World Art Studies 19 (2019)

POLAND–JAPAN

CONTEMPORARY ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS

Edited by Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk

POLAND-JAPAN.
CONTEMPORARY ART
AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS

World Art Studies

Conferences and Studies
of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies

Vol. XIX

in collaboration with

Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw

POLISH INSTITUTE OF WORLD ART STUDIES

POLAND–JAPAN

CONTEMPORARY ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS

Edited by

Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk

Polish Institute of World Art Studies & Tako Publishing House
Warsaw–Toruń 2019

Publication subsidised within the framework
of the programme CZASOPISMA / NEWSPAPERS
by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage,
Fund for the Promotion of Culture. Agreement no. 03665/19/FPK/IK

Ministry of
Culture
and National
Heritage of
the Republic
of Poland.

Reviewers
Prof. Dr habil. Aleksandra Simińska
Prof. Dr habil. Bogna Łakomska

Photographs
The materials have been made available by the authors of the texts together with the right to their publication. In the case of public and private collections the source has been indicated. In other cases the editorial staff has made every effort to attribute the image to a source.

On the cover
Jirō Yoshihara, *Circle*, oil on canvas, 1964
Source: http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/2016/modern-contemporary-asian-art-evening-sale-hk0628/lot.1002.html (accessed: 22.11.2019)

ISSN 2543–4624
ISBN 978-83-956228-9-2

Polish Institute of World Art Studies
ul. Warecka 4/6 m 10, 00–040 Warszawa
e-mail: biuro@world-art.pl
www.world-art.pl

Tako Publishing House
ul. Słowackiego 71/5, 87–100 Toruń
e-mail: tako@tako.biz.pl
www.tako.biz.pl

This book can be ordered by mail
Polish Institute of World Art Studies: biuro@world-art.pl
Tako Publishing House: www.tako.biz.pl

TABLE OF CONTENTS

II. Institutions

III. Artists

Jerzy Malinowski
President
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

The centenary of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan

2019 marked the centenary anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan, which became an opportunity for organising many artistic, cultural and scientific events, prepared by Polish art historians, Japanologists and artists.

On December 15, 2018, at the meeting of the group responsible for coordinating initiatives of selected institutions and associations in Poland to celebrate the 100th Anniversary, the so-called **Komitet Polska-Japonia 2019** (**Year 2019 Poland-Japan**/ポーランド・日本２０１９年委員会) was established. It was composed of representatives of: Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and Warsaw University, Aleksander Zelwerowicz Theatre Academy, The Maria Grzegorzewska University (Institute of Art Education) and Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology in Warsaw, Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków, The Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw and the association Pompka Foundation/PUBLINK in Warsaw. Prof. Jerzy Malinowski, President of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies, was appointed Chairman of the Committee, Dr Jadwiga Rodowicz-Czechowska of the A. Zelwerowicz Theatre Academy, former Ambassador of Poland to Japan, was appointed Vice-chairman, and Dr Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk of The Maria Grzegorzewska University (Institute of Art Education), and Anita Zdrojewska of the Pompka Foundation/PUBLINK Foundation became members of the Committee. An extensive programme, including scientific conferences, exhibitions, theatre performances, book publications and meetings, was published in the January issue of the monthly "Sztuka i Krytyka"/ Art and Criticism" (www.world-art.pl).

Studies on Asia, including Japan, are among the most important areas of activity of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies. The Institute has organized and supported conferences and published books and studies on art, theatre, ethnology and visual culture of Japan in its own series and magazines.

Post-conference publications include, among others, the volumes of the present series "World Art Studies": *Sztuka Japonii. Studia / Art of Japan. Studies* (Warsaw 2009), *Art of Japan, Japanisms and Polish-Japanese art relations* (Toruń 2012) and *East Asian theatres. Traditions – inspirations – European / Polish contexts* (Warsaw-Toruń 2017).

This series also includes this volume, *Poland – Japan. Comtemporary art and artistic relations*, which comprises studies and materials from the Polish-Japanese *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Art-*

ist conference, which took place in June 2019 at the seat of the Association of Polish Architects SARP in Warsaw.

The Institute's contribution to the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan – apart from the co-organization of the Warsaw conference – is, among others, the publication of the Polish edition of *Kaempfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed* edited, translated and annotated by Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (University of Hawai'i Press, Manoa 1999). The Polish version, translated by Maciej Tybus in consultation with Ewa Kamińska and edited by Grażyna Raj is titled *Japonia: spojrzenie na kulturę Tokugawów* [Japan: a look at Tokugawa culture] (Warszawa-Toruń 2018).

Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk
Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist

We are offering you a volume of articles devoted to the contemporary interpenetration and mutual influence of Polish (European) and Japanese culture.

The texts in this volume have been grouped under the following sections: **I. Studies** – papers by historians, art critics and theorists shedding light on different issues at the cusp of European and Japanese culture from the latter half of the twentieth century to contemporary times, from the Japanese Avant-garde to *kawaii* aesthetics; **II. Institutions** – statements by representatives of well-known cultural and art institutions dealing with the interpretation, archiving and popularisation of the legacy of Japanese art in Polish collections and building Polish(European)-Japanese relations in art (through the organisation of academic and artistic exchanges, residencies, workshops, festivals, concerts, exhibitions, lectures, etc.). **III. Artists** – this chapter is also an important part of the volume, comprising the testimony of artists/scholars from the perspective of their own experiences when visiting Japan (or, conversely, of Japanese artists in Poland) as holders of fellowships or artists-in-residence. It also features testimonies of artists from other parts of Europe (e.g. Austria and France) who are contributing in a significant way to the vibrancy of European(Polish)-Japanese contacts.

It is our hope that the publication will make an important contribution to the debate on contemporary Polish(European)-Japanese relations in the realm of art.

I. Studies

Anna Katarzyna Maleszko
National Museum in Warsaw

What does the East mean to the West? On our inspirational get-togethers

Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), the renowned English writer of the Victorian era, wrote the famous phrase "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet".[1] In doing so, his intention was not to espouse a belief in Europe's superiority over the East as some had interpreted it (though certainly he did subscribe to the historic and civilisational mission of Europeans), but to voice his conviction on the diversity of human nature. He believed that people from different civilisations and cultures are so dissimilar that complete mutual understanding is not possible. Respect, sure, but understanding, not quite.

Since the late 19th century, cultural anthropological study has spawned many theories, often conflicting ones, on the intermingling and mutual influence between different civilisations and cultures. Today, as Jan Kieniewicz correctly noted, "thinking and speaking on the multiplicity of worlds has become a commodity, an element of the consumerist model of living, but it requires a certain effort. Overly simple interpretations of the complexity of the world proved to be insufficient to its understanding and ineffective in attempts to introduce change. It was in these circumstances that the 21st century began, bringing with it further questions about the future. Today, we increasingly frame the future in a convention of confrontation between civilisations, whose character may prove decisive, depending on whether the confrontations take the form of conflict or amity."[2]

Thanks to the astounding growth of technology and communication we can freely move about this world of many civilisations and cultures, crossing the personal boundaries we were raised with. Slowly the term "culture" itself is becoming a problem. Let us recall that in the past this word meant something like "refinement," or, as Matthew Arnold put it "a study of perfection."[3] Following the research work of Franz Boas, we no longer speak of culture at large but of cultures built by various communities. According to this theory, each community has its own unique culture. We owe the spread of this understanding of the word culture to a famous 1934 work by Ruth Benedict titled *Patterns of Culture*. Another fundamental work by this outstanding anthropologist, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword,* gave us an in-depth and incredibly accurate picture of the distinctiveness of Japanese culture, of the way its people perceive and understand the world.

[1] Kipling (1889).

[2] Kieniewicz (2003: 11).

[3] Mathews (2000: 14).

Today, anthropologists are increasingly reluctant to use the word "culture," more often subscribing to the belief that "Humankind has... bid farewell to that world which could... be seen as a cultural mosaic, of separate pieces with hard, well-defined edges. Cultural connections increasingly reach across the world."[4] As Kieniewicz also aptly notes in his work quoted earlier, many of today's scholars see our world as a place where we can choose a culture, picking it out like a costume or an outfit from the immense global cultural supermarket. Moreover, coming in the wake of historical and modern study on "national character" were increasingly critical opinions on national states and on the way social life is shaped therein. Taking hold was the theory that "'culture'... is not intrinsic and primordial, but manipulated and perhaps invented by the state for the sake of its own legitimation."[5]

Poland is a country of strong national identity and of a culture which draws hand over fist from the legacy of other countries and adapts the borrowed elements into models fitting our predilections. We may be tempted to say that in this approach we somewhat resemble the Japanese, who also tend to modify all their foreign acquisitions to their tastes. Having a dominant influence on the emergence of our sense of distinctiveness was and continues to be the country's difficult past and its geographical position exposing it to many threats over the centuries. Yet, going hand in hand with our strong sense of distinctiveness is a tendency to diminish our own accomplishments and to indiscriminately glorify those of others. Let us recall what Juliusz Słowacki wrote about this tendency in his *Agamemnon's Tomb*:

Poland ! You are still deceived with baubles; You were the nations' peacock and parrot, Now you are a handmaid of other peoples.

This proclivity to celebrate otherness while denigrating Polishness may, however, bear sweet and succulent fruit. That is how I see our contact with Japanese culture, which has been captivating imaginations and bringing a wealth of inspiration for centuries.

Poland's greatest lover of Japanese art, Feliks Jasieński, first came face to face with it while in Paris, amassing there a large collection which he ultimately donated to the National Museum in Krakow. He also played an exceptionally important role in introducing Warsaw and Krakow art circles to the work of Japanese artists, in the process infecting many Polish artists and critics with a passion for collecting Japanese woodblock prints. Among the more prominent collectors of such art were people like Stanisław Dębicki, Józef Mehoffer, Leon Wyczółkowski, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Franciszek Siedlecki, Edward Okuń, and the publisher of the influential *Chimera* magazine, Zenon Przesmycki.

Ill. 1. Hayakawa Komejirō, Nagoi works, before 1920, vase decorated with the image of plovers over the sea, cloisonné on copper, gift of Juliusz Henry Block, 1935

The collection of Japanese art residing in the National Museum in Krakow is the largest of its kind in Poland, consisting not only of the items donated by Feliks "Manggha" Jasieński but also including donations, admittedly more humble ones, from other individuals, like Erazm Barącz (in 1921) and Leon Kostka (in 1949).

The collection of the National Museum in Warsaw ranks second behind the Krakow museum's in terms of size and includes the remnants of prewar collections belonging to people like Stanisław Glezmer, Mathias Bersohn, Henryk Grohman and

[4] Mathews (2005: 17).
[5] Mathews (2005: 21).

Ill. 2. Tray decorated with a swarm of golden butterflies, Meiji period, 19th/20th c., wood, rōiro-nuri black lacquer, gold powder hiramaki-e decoration, details painted with black and red lacquer

Juliusz Block, as well as post-war donations and purchases. (ill. 1, 2, 3) Among the donations are collections built by Polish expatriates who decided to bequeath their assets to the nation; arriving in the museum's collection in this manner were the Japanese woodblock prints amassed by Olgierd Koreywa and Stanisław Dembiński.[6] (ill. 4, 5, 6) With the absence of a permanent display of Far Eastern art in any Polish museum, the only opportunity for the general public to enjoy direct contact with the work of old and contemporary Japanese artists are temporary exhibitions. Sadly, despite possessing a very interesting assortment of Far Eastern art, the National Museum in Warsaw has yet to open a permanent gallery for art of this kind. In fact, it is not much different in Krakow, where the huge collection of Feliks "Manggha" Jasieński slumbers in the museum's storehouse. Fortunately though, Krakow, having a museum mandated with dealing with Japanese art, is a city where exhibitions of Japanese art are held regularly.

Ill. 3. Tsuba adorned with the image of two herons wading near the bank with a weeping willow, 19th c., brass, silver, inlay and engraving, gift from the collection of Henryk Grohman, 1939

[6] For more on the Japanese art collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, see the catalogue for the exhibition organised by the National Museum in Warsaw and the Manggha Centre of Japanese Art and Technology (today Manggha Museum): Maleszko (2006).

Ill. 4. Amida Nyorai on a lotus pedestal, Japan, 17th c., wood, gilded lacquer, National Museum in Warsaw

Ill. 5. Utagawa Hiroshige, Tomoe Gozen, print from the *One Hundred Poets* series, colour woodblock print, 1845, National Museum in Warsaw, gift of the Dembiński family

Ill. 6. Andō Hiroshige, *Travellers on a bridge with a distant view of Mount Akiba*, woodblock print from the series *53 Stations on the Tōkaidō*, 1833–34, colour woodblock print, collection of Stanisław Dembiński, gift of Maciej Dembiński, 2003

Ill. 7.
Exhibition *Masterpieces of Japanese Art in Polish Collections*, National Museum in Warsaw, 17 June – 9 August 2015, Design: Maria Odolczyk

A permanent exhibition of Far Eastern art, including Japanese art, does exist in Torun, at Kamienica pod Gwiazdą, a division of the Torun Regional Museum, which has been holding a lot of Japanese art exhibitions of late.

The number of Polish collectors of militaria, ceramics, bronze, lacquer, woodblock prints and paintings is growing, which begs the question: "Why the persistent fascination with Japanese culture in Poland?" I have been seeing this for years while organising Japanese art exhibitions, which invariably enjoy great interest among museum and gallery goers. Attending these shows are individuals who are well-versed, and often extremely so, in Japanese culture as well as those having zero contact with the Far East but craving an infusion of "exoticness" into their lives. As is often the case, exhibition visits instil an interest in these far-away countries and awaken a desire to learn more about them.

