

**POSTWAR “AVANT-
GARDE” ART
MOVEMENTS AND
WOMEN ARTISTS,
1950s–60s (2005)**

Kokatsu Reiko

INTRODUCTION

FOR THE *Japanese Women Artists before and after WWII, 1930s–1950s* exhibition held in 2001, I compiled and surveyed 137 works by forty-eight women artists (comprising mainly yōga Western-style painting, but including a few nihonga Japanese-style paintings and photographic works as well), with a special focus, among the institutions that women would have confronted when setting out to become painters at the time, on the fine arts education system.¹ That is to say, works by pre-World War II women yōga painters are currently undervalued by art history and the art market, and many women artists have disappeared into oblivion, but rather than merely reducing the reasons for this situation to any deficit in the quality of women’s artworks themselves, I aimed to shift attention to the flaws of the social system within which women painters were reared and their artworks appraised.

I think that this clarified, to an extent, the realities facing women then. These included the fact that almost all pre-World War II fine arts schools excluded women, with the exception of the Women’s School of Fine Arts (currently Joshibi University of Art and Design); that within art associations [*bijutsu dantai*] there existed a system of authority centered on men, and it was difficult for women to become members [*kaiin*]; and that opportunities for women to obtain a fine arts education were extremely limited due to patriarchy in the household. In the exhibition I further investigated whether such systems of male domination were fundamentally ameliorated by the post-World War II conversion to a policy of gender equality. I could confirm that, in

¹ *Hashiru onnatachi: Josei gaka no senzen, sengo 1930–1950 nendai/Japanese Women Artists before and after WWII, 1930s–1950s*, held at the Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, October 21 to December 9, 2001.

accordance with the Guidelines for the Reform of Women's Education announced in December 1945, public and private art schools (many of which subsequently gained official status as universities) went coed the following April, starting with the Tokyo Fine Arts School (currently Tokyo University of the Arts), and that accomplished women members emerged one after another within the art associations too, with successive female prizewinners among them. Yet it was also true that the "success" of these women artists was merely a temporary boom due to democratization in the immediate postwar period, and that the same concept of male dominance found before the war still survived unchanged in the social consciousness that emerged in postwar art schools, art associations, and mass media including newspapers and magazines.

For *Japanese Women Artists in Avant-Garde Movements, 1950–1975*, I will take another stab at looking through the relationship between female artists and postwar society starting from the 1950s up through the mid-1970s, primarily drawing upon criticism published in art magazines of the time. I posit that this approach will lay bare the special gaze directed at women artists that persisted in postwar society, one that remains unclear if we merely look at the educational system's official stance of gender equality. In the process, this exhibition restricts its subject matter not, as in the prewar exhibition, to the women artists who were affiliated with the art associations, but rather to those who participated in the avant-garde groups that formed successively in the postwar period, as well as those who undertook their practices independently. The issue of how the avant-garde is defined in the arts is key here, and I would like to proceed by clarifying this to the extent possible in this context based on the historical facts. Speaking first in broad terms, most of the artists affiliated with art associations that preserved the same prewar hierarchical system grew increasingly distanced from postwar artistic innovations and were prone to a preoccupation with reproducing the authority of the old art salons [*gadan*].² The majority of artists who emerged after the war initially displayed work in some kind of art association exhibition [*dantaiten*], but in many cases artists involved in innovative trends soon withdrew from such organizations in search of freedom. In part because they were held in an *indépendant* format through their ninth iteration in

² Of course, this is not to say that there were no artists who continued to pursue innovation in their own art, regardless of these authorities, while maintaining an affiliation with art associations. Among the artists exhibited in *Japanese Women Artists before and after WWII*, there is Sakurai Hamae, and even among the postwar generation of artists there are several people to whom we should pay attention, such as the Dokuritsu Art Association member Fukushima Mizuho. A more expansive survey of artists and sculptors is a subject I hope to pursue in the future.

1955, the exhibitions of the postwar Women Artists Association [Joryū Gaka Kyōkai] drew the participation of artists from Katsura Yukiko—one of the founders—to Tanaka Tazuko, Emi Kinuko, Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori, Akana Keiko, Fukushima Hideko, and Takako Saito.³ Similarly, Kamiya Nobuko, Katatani Aiko, Fukushima Hideko, and Enomoto Kazuko all exhibited with, and for a time became members of, the Bijutsu Bunka Association, which repeatedly split in the postwar period. Beyond these examples, female artists who would later conduct their practices independently exhibited work with the Nika Association, Dokuritsu Art Association, Shinseisaku Society, and newly formed arts groups that had a relatively liberated atmosphere, such as the Jiyū [Free] Art Association and the Kohdo Art Association.

³ This is probably the lone Japanese exhibition in the exhibition history of Takako Saito, who moved to New York in 1963 and participated in Fluxus.

1. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ART WORLD AFTER 1945

SO ASIDE FROM the existing art associations, what sorts of avant-garde art groups were formed after the war, and in what sorts of positions did women participate in them? In terms of women-only groups, there was the aforementioned Women Artists Association (established February 1947), but this was more of a miscellaneous congregation of women artists from different trajectories, including those involved in the government-sponsored exhibition system, and not an avant-garde group. Formed by Maruki Iri, Akamatsu Toshiko, Yamashita Kikuji, Inoue Chōzaburō, and others in May 1947, the Avant-Garde Art Society [Zen'ei Bijutsu Kai] was organized by those who had seceded from the Bijutsu Bunka Association. But although the group

was seeking an artistic avant-garde from within the socialist movement, many members withdrew after a few years.

In September 1947, Fukuzawa Ichirō, Takiguchi Shūzō, Okamoto Tarō, Hasegawa Saburō, Murai Masanari, and Abe Yoshibumi (Nobuya), among others, formed the Japan Avant-Garde Artists Club as a gathering of painters with Surrealist and abstract orientations. Katsura Yukiko became one of the organizing secretaries, and Kamiya Nobuko also participated. This club held two *Modern Art* exhibitions—in February 1948 and September 1949—with the backing of the Yomiuri Shimbun. Among the young artists who participated in the Modern Art Summer Seminar (held at Bunka Gakuin, Tokyo) sponsored by the club in July 1948, seven artists including Kitadai Shōzō, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, Fukushima Hideko, and Yanagida Miyoko went on to form their own association, the Shichiyōkai.

As far as developments linking literature and art, in January 1948 Hanada Kiyoteru, Okamoto Tarō, Abe Kōbō, Haniya Yutaka, and others formed the Night Society [Yoru no Kai]. Katsura Yukiko also participated via an introduction by Okamoto. Separately, Hanada and Okamoto formed the Avant-Garde Art Study Group in September of that same year. As a kind of merger of these groups, in April 1949 the Century Society [Seiki no Kai] was reorganized by Abe Kōbō, Sekine Hiroshi, and Segi Shin'ichi.⁴ The painting division of the Century Society was inaugurated in May, with Kitadai Shōzō, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, Ikeda Tatsuo, and Fukushima Hideko participating. Abe Machi also had some exchanges with the group. But in April of the following year, Kitadai and most of the other painters left to form the Pouvoir Society.

Retracing the new art developments of 1950, we find the restructuring within the Nika Association of the Ninth Room Society (in which Katsura Yukiko participated), and in September, the formation of the Modern Art Association by Murai Masanari and Yamaguchi Takeo. The same year two identically named Japan Independent [*Nihon andepandan*] exhibitions—one begun in 1947 by Communist Party-affiliated painters with the sponsorship of the Japan Art Society [Nihon Bijutsu Kai], and the other (hereafter, the Yomiuri Independent) begun in 1949 with the sponsorship of the Yomiuri Shimbun—held their third and second iterations, respectively, at the same venue, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. These two Independent Exhibitions offered

⁴ According to Segi, the artists who participated in the Century Society were, with the exception of Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, unrelated to Night Society, and descriptions of the Avant-Garde Art Study Group as having been formed by the young artists associated with Night Society are also incorrect. Segi Shin'ichi, *Sengo kūhaku-ki no bijutsu* [Art of the postwar blank period] (Tokyo: Shichōsha, 1996), 99; Segi Shin'ichi, *Nihon no zen'ei 1945–1999* [The Japanese avant-garde, 1945–1999] (Tokyo: Seikatsu no Tomo Sha, 2000), 183–213.

1950s artists an important presentation platform.⁵ Prior to that, *Atorie* and *Mizue* were revived and *Sansai* launched in 1946, and *Bijutsu techō* was founded in 1948. Moreover, events including the launch of *Geijutsu shinchō* in 1950 meant that the major art magazines were now largely in place. Although short-lived, *Bijutsu hihyō* (1952–57), which gave birth to major postwar art critics, and *Bijutsu jānaru* (1959–69) also followed closely in their wake.⁶ Both the editorial side and the readers were overflowing with an excitement for art criticism that was considerably greater than what we see today.

