

Exploring II

Fragments of Art in Everyday Life

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Introduction

This exhibition seeks to broaden the recognition as well as increase the appreciation of contemporary art by comprehensively showcasing the outstanding works of artists with disabilities alongside those of currently active visual artists.

In a time of uncertainty, shaped by climate change, war, inequality, human rights issues, and the rapidly advancing influence of technology, contemporary artists provide new perspectives on the world and offer wisdom for better living and survival, as conveyed through their works. Even artists with disabilities, for whom it is difficult to fully explain their own experiences, reflect their familiar surroundings and their joy and suffering into unique expressions. In today's society, where the accumulation of small issues amplifies into larger-scale problems, it might be said that the essential truths we should be grasping are often hidden close at hand.

We will explore the power of artistic expression to open new perspectives on the world through the works of 14 artists, regardless of the presence or absence of disabilities. Through four key themes of "Beloved Things," "Handiwork," "Routine" and "Beyond Words" as elements that live and breathe in our daily lives, we would also like to explore the senses that we find vital in everyday living. This includes touching upon the hidden meanings in seemingly simple handiwork and repetitive daily actions, as well as the small discomforts encountered regularly in social norms.

Standing before works that, while silent, reveal a resolute will, we allow our imagination to explore why these expressions came into being. This attitude of trying to grasp the unspeakable something that the work emits leads us to the threshold of discovering fragments of art in everyday life. By paying attention to the finer details, a deeper understanding and empathy may arise.

We hope this exhibition will offer an opportunity for a contemporary audience to reflect on the essence of human expression, transcending the context of disability, as we explore these ideas together.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who kindly offered their warm support in making this exhibition possible.

も

Beloved Things

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Seeing children drawing their favorite insects or vehicles suggests that the urge to capture cherished and beloved subjects may be an inherent human instinct.

Lovingly touching, shaping, and repeatedly drawing beloved items from one's daily life. The following pieces invite us to confront a straightforward question that is universal: why do people create art and objects, and why are viewers drawn to them?

Here we introduce Kobayashi Takanobu, who paints oil paintings with a distinctive sense of light and texture, using motifs such as plates and building blocks; Sogi Kazuaki, who creates imaginary creatures combining insects and dinosaurs from a single sheet of paper; Shuji Takashi, who meticulously depicts still-life objects from daily life in pastel drawings; and Fukuda Naoyo, who uses books familiar since childhood to evoke a transcendent communication of words across time and space.



Kobayashi Takanobu 1960–

1990年
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して の の との わ を き な こと し

Kobayashi has been creating paintings since the late 1990s, focusing on universal and everyday subjects such as vessels, pillows, and forests, with an emphasis on light. Maintaining a deliberate distance from trends, Kobayashi persistently explores an introspective process, striving for expressions that are both essential and timeless. The works are distinguished by their portrayal of familiar, ordinary objects, rendered through meticulous and unpretentious brushwork. This approach avoids superficial embellishment, instead uncovering the symbolic depth and understated essence of the subjects. Despite the simplicity of these paintings—or perhaps because of it—they possess a rare ability to highlight the extraordinary qualities latent in the familiar. This, in turn, invites viewers to reflect on the profound mystery of existence itself.

Kobayashi explains this perspective as follows:
“I have consistently painted figurative works based on concrete subjects. I have painted a variety of subjects, but regardless of what I depict, my aim is not to portray the objects themselves or the circumstances surrounding them. Instead, I want to use the tangible, visible forms as a starting point to capture an invisible ‘something.’ I believe that this ‘something’ might be the very ‘existence’ of the objects themselves—the fact that they are there.”

On display in this exhibition are works by Kobayashi featuring motifs of ‘vessels’ and ‘pillows,’ which are among his signature pieces. His works offer an opportunity to reconsider one’s existence and the connection with everyday surroundings that often go unnoticed.



Pillow, 2016



Vessel-white bottle, 2023



Block (yellow & green gray), 2021



Vessel-white plate (warm gray), 2023



Vessel-green, 2019

Sogi Kazuaki 1977–

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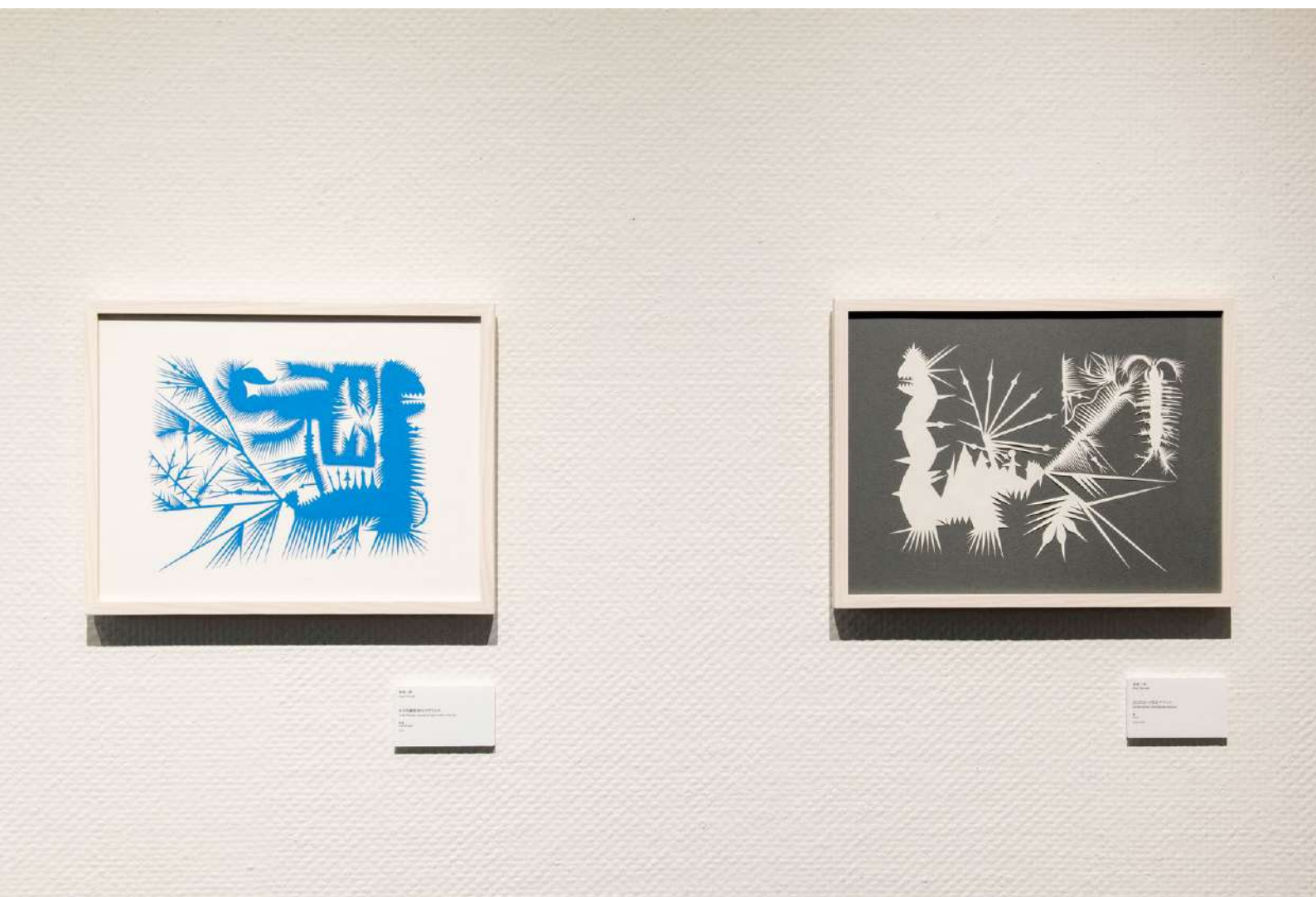
Sogi has been regularly attending a workshop in Osaka Prefecture and participating weekly in activities at the Nanairo Circus Troupe in Oji-cho, Nara Prefecture since around 2016. At the facility, the group typically spends the morning in a nearby forest. While others engage in farming or caring for animals, Sogi is uniquely permitted to wander searching for insects. He searches for insects like centipedes, gently captures them with his bare hands, cherishes them, plays with them, and observes them closely. When the time comes to leave, he gently releases them and departs the forest, often spending his days in this manner.

Sogi began creating paper-cut artworks in the fifth grade, and has continued this practice for over 30 years. At the facility, he works on his paper-cut art whenever he feels inspired, and with focused effort can complete an A4-sized piece in about three to four hours. If a piece is not finished, Sogi sometimes takes it home as a homework assignment to complete. The subjects of his works range from insects such as centipedes, scorpions, and bees to weaponry like pistols, missiles, and tanks, as well as dinosaurs, animals, and plants. He constructs these creations directly from his imagination, without any preliminary sketches, and invents fantastical creatures named in the pattern of “XYZ-saurus.”

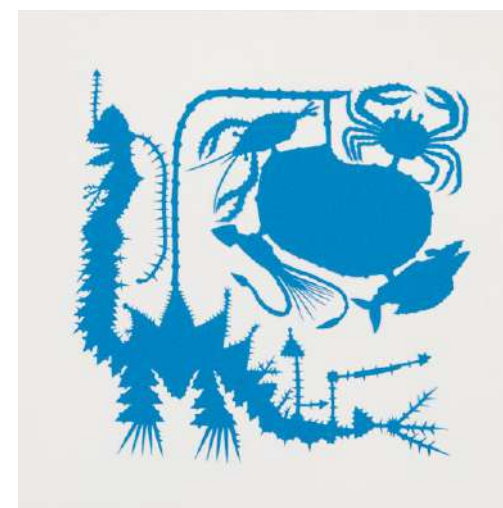
The spiky shapes that emerge from a single sheet of paper represent a small universe made up of the artist’s favorite things. The detailed, precise shapes and the curving beauty that connects the entire form are truly remarkable. Please try to perceive not only the seemingly sharp and poisonous objects, but also the tenderness and warmth that emerge from the silhouettes created by Sogi.



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Whale-shark-saurus, 2019



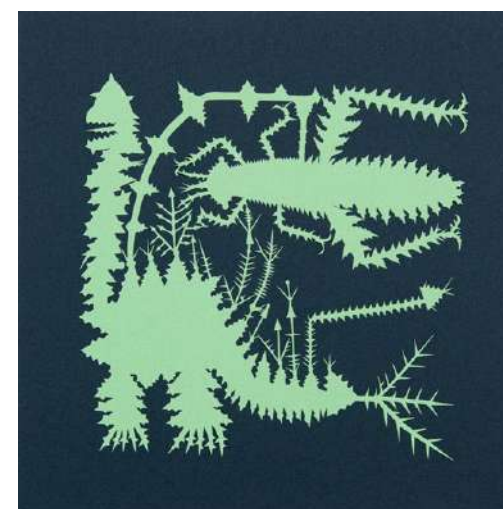
の
Tree-flower-scorpion-gun-robo-saurus, 2021
ZOIDS
Zoids-spiny-centipede-saurus, 2014



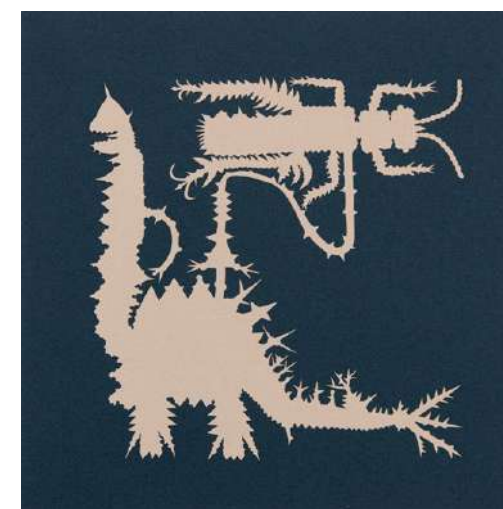
ル
Conveyor-belt-sushi-saurus, 2014



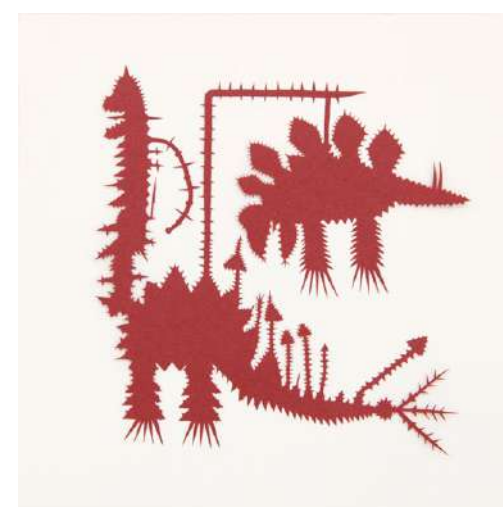
ッパ ル
Centipede-gun-leaf-saurus, 2014



の シ ル
Upside-down-leaf-spiny-stick-saurus, 2014



ル
Jumping-insect-saurus, C.2014



テ ル ル
Stegosaurus-saurus, C.2014



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Pterosaur-saurus, 2014

Shuji Takashi 1974–2021

1993年 ク プ を き し な ー ン
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Shuji started painting in 1993 at the Suzukake Painting Club. Being an avid fan of the Hanshin Tigers, he once spent time in the studio meticulously drawing the scoreboard of Koshien Stadium down to the smallest detail. After finishing it, he completely drew over it with a black crayon. He is also known to have painted an image where, except for the blue sky in the background, everything else was a solid block of black squares.

