earth sets speed limits while competing to break speed records.

Speed limits are in place because speeding is our natural desire. Which is to say, you must not exceed the speed limit when it causes trouble for other people.

But when you draw a picture or make a poem, you are in your own world, so no matter how fast you drive, you don't have to worry about killing anyone or hurting other people. . . .

In the world of art and poetry, there are no rules. . . . People who make pictures: that's all there is to it.

When you draw pictures and write poems, please exceed the speed limit as much as you like. And please make your own rules for drawing pictures and writing poems.

It is fun to think up something extraordinary and carry it out. But it requires tremendous courage to go ahead and do what no one else has done.

It is important for humankind to know the rules and follow them. It is more important, though, never to stop asking questions and answering them when you face something strange or unknown.

Excerpt. Originally published as "E no koto: Supīdo ihan" [About pictures: Speed violation], *Kirin* (April 1961), pp. 20–21.

On Being Weird
UKITA Yōzō

Being "weird" is the opposite of being "ordinary." In fact, it is the extreme opposite.

It so happens that many people live their whole lives without knowing that they have something weird inside.

But I want to say to you: what is weird within you is your treasure.

Let me explain. It is impossible for you to meld your mind completely with another person's—even between a parent and a child, between brothers and sisters, between good friends, between a pupil and a favorite teacher.

No matter how friendly you are with someone else, your two minds occupy different places. Your mind cannot be one with his. As a person, you can understand how he feels in your brain, but only he knows how he truly feels. This feeling has everything to do with his "worth."

That which only you feel, something different from all others—that is "weird." That is your treasure.

Some people are called "weirdos" in our society. They are often disliked by other people.

In my opinion, though, we need to be "weirdos" to the very core. If a person is not a weirdo, he has no value as a human being. If he has no taste as a human being, equipped with the distinct workings of the mind that animals lack, he is no better than a beer bottle.

He would be a bore, making the same sound over and over no matter who tapped him.

We are all blessed, born with something weird. Please start looking immediately for whatever is weird in you.

If you don't watch out, your treasure will get covered up with grime and disappear before you know it.

Excerpt. Originally published as "E no kyōshitsu (5): Henchikurin to iu koto" [Picture lesson, part 5: On being a weirdo], *Kirin* (March 1963), p. 27.

Let's Think More about Useless Things (Part 3)
SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

When I attended a gathering on children's drawings, a majority of mothers were concerned about their children's achievement in Japanese and mathematics. I found just a handful of mothers wanting to have art education expanded, although they seemed to think that by studying art, their children would become good at choosing clothing patterns, dressing themselves well, or buying nice jewelry, and perhaps they would become gentle people.

I firmly believe, however, that children's drawing is not for such useful purposes, so that kids become good at drawing different forms or selecting ties. Rather, its uselessness is the point.

If the classes taught at school are all about being useful, what dull people it may produce. The thought of it frightens me.

As contradictory as it may sound, I believe that the most useful thing to think or do is that which is deemed useless from a conventional standpoint, because it will truly prove that we are alive.

The composer Dan Ikuma once wrote in a newspaper essay that he was infuriated when he read an article that said that the whole nation must collaborate on the Olympic Games. Reading such an article, he felt like *not* collaborating, even if everybody else did. I was pleased because I too would not want to collaborate if I had seen this article.

I don't dislike the Olympic Games per se. But I cannot collaborate with those who make such a simplistic claim, which tramples on the feeling of every individual, as though we still lived in wartime Japan.

It is not limited to the Olympic Games. Right now, an exhibition of French art in Kyoto is inundated by visitors daily. Still, I don't think Japanese people's artistic literacy is so high. They flock to the exhibition, enticed by the respectable label of "Louvre," when newspapers and other media outlets write it up. It is just the same as the Ise Pilgrimage.[2] . . .

Recently I visited a friend of mine at his home to find an unusual room partition. When I asked about it, he told me that the fabric used to hang on a country wagon. Made up of scrap in red, yellow, and other colors, it ended up with a pleasant and unexpected pattern. The point here is not which is more aesthetic, the Louvre or this country-cart decoration; the most important thing is that you have the independent mind to decide according to your own criteria.

Morally speaking, being dogmatic is no good. And yet I find the Japanese people too undogmatic. "Dogmatic" in the true meaning of the word can mean that you think more and do more.

Unfortunate instances of being dogmatic are often motivated by other people's words or by self-interest, not by the conviction that it was truly wonderful to do those things. The word "dogmatic" can describe both shallow acts and true convictions. In either case, the Japanese have become the people of Louvre and Olympics worship.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Motto yaku ni tatanai koto o kangaeyō (3)," *Kirin* (April 1963), pp. 18–19.

gutai journal

The Establishment of the Individual
SHIRAGA Kazuo

All you have to care about is fattening yourself up.

If you fatten yourself up, society will also get fatter. That is, in terms of mental capacity.

I believe those who are hungry in their souls are living their lives in a truly correct way. Doesn't society make tremendous gains when eager individuals take something away from everything that is happening in the world and from all other people to become taller and fatter?

In managing our lives, which have been launched by using our own images [*eizō*] as capital to bring ourselves into the next stage of existence, we must not give to but take away from others. Before you give to somebody, you should see whether he or she has an eye. Those who have an eye can grasp things for themselves, without having them handed to them. In doing so, they can establish human relationships and encourage each other, thereby forming a society.

In a society that's so alert, fools are indeed poor no matter how materially rich they might be. What I mean by "fools" here is not people who are born feebleminded but people who are small-minded and cannot see by their mind's eye, who are too narrow-minded about everything.

You must first understand your inborn quality. This quality represents your difference from others, manifesting itself when you see and feel something, talk, draw, and make sounds. And you must create your own method of feeling, talking, and drawing. Preexisting methods are too feeble for you to express yourself, impotent to demonstrate how you differ from others. You can begin by doing what you like, as much as you like, without being encumbered by anything; the image of your character will gradually emerge. Everything you do is informed by your quality. However, on its own, the quality you are born with makes you no greater or no smaller. This is not interesting. If you don't fatten it, grow it, forge it by taking from other people, it is of no use. I believe that the force of your will is at work when your character is expressed in your own way. The force of your human will allows you to build on your innate qualities and add acquired aspects to them. Your innate qualities will grow as you take away from other people and acquire potent abilities. Expression is an important method for this. When action becomes an expressive consciousness, this all becomes possible. Expression is mediated by thinking, and the same can be said whether the expression is formless or given a form through your physical actions.

The stronger your will, the more resilient you will be when faced with all nonhuman forces. Today's intelligence must be neither escapist nor content with limited freedom, unlike the consciousness of the early twentieth century, which longed to escape the pitch-dark world and reach one filled with light, which tried to maintain a purity of faith and ended up a dim and shrunken void.

Those who are individually powerful and proactive seize their character and constitute an assertive whole.

Without establishing psychic individualism, we cannot establish any worthwhile culture for the whole. In politics, totalitarianism fails; in culture, that which is unfree and akin to totalitarianism must be purged.

Art expressed by means of what you have gained has much to offer other people, whereas art created to be given to other people contributes little to those it's imposed on. Expression is for everyone. It must not be limited to a certain type of person. Your own art will not emerge if you think about social significance or commercial value. If you believe that your art has a spiritual meaning and it helps you develop yourself, such art will truly be on the cutting edge of global culture. This art will have both social significance and commercial value.

We humans must be brave enough to think the useless and do the useless. What is considered useless today may not be useless in the new, fast-approaching world. All rational things come from the realms of the nonhuman; all functional objects are made by science. Human emotions are important and meaningful, and the establishment of the individual is essential. The human spirit appears to be entering a realm neither rational nor irrational. An empty infinite world. A space of zero, devoid of matter either organic or inorganic. Warm and comfortable, it is a splendid playground. Here, humans will grow fatter and fatter as we enjoy all sorts of mental frolic. Those with a character like Cézanne or Van Gogh can play freely here. When we play without regard to such human attributes as reason and emotion, we can discover countless differing individual qualities.

As I gave direction to my own quality and expressed myself by painting with my hands, painting with my feet, and painting with my body, my character has improved, moving along a particular path that was seen in my works. In its evolution, my creative act has stripped me naked and pushed me toward a terminal point. The moment I saw Kanayama's advertising balloon in our Tokyo exhibition,[3] I had a revelation. With that work, he symbolically put the balloon's sphere in the room's rectangle; in doing so, he made the final conceptual manipulation (although I don't know if that was really final or not; it appears to me final in the usual sense of "composition"). I also had a panoramic view, connecting it with another work by him that consists of a sunlike, strongly illuminated red sphere. Which is to say, these two separate works had unconsciously affected each other and produced a unity out of multiplicity. I saw a glimmer of light in this recognition. It can be so meaningful to undertake many acts all at once. My intellect, which found it purer in terms of quality to present a single act in one work, may now be able to appreciate the greater purity in a synthesized act. To put it concretely, I am now confident that whether I use my hands or my feet, so long as I am the one undertaking an act, the work will have my quality. I have thus begun to think that undertaking an act with many people may be meaningful. By unconsciously enumerating qualities of different individuals, each of us can understand our own quality more clearly. By undertaking an act together, much can be revealed to each of us. If so, the appearance of an exhibition will be very different. Around the time I reached this conclusion, the leader of the Gutai Art Association, Yoshihara Jirō, proposed that we present an onstage exhibition. It will be a very difficult task. But what a rewarding endeavor. No matter how challenging, I am determined to bring it to fruition. When sounds, lights, materials, and human acts, as well as all aspects of stagecraft, produce one single whole, individuals' mental fattening will become very great, while the revelations the audience will have will be far greater than with the previous exhibitions. I am eager to give this idea a concrete form and have our first exhibition or, rather, our first presentation, at the earliest possible date.

Originally published as "Kotai no kakuritsu," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956), pp. 6–7.

Can a Piece of Cloth Be a Work of Art?

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

Tanaka Atsuko caused a sensation at the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*: she exhibited pieces of fabric that were simply cut into rectangles and created a spatial composition consisting of a series of bell ringings triggered by a button, which was perhaps the first ever invisible work in the history of art. Among her works in the exhibition was a square piece of pink rayon more than 3.6 meters long on each side hung near the exit. Every time the air breezed in from outside, the fabric fluttered. The only visible sign of manipulation by the artist was the green[4] band that hemmed the edges. Other cloth rectangles were hung with no alteration whatsoever. Could things like these mean anything artistic? Ordinary people might well have thought that her works were simplistic, frivolous, and lacking rigor. Indeed, I understand why.

The color pink, dominating more than 90 percent of her fabric work, looked utterly vulgar. If the artist were to keep this flimsy rayon cloth after the exhibition and put it up for fire sale, no sane Japanese person would buy it. I wonder where on earth she found fabric in such a nauseating color. The same can be said of the color of the thin green band with which she hemmed this work. Besides, she merely hung it, hardly working with it at all. The cheapness of the rayon, which could at best be used in handicrafts, contrasted sharply with the gravity that traditional tableau painting assumes. How insignificant it looked! It is true, however, that this work can be easily folded into a small bundle, making it far easier to transport to an exhibition. The transportation of gigantic canvases is a persistent headache for ambitious painters and art-supply vendors who want to preserve the gravity of their works painted on huge canvases. Tanaka solved this insoluble problem by creating a mammoth work that can be carried in a suitcase.

An American newspaper reported that when there is no breeze, an artificial air movement—like air currents produced by waving arms—created wrinkles. That is to say, this piece of fabric changes its state constantly according to the airflow. Tanaka did not and could not predetermine its form; she left it to chance. "It is difficult to imagine that she had any definite conception about its form."

Needless to say, a contemporary artist is expected to present experiments at an exhibition. Granted, Tanaka's hanging fabric pieces constituted a new idea. And yet they invoked no immediate sensation of beauty in the viewer's mind. If avant-garde painting can be divided into two categories—the one that shows superficially novel forms and the other that at once has novel forms and instantaneously touches the viewer's mind—Tanaka's works belong in the former. . . .

We feel secure and respectful with regard to old things. This feeling inexplicably effects a misconception that determines the value we place on art. Indeed, a similar effect can also be observed outside the art world, like a walk down an old familiar street, or other aspects of history that make us feel nostalgic, which we readily accept with little reservation. Similarly, people make aesthetic judgments and speak comfortably about things that give them a sense of security. In other words, when speaking of something whose beauty they expect other people to readily acknowledge, they tend to exaggerate and mix a bit of sentimentality into their words.

Tanaka's work, in contrast, is nothing like that. It is unlikely that people would say that such a nauseating color, a flimsy piece of cloth, or an uncomposed form is beautiful. Even if they *did* think her work was beautiful, they would hesitate to say so—they would likely try to avoid thinking that way. Perhaps these people feel inferior when they find beauty in that which is despised by everyone else. Yet those who claim that colors of, say, low saturation are universally beautiful have never explained why, and it is obvious that beauty is not as limited as those people claim. Nevertheless, we misguidedly ignore such an obvious fact and accept a color scheme that supposedly creates a sense of balanced beauty.

In fact, I *did* find Tanaka's works beautiful, although I do not intend to impose my view on everyone else. I particularly wanted to write about Tanaka's work, not because of my subjective opinion but for the following reasons:

I have explained that experimentation is necessary in avant-garde painting, but there are two kinds of vanguard experimentation: beauty is either received without resistance or utterly resisted. Come to think of it, it is absurd to say that something is new and at the same time acceptable as beautiful in the viewer's mind. Consider Heisenberg's uncertainty principle—the concepts "new" and "beautiful" are forever chasing each other. That is to say, since newness in art invariably awakens a new sensibility in the viewer, it is impossible for it to be accepted without resistance. If something is at once new and beautiful, that in and of itself constitutes a logical contradiction.

Should we find beauty in new art, we inevitably feel resistant and hesitate to speak up and express how we feel. For this reason, while avant-garde painting as a concept is highly regarded, we see little of it in reality.

Among these few examples of avant-garde art, Tanaka's work has taught me about an aesthetic sensitivity that I did not have, especially an alternate possibility of rigorous beauty that womanly sweetness and frailty may create. They were a great influence on me. I ask you to reconsider her works, which is why I wrote this essay.

Originally published as "Ichi-mai no nunokire demo geijutsu sakuhin ka," *Gutai* 4 (July 1956), p. 31. This version adapted and excerpted from "Can a Piece of Fabric Be a Work of Art?," trans. Reiko Tomii, in Ming Tiampo and Katō Mizuho, *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka, 1954–1968*, exh. cat. (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 2004; New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University), pp. 107–09.

On Gutai Art

MURAKAMI Saburō

Painting had never incorporated time as a concrete factor. The Cubists expressed different factors of time on the same plane, and the Futurists tried to express the movement of time itself. However, such works were persistently paintings in which the full view was taken in simultaneously. There, time was simply presented as the ideological content or an image of time.

Time itself had never participated in the spatiality of a painting. The Gutai group's enthusiasm to make discoveries demands not only the aspect of space but also that of time in order to convey the entirety of the aesthetic emotion. By abandoning the frame or jumping off the wall, we are trying to experiment with a new painting that shifts from immobile time to live time. This is entirely different from the connection between time and space in conventional drama performing literary content. The change that is about to take place here possesses a lasting time, which rouses emotion in itself. A space for such time and time for such a space—this is a painting with a new meaning.

Originally published as "Gutai bijutsu ni tsuite," *Gutai* 7 (July 1957), unpaginated. This translation by Ogawa Kikuko, repr. from *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition*, supervised by Ashiya City Museum of Art & History (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010), p. 61.

The Outlandish Group of Works: Amsterdam Art Exhibition

YOSHIHARA Jirō

The Story Behind the "Wooden Box"

A box is now on exhibit inside a room at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. This wooden box that is a cubic meter in size and made from rough wood is nailed up so that it does not open. Of course, it is exhibited as a respectable work of art, but it looks merely like a packing box. This was created by Murakami Saburō, a member of the Gutai Art Association. This work was once rejected for an exhibition at Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, but the Stedelijk Museum treated it as a legitimate artwork.

Though it is a mere box, a clock ticks time on the inside, devised to sometimes make ding-dong sounds at odd times of the day.

But I must say that this exhibition overall is extremely outlandish. There are groups of artists who call themselves Zero in Germany and the Netherlands, who are said to have begun their activities around 1960. This exhibition is Zero's 3rd international exhibition. The central member of this movement was the late Yves Klein. His posthumous works are also on exhibit. They are his typical works that were done in blue and gold monochrome. Though they are two-dimensional paintings using a single color, Klein contrived one unique idea or another in these works, such as creating an indented surface, or a surface to which pieces of sponge were applied and painted over. The retrospective exhibition of Klein's work that is also being held in Paris allowed me to perceive the strength that could be possessed by monochrome works.

The Revolving "Hemp Bag"

In this exhibition, the Zero groups have presented the work of Otto Piene (Germany), which entirely covers the walls in a room with screens upon which odd shapes from six windows are projected; Heinz Mack's (Germany) work in which countless metal plates revolve and reflect light; and Gunther Uecker's (Germany) work that shows a furiously revolving hemp bag with many large nails attached to it. Henk Peeters (Netherlands) utilizes water and exhibits works that sparkle. One work shows reflecting water ripples, while another uses plastic bags filled with water.

The other exhibited works are by invited artists, chiefly: the Gutai group from Japan; Lucia [*sic*] Fontana, Enrico Castellani, and Piero Dorazio from Italy; Yayoi Kusama from New York; Yves Klein (posthumous works) and Pol Bury from Belgium; and Armando and Soto (Venezuelan by nationality) from France. A group of artists from Southern Italy called "Group I" was also invited.

Purchasing Materials: On-Site Production

Because of the nature of this exhibition, I came to Europe with my second son, Michio, so that he could be my assistant. The organizers of this exhibition invited Gutai because they were amazed by the type of works we exhibited in our outdoor exhibitions (that did not include our paintings), which were held during an early period of our activity. This meant that we had to create some of the works on site. We brought Kanayama Akira's gigantic balloon work, but we had to purchase some materials and give instructions as to how some objects should be created in Amsterdam. These included two ladder-like objects for Shimamoto Shōzō's two works, which the viewers perceive by walking on them; Murakami Saburō's box, as well as paper screens for his other work in which he hurls himself through the screens; and a large cloth for Tanaka Atsuko's work, which is swayed by the wind. Michio, some Dutch art students and I assembled Motonaga Sadamasa's work, in which bags filled with water are suspended from the ceiling, as well as Kanayama's work that employs a 120-meter sheet with footsteps printed upon it. Aside from these, Michio created his own work that used colored tapes, and another one in which twenty light bulbs are lit up inside a large mountain of sand. My work only utilized three white canvases, entitled *Douka egaite kudasai* ("Please Depict"). All of these works were first created in 1956, but strangely, I did not feel the gap in time from them once they were reassembled.

After touring the entire exhibition, as I expected, I particularly liked Fontana's seven large, spherical, bronze objects. Other works I found notable are Hans Haacke's (Germany) and Soto's (France) works that use water and wind, Kusama's boat, and Soto's optical work that is devised inside a whole room.

