

Taking the World Art World - A Report from the Circuit

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It has been more than a year since I came to France with the cartoonish title of "Taking over the World Art Scene. I have made many promises in Japan. I came to France after discussions with a friend in San Francisco, Los Angeles. Let me explain the situation.

In 1972, I was in the "konnyaku commune" in San Francisco, working with a group of people on a mural commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Art, which was to be erected in the Japanese district. At that time, Mr. Yasunao Tone came from Japan. He had just done some chronological work for "Bijutsu Techo" and had an overall perspective, so he gave me a lot of advice and we had a wide range of discussions. I admire San Francisco and have been involved in San Francisco for many years, and am a beatnik admirer. So, first, we had the critic Mr. Tone as a lecturer and studied Foucault's "Introduction to Linguistics" with his friends, and later we had a book reading session on Mr. Tone's book as well.

During that time, we lived together in the same house for about six months, listening, discussing, and arguing. In conclusion, to skip over the progress, I was told by everyone, "You can't stay in the same situation so long," and I was forced to take on new responsibilities and new assignments since the "Kyushu-Ha" project.

Now, then, what will happen next? How will it be handled? Will tactics solve the problem? Is it a reorganization? Is it a revolution in the art world? No, revolution is no longer enough! There was much discussion about whether I should be a salesman or not, but I won't go into that here because it would be too long. After all, the point of "Paris" was absolutely necessary, and in the meantime, it was decided that all was not well with this place. I had been so absorbed in the commune life in San Francisco that I had never thought of living in France, even in my dreams....

When I arrived in Paris, I was surprised to find that there were about a hundred Japanese artists who were making a living as artists. Of course, they are making art and selling it in France to feed their wives and children. The number of people living in the city was like a dream. It was true that if they could eat, I felt like "I'll try it, too.

I have one recollection about this. When I went to the U.S. for the first time about 11 years

ago, Honda and Suzuki motorcycles were selling very well, and Japanese living in the U.S. were also saying that their shoulders were getting wider. However, an American said, "Japanese are indeed good at small and elaborate things such as motorcycles, cameras, and watches, as well as at imitating others.だが、Automobiles, which require comprehensive industrial strength, cannot be made in Japan. If a screw is lost in a Japanese automobile, a different kind of screw can be used in time. This means that if you screw in a Japanese-made screw, the screw threads will be broken and you can make it in time because the base metal is soft. In this way, American automobiles are still strong. However, what do you think? When I traveled around the U.S. by bus a couple of years ago, I was amazed at the number of Japanese Toyota and Datsun factories and billboards that I saw. I was also surprised to see them in TV commercials. By that time, the tyranny of general trading companies had become a hot topic, and Japanese exports to the U.S. began to face various problems, as you are aware. In spite of such a widespread distribution of Japanese products in the U.S., only about 10 Japanese painters, at most, are able to make a living from their works alone. And I am talking about the entire U.S. as a whole. However, most of the avant-garde artists in the U.S. work as university teachers to make a living. Capro, famous for his happenings, is also a university teacher. As far as I know, there are about 20 Japanese teachers in the area. What does it mean that as many as 100 artists are living in this small Parisian town with only their works to show? Clearly, we are entering an era that is different from Fujita's time. On the other hand, not only artists, but also many musicians are active in the art world. It seems as if the export of "artists" is growing along with the expansion of the Japanese economy.

Another thing is that in the world of painting, France does not have as many fads as Japan or the United States. It is very difficult to see trends in clothing and exhibitions, and after living here for a year, I feel that the number of men with beards and jeans has increased somewhat. In other words, they have a lot of initiative. Therefore, I understand now that I live in France that it takes 10 years to complete a project, rather than one or two years. What exactly are we trying to do in France? To do this I would have to explain a small amount of what I have done in the past and what I wanted to do.

Our "Kyushu-Ha" group originated in Kyushu. The group grew up watching the postwar rise and fall of the coal industry, including the Miike Coal Mine. As I wrote in the bulletin of Kyushu-Ha at the time, we were focusing on Bauhaus as a precursor to the contact between industry and art. The Bauhaus was never completed, in part because it was

destroyed by the rise of the Nazis. We thought we had to develop. I thought I had discovered the interstitial issue of locality as the key to development and its elements. And it's important that we integrate ourselves brilliantly with the community. At the time, the struggle in Miike was a struggle for production, and the mass struggle was unimaginably more raw than in the world of art. It was the Mexican Mural Movement that strongly gripped us under such circumstances. It seemed to us that the Mexican Mural Movement had a very close connection with the Mexican community. The question arose as to what would make us more closely connected to the local community. First of all, it is important to keep in touch with one another. We decided to bring the open format of the "Yomiuri Independents" into our "Kyushu Independents".