The subjects of his paintings include potted plants from the shelves of the painting club, empty bottles, pipes, small brushes, and seasonal plants or vegetables brought in by staff members. In a hunched posture over the paper, he leans in closely and meticulously applies colors with pastels. The bold compositions, which sometimes seem to extend beyond the frame, are not arrangements based on the actual placement of objects but rather reconstructed either in his mind or directly on the canvas. The soft ambiance that emanates from his work is the result of a meticulous process. Using pastels and erasers equally, he repeatedly draws and erases until achieving the image that matches his ideal vision.

The works, reduced to simple silhouettes using a limited palette of colors, suggest a new perspective and reveal the essence of the subject to the viewer. As you engage with the artwork, while considering the diligent effort put into creating it, please take a moment to reflect on the process of perceiving the subject in its true form.



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Strelitzia in a Vase, 2005



と いも
Doll and Potato, 2006



ン い と とブ の
Flowers in a Bottle with Loquats and Grapes, 2010
レ コ とコップとと
Great Burnet, Cup and Sake Bottle, 2010



Fukuda Naoyo 1967–

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Fukuda creates works by using everyday objects like handkerchiefs and books, as well as stationery items such as erasers and manuscript paper. Through them, she focuses on the relationship between words, text, herself, and the world. She persistently repeats actions such as scraping, folding, cutting out, and embroidering, incorporating chance and unconscious processes into her methods. Through these acts, objects undergo a transformation and emerge as works of art in a new, altered form.

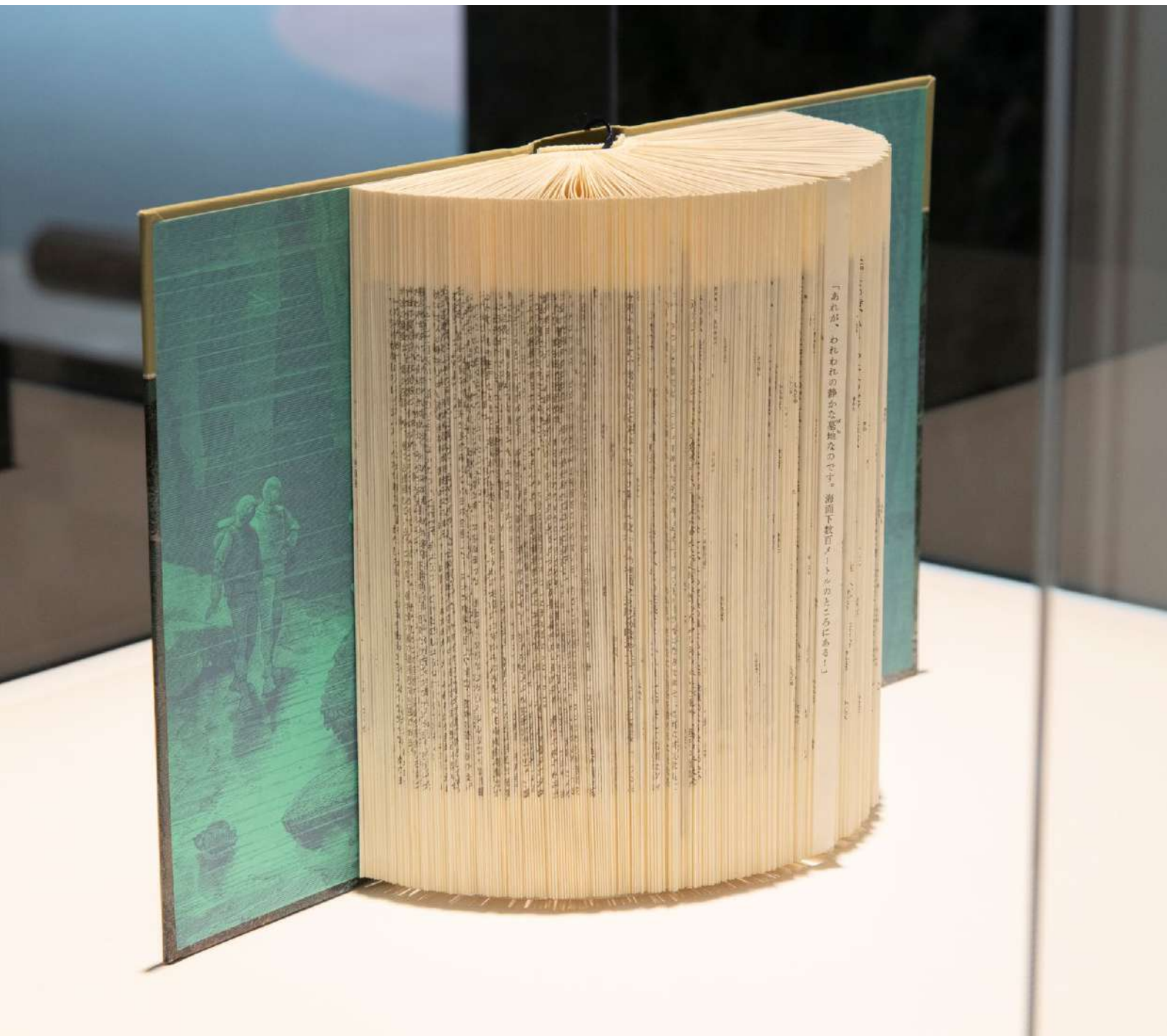
The series being exhibited, *The Winged*, draws inspiration from books that Fukuda has cherished since childhood, such as *Adrift In The Pacific (Two Years' Vacation)* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. Every page is folded in half, leaving only a single line visible to read from the entire book.

Fukuda explains:
"It's often misunderstood, but I'm not actually trying to showcase my favorite passage - in fact, I don't even know which line will emerge until I actually fold the pages. In the first place, sentences often extend across multiple lines, so regardless of their content, it feels like a miracle to find a neatly contained single line, standing like a flower in a vase, right at the center of the page (in the vertically-printed Japanese-style books). It is precisely because the line suddenly appears as I fold the pages with single-minded focus, as if in prayer, that I am convinced the book has spoken its words to me. In that instant, inspiration strikes, and the book transforms into something with wings—a messenger from the heavens. As time passes, *The Winged*—each from different eras, lands, and authors—exchange their lines, quietly continuing their new form of communication."

By listening to the whispers of *The Winged*, the world we live in today expands in depth and richness.



もの 年
The Winged: Adrift in the Pacific, 2022



もの
The Winged: Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, 2022

Handiwork

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Works created using materials such as fabric, thread and origami paper, which were not always a part of the mainstream in art, blur the boundary between handicrafts and fine art. Along with a critical perspective on traditional art, they open up a new frontier in the exploration of novel forms of beauty and interpretation.

Repetitive acts of creation using everyday materials. These unique creations are expressions of a strong will manifested in extraordinary forms.

Here we introduce Nisato Chikara, who produces charming balls of thread through the endless, yet simple, act of cutting and tying thread; Fujioka Yuki, who creates never-before seen paper sculptures using the simple tools of paper and scissors; and Tanizawa Sawako, who purposefully uses the technique of paper cutting to address issues such as gender within society.



Nisato Chikara 1968–

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Nisato repeatedly engages in the task (or Handiwork) of cutting and tying threads day after day. The practice originated during the collaborative production of naturally dyed threads in the studio, where an accident caused the threads to become tangled. As a result, they had to be cut and retied. Nisato grew fond of this act of cutting and retying, which eventually became the focus of his work. Over time, he began secretly cutting and tying even non-tangled threads when the staff weren't watching. The action he calls "itokko (threadlings)" has been carried on with official approval from the staff since 2008.

Nisato, who has poor vision, holds the thread with his rounded fingers, hunching his back as he brings his eyes close to the thread to work. In the warm, sunlit window facing south, he feels the sensation of the thread in his hands as he repeatedly ties and cuts it, creating knot after knot. His posture evokes a sense of reverence, almost as if in prayer.

A ball of thread with countless knots linked together - it took about a year to complete the first one, and now one is produced every few months. The result of countless hours of intense focus, the finished piece takes the form of a ball of thread with knots that resemble flower petals or even small animals, creating an irresistibly charming sculpture. It is likely that Nisato does not have the conscious intention of creating "art" or giving titles to his works, and all of his pieces remain untitled. The daily, repetitive process itself is a great joy for him.



Untitled, Early 2010s



Fujioka Yuki 1993–

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Fujioka began creating paper-cut artworks at the age of six after receiving a pair of scissors from his grandmother and he has continued this practice every day since. Initially, he created semi-representational paper-cut artworks. When Fujioka was a third-year student at the Kumamoto Special Needs Primary School, a curator involved in the Kumamoto City Museum of Contemporary Art’s opening exhibition visited the school, which led to his debut museum exhibition at *ATTITUDE 2002*.

Fujioka uses everyday materials, such as ordinary office scissors, and paper that can be easily found in daily life, including flyers, origami paper, and copy paper. After Fujioka cuts various papers to a size that feels right to him, typically just a few centimeters in dimension, he begins to make intricate cuts. At the end of the process, he always makes a final diagonal cut indicating he has finished. The paper, cut into strips less than 1mm thick, curls into a spiral shape, and when these spirals are gathered together, they form a unique paper artwork.

The paper “sculptures,” which are created daily by Fujioka, number in the thousands. All of them are carefully preserved by Fujioka’s mother. This exhibition showcases a selection of works from 2004 to 2024, carefully curated in chronological order. Though they may appear similar at first glance, each piece differs in the type of paper, size, width of the cuts, and direction in which the scissors are applied.

The accumulated paper cuttings can thus also be seen as a reflection of the days Fujioka has lived. Take your time to engage closely with each individual piece, or experience the entire body of work as a whole, and see what resonates with you in your own way through Fujioka’s works.



Untitled, 2020–2024



Untitled, 2004–2005

Untitled, 2006–2010

Untitled, 2009–2012

Untitled, 2006–2008

Untitled, 2009–2012

Untitled, 2023

Tanizawa Sawako 1982–

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Tanizawa creates works that expose societal discomfort by using media and techniques not typically seen in the male-dominated art history, such as paper cutting, stenciling, and ceramics. These works, which focus on themes of gender and feminism, bring attention to issues that were not traditionally addressed in mainstream art practices.

By using objects that symbolize gender differences and female representations depicted in the past as motifs, the artist folds, crushes, cuts, prints, and adds color, expressing the complex aspects of humanity that cannot be captured in a singular way. Addressing the current situation where people in socially vulnerable positions find it difficult to speak up, the artist conveys strong, short messages such as 'NO,' 'Asshole,' and 'Don't Take It' as a form of protest. The paper, made from recycled packaging paper, and the frames, made from scrap from dismantled buildings, are familiar materials, yet they carry various metaphors, including covering and concealment, as well as the dismantling of the patriarchal system.

This time, we will exhibit the *Haikai Chieko-sama* series, which attempts to reinterpret the image of Takamura Chieko (1886–1938), who continued creating paper art even while suffering from mental illness, through the act of reproducing her works. Additionally, we will showcase the *Loosen Up the Correction* series, named to signify an exercise in understanding the corrections present in everyday life and education.

The artist says, 'The paper-cutting form is a rich existence that does not require privileged skills or space, possessing both fragility and flexibility.' Paper and handmade crafts, which allow the continuation of creation even in difficult times. Please feel what the works, carefully created with a strong will, convey.



を #4
Loosen Up the Correction #4, 2023



— と
Nude and Bananas, 2023
NO
NO 'Horse Mackerels, 2023

を え てし
Everything She Says He Turns It into
A Poem' Apples in a Lipped Bowl, 2023
い の ッ —
Message to Young Women' Pomegranate, 2023

NO
NO 'Tsukimi Soba, 2023
— と
Nude and Fish Fillets, 2023

Routine

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The daily practice of carrying out a routine to reach one's fullest potential requires discipline of both the mind and body, yet it has a certain refreshing quality. It is an act that is akin to meditation and prayer.

Repeatedly performing 'acts' countless times functions like a barometer, reflecting the rhythm of the mind and breath. Through the repeated accumulation of each remarkably focused small act, an overwhelming force develops, seemingly imbued with spirituality.

Here we introduce Morimoto Eri, who systematically places 'dots'; Shibata Ryuhei, who captures and writes the world through 'numbers'; Matsumoto Kunizo, who layers 'words' on a calendar as if fulfilling a necessary action; and Hirata Yasuhiro, who seeks mental tranquility by driving 'nails'.



Morimoto Eri 1978–

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Morimoto creates paintings and sculptures using a systematic method based on specific rules. It gives a complex impression, as if emotions and sentiments have been eliminated, but in reality, it is a record of deeply personal sensations and actions. The artist says that she is strongly drawn to fractal patterns, boundaries, and net-like structures. She separates concrete sensations like humidity, the scent of the environment, and the joy of looking at beautiful plants and landscapes, reconfiguring them into artwork through her unique filter.

The series of flat works titled *contour map* is based on landscapes that the artist found compelling. These landscapes are deconstructed into dots of various colors and sizes, and after calculating the dimensions, the artist then places these dots on the canvas according to a predetermined plan, creating the final piece. The paired “memo” serves as a manual documenting the production process (which the artist refers to as a “recipe”). It details the number of dots for each color and the process of placing them, with each unit of the cross-shaped pattern representing 100 dots.

The artwork titled *percolation*, consisting of paper pieces, is a series that has been ongoing for 40 years. Since the age of four or five, Morimoto began cutting paper into small pieces with scissors, continuing this practice almost as a ritual without showing it to anyone. At the time she completed graduated school, she gained recognition by presenting a video installation of paper cutting, and since then, she has refined this practice into her life’s work.