Eliciting particularly strong reflection in me were the events surrounding the last three exhibitions I organised in 2015 and 2016. I would like to share my observations and to offer up my own understanding of the factors behind the great interest in Japanese art and culture in Poland. Taking place in 2015 at the National Museum in Warsaw was an exhibition titled "Masterpieces of Japanese Art in Polish Collections" (17 June – 9 August 2015). (ill. 7) That show was a product of collaboration with the Manggha Museum in Krakow and featured items from the national museums in Warsaw, Krakow, Wroclaw and Poznan, and from the Museum of King John III's Palace in Wilanów. They included paintings, sculptures, woodblock prints and artisanal handicrafts from the 17th to the 20th centuries. The exhibition's layout, devised by Maria Odolczyk, was conceived so as to loosely allude to Japanese architecture and interior design, resulting in a space in which a variety of objects, often very colourful and ornamental, came together to form a harmonious whole yet could still be "contemplated" individually. The mission was accomplished. The visitors were enthralled not only by the diversity and aesthetic quality of the works on display but also by the atmosphere permeating the space. It all came together to make for a very successful exhibition.

The second exhibition I organised – whose success, I must admit, came as something of a surprise to me – bore the title "The World of Japanese Warriors: The Warrior's Spirit and the Artist's Craft". It ran at the Museum in Gliwice for three months (October 2015 – January 2016), attracting more than 3000 visitors, a huge number for such a relatively small town. The Museum in Gliwice, which possesses quite an interesting collection largely hailing from the former German Upper Silesian Museum, undertook the difficult and costly task of restoring some of the militaria in the collection, returning them to their former glory for the exhibition. (ill. 8)

Because the Gliwice collection is quite modest in size, the exhibition made it necessary to borrow works from other institutions. As a consequence, that exhibition included pieces from the National

Ill. 8. Exhibition *Świat japońskich wojowników: duch wojownika i kunszt artysty* (The World of Japanese Warriors: The Warrior's Spirit, The Artist's Craft), The Museum in Gliwice, October 2015 – January 2016, design: Tomasz Kokott

Museum, the Polish Army Museum, the National Museum of Ethnography and the Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw, as well as ones from the National Museum in Wroclaw and the Manggha Museum.

In no small part thanks to the wonderful contribution of Tomasz Kokott, over the exhibition's several cosy rooms, we created an imaginary picture of the world of samurais: their belief, their aesthetic tastes, and their rich and diverse armours. The woodblock prints showed famous heroes and their valiant deeds. This was very well received by the public, who came out in droves for the exhibition's duration.

Poland has a constantly growing community of Japanese weaponry aficionados and enthusiasts of the samurai tradition. They delight in the decorativeness and exoticism of the armour, the exquisiteness of the swords and the code of honour practiced by the warriors. I suspect that interests of this kind are at least in part influenced by the chivalric ethos still alive in Poland, one that has shaped our culture over the centuries. Japanese and Polish knights differed entirely in culture but, paradoxically, they shared traits like great valour, putting honour before life, a sense of privilege, heroism, and reverence for ideals.

The third exhibition I wish to mention, held at the National Museum in Warsaw from late February to mid-May 2017, was a large showcase of more than three-hundred *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints titled "Journey to Edo. Japanese ukiyo-e prints from the collection of Jerzy Leskowicz". As indicated in the title, the works on display came from the collection of Jerzy Leskowicz, the greatest living Polish collector of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. In terms of sheer quality, his collection of nearly 2000 prints can confidently compete with the finest private collections anywhere in the world. Leskowicz nurtures a particular fondness for the landscapes of Hokusai (1790–1846) and Hiroshige (1797–1858) and the portrait prints of masters like Utamaro and Sharaku. The diversity of the works made it possible to show a broad panorama of Japanese life and landscapes from the 18th and 19th centuries, taking viewers on an imaginary journey from Kyoto to Edo along the Tōkaidō i Kisokaidō roads, the two main routes linking Japan's largest cities in that period. (ill. 9)

While putting together that exhibition, I thought about how to construct a narrative that would not exhaust the visitor with a multitude of rather similar works. The idea to take them on a journey into the past – interpreted on several levels, as a trip to the era of the Tokugawa shoguns' reign and to Japan's two largest cities of the day, imperial Kyoto and the seat of the shogunate, Edo – proved to hit the mark. Very important in that undertaking was the outstanding exhibition design work of Jacek Gburczyk. Drawing inspiration from traditional Japanese architecture, the artist created an incredible space which the viewer could explore to immerse themselves in a world of old Japan as they took in the landscapes, roads, cities and people of the country. Accompanying them on the journey was the sound of music. In one room, we also presented the traditional process of making colour *ukiyo-e* prints.

The exhibition was wonderfully received and the people who visited it, often more than once, expressed a sincere delight not only from the show's content but also from the general aesthetic experience and the pleasure they felt being there. So, with its stylistic otherness and difficult subjects which are often incomprehensible to the average viewer, why does Japanese art attract and excite so

Ill. 9.
Exhibition *Journey to Edo. Japanese ukiyo-e prints from the collection of Jerzy Leskowicz*, National Museum in Warsaw, February – May 2017, design: Jacek Gburczyk, Karolina Chyziak-Włodarczyk, Krzysztof Czajka

many? After all, we grew up in an entirely different tradition and with a dissimilar way of looking at the world. Yet, in this case, as West meets East, the viewer becomes enchanted and can at least to some extent understand the value of this otherness.

Compared to European art, the art of the Far East is characterised by a greater degree of traditionalism despite its multitude of movements and schools, meaning that a specific repertoire of forms is repeated in a fundamentally constant manner over the centuries. Looking at Far Eastern art through the prism of European art – in which each period brings new styles which differ drastically from earlier ones, created under the pressure to innovate in a quest for new forms of expression and new ways to view art and the world – we see considerably greater continuity and order. The changes transpiring in Western art in the Early Modern period were swift and significant, much more abrupt and bringing much more hefty formal shifts than in the art of the Far East.

From the Renaissance to the end of the 19th century, Western artists focussed their attention mainly on searching for perfect and faithful means of reproducing human appearance and the world around us. In the past, a characteristic feature of European art was realism, a desire to faithfully convey space, volume and colour in a painting. Against such efforts and their outcomes, Far Eastern art may seem much more conventional and schematic as it repeats established patterns over and over. Artists from the East understood and experienced nature in a contemplative manner, for centuries employing the same techniques and tools – a brush, ink and watercolour. They made their works using a technique which European artists reserved for studies or preparatory sketches and not for finished works. This "sketchiness" in the work of Far Eastern artists makes it possible for the viewer to feel part of the creative process, as if watching the work arise, which is certainly appealing.

Interest in the Far Eastern art tradition may also be partially attributed to a feeling of exhaustion, discomfort or intolerance with respect to contemporary art. This applies not only to the general audience or culture "consumers" but also to highly-informed individuals and even respected art historians. In support of this theory, let us quote Wiesław Juszczak, who said, "certainly, walking into a gallery, listening to music or sitting in a theatre, I always very strongly and vividly feel that the phenomena I encounter are not those which I have come for; that they are just playing the part. To put it another way: they pretend to be the thing they ought to be. This allows me to say that we see a proliferation of such 'works of art' which pretend to be art in places typically intended for it."[7]

What attracts us to Japanese art is the meticulousness and sincerity with which the artist approaches even the smallest, humblest thing. A box, a bowl or a miniature figure carved from ivory or wood astounds the eye with its perceptiveness of the world and its bewitching decorativeness, its stylistics often imbued with a subtle sense of humour.

[7] Juszczak (1995:103).

Ill. 10. Daikoku and Ebisu – gods of good fortune, 19th c., ivory netsuke

Ill. 11. Sano Takeo, *Tiger Spring*, ca. 1960, watercolour

Ill. 12. Katsushika Hokusai, *Resting traveller* (the poet Saigyō), ca. 1830, ink on paper, vertical scroll, National Museum in Warsaw

In such works, we are dealing with a sincere statement, with beauty, and though it is a beauty understood somewhat differently, it is still legible and deeply moving. The often modest works are able to tell us much more about the world and ourselves than the contrived "creations" that ultimately prove hollow. (ill. 10, 11, 12)

Another thing that attracts us is the reversed hierarchy in Far Eastern art. For centuries, in European art, humans took and still take centre stage. In Japanese art, however, the spotlight may be on a camellia blossom, a butterfly, a blade of grass or a cicada.

Even though the Japanese conception of aesthetic rules is fundamentally different from classical European models, Japanese aesthetics somehow appeal deeply to Europeans. In ancient Greece, beauty was closely tied to notions like strength, wealth and grandiosity. This formula is overtly evident in the myth of the judgement of Paris: Hera offers the young man power, Athena – victory over all his adversaries, and Aphrodite – the most beautiful woman. The implication is clear: power, strength and love are naturally interwoven with the category of beauty. For centuries, in our European cultural circles, the beauty canons evolving in the Mediterranean basin were the be-all-and-end-all, fixed and practically transcendent. "Divine" beauty was reflected in perfect shapes based on harmonious proportions, symmetry and completeness.

For the Japanese sense of beauty, referred to as *wa*, harmony was also crucial but it was arrived at via a completely different road. The original meaning of the word *utsukushii* seems to indicate that, for the Japanese, the notion of beauty belongs more to the realm of emotions than the intellect. *Utsukushii* can be translated as "beautiful," and this is how it is used today. However, early in the second millennium AD, the meaning of this word was somewhat different, as we notice in surviving works of literature from the period. It described the feeling evoked by something frail, something in need of care. More than anything, it applied to something that is pleasant due to its vulnerability and delicacy. A similar meaning resulted from its use in reference to objects, not people. In her memoir *Makura-no soshi*, Sei Shonagon writes: "Nanimo nanimo chiisaki mono-wa mina utsukushii," which may be translated as: "Beautiful is anything that is small," or "All that is small breeds a sense of protectiveness." In the Muromachi period (1392 – end of 15th c.), the word *utsukushii* began to acquire its modern-day meaning of "beautiful," though it still harbours a certain emotional connotation today.

Reason, so strongly underpinning Western classicism since the time of ancient Greece, is absent from Japanese aesthetics. In the West, from the Canon of Polykleitos to the work of Jacques-Louis David, it was declared that art, like a guide, should be the "light of reason," and, thus, beauty was determined by fidelity to the principles of rationalism and mathematics, or, as mentioned earlier, by symmetry, proportion, perspective and the "golden ratio." We find no such thing in Japan. There, beauty is never understood as an external quality but something intrinsic to a phenomenon, being or object; beauty exists in the heart of those who can feel it. This idea is wonderfully reflected in the foreword to the anthology *Kokinshū* ("Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern," compiled in the early 10th c.). The author of the foreword, the poet Ki-no Tsurayuki (d. 946), states: "The seeds of Japanese poetry lie in the human heart and grow into leaves of ten-thousand words." This path was followed by later theoreticians and poets. Finally, when Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), the leading exponent of *kokugaku* (the national school) and eulogizer of the Japanese tradition's greatness and immortality, defined the theory known as *mono-no aware* ("pathos of things," "charm of the moment," or the like) in attempting to explain the essence of Japanese poetry, he too referenced emotional qualities playing a central role in the formation of Japanese sensitivities. According to this line of thinking, that which is beautiful does not have to be perfect and flawless. Unlike in European culture, where nature is "improved on" in pursuit of the ideal of perfection, Japanese artists accept nature in all its imperfections and unpredictability, finding its charm precisely in those aspects. In a single humble painting or in a diminutive ornamental motif we can encounter numerous Japanese takes on the essence of beauty: *miyabi* or sophistication, *wabi* – noble simplicity, *sabi* – imperfection caused by the passage of time and wear, the enigmatic profoundness (*yūgen*) of symbolic *zen* gardens and monochromatic paintings; all of this mingles and comes together in *mono-no aware*, or the ability to reach the essence of a thing and a sensitivity to beauty in all its permutations necessary to create a true work of art.

Arriving at the exhibition, the viewer infallibly and intuitively feels this quality, succumbs to it and delights in it, by way of which the remote and "other" East becomes close and the art fulfils its foremost objective: it explains, reveals, portrays the world and life, moves and bewitches.

Bibliography

Juszczak 1995 = Wiesław Juszczak, *Fragmenty. Szkice z teorii i filozofii*, Warsaw 1995: 103.

Kieniewicz 2003 = Jan Kieniewicz, *Wprowadzenie do historii cywilizacji Wschodu i Zachodu*, Warsaw 2003: 11.

Kipling 1889 = Rudyard Kipling, *The Ballad of East and West*, 1889.

Maleszko 2006 = Katarzyna Maleszko, *Sztuka japońska z kolekcji Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie / The Japanese art collection of the National Museum in Warsaw*, Krakow 2006.

Mathews 2005 = Gordon Mathews, *Global Culture/Individual Identity. Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket*, Abingdon 2000: 14, 17, 21.

Shigemi Inaga
稲賀繁美, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto
Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Hayama

Utsushi and Utsuroi: Imprint and Transience

Summary

For the last quarter century, Morimura Yasumasa (b. 1951) has 're-played' Western world art history by using his own body. He replicates the visual experiences of the famous Western artists by reconstructing the scene of well-known masterpieces. His body is thereby 'possessed' by the historical personae while he takes possession of the very images he imitates. Morimura's own 'self' is superimposed upon many historical 'selves', and the double images constitute a parallel world between the past and the present. There is a circular structure: the dead artists take possession of the living body of Morimura.

In this reciprocal overlapping, implying imprint and transience at the same time, let us ask a number of questions. How can we locate History? What does the *jikihitsu*, or the artist's own signature, mean in this process of *utsushi* (duplication) and *utsuroi* (transition-transience)?

On the other hand, Ishikawa Kyûyô (b. 1945) retraces the life and deeds of Chinese 'hommes de lettres' in his *History of Chinese Written Letters*.[1] The letters or personal signatures consist of traces of ink left on the paper by the movement of brush strokes. And yet this story or history conceals its own pre-history which had consisted of imprints engraved on stones by a chisel (before the historical invention of paper). Thus the *History of Chinese Letters* highlights the duplication by which the older layer of stone engraving had been erased and concealed by the new layer of ink on paper. Moreover, the *jikihitsu* or the authentic signature of the historical masterpiece by Wáng Xīzhī reveals itself only as a phantom or a ghost. The original is long-lost and we can have a glimpse of it only through the amassed copies and (more or less faithful) replica meticulously prepared and treasured in the successive royal collections. The original and lost *jikihitsu* can be perceived through the filigree of reproductions sedimented in the course of transmission. Just like a palimpsest in the Western tradition. And yet, as a practitioner and theoretician, Ishikawa Kyûyô tries to discover the truth in the history of the *jikihitsu* in this very process of irremediable perdition. According to him, it is in the very loss and transience of cultural heritage or in this ramification of concealment that History reveals its truth.