The Fruits That Were Picked

Most of the participating artists showed up at the opening reception. I shook hands with Fontana, whom I had not seen in quite a while. I was able to vividly sense the amazement that those artists felt from Gutai's works, which were first created ten years ago. The works of Haacke and Peeters extensively utilize water in this exhibition, but Motonaga began using water way before them; Haacke's present work has close resemblance with Tanaka's wind-based work, which was created ten years ago. Gutai's manifestations (that I referred to as "the fruits that should be picked" in the *Gutai* journal published at the time), which were presented ten years ago in a pine grove in Ashiya as well as at various theater halls, were "picked" by French critic Tapié, and again by the art museum in the Netherlands.

Originally published as "Fūgawarina sakuhin gun (Amusuterudamu bijutsukan)," *Gutai* 14 (October 1965), unpaginated. This translation by Taeko Nanpei, repr. from *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition*, supervised by Ashiya City Museum of Art & History (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010), pp. 72–73. Note: In this printing, Japanese names have been changed to appear in Japanese order.

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notizie

[untitled]

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

Paint
Discarded oil paint
Enamel
Cheap painting
Chlorine sculpture
Hammered clay lacquer
Gouache
Paint
Time
The rainbow
The heat
Magic ink
Colored ink
Sculpture adhesive
Crayon
Blood
Liquid paint
Wax
Spots of dirt from the neighboring painting

Brush
The lost object
The brush
Pig bristle brush
Japanese brush
Toothbrush
A sheath of straw
Graphite
Time
Electric cooker
Rubber bung
Ruler
Sponge
An empty bottle
Cannon
Hand
Two "dés"[5] of six
Somebody's footsteps
Brush of marten skin

Canvas
Trash can
Newspaper
Hemp paper
Japan paper
Canvas of pantagone
Stone
Air
Present
Mirage
Plastic canvas
Composite wooden board
Zinc plate
Street with cement surface
Wedding dress
Sheet
White cloth
Red cloth

myself

Originally published in French in *Notizie: Arti figurative* 2, no. 8 (April 1959), pp. 17–19. This translation from Barbara Bertozzi and Klaus Wolbert, *Gutai: Japanische Avantgarde/Gutai: Japanese Avant-Garde 1954–1965*, exh. cat. (Darmstadt, Germany: Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, 1991), pp. 437–38.

[untitled]

MOTONAGA Sadamasa

The universe never ceases for a single instant to change and we experience this. Transformation is nothing other than renewal, so it is only natural that we should try to create new phenomena or that we discover these with astonishment.

Gutai art is created by a group of individual artists who use all possible techniques and materials, whereby they do not restrict themselves to the two- or three-dimensional, but also use liquids, solid matter, gases and even clay, electricity and time itself to reveal everywhere all possible forms of beauty in its original freshness.

Our motto is "Let us create something strange." Something strange, that is the hesitant appearance of something unheard of, hidden away at the base of humanity. The Gutai artists are only the hammers or drills to break down the wall.

Originally published in French in *Notizie: Arti figurative* 2, no. 8 (April 1959), p. 15. This translation from Barbara Bertozzi and Klaus Wolbert, *Gutai: Japanische Avantgarde/Gutai: Japanese Avant-Garde 1954–1965*, exh. cat. (Darmstadt, Germany: Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, 1991), p. 439.

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phase two gutai

On Breeding Painting

ONODA Minoru

The Informel movement that began in Euro-America has now become a safe, accepted method in Japan, losing its initial drive for negation and rebellion. . . .

My recent works at once make a cynical critique, even deride this tendency and [extend][6] my obsession with an idea of mechanical multiplication of a multiplicitous thing (which could be either a physical object or a sign).

Most striking is the sameness of the enormous numbers of components produced at automated factories. If we look at, say, vacuum tubes made daily in infinite quantities . . . if we look at their endless accumulation, can't we marvel at their vast meaninglessness? . . .

In order to objectify the image, I chose countless circles and lines, which I have since called my "circles." . . . The canvas can be viewed from any direction, and my "circles" can be extended from any point of the canvas to outside it. They may be painted not only on walls and ceilings but also on the streets, automobiles, and whatnot. If I continue painting circles, anything becomes my work. Thus I named this series "Breeding Painting." Yet my conception is not quite organic but rather more empty, with no deep thought, and mechanical. . . .

Idly looking up at the sky, I dream of my "circles" densely covering this sky, this earth with no room left to fill.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Hanshoku kaiga," *Himeji bijutsu*, no. 1 (December 1961).

What Technology Demands

KIKUNAMI Jōji

Before the flash of the atom bomb over Hiroshima cast an extraordinary anxiety and distrust over technology, science and technology from the Renaissance to the heat engine intersected with art, offered discoveries and methods useful for art, inspired courage in the human spirit, and itself became the dream for a new society, while at the same time recognizing, resisting, and confronting the violence brought about by its double-edged quality. Through its positive attitude, science and technology filled the gap with art, since they both explored the unknown, which is a shared endeavor and pleasure of all human beings. . . .

Since its invention, however, computer technology has made brisk progress as an automated calculator for warfare within an extremely short period of time. By shifting from analog to digital, it has coldly confronted and repudiated humanity. The development from transistor to IC[7] has made the dialogue between human and machine easier, amplified memory capacity, and shortened calculation time. As its areas of application expand, it far exceeds human ability and has begun to control society itself. Although it presently appears that computers have a very rudimentary application in art, it is not far-fetched to imagine rapid development in this area in the near future, in which the computer will have acquired creativity of its own. This seriously undermines the place of humankind, compelling us to examine our raison d'être.

Technology has had a cause-effect relationship with humanity since the most primitive periods of human history. As such, it incites a fear of alienation in us. However, humans are the ones who have created technology and use it. In order to do something truly human, it is imperative that our entire civilization—the spirit that we have so far accumulated—must undergo a fundamental transformation, and we should improve human nature, individuality within social networks, our understanding of science, and science's capacity.

In the world of art, incorporating the latest product from the factory or introducing the latest technique is in itself no answer. Likewise, setting up an automated control system, which may bring about security and satisfaction, in itself has nothing to do with art. We must be willing to discard the abstract and conservative workings of the mind. The quickest way to a solution is to focus on how to deploy these mechanisms.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Tekunorojī ga semaru mono," in "Ningen to tekunorojī" [Humankind and technology], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 313 (May 1969), p. 127.

EP3: Third Earth Power

YOSHIDA Minoru

Today, humanity desires and gathers information. Here and there on this earth, computers memorize and sort information. When needed, they provide the most appropriate answers within seconds. Politicians and economists believe this will greatly impel progress. But even though computers may be great for accumulating wealth, they have been unable to control youth power and student power, which represent the spontaneous generation of EP3, Third Earth Power. . . .

The Old Power is so intent on emphasizing capital; it inputs its capital into computers in order to increase the profit of its output tenfold. EP3, in contrast, empowers even artists. It consists of the so-called civilization bums. It is a fact that, as civilization progresses, Power has aftereffects, and the patients suffering from aftereffects turn into a kind of EP3. Aftereffects of the medium of television. Numerous aftereffects engendered by speed, which is enabled by zippy machines. Aftereffects of pharmaceuticals. The agents of EP3, artists suffer aftereffects of the feebleminded media and the computerized media. . . . Artists are shifting their task to communication, using Third Materials produced by all sorts of industries. That's Third Art. In museums, it becomes more and more impossible to show electronic art, light art, kinetic art, and other technology art. Civilization bums of EP3 lose their place in society and go underground. Architects, please get to building Third Museums that suit our time. . . . EP3!! Soon all materials on earth will be plasticized and turned into Third Materials. EP3!! Retards attempt to turn robots into plants. EP3!! Scientists dream of their shoulders being massaged by the cyborg women they produce. . . . EP3!! Professors, drunk on themselves, teach the anachronistic idea of humanity, while students look for knowledge outside school. . . . EP3!! A great space voyage is being planned with a time machine and a spaceship. EP3!! Beef steaks are pulverized, mixed with stomach medicine, and encased in tubes for lunch. EP3!! Barbarella and the apes of *Planet of the Apes* become heroes, Electric Man makes love to Marilyn Monroe, and computerized sex needs semen traps. EP3!! Warfare on the earth becomes a party. EP3!! Shaken up, the earth will collapse at any moment. EP3!! The Zond program and Apollo missions blow away the self-intoxication that artists have long nursed; what will happen to them in the new millennium? Civilization bums roam the universe. Today they already have information related to extraterrestrials. Who canned art?

Wanted: eaters of this can. EP3!!

Excerpt. Originally published as "EP3: Dai-3 chikyū seiryoku," in "Ningen to tekunorojī" [Humankind and technology], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 313 (May 1969), p. 126.

Servo Line Gear-Shifting Record

NASAKA Senkichirō

Examination of closed-curve space. Electrical swimming of electrically charged particles. Connected radar bombing. Conflict between positivist ground and insight. Addition of adrenaline. Hyperbolic navigation method. Van Allen radiation belt in Operation Argus.[8] Quartz-crystal-corrected oscillation. SCC-5, SW change VHF converter completed. Directionality of subconscious program solved by computer. Torpedo engine dismantled. Yellow-colored breathing. Yunnan French Railroad: 287 miles, gauge 4 feet 8 inches. Breeding of stainless-steel cats. Brawl with lawful Dutch wife. Fashion application of lithium lightweight battery. Swallow a small IC capsule oscillator. Cesium, plasma 100,000 GC, beam 50W, means it requires induction parts for enjoyment. Yellow glasses for poor sight. Newton made no hypothesis. Concluding the earth's age by measuring amounts of radioactive atoms. Private license for military tank operation. Speed range: transonic, unable to descend. Nighttime humans. Spherical wheel structure. Swing sweep focus and expander control multiplication machine structure. Meandering trajectory calculation. Several equative sentences arranged in parallel cannot be considered dual sentences. Establishment of the amount of information. With small steam engine, the space of interbulb plunger is set small. Adenine, guanine, cytosine, thymine, phosphoric acid mediator. Direct-current overcharged electrolysis electric-current curve. Automatic voltage adjustment emergency generation, impulse 3, cam 4, argon injection. Sunlight's nontemporary spread and spherical projection body. Frozen petals. Dynamics describes movement. High-speed blue film-screening apparatus. Body and its functions as complex machine.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Sāborain hensoku kiroku," in "Ningen to tekunorojī" [Humankind and technology], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 313 (May 1969), p. 128.

Between Concept and Everyday

IMAI Norio

In the current age, how often do we have truly moving encounters with things and events? . . . Today's information society—our everyday space as well as all sorts of media, including the mass media—teems with things that constantly change. . . .

Information overload may be the consequence of indirectly experienced information. In our everyday life, it not only makes us forget the true encounter but also buries us in the emptiness of everyday life. It is no overstatement to say that this will inevitably result in utter dehumanization. . . .

Indeed, the current Expo '70, touted as the showcase of future cities, offers very little to cheer us, let alone freedom of viewing. I wonder whether we *see* Expo '70 or we are *made to see* it. . . . What is *not* lacking at Expo '70 is an imposition by things, as well as our effort to comprehend things; what is lacking is a refreshing encounter between things (objects, or "nature" in a new sense) and humans (the spiritual structure). In this respect, some displays, such as living trees (firs in front of the British Columbia Pavilion) and water (used in a flame sculpture at the entrance of the Gas Pavilion), appeared very fresh to our eyes, not just because we were weary of the entire site, filled with shiny, smooth, or garish things adorned by primary colors that expressed the cosmic sensibility in the worst sense of the word.

In order to shift the gist of our discussion from "What can artists do in the realm of design?" to "What can be done after Expo '70?" we must examine artists' place and role in society. If we avoid this issue, no matter what else we do, we're worthless. Our work will never transcend the age-old role of court decorators, let alone thinking about our role in society (or even in corporations). . . .

What, then, is the role of art in a commercial or public space? It is the task for individual artists to answer this question, and their answers can only be given in the form of their works. One thing I can say, however, is that their answers must provoke direct experiences, encourage unmediated encounters. They must offer not illusory but real communication. Their methods must involve stage direction without stage direction, if you will. Needless to say, in art and design, elegant expression or extravagantly large scale alone will not suffice; they bring nothing to people. Rather, it may be more refreshing to have nothing at all like that. . . .

In a larger sense, whatever we do, it concerns the everyday. Whether making art or having a meal, it's an aspect of everyday life. They are not that different. Thus those who make things must devise ways to participate in society while rising up from the gaps in the relationship between the prescribed life space occupied by an individual and surrounding everyday situations.

Excerpt. Originally published as "Kannen to nichijō no aida," *Ōru Kansai* (June 1, 1970), pp. 138–40.

EDITOR'S NOTES

[1] A board traditionally placed under a sheet of paper when one is writing. *Shitajiki*, typically made of plastic, remain in use today.

[2] An early-nineteenth-century, once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage in which people traveled to the Ise Shrine, dedicated to the ancient Shinto sun goddess, in the city of Ise in present-day Mie Prefecture.

[3] *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, October 19–28, 1955. The work Shiraga describes consisted of an advertising balloon hung from the ceiling in one of the galleries.

[4] The trim's actual color was blue.

[5] In French, "dice"; i.e., a roll showing two sixes or "snake eyes."

[6] Word missing in the original.

[7] Integrated circuit.

[8] A secret program of atmospheric nuclear-weapons tests conducted in the South Atlantic Ocean by the United States in 1958.

chronology

COMPILED BY HIRAI SHŌICHI

1954

JUNE

June 3–7: *7th Ashiya City Exhibition*, Seidō Primary School, Ashiya. Seven future Gutai members participate. Hereafter, Gutai members show in this local group exhibition every year until 1972.

AROUND AUGUST

Gutai Art Association founded by Yoshihara Jirō and sixteen artists residing in the Kobe–Osaka region and studying art under his tutelage: Azuma Sadami, Fujikawa Tōichirō, Funai Yutaka, Isetani Kei, Masanobu Masatoshi, Okada Hiroshi, Okamoto Hajime, Sekine Yoshio, Shimamoto Shōzō, Tsujimura Shigeru, Ueda Tamiko, Uemae Chiyū, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Yoshida Toshio, Yoshihara Hideo, and Yoshihara Michio. The office is located at Shimamoto's home in Kōshienguchi, Nishinomiya.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 13–28: *2nd Genbi Exhibition*, Matsuzakaya department store, Osaka. Travels to Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Nov. 22–26, and Asahi Hall, Kobe, Dec. 10–16. All founding Gutai members participate. They also show in the 3rd and 4th *Genbi Exhibitions*, 1955 and 1956.

THIS YEAR

Zero-kai (Zero Society, founded 1952), a group comprising Kanayama Akira, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka Atsuko, et al., has an exhibition in a display window of Sogō department store's Osaka branch.

1955

JANUARY

Jan. 1: *Gutai* 1 published.

MARCH

Mar. 1–17: *7th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Twelve Gutai members, not including Yoshihara Jirō, all show works signed "Gutai."

AROUND APRIL

Kanayama Akira, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Tanaka Atsuko leave Zero-kai and join Gutai.

JULY

July 25–Aug. 6: *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya. Sponsored by the Ashiya City Art Association. Of some forty participants presenting works outdoors, twenty-three are Gutai members.

SUMMER–EARLY FALL

Kinoshita Toshiko, Motonaga Sadamasa, Ōno Itoko, Shiraga Fujiko, Ukita Yōzō, et al., join Gutai.

OCTOBER

Oct. 10: *Gutai* 2 published.

Oct. 19–28: *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo. Murakami performs *Work (Six Holes)* and Shiraga Kazuo performs *Challenging Mud* live for the press.

Oct. 20: *Gutai* 3 published, featuring *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*.

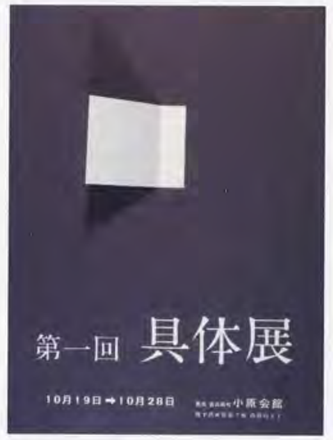

第一回 具体展
10月19日→10月28日
小原会館

FIG. 72. Poster for *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1955. Design: Shimamoto Shōzō. Features rectangular "window" cut open and folded out.

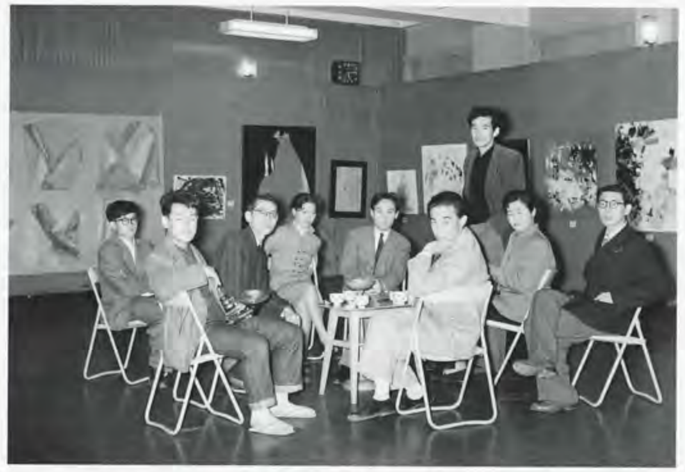


FIG. 73. Gutai members at *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1955. From left: Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, Kanayama Akira, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Sumi Yasuo, Yoshihara Jirō, Motonaga Sadamasa, Ōno Itoko, and Yoshida Toshio

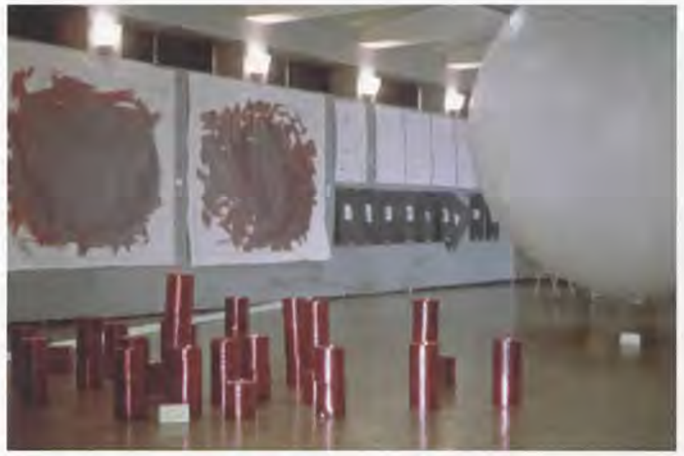


FIG. 74. Installation view of *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1955. On floor, foreground: Yamazaki Tsuruko, *Tin Cans*; right: work by Kanayama Akira. On wall, left: Shiraga Kazuo, *Works*; top row, right: Murakami Saburō, *Works Painted by Throwing a Ball*; bottom row, right: Shimamoto Shōzō, *Work*

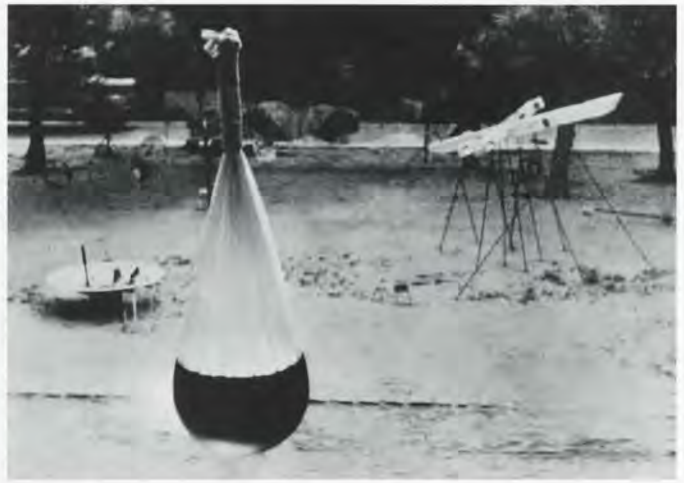


FIG. 75. Motonaga Sadamasa, *Liquid: Red*, 1955. India ink and water in polyethelyne, dimensions vary with installation. Installation view: *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*, 1955. Background, right: Yoshihara Jirō, *Work*

1956

APRIL

Apr. 6–8: *Life* magazine photographs staged demonstrations by Kinoshita Toshiko, Motonaga Sadamasa, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka Atsuko, Yoshida Toshio, and Yoshihara Michio at the Yoshihara Oil Mill factory, Imazu Beach, Nishinomiya.

