SAYONARA, YOMIURI INDEPENDENT (1964)

Tōno Yoshiaki

A source of so much excitement since 1948,[1] *the Yomiuri Independent is no more. But what of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum's "six rules" for exhibiting works and the freedom of expression? Is this mission over for free, anti-establishment/ unjuried exhibitions?*

THE YOMIURI INDEPENDENT EXHIBITION was discontinued this year, making the previous fifteenth edition its last.[2] That means one less thing to look forward to in the spring.[3] Every year, just as things were settling in to the new season,[4] I would cheerfully head over to that place to which I usually hardly ever go, the Metropolitan Art Museum in Ueno Park. Since in recent years the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, as exhibition sponsor, would have five or six critics do write ups of their top works that ran with illustrations on the front page of the evening edition,[5] it became my custom, at a certain point, to visit on set up day. The venue always seethed with a feverish energy: somebody would be busily constructing a giant castle out of trash on one side, while a purist would be hanging and rehanging their paintings [*tableaux*] on the other. Most of the paintings would still be leaning against the wall, and as I turned them over one after another to pick and choose which I liked, some artist would come along and ask me to comment on their work. I'd be the one to get all flustered, and then the next comer would step forth while I was still tripping over my tongue. I guess visiting on set up day was my best chance for direct contact with young artists—though I can't say how the artists felt as they watched us featured critics snooping about like inspectors.[6] This is where I first met Shusaku Arakawa,[7] stood entranced by Tetsumi Kudo's anemone-like vinyl sculpture,[8] doubled over laughing at Ushio Shinohara's Mohawk hairstyle,[9] and was struck by Okamoto Shinjirō's Marilyn Monroe picture *Death of an Actress* (1963).[10] There's no doubt this sweaty weed patch is where my criticism was cultivated.

I'm not getting sentimental here. Setting aside the motivation or reasoning behind it, the discontinuation of the exhibition was obviously only a matter of time, and there's a part of me that even welcomes it. The Yomiuri Independent was certainly an important exhibition for laying the foundation of Japan's postwar art scene. It was, first off, a stronghold for young artists seeking free expression in opposition to the revival of the exclusive salons and art associations of the old prewar system. But if the authority of the association exhibitions has completely hit bottom, and everything is freer now than ever before—almost disturbingly so—then we could say that the Independent, which staked itself on being "anti-establishment" and "free," has fulfilled its mission.

1 [The Yomiuri Shimbun Co.'s announcement in October 1948 that it would launch its own Japan Independent Exhibition caused a stir, as an exhibition of the same name had been launched the year prior, in 1947, by the Japan Art Society [Nihon Bijutsu Kai]. The first Yomiuri-sponsored Japan Independent Exhibition was held in 1949. Over time the exhibition came to be known as the Yomiuri Independent in distinction to the other Japan Independent, and the name was officially recognized from the eighth edition of 1956 onward. William Marotti provides an overview of the history and social context of the Yomiuri Independent, including the contention over its name, in "Artistic Practice Finds Its Object: The Avant-Garde and the *Yomiuri Indépendant*," pt. 2 in *Money, Trains, and Guillotines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 111–99. In the case of both exhibitions, the titular independent is derived from the French *indépendant.*

2 [The decision was made in January 1964.]

3 [*shinnen* 新年, literally, "new year." Tōno's idiomatic use of this term derives from the coincidence of the new year with the start of spring in the lunar calendar. Running for about two weeks each time, the Yomiuri Independent generally opened in late February or early March, in contrast to the juried exhibitions organized by art associations, which were held in the fall.]

4 [*toshi ga ake* 年が明け, literally, "the year would start." Here again Tōno draws upon new year imagery to establish the

sense of the Yomiuri Independent kicking off the art calendar. Promotional coverage of the exhibition in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* often referred to the exhibition as the start of the spring art season.]

