

2 & 3 July 2025

Art Appreciation lecture series 2025

Legendary Stories: Leonardo da Vinci to Murakami

The Hiroshima Panels, Toshi and Iri Maruki

Dr Mikala Tai



Toshi and Iri Maruki, *II Fire (火, Hi)*, 1950

Lecture summary

Revisit The Hiroshima panels, a series by Japanese husband and wife duo Toshi and Iri Maruki that they began in 1950 and completed in 1982. Delve into the artistry behind the panels, which depict the consequences of the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima in vivid painterly horror. Trace how the compelling humanity of these works influenced Australia both culturally and politically, and discover the role the Art Gallery of New South Wales had in helping rebuild Australia's post-war relationship with Japan through an exhibition of some of the early panels in 1958.

Mikala Tai is a curator, researcher and academic specialising in Australian and Asian art. She was previously the Head of Visual Arts at Creative Australia and Director of the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney.

Slide list

1. Alex Seton, For Every Drop Shed in Anguish, 2024, Install documentation at the Australian War Memorial, Mark Pokorny
2. Angelica Mesiti, A hundred years, 2019-2020 (still from single channel video)
3. Ramingining artists, Djon Mundine, Bandjalung people, The Aboriginal Memorial, 1987-88, National Gallery Australia.
4. Pablo Picasso, Guernica, oil on canvas, 1938. 3.49 x 7.77 metres. Collection of Museo Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid
5. Francisco Goya, The Disaster of War: Plate 37 Esto es peor (This is worse).
6. NO-PHOTO 2024
7. NO-PHOTO 2024
8. The Crab's Claw, The Argus, 1942
9. The Crab's Claw, The Argus, 1942
10. Front cover of the pamphlet toy manufacturers and retailers published in 1951 opposing Japanese toy imports. The Courier Mail, 31 August
11. The Crab's Claw, The Argus, 1942
12. The bombings of Hiroshima (left) and Nagasaki (right). Getty Images

13. The aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima. Getty Images
14. A shadow of a victim of the Hiroshima atomic bomb seen on stone steps. Getty Images.
15. Iri Maruki and Toshiko Akamatsu
16. I Ghosts (幽靈, Yūrei, 1950)
17. Views in and around Kyoto (Rakuchu-Rakugai zu) circa 1660, Unknown artist. AGNSW Collection
18. Cranes, circa 1770-circa 1772, Maruyama ŌKYO. AGNSW Collection
19. Ghosts (幽靈, Yūrei, 1950) Detail
20. The Hiroshima Panels
21. Water, 1950
22. The Hiroshima Panels
23. II Fire (火, Hi, 1950)
24. II Fire (火, Hi, 1950) (Detail)
25. The Australian Tour Catalogue
26. The Sydney Morning Herald, July 3, 1958
27. July 9, 1958, Women's Weekly
28. July 9, 1958, Women's Weekly
29. July 9, 1958, Women's Weekly
30. The Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday July 23, 1958
31. The Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday July 24, 1958
32. Contemporary Japanese Art Catalogue, AGNSW 1958
33. The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday November 8, 1958
34. Contemporary Japanese Art Catalogue, AGNSW 1958
35. Contemporary Japanese Art Catalogue, AGNSW 1958
36. The Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday November 5, 1958
37. The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday August 25, 1958