Apr. 9: *One Day Only Outdoor Art Exhibition* held at the ruins of a U.S.-bombed Yoshihara Oil Mill factory near the Muko River, Amagasaki. Staged for *Life* magazine photographers.

MAY

May 1–8: *Shinkō Independent Exhibition*, Shinkō Newspaper Building, 3rd floor, Kobe. Includes a "Gutai room" featuring works by only the group's members.

JULY

July 1: *Gutai* 4 published, featuring *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*.

July 27–Aug. 5: *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya. Features Motonaga's large-scale *Work (Water)* and Yamazaki Tsuruko's *Work (Red Cube)*. This exhibition is sometimes referred to as the *2nd Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, with the 1955 *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun* considered to be the *1st Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1: *Gutai* 5 published, featuring *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*.

Oct. 3–8: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Sanseidō Gallery, Tokyo.

Oct. 11–17: *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo. Includes painting performance by Shimamoto Shōzō and presentation of Tanaka's *Electric Dress*, both for the press.

DECEMBER

"Gutai Art Manifesto," by Yoshihara Jirō, published in leading art journal *Geijutsu Shinchō*.

1957

JANUARY

Tunica Musical Show, Umeda Shōchiku Cinema, Osaka. Gutai creates stage design for undergarment designer Kamoi Yōko.

WINTER–EARLY SPRING

French art critic and Informel promoter Michel Tapié sees *Gutai* journals sent to Paris-based artist Dōmoto Hisao and becomes interested in Gutai.

APRIL

Apr. 1: *Gutai* 6 published, featuring *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*.

Apr. 3–10: *3rd Gutai Art Exhibition*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art. Tsubouchi Teruyuki joins Gutai.

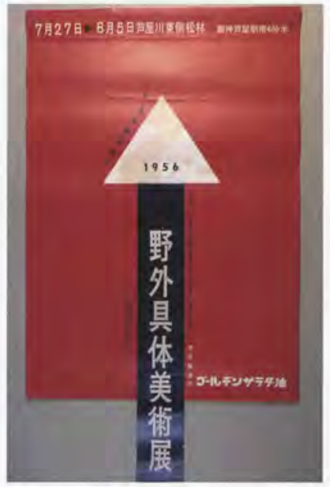

7月27日 ▶ 8月5日芦屋川東側松林
1956
野外具体美術展
ゴールデンサラダ油

FIG. 76. Poster for *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1956. Design: Yoshida Toshio

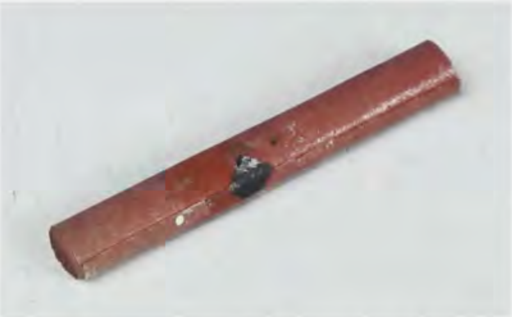


FIG. 77. Invitation for *Gutai Art on the Stage*, 1957. Design: Motonaga Sadamasa. When scroll is unfolded, confetti spills out.

MAY

May 29: *Gutai Art on the Stage*, Sankei Kaikan, Osaka. Travels to Sankei Hall, Tokyo, July 17. Features twelve performance events, including Kanayama Akira's *Giant Balloon*, Motonaga Sadamasa's *Smoke*, and Shiraga Kazuo's *Ultramodern Sanbasō*.

JULY

July 15: *Gutai* 7 published, featuring *Gutai Art on the Stage* and *3rd Gutai Art Exhibition*.

SEPTEMBER

Tapié visits Osaka, initiating relationship with Gutai that will last through its disbandment.

Sept. 3–10: Gutai organizes *Georges Mathieu Exhibition*, Shirokiya department store, Tokyo. When it travels to Daimaru department store, Osaka, Sept. 12–15, Gutai sponsors three lectures in the auditorium of the Asahi Newspaper Building: Imai Toshimitsu's "Informel Movement," Mathieu's "Today's World Art and the East," and Tapié's "Challenges of Contemporary Art."

Sept. 29: *Gutai* 8, titled *L'aventure informelle*, published. Jointly edited by Tapié and Yoshihara Jirō.

OCTOBER

Oct. 8–10: *4th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo.

Oct. 11–Nov. 11: *International Contemporary Art Exhibition—Informel: Genesis of an Other Art*, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo. Organized by Tapié and includes Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshihara Jirō.

Oct. 15–20: Gutai organizes *Sam Francis—Imai Toshimitsu Two-Person Exhibition*, Tōyoko department store, Tokyo. Travels to Kintetsu department store, Osaka, Nov. 26–Dec. 1.

DECEMBER

Dec. 16–22: *International Contemporary Art Exhibition—Informel* travels to Daimaru department store, Osaka. The work of Tanaka Atsuko joins that of the three Gutai members included in the Tokyo iteration.

1958

APRIL

Apr. 4: *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage*, Asahi Kaikan, Osaka. Features eleven performance events. Michel Tapié's lecture "What Is New Art?" precedes the presentation.

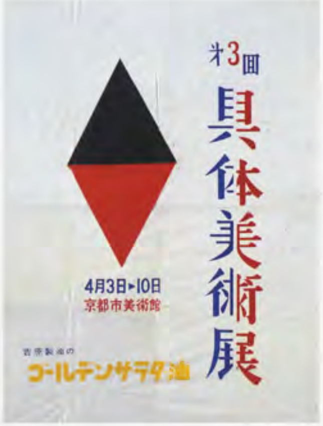

才3回
具体美術展
4月3日▸10日
京都市美術館
吉原製油の
ゴールデンサラダ油

FIG. 78. Poster on vinyl for *3rd Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1957

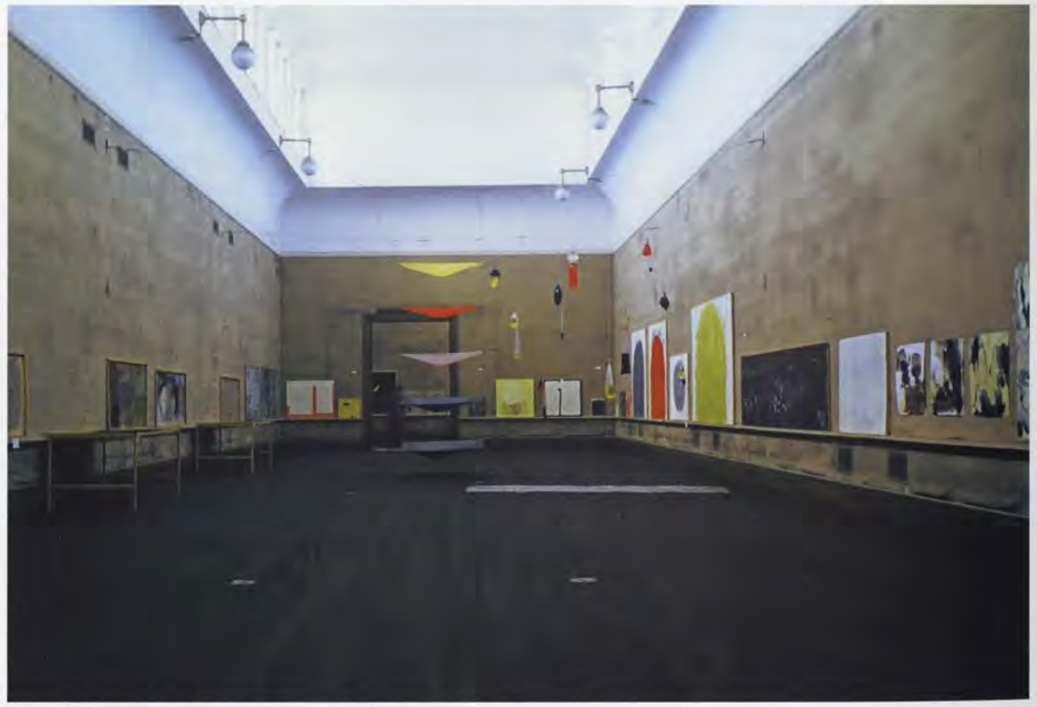


FIG. 79. Installation view of *3rd Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1957

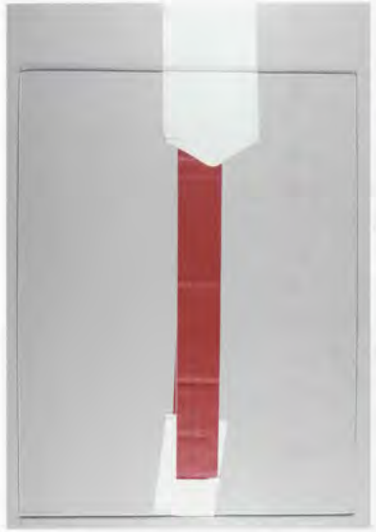


FIG. 80. Invitation card for *4th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1957. Design: Murakami Saburō

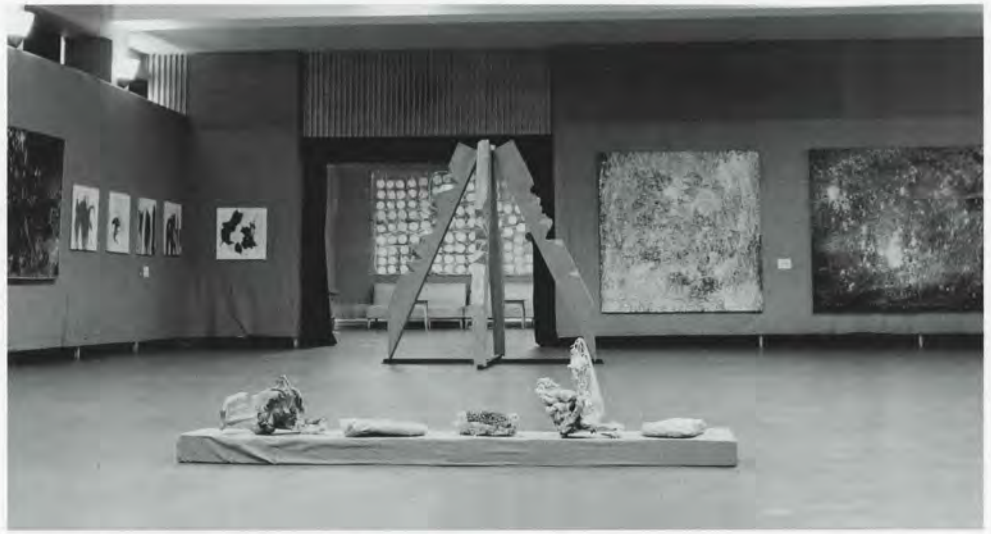


FIG. 81. Installation view of *4th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1957. Works by various artists, including, on floor, foreground: Kaneki Yoshio; on floor, background: Shiraga Kazuo; left wall: Kinoshita Toshiko; through doorway: Tanaka Atsuko; rear wall, right: Yoshida Toshio

Apr. 12–20: *International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka. Tapié and Yoshihara Jirō select a roster of Informel artists from the United States, Europe, and Japan. Travels to Nagasaki, May 27–June 2, Hiroshima, June 24–July 6, Tokyo, Sept. 2–7, and Kyoto, Sept. 13–18.

Apr. 12: *Gutai* 9 published, featuring *International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai*.

Apr. 30–May 2: *2nd Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo. Subsequently renamed *5th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

JUNE

June 7–July 13: *Development of Japanese Abstract Painting*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Murakami Saburō, Shimamoto Shōzō, and Yoshihara Jirō.

SEPTEMBER

Yoshihara Jirō travels to the U.S. in preparation for a Gutai exhibition; he will return via Europe two months later.

Sept. 25–Oct. 25: *Gutai Group Exhibition*, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York. Features paintings by seventeen Gutai members and a documentary film of stage performances. Travels to Bennington, Vt.; Minneapolis; Oakland, Calif.; and Houston. Subsequently renamed *6th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 24: Lecture program, Ashiya City Public Hall, coorganized with Ashiya City Art Association. Includes Tapié's lecture "New Art in the World," Yoshihara Jirō's lecture "Traveling in Europe and America," and a slide show of young artists' work from around the world.

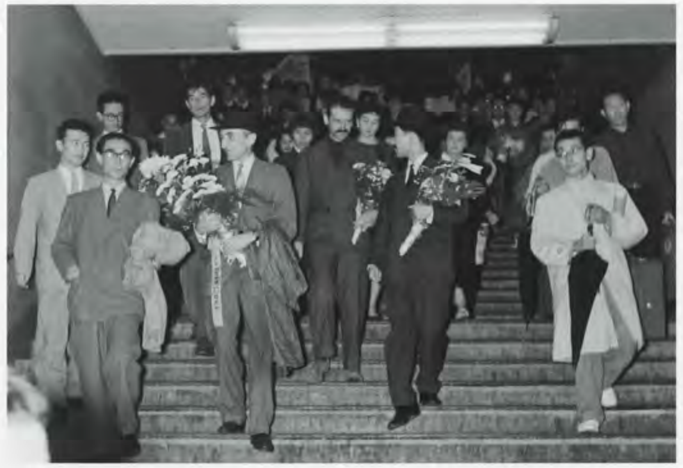


FIG. 82. Gutai members greeting Michel Tapié and Georges Mathieu (both at center) at Osaka Station, September 1957

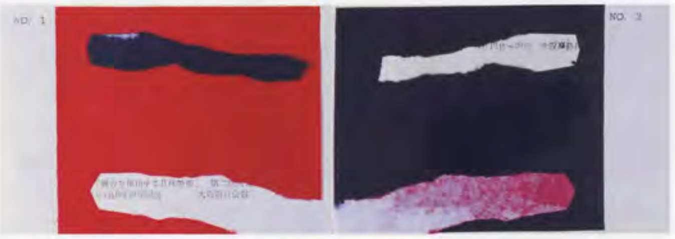


FIG. 83. Invitation card for *2nd Gutai Art on the Stage*, 1958

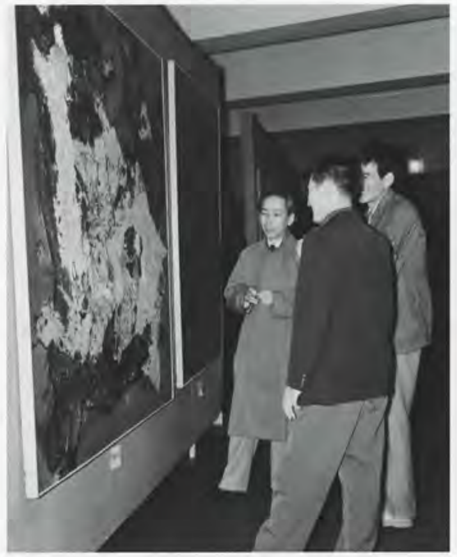


FIG. 84. Takiguchi Shūzō, Shiraga Kazuo (facing away), and Motonaga Sadamasa at *2nd Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, 1958

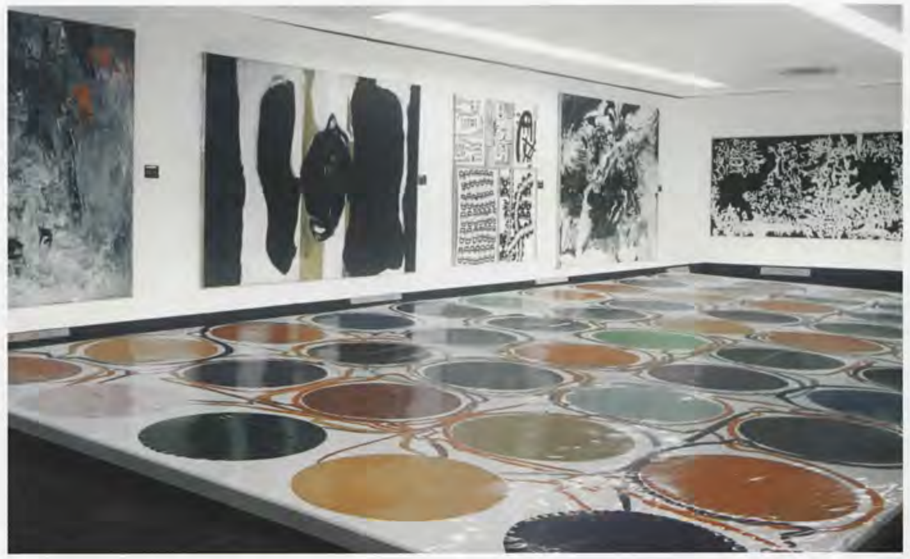


FIG. 85. Installation view of *International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai*, 1958. Works by various artists, including, on floor, Tanaka Atsuko; on walls, from left: Yoshihara Jirō (partially visible), Robert Motherwell, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Paul Jenkins, and Carla Accardi

1959

FEBRUARY

A BBC camera crew films Gutai artists (Kanayama Akira, Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga Kazuo, Sumi Yasuo, Yoshida Toshio, and Yoshihara Michio) at work over two days in the Osaka area.

MAY

May 5–June 15: *Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin. Includes Kanayama, Masanobu Masatoshi, Motonaga Sadamasa, Murakami Saburō, Shimamoto, Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka Atsuko, and Yoshihara Jirō.

