

An abstract painting featuring bold, expressive brushstrokes in vibrant yellow and black. The composition is dynamic and layered, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. In the upper right corner, there is a small, faint circular mark containing the letter 'M'.

具 体
6

**“Under Each Other’s Spell”
Gutai and New York**

“Under Each Other’s Spell”: The Gutai and New York

Ming Tiampo, Guest Curator

30 July – 17 October 2009

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center
830 Springs-Fireplace Road
East Hampton, New York 11937
www.pkhouse.org

22 October – 16 December 2009

Harold B. Lemmerman Gallery
Visual Arts Building
New Jersey City University
2039 Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, New Jersey 07305
www.njcu.edu

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Cover: *Gutai* No. 6 (1 April 1957), with cover painting by Shōzō Shimamoto. Lent by B.H. Friedman.
Opposite: Jirō Yoshihara and Paul Jenkins at the Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka, November 1964.
Photograph courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins.

“UNDER EACH OTHER’S SPELL” GUTAI AND NEW YORK

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“UNDER EACH OTHER’S SPELL” GUTAI AND NEW YORK

Special Events

The Day On Which A Man Dies An Occidental Noh Play

By Tennessee Williams

Designed and directed by David Kaplan

Friday, August 7 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, August 8 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, August 9 at 2:30 p.m.

Senior Thesis Lecture Hall, The Ross School
18 Goodfriend Drive, East Hampton, NY

Reception and gallery talk by Paul Jenkins

Sunday, August 16 from 5 – 7 p.m.

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center
830 Springs-Fireplace Road, East Hampton, NY

Gutai: A “Concrete” Discussion of Transnationalism

Wednesday, November 18 from 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Introduction:

Alexandra Munroe, Ph.D., Senior Curator of Asian Art,
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Speakers:

Paul Jenkins

Ming Tiampo, Ph.D., Carleton University

Judith F. Rodenbeck, Ph.D., Sarah Lawrence College

Reiko Tomii, Ph.D., independent art historian and curator

Peter B. Lewis Theater, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
Fifth Avenue at E.89th Street, New York, NY

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Works in the Exhibition



Michel Tapié and Jirō Yoshihara at the International Art of a New Era exhibition, Takashimaya department store, Osaka, April 1958. Behind Tapié is Jackson Pollock's painting, Number 8, 1951 / "Black Flowing," now in the collection of the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. The exhibition also included Lee Krasner's 1957 painting, The Seasons, now in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

FOREWORD

A few years ago, while visiting Paul and Suzanne Jenkins at their home in Manhattan and admiring the many treasures they have collected over the years, I noticed a marvelous small canvas that seemed to me to pulse with the same rhythmic energy that one sees in Paul's work, but was clearly not painted by him. He explained that it was a gift from a Japanese artist, Kazuo Shiraga, who was a member of the Gutai ("Concrete") Art Association, and that it had been given to him by Shiraga during Paul's November 1964 visit to the group's headquarters, the Gutai Pinacotheca, in Osaka. In fact, he said, he had several other works by Gutai artists, as well as interesting photographs and other documentation of his interaction with the group, both as a fellow exhibiter at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York and as an artist in residence at the Gutai Pinacotheca.

I then put on my curatorial hat and remarked that this collection would make a wonderful exhibition for the Pollock-Krasner House, where an aspect of our mission is to place modern American art in its international context. With typical graciousness and generosity, Paul and Suzanne agreed, and it was through their good offices that Ming Tiampo was persuaded to take time from her busy schedule of travel, lecturing and writing to serve as guest curator. Dr. Tiampo's scholarship has transformed what began as a display of personal memorabilia into a

revealing investigation of a highly significant cultural and artistic exchange based purely on mutual affinity.

Tokens of this interaction are to be found in the Pollock-Krasner House library, which contains a copy of Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* that was a gift from Jenkins to Pollock, and three copies of the *Gutai* journal. When the library was inventoried after Pollock's death in 1956, Lee Krasner confirmed that the journals had belonged to him, but there was no indication of where he got them. It was thought that perhaps they too had come from Jenkins, or that his friend Alfonso Ossorio, who kept up with trends in international modernism, had given them to him, or that they might have come from the French entrepreneur Michel Tapié, who had arranged Pollock's 1952 exhibition in Paris and who was also involved with the Japanese avant-garde. The question was not answered until 2006, when Tetsuya Oshima was researching Pollock's cutouts and discovered the crucial document in Krasner's papers at the Archives of American Art. Dr. Oshima was the first scholar to appreciate the significance of the document, and I am much obliged to him for his essay about it—and for solving a longstanding mystery.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Suzanne Donnelly Jenkins, whose meticulous organization of the Paul Jenkins archives is a model of efficiency. I also wish to thank the lenders whose kind coopera-

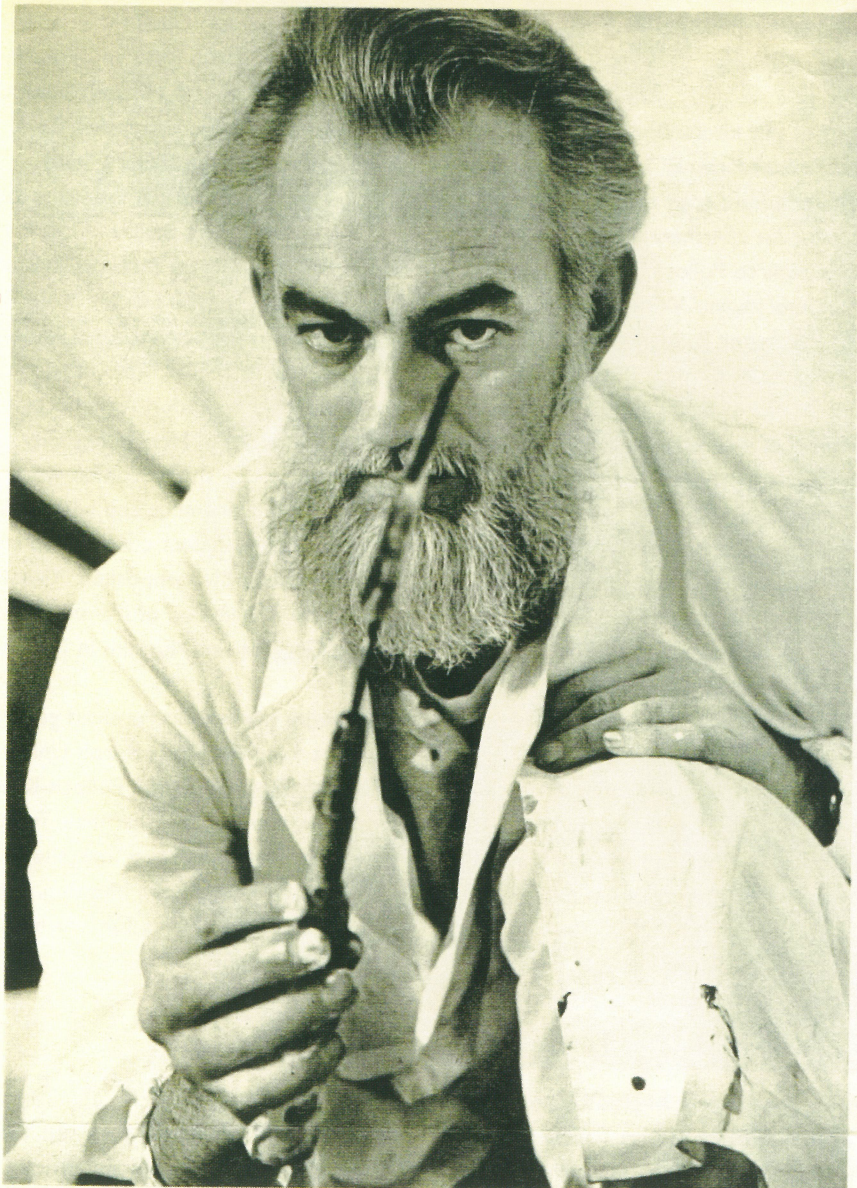
tion has enabled us to enrich the exhibition with additional Gutai material: Shūzō Fujiwara and Mizuho Katō of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History; Susan Cary of the Archives of American Art; Romi Sebald of the Gibson Gallery, State University of New York at Potsdam; Sandra H. Olsen and Robert Scalise of UB Art Galleries, University at Buffalo; Christian Filstrup of the Melville Library, Stony Brook University; B.H. Friedman; David Anderson, and a private collector. It has been a pleasure to work with Midori Yoshimoto, Gallery Director of New Jersey City University, where the exhibition will travel in October - December, and with Reiko Tomii, the independent curator and scholar who organized the symposium, "Gutai: A 'Concrete' Discussion of Transnationalism," at the Guggenheim Museum in November.

The entire project has received generous support from the Stony Brook University Research Foundation, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Thaw Charitable Trust, the Japan Foundation of New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Carroll and Donna Janis, for which I am sincerely grateful.

Helen A. Harrison, Director
Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

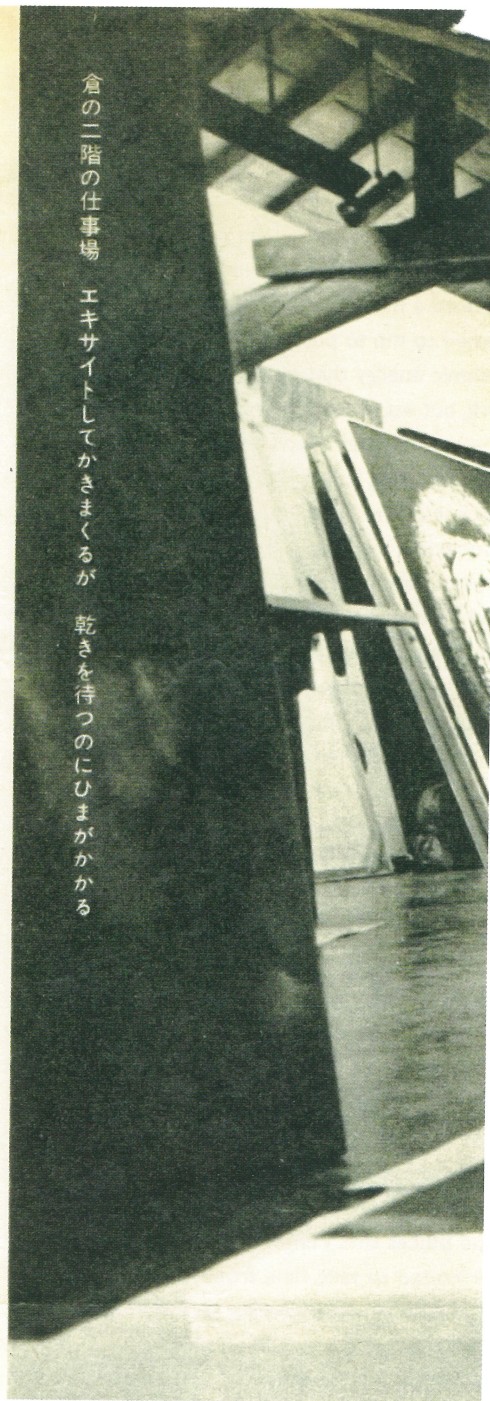
PAUL JENKINS AT WORK

Avant-garde artist Paul Jenkins from New York City, accompanied by his artist wife Alice Baber, stays at his old friend artist Jiro Yoshihara's home in Osaka, where he immediately went to work, putting off Kyoto-Nara tours.



