



gutai

splendid playground

MING TIAMPO

ALEXANDRA MUNROE

GUGGENHEIM

contents

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Gutai: Splendid Playground
Organized by Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe

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Shoin, 2010).

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

Endpapers, front: detail of model for Motonaga Sadamasa's
Work (Water) (1956/2013) for *Gutai: Splendid Playground*,
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011; back: Gutai Art
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gutai art manifesto

YOSHIHARA JIRŌ

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

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

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

Lock up these corpses in the graveyard.

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

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

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

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

Now, interestingly, we find a contemporary beauty in the art and architecture of the past ravaged by the passage of time or natural disasters. Although their beauty is considered dec-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our exploration into the unknown and original world bore numerous fruits in the form of *objets*, in part inspired by the annual outdoor exhibitions held in Ashiya. Above all, Gutai's

objets differ from those of the Surrealists in that the former eschew titles and significations. Gutai's *objets* included a bent and painted sheet of iron (Tanaka Atsuko) and a hanging box like a mosquito net made of red plastic (Yamazaki Tsuruko). Their appeal lies solely in the strength of their material properties, their colors and forms.

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

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

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

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



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

all the landscapes: gutai's world

ALEXANDRA MUNROE

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

—Yoshihara Jirō, “A Statement by Jirō Yoshihara: Leader of the Gutai,” 1958¹

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

—Shiraga Kazuo, “The Establishment of the Individual,” 1956²

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

The first Guggenheim International Award (GIA) exhibition opened at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris before moving on to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. An international jury selected works by artists from eighteen countries, including, significantly, former Axis states

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

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



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

please draw freely

MING TIAMPO

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

—Yoshihara Jirō, "For Publishing This Pamphlet," *Gutai* 1, 1955¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

具体 **gutai**

network

to introduce our works to the world

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

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

From the start, the journal was published in Japanese and partially translated into English or French in order to reach audiences around the world. Sent across oceans and passed from hand to hand, issues were distributed to an ambitious list of peers and soon gained a cult following. One set, sent to Jackson Pollock in 1956, was discovered by writer and eventual Pollock biographer B. H. Friedman as he was helping Lee

Krasner with the artist's affairs after his death. Friedman subscribed to the magazine and introduced Gutai to Helen Frankenthaler, Sam Francis, and the then-unknown Ray Johnson, as well as to the bookseller George Wittenborn, who purchased copies to sell at his shop. Another set landed in Paris the following year, initiating a decadelong partnership between Gutai and the critic Michel Tapié.

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

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

MING TIAMPO

NOTES

1. Yoshihara Jirō, “Hakkan ni saishite”/“For Publishing This Pamphlet,” *Gutai* 1 (January 1955), pp. 1 and 33.
2. For more on artists' journals as exhibition spaces, see Gwen Allen, *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011).