These two case studies would allow us to grasp the *modus vivendi* of *jikihitsu* in history. As an epigraph, let us quote from Roland Barthes, who famously declared in his *Empire des signes* (1972): "Le signe est une fracture qui ne s'ouvre jamais que

[1] We refrain from using the word 'calligraphy' for the translation of 書, as it is simply misleading.

sur le visage d'un autre signe."[2] He was referring to a strange statue portrait of the Monk Hôshi 宝誌和尚 (ill. 1) kept at Saijû-ji Temple西住寺. His front face is vertically split, and another face reveals itself in the cleaving from the inside. One may ask if the revealed face represents 'empty-ness' 空性or the true 'Buddha nature' 仏性. Takashi Murakami, a famous contemporary Japanese artist, disguised himself in this double image of uncertain identity in repetitive revelations.

1. Morimura's signature: *Jikihitsu*, or the (Im-)Personified World Art History

Let us begin with a famous ghost story. According to legend, Hôichi was a blind minstrel (or *biwa hōshi*) with an amazing gift for the musical instrument *biwa* (a loquat-shaped Japanese lute). He was particularly good at performing the *Tale of the Heike*, an epic describing the fall of Emperor Antoku (1178–1185). Hoichi was approached late one night by a gruff samurai who demanded that the minstrel play for his lord. It turns out eventually that Hôichi was playing his *biwa* furiously in the middle of the Amidaji cemetery. Realizing that Hôichi had been bewitched by ghosts, the priest vowed to save him from further trickery. He painted Hôichi's body with the kanji characters of the *Heart Sutra* for protection and instructed him to remain silent and motionless. The ghostly samurai approached Hôichi but was unable to see anything but his ears. The sutra had rendered the rest of Hôichi's body invisible.[3]

Let us quote from the rendition by Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), who made this story famous in his English rendering, *The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hôïchi*, included in his final book, *Kwaidan* (published on March 25, 1904):

> At that instant Hôïchi felt his ears gripped by fingers of iron, and torn off. Great as the pain was, he gave no cry. The heavy footfalls receded along the verandah – descended into the garden – passed out to the roadway – ceased. From either side of his head, the blind man felt a thick warm trickling; but he dared not lift his hands (...)[4]

Obviously, earlobes here designate the 'liminality' (Z. Bauman) of possession – between the realms of the sane and the insane. We know of several famous historical figures who have cut off their earlobes. In medieval Japan, the Priest Myôe (1173–1232) is known to have cut off his right earlobe during an ascetic exercise; in the modern era, the Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh also cut off his (left) earlobe. Vincent had previously made a self-portrait in the guise of a Japanese Buddhist monk with whom he wished to identify himself (1888). One of Morimura's earliest attempts at disguising himself as a Western painter shows him as Vincent smoking a pipe with his left wounded ear bundled (original in 1889, Morimura's performance in 1985) (ill. 2). For his later retrospective show, Morimura published a book, *Confession of the Self-portraits*, with the subtitle: 'when "I"-watashi 私 encounter other "I-s"-watashiわたし'. Is it a mere coincidence that the first personal pronoun ('watashi' in Japanese) also happens to mean 'ferry' or even 'ferryman' like Χάρων, or Charōn in Greek mythology, who assures the connection between Hell and this world...

To understand this multiplication and successive 'rebirth' of the 'I-watashi' in History, Lafcadio Hearn's observation is helpful. In one of his essays treating of insects, Hearn quotes form one waka poet, Minamoto no Shigeyuki 源重之 (d. ca. 1000), with his English translation:

> 音もせで思ひにもゆる蛍こそ啼く虫よりも哀れなりけれ
>
> *Oto-mo sede omohi-ni moyuru hotaru koso naku mushi yorimo aware narikere*
>
> Not making even a sound [yet] burning with desire, – for this the firefly indeed has become more worthy of pity than any insect that cries.

And Hearn adds the following explanation. In his imagination, not only the generations of lives but even inanimate matter conceals within itself a succession of memory from the immemorial past:

> But I cannot rid myself of the notion that Matter, in some blind infallible way, remembers; and that in every unit of living substance there slumber infinite potentialities, simply because to every ultimate atom belongs the infinite and indestructible experience of billions of billions of vanished universes.[5]

[2] Barthes (1972: XX, accessed 20.11.2019).

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoichi_the_Earless (accessed 20.06.2019).

[4] Hearn (1904: XX, accessed 20.11.2019).

[5] Hearn (1910: 169).

According to Hearn, what we call 'soul' is a sort of 'composite of recollections'; an image of ghostly personalities in which the characteristics of many familiar faces are superimposed to form a memory and interblended by our affection for them.[6] Scholars have already traced the influence of Sir Francis Galton's (1822–1911) idea of the 'composite portrait' (1879) in Hearn. Galton had established a 'portrait of type and not of individual' by superimposing multiple portrait photographs on a single face. While insisting upon the possibility of hereditary succession of one's talent in terms of eugenics (in particular in his *Hereditary Genius*, 1869), Galton also discovered a statistical tendency of 'returning to the average': instead of exaggerating peculiar oddities, the superimposition of characteristics in successive operations tends to neutralize the physiognomy to an average. Eccentric traits that would characterize the typical face of a criminal, for example, cannot be detected in the superimposition of such faces. On the contrary, criminality seems to sublimated in the process of transmigration/metempsychosis. This reminds us of another ghost story masterpiece by Hearn, *Mujna the face-less*. The lack of characteristics ultimately reduces the spirit's face to an egg-like plane surface which completely lacks in personality. The horror stems from the total lack of distinguishable features.

Nishida Kitarô (1870–1945), a distinguished modern Japanese philosopher, did not fail to grasp this particularity in Lafcadio Hearn. He writes as follows (my tentative translation):

> Hearn was a writer with mystical insight, who saw spirituality at work behind every phenomenon. He not only felt the pulsations of thousand-year life underneath of our simple feeling or sentiment; he also grasped vitalities of the ancestral soul in each of the physical expressions. Our personality is not an individual matter but a composite of generations of personalities. From the bottom of our body the flux of life from our progenitors rises up. Our body is nothing but the extreme limit of the pillar of endless spirits stemming from the primordial past. Thus he meditates in the indigo of the Mexican Bay the azure of the joyful summer sky of past centuries; in the sky-burning crimson light in the tropical eve he felt the volcanic eruptions of the immemorial past as well as the raging fires in the forest;

Ill. 1. Statue of the Monk Hôshi, Seijû-ji Temple, courtesy of Shincho-sha Publishing Co.Ltd

Ill. 2. Morimura Yasumasa, *Self-Portrait with bandaged ear*, 1985, courtesy of Morimura Yasumasa

[6] Hearn (1889), a similar remark can also be found in Hearn (ca. 1890; 1894).

> he listened to the murmur of dead parents and grandparents while observing the changing countenance of his own children, and he yearned for the *karma* of transmigration as he felt a frisson at the handshake with his beloved...[7]

This brings us back to Morimura. Like Lafcadio Hearn, Morimura is also trying to fuse into the past to reveal himself. (ill. 2) Curiously enough, the Japanese term for Ghost land 幽界(*yûkai*) has the same sound as 融解 (*yûkai*) i.e. 'fusing' or 'melting'; they are also homonyms of 誘拐 (*yûkai*) meaning 'kidnapping'. Is Morimura 'kidnapped' by History, or are the historical selves 'fusing into' Morimura's Self, fusing him with the historical Ghosts of the Past?

Here, let me introduce another Japanese term. *Utsushi* means both 'copy', 'transcription', 'transportation' and 'possession'. *Iki-utsushi* means 'similar to reborn', suggesting the 'reincarnation' of a dead person as if he or she were 'alive' (*iki*). By collecting Western old masters, Morimura assimilates himself into the Collective Self, incarnating all of Western Art History by himself alone. Here the 'order-made' signatures (of each of the Western masters, with his or her personal touch and individual style) transform themselves into a 'ready-made', neutralized portrait. Morimura's *Last Supper* or *Ultima Cena*, after Leonardo da Vinci, represents twelve masters, who are none other than Morimura himself in disguise. If at the Last Supper, Christ's body and blood are symbolically distributed and consumed by his disciples to immortalize and enshrine his teaching as their vocation, the same mystical communion takes place in this repeated ritual of Morimura's reincarnating the Western Masters like a cannibal. Among those convoked, or rather invoked, is Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), but astutely enough his presence is shown by his very ghost-like 'absence' from the scene...

The disappearance guarantees the ultimate vindication of presence. The personal signature or *jikihitsu* obtains an a-historial anonymity, as if the individual self-identity were fusing into the self-portrait of the collective selves. This also reminds us of the fact that etymologically 'persona' stems from the Greek for mask, πρόσωπον (prosopon). Nobody knows if the mask hides the real personality or if it reveals the true nature of the person hidden behind the mask. Whatever the case, the fact remains that beyond possible personal identification, a Collective Self manifests itself, allowing transhistorical neutrality, encompassing the West and the East (or the Rest, just as in the case of Mauricio de Sousa, who is conducting a parallel world operation in Brazil by introducing his comic characters on the canvases of Old Masters, as if duplicating the practices of Morimura at the antipodes of Japan...). 'Another twin-like "I-watashi" is everywhere and is constantly multiplying themselves' in search of anonymity.

2. Ishikawa Kyûyô, or the Paradox of *Jikihitsu* in the *History of Chinese Letters*

In his prize-winning ambitious volume *The History of Chinese Letters* 中国書史(1996), Ishikara Kyûyô conceived the eponymous history as a dialectical struggle between stone and paper. Usually, in manual-type guide-books, especially for the purpose of calligraphic training, the fact that Chinese characters were originally engraved on bones for geomancy or on stones for inscription before the invention of paper has not been taken seriously, if not entirely ignored. But this shift could not have avoided drastic modification of the practice. Ishikawa starts with the presupposition: firstly, a stone layer is buried beneath the paper. Secondly, he states that the phenomenology of writing in China requires an effort of archaeology, which implies the necessity of practising methodological anachronism (we will explain it later). Thirdly, engraving letters as inscriptions is synonymous with the making/becoming of History by Chinese definition. By the same token, Chinese history can and should be retraced by examining the material traces of written letter inscriptions. In other words, engraving letters is concomitant with the '*Entstehung der Geschichte*', thus retracing history from imprinted traces turns out to be an indispensable approach. Fourthly, the aforementioned fact also allows us to make a rediscovery of the Past through calque, by way of retracing the ancestral technique and deed left in their authentic writings – i.e. the *jikihitsu* – for the very reason that they crystallize the *modus vivendi* of the personality of historical figures.[8]

[7] Nishida (1928–1965)

[8] This is due to the fact of historical and cultural difference: if in the West, the scribes are mainly intellectual servants to the powerholders, in China, in contrast, the writing of the *jikihitsu* has been the personification of the human virtue

The most important historical event in the long Chinese history of *jikihitsu* letters is undoubtedly the positioning of Wáng Xīzhī 王羲之(303–361), whose 蘭亭序*Lántíngjí Xù or Preface to the Orchid Pavilion* (353) (ill. 3) and other writings has played an important role, all the more irreplaceable as the originals are entirely lost. Here the problematique of lost *jikihitsu* surfaces. It is widely known that following the loss or inaccessibility of the original, many 'authentic' copies proliferated. The Beijing Palace Museum boasts of possessing eight distinguished copies made using the meticulous technique of '*Shuang gou tian mo*' or 'putting the ink according to the engraving of the original'. Yet the 'original' here stands for the later copies made by posterity in its worship of Wáng Xīzhī. Among these 'faithful copies' Ishikawa takes up three, and without hesitation characterizes the merits and eccentricity of each of the copies as follows:

The tired copy「奇想天外のヒゲ蘭亭」 'eccentric beard style'

The second copy 「三折法」 楷書 'formal three-stroke Sung Dynasty style'

The first copy 「双胴の怪獣」「合成体」 'catamaran cyborg monster'

Ishikawa observes that each of these copies could not help but reflect the particular style of the epoch during which it was made, and as far as the style of writing is concerned, they could hardly transmit faithfully the traces of the Six Dynasties Period original. The original Wáng Xīzhī style is veiled, as it were, under the Tang Dynasty style writing through which it was transcribed. Ishikawa's approach consists of restoring the vacant and absent 'original' by taking into account the 'deviations' by which each of the copies was marked in its idiosyncratic *jikihitsu* traces.

In terms of the authentic *jikihitsu* signature then, how can we evaluate this almost impossible mission and audacious tentative of recuperation? How to restore the lost original? If not by putting together and superimposing the diverse, heteroclite and ill-natured copies of posterity – full of confusion with the Tang Dynasty style overlapping, altering, and

Ill. 3. Three copies of Wang Xizhi's 'jikihitsu' writing, Beijing Palace Museum, courtesy of Ishikawa Kyûyô

suffocating the Six Dynasties original writing style, which, by the way, we can no longer witness as such.

Logically speaking, it would certainly be possible to one by one eliminate the errors committed by later generations in their (unintentional or intentional) modifications or reinterpretation of the original; but it would be sheer nonsense to suppose that by accumulating such refutations, putting aside obvious errors, one can one day reach the lost original. It is well known in a certain Jewish tradition that the Revelation from God is already lost when it is inscribed on the rock. The rock can retain only the loss of the original Voice from Heaven. And the duty of later generations consisted in trying to restore the lost original by accumulating and assembling the fragments that had been fatally broken and scattered in different languages by way of translation. Here is the theological understanding of the post-Babel situation. In a strikingly similar way, it is the inaccessibility of the original that has bestowed on Wáng Xīzhī in China an inviolable authority and authenticity.