仕事用の白衣に着がえ 「ジェンキンス博士とハイド氏？」と冗談をとぼす氏だ

倉の二階の仕事場 エキサイトしてかきまぐるが 乾きを待つのにひまがかかる



GUTAI AND PAUL JENKINS

The majority of the works in this exhibition are from the collection of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins. Paul was first introduced to Gutai in 1957 by the French art entrepreneur Michel Tapié during the lead-up to his own one-person show at Galerie Stadler in Paris (March 19 to April 13, 1957). The excited Tapié, who had just learned of the group from Hisao Domoto, traveled to Japan a few months later, and arranged for the group to show in New

York at the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1958, where Jenkins first met Jirō Yoshihara, the group's leader. At that time, Yoshihara extended an invitation to Jenkins to visit Japan. Six years later, in 1964, Jenkins and his then-wife, artist Alice Baber, became artists in residence at the Gutai Pinacotheca, the group's newly established museum space in Osaka. While in Japan, Jenkins showed at the Gutai Pinacotheca and at Tokyo Gallery, spent

time working with Gutai members, and visited their studios (the Motonaga in his collection is inscribed "Nice meeting with Mr. Paul Jenkins at my studio on the 13th Nov. '64.") The paintings in the Jenkins collection were given to the artist in exchange for his own works as an act of friendship. As Jenkins recounts of the time they spent together, they were "under each other's spell."



*Paul Jenkins visiting Jirō Yoshihara
at his home in Osaka, 1964.
Courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins.*



Fig. 1 Kazuo Shiraga, Challenging Mud, First Gutai Art Exhibition, Ohara Hall, Tokyo, 1955, © Hitoshi Shiraga and the former members of the Gutai Art Association, Courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.

“UNDER EACH OTHER’S SPELL” GUTAI AND NEW YORK

Ming Tiampo

We are following the path that will lead to an international common ground where the arts of the East and the West influence each other. And this is the natural course of the history of art.¹

Crashing through a gold-painted paper screen, Gutai Art Association leader Jirō Yoshihara opened the *First Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1955 with a flourish. In the same exhibition, Kazuo Shiraga stripped down to his shorts and dove into a pile of mud, rocks, sand and clay, “painting” with his entire body (Figure 1), and Saburō Murakami, the artist who dreamed up Yoshihara’s grand entrance, tore through three paper screens six times, landing on the floor with a concussion (Figure 2). As if that weren’t enough, Atsuko Tanaka encircled the space with a network of clanging bells that rang sequentially when unsuspecting visitors pressed on a button marked “please push this button,” startling those who dared to comply with her simple request.

This was Yoshihara’s way of “waking up the world of painting” after the isola-

tion and totalitarianism of the Second World War. Seeking “something like how after World War I, Dada was born, an epoch-making way of thinking that did not exist before the war;”² the Gutai leader pushed the young artists who gathered at his studio to challenge aesthetic, philosophical and geographic boundaries, inspiring them to burst forth onto the world stage with radical experiments in painting, performance and installation.

Their story is a tale of discovery and adventure, taking them into new artistic territory, but also around the world as they pursued an “international common ground” that prefigured the globalization of the contemporary art world today. Based out of Ashiya, a small town whose nearest big city, Osaka, had a small art scene even compared to Tokyo, the group used travel and the postal system to create and

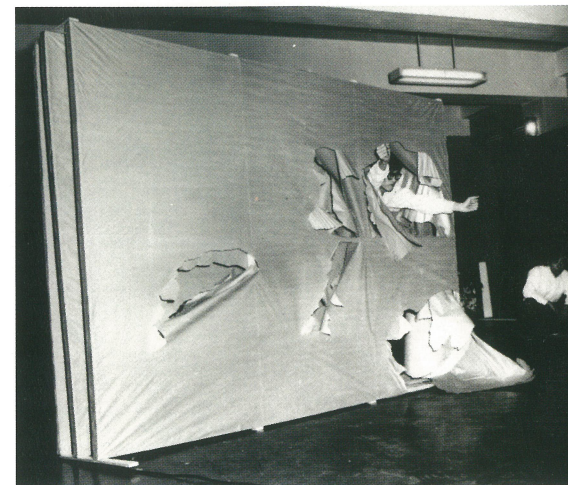


Fig. 2 Saburō Murakami, At One Moment Opening Six Holes, First Gutai Art Exhibition, Ohara Hall, Tokyo, 1955 © Makiko Murakami and the former members of the Gutai Art Association, courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.

*The Gutai group
found ways of
transforming a
handicap into an
advantage.*

sustain a communications network that extended to France, Holland, Italy, Japan, South Africa, and the United States.³

"Under Each Other's Spell": The Gutai and New York tells the story of the Gutai group's changing relationship with the New York art world from the first audacious letter they sent half-way around the globe to catch the attention of an art world celebrity in 1956, to the group's critically disparaged first New York exhibition in 1958, to the magnetic pull that their legendary experiments and avant-garde space in Osaka exerted on New York's artists in the 1960s.

Sincerely Yours: Gutai, New York and the Postal System

Acutely aware of their distance from art-world audiences, within Japan as well as beyond it, the Gutai group found ways of transforming a handicap into an advantage. Their first official group activity was thus not a conventional exhibition, but one that reached audiences beyond the confines of their small town to Osaka, Tokyo, and beyond: the *Gutai* journal.

By distributing the *Gutai* journal to artists, critics, journalists, and curators worldwide, Gutai used the publication to create the "international common ground" that they envisioned. They saw it as a meeting place for young artists internationally; a place for them to disseminate their work, provoke dialogue, and introduce emerging artists from other locales.

Each copy of the journal, sent from Ashiya to New York, Paris, Turin, Amsterdam, Johannesburg, and elsewhere around the world, activated its own chain

of events. In 1956, the journals that Gutai sent to Jackson Pollock resulted in B.H. Friedman's publishing an essay in *Gutai* on Pollock, *Gutai* publishing the work of Friedman's friend, the then-emerging artist Ray Johnson, as well as a long series of personal and epistolary introductions to such people as Helen Frankenthaler, Saburō Hasegawa, and Sam Francis.

These encounters were exchanges in the true sense of the word. Akira Kanayama's mechanically reproduced multiple, signed and included in *Gutai 2* (one of the two issues sent to Pollock and originally given to Friedman) (Figure 3) would have resonated with Ray Johnson's experiments with collage, which he called



Fig. 3 Akira Kanayama, *Untitled multiple*, 1955. Insert in *Gutai 2* (10 October 1955), sent to Jackson Pollock by Shōzō Shimamoto.

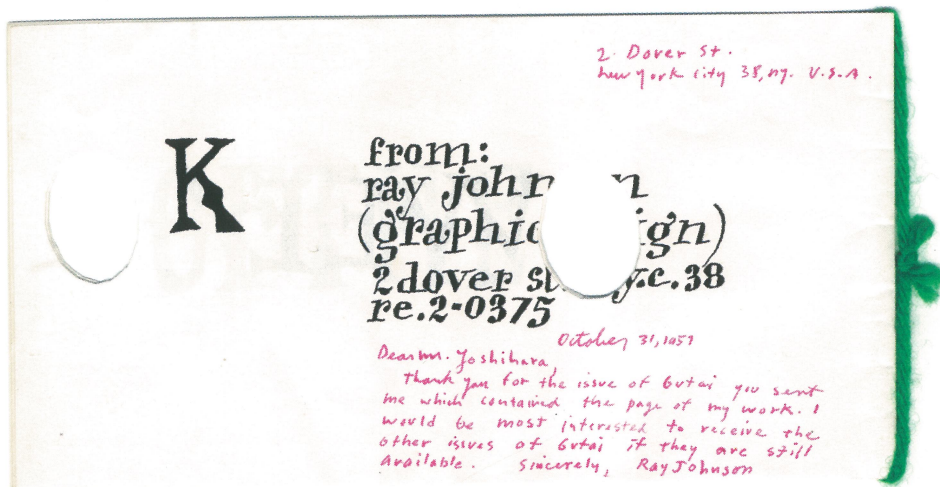
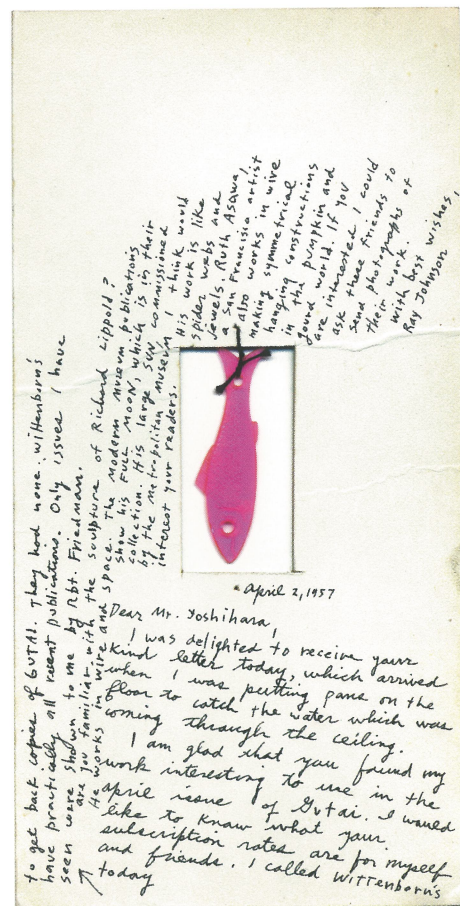


Fig. 4-5 Ray Johnson, correspondence with Jirō Yoshihara, 1957. Collection of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, reproduced courtesy of the Estate of Ray Johnson at Richard L. Feigen & Co.

moticos, and an early form of correspondence art. In turn, Johnson's enthusiastic letters to Yoshihara, which featured innovative graphic design, a pink plastic fish dangling from a cut-out window, and a crescent-shaped feathered object (Figures 4, 5 and 6), impressed the Gutai leader so

much that he dedicated an entire page of Gutai 6 to the artist's work (Figure 7), commenting that Johnson's "method of sending out and publicizing his work stimulated the Gutai members greatly,"⁴ complementing their own strategies of dissemination and networking.



By distributing the Gutai journal...
Gutai used the publication to create the
"international common ground" that they envisioned.



Fig. 6 Ray Johnson, mixed media collage. Sent to Jirō Yoshihara, 1957. Collection of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.

Gutai and the Martha Jackson Gallery

In early 1957, the Japanese artist Hisao Domoto, who was working in Paris and was associated with the Informel group of gestural abstractionists, gave a few copies of the *Gutai* journal to French critic Michel Tapié.⁵ A few months later, the Paris-based critic traveled to Japan to meet the Gutai artists and see their works firsthand. Beginning a decade-long friendship with Yoshihara, Tapié worked with him to plan the 1958 *International Art of a New Era*, an exhibition in Osaka that brought together artists from Europe, Japan and North America. With the help of Alfonso Ossorio, a Eurasian Abstract Expressionist artist and collector familiar with Japanese, French and American avant-gardes, Tapié and Yoshihara brought the Gutai section of the exhibition to New York, where it opened the 1958 Fall season at the Martha Jackson Gallery (Figure 8).