It is also important to note that around this time the art critics Takiguchi Shūzō (*Yomiuri Shimbun*), Hijikata Teiichi (*Mainichi Shimbun*), and Uemura Takachiyo (*Asahi Shimbun*) were put in charge of exhibition reviews at the three major newspapers. In addition to the aforementioned Yomiuri Independent, there were *Asahi Shimbun's* Selected Masterworks of Art Exhibition (1950–66), and *Mainichi Shimbun's* Japan International Art Exhibition, which launched in 1952 and then alternated every other year with the Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition beginning in 1954. Another major change after the war, then, was that the juried and open call exhibitions sponsored by newspaper publishers provided painters with a site for presentation outside of the major art association exhibitions.⁷

In 1951, an exhibition organized by Takiguchi Shūzō at Takemiya Gallery opened in June, while Jikken Kōbō/Experimental Workshop, for which Takiguchi became mentor and christener, formed in August (with Fukushima Hideko participating). Also in June, the Demokrato Artists Association was formed in Osaka by Ei-Q and others, taking a democratic management structure with membership for all and no entry screening as its hallmark (Mori Yasu and Aohara [Uchima] Toshiko were among the female participants). In October, the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art (popularly known as the Kamakura Museum of Modern Art) opened as the first modern art museum in Japan.⁸ Next, in December 1952, the National Museum of Modern Art opened in Kyōbashi, Tokyo. The following December (1953) it would hold its first special exhibition of contemporaneous (contemporary) art: *Abstraction and Surrealism: How to Understand Them?*

⁵ The Independent exhibition sponsored by the Japan Art Society (established 1946) grew increasingly oriented toward Socialist Realism, while from the end of the 1950s until its close in 1963 the Yomiuri Independent was overrun by Anti-Art-like junk art. But at the start neither was so rigorous in its distinctions, so there were artists who exhibited in both without preference, as well as many incidents of confusion resulting from their shared name, such as artists sending paintings to Tokyo from the provinces intending to submit them to the Yomiuri but ending up exhibiting with the Japan Art Society instead. Akasegawa Genpei writes that from the mid-1950s many young artists moved from the Japan Art Society exhibition to the Yomiuri, stating bluntly that this was due to “a burning desire for the immediacy of painting” as well as the “desire to be in the limelight” in the pages of a major newspaper. Akasegawa Genpei, *Ima ya akushon aru nomi!* ‘Yomiuri Andependan’ to iu genshō [Now there is only action!: The phenomenon that was the Yomiuri Independent] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1985), 67–70.

⁶ For reference, see Mitsuda Yuri’s seven-part series “Hiyō no eiyū jidai: *Bijutsu hihyō* (1952–57) shi ni okeru gendai bijutsu hihyō no seiritsu” [The heroic age of criticism: The establishment of contemporary art criticism as seen in *Bijutsu hihyō* magazine (1952–57)], *Aida*, nos. 110–15, 117 (February–September 2006).

⁷ The monthly reviews of exhibitions in *Bijutsu techō* shift from “This Month’s

2. ON ABSTRACTION AND SURREALISM: THE “AVANT-GARDE” OF 1953

SO FAR I HAVE been enumerating the facts roughly chronologically, but how were female painters involved in these new postwar art currents, and how were they evaluated? Let's take a look at the case of the *Abstraction and Surrealism* exhibition, in which eleven female painters participated. As implied by its Japanese subtitle, *Hishajitsu kaiga o dō rikaisuru ka?* [How to understand nonrealistic paintings], the exhibition aimed to “systematically organize the avant-garde trends in contemporary art circles, and enable viewers to understand so-called ‘difficult new paintings.’”⁹ The ninety-six exhibiting artists included both painters and sculptors.¹⁰ While the exhibition was on view, *Bijutsu hihyō* published the roundtable discussion “Avant-Garde and Realism,” featuring Hanada Kiyoteru, Suematsu Masaki, and Okamoto Tarō, in its December 1953 issue, followed in January 1954 by a roundtable on “The Challenge of Actuality,” to which Uemura Takachiyo was added alongside the previous participants. Uemura had published “Clarifying Ideas: Problems of the Current Year in Retrospect” in the December issue, so this was a continuation of the roundtable based on his arguments.¹¹ Although I will not go into the details of the two discussions, in reading the participants' statements we can see that at the time the situation was such that the “avant-garde” [*zen'eī*] was easily confused with Socialist Realism. In the December issue, Hanada claims that “because it is not clear how avant-garde [*avangyarudo*] art and Socialist Realism are related in terms of methodology . . . [there are people who] tell both avant-gardists [*avangyarudisuto*] and

Association Exhibitions” to focus on solo exhibitions starting in February 1952.

8 [While the Japanese name of this museum could be directly translated as Kanagawa Prefectural Modern Art Museum, from the 1950s until 2003 promotional materials listed it as the Kamakura Modern Art Museum to make clear that it was not located in Yokohama. When the museum expanded to a second location in Hayama in 2003 (following the addition of an annex to Kamakura in 1984), its official English name changed to the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama.

The museum continues to use this as its official name even after the closing of the original Kamakura building in 2016, as its exhibition program continues in both the 1984 Kamakura Annex and 2003 Hayama buildings.]

9 *Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan nenpō* [National Museum of Modern Art annual report], Shōwa 27–30 (1952–55): 45–46.

10 Eleven out of ninety-six artists being female is, indeed, greater than what we would find in retrospective exhibitions of modern artists held today. So does this mean that democracy has regressed since then?

11 [See Hanada Kiyoteru, Suematsu Masaki, and Okamoto Tarō, “Avangyarudo to riarizumu” [Avant-garde and realism], *Bijutsu hihyō*, no. 24 (December 1953): 25–37; Hanada Kiyoteru, Suematsu Masaki, Okamoto Tarō, and Uemura Takachiyo, “Akuchuariti no tame no kadai” [The challenge of actuality], *Bijutsu hihyō*,



fig. 1

Okanoue Toshiko, *Interior* (1951), collage on paper. Collection of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. © OKANOUE Toshiko, courtesy The Third Gallery Aya. All rights reserved.



fig. 2

Katsura Yukiko (Yuki), *March* (1952), oil on canvas.

communists to compromise” (pp. 26–27); while Okamoto notes later, “But in Japan, the word *avant-garde* [avangyarudo] isn’t being used that much. People are usually afraid to say *avant-garde* [avangyarudo], so they say modern art instead” (p. 28); to which Hanada responds, “Isn’t it probably that saying *avant-garde* [zen’ei] art makes them feel as though it has something to do with communism?” (ibid.).¹² Furthermore, we can see that Okamoto, as an artist, objects to this situation and tries to establish an artistic *avant-garde* [both *zen’ei* and *avangyarudo*] from the standpoint of individualism, while the critic Hanada calls for the entirety of the *avant-garde* [avangyarudo] to come together into an artistic movement. As for *Abstraction and Surrealism*, Okamoto observes in the January issue that, “for the first time since the Museum of Modern Art opened . . . something vaguely like a contemporary art exhibition has come out” (p. 21), although Hanada comments that “[its] actuality is insufficient” (p. 26), and “it comes back to the question of how to utilize this *avant-garde* [avangyarudo] labor to produce actualism” (p. 28). Ultimately the show earns praise from the participants for demonstrating that both artists and the National Museum of Modern Art had at last managed to arrive at the starting line of the *avant-garde* [zen’ei].¹³

Uemura also provides commentary on eighteen of the exhibited works in the article “A Guide to *Abstraction and Surrealism*” in *Bijutsu techō*’s February 1954 issue.¹⁴ Evaluations of work by female painters appear here, so let me go ahead and present them. Of Okanoue Toshiko, who collaged together photogravure images from *Life* magazine (fig. 1), he praises the uniqueness of her ideas and says her works could be “a form of resistance to Japanese reality, depending on your point of view.”¹⁵ He lauds Katsura Yukiko’s *March* (1952, fig. 2), noting, “the satirical nature of the picture plane, the fairy-tale-like atmosphere, and the manga-like elements collide with the artist’s intellectual aspect or the rational aspect of modern plastic arts to generate that kind of picture,” while also adding that “the artist has a special sensibility” and that she is a “unique female painter.”¹⁶ Further, he states that the “difficult title” of Hayase Tatsue’s *Irreversible Sleep* (1953) is typical of surrealist works, and finds behind the work’s composition “the artist’s dream pertaining to civilization and nature.”¹⁷ Beyond these, Uemura takes up works by emerging through veteran artists in equal measure, including

no. 25 (January 1954): 15–31; and Uemura Takachiyo, “Hassō o meikaku ni: Honnendo o kaiko shite no mondaiten” [Clarifying ideas: Problems of the current year in retrospect], *Bijutsu hihyō*, no. 24 (December 1953): 21–24.]

12 In March 1953, the Young Artists Union [Seinen Bijutsuka Rengō] was formed under the leadership of the Avant-Garde Art Society through the participation of artists including those from the Century group. Its 1st Nippon Exhibition was held at the same time (continuing annually until the seventh edition in 1959), and reportage paintings were exhibited by young artists suffering under the conflict between Communist Party–endorsed Socialist Realism and the techniques of Surrealism. Representative works include *The Tale of Akebono Village* by Yamashita Kikuji and the Bathroom series by On Kawara.

13 [This passage reveals some of the shifting terminology of the day. The term *zen’ei* 前衛, rendered in Chinese characters that literally mean “the front guard,” and the term *avangyarudo*, rendered in katakana, are used somewhat interchangeably to refer to “the avant-garde” in Japanese. However, in these debates *zen’ei* is only used once, and thus appears to be employed to emphasize an allegiance with explicitly political goals as would be seen in movements such as Socialist Realism. Such a use would fall in line with a broader tendency in Japanese art circles to juxtapose *avangyarudo* and *zen’ei* as a means of drawing a distinction between

Kitadai Shōzō's *Mobile Object*, Tsuruoka Masao's *The Growth of a Bud*, Murai Masanari's *Boy*, Okamoto Tarō's *Roar of Laughter*, Fukuzawa Ichirō's *Saiyūki*, and Abe Nobuya's *Adam and Eve*.

Other works exhibited by female painters included Abe Machi's *Forest* (1953), Inoue Teruko's *Village* (1952), Kamiya Nobuko's *Black Animal* (1953), Oda Rira's *Work* and Ogawa Takako's *Breeze* (both of unknown date), Sasakawa Yuiko's *Spring Evening* (1953), Tanaka Kimiko's *The Mountains and the River* (date unknown), and Urushibara Hideko's *Night* (1953). Uemura is named alongside Takiguchi Shūzō as an auxiliary member of the organizing committee, so Abe, Hayase, Kamiya, Okanoue, and Urushibara were likely chosen from group and solo exhibitions at Takemiya Gallery. Inoue (wife of Chōzaburō, Jiyū Art Association), Oda (wife of Hiroki, Nika Association), and Sasakawa, who are missing from the *Japanese Women Artists in Avant-Garde Movements* exhibition, appeared several times in art magazine exhibition reviews of the day, making it possible to infer their success.¹⁸ As for Tanaka—the subject of a recent retrospective—it was probably her thickly coated style, evoking Rouault, that was appreciated as being surrealist.¹⁹

The roundtables in *Bijutsu hihyō* were followed by yet another in the February 1954 issue, “Depicting ‘Things’ [*mono*], not ‘Ideas’ [*koto*],” conducted this time from the standpoint of the exhibiting artists. (The participants were Komai Tetsurō, Oyamada Jirō, Saitō Yoshishige, Sugimata Tadashi, and Tsuruoka Masao). This discussion would draw an important remark out of Tsuruoka that had great repercussions in the later contemporary art world: “Painting in Japan doesn’t depict *things*. . . . [It] depicts an *idea*, an experience, the intangible. Even though *ideas* should be expressed with and through *things*, artists forget about things in trying to depict ideas.”²⁰ But the fact that not even a single female painter was called to act as a participant here reveals the low state of consciousness toward women of the day—even at a magazine at the cutting-edge of art criticism.²¹

a modernist artistic avant-garde and a political avant-garde, respectively. It is also important to note here that the discourse around “actuality” (*akuchuariti*) that forms the backdrop of this paragraph leads to neologisms such as “actualism” (*akuchuarizumu*) that attempt to move beyond the problematic terminology of “realism” associated with Socialist Realism, documentary film, and photography.]