5 [The timing and format of this feature in fact changed over the years. For the 9th Yomiuri Independent in 1957, six critics—Imaizumi Atsuo, Nakahara Yūsuke, Okamato Kenjirō, Tominaga Sōichi, and Uemura Takachiyo along with Tōno—each spotlighted a single work in a splashy layout that took up most of page 3 of the March 8 evening edition, toward the end of that year's run from February 25 to March 12. (Tōno wrote about the painter Toneyama Kōjin.) But for the eleventh edition, held from February 28 to March 15, 1959, the spotlights ran serially on the front page across several days, starting with Tominaga Sōichi's appraisal of a painting by Kiyokawa Taiji on March 2, and concluding with Hijikata Teiichi's commentary on a Nagahara Tatsurō painting on March 7. (Tōno did not contribute this year.)]

6 [*kensatsukan* 検察官, literally, "prosecutor." The word choice is noteworthy considering that Neo-Dadaist artist Akasegawa Genpei had been written up in a sensational article in that year's January 27 edition of the *Asahi Shimbun* that identified him as the subject of a criminal investigation into the production of "imitation" 1,000-yen notes, and speciously linked him to a major forgery ring. See also Akasegawa Genpei, "'Shihon shugi riarizumu' ron," *Nihon dokusho shimbun*, no. 1246 (February 24, 1964). For the English, see "Theses on 'Capitalist Realism,'" trans. William Marotti, Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan.]

7 [Tōno wrote about Arakawa's work at the 11th Yomiuri Independent for the March 8, 1961, evening edition of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Arakawa moved to New York later that year.]

8 [Although Kudo submitted work to multiple editions of the Yomiuri Independent, Tōno is most likely referring to *Proliferating Chain Reaction* (B) (1959–60), exhibited at the twelfth edition of 1960. On opening day that year, Tōno led off the featured works series on the front page of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*'s evening edition with a spotlight of this work that has since gained notoriety for introducing the phrase *junk Anti-Art* (garakuta no hangeijutsu) into Japanese art discourse. In his article, Tōno describes the work as comprising "red and white and yellow vinyl strings that were all tied together and knotted into [a structure made of] scrubbing brushes." See Tōno Yoshiaki, "Garakuta no hangeijutsu" [Junk anti-art], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 2, 1960, evening edition.]

9 [A trademark look of the artist's, memorably documented in a profile for the April 27, 1958, edition of the weekly *Shūkan sankei* that anointed Shinohara a "rockabilly painter." As reproduced in Ushio Shinohara, *Zen'ei no michi* [The avant-garde road] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), 31–33.]

There are those who get angry about the Yomiuri Shimbun Co. suddenly deciding to discontinue the exhibition and then notifying only the artists without offering an official explanation in the paper, but that's a minor quibble, and it's a bit more mature to acknowledge they did well to take it this far in a country where exhibitions function solely as commercial ventures for newspaper companies and department stores.

I've gotten roped into insider meetings about this issue twice already of late. And what I sensed was that while everyone makes a *big show* [11] of wanting to keep the Independent going, they don't have any realistic proposals or display any true commitment. There's nothing I despise more than this *big show*, which doesn't even amount to the yapping of a whipped cur. And you know why it doesn't amount to anything? Because, *obviously*, it would be hard to get mass media coverage if you did an exhibition that no longer had the involvement of a newspaper company. About ninety percent of the appeal of the *Yomiuri* Independent for participants surely came down to the hope that, just maybe, they could get their work on the front page of the evening edition and instantly be minted a star artist *in the press*. I find the ambition, the vanity of these artists to be incredibly contemporary, and beautiful. We know what those who regard that kind of thing as impure and cloister themselves in their art really want deep down inside. *The mass media kills artists*, they say—but those artists were always weak from the start, while what we need is more artists who are driven to keep growing by the powerful charge they get from the allure of the mass media. Even for critics—or for this one at least—having your name or face in a newspaper or magazine might be the sole joy, and a source of energy.

So let's not get worked up about the objective fact of the discontinuation of the Yomiuri Independent Exhibition. All that's happened is there's one less place for presenting works. But it's not like your stage is so small, right guys? The truth is I bet you're all bigger egoists than that.

There's just one issue that bothers me, which is that last year the Metropolitan established new exhibition regulations disallowing the following:

10 [Okamoto's "manga-esque" paintings of "actresses or men and women" earned praised from the critic Nakahara Yūsuke in a comprehensive review of the 1963 Yomiuri Independent, "Dai 15-kai Yomiuri Andepandan-ten no tenbō: Shikaku geijutsu ni shinpū" [The outlook from the 15th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition: A new phase in visual art], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 12, 1963, evening edition.]