gutai pinacotheca

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

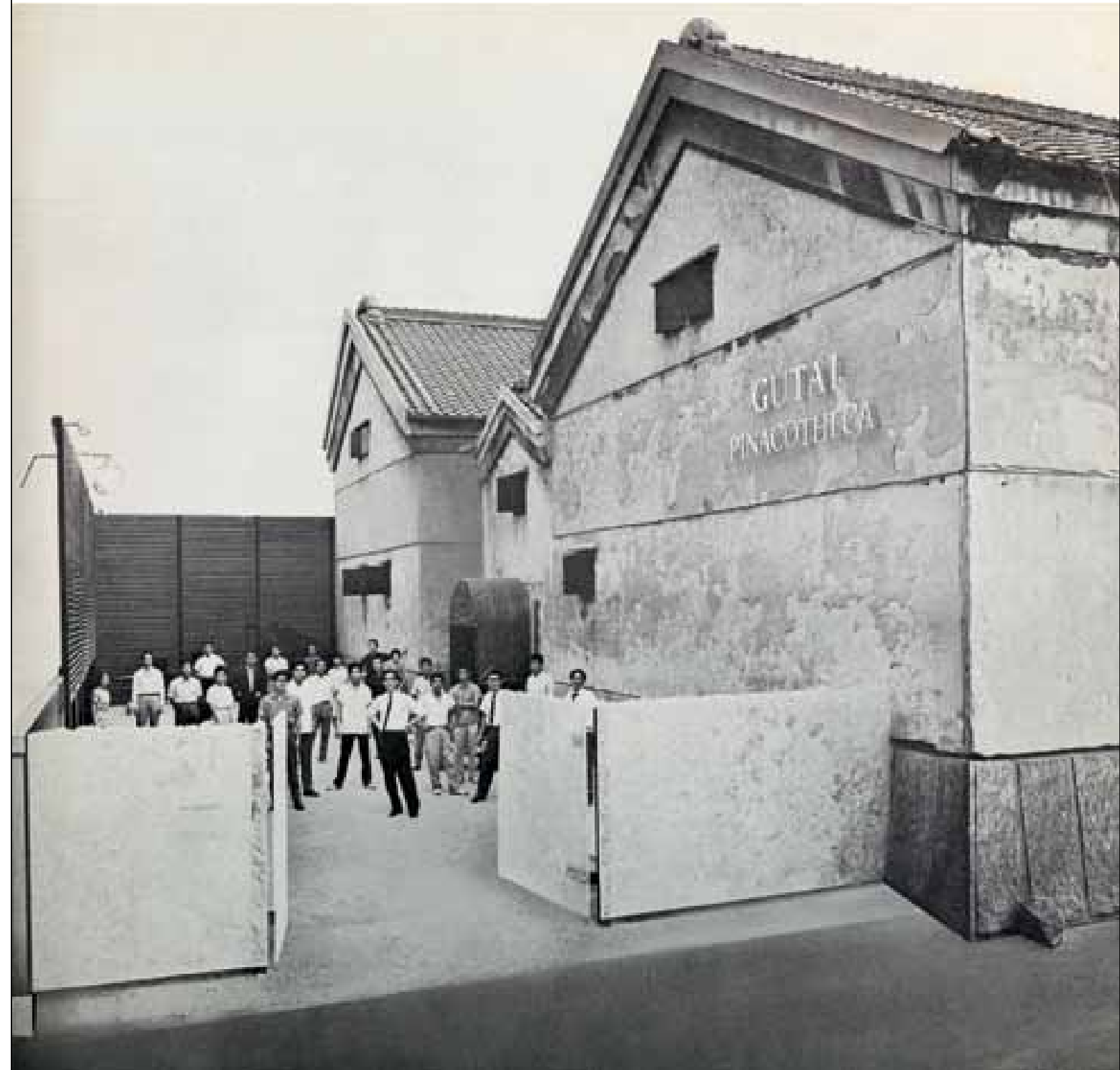


PLATE 37. Gutai Art Association members in front of Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1962

new perspectives on gutai



Kansai region and its prefectures

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

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

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

prewar kansai cosmopolitanism and postwar gutai

HIRAI SHŌICHI

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

—Yoshihara Jirō, 1955¹

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

What, then, was Gutai like as a collective? Gutai was an “assignment-based” collective, whose members evolved under a forceful leader. Born in 1905, Yoshihara was forty-nine at the time of Gutai's founding. Senior to most members by fifteen years or more, he acted as an inspirational mentor and strict taskmaster, in pursuit of art that was original and internationally relevant. On the expressive front, Yoshihara's overall assignment was radical yet simple: “Never imitate others! Make something that has never existed!”⁴ To unlock creativity and nurture experimentation in his young charges, he devised new presentation formats, outside the conventions for

