

Abstracts and Profiles

ラジカル ! (Rajikaru!) Experimentations in Japanese Art 1950–1975
Day 2: a full-day scholarly conference

Abstracts and Profiles

Saturday, April 28, 9:30 am – 6 pm
 Museum Lecture Hall, Getty Center

Morning Panel
Intermedia and Border Crossings

APN (Asahi Picture News): Learning from *The New Vision*
 Miwako Tezuka

From 1953 to 1954 the major weekly photo-journal *Asahi Graph* commissioned select artists from a variety of creative fields to design title-page images for its column “Asahi Picture News” (APN). Fifty-five unique black and white photographs resulted from the project during this period. There were two assigned photographers for APN, Ōtsuji Kiyoji and Kitadai Shōzō, who took turn to work with other artists, including Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, Komai Tetsurō, Teshigahara Sōfū, among others. Such undertaking of cross-media collaboration was a radical experiment at the time. In addition, seen as a whole, these images make up an atlas of formal characteristics of both the photographers and the image creators.

Instrumental in realization of APN was the involvement of the core members from cross-media avant-garde art group, Jikken Kōbō/Experimental Workshop. *Asahi Graph*'s editor-in-chief Izawa Takumi approached the Workshop's lead artist Kitadai Shōzō sometime in late 1952. This group, consisting of fourteen young artists including visual artists, composers, engineer, and lighting designer, began its public activities in late 1951 by producing a stage set, costume design, and music for a modern dance work. Since then it continued to receive collaboration offers. Many of Experimental Workshop's works were ephemeral in nature, encompassing theater design, music, and lighting. Considering its seeming interest in works on stage, it is unusual that some of its key, and relatively senior, members contributed much to APN. The APN images by Kitadai and Yamaguchi clearly indicate their point of reference: Moholy-Nagy's 1946 seminal publication *The New Vision*. This paper examines the similarities between Moholy-Nagy and Experimental Workshop in their attempt to incorporate emerging new sensibilities of their time.

Imagineries of the Modern: Photography in the Postwar Era

Charles Merewether

Looking at the photographic practice of Tōmatsu Shōmei, Hosoe Eikoh, Kawada Kikuji, Moriyama Daidō, and Nakahira Takuma in Japan during the period of the 1960s, I will argue for viewing this body of work as constructing an urban imaginary that offers a subterranean history of postwar Japan. Considered alongside their contemporaries in other fields of contemporary culture, I will discuss how their photographs reveal a phantasmatic Japan haunted by the spectral image of defeat, the oppressive order of a technocratic economy, the anomie of everyday life and libidinal thrall of a commodity culture. Through a poetics of materiality, their photographs suggest a culture of anxiety in which selfhood and subjectivity are destabilized and lost to a world of transgression and taboo, of secrecy and exposure, of fear and desire. Together the photographers present a fugitive boundless world that betrays the disjunctive present of modern life.

From Space to Environment: The Origins and Development of Kankyō

Midori Yoshimoto

“Environment,” or *kankyō*, is a key word in understanding the development of vanguard Japanese art in the latter half of the 1960s. An early but important event associated with the term was the founding of Kankyō no Kai (literary “Environment Society”) in November 1966 and its exhibition and event-program, entitled *Kūkan kara kankyō e* (From Space to Environment), held at the Matsuya Department Store Gallery and at the Sōgetsu Art Center in Tokyo. The group was multidisciplinary in nature, consisting of 38 individuals, including visual artists Yamaguchi Katsuhiro and Ay-O; architect Isozaki Arata; designer Awazu Kiyoshi; music critic Akiyama Kuniharu; and art critic Tōno Yoshiaki. The title itself saliently pointed to the shared awareness of the internationally popularized term “environment” in art and urban design among these members. In their conception, an “environment” would allow a more dynamic and even chaotic relationship between the viewer and an art work, while a “space” presents a fixed yet harmonious one. The shift from “space” to “environment” was necessitated by the “intense self-deconstructions” in various artistic realms, which prompted a “reorganization” of all the arts into a new system. Not only did the Japanese *kankyō* resonate with Allan Kaprow’s “Environments” and Dick Higgins’s “intermedia”; but it also had an art-historical connection to these counterparts.