The act of placing perfect circles at uniform millimeter intervals and cutting paper pieces to the smallest recognizable size involves techniques and methods that are incredibly difficult. Morimoto says that although following this process involves physical pain, it is mentally peaceful and fulfilling; like an athlete who trains daily to develop remarkable strength, she sharpens her senses by repeatedly performing the same actions, thereby creating entirely new visual experiences.



contour map# humidity -blue-grey/edge (B2-) -memo, 2022

contour map# humidity -blue-grey/edge (B2-), 2022



contour map# sandy beach (dry), 2023
contour map# grove of tree (night), 2023



Shihenbin (blue), 2024 *Shihenbin (green), 2024* *Shihenbin (yellow), 2024*

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Shibata has an exceptional memory for numbers. For example, he can easily recall the birthdays of celebrities and, when meeting someone for the first time, can instantly determine the day of the week they were born by asking for their birthdate. His work directly reflects his strong interest in numbers. Upon closer inspection of his works, one can notice notations such as specific minutes and seconds, as well as dates and days of the week. These notations include details such as the lengths of songs by his favorite idols and the airing times of TV programs he used to watch.

He quickly taps on a calculator while drawing, but his unique method of calculation remains mysterious. It may be a process of reconfirming what he already knows, a kind of double-check.

Shibata also chooses surfaces to draw on that aren't limited to just paper or canvas, but often include packaging materials or scraps from various objects. He used to carry around a notebook, and whenever he had free time, he would quickly tap on a calculator and jot down various numbers that he observed in his surroundings. Since acquiring a smartphone, Shibata has often been seen browsing music sites, particularly focusing on long tracks. This suggests that interacting with numbers continues to bring him comfort and tranquility in his daily life.

Shibata's work, when viewed up close, resembles intricate decorative patterns, but seen as a whole from a distance, it can appear as a fluid, abstract painting. This suggests that to truly understand the world, one must recognize that there are alternative ways of perceiving it.



き ル
Title deleted, 2015



1992-1997, 2017



Matsumoto Kunizo 1962-

レンー 手 な し と の文字を き を 文
字 の と わ な も 字 な し てき
この ル のき 3 の を
文字を き してい こと な を の
を も し の し の き 会 の を な 字
と を の を してい

レンー 文字を こと 1997年 1 との レンー
し の な文字 ことをしてい し てい し 2002年
レンー も き な と な 文字 の
な な き し レンー の き の ークとな 2020年
コ ル の も な な を い き し

展 の レンーの 2016年 し の し のものと
2020年コ き し のもの
シ 字の の こ を して て い

Matsumoto creates works by densely layering his distinctive writing on items like calendars, notebooks, and letters. The characters featured in his works are closely tied to the environment in which he grew up. Among these, kanji characters such as “ ” (dance), “ 人 ” (man), “ 女 ” (woman), “ 魔 ” (demon), “ 火 ” (fire), and “ 生 ” (life) appear repeatedly. The origins of Matsumoto’s style can be traced back to his exposure to Kabuki theater at the age of three. He later learned calligraphy at school and in institutions, and his foundational skills were further developed through self-study by copying characters. Additionally, his family ran a Chinese restaurant, and he was responsible for picking up three daily newspapers for the business every morning. It seems that, by observing the headlines and the size of photographs in newspapers, he developed a unique sense of associating kanji with meaning, while also sensing the significance of social events.

Matsumoto began writing on calendars around 1997. Initially, he would fill in the small spaces on a calendar, which was posted on the refrigerator, with fine text over the entries his mother had written for each month. Since the sudden passing of his loving father in 2002, he began writing on daily calendars as well. After the passing of his father, he would write obsessively late into the night at home, almost as if possessed by the act of writing itself. The works created in the daily calendar became his lifelong project. This continued until the late autumn of 2020, when he was hospitalized due to a serious case of aspiration pneumonia, compounded by an infection from COVID-19.

The calendar works on display at this time are from two distinct periods: one from the period around 2016, when the family’s Chinese restaurant closed and the artist moved to his brother’s house, and the other from 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when he continued to create. The works written on memo paper are from the period immediately following his father’s sudden passing. While looking at the paper that was used, the smudged stains, and the traces of the written characters, please try to imagine the events that the artist experienced in his life.



Untitled, 2016



Untitled, 2020



Untitled, 2004

Untitled, 2004

Untitled, 2004

Untitled, 2004

Hirata Yasuhiro 1984—

1998年 リ い きの の を のを て し
の を し いてき し
の プ の 2004年 し の て
の な の い の も き
し
の な の の を の と を き と
の とも こし を てい の を の い いこ
近 を い の て
この とも こし 10年 し の 1 1 2 の いてい し 2020
年コ し 近年 の を い の
わ てい
とも とも な い

Hirata was born into a family that ran a construction business and grew up watching his father do carpentry work in the workshop from a young age. In 1988, when he first began attending the art studio, he repeatedly painted sideways portraits of people, as well as his father’s work tools, such as caulking guns, nails and paint cans.

Hirata began creating cylindrical objects around 2004, a time of significant personal change, including his graduation from the familiar environment of his special-needs school and the loss of his grandmother—the first time he experienced the death of a close family member. This shift in his artistic focus was prompted when his father happened to receive a paper tube from a business acquaintance.

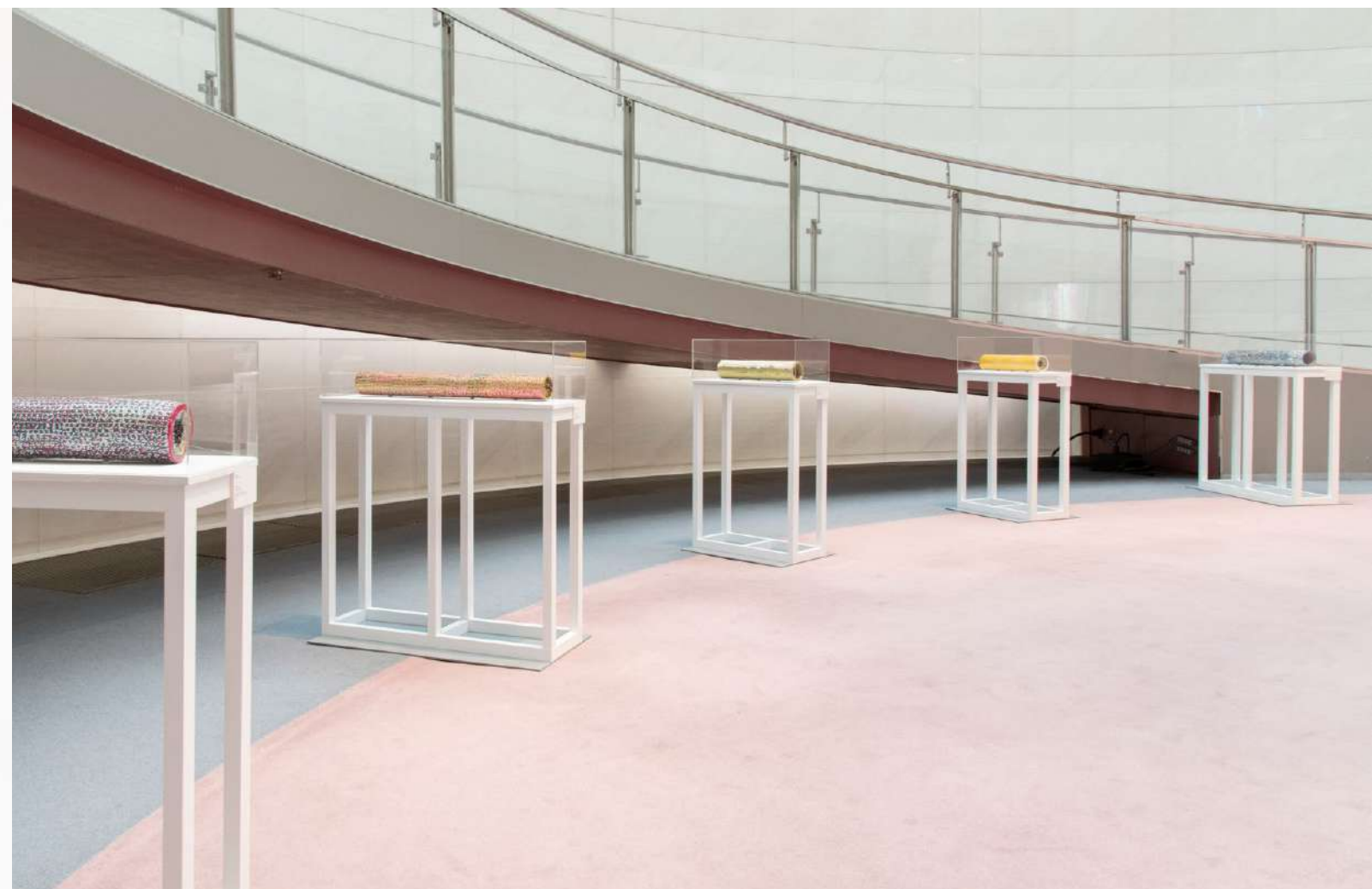
Hirata drives countless nails into an unstable curved surface, placing them at regular intervals, and then draws spirals or circles around them. According to him, he is recreating his favorite food, which is corn. Hammering nails into the curved surface requires a high level of skill, a technique he mastered from a young age when he became adept at using a hammer. He continuously strikes the nails with precision, working his way towards the center of the cylinder.

Hirata immersed himself in the creation of these “corn” objects for about ten years, and after that, his practice continued at a relaxed pace, with him striking one or two nails per day. Hirata resumed his intense focus on creating the “corn” sculptures around 2020, when the state of emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. In recent years, he has incorporated a variety of nails, covering the entire surface of the paper tubes so densely that it is almost completely covered.

From Hirata’s works, where nails are driven in single-mindedly, a profound spirituality emanates that can be felt as either madness or prayer.



と も こし
Corn on the cob, 2024



と も こ し
Corn on the cob, C.2005

Beyond Words

文字をえのなコーション手
しし文ないと文字
わなな

の文字をいなの
きのコーションを
ンのをて手なもてコーション

ここしいリゲな文字を
文字をいなを
文字のをしてい文を
いし

Characters are a convenient means of communication to clearly convey things. However, when one is not part of the same linguistic or cultural sphere, the pictorial and symbolic nature of the characters diminishes, and the meaning can suddenly become unclear.

While using inherently universal letters, these works break free from the meaning and rules of language, forming a uniquely personal mode of communication through contemplation and poetry composition. Not only the works themselves but also the media through which they are depicted and the ways they are conveyed reveal the profound depth of communication.

Here we introduce the works of Kamitsuchibashi Yuki, whose beautifully crafted calligraphy, which at first glance appears to convey meaningful text, is actually composed of random letters; Hirano Yoshiyasu, who reflects the world by layering characters at a high density; and Tachibana Fumio, who explores the fundamental properties of characters.



	3	の		ン	を	7	の	パ	コンを	い	し	2020年
な	て	5	6	主	手	き	パ	コンを	を	てい		
		しい	文字	リグ		の		な	わ		ンを	を
DVDのパッ	ー	をし	してい	手	きの			も	な	ル	グの	ンの
の展	な	を	してい					の	なコ	の	も	と文字
A		文字の			の	え						えもな
い		の文字	も	Hotel	Water	な	と	な				
	しない		の	ルの				ない			ない	なも
	い											し
近	-	パー	-	ン	のバ	コン	を	してグ	ック	ンも	てい	の
					の	ン	を	の	ンの	をコ	-	き
		し		の	の	の			ンル	も	してい	えな
ン		し		ク		レ	ン	-の		をクルクルと		
のIT	会	文字	コ	ーション	の	と	を		と	パ	コン	な
	て	の	との			してい	の					

Kamitsuchibashi became interested in English and fonts from the age of 3 and started using a computer at the age of 7. In 2020, he began working at Atelier Yamanami, producing artwork five to six days a week, primarily drawing by hand as well as using a computer.

The works he creates are beautiful examples of decorative lettering (calligraphy). He holds a water-based pigment pen, typically used for drafting, like a fist, and carefully thickens the lines. Other hand-drawn works include designs for small labels, tags, book covers, and DVD package designs. There are also paintings with panel-like compositions similar to manga, where the development of figures and text forms a unique world.

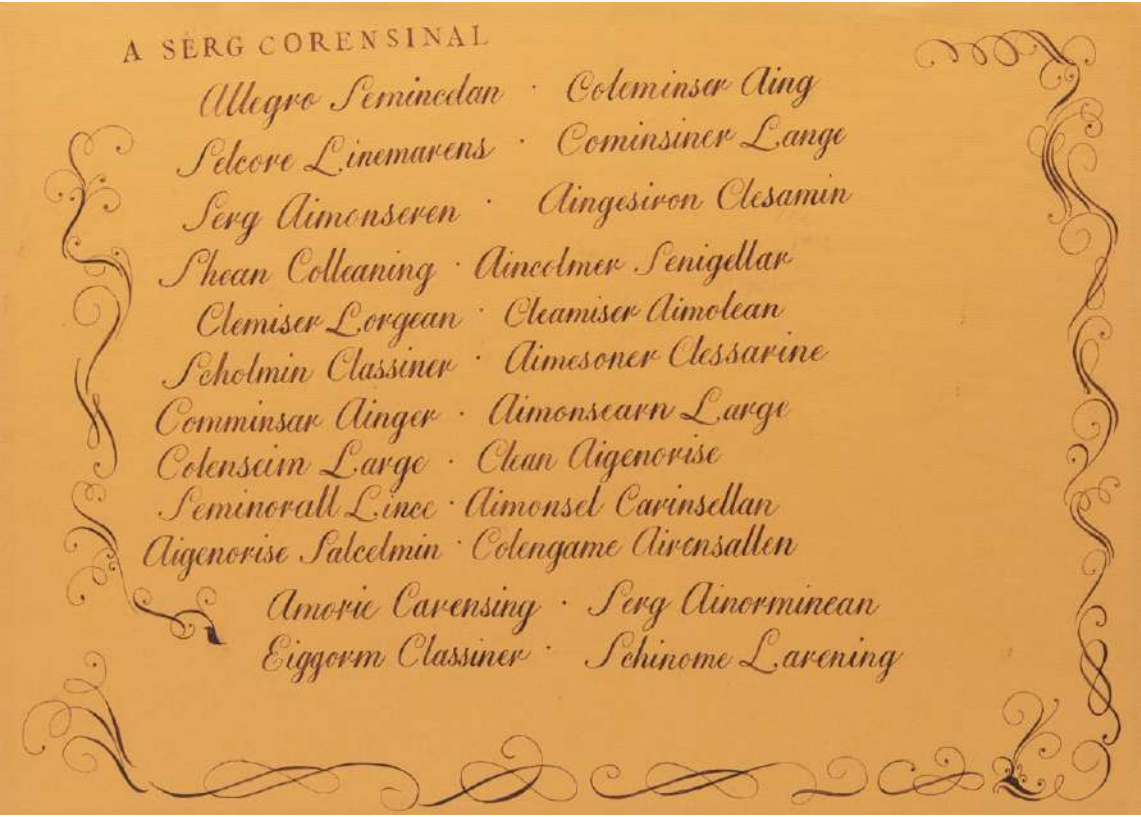
The sequence of letters starting with “A” seems at first glance like a person’s name, but it is neither legible nor a name. Other sequences of letters occasionally include recognizable words like “hotel” or “water,” but the majority appear to be fictional spellings that do not correspond to any real English words. A sense of uneasy frustration lingers—words that seem readable but aren’t, meanings that feel graspable but remain elusive.