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

REIKO TOMII



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

exhibitions, which in effect constituted new assignments: to come up with works to be shown outdoors, on the stage, and in front of the press. Further, writing for the group's journal served as yet another assignment that stimulated members to articulate the significance of their own and one another's works. Shiraga, for example, who decided to move from using his feet to paint to using his entire body in *Challenging Mud*, laid out this thought process in the pages of *Gutai*.⁵

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPILED AND TRANSLATED BY REIKO TOMII WITH MING TIAMPO AND ALEXANDRA MUNROE

This anthology of writings by Gutai members consists of four sections: texts that appeared in *Kirin*, a children's poetry and art magazine; writings from the group's journal, *Gutai*; texts that appeared in the special Gutai issue of the Italian art magazine *Notizie: Arti figurative*; and texts related to Gutai's Phase Two period (1962–72). Other translator credits noted where applicable.

kirin

Let's Make Mischief!

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

“Let's make mischief”: this must sound like a strange title. Some of you may even have thought it was supposed to say, “Let's *not* make mischief” but that it somehow had been changed. . . .

I want to explain the relationship between a new kind of painting and mischief. . . . We tend to see things from only one point of view. As you grow older, you will have to consider difficult things. I hope you can learn to see correctly from all points of view, not just one, as one way of thinking about difficult things. . . .

But what does it mean to see things from various points of view? I want to explain it by going back to where we began: “Let's make mischief.” Everybody knows mischief is no good. I think so, too. If we want to look at it from the other side, we have to ask why some people wreak havoc when everyone knows it is wrong. There are many kinds of mischief. Stealing persimmons or eggs from other people's yards benefits you. If you hate somebody and destroy his fence or mess it up, that's vindictive. In these cases, we know the reasons why. But how about tearing up a poster or writing graffiti [on a newly painted white] wall?

You do not benefit from such mischief. Your mother might rap your forehead with a smile on her face, or you might punch your best friend in the back and run away, even though you don't mean to hurt him. Why? I think this type of mischief, which is different from stealing or getting even with other people, happens like this: At your age, you have to remember many things and do many things that your fathers, mothers, and teachers tell you to do. As you learn difficult things like grown-ups and your older siblings, it becomes hard for you to behave spontaneously like you did before. That means that you are becoming a good person, but sometimes you might feel not entirely satisfied. Once in a while you may want to do what you want without anybody telling you how to behave, because you are always being given instructions by your fathers and teachers. One way you might satisfy this desire is mischief.

I myself wonder if good kids who always do what grown-ups tell them can lose the ability to decide right and wrong on their own. Of course it is important to listen to opinions of people respected in society. But at the same time, we cannot overlook the importance of making up what you like and doing it yourself. In this sense I would like you to make a lot of mischief. Mind you, mischief like graffiti on other people's walls or ruining calligraphies and drawings made by your older brothers and sisters is no good.

How then do you make good mischief? The only way is to make your own tools for it. For example, you can build a paper screen and break it, or buy a huge sheet of white paper and smear on different colors randomly. Some of you may say, “That sounds very interesting, but if I start doing that at home, they will surely think I'm going crazy or I'm acting like a baby.”

In order to encourage those of you who worry, I would like to tell you about how some grown-up painters I know have fun. In October of this year, these painters had an exhibition at the Ohara Kaikan in Tokyo. One of them, Murakami [Saburō], thought this up: He blocked the entrance to the exhibition with a huge sheet of paper so that nobody could enter. Then he ran toward it from twenty meters or so away, broke it, and went through. When I heard about it, I thought, “It is really amazing to break through a crisp sheet of paper in an instant—an act that would blow away the blues!” . . .

I know of many more mischievous acts like this. While reading, some of you must have thought, “That sounds pretty good, but I can come up with even better mischief!” If you have any ideas, I suggest you act on them. And if you come up with any good mischief, please let me know, too.

Why do I promote mischief like this? Because grown-ups also enjoy making this kind of mischief from the bottom of their hearts. Just hearing about it, I want to do it myself. I can't stand people who draw just to show off their skills or beg teachers to teach them just so they can get good grades.