11 [*daigimeibun* 大義名文. Derived from Confucian terminology for the appropriate bearing of vassals in relation to their lord, this word has come to have the sense of "pretense" or "pretext" in modern Japanese. It is related to the customary practice of presenting one's *tatemae* (outward stance) without revealing one's *honne* (real intent) in formal communication in Japan. In other words, it refers to a difference between what one says or does and what one thinks. See also note 38.]

> (1) Works with devices that emit irritating or high-pitched sounds; (2) works employing materials that may give off foul odors or rot; (3) works incorporating bladed implements and the like that may pose a safety hazard; (4) works that may contravene public health statutes,[12] as with works that demonstrably give offense to viewers; (5) works that place gravel, sand, and the like directly on the floor, or which employ materials that may damage/soil the floor; (6) works suspended directly from the ceiling.[13]

Although these regulations apply to works in all exhibitions held at the Metropolitan, it's not hard to deduce that they clearly target the Anti-Art tendencies of the Yomiuri Independent. What counts as a work that emits "irritating or high-pitched noises?" When you stood before Hiroko Hiraoka's concentric circles at the 1962 edition, a tape recorder would "emit" beautiful concrete sounds.[14] But what's the basis for determining those sounds to be "irritating"? I don't think it's going to be the Bass Boom[15]—and if, for one, this means you're not permitted to tap out sounds with your hand on some metal sculpture, then children shouldn't be permitted to run around screaming either. It is emblematic that that was the year everyone made such a big deal over Jean Tinguely's noisy mobile sculptures.[16] What is it that might "rot"? Aren't the officials at the Metropolitan aware that masterpieces from any point in history will eventually get moldy and "rot"? What's the measure for saying something gives "offense?" When I'm at the Nitten[17] and see a completely lifeless work by one of those masters who could be a relic from the nineteenth century, I do in fact feel offended, so what are they going to do about that? And as for works that place gravel, sand, and the like directly on the floor to make a sculpture more striking—don't we see that all the time in the lower-level sculpture hall? [18]

In any case, there's never been anything so nonsensical, so blatantly persecutory as these regulations. Everyone knows the story about the rejection of the work Marcel Duchamp submitted to the New York Independent in 1917 after signing a urinal R. Mutt (the name of a sanitary equipment manufacturer in New York at the time) and titling it *Fountain*.[19] In protest, Duchamp wrote the following in *The Blind Man*:

12 [*Kōshū eisei hōki* 公衆衛生法規. Although it derives from the English concept of "public health," in Japanese usage the sense of *kōshū eisei* is closer to "social hygiene."]

13 [The rules were announced in 1962 and implemented in 1963. Tōno cites "64 bijutsu nenkan" [Art annual '64], supplementary issue, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 230 (December 1963): 69–70.]

14 [Tōno spotlighted Hiraoka's *Shōka* (Sublimation) in the Yomiuri Shimbun that year. Although the exact details are unclear in Tōno's description, the work seems to have comprised a large painting of a target-like concentric circle motif with a white box placed before it. Standing on the box activated a tape that played back a range of sounds, including radio frequencies and water sounds; there was also a rotating device fitted with a needle that scratched out its own sounds. Tōno Yoshiaki, "Kiyorakana mūdo" [A pure mood], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 9, 1962, evening edition. That same year, Tone Yasunao exhibited *Tape Recorder*, a reel-to-reel tape recorder with a preloaded loop of his sound works hidden inside a large white cloth bag, and Kazakura Sho submitted *Siren*, a multipart work that included a plastic bag blown around by the fan on an air horn. In his article Tōno mentions a collaborative performance Hiraoka and Tone had staged a month prior at Tokyo's Minami Gallery in which works by Hiraoka were turned into scores by Tone. A former member of Neo Dada, Hiraoka left Japan a few months af-

ter the 1962 Yomiuri Independent, eventually settling in New York with her husband, the conceptual artist On Kawara. She subsequently gave up her artistic career to support Kawara.]

15 [A passing reference to contemporaneous singers, such as Frank Nagai and Kayama Yūzō, who were popular for their distinctive baritone voices.]