Recently, Kamitsuchibashi has been using computer software like Word and PowerPoint to create graphic designs. The process is incredibly fast, where he selects a preferred font from many options and then repeatedly copies, pastes, and adjusts the font style over and over. This process is also shared on his video streaming channel.

Once his design work is complete, he steps away from his desk and spins around like a ballet dancer. Kamitsuchi-bashi's creative work suggests both the potential and limitations of communication through text. At the same time, it appears to explore a connection with a different dimension of time and space, one that has expanded through a digital society shaped by computers and video streaming.



ル
Title Unknown, 2020



ル
Title Unknown, 2021



ル
Title Unknown, 2021

Hirano Yoshiyasu 1980–

2006年をののののを
ものし2014年の文字いことい文字のも
しないとをと文字をしいいなし

しいンをの文字ののないとしき
文字ともわとことのをしていとえ
文字なていレーのき
なしていンののもしンル
をてい

のいールンのと近のいルンと
ないのののを展いしのの
てルを

きをのなンバクな文字の文字を
のもわいきこと
の文字といをしな
の近なをレーしていともえも
し

Hirano began working around 2006, and his early works involved drawing animals by repeatedly creating lines of a consistent length, as though using a ruler. Around 2014, a support staff member noticed words hidden within Hirano’s drawings. Thinking Hirano might have an interest in text, they handed him a newspaper. Hirano then began extracting words from the newspaper and meticulously filling entire canvases with them.

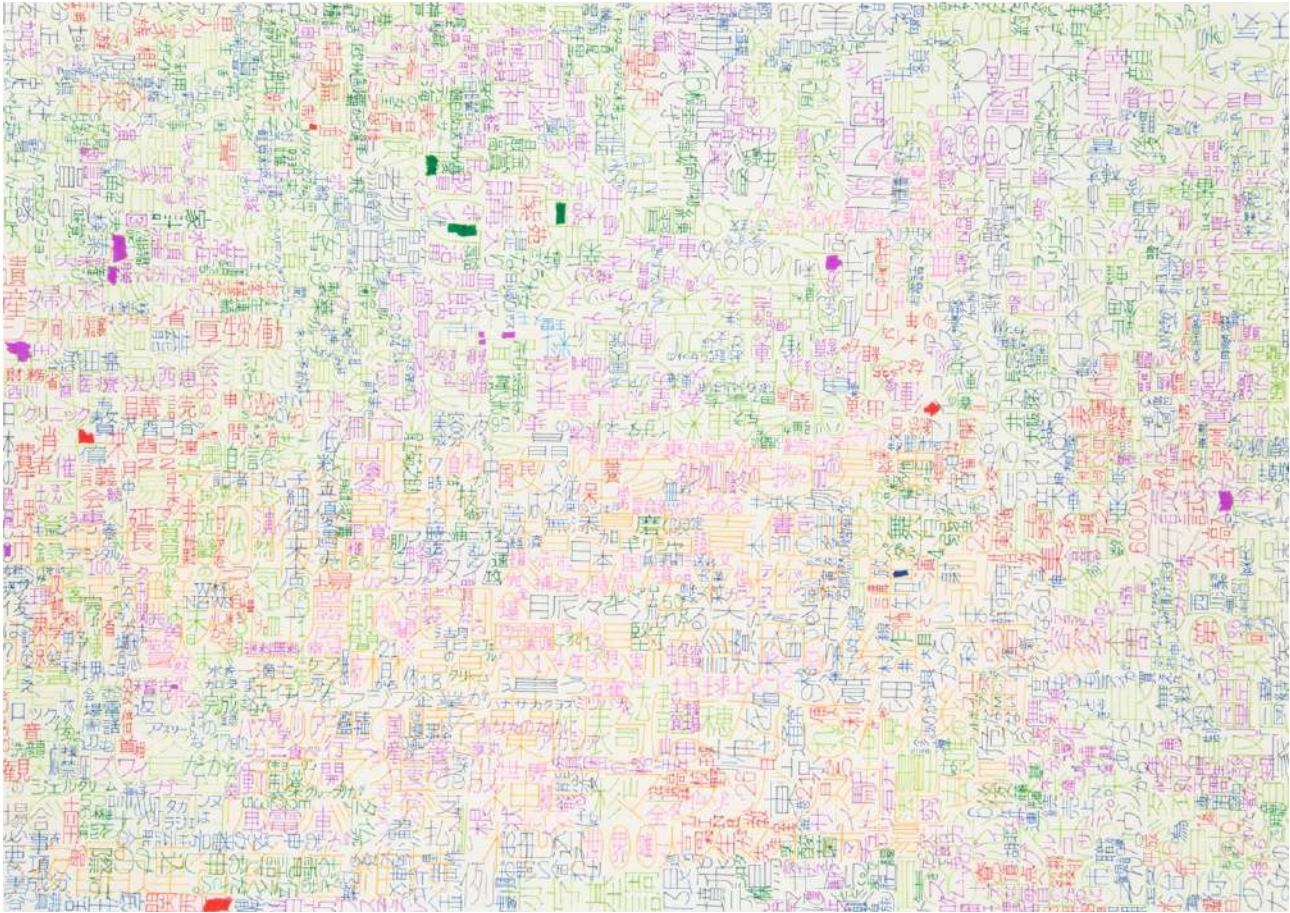
Hirano produces beautiful fonts, which initially led to the assumption that he was interested in the shapes of letters. However, as the written characters, in both Japanese and English, conveyed coherent meanings, it came to be understood that he comprehends the meanings of words. The characters Hirano writes are not only extracted from newspapers and magazines but have also gradually evolved to include memorized phrases and words he encounters in daily life through hearing or observation. Additionally, by utilizing the thickness of the pens and the characteristics of ink bleeding during the drawing process, he has fluidly adapted his font style.

This exhibit displays early Japanese character works created with a fine pigment ballpoint pen, alongside more recent, high-density pieces titled *In My Brain*, where bold English and Japanese characters intertwine, created with a thick felt-tip pen. Many of Hirano’s works are untitled, but *In My Brain* is the first work for which he personally assigned a title.

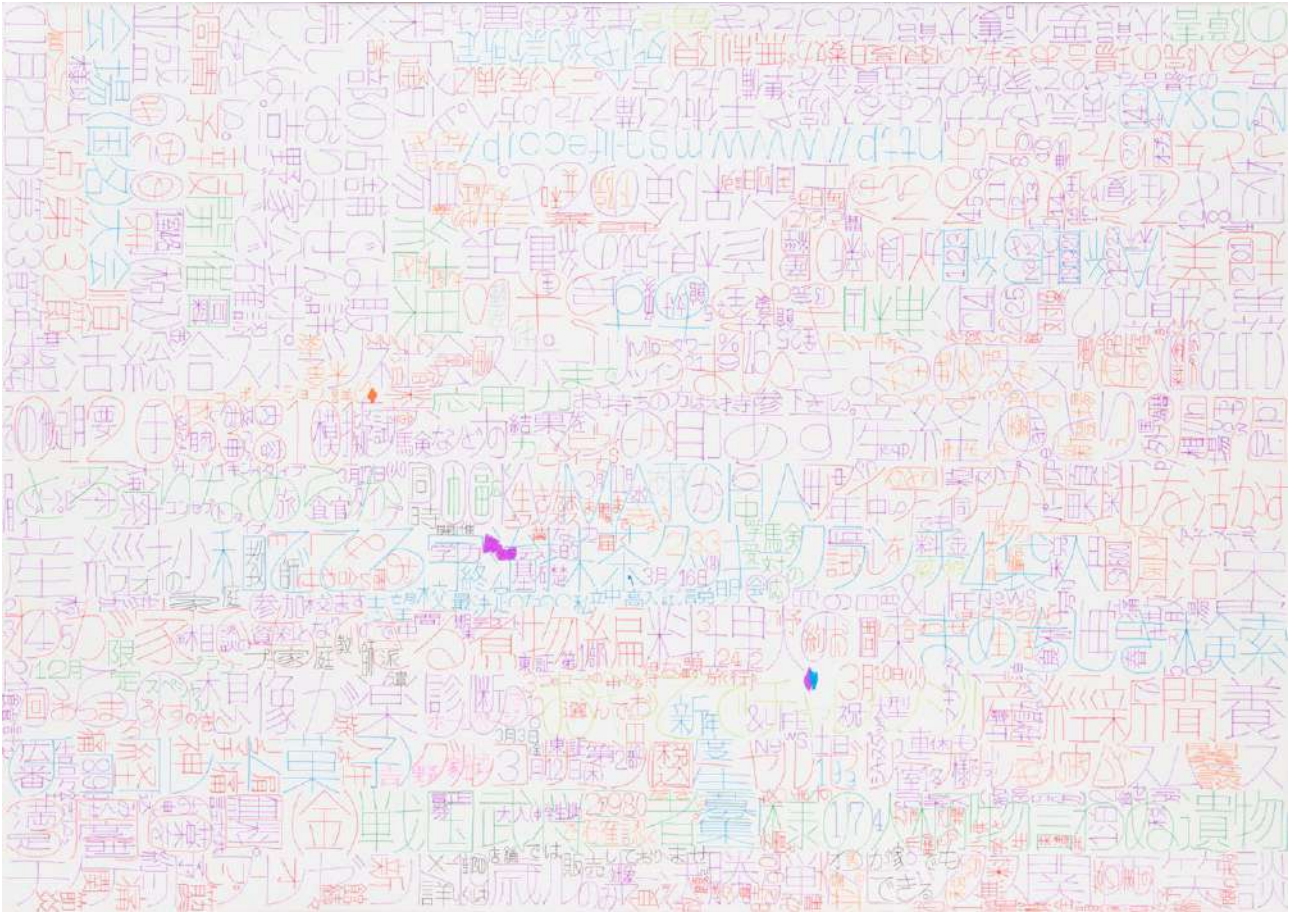
Hirano’s works, created with a remarkable sense of form, offer not only a strong visual impact but also a deep appreciation for their playful use of words, embedding text within text in an intricate way that never ceases to captivate. Incorporating newspaper text that reflects current events while intertwining personal family matters, these pieces can be seen as a straightforward expression of a complex and chaotic world.



の ない
In My Brain, 2022



Untitled, 2015



Untitled, 2014

文

Tachibana Fumio 1968—

し 近年 を この 文字 近 を し
の を を してい な て 文字 な

展 2018年 し Shape of my shadow シリー し
い ッ ックの とも し い を してい 文字
い を しし の も え
シリー の の してい

い の な も
い を
も こ ない の な
てい を
な もの の を き
とこ を
の い 文字の て
いてい を

もの なの
の と も てい

を をな とい な の を て え もの

Tachibana was born into a family running a bookbinding business in Hiroshima, spending his childhood in an environment where text, paper, and printed materials were always present. In recent years, he has become known for experimental works in typography, in addition to creating books. His pieces delve deeply into the fundamental properties of letters, paper, and their textures, pursuing these elements with intense focus.

The work currently being exhibited is the *Sho-tai: Shape of My Shadow* series, which was first presented in 2018. The sun-bleached, creased deadstock paper is adorned with ink brushstrokes, forming ambiguous symbols that collectively create the layout of the piece. It also appears as though the long process of the creation of ideographic characters is being shown in reverse.