¹⁴ [Uemura Takachiyo, “Chūshō to gensō ten’ annai” [A guide to *Abstraction and Surrealism*], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 78 (February 1954): 6–10.]

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. Okanoue’s works were exhibited in *Japanese Women Artists before and after WWII, 1930s–1950s*, cat. nos. 128–37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* This work was also exhibited in *Japanese Women Artists before and after WWII, 1930s–1950s*, cat. no. 95.

¹⁸ The author’s inability to exhibit works by these artists should be attributed to the insufficiency of her research.

¹⁹ Hayashi Kiichirō, ed., *Tanaka Kimie gashū* [The collected works of Tanaka Kimie] (Kamakura: Tanaka Kimie Bijutsu Kenkyūjo, 2004). Tanaka Kimiko (1908–1987) was a painter affiliated with the Nika Association. She changed her artist name to Kimie in 1970.

²⁰ [Komai Tetsurō, Oyamada Jirō, Saitō Yoshishige, Sugimata Tadashi, and Tsuruoka Masao, “‘Koto’ de wa naku ‘mono’ o kaku to iu koto,” *Bijutsu hihyō*, no. 26 (February 1954): 13–24. For an abridged translation of the discussion



fig. 3
Katsura Yukiko (Yuki), *Human and Fish*
(1954), oil on canvas. Collection of Aichi
Prefectural Museum of Art.



fig. 4
Katsura Yukiko (Yuki) at her home and art
studio, circa 1955. The work on the wall is
History of Man (1953); to the left in front is
Resistance (1952). Photo by Hirata Minoru.
© HM Archive, courtesy Taka Ishii Gallery
Photography / Film. All rights reserved

3. THE APPRAISAL OF KATSURA YUKIKO: THE EARLY 1950S

AMONG THE FEMALE painters included in *Abstraction and Surrealism*, Katsura Yukiko (1913–1991) had the longest career and was the most thoroughly avant-garde. At the 39th Nika Exhibition in 1954, Katsura exhibited *Human and Fish* (fig. 3) and *There Are Too Many People*. These works were painted following the March 1954 irradiation of the *Daigo Fukuryū Maru* by fallout from American thermonuclear tests at Bikini Atoll, and were among a great number of paintings responding to the incident that were on display at that year's Nika Exhibition, Jiyū Exhibition, and Heiwa [Peace] Art Exhibition. In reaction, manga artist Yokoyama Ryūichi's exhibition review "Bikini Tuna Tableau: From the Nika, Kohdo Exhibitions" in the October 1954 issue of *Geijutsu shinchō* says of Katsura's *Too Many People* that "of the works dealing with Bikini, the lady artist's was the best," and "I was confounded by how, just when I thought there was a Shinto *gohei* [staff with streamers] here or a dried fish there rendered in a realistic brush, I would come across a face like that of a cat that might appear in a *Punch* comic. They say that faces often end up looking similar to that of the artist. Speaking of which, Ms. Katsura's face is—"22 He furthermore critiques her work from the perspective of a manga artist, writing, "*Human and Fish*: the Bikini cat also appears here. The thing wrapping around its head seems to be a *shimenawa hachimaki*,²³ and below that is a necktie-like fish," before concluding that "with these kinds of pictures, the tricky part is that if the humor is overdone you run short on force, and yet if you cry out directly it becomes boorish."²⁴

in English, see "Depicting 'Things,' Not 'Ideas,'" trans. Sarah Allen, in *From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan, 1945–1989*, ed. Doryun Chong, Michio Hayashi, Kenji Kajiya, and Fumihiko Sumitomo (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 58–62. The quotation here is taken from Allen's translation. Kokatsu provides the following sources as examples of the statement's "repercussions": Hariu Ichirō, "Sengo bijutsu seisuishu 6: Sensō to heiwa no tanima de" [The rise and fall of postwar art 6: In the valley between war and peace], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 222 (July 1963): 103–104; Minemura Toshiaki, "Shokkaku no riarizumu: Funshutsu shita mō hitotsu no Nihon" [The realism of the tactile: Another Japan extruded], in *1953-nen Raitoappu Jikkō linkai*, ed., *1953-nen raitoappu: Atarashii sengo bijutsu ga mietekita/1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Meguro Museum of Art, 1996), 107–132.

21 Of course, the absence of any female art critics until the appearance of Hyūga Akiko in the 1960s is also a major part of this problem.

22 [Yokoyama Ryūichi, "Bikini maguro taburō: Nika, Kōdō ten yori" [Bikini tuna tableau: From the Nika, Kohdo exhibitions], *Geijutsu shinchō* 5, no. 10 (October 1954): 79.]

23 [A *shimenawa* is a braided straw or hemp rope, associated with Shintoism, that is used to designate sacred objects, to cordon off sacred spaces, and to ward off evil. It is recognizable by the inclusion of straw tassels and/or plaited paper

In *Bijutsu techō*'s November 1954 special feature "Autumn Exhibitions, Part 1," Hariu Ichirō uses an imagined dialogue format to critique Katsura in a half-uplifting, half-disparaging style in his take on the Nika Exhibition. Speaker B claims, "Among all the works on the theme of the hydrogen bomb, Katsura's *Human and Fish* merits attention in that it delves into the everyday psychology of the theme. Through the collage-like combination of fish, *shimenawa*, and human faces, it satirizes the tragicomedy of modern society. But the reason the picture gets sidetracked by the cleverness of its idea and becomes explanatory and illustrative surely comes from the equivocality of the artist not having a full grasp of this tragedy." Speaker A responds, "Katsura's is a semiabstract, so-called eclectic style. Even in terms of Surrealist psychological symbols, I think it's considerably watered down."²⁵ Meanwhile, Chikurin Ken's "Biographical Note: Katsura Yukiko" for *Bijutsu techō*'s December 1954 issue opens, "What the hell is this? Probably an idiot's or a lunatic's, or a menopausal woman's picture.' Such were Tatsuno Yutaka's words a few years ago as he stood in front of Katsura Yukiko's work, which had suddenly begun asserting a thematic quality."²⁶ Thus from the very outset Chikurin put violent, discriminatory language in print under the pretext of someone else's remarks. Sarcastically bending over backwards to see in Katsura's detailed depictions the "femininity" of an unfeminine woman painter, he continues, "A work like *Fish and Human* [sic] at this year's Nika falls into the category of a fair success. Moreover, if it's the case that the true nature of the 'femininity' that she herself fails to recognize in her so-called unfeminine artwork exists in the form of the mania for materiality that she invests into this detailed description, then it becomes all the more evident that this technique has to be respected."²⁷ Unfortunately, this directly indicates Japanese male society's gaze toward women at the time.²⁸ That we cannot entirely say this gaze was limited to then will become clear by and by, even within the bounds of this short essay.

Yet it's certainly true that Katsura (fig. 4), as a talented established painter, was a presence that couldn't be ignored. Uemura Takachiyo featured Katsura in his second installment of the serial "Short Essays on Contemporary Artists" (*Bijutsu techō*, September 1955). Here, Uemura has high praise for Katsura's 1950s move from her earlier decorative collage works made with cloth and wood fragments to themes evincing

streamers (*shide*) as decorations hanging from the rope. A *hachimaki* is a cloth headband tied around the top of the head that sometimes features slogans related to the activity of the wearer. They are often worn in challenging or ritualistic contexts, including sports matches, traditional drumming performances, local seasonal festivals, martial arts, academic exams, and war. *Hachimaki* serve simultaneously as symbols of effort, talismans of good luck, and practical accessories to tie back hair and catch sweat.]

24 [Yokoyama, "Bikini maguro taburō," 79.]

25 [Hariu Ichirō, "Shūki tenrankai sono 1" [Autumn exhibitions, part 1], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 88 (November 1954): 41.]

26 [Chikurin Ken, "Jinbutsu memo: Katsura Yukiko" [Biographical note: Katsura Yukiko], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 89 (December 1954): 39.]