Paradoxically enough it is the distance from the original *jikihitsu* that sustains the worship of the ultimate Canon. Like the ghost in Lafcadio Hearn,

directly emanating from the noble personality. This is one of the reasons why we do not use the term "calligraphy" here.

Wáng Xīzhī has to be invoked whenever necessary so as to constitute the History around this lost origin. History – as written inscription – is 'fabricated', as it were, in due respect of the Canon. Such a Canon can *de jure* no longer exist anywhere, if not in the collective aspiration and yearning of its lost heritage. What Morimura has done with the *Ultima Cena* is not alien to this invocation of the ghostly spectre...

In this context, the significance of the Emperor Taizong 太宗of the Tang Dynasty (598–649) is revealed. As is well known, Emperor Taizong 太宗 is responsible for the loss of the *Lántíngjí Xù* and other *jikihitsu* writing by Wáng Xīzhī, as they were said to be buried in his tomb at his orders. However, through its loss, the lost piece gained the status of an a-historical absolute Canon, while its loss liberated posterity from its enchantment and bondage. Posterity is at the same time 'haunted' by the magnetic field of the Ghost but has simultaneously gained the freedom of their own development, free from the haunting of the Past. As the absolute absent Canon, 蘭亭序*Lántíngjí Xù* (353) and other lost *jikihitsu* have obtained and established their positionality of the Canon in compensation of their own irremediable loss. And this paradox marks the very foundation of historiography in the Chinese tradition: let us remark that *lìsh* ǐ 歷史in Chinese is hardly equivalent to its Western counterpart of 'history'. In China, posterity is authorized, in terms of their 'vocation', to legitimize the Past whose loss it is responsible for.

This accounts for the later development of the Chinese history of letters after its founding with the Constitution of Wáng Xīzhī.[9]

In conclusion, let us summarize the lessons we can take away from the two parts of this brief presentation in terms of *jikihitsu* practice. Let us here again refer to the two notions of '*utsusu*' and '*utsuru*'. It is well known that these basic notions in the Japanese language added another dimension when they came into contact with Buddhism. '*Utsushimi*' 現し身, meaning worldly existence or reality, can easily be morphed into '*utsusemi*' 空蝉 or 'the cicada's empty shell', evoking transience. The 'real body' or 'real presence' ('*utsushimi*') is nothing but the other side of the '*utsusemi*', 'cast-off skin', a slough or a cadaver. In the famous *Collection of Ancient and New Poems, Kokin Waka-shû* /古今和歌集 in 20 volumes, edited in 905, we learn by heart the following piece:

> うつせみのからは木ごとにとどむれど魂のゆくへを見ぬぞかなしき （古今・物名）
>
> *Utsusemi-no kara-ha kigoto-ni todomure-do tama-no yukuhe-wo minu-zo kanashiki*
>
> Cast off skin of the cicada remains on each trunk of the trees, and alas, the souls within have moved away I don't know where...

Morimura's so-called appropriation of Western art history shows the interplay between *utsushimi* an *utsusemi*, with all the ambiguity inherent in the imposition of Self on History through *jikihitsu*. In contrast, Ishikawa Kyûyô's conception of the *History of Chinese Letters* vividly shows the dialectical conflict and dynamics of *jikihitsu*. A potential *dynamis* takes shape as *energeia* in a series of confrontations taking place between the centripetal *abyme* of the initial Canon and the centrifugal deviation the absent Canon has opened up to posterity. Here are two remarkable cases of Japanese perception of *jikihitsu* which have been articulated in their encounter with universal history, which artists in Poland are constantly aspiring for.

Bibliography

Barthes 1972 = Roland Barthes, *Empire des signes,* Skira 1972.

Hearn 1889 = Lafcadio Hearn, 'A Ghost', *Harpers Monthly* 1889.

Hearn ca. 1890 = *In the Cave of the Children's Ghost* (manuscript), published in 1894.

Hearn 1894 = *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, Houghton, Mifflin 1894.

Hearn 1904 = Lafcadio Hearn, 'The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hôïchi', in: *Kwaidan*, MacMillan London 1904.

Hearn 1910 = Lafcadio Hearn, 'Fireflies', in: *Kottô, Being Japanese Curios, with Sundry Cobwebs,* MacMillan, London 1910: 169.

Nishida 1928–1965 = Nishida Kitarô, 'The Thought of Mr. Lafcadio Hearn' (1928), in a leaflet in the *Complete Works of Lafcadio Hearn*, Tokyo: Daiichi Shobô, vol. 4., 1928; *Complete Works of Nishida Kitarô*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, vol. 1, 1965.

[9] The details of the development are given as a 'reincarnation' in the Appendix, infra.

Appendix

Experimental 'Reincarnation' of the History of Chinese jikihitsu Lettere by Western typography

In the following part, we imitate, though far from perfectly, the typography corresponding to each particular style of *jikihitsu* in the Chinese original.

Immediately after the 'Constitution' of the authority of Wáng Xīzhī 王羲之by the imperial order of Taizong 太宗in the heyday of the Tang Dynasty, 孫過庭 Sun Guoting (648–703) did not hesitate to show an 'Enormously Reactionary tendency' (p. 191), and with 張旭 Zhang Xu (birth and death year not known) the Mid Tang Dynasty saw 「狂書」 Simply Crazy Writing. In contrast, 顔真卿 Yán Zhēnqīng (709–785) established a standard typography, to be respected as the formal and standard 'correct' style after the introduction of movable types. Shortly after, 懷素Huáisù (737–799) invents a Snake dancing in deviation from the typographical standard.

During the Sung Dynasty, 蘇軾 Sū Shì (1037–1101) marked, again, an intentional deviation by lack of equilibrium. 黄庭堅 Huang Tingjian (1045–1105), another representative of the Sung Dynasty, excelled in 'Crisp & brisk while strongly adhesive' writing of his own, in his recollection of Li Bai's poetry. Later, during the Ming Dynasty, 'Another way of adhesiveness', in contrast to crispness, was proposed by 祝允明 Zhù Yǔn míng (1460–1526), who realized what Ishikawa names Twisting and screwing lettering in his *Red Cliff Oath in Great Letters* 大赤壁賦. The third contemporary master was 文徵明 Wen Zhengming (1470–1559), who, in his scroll of poems in cursive letters,「行書詩巻」, showed his style of *jikihitsu*, Dreaming Nostalgia of the lost past. 徐渭 Xú Wèi (1521–1593) showed an extreme heterography with his twisting style which Ishikawa calls Villainy on the Battlefield.

The take-over of power by the Qing Dynasty could not but have a deep impact on literati life. 王鐸 Wáng Duó (1592–1652) did not conceal his Coquetry and Flirtation. 八大山人 Bādà Shānrén, a painter, and calligrapher also known as 朱耷 Zhū Dā (1626?–1705?), who also lived during the transitory period from the Ming to the Qing Dynasty, was qualified by Ishikawa as Bluntly Gruff ぶっきらぼう bukkirabô. Jin Nong 金農 (1687–1763), also known as an eccentric painter, is distinguished by his 'Blade swallowed up into the brush' 刀の刃をまるごと毛筆に呑み込んだ style. 鄭 燮 Zhèng Xiè, or Zhèng B ă nqiáo (1693–1765) also established a style of his own, 'Creeping low as if squaring off'. 董其昌 Dǒng Qíchāng (1555–1636), a painter active in the previous century, showed「行草書巻」in his scroll of cursive lines, what Ishikawa has named a style Pretending to be at will and with ease, but concealing timidity & warped inflection. Likewise, 張 瑞図Zhang Ruitu (1576?–1641?) preferred a style like 'A drunken razor'.

The development of the epigraphic studies introduced a new tendency. 鄧 石如 Deng Shiru (1743–1805), was an earlier example, with his marked style that one may call A pseudo-classical anachronism of retrieving engraving and clerical style on paper. This trend is followed by 趙之謙 Zhao Zhiqian (1829- 1884) with his practice of the clerk style in which Ishikawa remarks 'The demise – historical end – of stone engraving scholarship'. In the republican era, after the fall down of the Qing Dynasty, comes 吳昌碩 Wú Chāngshì (1834–1927), in whom Ishikawa sees a 'Retreat from the seal engraving or the border transgression toward calligraphic lettering'. The final phase may be represented by the calligrapher-painter, 齐白石 Qí Báishí (1864–1957), clearly marking the 脱却 Overcoming to the realm of Expressivity. His seal engraving is also full of unprecedented 'Freshness in cutting and slitting'.

The above will serve as a practical guide for the reading of Ishikawa's huge volume.

Yuko Nakama
Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto

Nature and humans: Physical reality in Japanese aesthetics Reconsidering the pictorial spaces of Hokusai and teamLab

In 1833, Katsushika Hokusai published his *Tour of Waterfalls of Various Provinces*, consisting of eight *ukiyo-e* prints. Hokusai was, on the one hand, a realist whose observations enabled him to reproduce the forms, inner life, and outer expressions of man and nature in a humorous key, and, on the other, a mannerist who tended toward the fantastic, enthusiastically translating nature's forms into his strange 'hokusaism'.[1] The famous piece, *Kirifuri Waterfall on Mount Kurokami, in Shimonotsuke* (ill. 1), shows one of the three most celebrated waterfalls of Nikko. Its fierce and monstrous shape, formed by the water running down, is more likely the result of Hokusai's powerful imagination.

Waterfalls have been appreciated by the Japanese for reasons of belief, religious asceticism, and, most of all, for sightseeing connected with pilgrimages. In Hokusai's *ukiyo-e*, the people in the pictorial space are not only amazed by the dynamism of the waterfall but are also surrounded by the splashing water, which conveys physical reality. Water vapour dispersed around the waterfall is precisely drawn with a kind of pointillistic technique in the piece *Aoigaoka Waterfall in the Eastern Capital*. Water mist and bubbles are forcefully articulated, especially in *Yōrō Waterfall in Mino Province* and *Kirifuri Falls at Kurokami Mountain in Shimotsuke Province*. People in the pictorial space are depicted in silent awe of the power of nature before their eyes. The strong contrast between the dynamism of the roaring waterfall and the silence of the people is effectively expressed. The composition of flat and multiple viewpoints invites viewers to share in this extraordinary experience by identifying with the figures in the pictorial space. The water forcefully and directly falls into a pool and splashes as it hits the stone. The atmosphere of light and mist dispersed in space, the sense of coolness, and the sounds of the water beating against the basin are delivered to the viewers beyond the frame.

Hokusai's well-known *Kanagawaokiura*, *The Great Wave*, was painted during the same period as the *Tour of Waterfalls of Various Provinces*. Here, the giant waves crash down on three boats that people are courageously rowing. Although the worship of Mount Fuji plays a central role, awe of nature is substantial; the expression of the vitality of nature, physically experienced by the people in the midst of the wave, is what Hokusai seems to be attempting to portray in this landscape image that goes beyond the frame to wrap the viewer in the pictorial space, creating a sense of reality rooted in the 'here and now'.

The sense of spatial awareness of pre-modern Japan seen in Hokusai's work is explored by teamLab

[1] Tsuji (2003: 65).

Ill. 1. Katsushika Hokusai, *Kirifuri waterfall on Mount Kurokami in Shimonotsuke*, c. 1833, colour woodblock print, 38.9 x 26.3 cm, from the series: *A Tour of Japanese Waterfalls*

(leader: Inoko Toshiyuki), a creator group attempting to use a digital-scientific approach to discover the flat or shallow spaces of traditional Japanese paintings. TeamLab is expanding their activities on a global scale, for example: *Time-Blossoming Flowers-Taiwan*,[2] 2016, *Memory of Topography*[3] at the Milan Expo, 2018, and *Au-delà des limites*[4] at *Japonismes 2018*, Paris. TeamLab's digital installations create landscapes of rice plants, flower gardens, and waterfalls that surround viewers with kinetics features similar to the movements of nature, as they step into the pictorial space.[5] 'Borderless' is the keyword, suggesting reciprocal inflows of flora, fauna, and humans. The images move and transform, also reacting to the touches or movements of the viewers, as in the real natural world.

2. The Japanese aesthetics of 'being present'

How then is teamLab connected to traditional Japanese painting? The goal of the group is to express the moving nature of life, and members seem to have learned from Katsushika Hokusai and the Rimpa school of the Edo period in particular. The originality of teamLab's digital technology is likely connected with the innovative mosaic screens of Itō Jakuchū of the late eighteenth century.[6]

I would like to reconsider, however, the representation of the rhythmical movement of nature that can be found as early as the twelfth century, during the Heian period, in the *Poems of Thirty-six poet immortals* (ill. 2) selected by Fujiwara no Kintō. Here, the butterflies and birds move rhythmically and the unique combination of chromatic hues and shininess within its sprinkled foils forms an asymmetrical composition. Parallel to the pictorial images, the wavy flow of *kana* characters in the original Japanese makes the entire design visually active.

We can observe this feature in successive generations, as in the seventeenth-century *Poem Scroll with Underpainting of Cranes* (ill. 3) – calligraphy by Honami Kōetsu, underpainting by Tawaraya Sōtatsu. Its rhythm of movement is specific to the Rimpa painters and is also seen in Suzuki Kiitsu's flower depictions in *Morning Glories* (ill. 4) from

[2] https://www.teamlab.art/jp/w/time-blossoming-flowers-taiwan (accessed 20.11.2019).

[3] https://www.teamlab.art/jp/w/topography/ (accessed 20.11.2019).

[4] https://www.teamlab.art/jp/e/lavillette/ (accessed 20.11.2019).