JUNE

Group exhibition, Galleria Arti Figurative, Turin. Subsequently renamed *7th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

Gutai organizes lectures by Christo Coetzee and Yamamoto Michiko at Ashiya City Public Hall.

AUGUST

Aug. 25–30: *8th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art. Travels to Ohara Kaikan, Tokyo, Sept. 11–13. Special participation by Coetzee.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 15–20: Gutai organizes *Franco Garelli and Franco Assetto Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka.

Sept. 21–30: *Fifteen Contemporary Japanese Artists Selected by Tapié*, Gendai Gallery, Tokyo. Includes Masanobu, Motonaga, Murakami, Shimamoto, Shiraga, Tanaka, Yoshida Toshio, and Yoshihara Jirō.

OCTOBER

11th Premio Lissone, Galleria La Bussola, Lissone, Italy. Includes Motonaga and Shiraga.

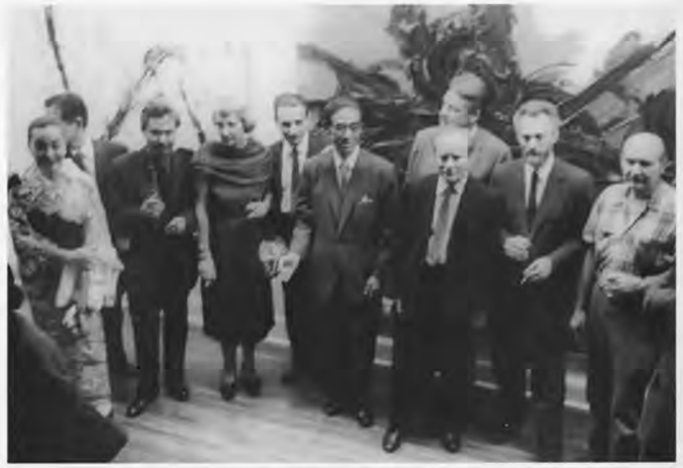


FIG. 86. *Gutai Group Exhibition*, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1958. From left: Inokuma Gen'ichirō and his wife, Kanemitsu Matsumi, Jackson, unidentified person, Yoshihara Jirō, two unidentified persons, Paul Jenkins, and unidentified person. Background, right: Shiraga Kazuo, *Work II* (1958, plate 79)

NOVEMBER

Nov. 12–Dec. 2: *Métamorphismes*, Galerie Stadler, Paris. Includes Shiraga and Yoshihara Jirō.

1960

JANUARY

Through Jan. 24: Gutai organizes *Christo Coetzee Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka.

MARCH

Michel Tapié opens International Center for Aesthetic Research in Turin. Murakami Saburō appointed as committee member to represent Japan.

APRIL

Apr. 19–24: Gutai organizes *The International Sky Festival*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka. The exhibition of Informel artists uses advertising balloons to display works by thirty U.S., European, and Japanese participants, including five Gutai members. *9th Gutai Art Exhibition* concurrently presented in the store's third-floor hall. Matsutani Takesada shows for the first time with Gutai, as nonmember. Special display by Florencio Méndez Casariego.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 8–23: *Four Japanese Artists*, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa and Yoshihara Jirō.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 11: *Gutai* 11 published, featuring *International Sky Festival* and *9th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

1961

MARCH

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin. Includes seventeen Gutai members: Kanayama Akira, Masanobu Masatoshi, Motonaga Sadamasa, Mukai Shūji, Murakami Saburō, Ōhara Kimiko, Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga Fujiko, Shiraga Kazuo, Sumi Yasuo, Tanaka Atsuko, Tsubouchi Teruyuki, Ukita Yōzō, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Yoshida Toshio, Yoshihara Jirō, and Yoshihara Michio.

APRIL

Apr. 11–16: *10th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka. Travels to Takashimaya department store, Tokyo, May 2–7.

Through Apr. 18: Gutai organizes *Elaine Hamilton Exhibition*, Fujikawa Gallery, Osaka.

FIG. 87. Invitation card for *9th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1960

MAY

May 1: *Gutai* 12 published, featuring *10th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

May 8–13: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Nakanoshima Gallery, Osaka.

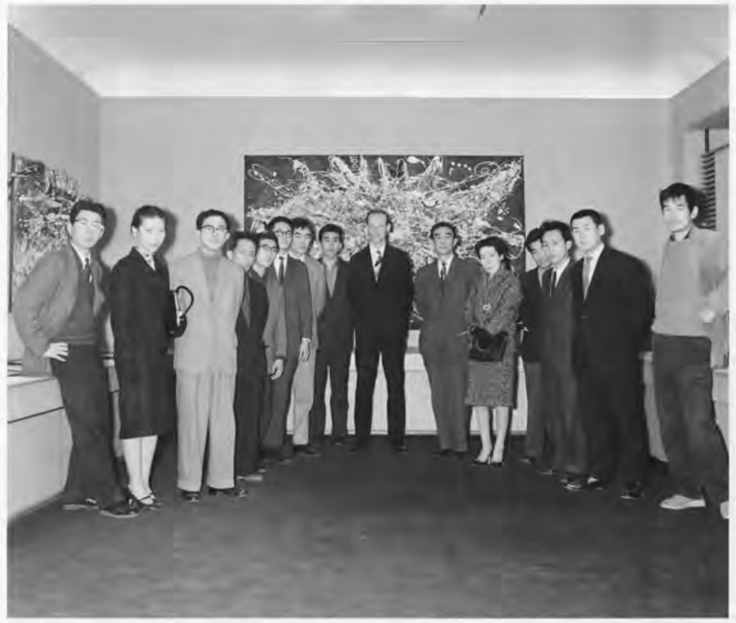


FIG. 88. Gutai members at *Christo Coetzee Exhibition*, 1960. From left: Yoshida Toshio, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Shimamoto Shōzō, Masanobu Masatoshi, Nabekura Takehiro, Murakami Saburō, Yoshihara Toshio, unidentified person, Christo Coetzee, Yoshihara Jirō, Tanaka Atsuko, Ukita Yōzō, Sumi Yasuo, Shiraga Kazuo, and Motonaga Sadamasa

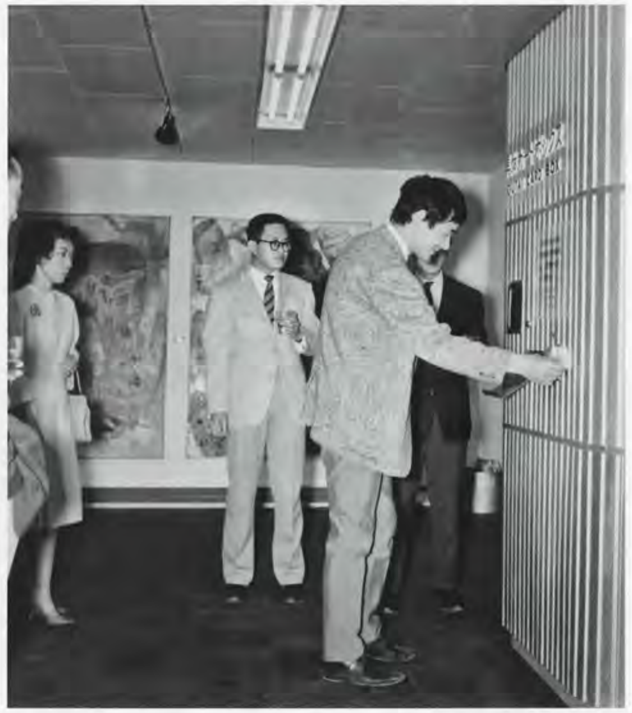


FIG. 89. Motonaga Sadamasa operating *Gutai Card Box* at *11th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1962

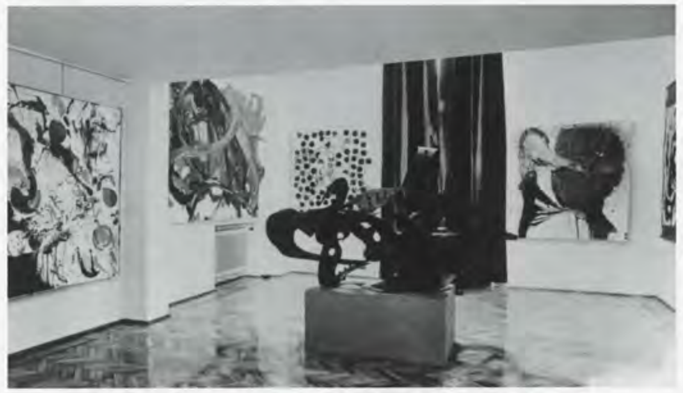


FIG. 90. Installation view of *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, 1961. Works by various artists, including, on walls, from left: Yamazaki Tsuruko, Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka Atsuko, and Motonaga Sadamasa

JUNE

12th Premio Lissone, Galleria La Bussola, Lissone, Italy. Includes Motonaga, Mukai, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshihara Jirō.

1962

JANUARY

Jan. 26–Feb. 22: *Shiraga*, Galerie Stadler, Paris.

APRIL

Apr. 17–22: *11th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka. Includes *Gutai Card Box*, a "vending machine" of hand-drawn works operated by a Gutai member inside.

Apr. 26–May 21: *Structures de répétition*, Galerie Stadler, Paris. Includes Mukai Shūji and Tanaka Atsuko.

JUNE

June 18–Aug. 5: *Strutture e stile*, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Mukai, Tanaka, and Yoshihara Jirō.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 1–10: Gutai Pinacotheca inaugurated in Osaka with an exhibition. The facility is a set of old renovated warehouses, owned by Yoshihara Jirō and located in the central neighborhood of Nakanoshima, which will be used regularly to showcase the group's work. Gutai's office is also moved here, and hereafter the building serves as the group's headquarters.

Sept. 20–Oct. 22: *L'incontro di Torino: Pittori d'America, Europa e Giappone*, Palazzo della Promotrice al Valentino, Turin. Includes Shiraga Kazuo and Yoshihara Jirō.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1–10: *Shimamoto Shōzō Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca. First of a series of members' solo exhibitions.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1–10: *Shiraga*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Nov. 6: Gutai and the Morita Modern Dance Company organize and perform *Don't Worry, the Moon Won't Fall Down!*, Sankei Hall, Osaka. Features nine performance events, including Mukai Shūji's *Faces and Signs*.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1–10: *Yoshida Toshio*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

1963

JANUARY

Jan. 15–24: *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Jan. 29–Feb. 3: *12th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Tokyo. Nasaka Yūko participates for the first time.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1–10: *Tanaka Atsuko*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

APRIL

Apr. 1–10: *Murakami Saburō*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Apr. 16–21: *13th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka.

MAY

May 1–10: *Mukai Shūji*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

JULY

July 1–10: *Yamazaki Tsuruko*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

July 6–Aug. 29: *Trends in Contemporary Painting: The West and Japan*, Kyoto Annex of National Museum of Modern Art. Includes Masanobu Masatoshi, Motonaga Sadamasa, Murakami Saburō, Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka Atsuko, and Yoshihara Jirō.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 1–10: *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1–10: *Matsutani Takesada*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1–10: *Maekawa Tsuyoshi*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

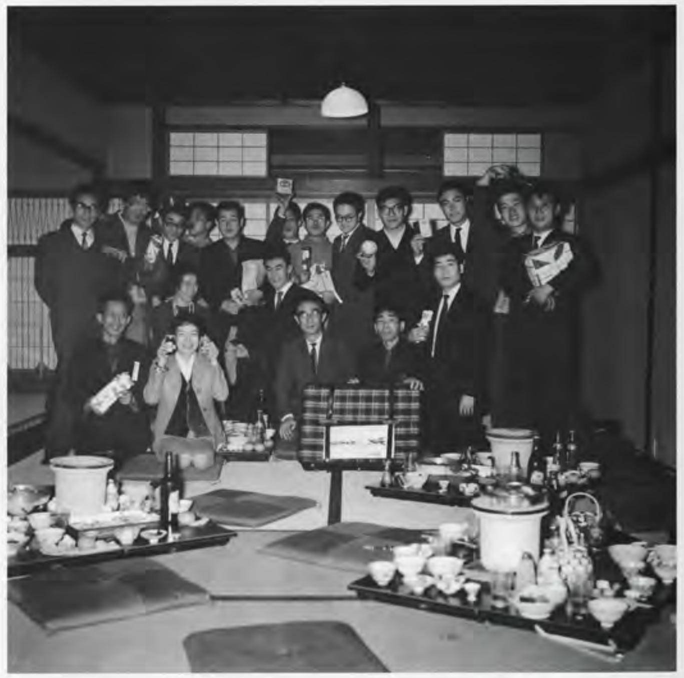


FIG. 91. New Year's party at Yoshihara Jirō's house, Osaka, 1962. Front row, from left: Masanobu Masatoshi, Tanaka Atsuko, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Yoshihara Michio, Yoshihara Jirō, Uemae Chiyū, and Maekawa Tsuyoshi; back row, from left: four unidentified persons, Shiraga Kazuo, Tsubouchi Teruyuki, Shimamoto Shōzō, Murakami Saburō, Matsutani Takesada, unidentified person, Mukai Shūji, and Sumi Yasuo

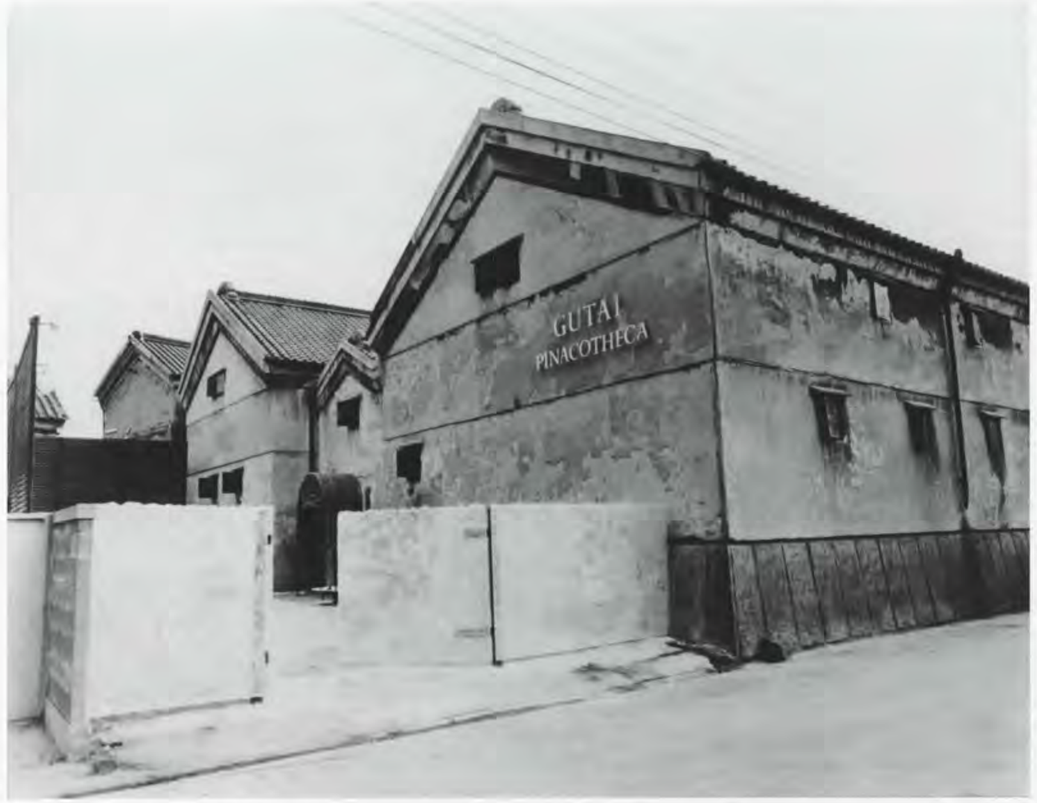


FIG. 92. Gutai Pinacotheca, ca. 1962

Nov. 16: Yoshihara Jirō receives a culture award from Hyōgo Prefecture, the part of the Kansai region that includes Ashiya, at the International Hall in Kobe.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1–10: *Yoshihara Michio*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Exposition d'art moderne, Grand Palais, Paris. Includes Motonaga, Shiraga, and Yoshihara Jirō.

1964

JANUARY

Jan. 15–Feb. 10: *Gutai Art New Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Jan. 16–Mar. 29: *Guggenheim International Award 1964* exhibition, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Includes Tanaka Atsuko and Yoshihara Jirō.

