

## **Introduction to Kyushu-Ha Takami Sakurai**

Kyushu-Ha began with a street exhibition (Fukuoka Prefectural Government West Street, a joint effort of painters and poets) in 1956. In 1958, we organized the first Kyushu Independents Exhibition. The following is a quote from the call for the second Kyushu Independents Exhibition in 1959 to help you understand the essence of Kyushu-Ha.

In April of last year, we held the Kyushu Independents Exhibition for the first time with the hope of establishing a place for avant-garde art in Kyushu. This exhibition was a significant first step in bringing together avant-garde artists scattered throughout the region, and as an exhibition it was a groundbreaking success due to the novelty of the "independents" format. In today's Japan, young artists of all genres are working together to push forward a new art form, and it is unacceptable for us local artists to stand idly by and watch. I believe that we must actively and enthusiastically promote our own new art. In this sense, it is with great ambition and confidence that we present the Second Kyushu Independents Exhibition. We are eagerly looking forward to the participation of new artists and ask for your support and encouragement. Among the exhibitors at the first exhibition, Fumiko Yamada and Mitsuko Ishibashi (now in Tabé) won first and second prizes at the Women's Art Exhibition, Koji Koga won first prize at the Ishibashi Museum of Art Newcomer's Excellent Work Exhibition, and Yoriko Cho received special treatment at Ichiyo-kai. At the Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, critics such as Yusuke Nakahara, Shinichi Segi, and Kimihide Tokudaiji selected the best three works, which attracted much attention, but we would like to mention that the Kyushu Independent Exhibition is expected by experts to be a breeding ground for the second and third new artists. From all members of the Kyushu-Ha.

Since then, we have held nearly twenty exhibitions in Fukuoka and Tokyo, and held the historic "Great Meeting of Heroes" in 1992. Here is a quote from Miyazaki and Obata's record.

Obata was lying wrapped in bandages. Next to him are three white Leghorns with their legs tied. On a small desk, a stand flashes and a dissecting scalpel glows sharply. All three birds, like Obata, were wrapped in bandages and strangely still. All is silence. When three chickens and a human being were placed next to each other on the silent white campus, the unbelievable fornication between chickens and human beings began. When the silence was filled with a dim joy of unintelligible meaning, the dissection began as if the silence had been fully taken in. Even a drop of blood is forbidden on a white campus in silence. What was needed was certain death, and with the grace of an assassin bee from Fabre's *Insects*, Obata

stabbed his brain with a needle and instantly became an object. The pure white feathers are transformed into jet-black wet feathers, sadly decorating the pure white of the campus, competing with the depth of silence. The pure white of Obata's bandage, turned into the black of suffering by the sin of adultery, settled in the depths of the earth just like the chicken. Again, Obata fell into a deep sleep with the bandage wrapped around his head, as if he were dreaming of the delicious taste of meat.

Even we were surprised at the presence of Miyazaki, whose life and death depended on time, regardless of the time table. Miyazaki participated with a shovel (a tool for digging in the earth). It was already dark at 7 p.m. in November in Hakata. And it was raining. Around seven o'clock, the tide began to ebb and the beach became wider and wider. As soon as each participant started indoors, Miyazaki went out to the beach by himself and started digging a hole. As soon as he dug a hole, he had to move on to the next one because the tide water would come up. This necessity made him dig one hole after another. By twelve o'clock, he had dug seven holes, each about twelve meters long. He was soaking in the water and digging hard at the bottom of the dark hole. There was no one on the beach but the sound of the waves. The sand was thrown high up on the sides to form sharp corners at a moment's notice, but the rain soon turned them into dull corners. His endless, monotonous work continued. As I watched him, from the dark depths of the hole, the past of losing so many comrades as a result of the forced schedule of this meeting came to me. Since the formation of the group, many friends have joined and many friends have left. As the history of the group has progressed, the friction of separation has become more and more intense, and even the slightest difference in opinion has become a major debate involving ideas. These people fled to a foreign land of spirit. Like a migratory bird leaving for Siberia. "If you do something foolish, your whole life as a painter will be ruined. They left one by one, leaving only the words, "There is no point in risking one's life to attend a meeting that is not an exhibition. The traces of their disappearance become holes of sorrow, or hollows of despair. This may be the only glorious achievement of the movement. Regardless of such sentiments, the hollow remains only a little in the waves that come again and again since ancient times. The night of the event in Hakata, where only a few friends knew the meaning of the hole. I wonder how many of these few remaining people will construct this beautiful hole of empty despair. I don't know the meaning of art movement. Painting is a castle that can only be built in such a wasteful and minuscule hole, isn't it? What a "shabby" fortress. Miyazaki is digging this shabby hole in the middle of the night in reality. At around one o'clock in the morning, the horizon swelled up like the belly of a pregnant woman, probably due to the high tide. Then the waves began to slowly erode the hole. It seemed so slow and yet so swift. The tide

completely submerged the hole, and huge waves washed over Miyazaki's entire body. Surely the ocean is a mother. But people must have called the sea mother only when the azure waves sentimentally embraced the green peninsula and white sandy beach when viewed from the safety of the mountain top. But for Miyazaki, who dug a hole in the cold, rough waves of the Genkai Sea, covered head to toe by the waves, could it be a mother? The sea is just like a vicious and cruel stepmother. Miyazaki's death-defying actions are as passive as a girl being raped by a black demon. The fangs of the sea thoroughly bullied Miyazaki. It may be that a hole is something that is attacked forever, a white skinned girl who is tortured, an "oppressed and eternal class. Only sad motherhood can qualify a beholder to see behind. In reality, Miyazaki gambles his death on the sandy beach at the seaside and builds up a concave castle in a hollow space through the act of digging. This may be the art of the female that deserves to be called the castle of minus. Only a hollow can devour death and become a fertile castle of time. Miyazaki was born into this tenderness, and will probably die being eaten by it.

These are just a few episodes of Kyushu-Ha, but this is the reality of Kyushu-Ha. At present, Ochi Osam is staying in San Francisco, the point of contact between the East and the West, as an organizer, and is continuing an active movement. Based on our experience, we are convinced that unless we both engage in bloody debates and work tirelessly, we will never be satisfied with the results of our work. Based on our experience, we are convinced that unless we both engage in bloody debates and work tirelessly, we will never be satisfied with the results of our work. For this reason, all of us at the Kyushu-Ha are delighted to support this meaningful exhibition of inter-group competition, and we would like to take this opportunity to present a letter of challenge to each group.

Why are you (or your group) in Kyushu and why do you want to be an avant-garde artist?  
Do you (or your group) intend to stay in Kyushu in the future?

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Please explain your (your group's) painting theories and arguments in relation to your achievements, either as a group or as an individual.

Do you (your group) believe that an avant-garde art group will bloom in Kyushu?

What do you want to earn a living from now or in the future

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Kyushu-Ha shows through its works and actions. We know that there are no quick conclusions everywhere, but we want to discuss thoroughly and get to the essence of things. So, please do not avoid us. Let's have an unreserved clash with the audience and each group.