Now that you and your mothers understand what kind of mischief I recommend, you may have a question: haven't we always believed that only with a lot of skill and effort can you make a masterpiece? In fact, if I say this kind of mischief can be art, you will be surprised.

What moves people's minds has long been called “art” and embraced not because it is skillfully made but because it enralls us, as though we can enter inside it. Let's compare ballet and the circus. Between the two, the circus seems more difficult in terms of skill. But ballet is called “art” and the circus is not, because circus acts try to perform difficult feats for the sake of difficulty while ballet dancers try to move your soul rather than simply performing intricate steps. That is to say, the latter have the power to make you feel like dancing yourself.

If you discover an interesting kind of mischief and show it to your friends and you make them think, “I want to do it, too!” that's great art. I want to recommend this kind of mischief rather than a carefully drawn picture. Because when you see your best friend, you will surely not pat his head but hit it.

Excerpt. Originally published as “Itazura o shimashō,” *Kirin* (February 1956), pp. 18–21.

The Baby and Milk, or Proof of Life

SHIRAGA Kazuo

Why does art exist? Certain kinds of art make the world more beautiful and dazzle people. Lately in the adult world, however, art is seen as the proof of life.

A baby cries when she needs milk. This signals that the baby is alive, because she will die without milk.

So if you want to do something, that means you are alive. If you do it, then that proves that you are alive. . . .

Speaking of doing what you want to do, there is one method you can always count on that uses only what you have in front of you. Think hard.

You can do many things when you are given a piece of paper or a box. What do you do if you don't have crayons or paint? You can make a hole in the paper, tear it, or stick a torn-off piece into a hole you make. You may find it more beautiful than you expected. It may even seem to be proof that you have been alive.

Let's look at our faces and compare them. They're all different. In the same way, what you want to do or what you think up is different for everybody. If you do what you come up with yourself, it will naturally express your feelings at the time. . . . This method is different [from the usual way of making art]. Everyone does it enthusiastically, once she gets started. And when I see you work this way, I can certainly tell that you are alive. So I encourage you to turn what you want to do and what you think up into your work of art.

Excerpt. Originally published as “Akachan to miruku: Ikigai to iu koto,” *Kirin* (May 1956), p. 1.

Extremely Interesting

YAMAZAKI Tsuruko

When you wake up Sunday morning, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Do you think, “I want to do something boring

today”? Do you think of something scary? I believe that everybody thinks, “I want to do something interesting.” That way when you go to bed, you can say to yourself, “Ah, it was interesting today,” and close your eyes with satisfaction.

As you can see, you might use the word “interesting” ten or twenty times a day. But can you explain what “interesting” means? Have you thought about what it feels like to be “interesting”? . . . When did you feel truly “interesting”? And how did you feel then? Please think about it with me. . . .

A: When watching a baseball game

B: When playing baseball

A: When playing a game that you've played many times before

B: When making up a new game and playing it

A: When doing something easy and ordinary

B: When doing something difficult or thrilling

A: When coming back early from playing

B: When playing too much, maybe even forgetting dinner, and getting scolded by your mother

I think the Bs are more interesting. Which do you think more interesting, the As or the Bs? I bet your answer is the same as mine.

Which is to say, what is really interesting is to do something yourself, to invent something yourself, to try even when something is difficult and you don't know whether you can do it well, to do something to your satisfaction.

Excerpt. Originally published as “Tobikiri omoshiroi koto,” *Kirin* (July 1956), p. 1.

The Earth Is Not Round

SHIMAMOTO Shōzō

The earth is not round. The earth is flat like your *shitajiki*,¹ and the sun moves from east to west. If you heard me saying such a thing, you would laugh at me. The earth is indeed round, and it revolves around the sun. Several hundred years ago, however, everybody believed the earth was flat and stationary. When Galileo started saying that the earth is round and moves around the sun, everyone scorned him. But now no one thinks the earth is flat. . . .