The exhibition was ambitious, filling both floors of the gallery with strong, well-executed paintings that included Shiraga's *Work II*, a black-on-red painting made with his feet, (Figure 9), and Yoshihara's *White Painting* (Figure 10), which was acquired by the Carnegie Museum of Art after being shown at the 1958 Carnegie International. Many of the paintings used experimental techniques, which were described in a gallery brochure. It explained to audiences that, for example, Akira Kanayama's "cobweb effect of fine lines" was created with "a can of paint ... placed in a child's toy truck and watched by the artist as it drips paint across an oil cloth surface."⁶ For the press, the impression of Gutai as a cutting-

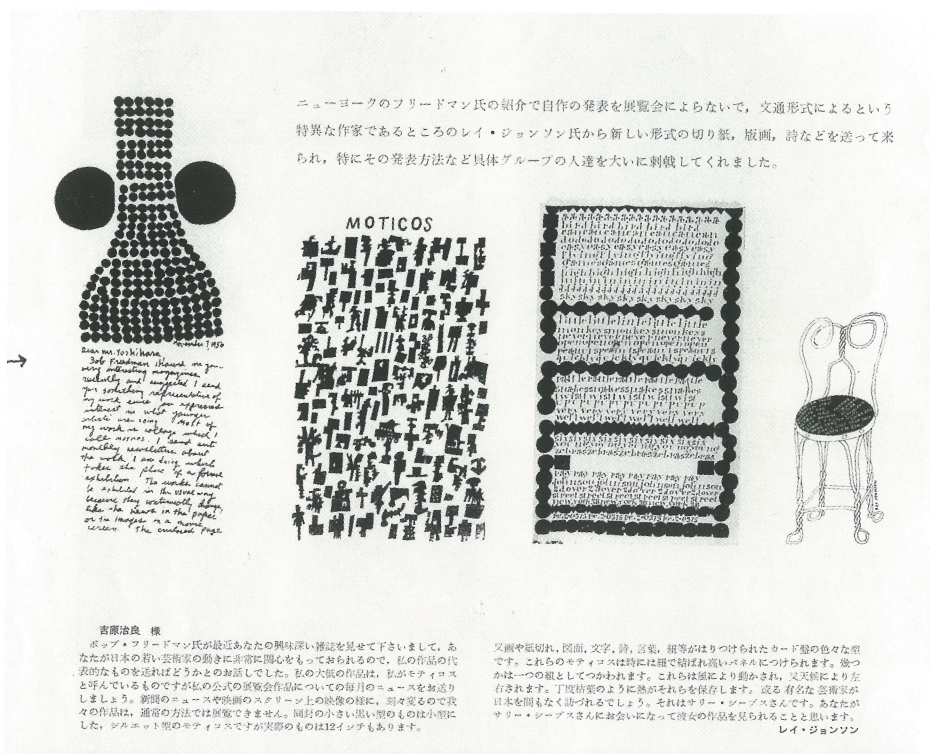


Fig. 7 Ray Johnson moticos reproduced in *Gutai* 6 (1 April 1957).



Fig. 8 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1958. Courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.

edge group should have been further reinforced by the photocopies of an article entitled “Japanese Innovators,” included with the press kit. This evocative *New York Times* article, written by Japan correspondent Ray Falk, told of a “new art form which may take the viewer to a gallery, to a pine forest, or to a theater;” and brilliantly described works from the Gutai exhibitions outdoors and on the stage.⁷

With expectations running high, it was an enormous surprise to everyone that this prominent, well-publicized exhibition was a flop, eliciting contempt even from the terse exhibition notices in *Art News*: “Gutai (Jackson [Gallery]) Group, a number of Japanese artists much influenced by New York Abstract-



Fig. 9 Opening of the Sixth Gutai Exhibition, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 25 September 1958, with Kazuo Shiraga's Work II at right behind the group. The Japanese-American artist Matsumi Kanemitsu is third from left, standing next to Martha Jackson. Jirō Yoshihara is at center, and Paul Jenkins is on the far right. Courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.



Fig. 10 Jirō Yoshihara's White Painting (center) at the Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, September 1958. Courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

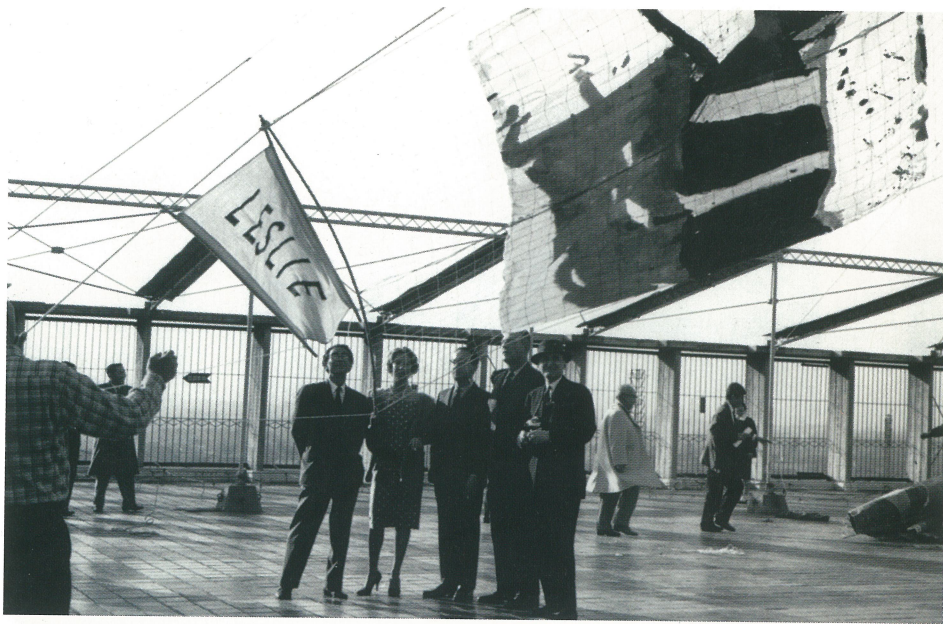


Fig. 11 Jirō Yoshihara (far left) and Michel Tapié (far right) at the International Sky Festival, Osaka, 18 April 1960, with the banner made from a design by the American artist Alfred Leslie.
© The former members of the Gutai Art Association, courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.

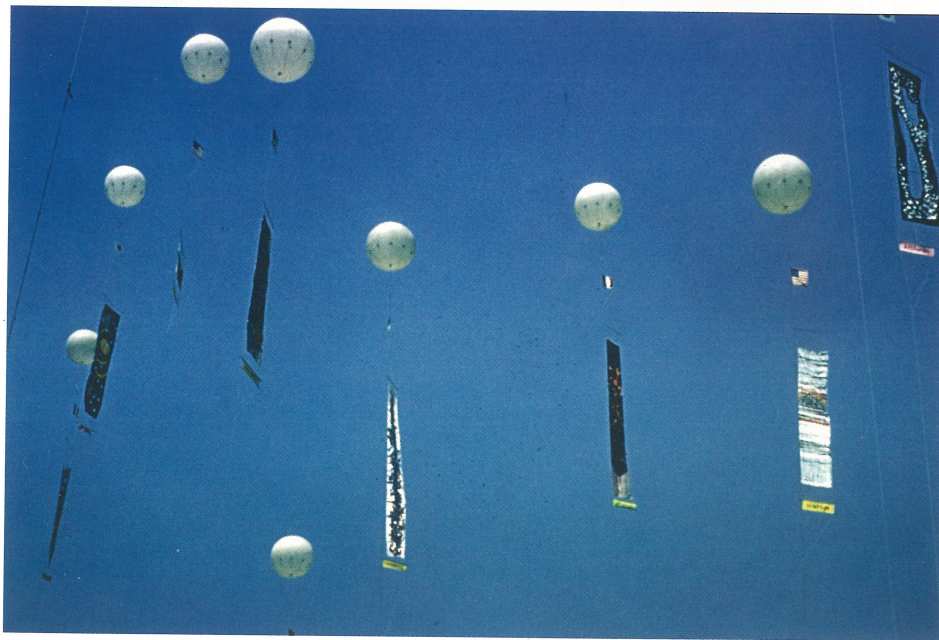


Fig. 12 International Sky Festival banners aloft, 18 April 1960. © The former members of the Gutai Art Association, courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.

Expressionism, and much in awe of Europe, were introduced in a fancy exhibition that was generally disapproved of as derivative and trivial.⁸ Overall, the press was disappointed that Gutai art did not conform to their expectations of what Japanese art should look like. One visitor encapsulated the sentiment in his guest book comment: “The ancient Japanese masters are still the greatest painters in our universe.”⁹

The time was not yet right for Gutai. Because the work did not look Japanese, it was assumed to be derivative of European or American art, causing Yoshihara to reply by pointing out the interconnectedness of the contemporary art world. “Gutai art does not practice Orientalism,” he asserted, adding that “our works, sent from a country from the Far East may shock European art lovers by their similarity with new artists from Europe and America.”¹⁰ Rather than marginalizing itself with neo-Orientalism, Gutai was determined to maintain a dialogue with artists internationally. Despite their negative reception in the press, however, Gutai gained a few interlocutors in New York, and Yoshihara made a few friends, including Paul Jenkins, whom he invited to Japan. Jackson took on Yoshihara and Motonaga as gallery artists, showing them both along with Sōfū Teshigahara and Hisao Dōmoto in the 1960 exhibition *Four Japanese Artists*, and giving Motonaga a solo show in 1961.¹¹

New York in Osaka

Gutai was committed to breaking down artistic and geographical boundaries, and soon found ways of making Osaka into a small but compelling cultural locus. Indeed, it rapidly became a node on an emerging network of avant-garde hotspots that were rising to cult prominence in the 1960s as a result of increased transnational movement and communication, as well as global decolonization.

In 1960, the group organized *The International Sky Festival* on the roof of the Takashimaya department store in Osaka (Figures 11 and 12). Thirty-eight artists from five countries were invited to submit sketches, which Gutai members then enlarged onto large kites that were suspended in the sky to create an ethereal rooftop exhibition. The show was beautifully documented in *Gutai 11*, which the group sent to exhibition participants, journalists, artists, critics and curators around the world, telegraphing their fresh exhibition concept and poetic use of the sky internationally.

Passed from hand to hand, information about Gutai spread word about the group's experiments in unanticipated ways. While preparing to show his work at the festival, for example, participant Alfred Leslie gave a copy of Ray Falk's *New York Times* article on Gutai to his friend Allan Kaprow.¹² Kaprow, in turn, began writing about Gutai in 1961 to provide an international context for Happenings in New York,¹³ and published a special section on the group in his 1966 book *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings*, which provoked further interest in the group's activities.¹⁴

Contributing to this growing tide of awareness about Gutai in the 1960s was the group's 1962 establishment of the Gutai Pinacotheca, a permanent exhibition space in Osaka. Not just a building, the Gutai Pinacotheca made Osaka a cultural destination, and gave Gutai an architectural identity and institutional visibility worldwide. The Pinacotheca soon became a stop on the itinerary of every prominent artist, critic, collector, and curator touring Japan, including Lawrence Alloway, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Willem de Kooning, Clement Greenberg, Peggy Guggenheim, Geoff Hendricks, Paul Jenkins, Jasper Johns, William Lieberman,

Isamu Noguchi, Yoko Ono, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others coming from New York (Figures 13 and 14).¹⁵

The current exhibition, "*Under Each Other's Spell*," represents a circling back to the beginning of the vibrant relationship between Gutai and New York, just one more episode that we hope will incite further research, artistic responses, and friendships.

