

About "Kyushu-Ha

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Last autumn, while viewing the "Turning Point in Contemporary Art in the 1960s" exhibition held by the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (also traveling to the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto), I felt a strange sense of nostalgia. This is because some of the "anti-art," as Neo-Dada art, action art, and conceptual art were called, were being feted in the art world. "Well, well, well, you're all tucked in like a virgin princess, have you had a sex change operation?" I felt a strange feeling of inadequacy. They originally came from a family of "anti-artists" known as Scavenger ART, Reclaimed ART, Counterfeit ART, and Packaging Art. There was also a coterie of ARTs called Offensive Sound ART, Putrid Stench ART, and Pornographic ART. Somehow, the sounds, smells, and eroticism probably caused a fart in the National Gallery of Art. It was not displayed in the center of the hall.

What was the excitement I felt while looking at the exhibition? After seeing the exhibition, I went outdoors and the reverberations were still there, but soon they disappeared like ghosts or fireballs into the Tokyo sky. The "Anti-Art" group was allowed to rebel and rebel all they wanted, so they deserved to be punished. They can only survive as ghosts or fireballs among those who believe in their existence. At that time, the sky over Tokyo looked like a large mirror. The comedy of "anti-art" played out in the mirror would return to the mirror, where it would shine. The audience cannot see the tremendous earnestness of it. There is no need to be sad at all. As long as people's histories have been alternately colored, there will be days when they will appear gloriously, even if in a different stage format.

Kyushu-Ha was a group of eccentric wild souls among such "anti-art" tribes. I could only watch them from afar, so I can't introduce much, but I can say that they were a tremendously great group. One of them, Mr. Mokuma Kikuhata, was one of the artists in the "60s Exhibition" and his works such as "Roulette" and "Botanical Picture Book" were prominently displayed. Since I lived in Kyushu, I think I saw "Kyushu-Ha" a little differently than people in Tokyo. For example, Artist/Musician Yasunao Tone said the following. "In the 1960s, it was a rare group in Japan that sought a theory of organization and movement, considered expression from the inside of life, and took up the issues of the ideology of expression and the independence of artists. However, the movement is so intense, so vast, and so localized in quality that it has yet to be properly evaluated. Kyushu-Ha movement is dynamic, with internal conflicts and a communal life that is filled with political games and artistic supremacy. With the results of the Yomiuri Independents exhibition and the solo and

group exhibitions in Tokyo, they used their philosophy as a weapon to challenge the politicism of local art and tear apart art politics into art and politics." (Published in Bijutsu Techo, October 1971)

Kyushu-Ha was disbanded in November 1968 with the "Great Meeting of Heroes". For the remnants of Kyushu-Ha, Mr. Tone's concluding remarks may be both true and embarrassing. However, I could feel the enthusiasm of the artists as they took expression from the inside of real life and emphasized above all the idea of painting. It was a brilliant strategy to attack the prefectural exhibition, which was under the influence of the art bosses, led by Mr. Takami Sakurai, and to attack the national network of public group exhibitions, and to hold a series of independent and self-reliant independents. Infighting is a daily occurrence and somewhere along the line they seemed to be overconfident. For example, if it was a member's wedding, it was a big deal. I don't know who made the toys, or when, or even if they found them at a fair, but there were tin rings with glass balls attached to them. Every day, the stage was set for an "anti-art" style of living.

The dissolution ceremony, the "Great Meeting of Heroes," was another splendid, bizarre, and mysterious event. It was held at a rented beach house in a cold wind. On that day, Junnosuke Miyazaki, who is still carving the strange wooden carvings of the play wheels, spent all day and night digging one sand pit after another. When he finished, all that was left was a pile of sand washed away by the waves and the remains of a hole, but this was ten years before Nobuo Sekine's "Phase One Earth" appeared. I was also impressed by guest performer Yoshida Yoshie, who spent all night scrubbing the floorboards of the beach house. Dressed in full body bandages, Mr. Eisuke Obata plucked the hair of a white chicken in his arms by candlelight and stripped it naked. Yoriko Cho and Takami Sakurai pried open a box containing hundreds of eggs and silently handed them to the astonished audience, just smiling at them. This is how the whirlwind of "Kyushu-Ha" swept through the city of Hakata. You can say, "That's all there is to it" about Kyushu-Ha. Many of the scattered artists still stay in Hakata and continue to create something. Mokuma Kikuhata, Osamu Ochi, Yasuyuki Ishibashi, Eisuke Obata, Mitsuko Tabe, Jutarō Yamauchi... Oh yeah, Kenichiro Terada had rectal cancer surgery, but he survived. Mr. Takami Sakurai and Mr. Arata Kinoshita live in Paris, while Mr. Masatoshi Katae makes wire mesh works in Tokyo. They all seem to be mysterious people who live in isolation and community at the same time.

The other day, I received an invitation to a strange exhibition. On my way back home, I

went to Nishi-ku, Fukuoka City, and found out that it was an exhibition to celebrate the establishment of the ward, organized by Obata, Tabe and others. They built the venue and everything, and it was an independent exhibition of their own. To my surprise, the mayor of the ward rushed to the opening ceremony, and the head of the local fishermen's union threw out a box full of fish, saying, "I want to congratulate you for creating a temporary museum. At the venue, hundreds of works by professionals, amateurs, and housewives were displayed in different ways. The panels for the temporary venue were lent to them for free by the president of a construction company. These panels are used for pouring concrete at the company. This kind of exhibition is possible because the aftermath of "Kyushu-Ha" is still alive and kicking somewhere. This would be unthinkable in Tokyo.

How did the giant cogs of art at the turn of the 60s mesh with history? Now, there is a tendency to ask again, "What was the art of the 60s in Japan? This seems to be a temptation from the museum side. When I think about it, the essence of the art of the 1960s may have been something like Extensive, which has now sunk deep into the artists. It may be something that can be scooped up with a homosexual approach. The scattered objects and bodies may have no choice but to become irretrievable linguistic ghosts.

Tatsuo Takayama, who was awarded the Order of Cultural Merit this year, recalled his motivation for painting his most favorite work: "When I came out of the exhibition of Japanese paintings, I thought of the discrepancy with the state of Japan.

Has the museum become a place with a solid antiquity suitable for the celebration of ghosts, or has it grown into a "dream house" that entertains spiritual guests?

(Kojin Tanaka, art journalist)