In everything, it takes a great effort to think up something new. And even if something is good, it takes time for other people to appreciate it. So if you are not strong enough, when you think up something new and important and nobody praises it, you may give it up, and instead you will start thinking up things that are not so new but that please everybody. Galileo and Picasso were not discouraged by the scorn they received and proved that they were right. That is why today people all over the world understand and respect their ideas.

Japanese people are very good at imitating, but they seem not as good as the people of advanced Western countries at inventing something new that nobody has ever known before. There must be many reasons it's that way, but among them is the

JUNE

June 18–July 25: *Trends in Contemporary Art*, Kyoto Annex of National Museum of Modern Art. Includes Motonaga and Shiraga.

Exhibition of Japanese Artists, San Francisco Museum of Art. Includes Motonaga, Mukai, Shiraga, and Yoshihara Jirō.

JULY

July 1–20: *15th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Includes first participation by members Kinashi Aine, Nabekura Takehiro, Sakamoto Masaya, and Yoshida Minoru, as well as by then-nonmembers Horio Sadaharu, Imai Norio, Imanaka Kumiko, Kanno Seiko, Kitani Shigeki, Naohara Michimasa, Nasaka Senkichirō, Tai Satoshi, and Tanaka Ryūji.

OCTOBER

Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition, Gutai Pinacotheca. Inaugurates an open-call competition to identify new talent.



FIG. 101. Installation view of 17th Gutai Art Exhibition, 1966. Works by various artists, including, rear wall and floor: Imai Norio; foreground: Sakamoto Masaya

Oct. 8–13: *16th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Keiō department store, Tokyo. Onoda Minoru's first participation as a member.

Gutai 14 published, featuring *Nul 1965* and *15th Gutai Art Exhibition*. Final issue.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 30, 1965–Jan. 8, 1966: *Group Gutai (Gutai's Paris Exhibition)*, Galerie Stadler, Paris. Travels to Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Feb. 1–27, 1966, and Mickery Art House, Loenersloot, Netherlands, Apr. 2–23, 1966. Includes paintings and sculptures by eighteen Gutai members.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1–10: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Dec. 4–12: *1st Japan Art Festival*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Shiraga Kazuo, Takasaki Motonao, and Yoshihara Jirō. Travels to Union Carbide Building, New York, Mar. 21–Apr. 23, 1966, and to Pittsburgh and San Francisco.

1966

JANUARY

Jan. 10–26: *New Art from Abroad*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Jan. 21–Feb. 27: *The New Generation of Contemporary Art*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Kitani Shigeki, Mukai Shūji, and Onoda Minoru.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1–10: *Uemae Chiyū*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

APRIL

Nul 1966, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, Netherlands. Includes all seventeen current Gutai members. Murakami Saburō visits Holland as the group's representative.

Zero op zee (Zero on sea), Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, Netherlands. Presents Gutai's projects for the exhibition *Zero op zee*, which is planned with artists from the German Gruppe Zero and the Dutch Nul group, among others, for Scheveningen Pier in The Hague but which is never realized.

MAY

May 10–30: *7th Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Prize for excellence awarded to Motonaga. Travels to Aichi, Hiroshima, Kitakyūshū, Miyagi, Nagasaki, Sasebo, and Takamatsu.

May 10–June 5: *Trends in Contemporary Art*, Kyoto Annex of National Museum of Modern Art. Includes Imai Norio and Imanaka Kumiko.

JUNE

June 1–20: *Gutai Exhibition of Three Members*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Includes Maekawa Tsusyoshi, Matsutani Takesada, and Mukai.

June 12–Oct. 2: *2ème Salon international des galeries pilotes*, Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland. All Gutai members included.