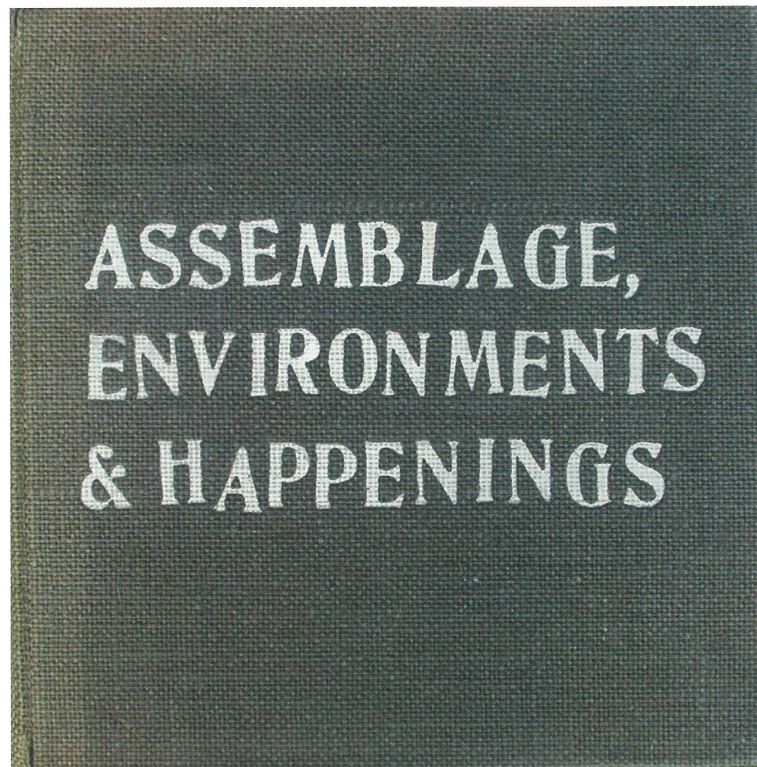




Fig. 13 Merce Cunningham, Jirō Yoshihara and John Cage, *Gutai Pinacotheca*, Osaka, 1964. Courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins.

NOTES

- ¹ “A statement by Jirō Yoshihara: Leader of the Gutai,” Martha Jackson Gallery press release, 17 September 1958, Archives of the New Gallery, Bennington College, Bennington, VT.
- ² Jirō Yoshihara, “Waga kokoro no jijoden” [Autobiography of my heart], *Kōbe Shinbun* (June 11, 1967); reprinted in *Botsugo 20 nen Yoshihara Jirō ten/ Jirō Yoshihara*, exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992), 201.
- ³ See Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Forthcoming 2010).
- ⁴ Jirō Yoshihara, untitled commentary, *Gutai 6* (1 April 1957): n.p.
- ⁵ Hisao Dōmoto, letter to Jirō Yoshihara, March 30 1957, Jirō Yoshihara papers, on deposit to Ashiya City Museum of Art & History.
- ⁶ Martha Jackson Gallery, “Paintings of the Gutai Group,” annotated list of works, 1958. Bennington College Visual Arts Department Records, Archives of American Art.
- ⁷ Ray Falk, “Japanese Innovators,” *The New York Times*, 8 December 1957, D24.
- ⁸ T.B.H. [Thomas B. Hess], “Reviews and Previews: New Names This Month,” *Art News* 57 (November 1958): 17.



Fig. 14 Paul Jenkins (back to camera), Jirō Yoshihara and Robert Rauschenberg, *Gutai Pinacotheca*, Osaka, 1964. Courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins.

⁹ *Gutai* exhibition guest book, September 25, 1958. David Anderson Archives, SUNY Buffalo.

¹⁰ Jirō Yoshihara, "Sur l'art Gutai," *Notizie—Associazione Arti Figurative* 2, no. 6 (June 1958): 10.

¹¹ Motonaga subsequently spent a year in New York, from 1966-1967.

¹² Allan Kaprow, interview by Judith Rodenbeck, 1996; Rodenbeck, e-mail message to the author, 21 February 2007.

¹³ Allan Kaprow, "Happenings in the New York Scene" *Art News* 60, no. 3 (May 1961): 36-39, 58-62; reprinted in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 16.

¹⁴ Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings* (New York: Abrams, 1966).

¹⁵ Many of these visits are recounted by Toshio Yoshida in "Gutai Pinakoteka no okyakusan-tachi" [Visitors to the Gutai Pinacotheca], *All Kansai*, no. 6 (June 1970): 66-67. Photographs of some of the visits are reproduced in Shōichi Hirai, *What's Gutai?* (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, 2004), 122.



Fig. 1 Copies of Gutai 2 and 3, sent to Jackson Pollock by Shōzō Shimamoto, February 1956. Pollock-Krasner Library, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, NY.

“DEAR MR. JACKSON POLLOCK”: A LETTER FROM GUTAI

Tetsuya Oshima

It is well known that Jackson Pollock owned issues 2 and 3 of the *Gutai* magazine (Figure 1). Pollock's close friend, B. H. Friedman, found them in Pollock's library when he helped Lee Krasner organize it after Pollock's death on August 11, 1956. Friedman reported this discovery in his letter, dated September 18, 1956, to the Gutai group and this story was published in *Gutai* 5.¹ Also, *Gutai* 2 and 3 were listed as part of Pollock's library in the artist's catalogue raisonné published in 1978. However, it was not clear how Pollock obtained them; and this matter has attracted our interest to date.² In fact Pollock had at least two copies each of *Gutai* 2 and 3.³ Thus, it is a further mystery why he had multiple copies of each issue. There is, however, an interesting letter in the Archives of American Art (Figures 2 and 3) that will solve those two riddles at once.⁴ In this short essay, annotating the letter, I would like to examine the Gutai group's strategy regarding their magazine.

The letter, dated and postmarked February 6, 1956 and addressed to Jackson Pollock, was sent by Shōzō Shimamoto. In the first sentence of the letter, Shimamoto wrote: “You would be su[r]prised at finding our modern art magazine ‘Gutai’ in the envelope sent from Japan.” The first riddle, how Pollock obtained *Gutai* 2 and 3,

is solved by this passage: the Gutai group mailed them directly to Pollock.⁵ In the inaugural issue of *Gutai*, Jirō Yoshihara wrote, “it is the conviction of the people who made it [*Gutai*] that through this publication, they will be blessed with a chance to form a strong bond with the people of the world.”⁶ Indeed, under Yoshihara's orders, the Gutai group published their magazine in Japanese and in English, demonstrating that they paid serious attention to foreign readers. Yoshihara had been interested in Pollock's art since he first saw the American artist's paintings in the 1951 Third Yomiuri Independent Exhibition. Most likely Yoshihara told Shimamoto, who was in charge of sending out *Gutai* overseas, to mail it to Pollock.

According to Shimamoto, he did not know Pollock's address, and therefore it was probably given to him by Yoshihara.⁷ But how did Yoshihara know it? The address, written on the letter from Shimamoto to Pollock, reads: “Spring St. [sic] East Hampton, L.I., N.Y., U.S.A.” Yoshihara may have found Pollock's address through publications, where it was often given as “East Hampton, Long Island,”⁸ “Springs, Long Island, New York,”⁹ “East Hampton, Long Island, New York,”¹⁰ in the catalogues of group exhibitions in which Pollock participated.¹¹ It is also

possible that Yoshihara learned Pollock's address from someone who had connections with the American art world, such as Saburō Hasegawa.¹²

In his letter to Pollock, Shimamoto also wrote: “we entreat you . . . to hand the extra magazines to the people who are interested in our action.” The second riddle, why Pollock had multiple copies each of *Gutai* 2 and 3, is solved by this passage. It is interesting that Gutai did not simply get in contact with Pollock by sending him their magazine, but also tried to form a network through Pollock by asking him to distribute the extra copies to his acquaintances. It is not known how many copies of each issue the Gutai group sent to Pollock. Taking into account their then circumstances, Shimamoto now conjectures that the number was “at the very most five or six.”¹³ It is also unclear to whom Pollock gave the extra copies.¹⁴ In any case, Gutai obtained one significant result by sending Pollock their magazine—they got acquainted with the American writer, B. H. Friedman. Friedman, who was given a copy each of *Gutai* 2 and 3 by Pollock's widow, had a strong interest in the Gutai group's work. In his aforementioned letter, Friedman asked them to sell him all the other already published issues of *Gutai* and to let him subscribe to the magazine henceforth.

Gutai Art Group
40 S. Shimamoto, 104, 1-Chome
Kōshinguchi, Nishinomiya, Hyogo
Japan 6th. Feb. 1956.

Dear Mr. Jackson Pollock;

You would be surprised at finding our modern art magazine "Gutai" in the envelope sent from Japan. Please forgive our audacity. Now we are anxious to know the opinion about our action toward art, and so if you would criticize of our paintings, it will help us very much to improve our works. Therefore we entreat you to give us the suggestion, and moreover to hand the extra magazines to the people who are interested in our action, though it is quite impudent asking.

Then, we will be very happy to be able to repay your kindness even a little by sending some information or materials in Japan, which helps your work.

Hoping you early reply.