In his recent book, *Sensō to banpaku/World Wars and World Fairs* (2005), art critic Sawaragi Noi traces the origin of the Japanese “environment” to the nationalist architectural design during World War II, emphasizing its inherently Japanese character. However, Sawaragi’s theory glosses over the rapid internationalization of art worlds in the 1960s, and thus neglects the close relationship between Japanese and American avant-garde circles. This paper will offer an alternative reading of history, by tracing a transnational lineage of the Japanese *kankyō*.

Idol to Globalization: Okamoto Tarō’s *Tower of the Sun*, 1970

Bert Winther-Tamaki

Recent globalization studies (e.g., Hardt/Negri, 2000) provide a framework for reevaluating the historical significance of Okamoto Taro’s *Tower of the Sun*, a seventy-meter four-faced colossus

that presided over the Japan World Exposition in Osaka in 1970 (Expo '70). Spectators were threaded through an exhibition inside and around the tower, starting with the primal past, rising through an evolutionary tree, to glimpse the future, and finally descend into a sea of faces of world citizens. Recent studies (Okamoto Taro Bijutsukan, 2000; Sunohara, 2001; Sawaragi, 2003) have considered this project in light of Okamoto's copious polemical statements on such topics as ethnography, ritual, and his own theory and method of dialectics (*taikyokushugi*). But while the remarkable character of Okamoto's *Tower* is emerging with new clarity, its relationship to globalization remains to be assessed.

This paper examines the tower as an expression of Okamoto's own prescient forays into what today would be called globalization theory and assesses its historical position in the early phase of advanced globalization. Okamoto allied himself with what he perceived to be a primary dynamic of art and culture in his time: the transgression of regional-national borders and decentering of Euroamerican cultural hegemony. He sought to boost subjective positions at the Expo '70 for people from countries lacking purchase on the technology and science of the superpowers. With *Tower of the Sun*, Okamoto sought to oppose the creed of positivist progress that was the official mantra of the exposition with, in his words, "a divine figure calling to the innermost sense of ourselves and making the mysterious inner life gush out." This Leviathan was imagined as ritualistically digesting and rejuvenating the multitudes, symbolically unleashing biopower unyoked from the hegemony of the bipolar framework of the Cold War.

Afternoon Panel
Comparative Dialogues in a Global Context

Connections and Resonances in 1960s Art:
An Introduction to Comparative Dialogues in a Global Context

Reiko Tomii

In post-1945 Japanese art, the expanded 1960s (1954-1974) saw two major developments. The first is the rise of Anti-Art (*Han-geijutsu*) and Non-Art (*Hi-geijutsu*), wherein the received notion of Art with a capital "A" (*geijutsu*) and the conventions and institutions of art with a small "a" (*bijutsu*) came under stringent assault. As a result, a radical tendency of ephemeral practices emerged, paralleling the "dematerialization of the art object" observed in Euro-America. This parallel prompted a sense of "international contemporaneity" (*kokusaiteki dōjisei*) in Japan's art world, as articulated by critic Haryū Ichirō around 1970. This recognition of "international contemporaneity" is the second important development in 1960s Japan.

In retrospect, the state of "international contemporaneity" also touched a number of other areas in the world, including Latin America. To understanding this internationally contemporaneous world, "multiplicity" becomes a paradigmatic key word, necessitating the reassessment of "influence," the long dominant art-historical concept predicated upon the paradigm of "center vs. margin." A critically important task that lays before art historians is more nuanced and refined readings of history.

The central theme of the afternoon session, "Comparative Studies in a Global Context," is the reexamination of the state of "international contemporaneity" through two basic concepts, "connection" (e.g., actual contacts/exchanges or knowledge of counterparts) and "resonance" (e.g., affinities/parallels with no or little connections). The introductory presentation will consider methodological and conceptual issues surrounding the two concepts through comparing

three contemporaneous acts of “digging a hole” in the 1960s by the Japanese collective, Group “I” (1965), the American artist Claes Oldenburg (1967), and the Japanese artist Sekine Nobuo (1968). It will be followed by two case studies: while “connection” between Gutai and Allan Kaprow is reexamined, “resonance” between Zero Dimension’s and Carolee Schneeman’s use of the naked body is contextualized in respective locales.