16 [Tōno seems to be referring as much to international art discourse as to local art discourse. Tinguely traveled to Japan the following year, in February 1963, to prepare a solo exhibition held from March 20 to April 6 at Minami Gallery. He toured the 15th Yomiuri Independent (held March 2–16) with Kate Millett, who was living in Japan at the time and had submitted work to the exhibition, and came away impressed by its anarchic energy. See Laurel Jean Fredrickson, *Kate Millett and Jean-Jacques Lebel: Sexual Outlaws in the Intermedia Borderlands of Art and Politics* (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), 186–87. Tōno wrote a profile of Tinguely in anticipation of the Minami Gallery opening, "Tōkyō no Tingerī: Haibutsu de ugoku chōkoku" [Tinguely in Tokyo: Kinetic detritus sculptures], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 16, 1963, evening edition.]

17 [Short for Nihon Bijutsu Tenrankai (Japan Fine Arts Exhibition). One of the juried exhibitions that Tōno contrasts with the Yomiuri Independent's anti-establishment stance, Nitten had long been associated with the highest levels of cultural patronage, beginning life as the Monbusho Bijutsu Tenrankai (Bunten; Ministry of Education Fine Arts Exhibition), and later being sponsored for a period by the Imperial Art Academy. At the time Tōno was writing, it was also held annually at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Since 2007, Nitten has been held at the National Art Center, Tokyo.]

18 [Designed as a high-ceilinged atrium suffused with natural light, the sculpture hall of the Metropolitan's 1926 building was accessed by going down a flight of stairs after passing through the building's entry hall. See "Original Museum Building by OKADA Shinichiro," Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, accessed February 4, 2021, https://www.tobikan.jp/en/outline/architecture1.html.]

19 [The inaugural exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists was held April 10 to May 6, 1917, at the Grand Central Palace in New York. In fact, the work was not officially rejected from the exhibition. It was accepted but kept hidden from view after deliberation by the society's board of directors, and later removed from the venue by Duchamp shortly after the exhibition's opening. Duchamp states that the name R. Mutt was derived partly from the sanitary equipment manufacturer Mott Works, partly from the comic strip "Mutt and Jeff," and partly from Duchamp's addition of the initial R., for Richard (French slang for "money-bags"). Marcel Duchamp, "Passport no. G255300," interview by Otto Hahn, trans. Andrew Rabeneck, *Art and Artists* 1, no. 4 (July 1966): 10.]

> What were the grounds for refusing Mr. Mutt's fountain:—
> 1. Some contended it was immoral, vulgar.
> 2. Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.
> Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral . . . no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows.
> Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.[20]

This is a clear, singular art thesis. Turning his getting locked out from the existing, worn-out notion of art on its head, Duchamp developed his own theory of art, by which he tried to save freedom of expression. It's the same situation with the Yomiuri Independent. It's pointless to just go on madly protesting the exhibition regulations in the name of freedom of expression. Once we've clearly exhausted all there is to say about what gives rise to works that make noise, that rot, or that incorporate bladed implements, or how concepts of art are fluctuating dramatically along with the times, we have to make a clean break with that bedeviled monument, now turned filthy boneyard. This is not a problem solely for the entrants to the Yomiuri Independent. It's a problem for all the artists who exhibit with associations at the Metropolitan. If there's anyone who is content with the exhibition regulations because their works don't make noise, don't rot, and won't give "offense," who is indeed pleased at the Yomiuri-style tendencies being driven out from the museum, then that person is a philistine with no comprehension of an artist's freedom—an artistic incompetent who, unable to assess their own artistic limits, has gone and stuffed their art into a bureaucratic pigeonhole. I think that as long as they recognize the differences in their respective notions of art, all kinds of artists should protest the exhibition rules. I intend to raise this issue as a motion at the upcoming general assembly of AICA Japan and, if possible, have them put out a statement on it.