Sincerely yours,

S. Shimamoto

With this as a start, Yoshihara began to exchange letters with Friedman. On October 15, 1956 Friedman sent Yoshihara a text that he wrote on Pollock; Yoshihara published it and its Japanese translation in *Gutai 6* together with the reproduction of Hans Namuth's photograph of Pollock at work, which he had obtained from Friedman.¹⁵

In his letter to Pollock, Shimamoto eagerly asked Pollock for his "opinion," "critic[ism]," and "suggestion" about Gutai work on their behalf. Yoshihara actively wanted Gutai work to be criticized by others in order to improve it. For this, Gutai first needed to make their work known to the world. Thus, they made *Gutai* their main vehicle of publicity and distributed the magazine not only within Japan, but also overseas. (In fact, Yoshihara gave founding the magazine priority over mounting their first exhibition.) According to Shimamoto, the text of his letter to Pollock was not written specifically for Pollock; he sent similar letters, based on a form letter, to many other foreign art people.¹⁶ However, Shimamoto's request for feedback from Pollock must have had special significance for the Gutai group. For instance, Yoshihara stated in "The Gutai Art Manifesto": "Gutai art does not change the material but brings it to life. Gutai art does not falsify the material. . . . If one leaves the material as it is, presenting it just as material, then it starts to tell us something and speaks with a mighty voice." Then, Yoshihara named Pollock as one of the two contemporary artists who realized the kind of work for which the Gutai group aimed: "In this sense I pay respect to Pollock's and [Georges]

Fig. 2

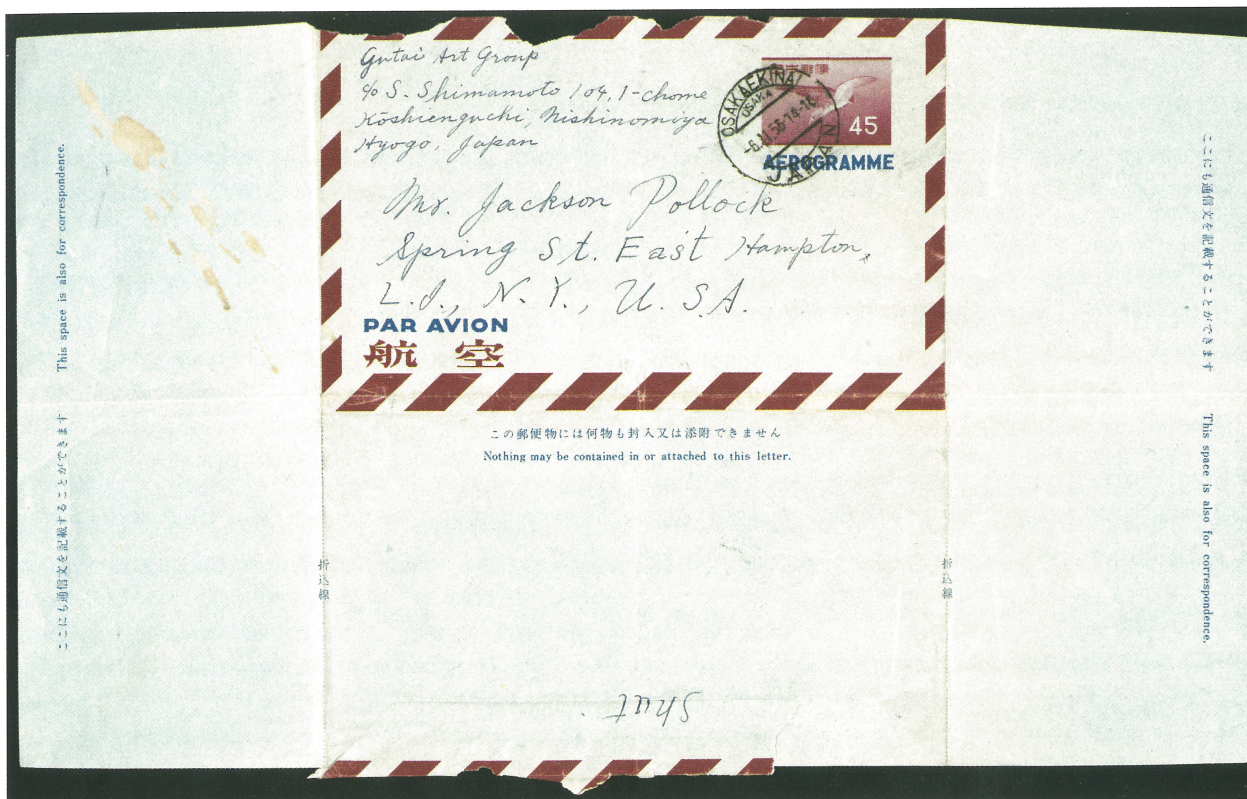


Fig. 3

Mathieu's works in contemporary art. These works emit the loud outcry of the material, of the very oil or enamel paints themselves. These two artists grapple with the material in a way which is completely appropriate to it and which they have

discovered due to their talent. . . .After Pollock many Pollock-imitators appeared, but Pollock's splendour will never be extinguished. The talent of invention deserves respect."¹⁷ Pollock was thus a special figure for the Gutai group.

According to Shimamoto, unfortunately there was no reply from Pollock to his letter.¹⁸ What did Pollock think of the work of this Japanese avant-garde group that revered him? That remains a mystery.

*Pollock's splendour will never be extinguished.
The talent of invention deserves respect.*

- ¹ "Obituary of Mr. Jackson Pollock," *Gutai* 5 (1 October 1956), n.p.
- ² See, e.g., Shinichiro Osaki, "Body and Place: Action in Postwar Art in Japan," in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*, by Paul Schimmel et al. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 122-23; Shōichi Hirai, *What's GUTAI?* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, 2004), 115.
- ³ "Among [Pollock's papers and library] were two copies each of the 2nd and 3rd editions of *Gutai*." B. H. Friedman, letter to the Gutai group, 18 September 1956. My thanks to Ming Tiampo for providing me with a photocopy of this letter.
- ⁴ Lee Krasner Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 3778, frames 1207, 1209. I discovered this letter on December 7, 2006. It has been available since March 19, 2009 on the website of the Archives of American Art (http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/searchimages/images/item_10290.htm).
- ⁵ It is unclear whether or not they sent Pollock issue 1 as well. On the other hand, in his letter to Friedman, dated October 1, 1956, Jirō Yoshihara wrote that they had sent Pollock one copy of issue 4. However, issue 4 has not been found in Pollock's library.
- ⁶ Jirō Yoshihara, "On the Occasion of Publication," *Gutai* 1 (1 January 1955): 1; Hirai, *What's GUTAI?*, trans. Christopher Stephens, 37.
- ⁷ Shōzō Shimamoto, letter to author, postmarked 29 November 2008.
- ⁸ Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951), 154.
- ⁹ Dorothy C. Miller, ed., *15 Americans* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1952), 16.
- ¹⁰ *The 1952 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting* (Pittsburgh: Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, 1952), n.p.
- ¹¹ Yoshihara owned the three exhibition catalogues named in notes 8-10. My thanks to Mizuho Katō, curator of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, for her assistance with my investigation of Yoshihara's materials preserved in her museum.
- ¹² In his letter to Friedman, dated April 16, 1957, Yoshihara wrote: "I wonder if you have heard anything of my intimate friend Saburō Hasegawa? He was talking about his having seen Mr. Pollock and Mr. Kline."
- ¹³ Shōzō Shimamoto, interview by author, Nishinomiya, 11 April 2009.
- ¹⁴ One of the likely people is Alfonso Ossorio. Unfortunately, Ossorio's archives have not been accessible for several years.
- ¹⁵ B. H. Friedman, "Jackson Pollock," *Gutai* 6 (1 April 1957), n.p.
- ¹⁶ The process of making the form letter was as follows: first, Shimamoto wrote a draft in Japanese; next, Yoshihara revised it in Japanese; lastly, Yoshihara's eldest son Shinichirō, who was good at English, translated the Japanese draft made by Shimamoto and Yoshihara into English. Shimamoto, interview by author, 11 April 2009.
- ¹⁷ Jirō Yoshihara, "The Gutai Art Manifesto," *Geijutsu Shincho*, vol. 7, no. 12 (December 1956): 202-3; *Document Gutai 1954-1972*, ed. the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History (Ashiya: Ashiya City Culture Foundation, 1993), 8-9.
- ¹⁸ Shimamoto, letter to author, postmarked 29 November 2008.

GUTAI ART MANIFESTO (1956)

Yoshihara Jirō

To today's consciousness, the art of the past, which on the whole displays 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 matters, all slaughtered under the pretence of production of the mind, can now say nothing.

Lock up these corpses in the graveyard.

Gutai Art does not alter matter [busshitsu]. 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 characteris-

tics, 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 in which creation occurs; however, the spirit has never created matter before. The spirit has only created the spirit. Throughout history, the spirit has given birth to life in art. However 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. Fortunately, these movements could neither successfully distort matter, that is, the paint, nor kill it though using it for the purpose of naturalism as in the case of Pointillism and Fauvism. However, their styles no longer move us; they are things of the past.

Now, interestingly, we find a contemporary beauty in the art and architecture of the past ravaged by the passage of time or natural disasters. Although their beauty is considered decadent, it may be that the innate beauty of matter is re-emerging from behind the mask of artificial embellishment. Ruins welcome us unexpectedly with warmth and friendliness; they speak to us though 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 Pollock and Mathieu. Their work reveals the scream of matter itself, cries of the paint and enamel. These two artists confront us in a way that aptly corresponds to their individual discoveries. Or rather, they even seem to serve the 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 Tapié. We found them quite

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

*We believe that by merging human qualities
and material properties, we can concretely
comprehend abstract space.*

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 freshly newborn. We were surprised to learn our aspiration for something vital resonated with theirs, although our expressions differed from theirs. 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. However, we have certainly lost interest in the clichéd abstract art. 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 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 quality 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 image.

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 could not be seen until the very 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 the topic 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 manner.

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 reveal a breathtaking freshness.

Among other members, Sumi Yasuo deployed a vibrating device, while Yoshida Toshirō created a lump of monochrome paint. I would like you to know 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* [three-dimensional objects], 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 eschews 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 prescribed 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 achievement of Dada. However, unlike Dadaism, Gutai Art is the product that has arisen from the pursuit of possibilities. Gutai aspires to present an exhibition filled with lively spirit, an exhibition from which an intense cry can be heard as the new life of matter is discovered.

Originally published as "Gutai bijutsu sengen" in *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no. 12 (December 1956), pp. 202-204.

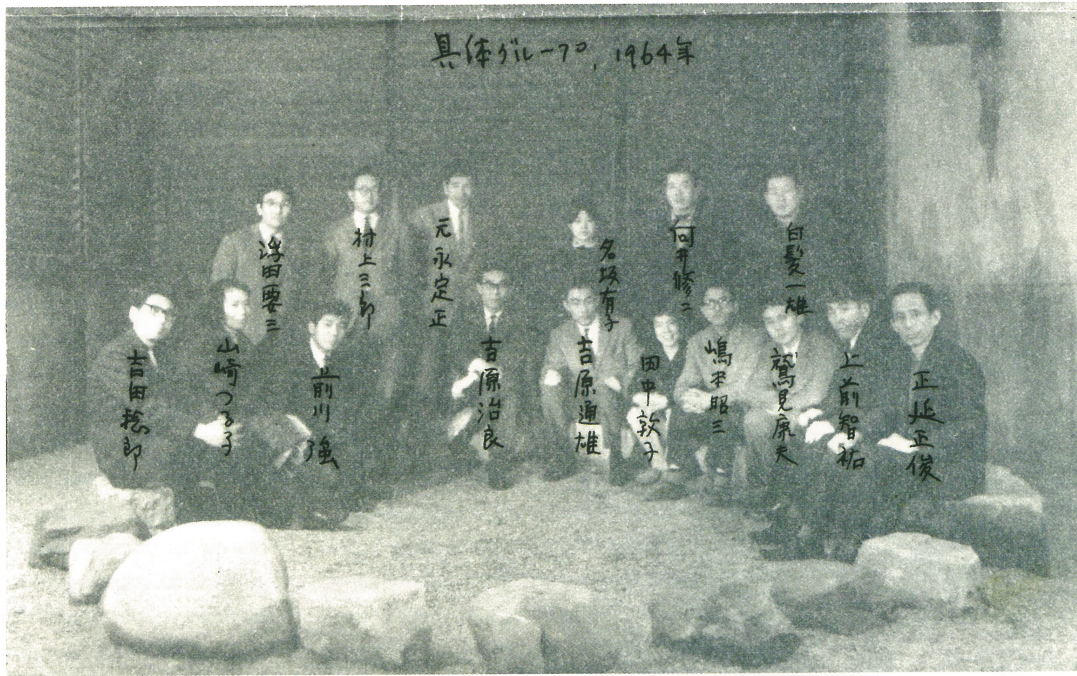
(Translated by Reiko Tomii)

For this translation, traditional Japanese name order (surname followed by first name) has been used.