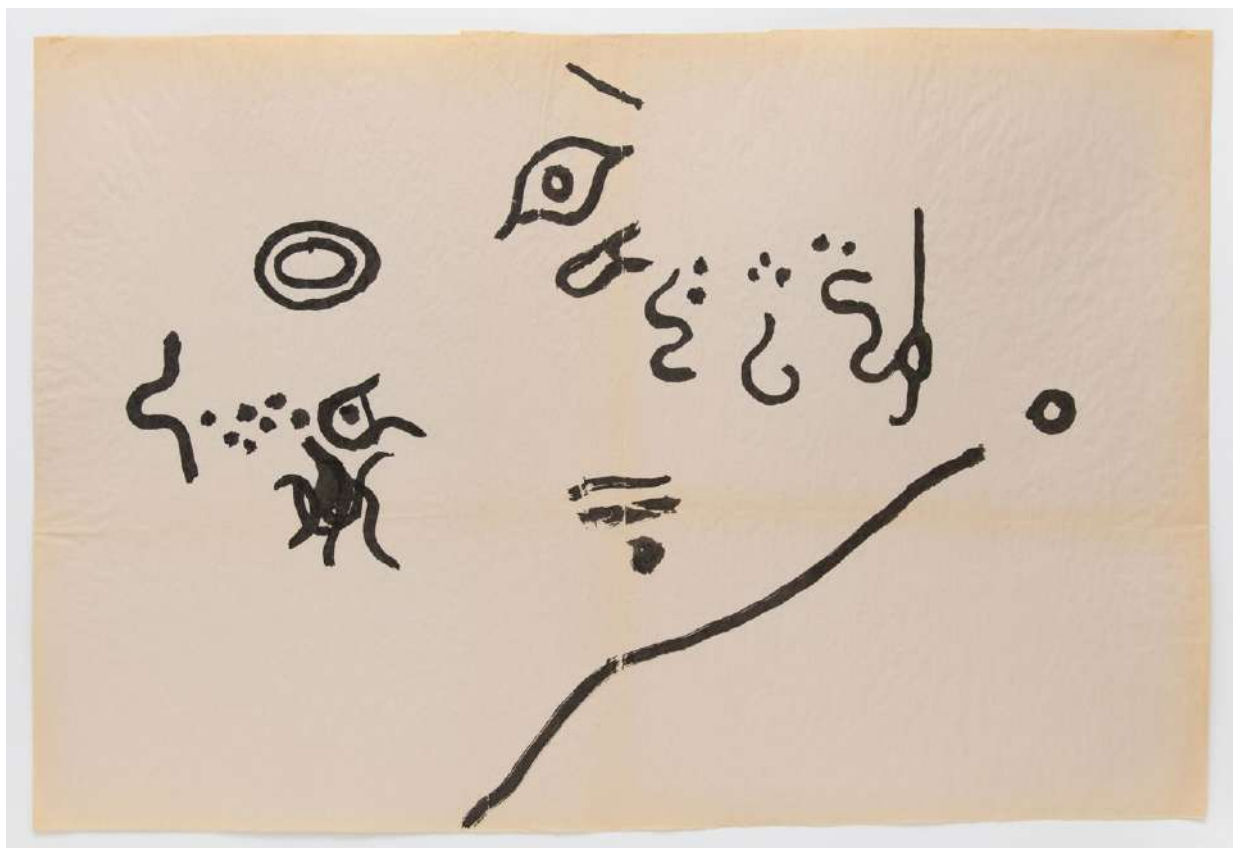
Tachibana notes the following in his book:

*I saw a white wall with numerous dark,
vertical lines made by falling raindrops,
the visible traces of the black rain.
I saw a rock upon which the shadow of
someone who had vanished instantly
still vaguely remained.
I saw a someone with a brush, writing the
names of the many people who had died.
I saw a piece of paper with holes where
the black ink had been charred by
the strong flash.*

*Is the ink that has been applied to paper
eternal?
Does my shadow remain, even after my
death?*

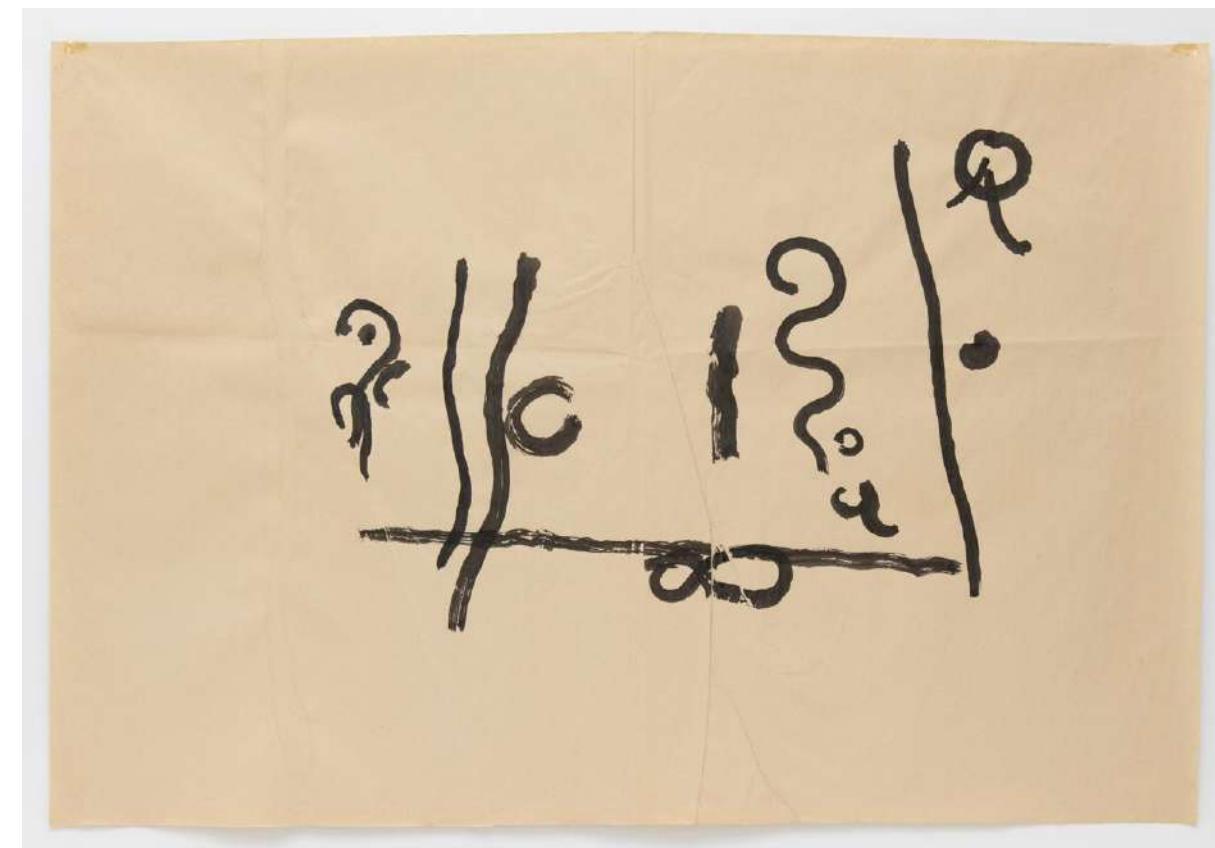
Tachibana's works make us reconsider the meaning of primitive actions such as drawing lines, tracing shapes, and writing.





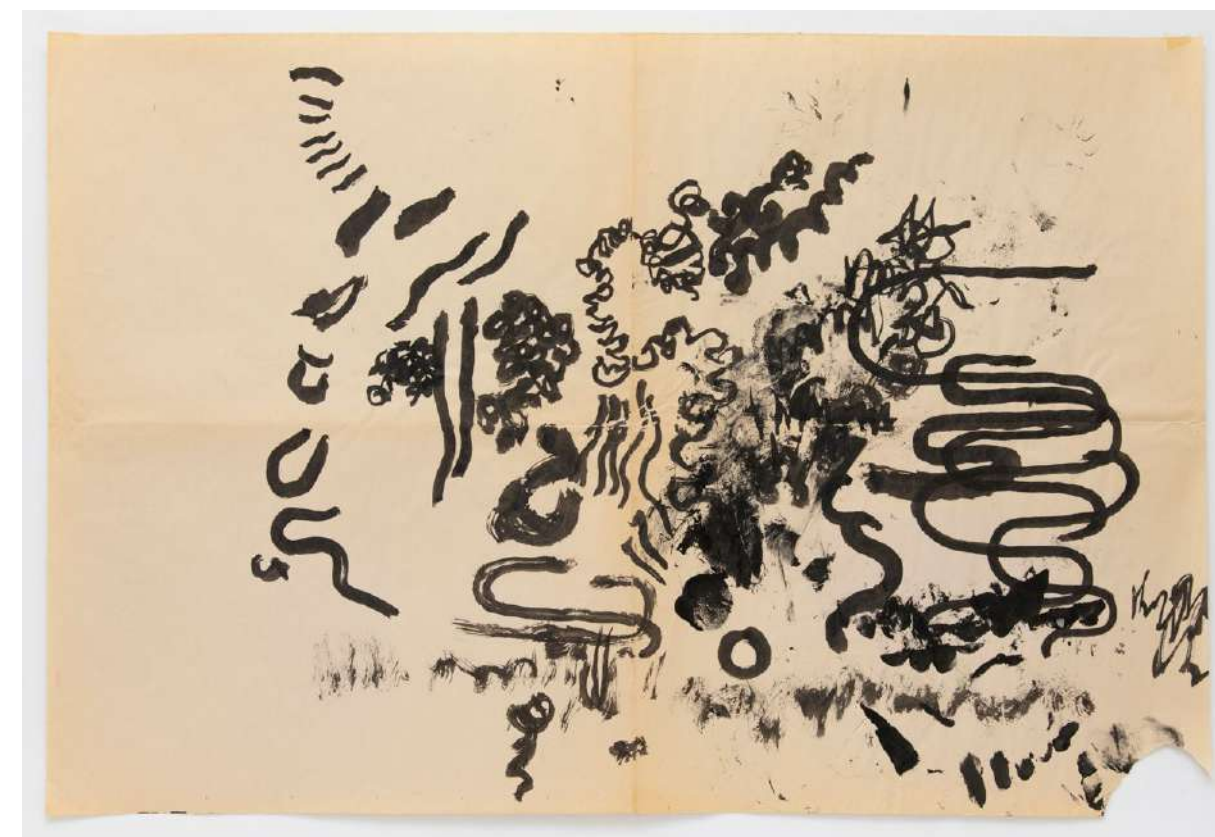
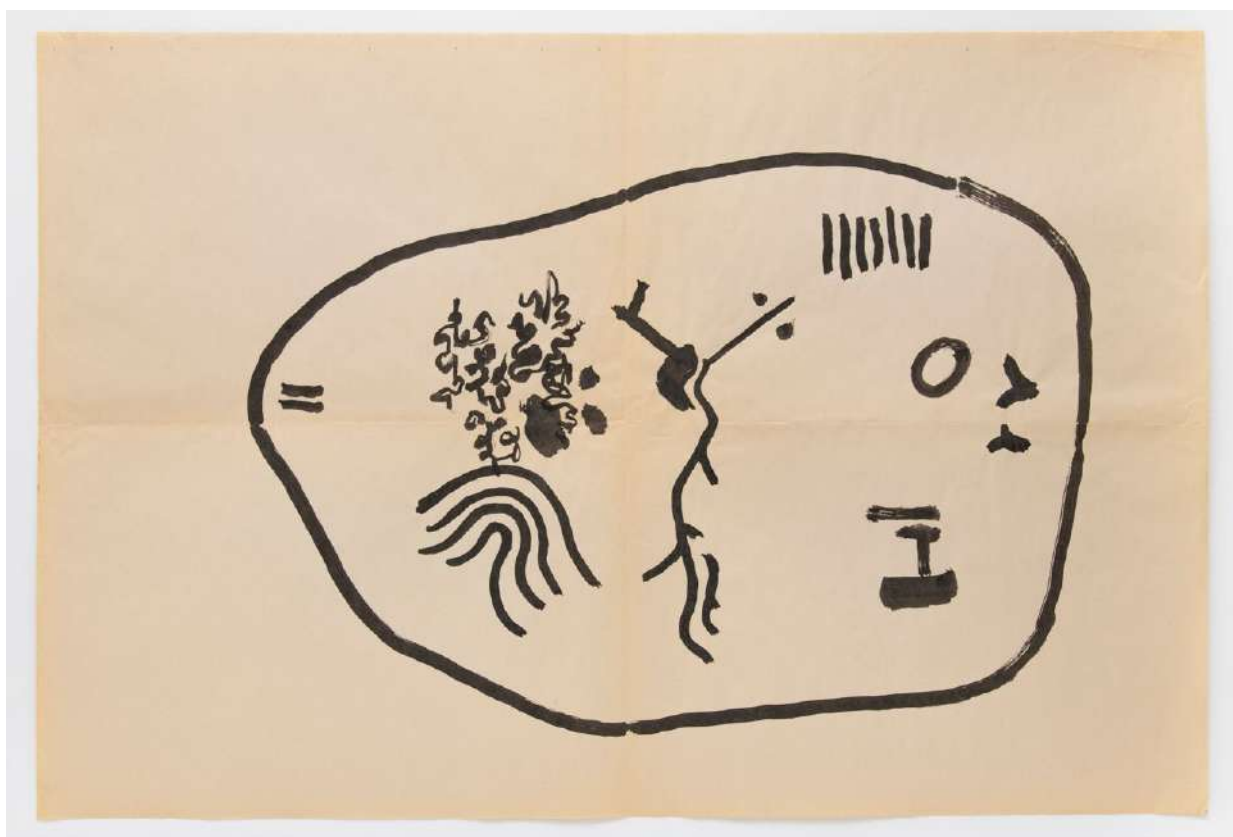
From the "Sho-tai" Series, 2018