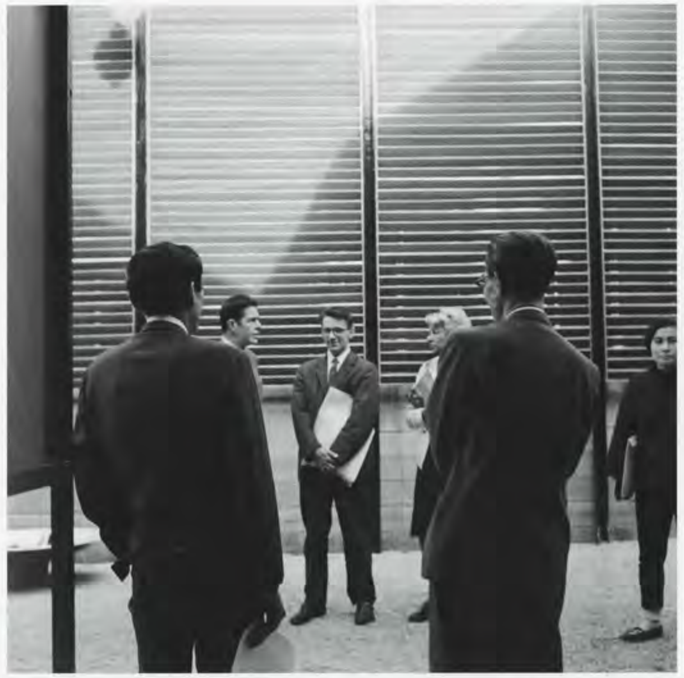


FIG. 93. John Cage (second from left), Peggy Guggenheim (third from right), and Yoko Ono (far right) in courtyard of Gutai Pinacotheca, 1962. Facing away, right: Yoshihara Jirō

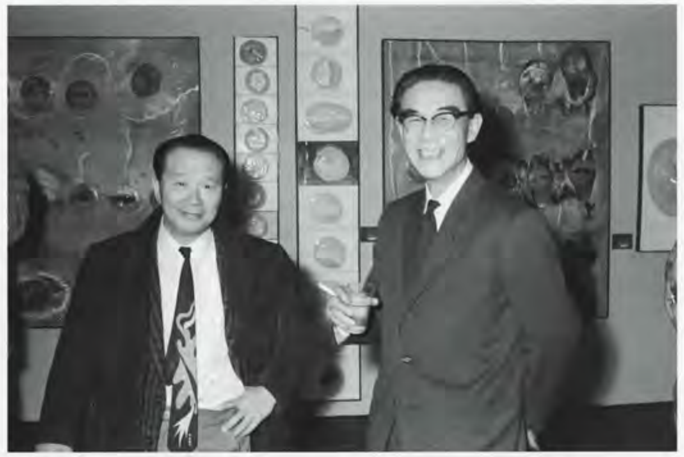


FIG. 94. Okamoto Tarō and Yoshihara Jirō at *12th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1963

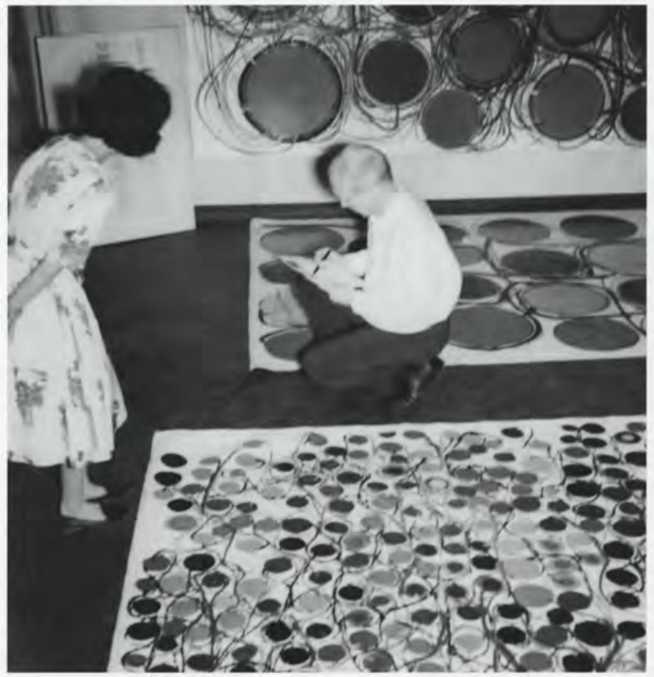


FIG. 95. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum curator Lawrence Alloway selecting Tanaka Atsuko works for *Guggenheim International Award 1964* at Gutai Pinacotheca, 1963

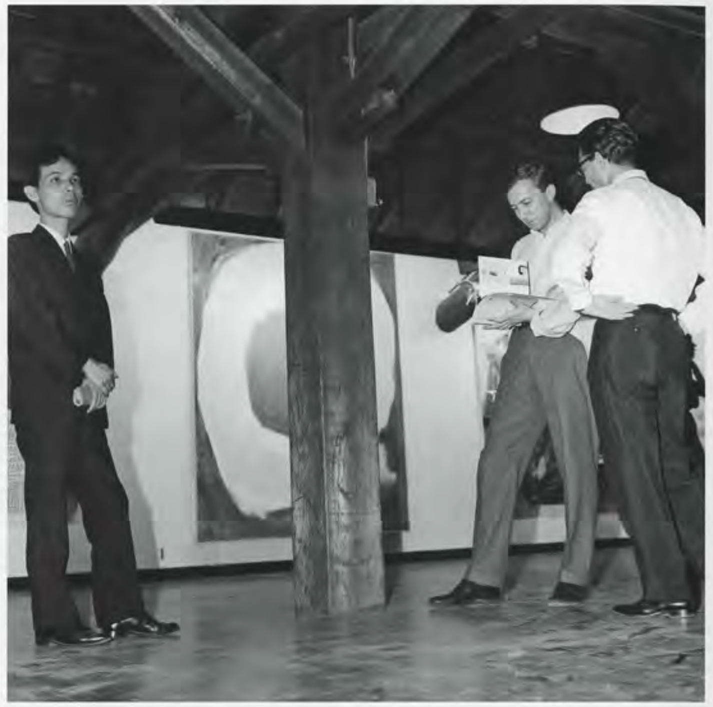


FIG. 96. Takemitsu Tōru (far right), Jasper Johns, and Yoshihara Jirō at Gutai Pinacotheca, ca. 1964

MARCH

Mar. 1–10: *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Mar. 20–May 31: *Beautiful Japan Exposition: Growth Rings of Beauty*, Takarazuka Family Land amusement park. Includes Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka, and Yoshihara Jirō.

Mar. 31–Apr. 5: *14th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Osaka.

APRIL

Apr. 4–May 10: *Trends in Contemporary Art*, Kyoto Annex of National Museum of Modern Art. Includes Kinashi Aine, Mukai Shūji, Uemae Chiyū, and Yamazaki Tsuruko.

MAY

May 9–30: *6th Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Prizes for excellence awarded to Motonaga Sadamasa and Tanaka. Travels to Kitakyūshū, Osaka, Sasebo, and Takamatsu.

JUNE

June 1–20: *Lucio Fontana and Giuseppe Capogrossi*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

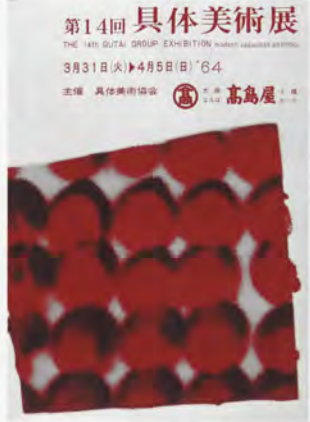
AUGUST

Aug. 14–Sept. 4: *Intuiciones y realizaciones formales*, Centro de Artes Visuales Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires. Includes Mukai, Shiraga, Tanaka, and Yoshihara Jirō.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 10–20, Oct. 1–10: *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

FIG. 97. Paul Jenkins and Yoshihara Jirō at Yoshihara's home, 1964



第14回 具体美術展
THE 14th GUTAI GROUP EXHIBITION
3月31日(火)▶4月5日(日)'64
主催 具体美術協会
髙島屋

FIG. 98. Invitation card for *14th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1964. Design: Nasaka Yūko

OCTOBER

Oct. 1–Nov. 29: *Contemporary Japanese Art*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Includes Motonaga and Yoshihara Jirō.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1–10: *Nasaka Yūko*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1–10: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Special displays by Alice Baber and Paul Jenkins.

1965

JANUARY

Exhibition to Celebrate Yoshihara Jirō's 60th Birthday, Gutai Pinacotheca.

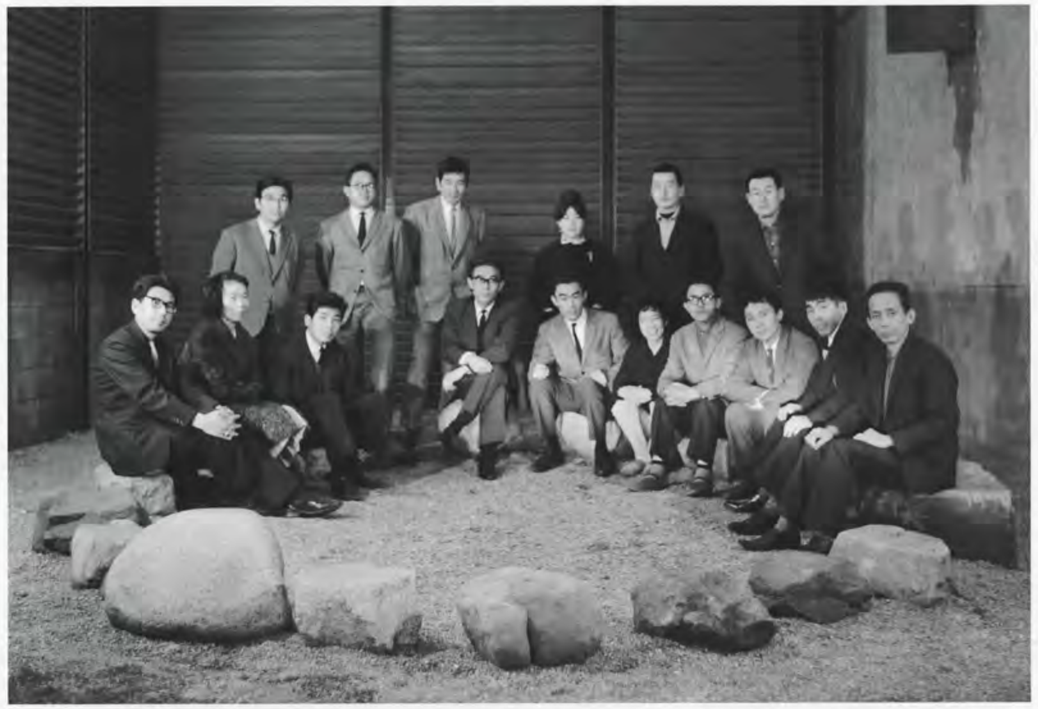


FIG. 99. Gutai members in Pinacotheca's front yard, ca. 1964. Front row, from left: Yoshida Toshio, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Maekawa Tsuyoshi, Yoshihara Jirō, Yoshihara Michio, Tanaka Atsuko, Shimamoto Shōzō, Sumi Yasuo, Uemae Chiyū, and Masanobu Masatoshi; back row, from left: Ukita Yōzō, Murakami Saburō, Motonaga Sadamasa, Nasaka Yūko, Mukai Shūji, and Shiraga Kazuo

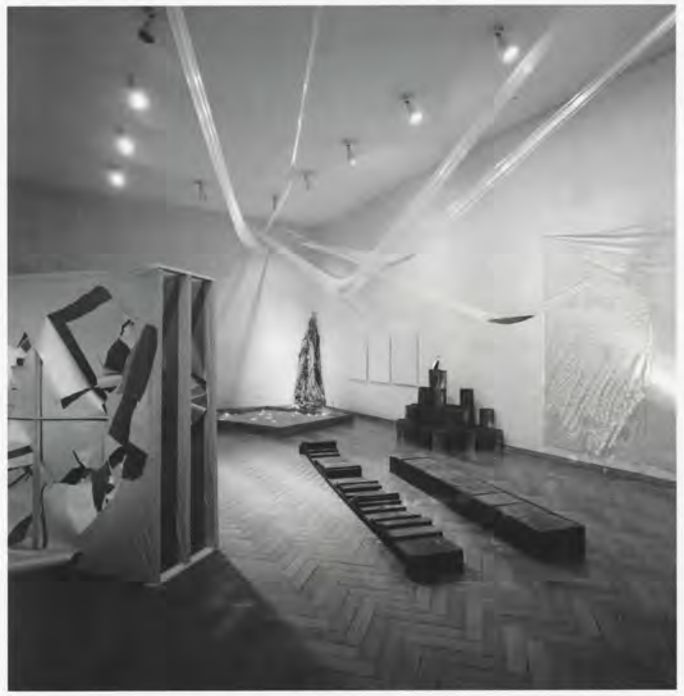


FIG. 100. Installation view of *Nul 1965*. Works by various artists, including, right wall: Yoshihara Michio, Yoshihara Jirō (three works), Yamazaki Tsuruko, and Tanaka Atsuko. Floor, from left: Murakami Saburō, *Work (Six Holes)*; work by Yoshihara Michio; and Shimamoto Shōzō, *Please Walk on Here.* Hanging from ceiling: Motonaga Sadamasa, *Work (Water)*

FEBRUARY

Feb. 27–Apr. 4: *Modern Art from Japan*, Kunsthaus Zürich. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Shiraga Kazuo, and Tanaka Atsuko.

MARCH

Mar. 1–10: *Masatoshi Masanobu*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

APRIL

Apr. 5–14: *Five Gutai Members from Kobe*, Daiwa Gallery, Kobe. Includes Maekawa Tsuyoshi, Matsutani Takesada, Mukai Shūji, Murakami Saburō, and Uemae Chiyū.

Apr. 15–June 8: *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Includes Kanayama Akira, Motonaga, Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga, Tanaka, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Yoshihara Jirō, and Yoshihara Michio. Yoshihara Jirō and Michio travel to Amsterdam to install new works and on-site reconstructions of earlier Gutai works.

Apr. 29–May 13: *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Art. Includes Motonaga, Mukai, Shiraga, Tanaka, and Yoshihara Jirō. Travels to venues in the United States, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, through 1967.

MAY

May 10–30: *8th Exhibition of International Art, Japan*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Prize for excellence awarded to Shiraga. Travels to Aichi Prefecture, Iwate Prefecture, Kitakyūshū, Kyoto, Miyagi Prefecture, Saga, Sasebo, and Takamatsu.

JUNE
June 18–July 25: *Trends in Contemporary Art*, Kyoto Annex of National Museum of Modern Art. Includes Motonaga and Shiraga.

Exhibition of Japanese Artists, San Francisco Museum of Art. Includes Motonaga, Mukai, Shiraga, and Yoshihara Jirō.

JULY
July 1–20: *15th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Includes first participation by members Kinashi Aine, Nabekura Takehiro, Sakamoto Masaya, and Yoshida Minoru, as well as by then-nonmembers Horio Sadaharu, Imai Norio, Imanaka Kumiko, Kanno Seiko, Kitani Shigeki, Naohara Michimasa, Nasaka Senkichirō, Tai Satoshi, and Tanaka Ryūji.

OCTOBER
Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition, Gutai Pinacotheca. Inaugurates an open-call competition to identify new talent.

Oct. 8–13: *16th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Keiō department store, Tokyo. Onoda Minoru's first participation as a member.

Gutai 14 published, featuring *Nul 1965* and *15th Gutai Art Exhibition*. Final issue.

NOVEMBER
Nov. 30, 1965–Jan. 8, 1966: *Group Gutai* (aka *Gutai's Paris Exhibition*), Galerie Stadler, Paris. Travels to Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Feb. 1–27, 1966, and Mickery Art House, Loenersloot, Netherlands, Apr. 2–23, 1966. Includes paintings and sculptures by eighteen Gutai members.

DECEMBER
Dec. 1–10: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Dec. 4–12: *1st Japan Art Festival*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Motonaga, Shiraga Kazuo, Takasaki Motonao, and Yoshihara Jirō. Travels to Union Carbide Building, New York, Mar. 21–Apr. 23, 1966, and to Pittsburgh and San Francisco.

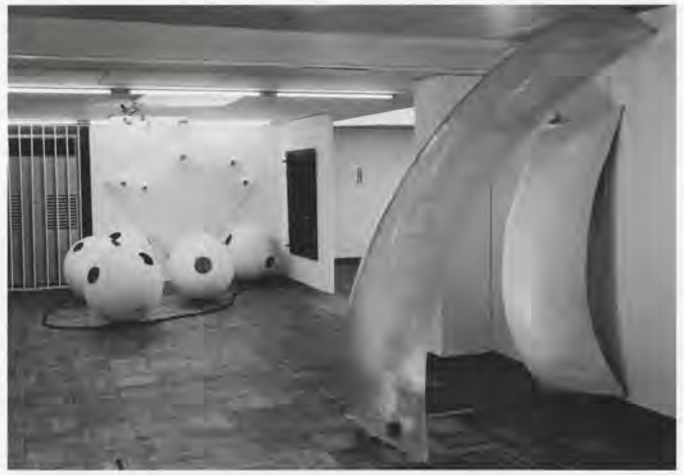


FIG. 101. Installation view of *17th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1966. Works by various artists, including, rear wall and floor: Imai Norio; foreground: Sakamoto Masaya

1966

JANUARY
Jan. 10–26: *New Art from Abroad*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Jan. 21–Feb. 27: *The New Generation of Contemporary Art*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Kitani Shigeki, Mukai Shūji, and Onoda Minoru.

FEBRUARY
Feb. 1–10: *Uemae Chiyū*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

APRIL
Nul 1966, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague. Includes all seventeen current Gutai members. Murakami Saburō visits the Netherlands as the group's representative.

Zero on Sea (*Zero op Zee*), Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague. Presents Gutai's projects for the exhibition *Zero on Sea*, which is planned with artists from the German Gruppe Zero and the Dutch Nul group, among others, for Scheveningen Pier in The Hague but which is never realized.

MAY
May 10–30: *7th Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Prize for excellence awarded to Motonaga Sadamasa. Travels to Aichi, Hiroshima, Kitakyūshū, Miyagi, Nagasaki, Sasebo, and Takamatsu.

May 10–June 5: *Trends in Contemporary Art*, Kyoto Annex of National Museum of Modern Art. Includes Imai Norio and Imanaka Kumiko.

JUNE
June 1–20: *Gutai Exhibition of Three Members*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Includes Maekawa Tsusyoshi, Matsutani Takesada, and Mukai.

June 12–Oct. 2: *2ème Salon international des galeries pilotes*, Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland. All Gutai members included.

JULY
July 1–10: *Imai Norio*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

July 12–20: *Karl Gerstner*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

July 19–24: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Taikodō Gallery, Kobe.

SEPTEMBER
Sept. 10–15: *17th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Yokohama. Travels to Gutai Pinacotheca, Oct. 1–10. First participation by members Kikunami Jōji and Takasaki Motonao and future members Kawamura Sadayuki, Matsuda Yutaka, and Moriuchi Keiko.

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague. Includes Imanaka, Kikunami, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshida Minoru.

OCTOBER
Oct. 14–26: *Artists Today '66*, Yokohama Citizens' Gallery. Includes Imai and Yoshida Minoru.

NOVEMBER
Nov. 1–10: *Yoshida Minoru*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Nov. 11–16: *From Space to Environment*, Matsuya department store, Tokyo. Exhibition of optical, kinetic, and environment art. Includes Imai, Kikunami, and Matsuda.

THIS YEAR
Gutai chapter appears in Allan Kaprow's book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*.

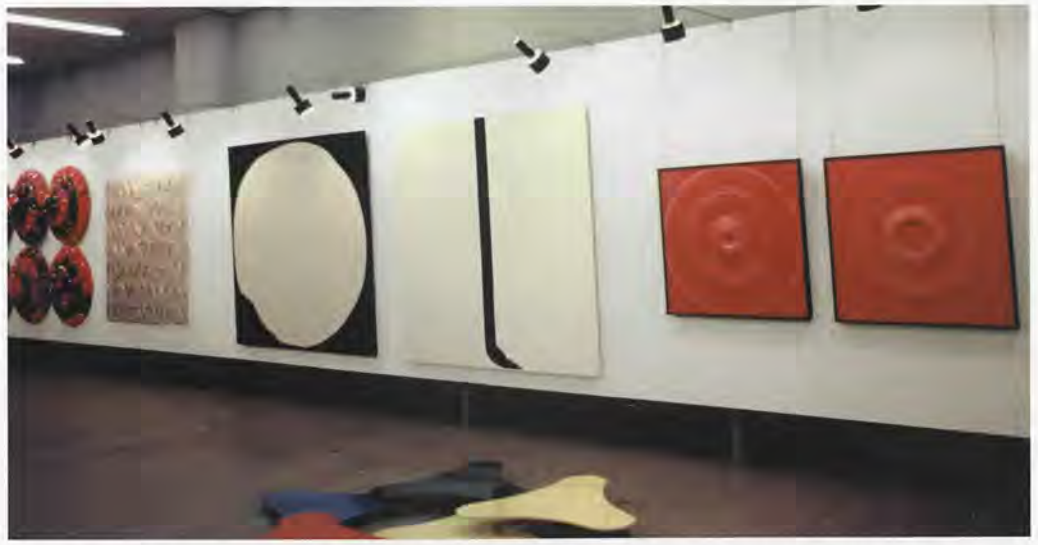


FIG. 102. Installation view of *19th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1967. On wall, from left: works by Imanaka Kumiko, Mukai Shūji, Yoshihara Jirō (two works), and Onoda Minoru (two works); on floor: Nasaka Senkichirō

1967

JANUARY
Kuwayama Tadasky, Gutai Pinacotheca.