27 Ibid.

28 Katsura Yukiko was forty-one years old at the time, and according to Tomiyama Taeko's experience as a member of the Jiyū Art Association from the 1950s to the 1960s, "Young women in their twenties would have their praises sung while a woman in her forties would be called 'that old woman.' Our pride would be wounded by various abusive remarks deriding women, such as 'that one's like a rotten wench' or 'you're only a woman!'" Tomiyama Taeko, telephone interview with the author, May 2005. Such abuse, however, is directly echoed in the infamous "Old Hag state-

satire and social engagement, such as those in *The Battle between the Monkey and the Crab* and *What Shall I Do!*, and for her development of a group of artworks including *An Ass in a Lion's Skin*, *Towering Rage*, *Resistance*, *March*, and *History of Mankind* that are dominated by their conceptual depth. In contrast with other critics' bewilderment at Katsura's characteristic combination of manga-like deformation and detailed painterly description, Uemura demonstrates his appreciation by writing, "I can believe that Katsura Yukiko's works try to intensify their humor and satire, reveal their character of resistance and anger toward pseudomodernity, and take on even more corporeality and concreteness in the metaphysical realm the more realistic they become for the right reasons."²⁹ He identifies in Katsura's works one possible form that the dialectical synthesis of avant-gardism and realism—problematized in the aforementioned roundtable with Hanada and Okamoto—might take, seeing in them "a scrupulousness that, in terms of painting, tries to sharply confront naturalistic descriptivism that copies the exterior world while also hewing rigorously to the avant-garde position of forging new forms, colors, and life in the interior world."³⁰

But Katsura must have become fed up with a Japanese society in which the misogynistic gaze, like that of Chikurin, was dominant, because she set off for Paris in September 1956, traveling around Europe and Africa. In 1958 she moved to New York, where she stayed until April 1961. This Euro-American study travel differed from the study abroad of other painters in that she got to know Jean Genet and Jean Cocteau in Paris, visited hamlets in the interior of Africa through the invitation of a doctor acquaintance from Paris, earned her living as a massage therapist in New York, and apparently generally led a leisurely life.³¹ By the time of her return home, Katsura had dramatically transformed her artistic style into one featuring abstract-expressionistic paintings composed of pasted crumpled paper and monochrome colors. But as Hariu Ichirō writes, this was still "mid-metamorphosis," and Katsura Yukiko's transformation would continue even after.³² Unfortunately even now a critical review that accurately captures the whole picture of Katsura Yukiko has yet to appear.³³

ment" by Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō in the present day, in which he claimed, under the guise of quoting from a scholar, that "the most wicked harm brought about by civilization is apparently the old hag." [Ishihara made the statement in 2001.]

29 [Uemura Takachiyo, "Gendai sakka shōron 2" [Short essays on contemporary artists 2: Katsura Yukiko], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 99 (September 1955): 31.]

30 *Ibid.*, 28.

31 Based on that experience she published *Onna hitori genshi buraku e hairu* [A lone woman enters the primeval village] (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1962), for which she received the Mainichi Publishing Culture Award in 1963.

32 Hariu Ichirō, "Gendai sakkaron: Katsura Yukiko" [On contemporary artists: Katsura Yukiko], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 193 (September 1961): 22–27.

33 Katsura's exhibitions in her father's birthplace of Yamaguchi at Yamaguchi Prefectural Art Museum (1980) and Shimono-seki City Art Museum (1991), as well as her retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Ibaraki (1998), provided the basic sources for furthering research on her. [These were joined in 2013 by *Yuki Katsura: A Fable*, organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.]



fig. 5
Fukushima Hideko, *Brilliant Starvation* (1956), oil on canvas. Collection of Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design. Exhibited in *Art of Today's World, Contemporary World Art*, and XI Premio Lissone Internazionale per la pittura.. © Kazuo Fukushima. All rights reserved.



fig. 6
Tanaka Atsuko, *Work* (1957), enamel and oil on board. Collection of Nara Prefectural Museum of Art. Exhibited in the 4th Gutai Art Exhibition and *Contemporary World Art*. © Kanayama Akira and Tanaka Atsuko Association. All rights reserved.



fig. 7
Left: Tanaka Atsuko, *Electric Dress*. Right: Yamazaki Tsuruko, *Work*. Installation view at the 3rd Gutai Art Exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, 1957. Photo courtesy of Ashiya City Museum of Art & History. Courtesy of Kanayama Akira and Tanaka Atsuko Association. All rights reserved.

4. EVALUATION OF WOMEN PAINTERS IN THE LATTER 1950S: FUKUSHIMA HIDEKO, TANAKA ATSUKO, AKUTAGAWA (MADOKORO) SAORI

IN JULY 1953, the Japan chapter of the International Art Club was formed under Okamoto Tarō's leadership. At his proposal, the *Art of Today's World* exhibition [Sekai konnichi no bijutsu ten] was held in November 1956 at the Nihombashi Takashimaya department store before traveling to Osaka, Kyoto, and Fukuoka through 1957, and thanks to the inclusion of Michel Tapié's collection, it triggered the Japanese art world's "Informel whirlwind" of the late 1950s. Jikken Kōbō's Fukushima Hideko (1927–1997, fig. 5) exhibited work in one Informel exhibition after another, including this exhibition; the *Contemporary World Art* exhibition [Sekai gendai bijutsu ten] (held October 1957 at Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo, before traveling to Daimaru Osaka department store) planned by Tapié, who came to Japan in 1957; and *International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai* [Atarashii kaiga sekai ten: Anforumeru to Gutai] (held April 1958 at Osaka Takashimaya department store before traveling to Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Tokyo, and Kyoto). Fukushima was highly praised by Tapié, and after this she showed her work in international exhibitions of Art Informel in Italy and Paris.³⁴ Tanaka Atsuko (1932–2005, fig. 6) exhibited in both the Osaka iteration of *Contemporary World Art* and in *International Art of a New Era*; other early Gutai members participating in the latter included the women Shiraga Fujiko and Yamazaki Tsuruko.

This led to more works by Gutai artists being introduced abroad, and that introduction laid the groundwork for the global reevaluation

34 A text in which Tapié looks back over his stay in Japan praises her as "an artist of the kind we rarely see," and reproduces an image of *Brilliant Starvation* (fig. 5). Michel Tapié, "Dai ikkai Nihon ryokō no seishinteki kessaisho" [A psychological accounting of my first trip to Japan], trans. Haga Tōru, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 134 (December 1957): 99. However, as a result of the decline of the Informel boom starting in the 1960s, Fukushima's 1960s works following her study abroad in Paris (1961–62) were not well received.

of Gutai from the 1980s on, but most importantly the esteem Tapié showed for Tanaka was particularly high.³⁵ Although the circumstances are not clear, Tanaka became ill from some disagreement with Yoshihara Jirō, and in 1965 she and Kanayama Akira ended up withdrawing from Gutai. After that, Tanaka kept repeatedly painting the same basic composition—initially inspired by the wiring diagram for her *Electric Dress* (fig. 7)—consisting of circles with multiple lines connecting them, which she continued until her final years without stagnating or letting up. We can even say that this power to continue, above all else, was itself singular to Tanaka.³⁶

Meanwhile, as a woman artist active in the late 1950s, Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori (1924–1966) also has a singular shine. Using the dyed painting technique that she adopted in 1954, she first exhibited two paintings titled *Woman* (fig. 8) at the Yomiuri Independent in March 1955, then was selected by Okamoto Tarō to show with the Ninth Room at the September Nika Exhibition, where she received an award of distinction. At her October solo exhibition (Muramatsu Gallery), too, she exhibited dyed paintings that received praise. What Akutagawa Saori painted through batik dyeing at this time was firstly a series of women’s faces, from which she developed, after her October solo exhibition, a series that drew on Japanese folk tales and the *Kojiki* [Records of ancient matters]. A major inspiration for this, she herself says, were the murals and color palette of Rufino Tamayo that she saw at the *Mexican Art* exhibition, which opened in September 1955 at the Tokyo National Museum.³⁷ The technique and the subject matter were completely unique to Akutagawa, and due to the depth of the settled color distinctive to the dyeing technique, as well as her skill with the color scheme, women’s emotions of anger, laughter, and despair are indeed given sublime expression through both exaggeration and abstraction. She gave birth to this style almost entirely on her own, and her distinction was that she carried out her work alone from start to finish without belonging to a group.³⁸

Reviews of Akutagawa’s work in 1955, when she was first selected for the Nika Exhibition, introduced her lightly as a celebrity’s wife or “housewife painter” (fig. 9)—describing her, for example, as “Mrs. Akutagawa Yasushi,” who had “abandoned singing in favor of painting out of care for her composer husband” (*Fujin taimuzu*).³⁹ In Kawakita

35 In the previously cited December 1957 *Bijutsu techō* article by Tapié, Tanaka is named as one of the artists who “should be compared to and listed among the world’s most established artists,” alongside Shiraga Kazuo, Shimamoto Shōzō, and Yoshihara Jirō, with Shiraga’s and Tanaka’s works appearing as illustrations. Ibid., 101. Images of Tanaka’s works were also published in Tapié’s later writings.

36 Last year [2004] a retrospective exhibition of Tanaka’s work was held in the United States, and Tanaka’s work graced the cover of *Art in America*. Janet Koplos, “Circuitries of Color,” *Art in America* 92, no. 10 (November 2004): 144–47. See also Mizuho Kato and Ming Tiampo, *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka, 1954–1968*, exh. cat. (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and New York: Grey Art Gallery, 2004).

37 Akutagawa Saori, “Mingeihin no heya de” [In the folkcraft room], in “Ankēto: Mekishiko bijutsu ten o mite, shinshin 27-shi no iken” [Questionnaire: Opinions of twenty-seven up-and-comers on viewing the *Mexican Art* exhibition], *Bijutsu hihyō*, no. 46 (October 1955): 39. The other women artists who responded were Tomiyama Taeko, Noda Yoshiko, and Emi Kinuko.

38 A notable exception was the two-time four-person exhibition she held with Ikeda Tatsuo, Yoshinaka Taizō, and On Kawara (Satō Gallery and Muramatsu Gallery, 1956).

39 *Nihon keizai shimbun*, August 28, 1955; *Sangyō keizai shimbun*, August 28, 1955;

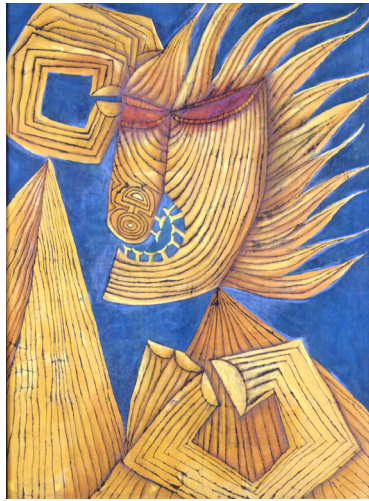


fig. 8
Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori, *Woman (I)* (1955), dye on cloth. Collection of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.



fig. 9
Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori in the *Sankei Shimbun*, August 28, 1955. The work behind her is *Woman B* (1955). Courtesy the *Sankei Shimbun*.



fig. 10
Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori, *Prince Izanagi Creating Japanese Islands*, 1955, dye on cloth. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

Michiaki's review of the Nika Exhibition, which he described as announcing "a wild epoch of overwrought amateurs," Akutagawa was also merely portrayed as manifesting "the charm of the amateurs in an interesting way."⁴⁰ But in a review of her solo exhibition at Muramatsu Gallery, Tōno Yoshiaki praised her as an artist, writing, "She spills out boldly conceived, uninhibited images from folk tales throughout the venue, with the roaring laughter of the festive and grotesque gods of Izumo refreshingly blowing away the dark clouds brooding over the artistic establishment. This liberated imagination is precious."⁴¹ Akutagawa's *Kukunochi Thrusting Heaven Up* was reproduced on the page alongside Oyamada Jirō's *Face B*.