From the "Sho-tai" Series, 2018



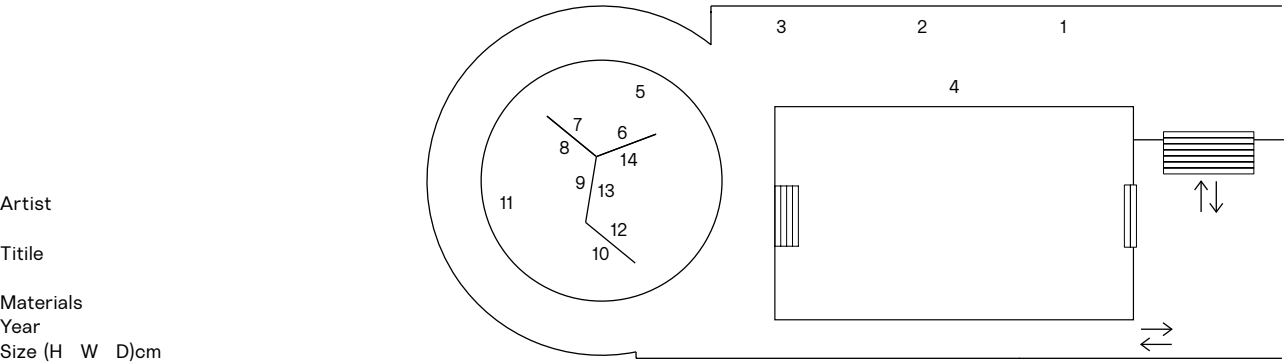
From the "Sho-tai" Series, 2018

From the "Sho-tai" Series, 2018



From the "Sho-tai" Series, 2018

From the "Sho-tai" Series, 2018



Artist

Titile

Materials
Year
Size (H W D)cm

1 𐄂 𐄂
Kobayashi Takanobu

Block (yellow & green gray)
ン
Oil on canvas
2021
41.2 41.4cm

Vessel-white plate (warm gray)
ン
Oil on canvas
2023
33.7 45.8cm

Vessel-white bottle
ン
Oil on canvas
2023
53.3 45.7cm

Vessel-green
ン
Oil on canvas
2019
38 45.5cm

Pillow
ン
Oil on canvas
2016
91 116.5cm

2 𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Sogi Kazuaki

ZOIDS 𐄂 𐄂
Zoids-spiny-centipede-saurus

Paper
Circa 2014
21 28.5cm

𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Tree-flower-scorpion-gun-robo-saurus

Colored paper
2021
21 27.5cm

𐄂
Conveyor-belt-sushi-saurus

Colored paper
2014
15 15cm

𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Centipede-gun-leaf-saurus

Colored paper
2014
14.9 15cm

𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Upside-down-leaf-spiny-stick-saurus

Colored paper
2014
14.7 15cm

𐄂
Jumping-insect-saurus

Colored paper
Circa 2014
15 14.8cm

𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Stegosaurus-saurus

Colored paper
Circa 2014
15 14.9cm

𐄂
Pterosaurus-saurus

Colored paper
2014
15 15cm

ン 𐄂
Whale-shark-saurus

Colored paper
2019
25.7 37.2cm

3 𐄂 𐄂
Shuji Takashi

ン い と と 𐄂 𐄂
Flowers in a Bottle with Loquats and Grapes

𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Pastel on watercolor paper
2010
79 54.7cm

𐄂 𐄂
Doll and Potato
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Pastel on cardboard
2006
54 77cm

𐄂
Strelitzia in a Vase
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂

Pastel on watercolor paper
2005
117 85cm

レ コ と コップ と と
Great Burnet, Cup and Sake Bottle
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂

Pastel on watercolor paper
2010
77 54cm

4 𐄂 𐄂
Fukuda Naoyo

𐄂 𐄂
The Winged: Adrift in the Pacific
𐄂
Book with pages folded-in
2022
22.4 29.3 9cm

𐄂 𐄂
The Winged: Nobody's Boy
𐄂
Book with pages folded-in
2022
14.9 22.4 7.5cm

𐄂 𐄂
The Winged: Boy Detectives Club
𐄂
Book with pages folded-in
2022
15.1 19.8 5.9cm

𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
The Winged: Heidi
𐄂
Book with pages folded-in
2022
14.8 20.5 6.1cm

𐄂
The Winged: Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea
𐄂
Book with pages folded-in
2022
20.8 34.7 11.2cm

5 𐄂
Nisato Chikara

Untitled

Thread
Early 2010s
Dimensions variable (total length 292cm)

Untitled

Thread
Early 2010s
6.5 7.5 4.5cm

Untitled

Thread
Early 2010s
7 7 5.2cm

Untitled

Thread
Early 2010s
7.8 7 4.2cm

Untitled

Thread
Early 2010s
7 7 4.2cm

Untitled

Thread
Early 2010s
7.2 6.6 4.3cm

6 𐄂 𐄂
Fujioka Yuki

Untitled
𐄂
Paper, cutting with scissors
2004-2005
4 16cm

Untitled
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Crayon on paper, cutting with scissors
2006-2008
5.5 11.3cm

Untitled
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Crayon on paper, cutting with scissors
2006-2010
7 12cm

Untitled
𐄂
Paper, cutting with scissors
2009-2012
7.4 16cm

Untitled
𐄂
Paper, cutting with scissors
2009-2012
8.8 13cm

Untitled
𐄂
Paper, cutting with scissors
2023
9 19cm

Untitled
𐄂
Paper, cutting with scissors
2024
10.5 9.5cm

Untitled
𐄂
Paper, cutting with scissors
2020-2024
Dimensions variable

Untitled
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Paper, crayon on paper, cutting with scissors
2020-2024
Various sizes (15 pieces)
Framed size 42.2 42.2 3.5cm

7 𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Tanizawa Sawako

𐄂 #3
Loosen Up the Correction #3
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
49.7 35.5 4cm

𐄂 #4
Loosen Up the Correction #4
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
50 35.6 3.6cm

𐄂 と
Nude and Bananas
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
36.4 36.1 3.6cm

NO
NO' Horse Mackerels
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
34.7 34.7 3.5cm

𐄂 え 𐄂 てし
Everything She Says He Turns It into A Poem' Apples in a Lipped Bowl
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
36.1 36.1 3.5cm

𐄂 の 𐄂 𐄂
Message to Young Women' Pomegranate
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
36.2 36.1 3.8cm

NO
NO' Tsukimi Soba
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
34.5 36.1 3.5cm

𐄂 と
Nude and Fish Fillets
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂
Acrylic paint on paper, acrylic board, scrap wood from a demolished house
2023
37.6 37.1 3.8cm

8 𐄂 𐄂
Morimoto Eri

contour map# humidity
-blue-grey/edge(B2-)
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂 176,300dots
Acrylic on cotton cloth covered panel
2022
72.8 51.5cm

contour map# humidity
-blue-grey/edge(B2-)-memo

Pencil on paper, frame
2022
51.5 36.4cm

contour map# sandy beach (dry)
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂 56,300 dots
Acrylic on cotton cloth covered panel
2023
41 41cm

contour map# grove of tree (night)
𐄂 𐄂 𐄂 64,400dots
Acrylic on cotton cloth covered panel
2023
41 41cm

<i>Shihenbin (blue)</i> シ Paper (flyer), bottle 2022 12.5 5cm	<i>Untitled</i> ンク Ink on paper 2004 14.9 10.4cm
<i>Shihenbin (green)</i> シ Paper (flyer), bottle 2024 10.5 5cm	11 . æ̥ Hirata Yasuhiro と も こし <i>Corn on the cob</i> ン – – シ Canvas tacks, marker, paint on paper tube Circa 2005 10 74.3cm
<i>Shihenbin (yellow)</i> シ Paper (flyer), bottle 2024 18 6cm	と も こし <i>Corn on the cob</i> – クリル Colored steel nails, acrylic on paper tube 2011 9.3 43.3cm
9 ㅈ . Shibata Ryuhei き ル <i>Title deleted</i> ン –ル シ クリル レ ン Color gel pen, acrylic, resin on canvas 2015 112.2 145.6 2.8cm	と も こし <i>Corn on the cob</i> ン クリル Brass nails, paint, acrylic on paper tube 2011 9.1 43.5cm
1992–1997 –ル シ Color gel pen on paper 2017 45.5 53.2cm	と も こし <i>Corn on the cob</i> – クリル Brass nails and colored steel nails, acrylic on paper tube 2010–2020 8 71.5cm
10 ㅈ ↑ ㅈ Matsumoto Kunizo	と も こし <i>Corn on the cob</i> – – – シ Colored steel nails, marker, dye, glue on paper tube 2024 10 49.7cm
<i>Untitled</i> レン – シンク Ink on calendar 2016 36.9 26.4cm	12 ㅈ Ë ㅈ Kamitsuchibashi Yuki ル <i>Title Unknown</i> ン Pen on paper 2021 54.1 76.5cm
<i>Untitled</i> ンク Ink on paper 2004 14.9 10.4cm	ル <i>Title Unknown</i> ン Pen on paper 2021 39.3 54.3cm
<i>Untitled</i> ンク Ink on paper 2004 14.9 10.4cm	ル <i>Title Unknown</i> ン Pen on paper 2021 54.3 76.5cm

12 ル シ
Title Unknown
 Pen on paper
 2020
 54.2 76.5cm

13 ル シ
Title Unknown
 Pen on paper
 2021
 38.3 54.1cm

14 イ シ
Hirano Yoshiyasu
 の ない
In My Brain
 クリル ル シ シ
 Acrylic, felt pen, pen on wooden board
 2022
 91.2 101cm

Untitled
 ー ル シ
 Color gel pen on paper
 2015
 54.5 77.4cm

Untitled
 ー ル シ
 Color gel pen on paper
 2014
 54.1 76.5cm

15 ジ シ
Tachibana Fumio
From the "Sho-tai" Series
 Ink on paper
 2018
 54.5 81cm

From the "Sho-tai" Series
 Ink on paper
 2018
 54.8 81.5cm

From the "Sho-tai" Series
 Ink on paper
 2018
 54.5 80.2cm

From the "Sho-tai" Series
 Ink on paper
 2018
 54.7 81.1cm

△

Π

Biography

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1960年

1986年

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2023年

2022年

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と

2019年

2014年

Balance 100 Tonson Gallery

ンコクを

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Kobayashi Takanobu

1960 Born in Tokyo, currently based in Kanagawa
1986 Graduated from Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts

Recent Solo Exhibitions

2023 *Vessels*, Nishimura Gallery, Tokyo
2022 *Cloud and Shadow*, Nishimura Gallery, Tokyo
Midday, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi
2019 *Balance*, 100 Tonson Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
2014 *Kobayashi Takanobu Dream, dreaming us*, Yokosuka Museum of Art, Kanagawa

Recent Group Exhibitions

2024 *Discovering the Sky*, The Shoto Museum of Art, Tokyo
Collaborative Exhibition Kawabata Ryushi + Takahashi Ryutaro Collection May It Be Your Tale, Ryushi Memorial Museum, Tokyo
2023 *GROUND3 Ordinary Painting*, ART LAB AICHI, Aichi
Symbiotic World - 2022 Jinan International Biennale, Jinan Art Museum, Jinan, China
2022 *Re: Freshers—New Acquisitions*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Hyogo
Sunset/Sunrise, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi

Public Collection

Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art / The National Museum of Art, Osaka / The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo / Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo / Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art / and others

Sogi Kazuaki

1977 Born and lives in Osaka
1988 At age 11, began creating paper-cut works
2016 Began participating in Nanairo Circus Troupe activities once a week

Solo Exhibition

2023 *Capacious Exhibition#20: Kazuaki Sogi Solo Exhibition*, Calo Bookshop and Cafe, Osaka

Group Exhibition

2016 *The World of Art Brut in Japan 3*, Borderless Art Museum NO-MA, Shiga

1982年	2007年	2023年	2022年	2021年	2024年	2022年	2020年	
MA, Master's course, Department of Painting, Graduate School of Arts, Kyoto City University of Arts	Loosen Up the Correction, studio J, Osaka Touching A Distant Hand, See Saw Gallery + hibit, Aichi Small Voice, Finch Arts, Kyoto	Emotionally Sweet Mood, studio J, Osaka Female Image Exercises, kumagusuku SAS, Kyoto	Kawaru Aida no Bijutsu 2024 Premonition to narrate and..., Kagoshima City Tenmonkan Library, Kagoshima	VOCA 2022 -The Vision of Contemporary Art-, The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo	Border Crossings: New Perspectives through Works from the Collection and Guest Artists, Kyoto Seika University Gallery Terra-S, Kyoto	Rokko Meets Art 2020, Mt. Rokko, Hyogo	Borderless Area Ohmihachiman Art Festival Town of Perception, Okumura Family Residence, Shiga	
Public Collection	Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art / Takamatsu Art Museum / Manggha Museum of Japanese Art & Technology (Poland)							