[5] Barbara London of the Museum of Modern Art, New York and Honor Harger of the ArtScience Museum in Singapore review teamLab as follows: 'Van Gogh rocked the world with his irises, Monet his water lilies, and Georgia O'Keefe her desert flowers ... Each extracted something particular from their own culture and forged distinctive visions about changing realities. This is what teamLab does so well, drawing upon its *ka-cho-fu-getsu* culture, as it devises magic carpets and walls of flowers that bud, blossom, and droop before starting the cycle again, mirroring life in the physical and the virtual, both in real time'. (teamLab 2016: 9)

'TeamLab uses technology to create encounters that are emotionally analogous with the experiences we might have standing in a meadow of flowers, or before a vast waterfall... By eschewing single-point perspective and instead physically positioning the viewer inside a scene, teamLab is inviting an enactment of the notion that there is no separation between us and nature'. (teamLab 2016: 10).

[6] Tsuji (2019: 96).

Yukio Lippit describes Jakuchu's mosaic screen of *Birds, Animals, and Flowering Plants in Imaginary Scene* as follows: 'The painting surface is divided into a fine ink-lined grid of tiny squares, which can be as small as nine millimeters per side...The appeal of these mosaic screens lies in their capacity to be experienced as both components of a picture [from a distance] and geometric abstractions [close-up], as well as in their pointillistic expressions of color, pattern, and form'. Colorful Realm (2012: 183).

the early nineteenth century. The petals of the morning glories seem to project out from the screen toward the viewers, creating a realistic and vivid impression with their intense colour and close-up motifs. To intensify the colour, the amount of ultramarine pigment was modulated to adjust the reflection of the light and the texture of the material. Such emphasis on detail was not just intended for naturalistic depiction or to stimulate viewers' senses but to portray the sensuous presence of the object. The Rimpa group's unique and recognized decorativeness is described by Furuta Ryo:

> Decorativeness as an art is not just a question of visual stimulation. By approaching the DNA-like rhythms or patterns inherent in human beings and nature, decorativeness increases its worth. This is not irrelevant to the fact that, generally speaking, decorative art in Japan is based on nature.[7]

The desire to 'be present' or 'integrated' in the pictorial space is remarkable in the fragmental compositions of close-up motifs and expanding features in Japanese traditional paintings.[8]

If we take a look at Hasegawa Tōhaku's *Maple* (c. 1592, ill. 5), painted on the *fusuma* (sliding doors) of the *Chishakuin* Temple in Kyoto, the image of the maple tree expands out from the pictorial space. The vision of both the painter and the viewer of the landscape is extremely near-sighted. In contrast to the abstractness of the gold background, the maple, red cockscomb, sweet osmanthus, white hagi, and chrysanthemum are colourfully represented but with a realistic touch. Here, viewers share the space and become part of the landscape, as though they were just under the maple tree appreciating the autumn season and the fragrance of the flowers.

In addition to the 'fragrance' of *Maple*, there is also the surrounding mist in *Pine Trees* (ill. 6) with subtly penetrating morning light, or the gentle spring wind in *Seasonal Willow*. What should be noted is that appreciation of the painting cor-

Ill. 2. *Poems of Thirty-six Poet Immortals* selected by Fujiwara no Kintō, Honganji version, a page from Shigeyuki-syū, c. 1112; silver, gold, colour, and ink on ornamented paper, 20.2 x 15.8 cm, Nishi Hongan-ji, Kyoto

Ill. 3. *Poem Scroll with Underpainting of Cranes* (detail). Calligraphy by Hon'ami Kōetsu, underpainting by Tawaraya Sōtatsu, 17th century; ink on decorated paper painted with gold and silver, 34.1 x 1356 cm, Kyoto National Museum

Ill. 4. Suzuki Kiitsu *Morning Glories*, Edo period, a pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colour, and gold leaf on paper, 178.3 x 379.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Ill. 5. Hasegawa Tōhaku, *Maples*, c. 1592, four sliding-door panels; ink, colour, and gold leaf on paper, 172.5 x 139.5 cm, Chishakuin

[7] Furuta (2004: 229).

[8] Takashina (2009: 77).

According to Roger Marx, an art critic and a close friend of Claude Monet, Japanese aesthetics satisfied Monet because it implies 'the whole from a fragment,' namely, the suggesting of expanding space from the canvas. This proves that Monet's understandings of Japanese aesthetics was quite profound. The fragmental feature of Monet is seen in his *Water Lilies, Clear Morning with Willows* at the Orangerie in Paris.

Ill. 6.
Hasegawa Tōhaku, *Pine Trees*, right panel, 16th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink on paper, 156.8 x 356 cm, Tokyo National Museum

Ill. 7. Suzuki Kiitsu, *Stream in Summer and Autumn*, right panel, 19th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink and colour on gold-leaf on paper, 165.8 x 363.2 cm

responds to the primary form of our existence in nature, which is the reason that the pictorial space and real space exchange freely and mutually. In these traditional landscape paintings, viewers place themselves virtually in the landscape.

If we return to Suzuki Kiitsu, his *Stream in Summer and Autumn* (ill. 7), a seasonal landscape of a stream among Japanese cypress, lily, and maple leaves, makes us focus on these motifs as we approach them. Such proximity and close-ups urge us not only to see but also to feel the drifting fragrance and humidity by evoking our intimate physical perception, just as if we were in the middle of a forest.

With the same goal as other Japanese traditional paintings that I have introduced, the ultimate aim of the painter was to create an atmosphere through the pictorial space and physical perception of being wrapped up in such a space. Recognizing how these screen paintings were actually viewed, it is notable that the depth of the pictorial space was further enhanced by folding the screen in a zigzag form, leading to a deeper spatial effect.

Conclusion

From an art-historical point of view, James Elkins of the Chicago Institute of Art stated in his co-edited book, *Landscape Theory*, that:

> Landscape is either a determined cultural production or an indeterminate subjective experience. As an alternative to the ideological thesis, the phenomenological viewpoint is becoming more significant, and it interprets the landscape in a founding, reciprocal relation of the self and the object, the sensing and the sensed, the seeing and the seen, and the touching and the touched in environmental and spatial consciousness.[9]

Considering his analysis of landscape, the characteristics of Japanese art, namely 'being in the space', seems to be akin to contemporary Western landscape theory. In fact, Gernot Böhme's new phenomenology relates to the typical Japanese phenomenon, the concept of *ma* 間 – meaning between the subject and the object – or between the spatial and the environmental.[10] Böhme proposes a new aesthetic, referred to as *aisthesis*, to contrast with judgemental aesthetics, and from this point of view he emphasizes sensory perception in his book *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres* (1995).

The characteristics of Japanese pictorial space that immerse the viewer are thoroughly reconstructed by teamLab. However, the sensibility and sensitivity of the Japanese tradition that includes the fragrance of flowers, the gentle wind, and cool water splashing as well as the meditative quality and blessings of nature seem to be left out of their sparkling bright, overflowing rays of colourful light. Maholo Uchida, curator of the National Museum of Emerging Science and Technology, interprets it as 'art and entertainment of boundless optimism and beauty'.[11]

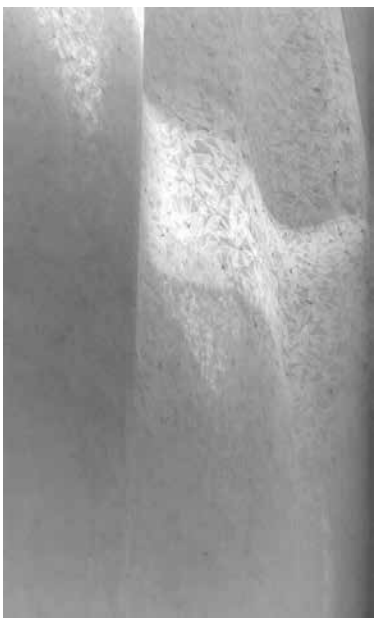
By contrast, Miyanaga Aiko's *The Beginning of Landscape* (2011–2012, ill. 8), with its 120,000 fra-

[9] DeLue, Elkins (2008: 109)
[10] Böhme (2006: v)
[11] Uchida (2016: 34)

grant orange-coloured olive leaves, sewn together to form an ever-flowing river, opposes the optimism of teamLab. It was created about the time of the Great East Japan earthquake and nuclear disaster in 2011. Miyanaga described her artwork relating to this catastrophe in Japan: 'Without realizing it, the lush landscapes that we have taken for granted are disappearing. We all need to confront the landscapes that will emerge after this.'[12]

The goal of Miyanaga's installation work can be taken to be the 'art of fragrance'. However, the leaves – chemically transformed by being soaked in sodium oxide – appear as translucent gold reticulations; they have lost their life. The fragrance is paradoxically completely absent, like a preserved specimen, representing nostalgia for the time when we enjoyed the art of fragrance as inspired by Hasegawa Tōhaku's or Suzuki Kiitsu's depiction of nature.

TeamLab found a way to express this reciprocal relation and environmental/spatial consciousness, as Elkin points out, by revitalizing Japanese traditional painting using the expressive potential of the new digital language. It is also remarkable that their intention to appeal to 'being part of nature' and 'to create a beautiful world of continuity'[13] inspires us and makes us think about nature itself. However, we must keep in mind that the natural environment of Japan, as Miyanaga depicted it, is not the same as during the time of *Kacho-fugetsu*, the world that teamLab attempt to idealize in their digital installation.



Ill. 8. Miyanaga Aiko, *The Beginning of Landscape*, 2011–2012; 120,000 trimmed leaves of fragrant orange-coloured olive, sodium oxide (Nakama Yuko, Hans Dickel, (eds), *Perception of Nature – Construction of Landscape. Global Perspectives*, Tokyo, 2014: 2)

Bibliography

Böhme 2006 = Gernot Böhme, *Fun'iki no Bigaku. Atarashii Genshogaku no Chōsen*, transl. Kajitani Shinji, Saito Sho, Nomura Fumihiro, Kyoto 2006: v.

Colorful Realm 2012 = *Colorful Realm: Japanese Bird-and-Flower Painting by Ito Jakuchu*, Yukio Lippit (ed.), exhibition cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2012: 183.

DeLue, Elkins, 2008 = Rachel Ziady DeLue, James Elkins (eds), *Landscape Theory*, London, New York, 2008: 103.

Furuta 2004 = Furuta Ryo, 'How Rimpa Gained International Recognition', in: *Rimpa*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo 2004: 229.

Miyanaga 2011 = Miyanaga Aiko, Artist's statement on 28 March, 2011. MIZUMA ART GALLERY: http://mizuma-art.co.jp/exhibition/1301319419.phpe

Nanjo 2019 = Nanjo Fumio, (ed.), *teamLab Eien no Ima no Nakade*, Tokyo, 2019: 44.

teamLab 2016 = teamLab, *teamLab 2001–2016*, Tokyo, 2016.

Takashina Shūji, *Zōho Nihon Bijutu wo Miru Me, Higashi to Nishi no Deai*, Tokyo, 2009: 77.

Tsuji 2003 = Tsuji Nobuo, 'In a Fantasy World: Hokusai's Late Works', in: *Hokusai*, Gian Carlo Calza (ed.), Milan, 2003: 65.

Tsuji 2019 = Tsuji Nobuo, 'Nihonbijutsuteki Shiten kara *teamLab* wo Miru', in: Nanjo Fumio, (ed.), *teamLab Eien no Ima no Nakade*, Tokyo, 2019: 96.

Uchida 2016 = Uchida Maholo, 'Art into the Future', in: teamLab, *teamLab 2001–2016*, Tokyo, 2016: 34.

[12] Miyanaga (2011)
[13] Nanjo (2019: 44)

Magdalena Janota-Bzowska
Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw

Sign of the Artist, the Artistic Sign: The Autonomy of the Artist's Signature

The signature of a work usually refers to the signature of its author, the artist's monogram or graphic sign put on the work. The signing of a work usually marks the completion of the creative process.

When analysing an artwork, it is interesting to see how the signature is made visible: on the back of the work, somewhere that does not draw attention, indiscernibly, or as a consciously highlighted mark, contrasting with the background in terms of colour, line or form and itself part of the composition. In this context, I would like to highlight the phenomenon, typical of Japanese art, of including a stamp identifying the artist on prints and paintings.

Towards the end of the 1990s, Wojciech Fangor began a series of works entitled *Signatures*. The artist used an individualised way of writing his last name supported by artistic devices from his earlier projects. In street art, tagging is a similar way of signing one's work. It has to do with the notion of marking and connecting the art object with a given author. There are some works in which the writer's signature becomes an art object in its own right.

* * *

It is generally assumed that a work's signature is a name, surname or the author's pseudonym, monogram or graphical sign. The very notion, deriving from the Latin word *signum*, can be said to describe the mark an artist leaves on his work, its purpose being to announce one's authorship. The signature identifies the person or persons who made the work. It confirms the work's provenance and situates it within the author's *oeuvre*.

Signing a work is also a sign or declaration of completion. When putting his signature on a painting, sculpture, print or drawing, an artist sends a signal that his work is ready to be shown to the public.

Abstract art, geometric abstraction and minimalist forms often remove the signature from the front of the work. This is partly due to compositional requirements and the striving for distinct forms. The arrangement could simply be disrupted by lettering. At the same time, the individual style and 'hand' play a leading role in attributing artistic authorship. The stylistic features of a work become the author's visual identifier.

Apart from art scholars, legal professionals are today the largest group interested in signatures. Their work is also linked to attribution. There are numerous publications, such as the directories by Paul Pfisterer[1] and John Castagno, cataloguing artistic signatures for the purpose of identifying

[1] Pfisterer (1995).

works and artists.[2] Proving a work's authenticity by identifying the markings on it makes it possible to assert authorship rights or to appraise the work's commercial value. But this aspect will not be explored here. My reflections are devoted to the artistic aspects of signing a work and are intended as a contribution to pilot research in this field.

It is interesting, from the viewpoint of artwork analysis, how the artist displays his signature. Sometimes the artist's signature is placed on the frame or in an inconspicuous spot on the reverse of the work. Sometimes its colours match the colour scheme of the piece and it can hardly be made out. In other cases – and these are especially intriguing – it may serve to balance the composition itself. The signature can also be an integral and intentionally highlighted element, standing out by virtue of its colour, line or form, an important and consciously placed element of the whole.

By leaving his signature on a work the artist subtly expands the latter's context. He forces the viewer to peruse successive elements, suggesting the order in which the work is to be 'read'.