And yet in a short text on Akutagawa's *Prince Izanagi Creating Japanese Islands* (fig. 10) in *Bijutsu techō*'s December 1955 issue, the same Tōno comments that "having all the ideas embodied as insects and plants likely comes from an organic emotional sense unique to women," and closes with the words, "while I hear she draws her works up quickly in dye on flimsy cloth, we await the day this becomes established within the stubborn resistance of oil painting."⁴² A contempt toward cloth dyeing as part of the so-called women's realm of craft products is faintly apparent in the expressions "flimsy cloth" and "quickly in dye," while the words "established within the stubborn resistance of oil painting" betray the fact that, in comparison to dyeing, the "man's technique" of oil painting occupies a higher position in Tōno's perception.

After this, Akutagawa continued exhibiting dyed paintings, first at the *Newcomers of Today: 1955* exhibition (Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art), then in 1956 in two four-person exhibitions with Ikeda Tatsuo and others, as well as the Heiwa Exhibition, the Nika Exhibition, and *Art of Today's World*. Finally, for her third solo exhibition in 1957 (at Muramatsu Gallery), she completed her dyed painting masterpiece *Kojiki* [Records of ancient matters] (fig. 11), measuring 176 by 1,346 centimeters. We can say that this large mural, which dynamically interprets and gives shape to the country-making myth of Izanagi and Izanami, was the culmination of the mythological world Akutagawa created. It was also the pinnacle of her dyed painting technique.

Despite achieving such a distinctive form of expression through dyed painting, Akutagawa then sought to convert to oil painting. Had

Haha to ko taimusu, September 10, 1955; and *Fujin taimuzu*, February 5, 1956.

Sources provided by Shūyū Gallery. [This citation information is as provided in Kokatsu's original text, and thus only includes the information required for standard Japanese citations. Since these publications are relatively difficult to obtain, the other details necessary for a standard English citation could not be confirmed.]

⁴⁰ Kawakita Michiaki, "Nika, Inten hyō" [Review of the Nika and Inten exhibitions], *Asahi Shimbun*, September 7, 1955.

⁴¹ Tōno Yoshiaki, "Aki no bijutsuten dai-sanjin" [Fall art exhibitions, third group], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 20, 1955.

⁴² [Tōno Yoshiaki, "Izanagi no Mikoto no kuni-zukuri" [Prince Izanagi Creating Japanese Islands], in the omnibus article "Sakuhin shōkai" [Featured works], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 103 (December 1955): 86.]



fig. 11

Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori, *Kojiki* [Records of ancient matters] (1957), dye on cloth. Collection of Setagaya Art Museum. Installation view in *Japanese Women Artists in Avant-garde Movements, 1950–1975*. Photo by DAGA graphics.



fig. 12

Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori, *Red and Black A* (1965), oil on canvas. Private collection.

Akutagawa herself internalized the hierarchy that rated pictures done in oil paint above those done in dye?⁴³ It may also be that Tōno’s criticism echoed in her head. Madokoro Saori—which she became through divorce, study in the United States, and remarriage—opened a solo exhibition of oil paintings in 1962 after her return to Japan. Here it became clear that she was attempting to shift to an abstract painting style entirely foreign to that of her dyed paintings (fig. 12). But in 1966, while still enacting this transition, she died suddenly of preeclampsia at the age of forty-two.

Akutagawa (Madokoro) Saori’s dyed paintings have been reconsidered amid the reevaluation of 1950s art taking place in the context of the nationwide rush to construct art museums since the 1980s, and they are currently held in the collections of a number of art museums across the country—but there has yet to be a single retrospective of her work held at any art museum.⁴⁴

43 In an April 10, 1954, diary entry before her first solo show, Akutagawa writes, “This time I want to paint in oil no matter what. There’s something burning in me that can only be expressed in oil painting. An intense volume.” Insert in Segi Shin’ichi, “Gahitsu ni ikita onna no dorama” [The drama of a woman who lived by the paintbrush], *Geijutsu seikatsu* 26, no. 9 (September 1973): 17.

44 [This finally changed in 2009 when the Yokosuka Museum of Art organized an Akutagawa Saori retrospective, held February 14 to March 22 of that year.]

5. FROM “ANTI-ART” AND THE YOMIURI INDEPENDENT ON: THE 1960S

GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH avant-garde art movements were born successively across the country from the late 1950s onward. These include the Kansai-based Gutai, formed in 1954 under Yoshihara Jirō (active until 1972); Kyushu-ha, established in 1957 in the city of Fukuoka by Sakurai Takami and company (active until 1968); Neo Dada (Tokyo, established 1960); Tosa-ha (Kōchi, 1962–67); Jikan-ha (Tokyo, 1962–66); Okayama Young Artists Group (Okayama, 1963–65); Hi-Red Center

(Tokyo, established 1963); and Zero Jigen (Nagoya and Tokyo, 1966 onward). In the backdrop to their births were the flourishing of the consumer lifestyle after the resurrection of Japan's monopoly capital and the formation of mass society through the development of mass communication following the first decade after the war's conclusion. Young artists of the provincial avant-garde carried out their art practices in their local areas, thereby retaining their regionalism while also exploiting the presentation opportunities available in Tokyo. Apart from solo and group exhibitions, the venue to which many of them rallied was the Yomiuri Independent.⁴⁵

After initially calling on participation from leading and midcareer artists affiliated with the art associations, the Yomiuri Independent became a gathering place for avant-garde artists seeking to literally demolish the framework of established art sometime around the close of the 1950s. Much has been said about the exhibition in books written by those who numbered among its participants, such as Akasegawa Genpei and Ushio Shinohara, as well as in retrospectives of individual groups and solo shows by individual artists.⁴⁶ But, of course, the names of women artists that appear there are entirely too few.

As captured by Kawakita Michiaki's reference to it as "rockabilly mania," the 10th Yomiuri Independent in 1958 initiated an invasion of black Kyushu-ha paintings made of poured asphalt, and sculptures made of plaster, bundles of bamboo, empty cans, and rags that destroyed the previous 1950s concept of the avant-garde. Such "junk art" continued to dominate the halls of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art every year until the exhibition's cancellation following its fifteenth iteration in 1963. One "node" that formed in that context was Neo Dada, established in March 1960, in which Kishimoto Sayako (1939–1988) participated from the second exhibition on. Kishimoto, who was then a twenty-one-year-old student in Tama Art University's nihonga department, had already been exhibiting in the Yomiuri Independent since 1958, and so may have been acquainted with Neo Dada's Shinohara or Akasegawa, but the details of her participation are not well known.⁴⁷ There is one photograph remaining of an artwork by Kishimoto at the Neo Dada exhibition, but as far as can be seen there, the work was nothing more than paint thrown at or scraped off of a plaster or concrete surface in the fashionable style of Art Informel, and

45 The exception is Gutai, whose members leaped to the world stage in the 1960s in search of exhibition opportunities. The major artists of Gutai did not exhibit in the Yomiuri Independent. The group that used the Yomiuri Independent most systematically was Kyushu-ha, whose members all participated collectively. In an unusual case, Kate Millett, an American woman who had been residing in Japan since 1961, exhibited a three-dimensional work combining domestic tools and metal at the fifteenth exhibition. Her life and works are favorably introduced in the July 1962 issue of *Geijutsu shinchō* (pp. 154–58) as part of a series entitled "Bi no raihōsha" [Visitor of beauty], written by staff editor Yamazaki Shōzō. Probably no one anticipated that, upon returning to the United States, Millett would end up publishing *Sexual Politics* (1970) and becoming a standard bearer of radical feminism!

46 See, for example, Shinohara Ushio, *Zen'ei no michi* [The avant-garde road] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), for which a complete facsimile edition was issued in 2006; Akasegawa Genpei, *Ima ya akushon aru nomi!*, retitled in paperback as *Hangeijutsu Anpan* [The Anti-Art Independent] (1994).

47 Neo Dada's Akasegawa Genpei and Arakawa Shūsaku were two years senior to Kishimoto Sayako at Asahigaoka High School in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. Zero Jigen's Iwata Shin'ichi was also from the same high school class as Akasegawa and Arakawa.

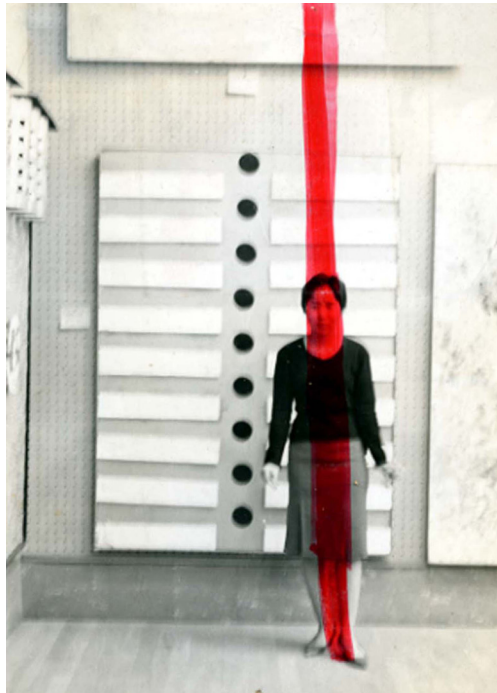


fig. 13
Kishimoto Sayako with her works at the
14th Yomiuri Independent, 1962.



fig. 14
Installation view of Kishimoto Sayako's
solo exhibition *Narcissus Medal*, Tsub-
aki-Kindai Gallery, 1965.