JULY

July 1–10: *Imai Norio*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

July 12–20: *Karl Gerstner*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

July 19–24: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Taikodō Gallery, Kobe.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 10–15: *17th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Yokohama. Travels to Gutai Pinacotheca, Oct. 1–10. First participation by members Kikunami Jōji and Takasaki Motonao and nonmembers Kawamura Sadayuki, Matsuda Yutaka, and Moriuchi Keiko.

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, Netherlands. Includes Imanaka, Kikunami, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshida Minoru.

OCTOBER

Oct. 14–26: *Artists Today '66*, Yokohama Citizens' Gallery. Includes Imai and Yoshida Minoru.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1–10: *Yoshida Minoru*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Nov. 11–16: *From Space to Environment*, Matsuya department store, Tokyo. Exhibition of optical, kinetic, and environment art. Includes Imai, Kikunami, and Matsuda.

THIS YEAR

Gutai chapter appears in Allan Kaprow's book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*.

1967

JANUARY

Kuwayama Tadasky, Gutai Pinacotheca.

MARCH

Mar. 1–10: *Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.



FIG. 103. Poster for 19th Gutai Art Exhibition, 1967. Design: Imanaka Kumiko



FIG. 102. Installation view of 19th Gutai Art Exhibition, 1967. On wall, from left: works by Imanaka Kumiko, Mukai Shūji, Yoshihara Jirō (two works), and Onoda Minoru (two works); on floor: Nasaka Senkichirō

Mar. 4–14: *4th International Young Artists Exhibition*, Seibu department store, Tokyo. Includes Horio Sadaharu, Imai Norio, Matsuda Yutaka, and Nasaka Yūko.

APRIL

Apr. 1–10: *Tai Satoshi*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Gutai Art for the Space Age, Hanshin Amusement Park, Nishinomiya. Includes Imai, Imanaka Kumiko, Kikunami Jōji, Nasaka Senkichirō, Sakamoto Masaya, Yoshida Minoru, Yoshida Toshio, Yoshihara Jirō, and Yoshihara Michio.

MAY

Gutai awarded Kobe Newspaper peace prize (culture prize).

May 10–30: *9th Exhibition of International Art, Japan*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. National grand prize awarded to Yoshihara Jirō.

May 26–July 8: *Gutai Group*, Osaka, Japan, Experimental Studio, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

JUNE

June 1–10: *Gutai Art New-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca. Subsequently renamed *18th Gutai Art Exhibition*.

June 5–30: *Gutai (Gutai's Austrian Exhibition)*, Galerie Heide Hildebrand, Klagenfurt, Austria.

June 23–29: *2nd Japan Art Festival*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Includes Motonaga Sadamasa, Shiraga Kazuo, and Yoshihara Jirō. Travels to Iikai Hotel, Honolulu, Aug. 18–27, and to Dallas and Houston.

JULY

July 21–30: *Art Poster Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

AUGUST

Aug. 23: *4th Summer Festival*, Festival Hall, Osaka. Features stage design by Gutai for Kansai Opera Company and Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1–14: *19th Gutai Art Exhibition*, Central Museum of Arts, Tokyo. Travels to Gutai Pinacotheca, Nov. 1–15. First participation by nonmember Kimura (Horio) Akiko. Darkened room included for light art.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1–20: *Gutai Art Small-Work Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

1968

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1–10: *Gutai Art New Artists Exhibition*, Gutai Pinacotheca.

Feb. 6–11: *Kobe Newspaper Peace Prize Art Exhibition*, Daimaru department store, Kobe. Includes all members.

MARCH

Enrico Castellani, Gutai Pinacotheca.

artist biographies

COMPILED BY NAKAJIMA IZUMI

For exhibitions organized by the Gutai Art Association, including all solo exhibitions by members at the Gutai Pinacotheca, see the Chronology in this volume, pp. 286–99.