MARCH
Mar. 1–10: *Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

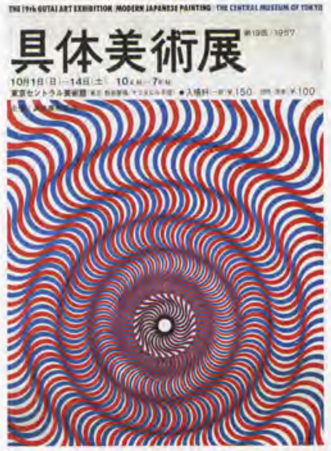

THE 19th GUTAI ART EXHIBITION MODERN JAPANESE PAINTING THE CENTRAL MUSEUM OF TOKYO
具体美術展
第19回/1967
10月1日(日)–14日(土) 10 –7
東京セントラル美術館
入場料 ¥150 ¥100

FIG. 103. Poster for *19th Gutai Art Exhibition*, 1967. Design: Imanaka Kumiko

Mar. 4–14: *4th International Young Artists Exhibition*, Seibu department store, Tokyo. Includes Horio Sadaharu, Imai Norio, Matsuda Yutaka, and Nasaka Yūko.

APRIL
Apr. 1–10: *Tai Satoshi*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Gutai Art for the Space Age, Hanshin Amusement Park, Nishinomiya. Includes Imai, Imanaka Kumiko, Kikunami Jōji, Nasaka Senkichirō, Sakamoto Masaya, Yoshida Minoru, Yoshida Toshio, Yoshihara Jirō, and Yoshihara Michio.

MAY
Gutai awarded Kobe Newspaper peace prize (culture prize).

May 10–30: *9th Exhibition of International Art, Japan*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. National grand prize awarded to Yoshihara Jirō.

May 26–July 8: *Gutai Group, Osaka, Japan*, Experimental Studio, Rotterdam.

JUNE
June 1–10: *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Subsequently renamed *18th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

June 5–30: *Gutai* (aka *Gutai's Austrian Exhibition*), Galerie Heide Hildebrand, Klagenfurt, Austria.

June 23–29: *2nd Japan Art Festival*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshihara Jirō. Travels to Ilikai Hotel, Honolulu, Aug. 18–27, and to Dallas and Houston.

JULY
July 21–30: *Art Poster Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

AUGUST
Aug. 23: *4th Summer Festival*, Festival Hall, Osaka. Features stage design by Gutai for Kansai Opera Company and Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra.

OCTOBER
Oct. 1–14: *19th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Central Museum of Arts, Tokyo. Travels to Gutai Pinacotheca, Nov. 1–15. First participation by future member Kimura (Horio) Akiko. Darkened room included for light art.

DECEMBER
Dec. 1–20: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

1968

FEBRUARY
Feb. 1–10: *Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Feb. 6–11: *Kobe Newspaper Peace Prize Art Exhibition*, Daimaru department store, Kobe. Includes all members.

MARCH
Enrico Castellani, Gutai Pinacotheca.

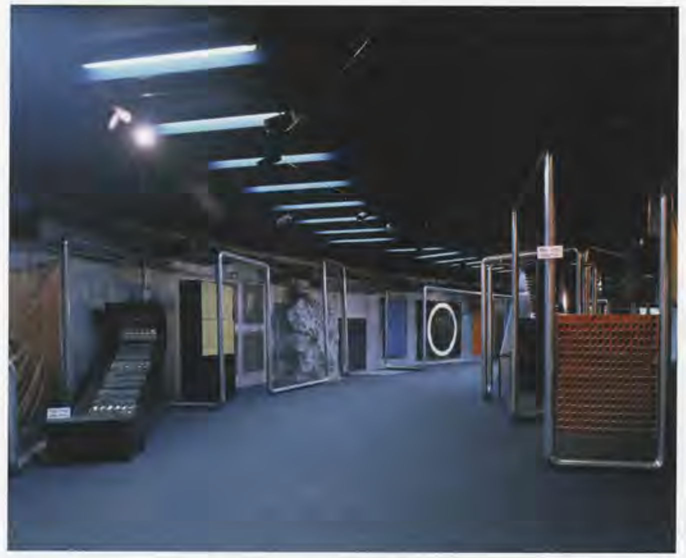


FIG. 104. Installation view of *Gutai Group Exhibition*, Expo '70. Pipe display armature by Nasaka Senkichirō. Left wall, from left: works by Horio Sadaharu (partial view), Kawamura Sadayuki, Yoshihara Michio, Takasaki Motonao, Imai Norio (two works), Onoda Minoru, Yoshihara Jirō, and Horio Akiko

APRIL
Milliorama, Takarazuka Family Land amusement park. Collaborative installation by Nasaka Senkichirō and Yoshida Toshio.

MAY
May 18–26: *3rd Japan Art Festival*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa and Yoshihara Jirō. Travels to Mexico City and Saint Louis.

JUNE
June 2–17: *Sam Francis*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

June 12–Aug. 17: *Contemporary Space '68: Light and Environment*, Sogō department store, Kobe. Includes Imai Norio, Imanaka Kumiko, Kikunami Jōji, Mukai Shūji, Yoshida Minoru, and Yoshida Toshio.

June 20–29: *Horio Sadaharu*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

JULY
July 1–20: *20th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

OCTOBER
Oct. 1–10: *Kawamura Sadayuki*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

NOVEMBER
Nov. 1–11: *Artists Today '68*, Yokohama Civic Art Gallery. Includes Imanaka.

Nov. 1–20: *21st Gutai Art Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Nov. 4–7: *Contemporary Art for the Night*, Miyazaki Kankō Hotel, Miyazaki. Includes all members.

DECEMBER
Dec. 1–20: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Dec. 7, 1968–Jan. 26, 1969: *Fluorescent Chrysanthemum: Contemporary Art from Japan*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Includes Kikunami, Yoshida Minoru, and Yoshida Toshio.

1969

MARCH
Mar. 1–10: *'69 Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

APRIL
Apr. 1–10: *Imanaka Kumiko*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Apr. 26–May 25: *Electramagica '69*, Sony Building, Tokyo. Includes Kikunami Jōji, Nasaka Senkichirō, and Yoshida Minoru.

Espaces abstraits de l'intuition à la formalisation, Galleria d'Arte Cortina, Milan. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Mukai Shūji, Shiraga Kazuo, Tanaka Atsuko, and Yoshihara Jirō.

JUNE
June 12–Aug. 17: *Contemporary Art: Dialogue between the East and the West*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Motonaga and Yoshihara Jirō.

JULY
July 24–29: *1st Hiroshima Renaissance Art Exhibition*, Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum. Includes Motonaga, Onoda Minoru, Shiraga, Takasaki Motonao, Tsubouchi Teruyuki, and Yoshihara Jirō.

NOVEMBER
Nov. 7–18: *Artists Today '69*, Yokohama Civic Art Gallery. Includes Yoshida Toshio.

DECEMBER
Dec. 1–10: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

1970

MARCH
Mar. 15–Sept. 13: Expo '70, Osaka. Asia's first world's fair includes multiple exhibitions and performance programs, including:

Art Exhibition of the Universal Exposition. "Contemporary Movements" section includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshihara Jirō; outdoor section consists of Gutai's collective installation *Garden on Garden*.

Gutai group exhibition in entrance of Midori Pavilion. Nasaka Senkichirō's 150-m-long, 10-cm-diameter metal pipe is installed, emitting an ambient sound work by Yoshihara Michio and serving as the armature for the installation of Gutai works.

Collaborative moving-image presentation by Horio Sadaharu, Kikunami Jōji, Nasaka, and Yoshida Toshio for Midori Pavilion's *Astrorama*.

APRIL
Apr. 1–12: *Soft Media*, Osaka Arts Center. Includes Horio Sadaharu, Imai Norio, Kitani Shigeki, and Moriuchi Keiko.

Apr. 6–10: *Yoshihara Jirō*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Apr. 7–12: *Prints by Eight Gutai Members*, Gallery Iteza, Kyoto. Travels to Petit Imabashi, Osaka, June. Includes Matsutani Takesada, Motonaga, Nasaka, Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga, Yoshida Toshio, Yoshihara Jirō, and Yoshihara Michio.

Apr. 12–15: *The Last Exhibition at the Original Gutai Pinacotheca*. Final exhibition before the Pinacotheca is closed and demolished as part of urban redevelopment efforts.

JULY
July 11–26: *5th Japan Art Festival*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Imanaka Kumiko and Kanno Seiko. Imanaka awarded prize for excellence. Travels to Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Dec. 3, 1970–Jan. 24, 1971.

AUGUST
Aug. 31–Sept. 2: *Gutai Art Festival: Drama of Man and Matter*, Festival Plaza, Expo '70, Osaka. All members participate in approximately thirteen performance events.

1971

JANUARY
Jan. 5–31: *1st Hyōgo Prefecture Art Festival*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe. Members who live in Hyōgo Prefecture participate.

Aspetti dell'Informele: Mostra storica international, Pinacoteca Provinciale de Bari, Italy. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshihara Jirō.

2nd India Triennial of World Art. Yoshihara Jirō awarded a gold medal.

SEPTEMBER
Sept. 5–Oct. 5: *Today's 100*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe. Includes Motonaga, Shiraga, and Yoshihara Jirō.

OCTOBER
Oct. 4–16: Gutai Mini-Pinacotheca opens in the Nakanoshima section of Osaka with an inaugural exhibition.

Oct. 21–26: *3rd Hiroshima Renaissance Art Exhibition*, Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum. Includes Imai Norio, Kikunami Jōji, Masanobu Masatoshi, Nasaka Senkichirō, Uemae Chiyū, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Yoshihara Jirō, and Yoshihara Michio.

NOVEMBER
Nov. 1–13: *Kanno Seiko*, Gutai Mini-Pinacotheca.

Nov. 8–11: *Fantastic Interior*, Sanbō Hall, Kobe. Includes Horio Sadaharu, Imai, Kikunami, and Mukai Shūji.

DECEMBER
Dec. 6–18: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Mini-Pinacotheca. Last exhibition as a group.

1972

JANUARY
Jan. 21: Yoshihara Jirō hospitalized for subarachnoid hemorrhage at Ashiya Municipal Hospital.

FEBRUARY
Feb. 3–26: *2nd Hyōgo Prefecture Art Festival*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe. Members who live in Hyōgo Prefecture participate.

Feb. 10: Yoshihara Jirō passes away.

MARCH
Gutai disbands by the end of month.

APRIL
Apr. 10–20: *Document of Seventeen Years of Gutai*, Gutai Mini-Pinacotheca. At the end of the exhibition, Gutai Mini-Pinacotheca is closed.

Translated by Reiko Tomii

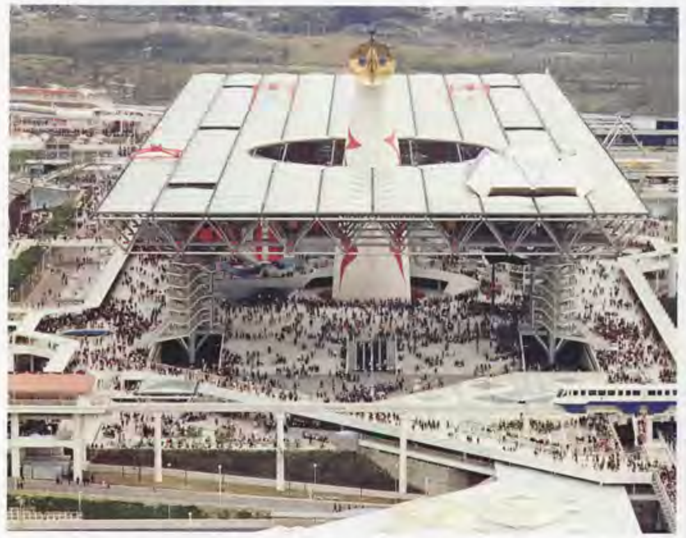
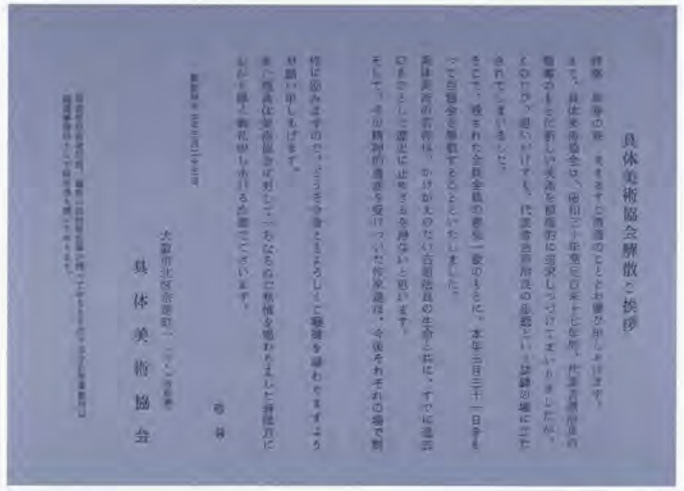


FIG. 105. Aerial view of Expo '70's Festival Plaza, designed by Isozaki Arata. Center: Okamoto Tarō, *Tower of the Sun*, 1970



具体美術協会解散ご挨拶

具体美術協会

FIG. 106. Announcement of Gutai's dissolution, 1972

gutai artists, 1954–72

Membership in Gutai was governed entirely by the group's leader, Yoshihara Jirō. Following the terminology used by traditional *bijutsu dantai* (artists' organizations), Yoshihara conferred the status of *kaiin* (member) upon artists who met with his approval and published member lists in the *Gutai* journal.

	ARTIST	KANJI	LIFE DATES	YEARS IN GUTAI
	Yoshihara Jirō (founder)	吉原治良	1905–1972	1954–72
JOINED IN 1954	Azuma Sadami	東貞美	1927–	1954
	Fujikawa Tōichirō	藤川東一郎	1922–	1954
	Funai Yutaka	船井裕	1932–	1954–55
	Isetani Kei	伊勢谷圭	1920–	1954
	Masanobu Masatoshi	正延正俊	1911–1995	1954–72
	Okada Hiroshi	岡田博	1923–	1954–58
	Okamoto Hajime	岡本一	1912–	1954
	Sekine Yoshio	関根美夫	1922–1989	1954–59
	Shimamoto Shōzō	嶋本昭三	1928–	1954–71
	Tsujimura Shigeru	辻村茂	?	1954
	Ueda Tamiko	上田民子	1909–	1954–55
	Uemae Chiyū	上前智祐	1920–	1954–72
	Yamazaki Tsuruko	山崎つる子	1929–	1954–72
	Yoshida Toshio	吉田稔郎	1928–1997	1954–72
	Yoshihara Hideo	吉原英雄	1931–2007	1954–55
	Yoshihara Michio	吉原通雄	1933–1996	1954–72
JOINED IN 1955	Hashigami Yoshiko	橋上よし子	1934–	1955–56
	Kanayama Akira	金山明	1924–2006	1955–65
	Kinoshita Toshiko	木下淑子	1928–	1955–58
	Motonaga Sadamasa	元永定正	1922–2011	1955–71
	Murakami Saburō	村上三郎	1925–1996	1955–71
	Ōno Itoko	大野糸子	?–1973	1955–57
	Shibata Takeshi	柴田健	1932–	1955–59
	Shiraga Fujiko	白髪富士子	1928–	1955–61
	Shiraga Kazuo	白髪一雄	1924–2008	1955–72
	Sumi Yasuo	鷲見康夫	1925–	1955–72
	Tanaka Atsuko	田中敦子	1932–2005	1955–65
	Ukita Yōzō	浮田要三	1924–	1955–64
JOINED IN 1956	Mizuguchi Kyōichi	水口強一	1932–	1956–59
	Ōhara Kimiko	大原紀美子	1934–	1956–72
	Sakamitsu Noboru	酒光昇	?	1956–58
JOINED IN 1957	Nakahashi Kōichi	中橋孝一	1906–	1957–59
	Tsubouchi Teruyuki	坪内晃幸	1927–	1957–72
JOINED IN 1961	Mukai Shūji	向井修二	1940–	1961–72
JOINED IN 1962	Maekawa Tsuyoshi	前川強	1936–	1962–72
	Watanabe Hiroshi	渡辺宏	1921–	1962–65
JOINED IN 1963	Matsutani Takesada	松谷武判	1937–	1963–72
	Nasaka Yūko	名坂有子	1938–	1963–72
JOINED IN 1965	Imai Norio	今井祝雄	1946–	1965–72
	Imanaka Kumiko	今中クミ子	1939–	1965–72
	Kinashi Aine (Shioya Yoshihiko)	木梨アイネ (塩谷愛彦)	1929–1986	1965–68
	Kitani Shigeki	喜谷繁暉	1929–	1965–68
	Nabekura Takehiro	鍋倉武弘	1940–	1965–66
	Naohara Michimasa	猶原通正	1941–1995	1965–72
	Nasaka Senkichirō	名坂千吉郎	1923–	1965–72
	Onoda Minoru	小野田實	1937–2007	1965–72
	Sakamoto Masaya	坂本昌也	1928–	1965–71
	Tai Satoshi	田井智	1939–1971	1965–69
	Tanaka Ryūji	田中竜児	1927–	1965–67
	Yoshida Minoru	ヨシダミノル	1935–2010	1965–72
JOINED IN 1966	Horio Sadaharu	堀尾貞治	1939–	1966–72
	Kikunami Jōji	聴涛襄治	1923–2008	1966–72
	Takasaki Motonao	高崎元尚	1923–	1966–72
JOINED IN 1967	Matsuda Yutaka	松田豊	1942–1998	1967–72
JOINED IN 1968	Horio Akiko	堀尾昭子	1937–	1968–72
	Kanno Seiko	菅野聖子	1933–1988	1968–72
	Kawamura Sadayuki	河村貞之	1940–	1968–72
	Moriuchi Keiko	森内敬子	1943–	1968–72

artist biographies

COMPILED BY NAKAJIMA IZUMI

For exhibitions organized by the Gutai Art Association, including all solo exhibitions by members at the Gutai Pinacotheca, see the Chronology in this volume, pp. 286–99.

HORIO Sadaharu

(B. 1939, KOBE)

Horio Sadaharu studied art at the *yōga* (Western-style painting) club in the Kobe shipyard of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, where he worked from high school graduation until his retirement at age sixty. Horio's Gutai-period works are concerned with manipulating the surfaces and edges of painting and exhibit the conceptualist tendencies of his mentor, Murakami Saburō. For Expo '70, he created a series of fabric works that responded to the environment, twisting and leaping over the central installation by Nasaka Senkichirō. After Gutai, Horio founded a number of local experimental art collectives, including Bonkura! and KUKI, and became best known for participatory performance works that often included children.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1968; Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 2002; Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Antwerp, 2011

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Gutai I, II, III, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; Yokohama Triennial, 2005; Venice Biennale, 2009; Frankfurter Positionen, 2011 (collaboration with William Forsythe); *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Atarimae no koto/Ordinary Things, Sadaharu Horio 1990–99. Exh. cat. Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 2002.