The thing is, you could say the Yomiuri Independent's discontinuation was the natural fate, the natural disintegration of an

20 [The text Tōno attributes to Duchamp has also been attributed to Beatrice Wood, one of the editors of *The Blind Man* along with Duchamp and Henri-Pierre Roché. It was published uncredited. See "The Richard Mutt Case," *The Blind Man*, no. 2 (May 1917): 5. A scan of the magazine can be accessed at the following url: http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/blindman/2/cover.htm. Tōno had met with Duchamp on multiple occasions, and went on to write two monographs on the artist, *Maruseru Dyushan* [Marcel Duchamp] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1977), and *Maruseru Dyushan "isaku ron" igo* [Marcel Duchamp: After "On Marcel Duchamp's posthumous work"] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1990), in addition to collaborating with the critic Takiguchi Shūzō in supervising the production of the Tokyo version of the *Large Glass*, completed in 1980 and now housed in the University of Tokyo Komaba Museum.]

The scene at the fifteenth and last Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, 1963.

exhibition that had been the center of an art movement.[21] Even with the meetings I mentioned above, opinions were largely split. Those who might be called the second-wave artists, such as Ikeda Tatsuo and Fujimatsu Hiroshi, were emphatic about continuing the exhibition, claiming that there is all the more need for an unjuried, free-entry exhibition at this very moment.[22] In contrast, more recent emerging artists, like Ushio Shinohara, Miki Tomio, and Nakanishi Natsuyuki,[23] had no intent of being so stuck on the place as to fight back against the exhibition rules, and indeed asserted that since their works break away from exhibition-hall art[24] in the first place, they want to take this opportunity to organize even more individuated exhibitions at free places outside the museum. Here we can observe two distinct inclinations in artists' feelings for the Independent. For the former group, it first has meaning precisely as a free, unjuried site of possibility that goes beyond artistic stances, and they would of course feel an attachment to and conviction in the path they had trod in creating an "anti-establishment" scene. Whereas the latter are beginning to have doubts about the very format of an Independent exhibition that indiscriminately allows anyone to participate, and so, along with their critical reflection on the disruption they caused over the past few years, they too have their conviction.

I think it's a given that if there were an Independent-format exhibition today, it would inevitably end up being something like an art movement, favoring a single tendency, as with the Yomiuri, and anything otherwise would make for a weak Independent. (On this point, let's see what happens with the regional Independents.[25]) Convincing as the argument is that an independent exhibition should be for all comers, from a painter of Princess Michiko[26] portraits to an artist like Shinohara, this is just another *empty show.* Could there be anything so dreadful as the sight of artists getting along in peaceful coexistence at a time of such tremendous flux? Instead of being overly sensitive to external conditions while high-handedly brandishing things like exhibition formats or freedom of expression, what we need to go deeper into is precisely our internal, art-theoretical conflicts. I was exasperated at the "'Anti-Art': Yes or No" symposium,[27] as well as the subsequent discussion of the event at the circle formed around Hariu Ichirō, Hari no Kai.[28] It was all hair-splitting of conceptual words and talk of external

21 [Discussion of the Yomiuri Independent as a movement in itself began as early as 1956, when Hariu Ichirō referred to it as such in a roundtable article in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* with the critics Imaizumi Atsuo, Segi Shin'ichi, and Takiguchi Shūzō on the occasion of that year's eighth edition. See "Yomiuri Andepandan-ten o mite: Wakai hitotachi ga shinshutsu; hitotsu no geijutsu undō ni; macchishite kita seishin to gijutsu" [A look at the Yomiuri Independent: The young people emerge; toward an art movement; spirit and technique coming together], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 14, 1956, evening edition.]

22 [*dainikisei* 第二期生, literally, "the second cohort of students." Tōno's "second wave" seems to refer to artists who participated in the Yomiuri Independent starting from around the fifth edition of 1953. There are numerous competing periodizations of the Independent, but its prime mover at the Yomiuri Shimbun Co., Kaidō Hideo, reflected that the exhibition started coming into its own in 1955, as did Akasegawa Genpei, who noted the arrival that year of artists including Yoshimura Masanobu, Ushio Shinohara, Tanaka Fuji, and Sawada Shigetaka. See Marotti, *Money, Trains, and Guillotines*, 143, 361n109.]

23 [All artists associated with the Neo-Dadaist and Anti-Art tendencies that came to define the last years of the Yomiuri Independent.]

24 [*kaijō geijutsu* 会場芸術. A term of unknown provenance, implying art that conforms to established conventions and

prescribed formats.]