By the way, my interest in the Mexican muralists was also inspired by the Beatnik Movement, which I saw as an event along the same lines of social movements and cultural regionalism. So, I spent another 10 years or so living in San Francisco. During this period, the world situation has gradually or suddenly changed, just as the beatniks have replaced the hippies. The Cuban Revolution seems to have been the primary phenomenon. No matter how hard the tiny Cuba tried, it could not occupy North America in battle. Put another way, Cuba can never dominate the United States. That Cuba won the war against the U.S. (in part because of the Soviet Union's presence). It is the beginning of a different kind of miracle that never existed before. Second, Vietnam. Exactly the same as Cuba, even the opponent was the same. And they fought far more fiercely and for a longer period of time, and defeated the United States. The miracle was born, frightening the whole world. The third was the so-called "oil shock," when the price of oil in the Middle East quadrupled in a single fist. There are too many unknowns to draw any conclusions, but it is clear that it was a near-miracle, unthinkable in the current economic climate. Another myth may be the difference between the Chinese and Soviet views of communism. What is the meaning of the world situation that allows such miracles to occur?

And furthermore, the problem of pollution in Japan, which has become the world's number one, and the battle of Minamata. On a personal level, there is the interplay of sex between the young and the old, the theory of the purpose of life, the fervent desire for another Bible, etc. It may sound strange, but these are strange phenomena that are, in a sense, artistic. For example, I believe that the most important labor relations measures of a company are among those that require the most artistic elements. In France, I am sometimes surprised when I read Japanese newspapers. Especially the ads, the copy, the illustrations, and even the company name are art itself, with ironic implications. When I read the beautiful copy

that says a pollution company is protecting the blue sky, I wonder if copywriters have to write lies to make a living, or if they work day and night to write such lies. It is clear that the companies think that art is the quickest way to hide the true nature of things. It is certain that most art is controlled in this sense, but in any case, it seems certain that we, including myself, do not understand the nature of things. In any case, understanding the nature of things will not help us. It's a lame story, but if I don't really want to die like this, what on earth should I do?

We will never be able to make the "power structure" do what we want. However, if we have tactics, a grasp of reality, and confidence in the future, we will be able to maintain our independence, as in Cuba and Vietnam. If we can do so, we must start preparing for the future. However, it is our suffering that we have to be used while being used. Applied art has more of its suffering than pure frame art. However, the two must be partnered. With this understanding in mind, I need to reflect on what I have done in France over the past year.

What is the "60's Exhibition" for us?

"More than 15 years have passed since the once-flourishing Yomiuri Independents Exhibition, and the results are starting to come in. We will provide a forum for critics, led by Yusuke Nakahara, to systematically review the past, pulling out all the records and organizing them into a historical review to determine what our constitution is and what our foundation is." This is the story of the originator of the 60's exhibition. He is a brilliant Independent and now a top leader in the world art world. The members of the independents, including him, have become practically international. By dissecting the source of this trend and examining the relationship between the significance of the independents and ourselves, we can clarify the path forward for the avant-garde. In other words, I have the nurturing parents, the independents exhibition, from Paris, from New York, from San Francisco, from Los Angeles, to thank for growing up here and being internationally active. I have heard several times that it is the independents consciousness that is truly world class. The great exhibitions of the 1960s were then taken over by organizers headed by Masunobu Yoshimura in Tokyo. However, when I heard this story from someone in Paris who had raised Yomiuri Independent, I thought that it was almost inextricably linked to the course of Japan's industrial development, and that the time period was also around the same time. It is true that, whether the writer is aware of it or not, he has unexpectedly taken on the character of a prophet of the times. If this is the case, and if the scandalous and somewhat distasteful independents are to run the world more than

Honda, Suzuki, and Nissan, we must not make industrial mistakes. I do not think that we, the Yomiuri Independents, are the only ones who feel the need to recreate and reorganize the Independents in a way that is faithful to the past. I believe that this is also a demand of the current Japanese art world.

What is a Union?

In October 1974, Mr. Masunobu Yoshimura spent a little more than a month in Paris, New York, Saso Francisco, and Los Angeles organizing a union proposal, which is now being prepared in Tokyo. Mr. Yoshimura is a neo-Dada organizer, otherwise known as a contributor to the Yomiuri Independents Exhibition and other exhibitions that have raised Japanese art to a world-class level. Yoshimura says.