Yamamoto Atsuo, ed. *Sadaharu Horio*. Exh. cat. Antwerp: Axel Vervoordt Gallery, 2011.

IMAI Norio

(B. 1946, OSAKA)

The youngest member of Gutai, Imai Norio conceived of convex, polygonal, all-white paintings, ultimately creating *Tankurō* (1966), a set of white-painted globes perforated by holes that evoke the wartime manga character Tankuro the Tank. *Circle* (1967) translates similar notions into the context of film. For this work, Imai used a hole puncher to punch a hole in each frame of a filmstrip, creating a void in the strip that reads as a moving white circle on the screen. Later in his career, Imai served a professor of experimental media at Seian University of Art and Design from 1993 to 2012.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Seian University of Art and Design, Ōtsu, Japan, 2012

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

From Space to Environment, Matsuya department store, Tokyo, 1966; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Inoue Michiko, ed. *Imai Norio ten: Shiro no kūkan:* 1964–1966 [Imai Norio: Space of white, 1964–1966]. Exh. cat. Kyoto: Galerie 16, 1966.

Imai Norio. *Shiro kara hajimaru: Watashi no bijutsu nōto* [Starting with white: My notes on art]. Osaka: BrainCenter, 2001.

IMANAKA Kumiko

(B. 1939, OSAKA)

In the early 1960s, Imanaka Kumiko produced a body of reliefs that resembled turbine motors, made by twisting thin strips of shiny paper and affixing them to Styrofoam or acrylic boards in swirling patterns. With her mathematically inspired structures and use of new materials, Imanaka became a prominent figure of optical art in Phase Two Gutai.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; *From Space to Environment*, Matsuya department store, Tokyo, 1966; *5th Japan Art Festival*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970; *Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1973; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

KANAYAMA Akira

(B. 1924, AMAGASAKI; D. 2006, OSAKA)

Kanayama Akira studied at the Osaka Municipal Institute of Art after withdrawing from Tama Art University, Tokyo, in 1947. In 1952, he founded Zero-kai with Murakami Saburō and Shiraga Kazuo and later married fellow Zero-kai member Tanaka Atsuko. Kanayama joined Gutai with Murakami, Shiraga, and Tanaka in 1955 and took on the role of secretary for the group's activities until his departure in 1965. Kanayama developed a conceptual approach to painting in opposition to gestural abstraction. His earliest works were geometric abstractions with minimalist lines that pushed the medium's limits. In 1957, he created a painting device consisting of a felt-tip pen affixed to a remote-controlled toy car, which was quickly followed by a version that dripped paint. Kanayama also explored painting in time and space, pushing his work toward ephemeral sculpture and performance by using large-scale inflatable balloons as canvases. These also served as the basis for his performance at *Gutai Art on the Stage* in 1957 and his 1970 film *Circle*.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Japan, 2007

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Städler, Paris, 1965; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; Venice Biennale, 2005; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Katō Mizuho and Kitagawa Tomoaki, eds. *Akira Kanayama*. Exh. cat. Toyota: Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, 2007.

KANNO Seiko

(B. 1933, SENDAI; D. 1988, NAGAOKAKYŌ)

Kanno Seiko graduated from the Department of Art and Science, Fukushima University, and regularly audited lecture courses in physics, music, and anthropology at Kyoto University, Kwansei Gakuin University, and elsewhere. After a number of years making abstract collages using newspaper and cardboard, Kanno returned to painting in the late 1960s. Calling these works *Kigō shi* (code poetry), she schematized concrete poetry into the visual language of painting. The result was a series of canvases covered in delicate geometric patterns made of fine meshes of lines.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, and Miyagi Prefectural Museum of Art, Sendai, 1997

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

5th Japan Art Festival, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Katō Mizuho and Wada Kōichi, eds. *Kanno Seiko ten: Shi to kaiga to ongaku to/Seiko Kanno: A Retrospective—Between Poetry, Painting, Music and . . .* Exh. cat. Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History; Sendai: Miyagi Prefectural Museum of Art, 1997.

KIKUNAMI Jōji

(B. 1923, KOBE; D. 2008, TAKARAZUKA)

Kikunami Jōji studied with renowned *yōga* artists Hayashi Shigeyoshi and Koiso Ryōhei. Postwar reconstruction prompted him to join the progressive artists' organization Kōdō Bijutsu Kyōkai, and by the mid-1960s, he had switched to optical art. Kikunami was an important artist of Gutai's Phase Two, leading the group's experiments in kinetic and op art. *Work 1-5-66* (1966), a white-painted board covered with silver-striped Tetron film, produced a moiré effect that created the illusion of movement. *Work 2-7-68*, exhibited at *Gutai Art for the Space Age* in 1967, was a two-meter-tall box embedded with a pantoscopic light that displayed red kaleidoscopic patterns, exemplifying Kikunami's ability to use technology to create optical effects.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; *Fluorescent Chrysanthemum*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1968; *9th Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1969

MATSUDA Yutaka

(B. 1942, OSAKA; D. 1998, SENNAN)

Matsuda Yutaka graduated from the Department of Fine Arts, Naniwa College, Osaka (now Osaka University of Arts Junior College), in 1963. Matsuda initiated what he called *mūbu āto* (moving art) in 1965, a series of reliefs with peepholes that provided a window into the kinetic heart of his works. In 1966, he began using electric motors to achieve more calculated and automatic movements. Matsuda received a number of prizes, including recognition for the best work at the *10th Shell Art Competition* in 1966 and an excellence prize at the *IBM Picture and Illustration Concours* in 1989.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

From Space to Environment, Matsuya department store, Tokyo, 1966; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Kimura Shigenobu. *Matsuda Yutaka no sekai* [The world of Matsuda Yutaka]. Osaka: Hōsha, 1991.

MATSUTANI Takesada

(B. 1937, OSAKA)

Matsutani Takesada is best known for his use of Elmer's glue, which he poured and dried to make a membrane on the surface of the painting. The membrane is then inflated, torn, or squashed, evoking a tactile sensation and an eerie resonance with human skin. While his use of black graphite and white glue recalls minimalism and the ink tradition, it also emphasizes his playful use of new materials. In 1966, Matsutani received first prize at the *1st Mainichi Art Competition*, which also provided him with a grant to study in France, where he has lived and worked ever since.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Ōtani Memorial Art Museum, Nishinomiya, 2000; Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama, 2010

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Groupe Gutaï, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Bataillon, Françoise. *Matsutani: Peintures, installations*. Exh. cat. Corbeil-Essonnes, France: Centre d'Art Contemporain Pablo Neruda, 1988.

Jouffroy, Alain, Tsuji Shigebumi, Osaki Shinichirō, and Ikegami Tsukasa, *Hadō Matsutani Takesada ten/Matsutani Waves*. Nishinomiya: Ōtani Memorial Art Museum, Nishinomiya City, 2000.

Andō Tadao, Jen-Michel Bouhours, Inaniwa Sawako, Yamanashi Toshio, and Mizusawa Tsutomu. *Matsutani Takesada: Ryūdō/Matsutani Takesada: Stream*. Exh. cat. Kamakura: The Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama, 2010.

Takesada Matsutani: From the '60s to Today. Paris: Galerie Richard, 2012.

MOTONAGA Sadamasa

(B. 1922, IGA; D. 2011, TAKARAZUKA)

Early in his career, Motonaga Sadamasa worked with natural materials such as rocks and water. *Work (Water)* (1956) was an installation of vinyl tubes suspended in the air that shimmered in jewel-toned colors. Inspired by *tarashikomi*, a traditional technique of *nihonga*, he started creating his best-known works around 1957 by pouring and commingling differently colored paints without blending them, thereby allowing the colors to create random forms on the canvas. A grant allowed Motonaga to live in New York from 1966 to 1967. While there, he adopted a technique using acrylic paint and an airbrush, a method he would continue to employ extensively in his later, hard-edge paintings of bright, cartoonlike forms and in the large body of children's books he illustrated.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Mie Prefectural Art Museum, Tsu, Japan, 1991; Ōtani Memorial Art Museum, Nishinomiya, 2002; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *11th Premio Lissone*, Gallerie La Bussola, Lissone, Italy, 1959; *Four Japanese Artists*, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1960; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *12th Premio Lissone*, Gallerie La Bussola, Lissone, Italy, 1961; *Exposition d'art moderne*, Grand Palais, Paris, 1963; *Contemporary Japanese Art*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1964; Groupe Gutaï, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Modern Art from Japan*, Kunsthaus Zürich, 1965; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1965, and various U.S. venues including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967; *1st Japan Art Festival*, Union Carbide Building, New York, 1966; *Espaces abstraits de l'intuition à la formalisation*, Galleria d'Arte Cortina, Milan, 1969; *Aspetti dell'Informele: Mostra storica international*, Pinacoteca Provinciale de Bari, Italy, 1971; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994; Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Mōri Ichirō and Hara Maiko, eds. *Motonaga Sadamasa*. Exh. cat. Tsu, Japan: Mie Prefectural Art Museum, 1991.

Kawabe Masami and Ikegami Tsukasa, eds. *Sadamasa Motonaga*. Exh. cat. Nishinomiya: Ōtani Memorial Art Museum, 2002.

Motonaga Sadamasa. *Motonaga Sadamasa ten: Iro ikiteru!* [Sadamasa Motonaga: Color lives!]. Exh. cat. Tokyo: Seiji Tōgō Memorial Sompo Japan Museum of Art, 2009.

——. *Waga kokoro no jijoden* [Autobiography of my soul]. Takarazuka, Japan: Motonaga Shiryō Kenkyūshitsu, 2011.

MUKAI Shūji

(B. 1940, KOBE)

Mukai Shūji graduated from the Osaka School of Art (now Osaka College of Art) in 1960. His works are characterized by the repetition of pictographic signs resembling parts of an abstracted musical score. Experimenting with the canvas surface, he affixed wires, books, and additional canvases, then covered them in signs. He took this challenge to the picture plane one step further in his 1961 work *Room of Signs*, in which he created a simply constructed three-dimensional painting covered with hand-drawn pictographic signs. In 1966, Mukai created *Modern Jazz Café "Check,"* an entire café covered with his signs, from walls and furniture to dishware and the people working there. Three years later he freed himself from object-based art with the performance *Happening: Burning All My Works*, in which he burned his old canvases in a field in suburban Osaka.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *12th Premio Lissone*, Gallerie La Bussola, Lissone, Italy, 1961; *Structures de répétition*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1962; *Intuiciones y realizaciones formales*, Centro de Artes Visuales Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1964; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1965, and various U.S. venues including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Mukai Shūji. *Mukai Shūji*. Exh. cat. Tokyo: Tokyo Gallery, 1965.

MURAKAMI Saburō

(B. 1925, KOBE; D. 1996, NISHINOMIYA)

Murakami Saburō graduated from the Graduate School of Humanities at Kwansei Gakuin University in 1959, majoring in philosophy and aesthetics. He also studied painting with Itō Tsugurō, a leading *yōga* artist, and began to show his works with the Shin-Seisaku Kyōkai. Murakami was one of the founding members of Zero-kai with Kanayama Akira and Shiraga Kazuo, who together joined Gutai in 1955. Murakami was highly conceptual in his methods and presentation of art, and he experimented with a variety of gestures inspired by children. His performance *Work (Six Holes)* (1955), in which the artist broke through paper screens, was conceived when his son threw himself against a paper *fusuma* screen. His *Work Painted by Throwing a Ball* (1954) emphasizes de-skilling and the random playfulness of the creative act. An important contributor to *Gutai* journal, Murakami encouraged viewers to rethink their assumptions about works of art, especially as concerned authorship, completeness, and medium, subtly questioning the conventions of both art making and viewing.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1963; Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1996; *Saburo Murakami: Focus on the '70s*, ArtCourt Gallery, Osaka, 2012

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Yamamoto Atsuo, ed. *Murakami Saburō*. Exh. cat. Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1996.

Ikegami Tsukasa and Reiko Tomii, *Murakami Saburō: 70-nendai o chūshin ni/ Saburo Murakami: Focus on the '70s*. Exh. cat. Osaka: ArtCourt Gallery, 2012.

NASAKA Senkichirō

(B. 1923, OSAKA)

Nasaka Senkichirō studied painting at the Nakanoshima Western-Style Painting Institute in 1937 and Kawabata Painting School in Tokyo in 1941 before ultimately graduating from the Department of Japanese Painting, Kyoto City University of Arts, in 1952.

Nasaka's Gutai-period works demonstrate an interest in serpentine forms, technology, and movement. In *Servo Line 8* (1969), an accordion tube powered by electric motors and an automatic controller wriggled on the floor. Nasaka exhibited a larger-scale installation with winding tubes in *Gutai Art for the Space Age* in 1967, and he designed the Gutai group exhibition in the Midori Pavilion at Expo '70 by extending a winding metal pipe construction throughout the hall on which Gutai works were hung and through which musique concrète was piped.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Gutai I, II, III, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

NASAKA Yūko

(B. 1938, OSAKA)

A graduate of Kobe Shōin Women's University, Nasaka Yūko was one of the most prominent voices of Gutai's Phase Two. Her large relief works are modular, composed of plates relief-sculpted with a palette knife into a material made of plaster and clay on a handmade turntable. The resultant circular patterns are then painted with resin and lacquer using an airbrush designed for painting cars. Often consisting of regularly repeated forms that reflect her industrially inflected technique, Nasaka's works echo the mechanical proliferation emblematic of 1960s Japan.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1964

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Groupe Gutaï, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Aspects of New Tendencies*, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; Heide Hildebrand Gallery, Klagenfurt, Austria, 1967; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

ONODA Minoru

(B. 1937, MANCHURIA; D. 2007, HIMEJI)

Born in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, Onoda Minoru entered the Osaka Municipal Institute of Art in 1956 and actively exhibited his works with Niki-kai, an artist collective formed in 1947. Onoda exhibited at the *3rd International Exhibition for Young Artists* in Paris in 1964 before being invited by Motonaga Sadamasa to exhibit at the *16th Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1964. Onoda was an articulate critic of Informel painting in Gutai's Phase Two. His 1961 manifesto "On Breeding Painting" described his "obsession with the idea of mechanical multiplication," an interest provoked by newsreels of Japanese factories churning out thousands of identical products. His paintings of the period use systems to create colorful patterns of dots on relief surfaces, exploring the aesthetic potential of systems thinking. Similarly, his designs for Expo '70 sought to humanize new technology by using rotating walls, sound sensors, and sophisticated materials to create interactive environments for human encounters.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

The World of Onoda Minoru, Himeji City Museum of Art, Japan, 2004

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; Heide Hildebrand Gallery, Klagenfurt, Austria, 1967; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Onoda Minoru. *Onoda Minoru no sekai* [The world of Onoda Minoru]. Exh. cat. Himeji City Museum of Art and Himeji Shiritsu Tomo no Kai, 2004.

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

(B. 1928, OSAKA)

Shimamoto Shōzō began studying painting with Yoshihara Jirō while studying at Kwansei Gakuin University. He was one of the founding members of Gutai and a key member of Gutai's Phase One, a period in which many members emphasized bodily gesture as the most authentic expression of the individual. In Shimamoto's early works, he focused on the relationship between destruction and creation. For a series including *Holes* (1954), he aggressively punctured and ripped through the picture plane. In another series, he used a handmade cannon to shoot paint onto canvas, and at the *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1956, the artist threw glass bottles full of paint at the painting surface. Shimamoto held multiple roles for Gutai; he was by turns secretary, promoter, writer, and planner. He was a central figure in developing the *Gutai* journal, sending issues around the world. Shimamoto was also a powerful influence on children's education in Gutai, writing many articles in *Kirin* as well as for *Gutai* journal. After the group's disbandment, Shimamoto founded AU (originally Artist's Union, now Art Unidentified), a group of more than two hundred Japanese artists inspired by Gutai's call to the new, and became active in mail art and performance.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

International Contemporary Art Exhibition—Informel: Genesis of an Other Art, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1957; *Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Städler, Paris, 1965; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Shimamoto Shōzō. *Boku wa kō shite sekai no yondai ātisuto ni natta* [This is how I became one of the world's four greatest artists]. Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2001.

Oliva, Achille Bonito. *Shimamoto Shōzo: Samurai, acrobata dello sguardo 1950–2008*. Exh. cat. Genoa: Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce Museo, 2008.

Yoshitake, Mika. "Breaking Through: Shōzō Shimamoto and the Aesthetic of *Dakai*." In *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949–78*, ed. Michael Darling, pp. 104–23. Exh. cat. Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 2009.

SHIRAGA Fujiko

(B. 1928, OSAKA)

Shiraga Fujiko joined Zero-kai before becoming a member of Gutai in 1955. That year, she showed a work titled *White Plank*, which consisted of a four-meter-long white board split vertically into two pieces by a serpentine line. Shiraga had a particular interest in creating unusual picture surfaces. In the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, she exhibited a wrinkled sheet of unpainted Japanese paper, and in *Work* (1961), she used broken glass embedded in paint and Japanese *torinoko* paper to create a richly varied texture. Shiraga stopped producing her own art in 1961 when she withdrew from Gutai, after which she played an important role in helping her husband, Shiraga Kazuo, with his foot-painting production.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994; Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

SHIRAGA Kazuo

(B. 1924, AMAGASAKI; D. 2008, AMAGASAKI)

One of Gutai's best-known members, Shiraga Kazuo studied *nihonga* in the Department of Japanese Painting, Kyoto City University of Arts, from 1942 to 1948. He also studied *yōga* at the Osaka Municipal Institute of Art before taking up oil painting. In 1952, he established Zero-kai with Murakami Saburō and Kanayama Akira, both of whom he had known since childhood. Shiraga is best known for his direct use of the body in painting. Attempting to create the most unmediated expression possible, he first used his fingers and hands to spread oil paint directly onto paper. Then, considering his hands too "learned," he turned to painting with his feet. In the renowned performance *Challenging Mud* (1955), he pushed pure bodily expression to the furthest point in his oeuvre by diving into and wrestling with mud made of plaster, gravel, and cement. Shiraga's performances can be understood as an extension of painting to "performance painting." *Ultramodern Sanbasō* (1957), an undulating dance that he performed wearing a bright red costume with elongated sleeves, hat, and mask, was, for example, to be understood as a red line in motion. Shiraga was a frequent contributor to *Gutai* journal, articulating the ethical role of the avant-garde artist. In 1971, he became a monk of the Tendai sect, receiving the name *Sodō* (Simple way). As he embraced the principle of *tariki hongan*, meaning "fulfilling the vow by relying on others' power," his foot painting became more lyrical, placing the power of his work in the *kamisama*, or gods.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Galerie Städler, Paris; International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin; Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo; Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1962; *Shiraga Kazuo: Action Painter*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2001; *Shiraga Kazuo: Painting Born out of Fighting*, Yokosuka Museum of Art; Azumino Municipal Museum of Modern Art Toyoshina; Amagasaki Cultural Center; Yokosuka Museum of Art; Hekinan City Tatsukichi Fujii Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009; *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades*, McCaffrey Fine Art, New York, 2009.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

International Contemporary Art Exhibition—Informel: Genesis of an Other Art, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1957; *Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Métamorphismes*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1959; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *12th Premio Lissone*, Gallerie La Bussola, Lissone, Italy, 1961; *L'Incontro di Torino: Pittori d'America, Europa e Giappone*, Palazzo della Promotrice al Valentino, Turin, 1962; *Structures de répétition*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1962; *Exposition d'art moderne*, Grand Palais, Paris, 1963; *Intuiciones y realizaciones formales*, Centro de Artes Visuales Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1964; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Modern Art from Japan*, Kunsthaus Zürich, 1965; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1965, and various U.S. venues, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967; *Aspects of New Tendencies*, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; *Espaces Abstraits de l'Intuition à la Formalisation*, Galleria d'Arte Cortina, Milan, 1969; *Aspetti dell'Informele: Mostra storica international*, Pinacoteca Provinciale de Bari, Italy, 1971; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994; Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Shiraga Kazuo. *Shiraga Kazuo: Nikutai to machiēru no deai* [Encounter between body and material]. Exh. cat. Amagasaki: Amagasaki Cultural Center, 1989.