Connections: Gutai and Kaprow

Cartographies of Gutai

Ming Tiampo

In post-1945 Japanese art, the expanded 1960s (1954-1974) saw two major developments. The first is the rise of Anti-Art (*Han-geijutsu*) and Non-Art (*Hi-geijutsu*), wherein the received notion of Art with a capital “A” (*geijutsu*) and the conventions and institutions of art with a small “a” (*bijutsu*) came under stringent assault. As a result, a radical tendency of ephemeral practices emerged, paralleling the “dematerialization of the art object” observed in Euro-America. This parallel prompted a sense of “international contemporaneity” (*kokusaiteki dōjisei*) in Japan’s art world, as articulated by critic Haryū Ichirō around 1970. This recognition of “international contemporaneity” is the second important development in 1960s Japan.

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Throwaway Architectures and Concrete Practices

Judith Rodenbeck

In 1958 Allan Kaprow’s “Legacy of Jackson Pollock” articulated a new direction for American art. Kaprow advocated an art that was expansive, material, and eclectic, but also rigorously formal in its approach to the salient aesthetic questions of form and address. He put this to practice with his performance piece, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, in New York in 1959. At the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1957, a small show had introduced the New York art world to the work of an avant-garde Japanese group, Gutai. Though Kaprow would include a number of Gutai works in the large volume of new art he began to assemble in 1960 (published in 1966), and acknowledged earlier Gutai activities as precursors to happenings, he always claimed that his

first encounter with Gutai was not with the work itself, but with a clipping from the NY Times review of the Martha Jackson show.

The history of encounter is no longer verifiable, and in any event the question of priority is not so interesting as that of synchronicity. This paper will lay out Kaprow's program, as explicitly articulated in his essays from the late 1950s and early 1960s, and as implicitly enacted in the works executed then. Doing so will make evident the stakes of Kaprow's own investments not just in "action," as he put it, but in architecture, painting, and the materiality of the body. While Kaprow's project, and the happening more generally as a category, has been understood by many scholars as specifically American, I will briefly sketch out a much broader set of contemporaneous activities that took place internationally. This will provide us with a working hypothesis not only about how Kaprow received Gutai, but also about the relative meanings of the "concrete."

Resonances: Zero Dimension and Carolee Schneemann

Anti-Modern Body of Zero Dimension

Kuroda Raiji

In 1960s Japan, a number of individuals and collectives with the background in the visual arts opted for performative strategies, but only few of them have since entered the art-historical discourse. Although paths away from the visual these practitioners followed were diverse, their shifts toward the performative were varyingly informed by the urbanization and Westernization of postwar Japan during the period of high economic growth.

Of particular note was those who endeavored to reform human consciousness, drawing from anti-modern rituals and traditional popular performing arts. These practitioners, whom I call "Ritualists" (*Gishiki-ha*), most radically registered their dissents to the rapidly changing society and the art-world system dictated by the strict social hierarchy and inescapable Western influences.

The Ritualist movement was initiated by Zero Dimension (*Zero Jigen*), a collective active from 1963 to the early 1970s, whose performances were termed *gishiki*, or "rituals." What sets Zero Dimension apart from other contemporary street-based performance collectives (e.g., Hi-Red Center, Jack Group [*Jakku no kai*], and *The Play*) was its singularly vulgar and visceral style, intended to antagonize its urban audiences. By 1966, Zero Dimension strategically incorporated shabby Japanese objects, anachronistic military attires, and exaggerated gestures reminiscent of Kabuki, all of which contributed to create a kitsch, weird, and baroque style. This mature style was grounded in its earlier aspiration to restart human consciousness from an anonymous "naked" state, or the "zero point," by revolting against the social control imposed upon the body that dates back to Meiji Japan (1868-1912) and its governmental mandate of modernization. Masochism and crude humor were part of its strategies to evoke the "naked" and "zero" state of culture and society—the concern that made Zero Dimension part of Japan's "counterculture," which encompassed *Butoh* dance and the *Angura* (underground) theater movement.

"The Living Beast of Their Flesh": Carolee Schneemann's Multi-Sensual Body Art

Anette G. Kubitzka

In the 1960s, artists shared an interest in expanding the notion of art, often coupled with a struggle for more liberal social and sexual values. New York artist Carolee Schneemann developed an independent sexual aesthetic and politics, which, influenced by Wilhelm Reich's

controversial writings, challenged established as well as radical ideas about sexuality.