“My ideal is a large artists' union. If the world's first artists' union is to be created, it will have to be organized by the Japanese. It would still have to be an organization of writers themselves, not dependent on patrons, for future diversification and development. I think it is necessary to have an independent and Chinese philosophy. Therefore,

- 1, The organizer is a self-sufficient power capable of acting radically.
- 2, Precede the 60-year Grand Exhibition.
3. The Japanese should organize an artists' union (international).
4. To obtain some kind of sponsorship in the near future and create our own museum (warehouse, atelier, art museum).
5. To expand the organization to the end of the line, and open or acquire museums and galleries.

The latter part of the bulleted list was decided at the meeting, and is not the opinion of Mr. Yoshimura alone.

Since some of what I have written may not be clear, I would like to explain my understanding of the situation. The expansion of the Japanese economy has necessitated the development of a distribution system of general trading companies, which has led to the astonishing growth of trading companies. A distribution mechanism for the art world must be established in conjunction with the Japanese economy. If it cannot be done, The problems of parks, museums, and medical colleges, which are most needed by local governments, will not be solved. Since it has not been established, a ridiculous art museum has been built in Kyushu, where a single painting can be purchased for 200 million yen and the museum is only there for that single painting. Establish a distribution mechanism for art with individual artists as the smallest unit of distribution. At the same time, designers, illustrators, photographers, etc., as a related organization, should now also be members of the huge At the same time, designers, illustrators, photographers, etc., as related

organizations, now need clear independence from huge clients, tactics that can withstand such orders, and a strong union-like distribution mechanism. More theoretically, we need to establish a new "general trading company" type of distribution system for the art world for the sake of social significance and livelihood.

I understand and act on the understanding that the first work was the holding of exhibitions in the 1960s that brought about the Yomiuri Independents and other national avant-garde, and the call for the formation of a "union" as an open entity for all fields as a powerful approach to the reorganization of world art. Naturally, the competition will be even tougher than before, and unexpected new developments will unfold. This will require a technological mindset. We still need to develop a variety of luminous ideas to succeed in bringing relationships together. Another world situation is moving in a controlling direction, whether we like it or not. In other words, it is becoming more and more political.

How do we respond to the interplay between control and art, between art bureaucrats and artists, and between bureaucratic control and the general public?

Yes or no will not solve the problem at all. We must quickly become one of the residents. The relationship between sei-katsu-sha and unions is also a key element in the reorganization that must take place. In my case, Kyushu is my sphere of residence, and even though I am now in France, my starting point is in Kyushu.

My Kyushu

Kyushu-Ha was founded when I was 27 years old, so it has already been more than 20 years. There were always four or five members in Kyushu-Ha. 論 We would sometimes leave because of disputes or the arrival of an art dealer, but no one ever left Kyushu. Even I, who am always roaming around in foreign countries, cannot leave Kyushu, and in the end, I cannot imagine leaving the Kyushu-Ha style. The fact that it arose and existed in a rural area with little activity resulted in its interesting character. It means that the members in their prime can come together whenever they want to. This uniqueness is the power of Kyushu. At the same time, it is the source of Kyushu-Ha's energy.

The 20 years of its existence have made it a solid organization, like a young girl becoming a great mother. Now there is no Kyushu-Ha; Kyushu-Ha has melted away and there are only Kyushu avant-garde artists. The exhibitions of art teachers in Fukuoka Prefecture gathered in "Today's Art Exhibition" have a five-year history of complete independence. The "Trend Exhibition" and the "Emotion Exhibition," organized with the cooperation of art

journalists from newspapers such as Nishinippon, Mainichi, and Fukunichi, are still going strong, having filled the 10-year period since the Kyushu-Ha exhibition. It is rare to find a place like this where the forces have been preserved without incident. At the same time, the situation in which some of the poets, novelists, activists, and journalists who were active in Minamata and Miike are always united is truly unique. Such a situation is a prerequisite for building the "Kyushu Kingdom," which means that independent planning is possible if theories and plans are clearly formulated in the Kyushu region. Miike may have lost, but Minamata is still making steady progress. The Denshukan issue in Yanagawa City is just as important as Minamata in terms of education for local people, but it seems as if the battle itself has become a way of life, just like a moss growing on the ground.

How great it is in the world that a small, individual unit of residents, not bureaucrats or large corporations, or even a local avant-garde artist whose unit has been forgotten, can confront the 20-year union issue with a small but independent exhibition for so long. We will fulfill our responsibility as a French branch of the horizontal movement by connecting with the Kyushu Kingdom, with unions, and with the 60th anniversary exhibition. We are fully aware that we are expected to study and work hard to adapt to an increasingly harsh global environment and an art distribution system similar to that of large corporations. We are confident that we can play a part in reorganizing the world art scene with advanced tactics and luminaries until the day it is truly ours.