Until the late Middle Ages, the vast majority of artworks, like other crafts, were marked with the seal of the particular guild. Each studio or workshop could be identified by its hallmark.[3] Markings were also placed on products that were subject to customs duties or various taxes and levies.

The mark pressed in 1520 on the '*magna campana regia*', commonly known as Sigismund's Bell, is an example of a guild mark left in a prominent place on a craft product. Proud of his work, the bellmaker Hans Behem from Nuremberg, marked the bell with the guild coat-of-arms, modelled after knightly heraldic signs. Behem's mark is a personal one, however, and designates a particular maker rather than a whole family or group that might use an identical seal.

During the Renaissance, giving exposure to the artist raised the latter's social status. This had to do with the artist's new autonomy and, consequently, the reputation attached to his name. Previously treated like an anonymous craftsman, the artist now became recognisable. These changes only popularised the custom of signing one's works. The signature identified the maker while underlining the uniqueness and quality of his work.

There are examples in art where the letters of the signature gain an additional meaning. They cease merely to state who the author is, but attest to the latter's presence in the work itself. The famous *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck is a noteworthy example. The font and structure of the signature placed in the middle of the painting, '*Johannes de Eyck fuit hic 1434*', is reminiscent of signatures on official documents, which has led art scholars to believe that van Eyck's work also confirms his presence at the ceremony in the house of the Bruges banker. As Gombrich observes: "Probably the painter was asked to record this important moment as a witness, just as a notary might be asked to declare that he has been present at a similar solemn act."[4]

The emergence of art collecting gave rise to an increasing interest in artworks among wealthy patrons. Disclosing the name of the author carried mutual benefits. The artist gained fame by having his works in a prestigious collection, while the collector could be certain of the provenance of the works.

When recounting how the Vatican *Pieta* came into being, Giorgio Vasari wrote: 'Michelangelo placed so much love and labour in this work that on it (something he did in no other work) he left his name written across a sash which girds Our Lady's breast. This came about because one day when Michelangelo was entering the church where the statue was placed, he found a large number of foreigners from Lombardy who were praising the statue very highly; one of them asked another who had sculpted it, and he replied "Our Gobbo from Milan." Michelangelo stood there silently, and it seemed somewhat strange to him that his labours were being attributed to someone else; one night he locked himself inside the church with a little light, and, having brought his chisels, he carved his name upon the statue. And it has such qualities that a very fine mind has described it as a true and lifelike figure.'[5] The inscription on Mary's sash, '*Michel Angelus Bonarotus Florent Facibat*', is proof of this incident.[6] In an unprecedented gesture, Vasari put the signature of the master on a par with the masterpiece.

[2] Castagno (1996).
[3] *Mały słownik terminów plastycznych* (1974).
[4] Gombrich (1951: 174).
[5] Vasari (1998: 425).
[6] Martindale (1966: 78).

In Polish art history, the artist signature inside the Sigismund Chapel at Krakow Cathedral on Wawel Hill occupies a prominent place. It is witness to the artistic freedom and high self-appraisal of the architect, Bartolomeo Berecci, active at the court of Sigismund the Old of the Jagiellonian dynasty, who placed the inscription 'BARTHOLO FLORENTINO OPIFICE' carved in beautiful classical capital letters in the top part of the cupola, around an angel's head. As Lech Kalinowski notes: "Berecci observed that as the creator of a perfect work of art he is equal to the creator of all structure and order."[7] With his signature, the royal architect emphatically articulated his uniqueness, and to this day he still dominates, as far as self regard is concerned, over monarchic majesty.

Nineteenth-century inspirations with the art of the Far East sparked interesting changes in the perception of signatures. Of note here are Japanese prints and paintings involving a stamp identifying the artist.

When analysing the works of *ukiyo-e* masters it is worth paying attention to the formal aspects of the signature's placement within the work. In every print, the signature travels around the composition, unlike its conventional European counterpart, steeped in the academic canon which prescribed placing the signature in the lower right-hand corner, much like one would sign a text. The Japanese signature, meanwhile, was inserted in such a way as not to disrupt the arrangement of the forms, colour spots, and lines. In the famous *Great Wave Off Kanagawa*, made in 1829–1833, Katsushika Hokusai inserts a signature that matches the colour scheme of the whole work. The text, underscored by a white cartouche, repeats the dynamic shape of the frothy white wave.

In the works of Andō Hiroshige, known as Utagawa, the signature adds to the colours. The *Views of Edo* series shows considerable freedom when it comes to the placement of the signature in the artwork. The print *Suruga Street*, made circa 1858,[8] includes three rectangular fields: two red ones and a yellow one. From the European point of view, they are a daring geometric intervention in a figurative work. The distribution of red accents in the signatures corresponds to the dress of the women walking around Edo, while the yellow hue returns in the colour of the clouds hanging over the city.

In his print *Moving the Guns, a Scene from the Sino-Japanese War 1894–1895*, Yusai Toshiaki[9] uses shades of red and yellow on a white signature cartouche. He repeats the same colours to amplify contrasts in the whole composition. The personalised Japanese seal can be examined in two compositional variants. The first is when it is placed against an empty background, becoming an element for example of the sky or of an unruffled water surface. The second variant is when it is made into a colour counterpoint, a colourful accent.

This way of looking and seeing also trickled into European art. Painters were quick to become tasteful collectors of Japanese prints. As Gombrich writes: "Here they found a tradition unspoilt by those academic rules and clichés which the French painters strove to get rid of. The Japanese prints helped them to see how much of the European conventions still remained with them without their having noticed it."[10]

The works of Vincent van Gogh are an interesting example of European painting inspired by Japanese art. The artist depicted Japanese motifs in his paintings many times. He wrote enthusiastically to his brother from Arles: "Japanese art is something like the primitives, like the Greeks, like our old Dutchmen, Rembrandt, Potter, Hals, Vermeer, Ostade, Ruisdael. *It doesn't end.*"[11]

The 1887 painting *Flowering Plum Orchard* after a colour woodblock print by Utagawa Hiroshige (*Plum Garden in Kameido* from the series *One Hundred Special Places in Edo*), deserves special attention.[12] Van Gogh copied the Japanese original, including parts of the signature. However, he added an orange border filled with Japanese characters in his version. He borrowed these features from another Japanese woodblock print to make the work more exotic, as he saw it.[13]

The experience of signing a painting with colourful, contrasting characters led van Gogh to pursue more works in the same vein. By comparing

[7] Kalinowski (1989: 514).

[8] https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/208678, (accessed 5.09.2019).

[9] http://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/dmuseion/docmetadata?from=rss&id=41545, (accessed 17.05.2019).

[10] Gombrich (1951: 396).

[11] http://www.vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let642/letter.html (accessed 31.08.2019).

[12] Albertowa (1988: 36).

[13] https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/stories/inspiration-from-japan?v=1#12 (accessed 28.05.2019).

Ill. 1. Detail – Vincent van Gogh, *Still Life: Vase with Fifteen Sunflowers*, Arles, August 1888, oil on canvas, 92.1 x 73 cm, National Gallery, London. Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C5%82oneczniki_(obrazy_Vincenta_van_Gogha), (accessed 27.05.2019)

Ill. 2. Detail – Vincent van Gogh, *Still Life: Vase with Fifteen Sunflowers*, Arles, January 1889, oil on canvas, 95 cm x 73 cm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C5%82oneczniki_(obrazy_Vincenta_van_Gogha), (accessed 27.05.2019)

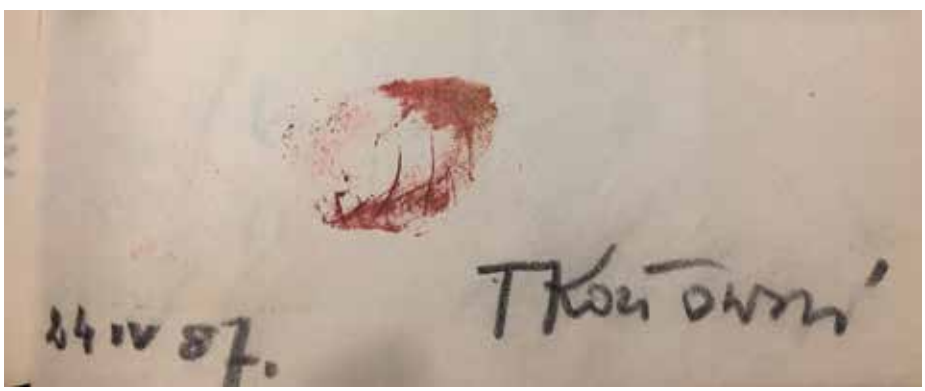
Ill. 3. Detail – Vincent van Gogh, *Still Life: Vase with Twelve Sunflowers*, Arles, January 1889, oil on canvas, 92.4 × 71.1 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C5%82oneczniki_(obrazy_Vincenta_van_Gogha), (accessed 27.05.2019)

the series of signatures on different versions of the famous *Sunflowers*, we can comprehend how important this finishing touch became to the artist. When examining three still lifes painted in Arles in 1888–89, it is worth noting how van Gogh used colour to accentuate the signature. The artist also chose a special place for it, every time displaying it on the belly of the jug. In each of the paintings the artist positioned his signature at the boundary of two contrasting colour fields. Moreover, he used a colour repeated in the contour lines delimiting other forms and colours. In the painting *Still life: Vase with fifteen sunflowers* from 1888, today at the National Gallery in London,[14] the signature is a shade of blue that contrasts with the rest of the composition. This device makes it 'shine bright' even more. In a painting that followed a year later, *Still life: Vase with fifteen sunflowers*, in the collection of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam,[15] the dark line of the signature and the contour form a distinct light contrast, while in *Still life: Vase with twelve sunflowers*, at the Philadelphia Museum of

[14] Gemin (1989: 58).

[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunflowers_(Van_Gogh_series) (accessed 1.09.2019).

Ill. 4. Tadeusz Kozłowski, *Widok z okna – Piaski* (View from a Window – Piaski), 1969, oil on canvas, 60x90, private collection. Source: private archive, cat. no. 248



Ill. 5. Tadeusz Kozłowski, *Sygnatura osobista* (Personal Signature), 1987, pencil, tempera on paper, private collection. Source: private archive, il foglio

Art, the temperature contrast is achieved through the juxtaposition of an intense red and cool shades of yellow. These examples prove that the artist was well-aware of the three basic types of painterly contrast: colour, light and shade, and temperature. (ill. 1, 2, 3)

The emancipation of the signature from the straightjacket of academic correctness led to a spread of its significance to many areas in which symbolic and letter-based identification were key. In some works, the artist's signature became a logo continuing the medieval hallmark tradition. Markings reminiscent of seal impressions found their way into the works of Oskar Kokoschka and Wassily Kandinsky, becoming a type of artistic monogram. The Polish painter Tadeusz Kozłowski is an example of an artist with an individualised signature consisting of the artist's thumb pressed onto the paper.[16] The choice of the fingerprint and alizarin as the colour were a reference to the wax seal. Leaving his trace on the paper, Kozłowski authorised it with an inscription proper only to himself, as seen on many of his paintings and gouaches. This double signature takes up the idea of the trace that

Ill. 6. Wojciech Fangor, *Sygnatura (259)* (Signature (259)), 1988, paper, gouache, 51 x 71 cm. Source: http://www.polishartworld.com/gallery/pId/562/id/59.html (accessed 14.05.2019)

[16] *Tadeusz Kozłowski – malarstwo* (2015).

the artist leaves as a record of his existence and with which he goes down in history. (ill. 4, 5)

The complete autonomy of the signature as an artwork in its own right is yet another phenomenon. Towards the end of the 1990s, Wojciech Fangor began a series of works entitled *Signatures*. Most of these are gouaches on paper.[17] The author used a characteristic way of writing his last name, supplemented with artistic devices that he had already used previously. Sweeping brushstrokes, transparent elements, and clear-cut graphical forms are the background and surroundings of these free letter compositions. The lettering of the last name seems familiar and is indeed like the signatures that Fangor appended to his earlier works. The shape of Fangor's signature crystallised in the 1950s. Throughout the *Signatures* series we see similarities between the writing and the author's identifying signs. Fangor uses a characteristic script for the letter 'g', with remnants of the typographic loop and an arch in the upper part of the letter. The writing is strong. Usually the letters have the same 'fatty' thickness. (ill. 6)

Stefan Szydłowski, an authority on Fangor, notes that the signature series was a kind of artistic autobiography. All of the works on paper were stamped by a notary to confirm their authenticity.[18] The scholar underlines: "These works bring to light a kind of contradiction between artistic creation and the market, the institutionalised art world. Collectors know how much a signature is worth, they know that the signature often decides the rank of an artwork, its place among other works by the same artist, and its price. Unsigned works are considered to have less value. The signature is proof of the truth, of taking credit."[19] The official stamps on Fangor's works correspond to the Japanese tradition of signing works. In an ontological sense, the art object now transcends the frame and becomes a formal document.

In 2003, with the exhibition *Sygnatury / The Signatures* at the Stefan Szydłowski Gallery in Ratuszowa Street in Warsaw, Fangor showed a collection of works devoted entirely to identification signs. These works on paper were forerunners of three-dimensional creations. Fangor's interest in the spatial signature, as he says himself, came from his experience of working with architects like Oskar Hansen, Jerzy Sołtan, Stanisław Zamecznik and Zbigniew Ihnatowicz.[20]

Fangor began developing the spatial formula for his signature by signing small, three-dimensional concept sketches on cardboard boxes, boards or even plexi, exploiting the latter's transparency. In this version, the signature appears as a kind of delicate suggestion and has to do with an unobvious notion of presence.

The first three-dimensional signatures came into being starting in 1998. These, however, were small-scale works, models that served as the conceptual outline for large outdoor pieces.[21]2002 saw the making of a medium-sized (69x94x80 cm) plexi model built out of the letters of the artist's name.[22] In 2008, at the Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko, the artist presented a spatial object made up of the six letters of his last name, which is now on permanent display in the Orońsko gardens.[23] The installation was a reference to a historic exhibition in 1958 at which the world's first *environment*, Fangor's *Study of Space*, had been shown. The artist invited viewers into a space that he had previously arranged. To construct a new mode of communication, he used letter-shaped see-through elements.