*Gutai places an utmost premium on daring
advance into the unknown world.*



Gutai artists in Osaka, 1964.



Photographs courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, JACKSON POLLOCK AND GUTAI

David Kaplan

The Day On Which A Man Dies is a work of performance art conceived in the late 1950s by Tennessee Williams, the author of such Broadway hits as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Williams seems to have been aware of and appropriated the effects of the Japanese Gutai artists, who crawled in mud, painted with their feet, shot paint from guns, crashed through paper walls, and staged performances well before the artists commonly credited with their invention, Robert Rauschenberg, Allan Kaprow and Yves Klein.

In 1957, after an August visit to painter Larry Rivers in the Hamptons, Williams began to construct a theater work in which an artist's frenzied hunt for new means of expression clashes with the doubts of his vitriolic mistress. At the drama's climax, the artist commits suicide. The play was inspired by the death of Jackson Pollock, whom Williams had known since they summered together in Provincetown in the 1940s. Pollock was killed in 1956 when he drove his car into a tree in East Hampton. Williams had done the same thing in Italy, with the intent to kill himself. Others dispute the notion, but Williams considered Pollock's death to have been a suicide.

In *The Day On Which A Man Dies*, Jeff Christian as The Man, Jennie Moreau as The

Woman, Gerson Dacanay as The Oriental and Helen Young as the Second Stage Assistant enact the requirements of Williams' stylized text. Provincetown-based artist Megan Tracy has created the original paintings on the bodies of the performers, and on the paper walls of the performance environment. The design of the production follows the stage directions of Williams' 1959 manuscript: in particular the use of color sequences that Williams boldly employed to establish meaning separately from the spoken word or physical behavior.

The play is subtitled *An Occidental Noh Play*. Noh drama is a 14th century form combining music, dance, storytelling and enactment—as does Williams' experimental form. Noh plays are often ghost plays, meditations on transience, a subject Williams explored in all his plays, often expressed in naturalistic stage business: broken glass, a blown-out match, smoke. The stage directions Williams specifies for *The Day On Which A Man Dies* echo Gutai practices: paintings are created and destroyed in the course of a performance, the bodies of the performers are painted, and the setting is made of paper. After airbrushing paper tacked to the floor, The Man crawls naked onto the fresh red paint, turning his entire body into the instrument of art making, echoing the work of Kazuo Shiraga, and anticipating Yves Klein's Anthropométries.

When the artist/actor rises, smeared with red paint, he has himself become a work of art and an avatar of the image on the flat surface, which he then attacks with a knife.

Williams' knowledge of Gutai was gained perhaps from the Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima, whom he visited in Japan in 1959 and to whom the *The Day On Which A Man Dies* is dedicated. Mishima's wry observations of sex as power, and his aesthetic interest in suicide, resonate prophetically in the role of The Oriental. Mishima would kill himself in 1976, on the day he completed the fourth and final volume of his own masterwork on transience, ironically titled *The Sea of Fertility*.

Tennessee Williams, a master of language, was also a practicing visual artist. For decades he painted in oil and watercolors and sketched with pencil and ink. He had more than a passing familiarity with the world of artists. When Williams befriended Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner in the

early '40s, he also became acquainted with the abstract expressionist painter and sculptor Fritz Bultman, and the painter Robert De Niro Sr. (actor Robert Jr.'s father), along with others in the circle surrounding the great German painter and teacher Hans Hofmann. Williams wrote about Hofmann a number of times, over many years, and Hofmann's theories of hot and cool colors is quoted (without acknowledgment) by The Woman in *The Day On Which A Man Dies*.

This production—first performed at Chicago's Links Hall in February 2008, revived in July 2009 at Chicago's National Pastime Theater, and presented in August in conjunction with the current exhibition at the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center—satisfies Williams' request for "Kabuki music" with the work of American composer Lou Harrison (1917-2003) who himself combined Asian motifs with avant-garde Western forms.



Gerson Dacanay in the role of *The Oriental*, from *The Day On Which A Man Dies*.
Photograph by Mike McGowan.

... paintings are created and destroyed in the course of a performance, the bodies of the performers are painted, and the setting is made of paper.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ming Tiampo is Associate Professor of Art History at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Her current book project, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2010), uses Gutai's transnational activities as a case study to suggest new ways of framing modernism. She has published and lectured in Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. 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). Dr. Tiampo is a founding member of the Carleton Centre for Transnational Analysis, an associate member of the Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry, and is currently on a Japan Foundation Fellowship in Tokyo.

Tetsuya Oshima is a curator of the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art in Japan. He obtained a Ph.D. at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is the author of several articles on Jackson Pollock, including "Jazz / les papiers découpés de Matisse et Jackson Pollock" in *Ils ont regardé Matisse: Une réception abstraite, États-Unis / Europe, 1948-1968* (2009). He is now preparing an exhibition of Pollock's work to be held at his museum in 2012.

David Kaplan holds degrees from Clark University and the Yale School of Drama. He is the co-founder and curator of the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Festival, where *The Day On Which A Man Dies* will be presented in September. Other plays directed by Kaplan have appeared in 40 of the 50 United States. He has staged plays around the world with professional companies in indigenous languages and settings, including Williams' *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale* in Hong Kong and *Suddenly Last Summer* in Russia. Kaplan has lectured and taught widely, and is the author of numerous articles and books, including the 2006 monograph, *Tennessee Williams in Provincetown*.

Jirō Yoshihara (1905-1972) was mainly self-taught as an artist. Before World War II his work was included in the exhibitions of the Nika-kai and the more vanguard Kyūshitsukai. After the war he was active as one of the principal promoters of avant-garde art in the Kansai region. Yoshihara was a founding member of Genbi (Contemporary Art Discussion Group) in 1953, and the Nihon Abusutorakuto Ato Kurabu (Japanese Abstract Art Club) in 1954. The following year he became the founder and principal sponsor of the Gutai Bijutsu Kyokai (Concrete Art Association), and was the group's leader until his death, after which it was disbanded.

Reiko Tomii is a New York-based independent scholar and curator who investigates post-1945 Japanese art in global and local contexts. Her extensive publications and translations include her contributions to *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art* (Getty Research Institute, 2007) and *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades* (McCaffrey Fine Art, 2009). She is a co-founder of PoNJA-GenKon (www.ponja-genkon-net), a scholarly listserv group for contemporary Japanese Art.

“UNDER EACH OTHER’S SPELL” WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

PAINTINGS

Paul Jenkins (born 1923)

Phenomena Nightwood, 1962

Acrylic on canvas, 31 3/4 x 25 1/2 inches

Lent by Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Sadamasa Motonaga (born 1922)

Untitled, 1963

Oil on canvas mounted on wood, 46 x 36 inches

Lent by Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Alfonso Ossorio (1916-1990)

Untitled, ca. 1955

Oil on masonite, 22 1/4 x 22 1/4 inches

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center,
gift of the Ossorio Foundation

Shōzō Shimamoto (born 1928)

Untitled, 1964.

Oil and enamel on cotton stretched over wood panel,
25 3/4 x 15 1/8 inches

Lent by Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Kazuo Shiraga (1928-2008)

Untitled, 1964

Oil on canvas, 19 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches

Lent by Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Atsuko Tanaka (1932-2005)

Work, 1965

Oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 20 7/8 inches

Private collection, New York

Toshio Yoshida (1928-1997)

Untitled, 1964

Mixed media on linen, 18 x 25 1/2 inches

Lent by Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Jirō Yoshihara (1905-1972)

Blue Calligraphic Lines on Dark Blue, 1963

Oil on canvas, 36 1/2 x 29 1/4 inches

Lent by the Gibson Gallery, SUNY Potsdam

WORKS ON PAPER

Akira Kanayama (1924-2005)

March 5, 1957, 1957

Felt pen on paper, 30 3/8 x 43 1/16 inches

Private collection, New York

Lee Krasner (1908-1984)

Soundings, 1962

Lithograph, 22 x 30 inches

Lent by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, on long-term loan to
the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

Jackson Pollock (1912-1956)

Untitled (after *Number 8, 1951* / “*Black Flowing*”), 1951.

Screen print, 23 x 29 inches (sheet)

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

DOCUMENTS

Gutai 2 (10 October 1955) and 3 (20 October 1955), sent by Gutai to Jackson Pollock, February 1956
Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

Letter from Shimamoto to Pollock that accompanied the journals, February 1956
Lent by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Gutai 5 (October 1956), open to Pollock death notice
Lent by B.H. Friedman

Gutai 6 (1 April 1957), open to Pollock memorial essay by B.H. Friedman
Lent by B.H. Friedman
Illustrated on page 38 and inside back cover

Gutai 6, open to publication of Ray Johnson *moticos*
Private collection, Japan

Correspondence between Yoshihara and B.H. Friedman, 1956-58
Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, gift of B.H. Friedman

Reproductions of correspondence from Ray Johnson to Jirō Yoshihara
Courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, Ashiya, Japan

Allan Kaprow (1927-2006)
Assemblage, Environments and Happenings.
New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966
Lent by the Melville Library, Stony Brook University

Poster of Gutai Exhibition, Martha Jackson Gallery, 1958
Lent by Martha Jackson Archives, UB Anderson Gallery, University at Buffalo

Pamphlet for "Four Japanese Artists,"
Martha Jackson Gallery, 1960-61
Martha Jackson Archives, UB Anderson Gallery,
University at Buffalo

Gutai New Year's Card Set, 1966.
Lent by David Anderson

Gutai Group New Year's Card.
Lent by David Anderson

PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILM

Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition (1956) and Gutai Art on the Stage (1957, 1958)
Video courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

Opening of the Sixth Gutai Art Exhibition, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York City, 25 September 1958
Courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

International Sky Festival, Osaka, April 1960
© The former members of the Gutai Art Association,
courtesy of the Ashiya City Museum of Art & History