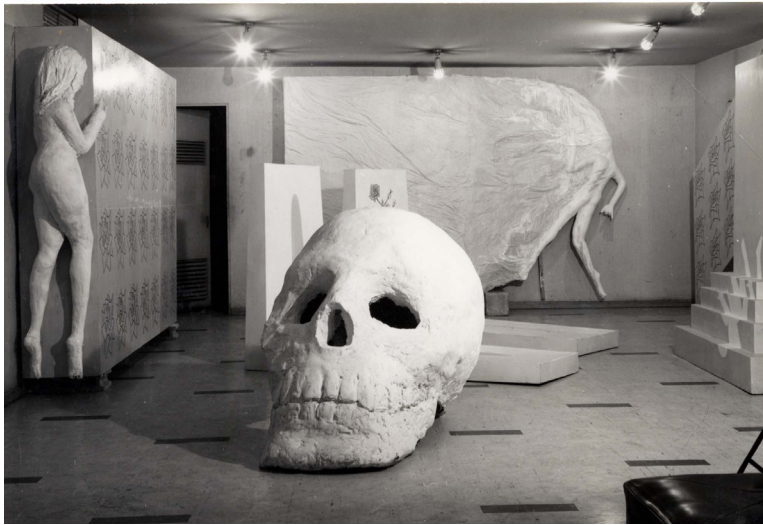


fig. 15
Installation view of Kishimoto Sayako's
solo exhibition *Gravestone of Narcissus*,
Tsubaki-Kindai Gallery, 1966.



fig. 16
Kishimoto Sayako spraying paint on works
and venue on the last day of her solo ex-
hibition *Look Left*, Sakura Gallery, Nagoya,
1967.

the same holds for the photograph of her work exhibited in the 1962 Yomiuri Independent (fig. 13).⁴⁸ It is after the Yomiuri Independent, sometime around 1965, that Kishimoto comes to grasp and develop her own style (figs. 14, 15, 16).⁴⁹

Tōno Yoshiaki's description of Kudō Tetsumi's *Proliferating Chain Reaction (B)* (1959–60), shown in 1960 in the twelfth edition of the Yomiuri Independent, as “junk anti-art” served as the catalyst for the birth of the term *Anti-Art*, which was frequently brought up in the art world in 1964, the year of the Yomiuri Independent's cancellation.⁵⁰ And while Miyakawa Atsushi's definition—despite its refutation by Tōno—that “whether by *objets* (found everyday items or junk) or by images, [Anti-Art] is a descent into the vulgar everyday” is more or less reasonable and easily understandable,⁵¹ it is also true that, as Nakahara Yūsuke points out, Anti-Art is “an ‘anti-art’ contingent on the ‘art’ concept of modern art, and so is something that cannot be absolutized and defined on its own in the first place.”⁵²

Needless to say, 1960, when Neo Dada was born, was the year the surge of the anti-Anpo (US–Japan Security Treaty) struggle and the Mitsui Miike coal mine dispute climaxed and both the workers and students calling for the elimination of the security treaty and the striking miners were defeated.⁵³ Like many young people in Tokyo, the members of Neo Dada also participated in the anti-Anpo demonstrations, though it has been claimed that what they really shouted was not “anti-Anpo” but “anti-Info[rmel].”⁵⁴ This thoroughgoing apoliticality and self-absorption in the world of art (purity?) fundamentally distinguishes the avant-garde of the 1960s on from that of the 1950s. This is because, in line with Akasegawa's later self-reflection, they no longer worried about social justice as they had in the 1950s, and even when it comes to their self-destructive explosions at the Yomiuri Independent, one could say they were still reliant on the institutional structure of an exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum sponsored by a major newspaper company.⁵⁵

Political unrest continued even after the automatic approval of the Anpo treaty prevailed over the breach of the Diet premises by demonstrators and the death of Kanba Michiko on June 15. On October 12, 1960, Japan Socialist Party chairman Asanuma Inejirō was stabbed to death by nineteen-year-old right-wing youth Yamaguchi

⁴⁸ Kuroda Raiji, ed., *Neo-Dada no shashin/Neo-Dada Witnessed: Photo Documents*, exh. cat. (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Art Museum, 1993), 39, ref. fig. 12. Photo by Kobayashi Masanori.

⁴⁹ See Kishimoto Sayako Isakuten Junbi linkai, ed., *Kishimoto Sayako, 1939–1988* (Nagoya: Kishimoto Sayako Isakuten Junbi linkai, 1990); “Josei to Āto” Purojekuto, ed., *Neo-Dada kara 21-seikigata majo e: Kishimoto Sayako no hito to sakuhin* [From Neo Dada to twenty-first-century witch: The person and work of Kishimoto Sayako] (Tokyo: “Josei to Āto” Purojekuto, 1997).

⁵⁰ Tōno Yoshiaki, “Garakuta no hangei-jutsu” [Junk anti-art], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 2, 1960, evening edition. On March 4 in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*'s art commentary, Takiguchi Shūzō responds immediately by saying, “anti-art—also called anti-painting, anti-sculpture, and the like.” Moreover in his prewar writings Takiguchi had already introduced Berlin Dada using the term “anti-art.” Takiguchi Shūzō, “Dadaisumu no chōkō” [The signs of Dadaism], in *Kindai geijutsu* [Modern art] (Tokyo: Mikasa Shobō, 1938). This information is courtesy of Ikeda Tatsuo, as cited in the editor's notes to *Aida*, no. 120 (December 2005): 40.

⁵¹ Miyakawa Atsushi, “Hangeijutsu: Sono nichijōsei e no kakō,” *Bijutsu techō*, no. 234 (April 1964): 50–53. [For English, see “Anti-Art: The Descent to the Everyday,” trans. Justin Jesty, in Chong et al., *From Postwar to Postmodern*, 127–32.] Tōno Yoshiaki's counterargument was published in the next month's issue. Tōno Yoshiaki,

“Isetsu ‘Hangeijutsu’: ‘Miyakawa Atsushi’ igo,” *Bijutsu techō*, no. 235 (May 1964): 46–49. [For English, see “A Dissenting View: Anti-Art—After Miyakawa Atsushi,” trans. Kikuko Ogawa, in Chong et al., *From Postwar to Postmodern*, 132–36.]

52 Nakahara Yūsuke, “‘Hangeijutsu’ ni tsuite no oboegaki” [Memo regarding “Anti-art”], in “1965 bijutsu nenkan” [1965 art annual], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 246 (December 1964): 74.

53 [In 1960 the US–Japan Security Treaty (Anpo Jōyaku) was up for renewal for the first time since the end of the US occupation in 1952. Anti-American sentiment in the wake of the Occupation and the Korean War—whose operations were run out of American military bases located in Japan—and the broad rights granted to the United States in this treaty made it widely unpopular in postwar Japan. Hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life, including not only union workers and students but also housewives and salarymen, took to the streets for months, turning these into the largest public protests in postwar Japan. As it became clear that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party was going to force the treaty through the Diet, protests became increasingly violent, leading to the death of University of Tokyo student Kanba Michiko on June 15, 1960, when police responded to a group of student activists breaking through the gates in front of the National Diet Building in Tokyo. On June 19, 1960, Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke forcefully ratified Anpo against popular opinion by having police remove boycotting opposition members from the Diet’s House of Representatives, holding a snap vote, and relying on the automatic approval process invoked after the House of Councillors failed to act on the treaty within thirty days.]

At the same time, Mitsui’s Miike Mine in Kyushu was undergoing a struggle for power between the labor union and management over a proposed reduction in the work force. In a common corporate tactic of the day, management had recognized a “secondary” union of more sympathetic workers in an effort to diffuse the power of the mine’s union, which derived its strength through strong community ties. A ten-month strike ensued in 1960, and the mass media coverage of this strike portrayed it in parallel to the Anpo protests as yet another grass-roots democratic movement. Similarly, violent struggles broke out between picketers and police, leading to the death of one miner and motivating people from around the country to travel to Kyushu and join rallies in support of the miners. After Kishi resigned following the ratification of Anpo, the new prime minister, Ikeda Hayato, made the resolution of this conflict a top priority and got both the unions and Mitsui to agree to mediation by the Central Labor Relations Board (CLRB). While the terms were not agreeable to local Miike miners since they declared the layoffs unavoidable, the larger national union felt that by this time, in September 1960, the forces working against the miners were insurmountable and thus the mediation proposal was ratified, with Miike miners returning to work on December 1. This defeat was widely understood as signaling the erosion of workers’ rights, and both the Anpo protests and the Miike strike were seen by protestors and much of the general public as either a failure of democracy that chillingly echoed the authoritarianism of wartime Japan, or a demonstration of the inefficacy of democratic systems.

For an in-depth analysis of the Miike strikes, see John Price, “The 1960 Miike Coal Mine Dispute: Turning Point for Adversarial Unionism in Japan?,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23, no. 4 (1991): 30–43. For further details on the 1960 Anpo renewal and its political repercussions, see Nick Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads: Conflict and Compromise after Anpo* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018) and Simon Andrew Avenell, *Making Japanese Citizens: Civil Society and the Mythology of the Shimin in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).]

54 Hariu Ichirō, “Sengo bijutsu seisuishī 8: Dai sanki no gunzō” [The rise and fall of postwar art 8: Figures of the third phase], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 225 (September 1963): 96. This may simply be Hariu’s pun. He continues with the rumor that Arakawa Shūsaku’s stone throwing triggered the breach of the Diet by the Zengakuren [National Federation of Student Self-Government Associations], which led to the death of a young woman, but this is probably a slip of the pen and clearly not true. This story, including the part about “anti-Info,” was excised from the later book edition of the series. Hariu Ichirō, *Sengo bijutsu seisuishī* [The rise and fall of postwar art] (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1979).