The 2008 installation with the letters of the artist's last name is described as a signature statue.[24] What occurred in this creative act was a metaphorical transmutation of the subordinate signature into an independent work of art, raised to this status by virtue of being a monument. The signature itself became an autonomous artwork.

"Things like letters, signs, are the nature of today. Not trees, apples, grass and cats, but signs. Everything has been transformed. I simply draw from nature. Art teachers always told me to draw from nature, so I'm painting from nature, precisely, only it's not my fault nature has changed. In the old days I painted apples, cabbage, sunflowers, and today letters"[25], Fangor said.

[17] Szydłowski (2015: 142).
[18] Szydłowski (2015: 142).
[19] Szydłowski (2012: 326).
[20] Fudała (2015).
[21] *Wojciech Fangor, Spectra Art Space Masters* (2015).
[22] Fangor (2003).
[23] *Sygnatura Wojciecha Fangora,* źródło: https://www.rzezba-oronsko.pl/index.php?aktualnosci,146,sygnatura_wojciecha_fangora__, (accessed 26.03.2019).
[24] Szydłowski (2015: 144–145).
[25] Wojciech Fangor in conversation with Stefan Szydłowski, in: *Wojciech Fangor, Spectra Art Space Masters*, 2015, [no pagination]

In 2010, Fangor made another installation out of letters. This time, to celebrate the art of Stanisław Zamecznik, the artist created the word *Zamecznik* for an exhibition organised by the Association of Polish Architects (SARP). The work was displayed in the SARP gardens. That same year saw the making of *Magda*, dedicated to the artist's wife, the painter Magda Shummer-Fangor. The installation was put up at the National Art Gallery in Sopot.[26] It was a colourful composition in bright shades of cobalt and yellow of varying intensity, against a pale white background. In a characteristic way it echoed the raster techniques the artist had used in his other works.

2015 brought the third work in the series. It consisted of the letters forming the name Starak and was shown at the Starak Foundation.[27] The installations *Fangor*, *Zamecznik* and *Starak* were done in monochromatic tones. The artist focused on the relationships between elements of the sculptures in space, restricting the colour palette to shades of grey. Most of the pieces are made of sheet metal coated with lacquer paints.

Fangor's experiments with signatures can be classified both as painting, sculpture and conceptual art. They are part of a game with the audience. Stefan Szydłowski thus commented the undertaking in one of his publications: "The phenomenon of the alienation of the signature in the art world provoked him to irony, irony about the work and irony about art people."[28]

The sculpture *Cow by Fangor* put up for auction at Polswissart in 2005, is a life-size spatial object made of epoxide resin coated with synthetic glue-based paint.[29] The painter set his distinctive signature on a three-dimensional model of a cow. This action was an excellent example of Wojciech Fangor's Rabelaisian sense of humour.

Signing a work is linked to an atavistic need to mark one's territory, to leave things, works or achievements behind so that other people won't forget us. It also positions one on the social ladder.

Within this broader context it is worth noticing the need to personalise artworks in street art. One of street art's typical gestures is tagging. Tagging has to do with the notion of the author marking and identifying the piece of his making. Marking space with tags – a short marker – is a concept deriving from information technology. A tag is a keyword assigned to a piece of information in data classification systems.[30] Tagging also refers to placing tags on products or leaving a mark. When the tag becomes identical with the signature it comes to include the key concept – the identity of the artist, which is an inalienable part of an original work. As an artistic signature the tag is personal. In a broader sense it can also be interpreted in relation to the signature in traditional Japanese art. Its purpose is to enable quick visual identification on the basis of a sign which becomes a kind of logo. Tags have a variety of functions and semantic capacities. In some renderings the writer's whole work becomes an art object in its own right. The boundary between the signature as an addition to the work and as an autonomous entity is blurred. The identifying sign serves as a bridge connecting the artist's various works.

Mathieu Tremblina took up the artistic challenge of deciphering the tags on the streets of the French city of Rennes. The artist carried out a series of projects to develop a systematic description of the letters used in street inscriptions. In his 2010 project *Tag Clouds*, Tremblina repainted a tag-covered wall in rue de Gaillon. He replaced the letters, illegible to an ordinary viewer, with a technical font. He kept the original colours and sizes of the inscriptions. Unravelling the underlying meanings of the inscriptions gave the action a broader semantic sense.

It is worth noting that Tremblina's action metaphorically corresponds to the presence of signed Japanese artworks in the consciousness of the Western viewer. Like van Gogh, we perceive these signatures as a system of lines and colours that we interpret as an integral element of the work without being able to unpack its content. The language barrier limits our understanding of what they mean. We look at the said works at the same level of perception as we would at the tagged wall in rue de Gaillon in Rennes.

A comprehensive analysis of signatures in artworks requires broader artistic, cultural, sociologi-

[26] Szydłowski (2015: 148).

[27] *Wojciech Fangor, Spectra Art Space Masters*, (2015), [no pagination]

[28] Fangor (2003).

[29] https://www.polswissart.pl/pl/aukcje/archiwalne/214-aukcja-dziel-sztuki/9607-cow-by-fangor, (accessed 07.04.2019).

[30] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_(metadata), (accessed 5.09.2019).

cal, and psychological studies. One thing it is certain: the art signature is a distinctive kind of *signum temporis*.

Bibliography

Albertowa 1988 = Zofia Albertowa, *Sztuka japońska w zbiorach polskich*, WAiF, Warszawa 1988: 36.

Castagno 1996 = John Castagno, *Old Masters: Signatures and Monograms, 1400–Born 1800*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham 1996.

Fangor 2003 = Wojciech Fangor, *Sygnatury*, Galeria Stefan Szydłowski, Warszawa 2003.

Fudała 2015 = Tomasz Faudała, "List do malarza", in: *Wojciech Fangor, Spectra Art Space Masters*, 2015 [no pagination]

Gemin 1989 = Massimo Gemin, *Van Gogh*, Uitgeverij Michon B.V. – Helmond 1989: 58.

Gombrich 2013 = Ernst Hans Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, Phaidon, 1951: 174, 396.

Kalinowski 1989 = Lech Kalinowski, "Treści artystyczne i ideowe Kaplicy Zygmuntowskiej", in: Lech Kalinowski, *Speculum artis*, PWN, Warszawa 1989: 514.

Mały słownik terminów plastycznych 1974 = *Mały słownik terminów plastycznych*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1974.

Martindale 1966 = Andrew Martindale, *Man and the Renaissance*, Paul Hamlym, London 1966: 78.

Pfisterer 1995 = Paul Pfisterer, ed. *Monogrammlexikon II: Internationales Verziechnis der Monogramme bildender Künstler des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts,* Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1995.

Szydłowski 2012 = Stefan Szydłowski, *Przestrzeń jako gra*, [catalogue], Kraków 2012: 326.

Szydłowski 2015 = Stefan Szydłowski, *Wojciech Fangor, 3 wymiary retrospektywa*, [catalogue], Orońsko 2015: 142–145.

Tadeusz Kozłowski – malarstwo 2015 = *Tadeusz Kozłowski – malarstwo,* Galeria Szydłowski, [catalogue] Warszawa 2015. Source: private collection, il foglio I

Vasari 1998 = Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, translated with an introduction and notes by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Oxford 1998: 425.

Wojciech Fangor, Spectra Art Space Masters, 2015 = *Wojciech Fangor, Spectra Art Space Masters*, 2015 [no pagination]

Online Sources

http://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/dmuseion/docmetadata?from=rss&id=41545 (accessed 17.05.2019).

https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/208678 (accessed 5.09.2019).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_(metadata) (accessed 5.09.2019).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunflowers_(Van_Gogh_series) (accessed 1.09.2019).

https://www.polswissart.pl/pl/aukcje/archiwalne/214-aukcja-dziel-sztuki/9607-cow-by-fangor (accessed 07.04.2019).

https://www.rzezba-oronsko.pl/index.php?aktualnosci,146,sygnatura_wojciecha_fangora__ (accessed 26.03.2019).

https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/stories/inspiration-from-japan?v=1#12 (accessed 28.05.2019).

http://www.vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let642/letter.html (accessed 31.08.2019)

Anna Dzierżyc-Horniak
John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

What one needs is concentration, inner silence, a willingness to listen: Koji Kamoji in Artistic Dialogue with Polish Artists

When reflecting on the presence of Japanese culture in contemporary Polish art, one cannot fail to mention Koji Kamoji (ill. 1). Born in Tokyo in 1935, Kamoji has lived in Poland for the last 60 years and is therefore a special artist. He claims that he will always be Japanese because he was born in Japan; on the other hand, he has put down such strong roots in the Polish art community that for a long time he has been exhibiting with Polish artists during presentations of Polish art abroad (including in Yokohama, Düsseldorf and Paris in the early 1980s).[1] The artist said: "in my case, however, the matter still continues to haunt me in the process of creation: Japan versus Poland, Asia versus Europe. I've been trying to solve this puzzle all my artistic life".[2] It is very interesting to see how Kamoji's creative individuality, straddling the two traditions, has been shaped. The artist's full-scale retrospective at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw last year (2018) (ill. 2), currently on display at the Manggha Museum in Kraków (2019),[3] raises similar questions, while also highlighting the significance (and distinctiveness) of Koji Kamoji's work against the

Ill. 1. Koji Kamoji during the exhibition *Niebieski pasek i cień* (Blue Stripe and Shadow), at one of Krasiński's 'Interventions' using the 'blue stripe', Galeria Foksal, Warsaw, 2005; photo. Sławomir Marzec, courtesy of Galeria Foksal

[1] *Contemporary Painting in Eastern Europe and Japan*, Kanagawa Prefectural Gallery, Yokohama, and the National Museum of Art, Osaka, Osaka (1981); *Kreis und Quadrat. Post-Konstruktivismus in Polen*, Galerie Depolma – Ars Polona, Düsseldorf (1981); *Echange entre artistes 1931–1982 Pologne – USA*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (1982).

[2] Cited after: Piwowar (2018).

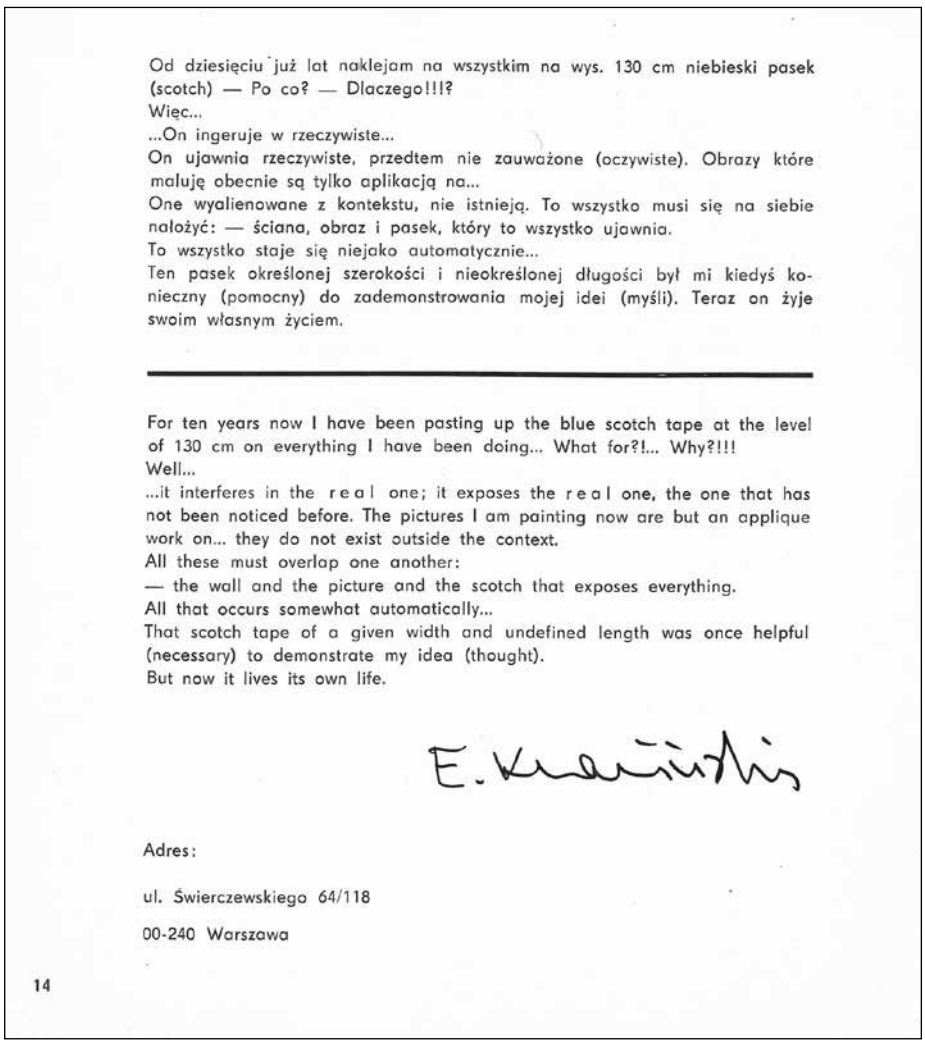
[3] *Koji Kamoji. Cisza i wola życia*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, 16.06–26.08.2018, curator Maria Brewińska; *Koji Kamoji. Cisza i wola życia*, Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology, Krakow, 13.04.2019–30.06.2019, curator Anna Król.