25 [The discontinuation of the Yomiuri Independent triggered a wave of new Independent exhibitions across Japan. For a retrospective overview of this phenomenon, see Yoshida Yoshie, "Ryūdōkasuru chihō no zen'ei: Yomiuri Andepandan-ten to sonogo" [Regional avant-gardes in flux: The Yomiuri Independent and after], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 296 (April 1968): 100–105.]

26 [Wife of Akihito, whom she married in 1959, and the first commoner to marry into the imperial family. She served as the empress consort of Japan from January 1989 to Akihito's abdication in April 2019.]

27 [Held on January 30, 1964, at Bridgestone Museum Hall in conjunction with the opening of the *Young Seven* exhibition Tōno organized for Minami Gallery, Tokyo (see also note 29). Tōno was the moderator, with artists Ikeda Tatsuo and Okamato Shinjirō, architect Isozaki Arata, composer Ichiyanagi Toshi, graphic designer Sugiura Kōhei, and critic Hariu Ichirō joining him as speakers. The event also included a color slide show of works by international artists and a screening of a documentary film by Teshigahara Hiroshi, *Tōkyō no Tingerī* (Tinguely in Tokyo), about Jean Tinguely's 1963 solo exhibition at Minami Gallery. In a short preview article for the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Tōno cites the December 1962 "Pop Art" symposium he attended at the Museum of Modern Art in New York as an inspiration. Tōno Yoshiaki, "'"Hangeijutsu": Ze ka hi ka' tōronkai: Sewanin maesetsu" ["'Anti-Art': Yes or no" symposium: Organizer's prefatory remarks], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 20, 1964.]

28 [A play on the kanji in Hariu's surname, *hari* 針. The name literally means "needle group." The discussion was later transcribed and published as Hariu Ichirō, Nakahara Yūsuke, Nakazawa Ushio, Odagiri Jō, Takiguchi Shūzō, and Tōno Yoshiaki, "'Hangeijutsu ni okeru 'han' no ishiki: '"Hangeijutsu": ze ka hi ka,'" *Bijutsu jānaru*, no. 47 (April 1964): 16–33. For an abridged translation, see "The Spirit of 'Anti' in Anti-Art: On '"Anti-Art": Yes or No,'" trans. Kikuko Ogawa, 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, 2013), 122–26.]

conditions, without the slightest chance to delve into the specifics of art theory. The issue only begins to take on specificity once people start arguing over whether, say, Miki is good or Shinohara not, so it doesn't serve anything at all to get into wild hysterics over a term like *Anti-Art*. In my case, I've been cloaking my dagger as I go about setting fires here and there these days. Organizing the *Young Seven* exhibition[29] for one; doing the symposium for another. I'm trying my best to serve up topics for debate. My hope is for them to become material for problems in art theory, rather than talk about external conditions. And that's when I'll join the fray with the last word.[30]

I did something a little tricky at the start of the symposium. I read a short paper—call it my "Pop art treatise"—but not one bit of it got through to those listening in the audience.[31] Surviving by my wits and words alone, I always find myself to be all the more endearing the more wicked I am. Like how the idea for the symposium came from my frustration over all the one-way traffic in the press of late, with no direct communication in the true sense of debate or dispute. First I tried to communicate with the audience by expounding my own thinking. That's when I turned into a "sound device,"[32] intoxicated by my own argument and speech. But in fact the microphone I was using was connected to an "electronics sound breaker"[33] invented by the Sogetsu Hall's brilliant sound engineer, Okuyama Jūnosuke,[34] which canceled out and distorted the words spilling from my mouth. The same lecture had been prerecorded to tape, so the parts where the sounds didn't overlap were canceled, whereas the overlapping sounds got denser or were filtered or set off vibrations depending on the situation. Seated next to me, the composer Ichiyanagi Toshi was following my manuscript and, according to chance operations, writing down instructions for controlling the machine, which he passed one after another to Okuyama. The words, which primarily had meaning for me, were primarily sounds for Ichiyanagi, their meaning always secondary for him. Although I thought I was communicating with the audience by reading my "Pop art tract," all it sounded like to the them was a mess of concrete music–like noises. The funny thing is that in all the rehearsals we did, since I was speaking in the soundproof recording studio at Sogetsu Hall, all I could hear was the words I was saying—but when we actually did it at the venue,[35] it was often painful for me to even go