Ū β				Morimoto Eri		
1978年	も			1978	Born and lives in Osaka	
2003年				2003	MA, Master's course, Department of Painting, Graduate School of Arts, Kyoto City University of Arts	
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2024年	contour map	-from the beginning-		2024	Contour Map# -from the beginning-, Gallery Yamaki Fine Art, Hyogo	
	リー	ン		2020	Conversion by Example, SAI Gallery, Osaka	
2020年	とえ の	リー		2007	Eri Morimoto, SAI Gallery, Osaka (also 2010 and 2022)	
2007年	展	リー		2004	CRITERIUM 58, Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki	
2004年	クリ テリ	58		2002	The Time of Blooming, Gallery 16, Kyoto	
2002年	のとき	gallery 16				
5 p m j . T じ						
2024年	Here and There and Back Again, Japanese Art 1964–2024 Nicolas Krupp Gallery			2024	Here and There and Back Again, Japanese Art 1964–2024, Nicolas Krupp Gallery, Basel, Switzerland	
2023年	ABSTRACTION	の		2023	ABSTRACTION -The Possibilities of Painting-, Gallery Yamaki Fine Art, Hyogo	
2012年	ー ク ックvol.2	リー		2012	Art Picnic vol.2 breathing art, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History, Hyogo	
2008年	VOCA展2008	の展		2008	VOCA 2008 -The Vision of Contemporary Art-, The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo	
	の	しい		2003	Kobe Art Annual 2003 Grip the Gap, Kobe Art Village Center, Hyogo	
2003年	ー	ル2003 Grip the Gap				
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√ ↑ =	Matsumoto Kunizo		
1962年	も		1962 Born and lives in Osaka
1988年	2016年	の	1988 Worked at his family's Chinese restaurant to 2016
1995年	リ	こ	1995 Started attending Atelier Hiko about twice a week to create artworks and go on field trips
ﻩﻱ ﻯ			
2007年	Galerie Susanne Zander	ルン	Solo Exhibitions
	文字	2004年	2007 Galerie Susanne Zander, Cologne, Germany <i>Obsessed with Letters</i> , Yukiko Koide Presents, Tokyo (also 2004)
ﻯ ﻯ ﻭ ﻡ ﺟ ﺰ ﺗ ﻯ			
2024年	文字との	き い	Recent Group Exhibitions
2022年	Do the Write Thing: read between the lines #3	り	2024 <i>Relationship with Letters</i> , Atelier Hiko and the Three Traditional Japanese Row Houses, Osaka
	Christian Berst	バ	2022 <i>Do the Write Thing: read between the lines #3</i> , Christian Berst, Paris, France
2021年	レ	い	2021 <i>Letters -Tangling Unraveling-</i> , Tokyo Shibuya Koen-dori Gallery, Tokyo
2020年	Scrivere Disegnando, When language Seeks Its Other	文字	2020 <i>Scrivere Disegnando, When language Seeks Its Other</i> , Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
	Centre d'Art Contemporain	ー	2018 <i>Do the Write Thing: read between the lines #2</i> , Christian Berst, Paris, France
2018年	Do the Write Thing: read between the lines #2	ン	2016-2017 <i>The Museum of Everything Exhibition #7</i> , Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, Australia
	Christian Berst	バ	2015 <i>Art Brut Live: Collection abcd / Bruno Decharme</i> , DOX Center for Contemporary Art, Prague, Czech Republic
2016-2017年	The Museum of Everything Exhibition #7	リ	2014-2015 <i>Art Brut Live: Collection abcd / Bruno Decharme</i> , La Maison Rouge, Paris, France
	Museum of Old and New Art	ー	Public Collection
2015年	Art Brut Live: Collection abcd / Bruno Decharme	ン	Collection de l'Art Brut (Switzerland) / Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou (France)
	DOX Center for Contemporary Art	ブ	
2014-2015年	Art Brut Live: Collection abcd / Bruno Decharme	コ	
	La Maison Rouge	バ	
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・ æ ɸ	Hirata Yasuhiro
1984年	1984 Born and lives in Osaka
1998年	1998 Started working at Atelier Hiko in his second year of junior high school, currently works there once a week.
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2022年	Solo Exhibition
	2022 Capacious Exhibition#17: Yasuhiro Hirata Solo Exhibition, Calo Bookshop and Cafe, Osaka
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2024年	Selected Group Exhibitions
2023年	2024 Relationship with Letters, Atelier Hiko and the Three Traditional Japanese Row Houses, Osaka
	2023 Uppalace ~The Palace of Leisure and Creation~, Atelier Hiko and the Three Traditional Japanese Row Houses, Osaka
2021年	2021 Outsider Art Fair's Special Exhibition: Super-Rough, Guest curated by Takashi Murakami, SoHo, New York, U.S.A.

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		Calo Bookshop and Cafe			
2018年		シ	展覧会 #07		個展
		Calo Bookshop and Cafe			
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2016年	PLASTIC	The Mass			
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1995年	MADE IN U.S.A.			ッ	ー
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2011年		も	と	の	コン
2008年	MOT		ル	き	とき
1999年	Ten Asian Artists in Residence		Mattress Factory		
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1997年	SELECTIONS WINTER '97		The Drawing Center		
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Kamitsuchibashi Yuki

2001 Born in Gifu, currently based in Shiga
2020 Began working at Atelier Yamanami, producing artwork five to six days a week, primarily using hand-drawing techniques and a computer.

Selected Exhibitions

2023 *How to Walk in a Parallel World: Kamitsuchibashi Yuki and Toya Makoto*, Borderless Art Museum NO-MA, Shiga
2022 *Imagine Letters/Letters Imagine*, Kyoto Prefectural Library, Kyoto
Infinity Art for Everyone: The Universe of Atelier Yamanami, Woodone Museum of Art, Hiroshima
Atelier Yamanami Exhibition: View from the Mirror The World of Art Brut, NU Chayamachi, Osaka
Genius: The Human Gift for Creating and Living, Shiga Museum of Art, Shiga
2021 *about me 5 Body and Soul*, Imagine & Design, Osaka
Imagine Letters/Letters Imagine, Kyoto Prefectural Library, Kyoto

Hirano Yoshiyasu

1980 Born in Aiohi, currently based in Osaka
2006 Began creating arttwork
2014 Began drawing text-based works

Solo Exhibitions

2020 *Capacious exhibition#13: Yoshiyasu Hirano Solo Exhibition*, Calo Bookshop and Cafe, Osaka
2018 *Capacious exhibition#07: Yoshiyasu Hirano Solo Exhibition*, Calo Bookshop and Cafe, Osaka

Selected Group Exhibitions

2024 *Repeat and Accumulate 2 -Sense of Wonder-*, Enokojima Art, Culture and Creative Center, Osaka Prefecture [enoco], Osaka
Five Perspectives, Takashimaya Gallery Next, Osaka
2018 *Something Like Meaningless*, Hajimari Art Center, Fukushima
2017 *Art Brut? Outsider Art? Or...? -Inherent Creativity-*, Eye of GYRE, Tokyo

Tachibana Fumio

1968 Born in Hiroshima, currently based in Tokyo and Hiroshima
1994 MA, Master’s degree program at the Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tokyo National University of Arts and Music

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2022 *IMPRINT / IMPRESS IT’S ONLY A PAPER MOON*, Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki
2016 *PLASTIC*, The Mass, Tokyo
2011 *Design Fumio Tachibana*, ginza graphic gallery, Tokyo
2005 *L’arbre qui cachait une Inoroyable Forêt*, SHISEIDO LA BEAUTÉ, Paris, France
2001 *Hen-Tai*, gallery 360°, Tokyo
1995 *MADE IN U.S.A.*, Sagacho Exhibit Space, Tokyo

Selected Group Exhibitions

2011 *Kaza Ana Air Hole: another Form of Conseptualism from Asia*, The National Museum of Art, Osaka
2008 *MOT annual 2008: Unraveling and Revealing*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
1999 *Ten Asian Artists in Residence*, Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, U.S.A.
1997 *SELECTIONS WINTER '97*, The Drawing Center, New York, U.S.A.

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My “Fragments”

Yamaki Kasumi　Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Art expresses what cannot be conveyed through words alone using visual language. Among its forms, contemporary art in particular is often challenged to justify the reasons behind its chosen themes, motifs, and methods of expression, as they are expected to engage in a critical dialogue with reality. No matter how skilled an artist is, simply pouring one’s passion onto the canvas will not be enough to earn recognition. Therefore, artists working within the genre of contemporary art not only create their works but also provide a statement explaining, “This is made with this specific intention.” In a sense, it is a game fought utilizing the work’s form as well as “the artist’s intention, will, and critical perspective.”

In contrast, the expression of persons with disabilities (which is referred to by various terms such as “outsider art,” “able art,” or “art brut”) often lacks clear understanding of the artist’s intention. To begin with, it is not always the case that the work is created with the intention of being “art.” It may be part of everyday life or something the artist feels compelled to do obsessively. There are those who find joy in having others view their work and those who have no interest in it. However, when those close to the artist (such as caregivers like family members or facility staff) recognize that the act or expression reflects the person’s individuality, it becomes something to be cherished as “art.” It is a game of respecting and observing the act or expression in order to understand the person.

In recent years, there has been an increasing trend of exhibiting contemporary art alongside the expressions of persons with disabilities. As described above, they are fundamentally different games—comparable to trying to play baseball and soccer at the same time. Therefore, one should not judge the superiority of the rules, nor should the rules of one game take priority over the other. However, in reality, contemporary art tends to adopt a more patronizing attitude. The situation in which only those expressions by persons with disabilities that offer a fresh sense of surprise from the perspective of contemporary art being evaluated as contemporary art as well as who holds the authority to make those decisions is highly exploitative and violent. For years, I have visited studios and facilities where persons with disabilities create, documenting and writing commentaries about their art (I have personally met several of the artists featured in this exhibition). Coming to the painful realization that even well-intentioned efforts at inclusion can amount to exploitation was a difficult experience for me. I believe that everyone who tries to bridge the expression of persons with disabilities and contemporary art carries this pain.

Miyamoto Noriko, who is in charge of curating this exhibition, *Exploring II - Fragments of Art in Everyday Life*, is likely someone who has experienced this pain and continues to reflect on it. In this exhibition, 14 artists are presented in relation to four key themes. Apart from the greeting panels at the entrance, there are no explanations addressing “disability.” Regardless of the background of each artist, all are treated equally. Both contemporary art and the expressions of persons with disabilities are defined by who creates them, but the decision to deliberately exclude this distinction may be an intention to shift the focus from the creator to the receiver (the viewer).

I may feel this way because Miyamoto refers to these works as “fragments of art.” I presume she coined this term with the image of “the essence of expression, the precious things that shine

brightly.” She was likely able to create this expression because she’s someone who can cherish what’s in front of her without needing to judge whether it’s art or not. Instead of using labels like “art brut” or forcibly imposing contemporary art rules onto it, this is an attitude of carefully observing what is before you, simply aligning it with what one feels in everyday life, without relying on the rules of either game. At that moment, the artwork returns not to the creator, but to us, the receivers.

In the narrow, runway-like space beside the café, whose murmuring conversations fill Spiral Garden, each artist’s “Beloved Things” are displayed. As you circle around the open atrium at the back, you encounter small sections titled “Handiwork,” “Routine” and “Beyond Words.” And before you know it, you find yourself making another round, caught up in the flow. These works, likely created out of the artist’s deep affections, impulses, or curiosity, invite viewers to observe them through the lens of their own experiences. I feel that these are my own “beloved things,” my own “handiwork,” my own “routine,” and my own “words.” If I could turn my small daily rituals, fixations, and habits (both physical and mental) into “fragments” to observe from a slight distance, what form would they take? Encountering “fragments of art” in this exhibition may not be so much about viewing someone else’s work as something separate from oneself, but rather about finding companions on a journey to discover the “fragments” of one’s own daily life.

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Acquiring Words That Soften Boundaries

Sato Mamiko Curator, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

"It is extremely difficult to plan an exhibition that displays works by artists with disabilities alongside contemporary art." This is something I have constantly felt while working on exhibitions featuring art brut and outsider art, which include works by artists with disabilities. Seeing how effortlessly this exhibition overcame that challenge, I couldn't help but let out a small hum of admiration.

The exhibition *Exploring II - Fragments of Art in Everyday Life* was organized by the Art to Live project, which was selected for Osaka Prefecture's "project introducing contemporary art by artists with disabilities for EXPO 2025 (Osaka, Kansai, Japan)." This project is a collaborative effort between capacious and the Association for the Promotion of Contemporary Art in Japan (APCA | JAPAN)¹. By leveraging their respective expertise, they aim to introduce works by artists with disabilities alongside contemporary artists, recognizing their artistic excellence and elevating their value within the context of contemporary art. This exhibition focused on small, everyday matters and challenges as essential themes worth capturing. Fourteen artists are featured under four themes: "Beloved Things," "Handiwork," "Routine" and "Beyond Words." The arrangement of works in the exhibition space placed artists with disabilities and contemporary artists in configurations that highlighted both their unique characteristics and the similarities they shared.

Particularly striking was the pairing of works by Hirata Yasuhiro and Morimoto Eri in the Routine section. Both artists share an obsessive engagement with repetitive acts and the circular forms that emerge from them.

Hirata has been creating art at Atelier Hiko in Hirano, Osaka since 1998, working there once a week. In Hirata's cylindrical pieces, named *Corn on The Cob* after his favorite food, numerous nails are hammered into the interior of cardboard tubes. Initially, the heads of the nails on the outside of the tubes formed neat rows, but in recent years, Hirata has begun using different types of nails, hammering them in greater quantities, resulting in a surface covered in various circular patterns. When looking at the areas without nails, the colors and patterns arranged on the sides of the paper tubes, and the countless nails densely packed inside, it begins to resemble a living creature hiding dangerous features. Some pieces, having been hammered to the brink of structural collapse, develop eerie contours—an effect that feels almost organic, as though the tubes themselves possess a living quality.

On the other hand, Morimoto creates small circular patterns through more detailed and meticulous work. Her *contour map* series translates landscapes into dots of varying sizes and colors, and she carefully calculates the placement of each one, methodically applying them to the canvas. In her work, perfectly round circles, which seem almost impossible to have been created by a human hand, appear in vast numbers, varying in color and size. The accumulation of these dots generates an entirely different world, so far removed from the original landscape that it becomes unrecognizable as such. Morimoto's working notes, alongside collections of minuscule paper fragments stored in glass jars, further attest to her commitment to an extreme level of precision and dedication, reflecting her meticulous approach to delving deeply into specific, intricate tasks.

While the processes through which Hirata and Morimoto create their circles differ significantly, both are fixated on tasks that might seem overwhelming to others. Despite experiencing some physical

discomfort, they become so absorbed in their work that, in the end, they achieve mental tranquility. Although there may be varying degrees, this process is an aspect that can be seen equally in both artists with disabilities and contemporary artists. The harmony created by their resonance was evident in the exhibition space they shared. This exhibition successfully created numerous moments of resonance like this. That is why, as I previously mentioned, I couldn't help but express my admiration.