HORIO Sadaharu

(B. 1939, KOBE)

Horio Sadaharu studied art at the *yōga* (Western-style painting) club in the Kobe shipyard of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, where he worked from high school graduation until his retirement at age sixty. Horio's Gutai-period works are concerned with manipulating the surfaces and edges of painting and exhibit the conceptualist tendencies of his mentor, Murakami Saburō. For Expo '70, he created a series of fabric works that responded to the environment, twisting and leaping over the central installation by Nasaka Senkichirō. After Gutai, Horio founded a number of local experimental art collectives, including Bonkura! and KUKI, and became best known for participatory performance works that often included children.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, 1968; Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 2002; Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Antwerp, 2011

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Gutai I, II, III, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; Yokohama Triennial, 2005; Venice Biennale, 2009; Frankfurter Positionen, 2011 (collaboration with William Forsythe); *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Yamamoto Atsuo, ed. *Sadaharu Horio*. Exh. cat. Antwerp: Axel Vervoordt Gallery, 2011.

IMAI Norio

(B. 1946, OSAKA)

The youngest member of Gutai, Imai Norio conceived of convex, polygonal, all-white paintings, ultimately creating *Tankuro* (1966), a set of white-painted globes perforated by holes that evoke the wartime manga *Tankuro the Tank*. *Circle* (1967) translates similar notions into the context of film. For this work, Imai used a hole puncher to punch a hole in each frame of a filmstrip, creating a void in the strip that reads as a moving white circle on the screen. Later in his career, Imai served a professor of experimental media at Seian University of Art and Design from 1993 to 2012.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Seian University of Art and Design, Ōtsu, Japan, 2012

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

From Space to Environment, Matsuya department store, Tokyo, 1966; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Imai Norio. *Shiro kara hajimaru: Watashi no bijutsu nōto* [Starting with white: My notes on art]. Osaka: BrainCenter, 2001.

IMANAKA Kumiko

(B. 1939, OSAKA)

In the early 1960s, Imanaka Kumiko produced a body of reliefs that resembled turbine motors, made by twisting thin strips of shiny paper and affixing them to Styrofoam or acrylic boards in swirling patterns. With her mathematically inspired structures and use of new materials, Imanaka became a prominent figure of optical art in Phase Two Gutai.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; *From Space to Environment*, Matsuya department store, Tokyo, 1966; *5th Japan Art Festival*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970; *Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1973; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

KANAYAMA Akira

(B. 1924, AMAGASAKI; D. 2006, OSAKA)

Kanayama Akira studied at the Osaka Municipal Institute of Art after withdrawing from Tama Art University, Tokyo, in 1947. In 1952, he founded Zero-kai with Murakami Saburō and Shiraga Kazuo and later married fellow Zero-kai member Tanaka Atsuko. Kanayama joined Gutai with Murakami, Shiraga, and Tanaka in 1955 and took on the role of secretary for the group's activities until his departure in 1965. Kanayama developed a conceptual approach to painting in opposition to gestural abstraction. His earliest works were geometric abstractions with minimalist lines that pushed the medium's limits. In 1957, he created a painting device consisting of a felt-tipped pen affixed to a remote-controlled toy car, which was quickly followed by a version that dripped paint. Kanayama also explored painting in time and space, pushing his work towards ephemeral sculpture and performance by using large-scale inflatable balloons as canvases that also served as the basis for his performance at *Gutai Art on the Stage* in 1957 and his 1970 film *Circle*.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Japan, 2007

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Arte nuova: International Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, Circolo degli Artisti, Palazzo Graneri, Turin, 1959; *Continuité et avant-garde au Japon*, International Center for Aesthetic Research, Turin, 1961; *Groupe Gutai*, Galerie Städlar, Paris, 1965; *Japon des avant gardes, 1910–1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1986; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on*

the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Japanische Avantgarde/Japanese Avant-Garde: 1954–1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany, 1991; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The Gutai Group 1955–56: A Restarting Point for Japanese Contemporary Art*, Penrose Institute of Contemporary Arts, Tokyo, 1993; *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 1994, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1994–95, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1995; *Gutai*, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1999; Venice Biennale, 2005; *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007; *Gutai: Painting with Time and Space*, Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland, 2009; Venice Biennale, 2009; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Katō Mizuho and Kitagawa Tomoaki, eds. *Akira Kanayama*. Exh. cat. Toyota: Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, 2007.