29 [Held January 30 to February 15, 1964. The participating artists were Shusaku Arakawa, Kikuhata Mokuma, Tetsumi Kudo, Miki Tomio, Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Okamoto Shinjirō, and Tateishi Kōichi (Tiger Tateishi). Tōno wrote a short text in which he contextualizes his ideas for the exhibition and introduces the artists, "'Yangu sebun' zatsuroku," featured in a pamphlet published by Minami Gallery. For the English, see "Notes on the 'Young Seven,'" trans. Sarah Allen, in Chong et al., *From Postwar to Postmodern*, 118–20.]

30 [Tōno could not have anticipated what a fray was in store for him when he wrote these words. Appearing in the same April 1964 issue of *Bijutsu techō* as "Sayonara, Yomiuri Independent," a scathing review of the symposium by Miyakawa Atsushi sparked a dispute between the two writers that continued through the pages of the July 1964 issue. See Miyakawa Atsushi, "Hangeijutsu: Sono nichijōsei e no kakō," *Bijutsu techō*, no. 234 (April 1964): 48–57. For the English, see "Anti-Art: The Descent to the Everyday," trans. Justin Jesty, in Chong et al., *From Postwar to Postmodern*, 127–32.]

31 [Tōno specifically mentions a length of "about 15 pages" of Japanese manuscript paper. Assuming he used the standard 400-character format, the paper's length would have been equivalent to about 2,500 words in English. The whereabouts of the manuscript are unknown.]

32 [*hatsuontai* 発音体, literally, "sound-making body." Likely Tōno's

coining, intended to draw a parallel between himself and works at the Yomiuri Independent that emitted “irritating” sounds.]

33 [Tōno provides this wording in katakana, glossing it *denshi onkyō hakaiki* 電子音響破壊器.]

34 [Okuyama was instrumental to many of the Sogetsu Art Center’s ground-breaking programs, including events by John Cage and David Tudor in October 1962. His electronics sound breaker was later used in Ichiyanagi Toshi’s *Life Music: For Various Modulators, Magnetic Tape, and Orchestra*, performed at Nissei Theater, Tokyo, in June 1966.]

35 [Bridgestone Museum Hall.]

on reading my paper, as the noises resulting from the distortion and filtering effects struck even my ears as being an irritant.[36] My somewhat conceited experiment in exposing the limits of one-way communication was spectacularly subverted by this unexpected ambush by reality. As I endured the pain, and endured the expressions on the faces of the audience looming at me like some ghastly tidal wave, I gained a physical understanding of the substance of *discommunication*.[37] But until we collide into that substance, the most any debate can do is spin around in vain. There has been a proliferation of discommunication in the wake of the Yomiuri Independent's discontinuation. And I hope this is an impetus for even more discommunication to proliferate—that is, I want people to stop with their weird mutual understandings.[38] As for the Independent, it seems to have sent us all into sudden *convulsions* upon its termination.

This is really sayonara, Yomiuri Independent.

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artplatform.go.jp/resources/texts/202004

36 [*ibutsu* 異物, literally, "foreign matter."]

37 [Tōno provides this wording in katakana.]

38 [*myōni wakariattari shinaikoto nano da*. As also reinforced by his animosity toward *daigimeibun* above, Tōno seems to be making a dig at a tendency in Japanese communication practice toward allowing ambiguous statements to go unclarified for the sake of maintaining social harmony. Although generally one can infer the other's intent based on context, sometimes both parties in an exchange may walk away with quite different understandings of what they were talking about. (Since Japanese does not require explicit plural markers, this may be as simple as confusion over whether the topic of discussion was one *thing* or two or more *things*.) Relatedly, expressions such as *kūki o yomu* (read the air) and *sontaku* (loosely, anticipating the desire of another person and then following through on it, especially in relation to a social superior) refer to the expectation that individuals will modulate their behavior in response to unspoken cues from their interlocutors or the group consensus. Someone who is unable to "read the air" is at risk of ostracism. Tōno suggests that in opening up the possibility for direct confrontation and antagonism, discommunication can in turn lead to better communication.]