And yet, while I found myself feeling that a boundary still exists between works by artists with disabilities and contemporary art, it would be premature to resolve this by simply segregating them. When works by artists with disabilities are pushed outside the realm of art and categorized as something “other”, it is not because they lack value, but because we lack the words to properly discuss them.

If we wish to recognize new artistic value in works that have not yet been widely acknowledged, we must expand our vocabulary as much as possible. It is important to speak about it in the form of an exhibition, as in this case, and at the same time, we can also discuss its value from academic perspectives such as art history, anthropology, disability welfare studies, and medicine.² Alternatively, critiques could also emerge from approaches in critical theory, minority studies, and gender studies, while discussing and selling in the market further contributes to enhancing the actual value of the artwork. By breaking free from the constraints of individual fields and creating cross-disciplinary language to discuss the artists and their work through various methods, we can finally present the value of the artwork with compelling persuasion. Unfortunately, even I must admit that I have yet to fully acquire the words necessary to do so.

To loosen the firmly drawn boundaries before us, we must accumulate more and more words—even if just one at a time. This exhibition embodied that effort with ease.

*1
Capacious is under the jurisdiction of the Osaka Prefectural Welfare Department and, as a commissioned project by Osaka Prefecture, it introduces works by people with disabilities in a wide range of forms, including artwork sales. In addition, the Association for the Promotion of Contemporary Art in Japan (APCA | JAPAN) has been running contemporary art fairs such as ART OSAKA for many years.
For more details, see: <https://www.capacious.jp/about/> ; <https://apca-japan.org>
(Last accessed: March 9, 2025)

*2
In Europe and the United States, research specialists support this field. For example, Valérie Rousseau, the head of the curatorial department and senior curator at the American Folk Art Museum, who is also a leading figure in the field, earned two masters in anthropology and art theory, and a Ph.D. in art history. She not only organizes exhibitions at her museum but also engages in a variety of related activities and initiatives. Recently, she also conducted interviews with KAWS for the exhibition *The Way I See It: Selections from the KAWS Collection* (The Drawing Center, NY, 2024-2025), which features works including his collection of self-taught art.
For more details, see: <https://drawingcenter.org/posts/kaws-interview-valerierousseau>
(Last accessed: March 10, 2025)

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The Origin of a “Typical” Art Exhibition

Hattori Tadashi Professor, Konan University

This exhibition, *Exploring II - Fragments of Art in Everyday Life*, was a quintessential art exhibition, displaying works as “art” in a straightforward manner. While any exhibition, by definition, showcases “art,” contemporary art exhibitions often focus on the way art is presented and framed rather than simply displaying it. However, this exhibition appears to have deliberately chosen not to challenge the established framework of “art” as an institution. This was likely a deliberate curatorial decision, but at the same time, it appears to stem from historical and structural reasons beyond mere planning intentions.

According to the explanation displayed at the entrance, this exhibition aimed to “enhance the appreciation” of “outstanding works by artists with disabilities” by having them recognized “as contemporary art.” It is stated succinctly in a single sentence, but being recognized “as contemporary art” and “enhancing appreciation” are not necessarily part of a straightforward process. This goal setting is quite natural when considering that Osaka Prefecture has been promoting a policy of evaluating works by people with disabilities as “contemporary art” within the context of art / welfare for many years. However, it seems that this approach has contributed to the exhibition giving the impression of a typical art exhibition.

Looking around the venue, it seemed that, within the diverse range of contemporary expressions, more traditional methods were the prevailing trend. Around the same time, an exhibition titled *Made in Aomori* was held at Omotesando Crossing Park, which was located not far from the venue at Spiral. The catchphrase for that exhibition was “Encounter contemporary art from Aomori at the Omotesando Crossing,” so two contemporary art exhibitions were being held just a few hundred meters apart. When comparing the two, it was clear that the latter exhibition used a wider range of expressive techniques, such as large-scale video installations placed outdoors and an ikebana arrangement filling a container truck to its maximum capacity. In contrast, most of the works in *Exploring II* were in more conventional forms, such as paintings that could be hung on walls or three-dimensional pieces that could be displayed on pedestals.

However, this does not mean that many of the works created by people with disabilities use conventional techniques. When attending contemporary art exhibitions, it’s not uncommon to encounter expressive works that make you question whether they can truly be considered “art.” Even more so, the expressions of people with disabilities often push the boundaries of art to their limits. For example, the works of Iguchi Naoto, which have garnered attention in recent exhibitions and media, involve pressing his face against the glass surface of a convenience store photocopier and making monochrome or two-color reproductions. There are also many individuals who repeatedly engage in expressive acts like rituals, solely for themselves, in their homes or care facilities.

The fact that many works in this exhibition use traditional techniques is probably not closely related to whether or not the artist has a disability, but more likely to the exhibition’s attempt to “enhance appreciation.” There are various criteria for assessing art, but the most straightforward is the evaluation in the art market. In order to increase its value in the market, the artwork must be bought and sold. Based on this approach, Osaka Prefecture has developed a project called “capacious” to promote the sale of artworks. When considering sales, it is preferable for artworks to be of a manageable size and

an easily displayable form, and thus, the somewhat unique goal of “enhancing the appreciation of artworks” was presented at the outset as the exhibition’s objective. To avoid any misunderstanding, it should be clarified that this exhibition itself is not intended for sales. However, there is no doubt that this goal setting and the existing policy direction have influenced the emergence of an exceptionally refined and “conventionally artistic” exhibition, which is quite unusual for a contemporary art show. In that sense, the use of the word “everyday” in the exhibition’s subtitle is symbolic. The works, woven from the everyday lives of each creator, are all pieces that can seamlessly blend into the daily life of the viewer—meaning they are pieces that can be taken home and displayed in one’s room.

In Japan, works by people with disabilities are often referred to as art brut, but this exhibition avoids categorizing such works under that specific label. Instead, it can be interpreted as aiming to position them within the broader context of contemporary mainstream art practices. The original art brut in France, due to its historical context in the mid-1940s and the collecting policy of its founder, Jean Dubuffet, primarily consists of works in traditional forms such as painting and sculpture. It is somewhat ironic that this exhibition, which avoided the categorization of art brut, ended up displaying works in forms closer to those typically found in art brut rather than contemporary art.

That being said, the fact that the physical form of the works is conventional does not necessarily mean that the expression within them lacks novelty or originality. The selected works were all powerful and of high quality. The extraordinary techniques of artists like Hirata Yasuhiro, who skillfully avoided the collapse of cardboard tubes while driving nails in without gaps, Morimoto Eri, who meticulously filled a canvas with tiny circular patterns following strict rules, and Fujioka Yuki, who miraculously cut paper into comb-like strips less than a millimeter wide, left us breathless. Meanwhile, the serene still lifes by Kobayashi Takanobu and Shuji Takashi, with their piercing observational skills that seemed to reveal the essence of their subjects, imbued the viewer with a sense of tension, as though we too were being penetrated by their gaze. Indeed, there was a vibrant display of expressions from contemporary creators. Therefore, this exhibition can be appreciated as one that, without resorting to gimmicks, earnestly engaged with art and respected the act of creation, embodying a sincere dedication that deserves praise.

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Related Event

A Conversational Program For Art Appreciation Report

January 26 (Sun), 2025, 10:00-11:15

Facilitator: Mitsuki Norie, Kuwahara Kazumi (NPO Arts and Resources Development Agency (ARDA))

Coordinator: Suzuki Kasumi (Association for the Promotion of Contemporary Art in Japan)

Participants: 14 / Applicants 16

Documented by: Kamijo Keiko (Editor)

As a related event, a Conversational Program For Art Appreciation was held, encouraging participants to deepen their understanding of the works through dialogue while viewing them firsthand. The program aimed to foster greater recognition and appreciation of works created by artists with disabilities, who may find it difficult to explain their own creations, by expanding the vocabulary used to discuss them through the diverse perspectives of the participants. A report on some parts of the program follows.

A related program titled *Let's Talk! A Conversational Program For Art Appreciation* was held. Participants ranged widely in age, from seven to their seventies. During the session, they were divided into two groups, each comprising approximately eight participants.

Before entering the venue, the organizers provided an explanation of the exhibition's purpose, and participants in each group introduced themselves. Cards printed with postcard-sized images of the exhibited works were laid out, and each participant selected a card featuring a work that caught their attention at first glance. Along with a brief self-introduction, they shared why they were drawn to that particular work. There were six members in the group I joined, including one elementary school student. All expressed interest in the works and creative expressions of artists with disabilities and responded positively to the exhibition's showcasing of works regardless of whether the artists had disabilities.

This report highlights some of the most memorable comments exchanged during each session. Please note that, due to time limitations, not all works could be discussed.

<Beloved Things>

In response to Kobayashi Takanobu's oil painting *Pillow*, which features universal motifs drawn from everyday life, such as vessels and pillows, participants shared a range of impressions: "The beautiful sheets and pillow convey a sense of high living standards, evoking the image of waking up happy in the morning," "The clear morning light streaming through the window makes me want to crawl back into bed," "It looks so fluffy, I feel like touching it," "The dark color of the background wall has a pleasant depth that heightens the contrast with the bright areas," "Maybe the artist wanted to paint a pillow as a kind of doorway between reality and the dream world," and "Painting entirely in white must have been difficult."

Sogi Kazuaki's work was selected at first glance by an elementary school boy. In addition to comments on its intricacy, such as "The subject is interesting, but the technique is also amazing," participants shared comments like, "At first, it looks prickly and intimidating, but on closer inspection, it feels humorous and gentle." When the facilitator explained that the artist often observes insects up close, letting them rest on his hand, one participant remarked, "Maybe the sense of humor comes from his affection for the subject."

Looking at Shuji Takashi's work, a participant commented on the thick pastel-filled surface: "Although it's black, it doesn't feel like a single flat color. There's a sense of depth that seems to draw you in." Interpretations of the motif varied. Some envisioned "an interior scene," while others, influenced by the sharp, vigorous brushstrokes, imagined "a knife and a murder scene."

<Beyond Words>

In Hirano Yoshiyasu's work, the surface is densely filled with colorful textual characters. Participants shared impressions such as: "Up close, it looks like text, but from a distance, it resembles overlapping fabric scraps," "I can see a town emerging," and "It looks like a piece of knitting."

<Routine>

Shibata Ryuhei's painting *Title deleted* showed the greatest difference between the postcard-sized reproduction and the actual work, which measures just under 150 cm on its long side. Exclamations of "Wow!" and "Amazing!" filled the room as viewers approached the large work, speculating about the strings of text it contains: "Could these be birthdays?" and "He must be fascinated by numbers." One participant remarked that the background color resembled "a beautiful lake in a forest, so clear and refreshing, as if you could plunge into it." In contrast, another viewer, seeing the traces of resin layered over the surface, imagined "hell" and even envisioned "Minos from Dante's Divine Comedy." The strikingly opposite interpretations were particularly intriguing.

Viewing Morimoto Eri's *contour map* series, viewers marveled at the meticulously placed, evenly spaced dots covering the canvas, with one person remarking, "It feels like a kind of ascetic practice." However, another participant offered a different perspective, suggesting, "What might feel like a test of endurance to me could actually be something soothing or satisfying for the artist."

The appreciation session ran well beyond the scheduled time. In the final round of reflections, all participants agreed that engaging in dialogue while viewing the works alongside people with differing perspectives had been highly enjoyable. Among the most memorable comments were: "I usually see art with people around my age, so it was fascinating to look at works and have conversations with people of a wide range of ages," "I was struck by how everyday materials like numbers, string, nails, and origami could be elevated into art," and "Even if the artist has no conscious intention of creating a work, their way of life itself is a work of art. I think that's what draws me to works by artists with disabilities."

Just as the artists' daily lives are reflected in the works on view, the interactive appreciation session seemed to evoke or deepen the participants' own interests and personal experiences through their engagement with the art. Even after the session had officially ended, many participants stayed on in the venue, continuing to view the works.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the exhibiting artists, the associated galleries, the welfare facilities, and the artists' families for their generous support and cooperation in bringing this exhibition to fruition. We are also deeply thankful to everyone who contributed their expertise in curatorial advising, design, publicity, photography, videography, venue setup and construction.

Atelier Hiko, Yellow, Gallery Yamaki Fine Arts, Yukiko Koide Presents, Suzukake Art Club & Atelier Suzukake, Nanairo Circus Troupe, Nishimura Gallery, Atelier Yamanami, Atelier Yu, Lumbini Art Museum, NPO Arts and Resources Development Agency (ARDA), sato design., Sakai Ryuta, Bridge Over, les contes /pob

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Exploring II –Fragments of Art in Everyday Life–

[Exhibition]

Date: January 23 (Thu)–27 (Mon), 2025

A Conversational Program For Art Appreciation: January 26 (Sun)

Venue: Spiral Garden, Spiral 1F (5-6-23 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo)

Artist: Kamitsuchibashi Yuki, Kobayashi Takanobu, Shibata Ryuhei, Shuji Takashi, Sogi Kazuaki, Tachibana Fumio, Tanizawa Sawako, Nisato Chikara, Hirata Yasuhiro, Hirano Yoshiyasu, Fukuda Naoyo, Fujioka Yuki, Matsumoto Kunizo, Morimoto Eri

Organizer: Osaka Prefecture

Presented by: Association for the Promotion of Contemporary Art in Japan, Capacious

Support: Wacoal Art Center

[Curators]

Curator: Miyamoto Noriko (APCA, Capacious)

Curatorial Support: Kawanishi Haruka (APCA), Tanaka Sayaka (Capacious)

Curatorial Advisor: Koide Yukiko (Yukiko Koide Presents)

Related Event Coordinator: Suzuki Kasumi (APCA)

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Art to Live

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