Hirai Shōichi. *Shiraga Kazuo: Akushon peintā* [Shiraga Kazuo: Action painter]. Exh. cat. Kobe: Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, 2001.

Shiraga Kazuo. *Paintings & Watercolours 1954–2007*. Exh. cat. London: Annely Juda Gallery, 2007.

Shiraga Kazuo ten: Kakutō kara umareta kaiga/Shiraga Kazuo: Painting Born out of Fighting. Exh. cat. Azumino, Japan: Azumino Municipal Museum of Modern Art Toyoshina and others, 2009.

Tomii, Reiko, and Fergus McCaffrey. *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades*. Exh. cat. New York: McCaffrey Fine Art, 2009.

SUMI Yasuo

(B. 1925, OSAKA)

Sumi Yasuo graduated from the Department of Economics, Ritsumeikan University, Osaka, in 1950. He is renowned for painting with unusual tools from daily life, such as abacuses, combs, and vibrating motors. The fine parallel lines left by the abacus and the rhythmical repetition made by motors create complex abstract forms. In his *Painting in Space*, a 1957 performance for *Gutai Art on the Stage*, Sumi and fellow Gutai member Ōhara Kimiko suspended themselves from the ceiling and threw ladlefuls of paint at a transparent plastic scrim hung at the edge of the proscenium.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Yasuo Sumi, Spazio Arte dei Mori, Venice, 2009

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sumi Yasuo. *Yakekuso, fumajime, charanporan* [Desperation, frivolity, irresponsibility]. Tokyo: Bungeisha, 2000.

Yasuo Sumi. Exh. cat. Venice: Spazio Arte dei Mori, 2009.

TAKASAKI Motonao

(B. 1923, KAMI)

Takasaki Motonao studied mathematics and architecture in the Technological Department at Waseda University, Tokyo, later graduating from the Department of Sculpture, Tokyo National University of the Arts, in 1949. He began exhibiting works with the Modern Art Association in 1951, where he met Shimamoto Shōzō, becoming a Gutai member in 1957. He also nurtured homegrown avant-gardism through the local artist collective Zen'ei Tosa-ha. Takasaki's knowledge of mathematics and the newly emergent field of computer science led him to pursue systematic production and the aesthetics of new technology. Aiming to make a grid painting without painting, he was inspired in 1966 to create his best-known series, *Apparatus*, featuring cutout white canvas neatly arranged against black-painted panels. The works strike a delicate balance between the steady grid designs and the warped pieces of canvas that appear as though they are about to peel off.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITION

1st Japan Art Festival, Union Carbide Building, New York, 1966

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nomura, Koh, Mishima Kimiyo, and Takasaki Motonao. *Back and Forth: Collage in the 1960s*. Exh. cat. Kyoto: Galerie 16, 1989.

Nagano Hiroko, Sekida Takashi, and Takasaki Motonao. *Chit-Chat*. Kōchi, Japan: Ajia Shobō, 1997.

TANAKA Atsuko

(B. 1932, OSAKA; D. 2005, NARA)

Tanaka Atsuko studied *yōga* at Kyoto City University of Arts, but left in 1951 to study modern art at the Osaka Municipal Institute of Art. There she met Kanayama Akira, whom she married in 1965. Tanaka participated in Zero-kai from its inception, and her work is concerned with the conceptual reinterpretation of painting. Early collages such as *Calendar* (1954), which challenged the nature and materials of painting, served as a springboard for later works that incorporated everyday materials such as commercially dyed cloth, ready-made bells, and lightbulbs. *Work* (*Bell*) (1955), shown at the *1st Gutai Art Exhibition*, was her first electric work. Seeking to embody movement in a practice that combined art and technology, Tanaka created one of the best-known works of Gutai in 1956, *Electric Dress*. From this piece, Tanaka developed a visual vocabulary of complex networks, lines, and circles that defined a new mode of articulating "abstract space in concrete terms." Her masterful canvases such as *Work* (1961) are environmental in scale.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Atsuko Tanaka: Search for an Unknown Aesthetic, 1954–2000, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 2001; *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka 1954–1968*, Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2004; Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2005; *Atsuko Tanaka: The Art of Connecting*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.; Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castelló, Spain; and Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2011–12.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Structures de répétition*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1962; *Contemporary Japanese Art*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1964; *Guggenheim International Award 1964*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1964; *Intuiciones y realizaciones formales*, Centro de Artes Visuales Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1964; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Modern Art from Japan*, Kunsthaus Zürich, 1965; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1965, and various U.S. venues,-- including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967; *Espaces abstraits de l'intuition à la formalisation*, Galleria d'Arte Cortina, Milan, 1969; *Japon des avant gardes*, 1910–1970, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde*: 1954–1965, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; Documenta 12, Kassel, Germany, 2007; Sydney Biennial, 2008; Yokohama Triennial, 2008; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Tōno Yoshiaki. "Tanaka Atuko no en" [Tanaka Atsuko's circle]. In *Tanaka Atsuko ten* [Tanaka Atsuko exhibition]. Exh. cat. Tokyo: Minami Gallery, 1963.
Nishihara Min, and Miki Akiko, eds. *The Gutai Group 1955–56: Nihon gendai bijutsu no risutāto chiten/The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*. Exh. cat. Tokyo: Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1993.
Katō Mizuho and Miyuki Minami, eds. *Tanaka Atsuko: Michi no bi no tankyū, 1954–2000/Atsuko Tanaka: Search for an Unknown Aesthetic, 1954–2000*. Exh. cat. Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History; Shizuoka: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2001.
Tanaka Atsuko and Minami Miyuki (interview). "Tanaka Atsuko: Jisaku o kataru" [Tanaka Atsuko: Talking about her own works]. In *Tanaka Atsuko ten Fukyū proguramu kirokushū* [Tanaka Atsuko exhibition outreach program records], pp. 7–15. Shizuoka: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2003.
Tiampo, Ming, ed. *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka 1954–1968*. Exh. cat. Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia; New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2004.
Watkins, Jonathan, and Katō Mizuho, eds. *Atsuko Tanaka: The Art of Connecting*. Exh. cat. Birmingham, United Kingdom: Ikon Gallery; Castelló, Spain: Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castelló; Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2011.

UEMAE Chiyū

(B. 1920, KYŌTANGO)

Uemae Chiyū initially studied *nanga* (Chinese-style literati painting) before transitioning to Western art. Uemae won first prize at the annual exhibition of the Niki-kai, an artist organization formed by the former members of Nika-kai in 1947, and had his first solo show at a public library in Manazuru in 1951. His painting style is characterized by repetitive gestures and an interest in ordinary materials such as matches, paint tubes, and sawdust. Between 1956 and 1964, he created works encrusted with the detritus of everyday life, bringing beauty to humble materials. The canvases themselves are often patched together from scraps, evincing postwar frugality and a lack of fetishism for the traditional materials of painting. In later years, Uemae transferred his practice to textile art. His intricately embroidered abstract works have since become well known in the textile world. Uemae has published two autobiographies of his Gutai years, both of which record a detailed history of the group.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Osaka Contemporary Art Center, 1999; Osaka Contemporary Art Center, 2006

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Kimura Shigenobu. *Uemura Chiyū: Higushō no shigoto* [Uemae Chiyū: Nonfigurative work]. 2000.

UKITA Yōzō

(B. 1924, OSAKA)

Ukita Yōzō played a key role at *Kirin*, a pioneering children's poetry magazine, founded in 1948. That year, he became acquainted with Yoshihara Jirō and requested cover artwork from him, beginning a long and productive relationship with the future Gutai leader. Ukita's work with *Kirin* was instrumental to Gutai for two reasons: his radical take on children's pedagogy and his publications experience; in fact, he obtained the printing press that enabled the group to publish the *Gutai* journal. Ukita was one of the most enthusiastic advocates for children's art education in Gutai and was a driving force in organizing the *Kirin* exhibition of children's art at the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts in 1955.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Värjäämö and Lounais-Hämeen Museum, Forssa, Finland, 1999

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Ukita Yōzō. *Yozo Ukita: Lounais-Hämeen Museo*. Southwest Häme, Finland, 1999.
Ukita Yōzō, Katō Mizuho, and Kurashina Yūzō. *Kirin no ehon* [The picture books of Kirin]. Ibaraki, Japan: Association of Kirin, 2008.

YAMAZAKI Tsuruko

(B. 1929, ASHIYA)

Perhaps the first Gutai member to have met Yoshihara Jirō, Yamazaki Tsuruko initially encountered the future Gutai leader in 1947 when she attended a workshop he held at an elementary school in Kobe. Having begun her practice with Cubist-style oil paintings, Yamazaki established her own voice through the use of industrial materials, notably in *Tin Cans* (1955). *Work (Red)*, shown at the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1956, was a three-meter-square enclosure made of red vinyl stretched over a wooden frame and lit from inside, which beckoned visitors inside to experience the colored space. Around 1957, she began a series of paintings made with a wash of dye over tin plates, creating layers of transparent colors on a glossy surface and incorporating chance.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 2005; Galerie Almine Rech, Paris, 2010

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Groupe Gutaï*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *Japon des avant gardes*, 1910–1970, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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——, ed. *Tsuruko Yamazaki: Beyond Gutai: 1957–2009*. Exh. cat. Paris: Galerie Almine Rech, 2010.

YOSHIDA Minoru

(B. 1935, OSAKA; D. 2010, KYOTO)

Yoshida Minoru studied *yōga* at the Kyoto City University of Arts, in 1959. While regularly showing his works at the annual exhibitions of the Modern Art Association, he started his Gutai career by exhibiting at the *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition* in 1964. Yoshida's experience in traditional textile design was instrumental in creating his early, hard-edge paintings, which feature undulating patterns in bright colors. Yoshida shifted to using industrial materials in 1966 for his solo show at the Gutai Pinacotheca, where he exhibited a curved stainless-steel wall piece. Subsequently, Yoshida practiced kinetic art embellished with futuristic designs. His *Bisexual Flower* (1969), shown at Expo '70, is an iconic work of Gutai Phase Two's innovations in art, technology, and environment art. Powered by electric motors, glowing neon water circulated through six units that rose and fell like flowering petals against a background of deafening sound.

Yoshida moved to Los Angeles and stayed there by exchanging studios with Maurice Tuchman, curator of modern art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where Yoshida participated in the Art and Technology program. He then moved to New York, staging a number of performance events there. After returning to Japan in 1977, Yoshida opened his house, which he had built himself, as a museum and became involved in art activities based in his native Kyoto, including the Kyoto Independent Exhibition and the AGA Festival, annual events of music and art that were held from 1991 to 1993.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; *Fluorescent Chrysanthemum*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1968; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Yoshihara Jirō. *Yoshida Minoru koten* [Yoshida Minoru exhibition]. Exh. cat. Osaka: Gutai Pinacotheca, 1966.
Yoshida Minoru. *Yoshida Minoru*. Ashiya: A-COLLECTION, 1983.
Morioka Yoshitomo, Shikata Yukiko, and Sumitomo Fumihiko. *Possible Futures: Āto & tekunorojī no kako to mirai/Possible Futures: Japanese Postwar Art and Technology*. Tokyo: NTT Publishing, 2005.

YOSHIDA Toshio

(B. 1928, KOBE; D. 1997, KOBE)

Yoshida Toshio served as Gutai's manager and publicist while concurrently working as an accountant at Yoshihara Oil Mill, a food-oil company owned by Yoshihara Jirō's father. Yoshida also exhibited with Jiyū Bijutsu Kyōkai and Genbi. In *Burn by CF* (1954) he created marks on wood panels with hot coals, and at the *2nd Gutai Art Exhibition*, he poured paint from watering cans onto a canvas. In his 1965 installation *Foam A*, he set up a small pump with a water-based solution in a flask from which white detergent foam spewed profusely, endlessly changing shape.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1962

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Fluorescent Chrysanthemum*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1969; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

YOSHIHARA Jirō

(B. 1905, OSAKA; D. 1972, ASHIYA)

Yoshihara Jirō was born in Osaka in 1905 to a wealthy family who owned Yoshihara Oil Mill, a leading edible-oil buisness. Coming of age before the war, Yoshihara was drawn to modern art and discourse, reading avidly about Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, and geometric abstraction. In 1928, he studied commerce at Kwansei Gakuin Commercial College to prepare himself for a role in the family business but instead became absorbed in painting. He was mostly self-taught, with *yōga* artist Kamiyama Jirō eventually serving as a mentor. In 1937, he submitted a number of surrealistic paintings to the annual exhibition of the Nika-kai, the largest artists' organization of *yōga* of the time, of which he became a full member in 1941. He helped establish an avant-garde subgroup of Nika-kai, called Kyūshitsu-kai, in 1939.

Yoshihara became one of the most influential figures in postwar Japanese art, contributing to the emerging public and private art associations of the Kansai region, including the Ashiya City Art Association in 1948 and Genbi in 1953. He was also an influential art critic, contributing regularly to such journals as *Kirin* and *Bokubi*, as well as to national newspapers, and was the driving force behind and editor of the *Gutai* journal. In 1954, Yoshihara founded the Gutai Art Association with sixteen initial members. Surviving until his death in 1972, the group eventually totaled fifty-nine members who spanned two generations of artists. As the leader of Gutai, Yoshihara conceived, organized, and largely funded its legendary events and is famous for his mandate to create original and innovative art: "Do what has never been done before!" He also led Gutai's essential commitment to internationalism, forging relationships and networks with avant-garde artists, critics, and curators on five continents. He produced experimental and interactive sculptures for the *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibitions* of 1955 and 1956, including works using electric light.

In painting, Yoshihara experimented with various modernist styles before maturing as a gestural abstract painter in the early 1950s. In the early 1960s, he developed a series of works titled *Circle*, comprising large circles painted on a monochrome background. Although they resembled unicursal drawings (made without lifting the brush), Yoshihara's seemingly calligraphic circles were carefully crafted in oil paint, creating a rich theoretical statement regarding the relationship between calligraphy and oil painting.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992; The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2006

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

International Contemporary Art Exhibition—Informel: Genesis of an Other Art, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1957; *Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Métamorphismes*, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1959; *Four Japanese Artists*, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1960; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *12th Premio Lissone*, Gallerie La Bussola, Lissone, Italy, 1961; *L'Incontro di Torino: Pittori d'America, Europa e Giappone*, Palazzo della Promotrice al Valentino, Turin, 1962; *Exposition d'art moderne*, Grand Palais, Paris, 1963; *Contemporary Japanese Art*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1964; *Intuiciones y realizaciones formales*, Centro de Artes Visuales Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1964; *Guggenheim International Award 1964*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1964; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1965, and various U.S. venues including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967; *Espaces Abstraits de l'Intuition à la Formalisation*, Galleria d'Arte Cortina, Milan, 1969; *Aspetti dell'Informele: Mostra storica international*, Pinacoteca Provinciale de Bari, Italy, 1971; *2nd India Triennial of World Art*, 1971; *Japon des avant gardes*, 1910–1970, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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YOSHIHARA Michio

(B. 1933, ASHIYA; D. 1996, ASHIYA)

The second son of Yoshihara Jirō, Yoshihara Michio graduated from the School of Economics at Kwansei Gakuin University, in 1955. In his early career, Yoshihara worked with natural materials such as earth and sand. In *Work* (1957), for example, he smeared coal tar on wood panels, which he then covered with sand and rocks. The piece thus had the appearance of slices of the earth's surface hung like a painting on the wall, while his *Mountain of Sand* (1961) is a three-dimensional heap of sand topped with a lightbulb and encircled with rope. Yoshihara worked little with color until 1965, when he accumulated hundreds of strands of multicolored paper tape in the corner of the Gutai Pinacotheca, which were subtly animated by a fan.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Continuité et avant-garde au Japon, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Nul 1965*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; Venice Biennale, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Gutai

The *Gutai* journal was published sporadically from 1955 to 1965 by the Gutai Art Association. In total, twelve issues were published, *Gutai* 1–14 (issues 10 and 13 were not published).

The complete *Gutai* journal is collected and translated in *Fukkokuban Gutai/Gutai: Facsimile Edition*, supervised by Ashiya City Museum of Art & History (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2010). For more information, see the Network section of this volume's Plates, pp. 101–09, and the Chronology, pp. 286–99.

Kirin

Kirin (Giraffe) was a children's poetry magazine founded in 1948 by leading Kansai intellectuals. From 1950 to 1961, it was published by Japan Children's Poetry Institute with numerous text, art, and design contributions from Gutai artists.

For a listing of articles by Gutai members published in *Kirin*, see the comprehensive bibliography in *Gutai shiryōshū: Dokyumento Gutai, 1954–1972/Document Gutai, 1954–1972*, trans. Moriguchi Madoka, Simon Scanes, and Shiraha Keiko (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1993), pp. 426–36. For more information, see the Play section of this volume's Plates, pp. 85–87.

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Japanese names are written according to Japanese convention, with surname first, followed by given name. Exceptions were made for individuals living or working abroad.

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Frontispiece: Yoshihara Jirō and Gutai members at *Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition*, Ashiya Park, Ashiya, 1956. Top row, from left: Tanaka Atsuko, Murakami Saburō, Yamazaki Tsuruko; middle row, from left: Mizuguchi Kyōichi, Kanayama Akira, Shimamoto Shōzō; bottom row, from left: Yoshihara Jirō, Motonaga Sadamasa, and Horii Nichiei

Endpapers, front: detail of model for Motonaga Sadamasa's *Work (Water)* (1956/2013) for *Gutai: Splendid Playground*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011; back: Gutai Art Association, *The International Sky Festival*, 1960, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 19–24, 1960