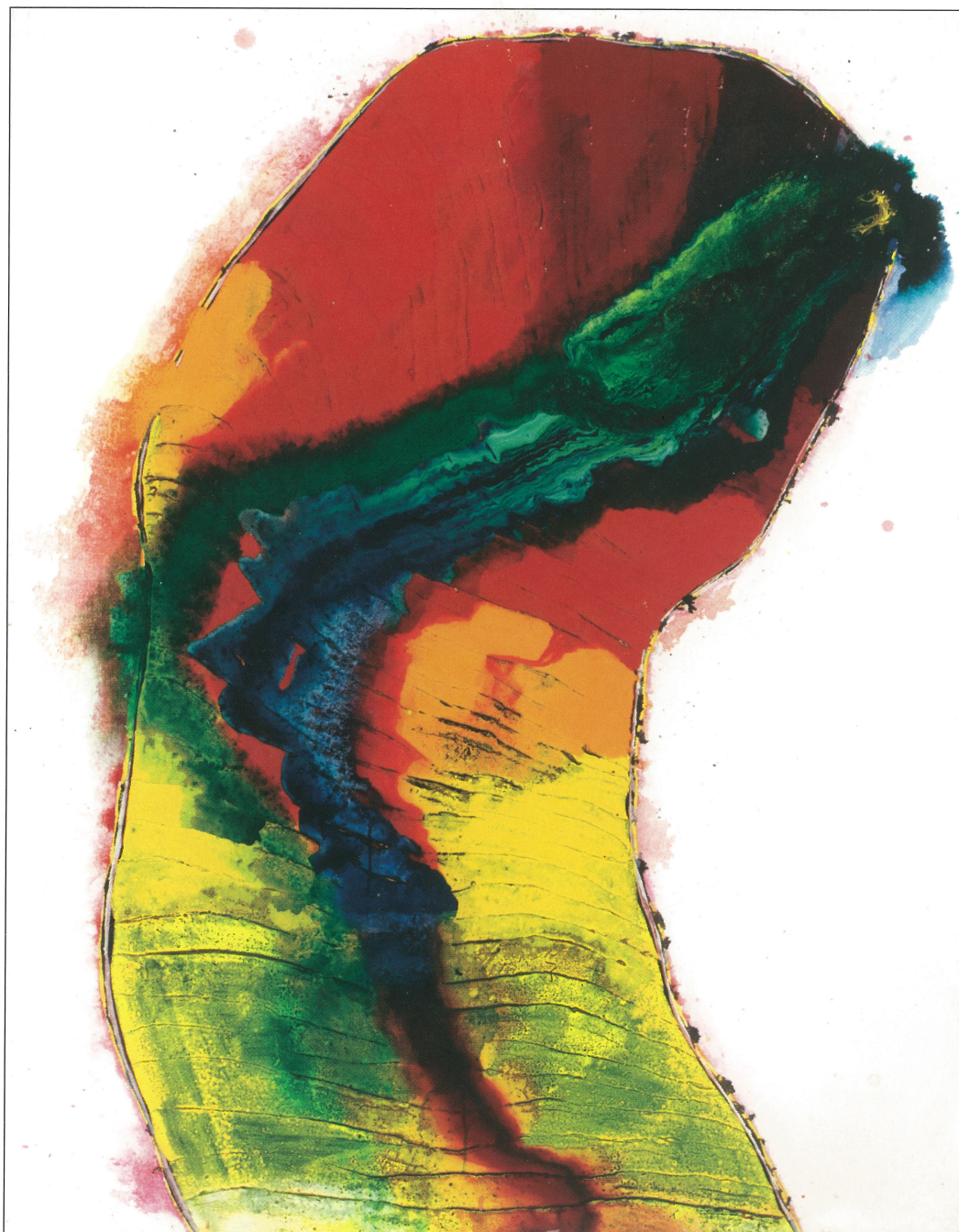
Toshio Yoshida, Paul Jenkins, Saburō Murakami, Minoru Yoshida and Kazuo Shiraga at Paul Jenkins' exhibition, Gutai Pinacotheca, November 1964
Paul Jenkins Papers, courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Paul Jenkins, Jirō Yoshihara and Robert Rauschenberg,
Gutai Pinacotheca, 1964
Paul Jenkins Papers, courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins

Merce Cunningham, Jirō Yoshihara and John Cage,
Gutai Pinacotheca, 1964
Paul Jenkins Papers, courtesy of Paul and Suzanne Jenkins



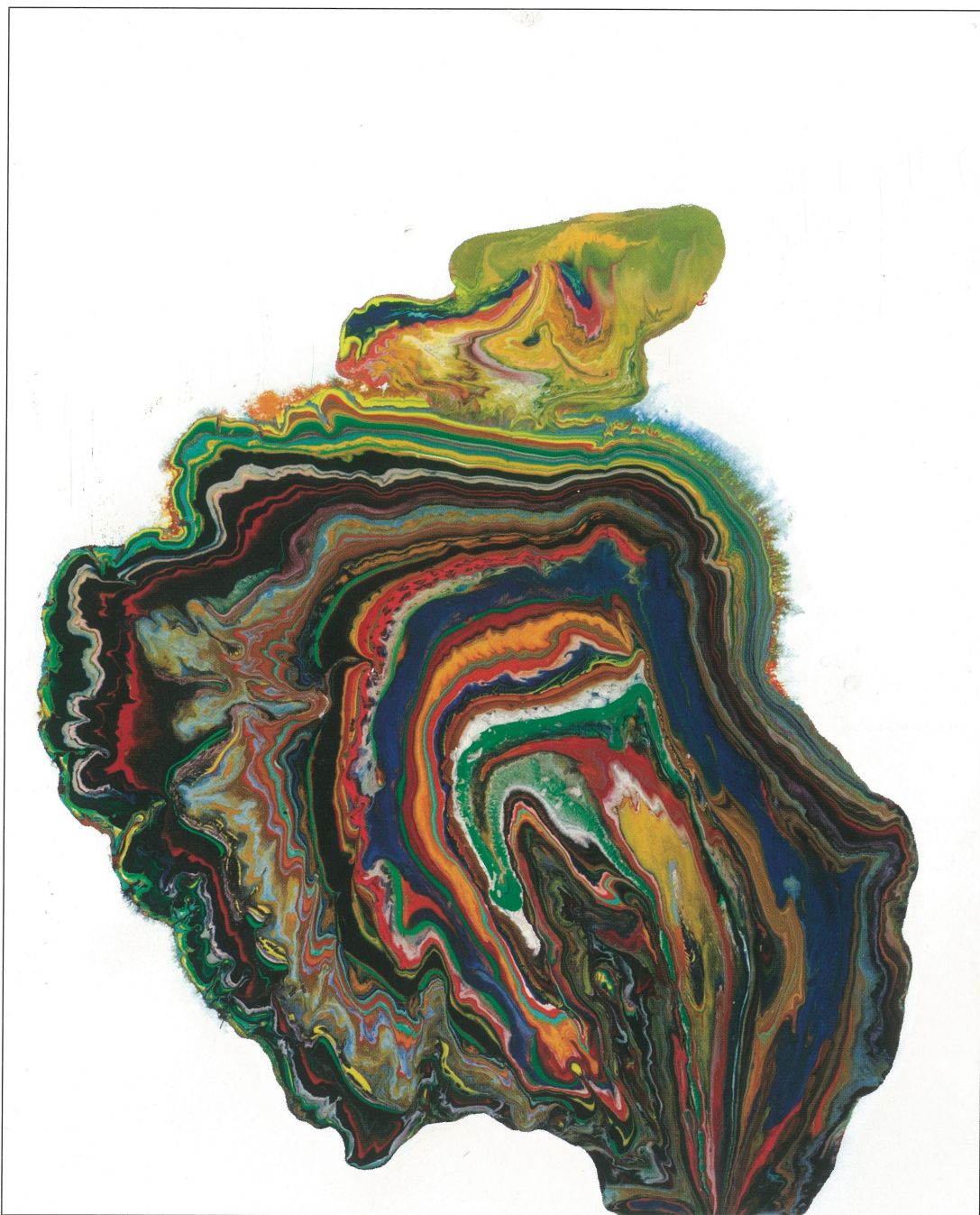
Paul Jenkins, *Phenomena Nightwood*, 1962, Acrylic on canvas, 31 3/4 x 25 1/2 inches.



Sadamasa Motonaga, *Untitled*, 1963, Oil on canvas mounted on wood, 46 × 36 inches.



Alfonso Ossorio, Untitled, ca. 1955, Oil on masonite, 22 1/4 x 22 1/4 inches.



Shōzō Shimamoto, *Untitled*, 1964, Oil and enamel on cotton stretched over wood panel, 25 3/4 × 15 1/8 inches.



Kazuo Shiraga, Untitled, 1964, Oil on canvas, 19 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches.



Atsuko Tanaka, *Work*, 1965, Oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 20 7/8 inches.



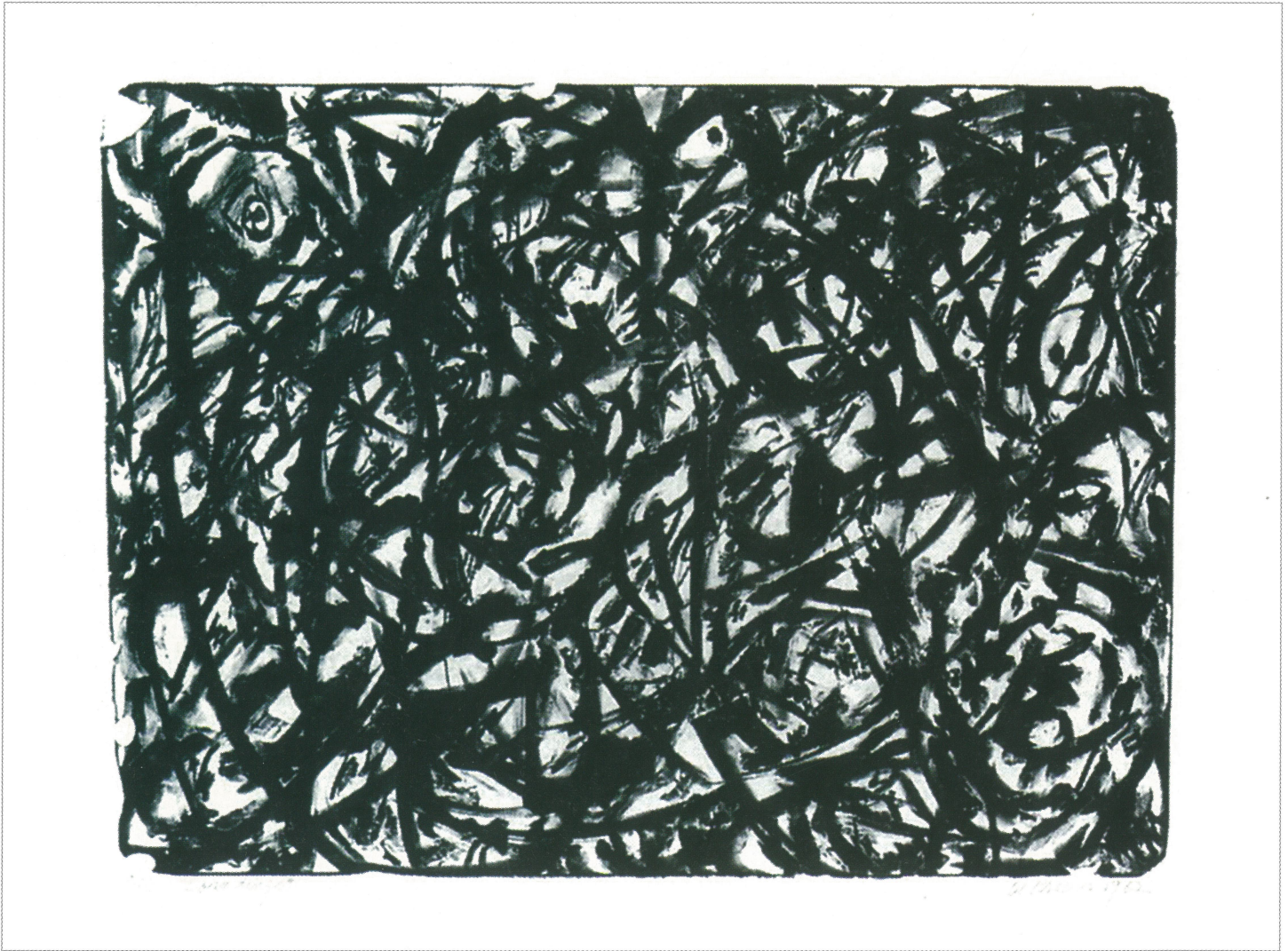
Toshio Yoshida, Untitled, 1964, Mixed media on linen, 18 x 25 1/2 inches.