55 “Radical reliance built up the ruins of painting there.” Akasegawa, *Ima ya akushon aru nomi!*, 24–25. It should be noted here that Akasegawa does not invest “the ruins of painting” with a negative meaning, but continues that from the traces of those ruins grew what was later officially recognized as contemporary art. It is ironic that Akasegawa himself was dragged into the Model 1,000-Yen Note trial in 1965, in which art intersected with the laws of the state in not quite the way Akasegawa had intended.

[It is important to note here that the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art is a municipal museum that hosts annual exhibitions by many *gadan* (art academies) and other artist associations through a rental system. The Yomiuri Independent followed the museum’s existing model by allowing any artist who wished to participate in the exhibition to do so by paying a fee that corresponded with the amount of wall space they would be allotted—a system that Kudō Tetsumi infamously took advantage of to secure an entire room for his installation *Distribution Map of Impotence and the Appearance of Protective Domes at the Points of Saturation* (1962). Furthermore, as artist Tone Yasunao noted in 1971, a newspaper sponsorship meant access to the mass media, the primary circumstance that finally allowed avant-garde artists to circumvent the power of the artistic establishment. Tone Yasunao, “Hyakka seihō, 60-nendai shoki” [Let a hundred flowers bloom: The early ’60s], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 347 (October 1971): 47–74.]

Otoya. On February 1, 1961, a right-wing teenager attacked the home of Shimanaka Hōji, the president of the Chūō Kōronsha publishing company, over Fukazawa Shichirō's story "Fūryū mutan" [The story of a dream of courtly elegance] in the journal *Chūō kōron*, leaving Shimanaka's wife wounded and her female domestic helper dead in a bloody incident that caused a great sensation.⁵⁶

We will go on a brief tangent here, but Fukazawa Shichirō, whose story triggered the Shimanaka Incident, participated in the June 1964 *Off Museum* exhibition held at Tsubaki Kindai Gallery following the cancellation of the Yomiuri Independent.⁵⁷ The exhibition was organized collectively by Neo Dada-affiliated artists who, vying with the rival *Independent '64* exhibition organized by Hariu Ichirō and company, claimed they no longer needed the walls of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Although only the names of leading artists such as Shinohara and Akasegawa have been discussed to date, the thirty-nine participants included a wide variety of figures (fig. 17).⁵⁸ In the words of one critic, participation ranged "from Takiguchi Shūzō down to avant-gardist PTAs and cheering squads,"⁵⁹ while according to Tamura Atsuko, who was one of those participants and the editor of *Shinfujin* at the time, it was a hastily organized affair, with the idea having been suggested at the opening of Kojima Nobuaki's solo show in the preceding exhibition slot at Tsubaki Kindai Gallery, and a large number of people having been gathered in order to split the rental fee equally per person.⁶⁰ Poet Shiraishi Kazuko was also listed among the exhibitors through her connection as a writer for *Shinfujin*. The work exhibited under Fukazawa's name on this occasion was a human-face-shaped clock *objet* titled *Mutan Clock*, a thing abounding in black humor with large and small hatchets attached in place of clock hands—reportedly made by all the participating artists together (fig. 18).⁶¹ Even an avant-garde that had become indifferent to politics was not entirely isolated from society. The substance of its fervor at the time must be carefully worked out through close examination of such networks of artists, poets, novelists, and editors.⁶² Kishimoto Sayako also participated in the exhibition, but there is no documentation remaining that tells us what her work was like.⁶³

The next March, in 1965, the *Big Fight* exhibition was held with almost the same thirty-nine members at the same venue (fig. 19),

⁵⁶ Prior to the incident, right-wing activists had been barging into the Chūō Kōronsha offices day after day in protest over what they saw as a disrespectful reference to beheading the then crown prince and Princess Michiko in Fukazawa Shichirō's story "Fūryū mutan," published in the December 1960 issue of *Chūō kōron*. Because Chūō Kōronsha made changes in personnel and apologized to right-wing organizations after the attack, it came under fire from newspapers for its stance, which was seen as undermining freedom of speech.

⁵⁷ Tsubaki Kindai Gallery was one of a number of rental galleries in Tokyo which allowed contemporary artists time and space to show their work, individually or collectively, for a fee. Within the limited contemporary art market that exists in Japan, such galleries continue to provide emerging artists with an important platform for exhibiting work in order to secure museum exhibitions and eventual commercial representation.

⁵⁸ A short text by Ushio Shinohara and the names of the members are printed in "New Pop, New Junk, New Toy: Off Museum" [in Japanese], *Bijutsu jōnanu*, no. 49 (June 1964): 10–13, but Kishimoto Sayako is missing. The chronology in the Shoto Museum of Art's Miki Tomio exhibition catalogue also covers the participants, but there are only thirty-four people listed, with seven names missing: Ushio Shinohara, Ishizaki Kōichirō, Waida Isao, Kazakura Shō, Hashimoto Sōhei, Izumi Tatsu, and Kishimoto Sayako. Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō



fig. 17
 Poster for the *Off Museum* exhibition held at Tsubaki-Kindai Gallery in June 1964. Collection of Nishiyama Teruo.



fig. 18
 From the June 1964 issue of *Bijutsu jōnanu*. Fukazawa Shichirō's *Mutan dokei* is visible at left center.

Bijutsukan, ed., *Miki Tomio: Tokubetsu ten/Tomio Miki*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: The Shoto Museum of Art, 1992).

Although the names of Asakawa Kunio and Harry are included in the chronology, they are not found on the exhibition poster. Preserved by Nishiyama Teruo, who had visited the exhibition, and brought to our attention during research for the present exhibition, the poster has for the first time fully revealed the names of the participants; but it is unclear whether the thirty-nine people listed on the poster actually did—and whether Asakawa and Harry did not—exhibit work.

59 Kita Ichirō, “Sen-kyūhyaku-rokujūyonen/Bijutsukai hyōbanki” [1964/Art world who’s who], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 245 (December 1964): 84.

60 Tamura Atsuko, interview with the author, February 9, 2005. Tamura also reported that she exhibited a white book dummy as a work. For more information on Tamura’s work with avant-garde art in *Shinfujin*, see “MJ intabyū Tamura Atsuko” [MJ interview with Tamura Atsuko], *Modan jūsu*, no. 6 (April 2003): 43–50.

61 Tamura Atsuko, interview with the author, February 9, 2005. This clock *objet* also appeared in the film *Some Young People* shot by director Nagano Chiaki as a Nippon Television program in 1964, and was discarded into the Tama River by the featured artists. The film is an invaluable work in which the couple Yoko Ono and Tony Cox, as well as Ushio Shinohara, Miki Tomio, Tanaka Shintarō, Katō Yoshihiro of Zero Jigen [Zero Dimension], and other avant-garde artists of the day all appear together to discuss art; for information on the contents I am indebted to Midori Yoshimoto and Miyata Yūka. The work was screened at the Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts during the *Japanese Women Artists in Avant-Garde Movements 1950–1975* exhibition (August 7, 2005).

62 Although it appeared after the fact, a short story by Chida Ui (Ui Angel), who was close to Ushio Shinohara, Katō Yoshihiro, Kishimoto Sayako, and other artists in the 1960s, and participated in happenings with them at the time, is noteworthy in this respect. See Ui Angel, “Purasutikkuna seishun” [Plastic youth], *Gunzō* (May 1995): 6–53.

63 Other female participants included Miyuki Minako and Ichige Fumiko. These women were also active in the Neo Dada periphery and held solo exhibitions at Naiqua Gallery. In *Off Museum* Miyuki presented a work made of hollow-cast plaster specimens of cigarette butts collected at her solo exhibition. This work is in the Takiguchi Shūzō collection. See *Takiguchi Shūzō: Yume no hyōryūbutsu/ Drifting Objects of Dreams: The Collection of Shūzō Takiguchi*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Setagaya Art Museum, 2005), no. TN-D-187. Ichige produced a work that traced the outlines of shadows, but in 1967 she married Tateishi Kōichi (Tiger Tateishi) and moved to Italy, bringing her art making practice to a halt. Shigeko Kubota is also named, but it is unclear which of her works was exhibited.



fig. 19
Poster for the *Big Fight* exhibition held at Tsubaki-Kindai Gallery in March 1965. Collection of Nishiyama Teruo.

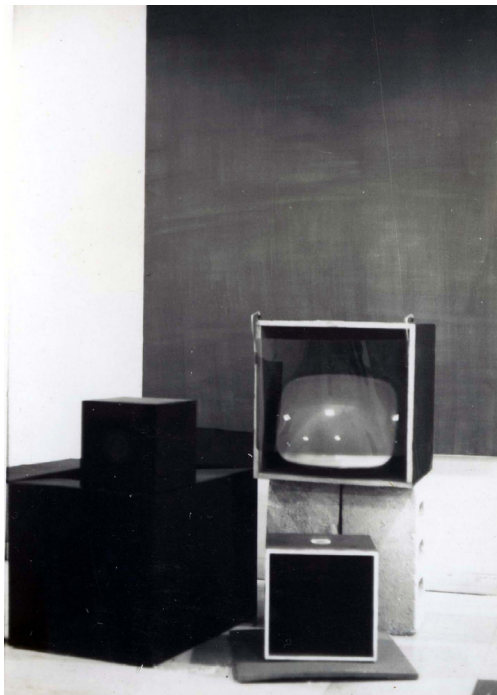


fig. 20
Hayashi Miyori, *Shōka kikan* (Digestive tube) (circa 1965). Photo by Nishiyama Teruo.