Following the inclusion of moving objects into her “painting constructions” and eventually of her own moving body as additional material in *Eye Body* in 1963, Schneemann abandoned the confinements of the canvas entirely in her 1964 group performance *Meat Joy*, a hedonistic spectacle that addressed all senses. Clad in briefs and bikinis, the performers interacted with paper, raw chickens, sausages, dead fish, wet paint, and each other. Visual pleasures were combined with tactile joys, odors of sweating bodies and dead animals, as well as a sound-collage of street noises and latest hits. By using the naked body in her work, Schneemann intended, “to break into the taboos against the vitality of the naked body in movement, to eroticize my guilt-ridden culture and further to confound this culture’s sexual rigidities—that the life of the body is more *variously* expressive than a sex-negative society can admit.”

While transcending narrow definitions of the sexual, like Zero Dimension of Japan, Schneemann, however, aspired to create awareness for the multiple expressive possibilities of the body and sensual experiences in order to make a quest for a more integrated, deeper experience of the self in the here and now. Jonas Mekas once observed about *Meat Joy*, that it invites us to find our depths via the object, via the surface world, through the phenomenal world of bodily sensations.

Profiles of Speakers and Moderators

Anette Kubitza is an art historian, curator, lecturer, and scholar of contemporary art. Her major publications include *Fluxus, Flirt, Feminismus: Carolee Schneemanns Körperkunst und die Avantgarde* (2002) and “Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe” in *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* (1996). She has contributed articles on a variety of contemporary artists to journals and exhibition catalogues in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. She has guest-curated *WOMEN beyond borders: The Art of Building Community* (2001-02; Los Angeles and Santa Barbara), among other exhibitions. She is on the advisory board of *WOMEN beyond borders*.

Kuroda Raiji (a.k.a. KuroDalaiJee) is an art historian and curator. The exhibitions he has researched and organized while working at Fukuoka Art Museum (1975-99) and Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (1999-present) include the first retrospectives of Kyūshū-ha (1988), Neo Dada (1993), and Collective Kumo (1997), and the solo exhibition of Lee Bul (2001). He also co-curated *The 1st Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale 1999*. In 1991 and 1995, he served as commissioner of the Japanese section for *The 5th and 7th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh*. His independent research has focused on documenting the important yet forgotten performances by visual artists of the 1960s, including Zero Dimension.

Miwon Kwon is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History at UCLA. Her research and writings encompass several disciplines including contemporary art, architecture, public art, and urban studies. She is founding editor and publisher of *Documents*, a journal of art, culture, and criticism (1992-2004) and author of *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (MIT Press, 2002) as well as numerous essays on the practices of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Christian Marclay, Ana Mendieta, Do-Ho Suh, Mark Dion, Gabriel Orozco, among others. She is currently at work on two new book-length projects, one on the art and the city, and the other on the problems of exchange.

Charles Merewether is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Cross Cultural Research, Australian National University. He was Artistic Director and Curator of *Zones of Contact: Biennale of Sydney, 2006*; and Collections Curator at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (1994-2004), where he curated with Rika Hiro *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan 1950-1970* (2007). His most recent publications include: *The Archive* (editor, 2006) and *Ai Weiwei: Beijing 1993-2003* (editor, 2003). He is currently writing a book on the cultural history of looting and launching a new magazine on contemporary Asian art in 2007.

Ozawa Tsuyoshi is a contemporary artist who works with diverse media. Part of the so-called subculture generation of Japan, he freely yet critically borrows from ingenious cultures, both traditional and modern, to critique the institutions of art, life, and society, while humorously exploiting everyday vernaculars. Major series include: *Jizoing* (1988-; photographed in Japan, China, Tibet, Korea, Moscow, Teheran, and New York); *Nasubi Gallery* (1993-95); *Museum of Soy Sauce Art* (1999; realized in three versions in Tokyo, Fukuoka, and Sanuki); and *Vegetable Weapons* (2001-), as well as the performance series of *Sōdan Art* (1990, 1995, 1999, 2001). His major retrospective was held at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2004).