KANNO Seiko

(B. 1933, SENDAI; D. 1988, NAGAOKAKYŌ)

Kanno Seiko graduated from the Department of Art and Science, Fukushima University, and regularly audited lecture courses in physics, music, and anthropology at Kyoto University, Kwansei Gakuin University, and elsewhere. After a number of years making abstract collages using newspaper and cardboard, Kanno returned to painting in the late 1960s. Calling these works *Kigō shi* (code poetry), she schematized concrete poetry into the visual language of painting. The result was a series of canvases covered in delicate geometric patterns made of fine meshes of lines.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, and Miyagi Prefectural Museum of Art, Sendai, 1997

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

5th Japan Art Festival, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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KIKUNAMI Jōji

(B. 1923, KOBE; D. 2008, TAKARAZUKA)

Kikunami Jōji studied with renowned *yōga* artists Hayashi Shigeyoshi and Koiso Ryōhei. Postwar reconstruction prompted him to join the progressive artists' organization Kōdō Bijutsu Kyōkai, and by the mid-1960s, he had switched to optical art. Kikunami was an important artist of Gutai's Phase Two, leading the group's experiments in kinetic and op art. *Work 1-5-66* (1966), a white painted board covered with silver striped Tetron film, produced a moiré effect that created the illusion of movement. *Work 2-7-68*, exhibited at *Gutai Art for the Space Age* in 1967, was a two-meter-tall box embedded with a pantoscopic light that displayed red kaleidoscopic patterns, exemplifying Kikunami's ability to use technology to create optical effects.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Aspects of New Tendencies, Internationale Galerij Orez, The Hague, 1966; *Fluorescent Chrysanthemum*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1968; *9th Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1969

MATSUDA Yutaka

(B. 1942, OSAKA; D. 1998, SENNAN)

Matsuda Yutaka graduated from the Department of Fine Arts, Naniwa College, Osaka (now Osaka University of Arts Junior College), in 1963. Matsuda initiated what he called *mūbu āto* (moving art) in 1965, a series of reliefs with peepholes that provided a window into the kinetic heart of his works. In 1966, he began using electric motors to achieve more calculated and automatic movements. Matsuda received a number of prizes, including recognition for the best work at the *10th Shell Art Competition* in 1966 and an excellence prize at the *IBM Picture and Illustration Concours* in 1989.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

From Space to Environment, Matsuya department store, Tokyo, 1966; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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MATSUTANI Takesada

(B. 1937, OSAKA)

Matsutani Takesada is best known for his use of Elmer's glue, which he poured and dried to make a membrane on the surface of the painting. The membrane is then inflated, torn, or squashed, evoking a tactile sensation and an eerie resonance with human skin. While his use of black graphite and white glue recalls minimalism and the ink tradition, it also emphasizes his playful use of new materials. In 1966, Matsutani received first prize at the *1st Mainichi Art Competition*, which also provided him with a grant to study in France, where he has lived and worked ever since.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Ōtani Memorial Art Museum, Nishinomiya, 2000; Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama, 2010

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Groupe Gutai, Galerie Stadler, Paris, 1965; *Unfinished Avant-Garde Art Group: With a Focus on the Collection of Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art*, The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1990; *Gutai I, II, III*, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992–93; *The 50th Anniversary of Gutai Retrospective Exhibition*, Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, 2004; *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era*, The National Art Center, Tokyo, 2012

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Takesada Matsutani: From the '60s to Today. Paris: Galerie Richard, 2012.