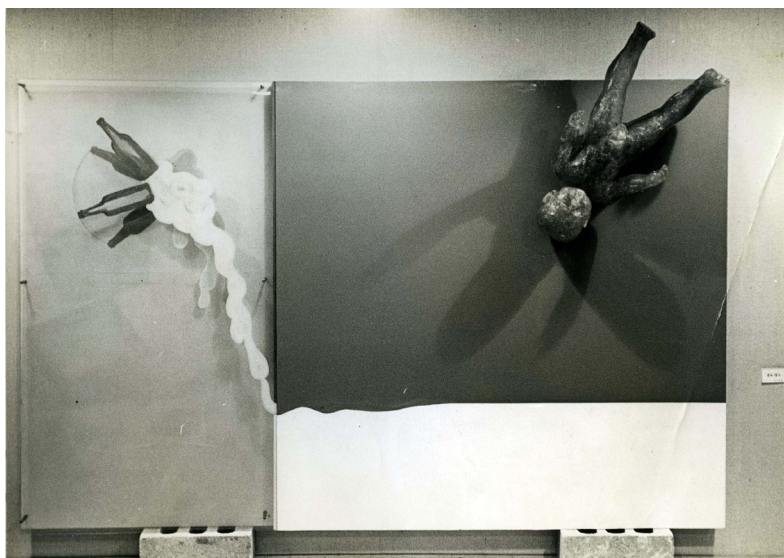


fig. 21
Kishimoto Sayako, title unknown (circa 1965).

but with the participation of a new face, Hayashi Miyori (1933–2000). Hayashi was an emerging talent who was then attracting much attention: she had already held two solo exhibitions in Tokyo in 1964, and of these the one in December at Naiqua Gallery was noted for suggesting “the spread of what might be called a void living space, simply by painting cardboard boxes of varying sizes pitch black and arranging them on the floor and walls of the gallery,”⁶⁴ while *Bijutsu jānaru* also published a statement by her.⁶⁵ Hayashi exhibited a box work (fig. 20) in *Big Fight* as well, while Kishimoto Sayako displayed a semisculptural work consisting of a statue of a child attached to the picture plane (fig. 21) that would be developed further at her solo exhibition *Narcissus Medal* in August of that year.

Both Hayashi and Kishimoto were extremely unique women artists who developed cutting-edge practices in the mid-1960s, but due to the nature of installation art, the works themselves did not survive (or were not preserved), and at present their activities have been almost entirely left out of accounts of 1960s art history. One of the objectives of the current exhibition has been in fact to collect documentation of the activities of such women artists who have been excluded from the mainstream. However, I have already reached the allotted length for this text without being able to examine the details of women’s artistic practices in the 1960s.⁶⁶ I plan to consider this again on another occasion (see also the explanatory texts for each chapter and artist in the exhibition catalogue). It is my hope that the artwork documentation collected here will provide a starting point for investigations by many more critics and researchers.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ōoka Makoto, “Geppyō: Koten, gurūpu ten kara” [Monthly reviews: From solo and group exhibitions], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 249 (March 1965): 129–30. Ōoka contrasts Morimoto Kikuko’s solo exhibition at Mudo Gallery to Hayashi’s, saying that although Morimoto’s work is “an extraordinary expression of vitality, it looks to me as though that . . . is also what generates the hermeticism of this artist’s world.” *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁵ Hayashi Miyori, “Watashi no hatsugen: Box ni tsuite no oboegaki” [My statement: Memo on Box], *Bijutsu jānaru*, no. 54 (May 1965): 37.

⁶⁶ In regard to Kishimoto Sayako’s artwork, see Kokatsu Reiko, “Bijutsu no ‘konseki’? Josei no kōi, sakuhin no juyō o megutte” [“Traces” of art? On the reception of women’s actions and works], *diatxt.*, no. 15 (June 2005): 128–34.

⁶⁷ [A comprehensive monograph on Hayashi Miyori’s practice has since been published. See Hayashi Miyori Project, ed., *Miyori Project: Hayashi Miyori ato shūsei* [Miyori Project: Hayashi Miyori art monograph] (Tokyo: Choeisha, 2011). A book on Kishimoto Sayako’s large-format paintings from the 1980s has also appeared recently, and the works themselves are held in collections including the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, the Nagoya City Art Museum, and the Miyagi Museum of Art. See Kishimoto Sayako, *I am sora tabu aka neko da! Gaka Kishimoto Sayako* [I am a flying red cat! Kishimoto Sayako 1939–1988] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2009).]

6. CONCLUSION: “AVANT-GARDE” AND “WOMEN”

THUS WE CAN say that 1960s avant-garde art unfolded not only in exhibitions at art museums organized by newspaper companies but also individually, making the downtown rental galleries that rapidly multiplied thereafter into its stage. Yet with the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1970 Osaka Expo as two major peaks, Japanese society rapidly pushed toward massification and the transition to a so-called middle-class nation that took “income doubling” as its slogan.⁶⁸ Amid these conditions Hariu Ichirō already pointed out in 1962 that “the avant-garde faith is now also an integral part of the established order,” and “we must . . . start by confronting this situation in which it is entangled with colossal control systems [mass media and national will].”⁶⁹ He concludes that it is necessary for us to break through this obstructed and discommunicative situation via a vector opposite that of the period of avant-garde enlightenment, but what this “opposite vector” might be is never specified. In a response to Hariu titled “Whither the Avant-Garde,” Nakahara Yūsuke writes that “there can no longer be an ‘avant-garde’ that makes the uncomprehending masses its antagonist and glories in its nonacceptance by those masses,” thus agreeing with the “transformation in the concept of the avant-garde” that Hariu identified, while also asserting that “one may now only be avant-garde through ‘art movements.’”⁷⁰ Nakahara goes on to claim that critics can “concentrate [the hidden potential for movements] and present their critical thinking” by organizing solo and group exhibitions,

68 [The actual term used by Kokatsu here to refer to the expansion of the middle class is *ichioku sōchūryū* 一億総中流, which literally means “hundred million people all middle class.” This term was commonly invoked in the 1960s under Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato’s Income Doubling Plan of 1960, and represented a drive toward broadening the consumer base of the Japanese population to support the rapidly expanding consumer economy. Other concepts, such as the *sanshu no jin-gi* (lit., three sacred treasures, or Imperial Regalia) of domestic appliances—black-and-white television, washing machine, and refrigerator in the late 1950s, and color television, air conditioner, and automobile by the late 1960s—as well as the growing cultural dominance of the image of the salaryman household reinforced the idea of a standardized middle-class lifestyle to which all Japanese should aspire to conform.]

69 Hariu Ichirō, “Zen’ei geijutsu ni tsu-kare mashita” [I’ve had it with avant-garde art], *Geijutsu shinchō* 13, no. 8 (August 1962): 153.

70 Nakahara Yūsuke, “Zen’ei no yukue” [Whither the avant-garde], in “Bijutsu nenkan 1963” [Art annual 1963], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 214 (December 1962): 61–63.

demonstrating his pride in and sense of responsibility toward the role of the critic.⁷¹

Nakahara's "art movements" are not the kind of spontaneous assemblies of artists like those of the late 1950s avant-garde art groups, and refer more to new trends in the art of the day that were theorized or extrapolated by critics. But even in such groups, there was no changing the fact that the position of women is always marginal. Moreover, in the current exhibition we need to remain conscious that within this sense of crisis with which Hariu and Nakahara were concerned—namely that the avant-garde was no longer regarded with hostility as something unusual by the masses and would, rather, be robbed of its ability to stand apart, leaving it to be swallowed up or buried in indifference—*woman* was synonymous with *masses*.

In the first place, Hariu's text starts with quotations of statements by artists who participated in a roundtable discussion titled "The Current State and Prospects of Avant-Garde Art," the first of which is by Yoko Ono and reads, "If someone says there's no appeal in what we're making, it's because the capacity to appreciate it has yet to be born in others, like not knowing the rules of baseball. . . . Subjectively speaking, the audience's eyes aren't innocent: they include prejudice and culture and certain historical factors, and are too malicious to be able to directly confront actual objects."⁷² Presumably these words serve to elucidate what was at work behind Donald Richie's harsh criticism in "Stumbling Front Line: Yoko Ono's Avant-Garde Show," published in the previous issue of the same magazine, *Geijutsu shinchō*.⁷³

In 1967 *Bijutsu techō* published Tōno Yoshiaki's series "Top Ladies of World Painting Circles,"⁷⁴ which concluded with a three-person roundtable featuring Katsura Yukiko and Nonaka Yuri alongside Tōno in its December issue.⁷⁵ In the discussion Tōno remarks: "Incredible leaps of intuition or inspiration are rare [among women]. Those who define the era are the single individuals through whom the nucleus of a new history passes, right? That's what I meant when I spoke of inspiration, but perhaps women just don't have the ability to produce what we call the logic of history."⁷⁶ Perhaps this is simply Tōno's personal thought, or else his thinking as of that point in time in 1967. But it would be wise to keep in mind that the holder of that thought was a prominent art critic, and that the environment in Japan then was such that a series about

⁷¹ Ibid., 64.

⁷² Hariu, "Zen'ei geijutsu ni tsukaremashita," 148.

⁷³ Donald Richie, "Tsumazuita saizensen: Ono Yōko no zen'ei shō," *Geijutsu shinchō* 13, no. 7 (July 1962): 60–61. Ironically, the previously mentioned favorable article introducing Kate Millett was published in the same issue. See note 31.

⁷⁴ Tōno Yoshiaki, "Sekai gadan no toppu redi" [Top ladies of world art circles], nos. 1–7, *Bijutsu techō*, nos. 281–88 (April–October 1967). The women artists taken up in these articles are Niki de Saint Phalle, Helena Sturtevant, Helen Frankenthaler, Marisol, Chryssa, Bridget Riley, and Louise Nevelson.

⁷⁵ Tōno Yoshiaki, Katsura Yukiko, and Nonaka Yuri, "Zadankai 'Sekai gadan no toppu redi' to sono jōken" [Roundtable: "Top ladies of world painting circles" and their conditions], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 291 (December 1967): 58–64.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61–62. In response to Tōno's comment, Nonaka Yuri fires back that it shows "the same old pattern of the gaze toward women" and that "it's hardly a leap of inspiration regarding women."

women artists in the United States and Europe under a title like “Top Ladies” could make it into a leading art magazine. Of the malice from such “prejudice and culture and certain historical factors” (to borrow Yoko Ono’s words)—which is to say the gender consciousness imprinted on individual human beings—what has changed since then, and what has been preserved in Japanese society? This exhibition is linked to the contemporary moment through that point.

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