Thomas Rimer served as co-curator for two of the first large-scale exhibitions on Japanese twentieth-century art in the United States, *Paris in Japan* (1977-78; St. Louis, New York, and Los Angeles), and *Nihonga: Transcending the Past* (1995; St. Louis). His 2001 exhibition, *Metamorphosis: One Hundred Prints of New Tokyo* (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) focused on interwar Japanese prints. He is currently editing a book on modern Japanese art for the University of Hawaii Press. Recently retired from the University of Pittsburgh, where he taught in the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department and the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, he now holds the Paul Terasaki Chair in Japanese-American Relations at UCLA.

Judith Rodenbeck holds the Noble Foundation Chair in Art and Cultural History at Sarah Lawrence College, where she teaches modern and contemporary art. She is also the incoming Editor-in-Chief of *Art Journal*. She has co-authored (with Benjamin Buchloh) *Experiments in the Everyday: Allan Kaprow and Robert Watts--Events, Objects, Documents* (2000), and written extensively about the art of the 1960s. She is currently completing a book on happenings and Fluxus in the late 1950s and early 1960s and their relations to avant-garde theater, photography, and musical composition.

Miwako Tezuka is Assistant Curator at Asia Society Museum, New York. She received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in 2005 with her dissertation on the cross-media avant-garde art group Jikken Kōbō/Experimental Workshop, active in 1950s Japan. At Asia Society, she curated *Projected Realities: Video Art from East Asia* and managed *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now* in 2006. Her publications include: "I See Future in Fast Forward: 2006 Asian Contemporary Art Week," *Orientations* (September 2006); and "Synergy: Takiguchi Shuzo and Experimental Workshop" in *Drifting Objects of Dreams: The Collection of Shuzo Takiguchi*, exh. cat. (Setagaya Art Museum, 2005). She is a cofounder of PoNJA-GenKon.

Ming Tiampo is Assistant Professor of Art History at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Her current book project, *Gutai: Japan's Transnational Modernism*, uses Gutai's transnational activities as a case study to suggest new ways of framing modernism. Claiming a place for Gutai in the history of modernism, this book explores how it may be reconsidered both for and from

the periphery, contributing to the theorization of modernism beyond the Euro-American context. Her previous projects include the AICA-award winning exhibition, *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka 1954-1968* (2004-05; Grey Art Gallery, New York and Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver).

Reiko Tomii is an independent art historian and curator, who investigates post-1945 Japanese art in global and local contexts. Based in New York, she has curated the Japanese sections of *Global Conceptualism* (Queens Museum of Art, 1999) and *Century City* (Tate Modern, 2001). She has edited a special issue “Art Outside the Box” for Josai University’s *Review and Japanese Culture and Society* (2005) and her most recent essays appear in *Collectivism After Modernism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007) and *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art* (Getty Research Institute, 2007). She is a co-founder of PoNJA-GenKon, a listserv group of specialists interested in contemporary Japanese Art.

Alicia Volk is Assistant Professor of Japanese art history at the University of Maryland, College Park. In 2006-07 she received a J. Paul Getty Foundation postdoctoral fellowship to work on a book project, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugorō and Japanese Modern Art*. Her research spanning from the late nineteenth century to the present resulted in: *Japan and Paris: Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and the Modern Era* (co-authored, 2004); *Made in Japan: The Postwar Creative Print Movement* (2005); and articles on Taishō-period creative prints, twentieth-century photography, among others. She is currently working on modern and contemporary folding screens, as well as the democratization of Japanese art in the immediate postwar period.

Bert Winther-Tamaki is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History and the Visual Studies Ph.D. program at the University of California, Irvine. He is author of *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2000) and co-author with Louise Cort of *Isamu Noguchi: A Close Embrace of the Earth* (University of California Press, 2003). His current book project, titled *Maximum Embodiment*, is a study of images of bodies in the *yō* movement of modern Japanese painting.

Midori Yoshimoto (Ph.D. Rutgers University, 2002) is Assistant Professor of Art History and Gallery Director at New Jersey City University. Her publications include: *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York* (2005); an essay and artists’ biographies in *Zen’ei no josei 1950-1975/Japanese Women Artists in Avant-garde Movements, 1950-1975* (2005); and entries in *YES Yoko Ono* (2000). Her curated exhibitions include *Do-It-Yourself Fluxus* (2003) and *Evolving Pattern* (2005). She also serves as a lecturer at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Chair of the Committee of Women in the Arts of the College Art Association.