Jirō Yoshihara, *Blue Calligraphic Lines on Dark Blue*, 1963, Oil on canvas, 36 1/2 x 29 1/4 inches.



Akira Kanayama, *March 5, 1957, 1957*, Felt pen on paper, 30 3/8 x 43 1/16 inches.



Lee Krasner, *Soundings*, 1962, Lithograph, 22 x 30 inches.



Jackson Pollock, *Untitled (after Number 8, 1951 / "Black Flowing")*, 1951, Screen print, 23 x 29 inches (sheet).

米画壇の巨匠ジャクソン・ポロック氏が具体的に大きな関心をもたれていた事は前号にも記載した通りですが、彼の死によってはからずも文通の機会を得た彼の親友B・H・フリードマン氏よりこの度美術論文を送って来られましたのでその全文と訳文を掲載いたします。猶彼の友人ハンス・ナムース氏の撮影したポロック氏の写真も送って来られていますので同時に掲載いたします。

JACKSON POLLOCK

B. H. Friedman

Already the image of Jackson Pollock, the man, is fading: "The facts" are being distorted equally by the sentimentality of friends and the viciousness of enemies. The apocryphists and mythologists are busy.

An honest biography of Jackson pollock could be written in words he wrote one of himself in paint. It would read like an existentialist parable ("existence precedes essence", "no reality except in action", "total involvement", etc.). And it would be as painful to write and to read as (for different reasons) Horton's life of Hart Crane. But the important thing is - and will be - to go to the paintings.



Pollock's paintings are a visual record of his acts, in a language more open, more frank, less tricked-up than that of any artist prior to his time. It is therefore all the more amazing that he (equals his work) should have been accused of painting deliberately difficult pictures. The real difficulty was - and is - that most of his detractors cannot face the honesty of his work, the inevitable and inseparable connection between his form and content. One would only have had to look at last year's "15 Years" show at Janis, one will only have to look at the retrospective exhibition to be held at the Museum of Modern Art this winter, to be convinced that the techniques which Pollock invented do not represent originality for its own sake (or difficulty for its own sake), but rather originality, developed slowly and painfully, as the only means by which the artist could say what he had to say, as the only means by which he could make action and energy visible. (Pollock's "abstractions" are "abstractions" of the creative act itself, of his own being, and in this sense they are far less abstract than most representational pictures. Remember Blake's "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.")

But the boys and the girls with the slick magazines didn't want to look. They glanced. They weren't interested in anything as basic as freedom and self-determination, and they certainly weren't willing to accept the responsibility that goes with them; they were interested in the phenomena of the passing parade, the march of time. Pollock's painting was too big a pill for them to swallow (and it didn't deaden the senses like aspirin and milltown); they choked on it. They just weren't used to a content that was basically democratic. It's impossible to believe that people can think and feel as free men, when your business is to condition their thinking with slick formulas. Likewise, when you're dealing with the techniques of photographic illusion, when the angle of every shot is edited, it's impossible to accept an art in which there can be no tricks, in whichever movement is visible.

So they looked the other way (as they have with work which has similar implications, such as that of Clyfford Still, Franz Kline, Mark Rothko, etc.). Or, if the painting did reach them, in spite of themselves, they saw the free, democratic, anti-totalitarian, anti-conformist implications of the art, and that seemed subversive. It was like waving a red flannel suit.

Jackson Pollock was subversive as man-artist. It's half-true that he was violent and destructive and that in the end he destroyed himself. The other half of the truth is that he was tender and creative. The ambivalence of his love, his passion, his being is clear enough in his paintings. In each of them a balance is achieved between the sudden-violent, if you like - explosion and the delicate caressing web. The sub-conscious and the conscious connect, fuse - as they must in all great art, expressive of heightened awareness - as they do, for example, in Goya's Capricios, and in Picasso's Guernica. (Picasso assimilated the history of art - intellectually, programatically. Pollock swallowed Picasso. And in Pollock's case it was that physical, that active, and in his most mature work it became that much his own.)

It is futile now to discuss what Jackson Pollock might have done if he had lived longer - as futile as the same kind of discussions about Shelley or Keats or Van Gogh or Seurat or Thomas. The important thing, as with those other artists who died young, is that he did what he did, that his concepts were given permanence and palpability, that to an unusual degree his "being" remains on canvas. The important thing is that when Jackson Pollock's body was buried one sad, sunny afternoon in Springs, Long Island, none of his paintings were buried with him.

Photo by HANS NAMUTH

ジャクソン・ポロツク

B. H. フリードマン

既に、ジャクソン・ポロツクの面影はなく、ジャクソン・ポロツクは去りました。事実は友人達の感傷と敵共の悪らつきによってまげられて居ります。アボクリフィストや神話学者は今忙いことでしょう。正しく、ジャクソン・ポロツクの伝記は長く文章によってのみ綴られましょう。それは、実存主義者の話を読むようなものであります。(実存は本質にまさる行動以外に実存はない全体の包含等々)

そして又フォートンの一生涯を書いたり読んだりするように、心しめつけられるものであります(異つた理由によつて)しかし大切なことは、そして又将来もずっと大切であろうことは彼の数々の作品に踏み入ることです。

ポロツク氏の作品は、彼の生前の行動を我々から見ることの出来る記録です、一言にして云えば彼以前のどの芸術家の作品よりも技巧少く、率直なものであります、それでポロツク氏がそして氏の作品が考えて考えてむつかしい絵を描いているのだという非難をうけていたと云うことは驚くべき事実であります。真実のむつかしさというものは氏の講義者の大部分が氏の作品の忠実さに対決することが出来なかったということであり、即ち作品の忠実さとはさけられないまた分けられない氏の作品の形と氏の真意、この関係であります。人々は作年のジャニスに於ける、15年展を見さえすればよかつたのです。そしてこの冬にモダンアート美術館で開かれている回想展を見さえすればポロツク氏があみ出したティクニツクはその根源のための根源を表わしているのではなく、(むつかしさのためのむつかしさ)時間をかけ苦惱に満ちて発展させられた根源性を表わしていると云うことを確信するであります。即ち、その根源性は芸術家で云わなければならないことを表わし得るたゞ1つの方法として、又芸術家が自分の行動をそして又エネルギーを表現するたゞ1つの方法として発展させられたものであります。

(ポロツク氏の抽象性は彼の創造的行動の抽象性であり氏自身の人間としての抽象性であります。この意味に於て多くの表現派の絵画よりもずっと具体性をもって居ります。ブレイク氏の言葉即ち知覚の扉がもしも美しいならばすべてのものは現在あるがまゝに見え、無限のものに見えると云うことを記憶せねばなりません)

浅薄な雑誌を眺めている少年少女たちは眺め入ると云うことを喜ばなかったのです。たゞちょっと見るだけで彼らは自由とか自力本願とか根本的なものには何も興味を持ちませんでした。そして、たしかに常につきまとう責任と云うものをうけ入れようとしなかったのです。彼らはたゞ通りすぎていくパレードの現象のみに関心を持ち、時のすぎ行く現象のみに関心をよせていたのです。その少年や少女たちにとつては、ポロツク氏の作品は、のみくだすにはあまりにも大きな丸業だつたのです。(アスピリンやミルトンのように本来の意味を消殺しているものでありません)即ち少年や少女たちはそれに息詰りを感じたのです。彼らは根本から民主的な内容にはなれなかつたのです。軽薄な公式にあてはめてのみものごとを考えようとする時には、自由な人間として思考し感じるということとは不可能であります。同様に写真の幻想的技巧をあやつりすべての瞬間が知覚し得る芸術を受け入れることは困難であります。そこで彼らは他の方法をさがしました。(丁度彼らは似たような意味をもつた作品自身が彼ら自身を意に介せず彼らについて行つたならば彼らは自由な民主的な反全体的反隷属的な芸術の含

を打振るようなものでしょう。ジャクソン・ポロツク氏は芸術家として破壊的な人でした。氏がはげしい人であり破壊的であり最後に自分自身を破壊に導いたということは半分はほんとうのことです。真実の後の半分は氏はやさしい創造的建設的な人であつたということなのです。

氏の愛情情熱そして氏の存在の矛盾した2つのものご自己同一は、彼の作品にはっきりとして居ります。

作品の各々に於て、急激なはげしいものを望むならば爆発的なものと繊細な可愛なものとの間に完全な調和が得られて居ります。無意識的なものと意識的なものとが一体に溶けあつて居ります。

高められた知覚の表現であるすべての偉大な芸術に於てとけ合わねばならないように、そして又たとえばゴッホの「カプリシヤス」やピカソの「ゲルニカ」で見られるように(ピカソは芸術の歴史を知的に、計画的に同化しました。ポロツク氏はピカソを完全に、自分のものとしそして氏の場合はそれが肉体的なものであり行動的なものであり、氏の最も爛熟した作品に於ては完全に自分のものとなつて居りました)丁度、ジェリーやキーツやヴァン・ゴッホやスラーそしてトーマスなどについて、同じような議論をするのが無益なことであるように、今ジャクソン・ポロツク氏がもう少し長生きしたらつくり出しただらうと思われることについて、とやかく議論するのは無駄なことであり、

重要なことは若死した他の芸術家についてと同じように氏が自分の作品を作っていたと云うことです。氏の意志は永久にのこりはっきりとのこつて居ると云うことです。特別に氏自身がキャンパスにのこつて居ると云うことでもあります。そして又重要なことはジャクソン・ポロツク氏の遺体が埋葬された時に人々は悲しんだことです。ロングアイランドの陽のよくあたる春の午後でした。

しかし彼の作品は氏の遺体と違つて永遠にうざりもれないものであると云うことです。(訳 鷺見 禎彦)

長谷川三郎氏の逝去

長谷川三郎氏は、3月12日サンフランシスコでガンのため死去されましたが、前衛絵画の我が国でのあり方に非常な貢献をした氏の逝去は、痛惜に耐えないところであり謹んで弔意を表します。

消 息 欄

- 昨年暮から今春にかけて日本画壇の話題をさらったアンフォルメル派の中心人物、タビエ氏が機関誌「具体」に異常な共感を呼び、私達具体グループの作品数点を是非彼らの企画している画集に収録し全世界に発表したいし、タビエ氏自身訪日に際して是非吉原先生はじめ具体の人達に会って色々話しあいたいという意味の手紙が渡仏中の堂本尚郎氏より送って来られました。
- 元 永 定 正 個 展
3月5日—10日 大阪阪急百貨店洋画廊 出品点数 50点
- 上前智祐、広井力 二人展



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