Ill. 2.
View of the exhibition *Koji Kamoji. Cisza i wola życia* (Koji Kamoji. Silence and the Will to Live), Zachęta – Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, Warsaw, 2018, photo. A. Dzierżyc-Horniak

background of Polish art. However, I would like to consider this issue from a slightly different perspective, through the prism of the dialogue the artist has established with a number of Polish artists. There is no doubt that Kamoji belongs to Polish culture. Within this belonging, we can distinguish his relationships with artists from at least two generations. I am thinking of Henryk Stażewski (1894–1988), Edward Krasiński (1925–2004), and Włodzimierz Borowski (1930–2008). Wiesław Borowski, co-founder and long-time director of the Foksal Gallery, who closely followed Kamoji's artistic development, believed that Kamoji's oriental sensitivity had anchored itself in Polish art through dialogue with the work of other artists, which enriched and purified it.[4] I am interested in the mutual influences and artistic friendships which gave this special quality to Kamoji's work. In this context, using the example of a number of selected joint projects, I will analyse the way in which Kamoji as a contemporary artist treats Japanese spirituality and aesthetics, doing so by applying Stażewski's 'lesson', drawing on Krasiński's 'foreign object in the midst of the obvious', and engaging with Borowski's conceptual games. It is Kamoji's dialogue with Polish artists that, in my view, sheds light on a special aspect of Japan's discovery of Europe (and Poland), and vice versa, of Poland's discovery of Japan.

My focus on the four individuals named above is not coincidental, as their artistic paths crossed frequently. Borowski, Kamoji, Krasiński and Stażewski met and became friends at the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw thanks to the art critics running the gallery: Wiesław Borowski, Anka Ptaszkowska and Mariusz Tchorek. The relief compositions Kamoji made for his diploma project at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw attracted the attention of Zbigniew Gostomski, co-founder of the gallery, then a young lecturer at the Academy, who got Kamoji involved at Foksal. It was 1966. Kamoji, aged 32, a recent graduate (he had previously studied for four years at the private Musashino Art University in Tokyo, also obtaining a diploma), found himself at the centre of an emerging art milieu whose activities gave rise to one of post-war Poland's leading exhibition venues. Interestingly, the friendships formed at the Foksal Gallery often found artistic references outside the gallery, which was due to the social dynamics at Foksal. Kamoji's appearance at Foksal, as Wiesław Borowski judged many years

[4] Ryszard Stanisławski held a similar view, arguing that Kamoji belongs to the Polish art scene and is in dialogue with Polish artists (Henryk Stażewski, but also Włodzimierz Borowski and Grzegorz Kowalski). 'I am thinking first and foremost of his sense of mystery confined to a limited area, with a constellation of contemplatively selected artefacts. I think that this sense both differs and coincides with the imagination of the mentioned artists. I am thinking of his ability to evoke a kind of psychological vibration of energy that arises within the sphere of contrasted objects and matter, whose mission is to disturb the imagination', cited after: Koji Kamoji (1980).



Od dziesięciu już lat naklejam na wszystkim na wys. 130 cm niebieski pasek (scotch) — Po co? — Dlaczego!!!?
Więc...
...On ingeruje w rzeczywiste...
On ujawnia rzeczywiste, przedtem nie zauważone (oczywiste). Obrazy które maluję obecnie są tylko aplikacją na...
One wyalienowane z kontekstu, nie istnieją. To wszystko musi się na siebie nałożyć: — ściana, obraz i pasek, który to wszystko ujawnia.
To wszystko staje się niejako automatycznie...
Ten pasek określonej szerokości i nieokreślonej długości był mi kiedyś konieczny (pomocny) do zademonstrowania mojej idei (myśli). Teraz on żyje swoim własnym życiem.

For ten years now I have been pasting up the blue scotch tape at the level of 130 cm on everything I have been doing... What for?!... Why?!!!
Well...
...it interferes in the r e a l one; it exposes the r e a l one, the one that has not been noticed before. The pictures I am painting now are but an applique work on... they do not exist outside the context.
All these must overlap one another:
— the wall and the picture and the scotch that exposes everything.
All that occurs somewhat automatically...
That scotch tape of a given width and undefined length was once helpful (necessary) to demonstrate my idea (thought).
But now it lives its own life.

E. Krasiński

Adres:

ul. Świerczewskiego 64/118

00-240 Warszawa

14

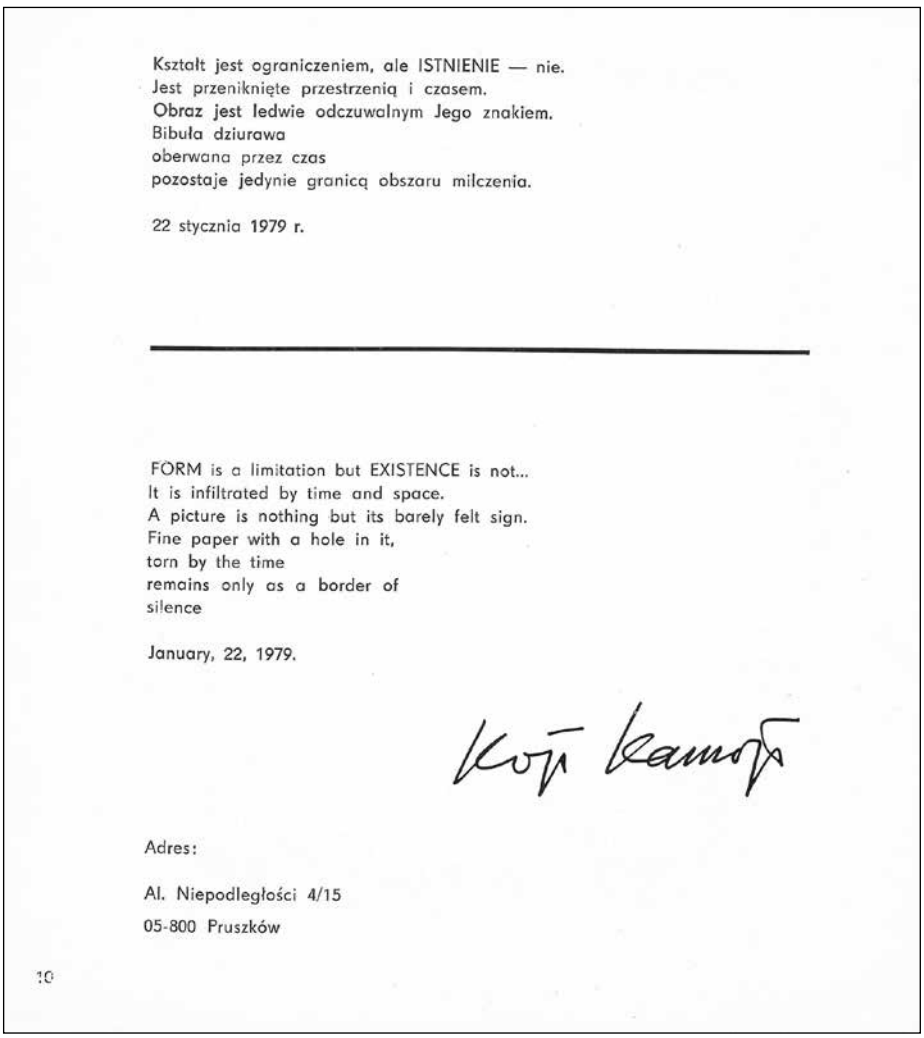
Ill. 3.
Fragment of the exhibition catalogue *Wystawa prac. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski* (Exhibition of Works. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski), Union of Polish Artists – Warsaw Branch, Warsaw 1979; courtesy of the artist

later, was a great gift to the new gallery.[5] Kamoji himself said that the most important artist he had met in Poland was Henryk Stażewski, a key figure at Foksal. His acquaintance with Edward Krasiński also played a significant role, since the latter's works, as well as those of Włodzimierz Borowski, were the ones that Kamoji appreciated the most from this circle of artists.[6] Their acquaintance fuelled the artistic Polish-Japanese dialogue that is of interest to me here.

Each of the above-mentioned artists was unique in his own way. In his subsequent, extremely varied projects, Włodzimierz Borowski embodied the critical but also deeply reflective attitude of the 'alert', 'restless' and, above all, 'disturbing' artist, which at first glance seemed to have little in common with the productions of Koji Kamoji. It is therefore of note that when Borowski stopped exhibiting in 1978–79 in protest against the 'connections in culture that undermine art and the artist', he changed his mind after being invited by Henryk Stażewski to join a collective exhibition at Dom Artysty Plastyka (House of the Visual Artist) in Warsaw (1979) with Koji Kamoji and Edward Krasiński.[7] At this show, the artist exhibited photographs of shadows of hands and hands coming out of the floor. Krasiński continued to apply scotch tape at the height of 130 cm, as he had done for the past 10 years; it became 'automatic' for him, as it were, so that the 'blue stripe' was now a creature in its own right (ill. 3). Stażewski argued that 'the infinite number and variety of objects and shapes

[5] Borowski (2014: 243, 267).
[6] Mazur (2016).

[7] The artist talked about it as follows in the exhibition catalogue: 'Henryk Stażewski's proposal to hold a joint exhibition allowed me to revoke my internal ban on publicly disclosing my impressions. There was a large number of arguments in favour, so for the first time I am acting in this privileged role – without embarrassment. (...) Let my exhibition piece fully justify my decision. Up till now, I have always been certain of my artistic productions, but I lacked arguments in favour of exhibiting them. The opposite is now the case [21 January 1979, Włodzimierz Borowski].' See: *Wystawa prac* (1979: 6).



Kształt jest ograniczeniem, ale ISTNIENIE — nie.
Jest przeniknięte przestrzenią i czasem.
Obraz jest ledwie odczuwalnym Jego znakiem.
Bibuła dziurawa
oberwana przez czas
pozostaje jedynie granicą obszaru milczenia.

22 stycznia 1979 r.

FORM is a limitation but EXISTENCE is not...
It is infiltrated by time and space.
A picture is nothing but its barely felt sign.
Fine paper with a hole in it,
torn by the time
remains only as a border of
silence

January, 22, 1979.

Koji Kamoji

Adres:

Al. Niepodległości 4/15
05-800 Pruszków

10

Ill. 4.
Fragment of the exhibition catalogue *Wystawa prac. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski* (Exhibition of Works. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski), Union of Polish Artists – Warsaw Branch, Warsaw 1979; courtesy of the artist

that one sees constantly and ceases to notice, the multiplicity of different material structures, etc. inspires the artist to search for order amid chaos and to simplify by reducing [objects] to geometric shapes'. Each of these attitudes confronted the artistic procedure of Kamoji, whose message was that 'FORM is a limitation but EXISTENCE is not... It is infiltrated by time and space.' (ill. 4) In my view, the exhibition and the declarations written by its authors[8] represent a common platform articulating their subsequent common intentions.

After this exhibition, Kamoji and Borowski made several joint projects,[9] including the performance *Bashō*. It was 1988. Kamoji was discovering and trying out performance for the first time, while simultaneously using installation. At this time he made *Dziecko w lecie* (A Child in Summer) (Okuninka nad Jeziorem Białym, 1988), *Kamień*

[8] Krasiński, Stażewski and Kamoji's statements are also drawn from: *Wystawa prac* (1979: 10, 14, 18–19).

[9] They prepared about 20 versions of signposts for Brok (*Drogowskazy do Broku*), the show *Intermedium* for the MDM Gallery (1980), and ran a guest studio at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (1981). The 1982 Paris exhibition *Echange entre artistes 1931–1982 Pologne – USA*, presenting Polish-American artistic exchange, unexpectedly ruined relations between the artists. Kamoji recalled that this was due to the decision of Anka Ptaszkowska, the curator of the exhibition, who, at the cost of a triptych submitted by Borowski, persuaded Kamoji to reconstruct his *Niciowcy* (Threadlings) as, in her opinion, a more representative work. Cf. Mazur (2016). After a few years Kamoji resumed working with Borowski, which resulted in the performance *Bashō*.

It is worth mentioning here that works realised in cooperation with other artists are a little known aspect of Włodzimierz Borowski's work. From the beginning of the 1970s, the artist stopped, as Paweł Polit explains, making material works of art, moving his work into the conceptual sphere. He realised projects undermining, on the one hand, the traditional image of the artist as a source of meanings and, on the other, seeking to establish a creative dialogue with other artists and audiences. The exhibition prepared by Polit, *Włodzimierz Borowski: Dialogues* (Galeria Kasyno CKiIO, Podkowa Leśna, 2013) explored this dialogue at length. It presented works created not only in cooperation with Kamoji, but also with Janusz Bałdyga and Andrzej Mitan as well as the documentation of joint action with Jan Świdziński and Krzysztof Wodiczko on the streets of Warsaw in 1972. Cf. Borkowski (2013).

oświęcimski (Auschwitz Stone) (Galeria Rzeźby, Warsaw, 1988) and *Obszar zamknięty* (Closed Area) (Galeria Rzeźby, Warsaw, 1989). He could hardly have made a better choice. As a phenomenon that had been recognized and successfully adopted in Polish art for a decade, performance had been anticipated, among others, by Włodzimierz Borowski with his syncretic shows.[10] The title of Kamoji's performance was a reference to to his favourite Japanese artist. Bashō was the pseudonym of Munefusa Matsuo, who lived in 1644–1694, a wandering, independent poet, master and teacher of *haiku*, considered by many to have been one of the most eminent poets of all time.

Borowski's and Kamoji's performance, staged three times (on 17, 19 and 22 May 1988), was a kind of poetic spectacle relating Bashō's last journey. Apart from Kamoji, two dancers from the Grand Theatre in Warsaw took part in the event, enacting in pantomime a pair of lovers symbolising intimacy (ill. 5). They danced in blue light to the sound of a Japanese flute and disco music around a used cutting board from Włodzimierz Borowski's apartment. In the final part, Kamoji struck the board with branches of blooming lilac until they were completely destroyed (ill. 6). The performance ended with Kamoji repeating Bashō's last poem several times:

> Sick on a journey
> over parched fields
> dreams wander on.

This poem was written a few days before Bashō died while on a solitary journey, one of his many several-month-long travels around the country, during which he visited Buddhist shrines, practised Zen, wrote *haiku*, and earned his living by teaching poetics. The miniature, 17-syllable poetic forms he created – 'drops of frozen time' in a momentary forgetting of the self and in unity with the whole world – are testimony of the author's profound spirituality and constant striving to attain enlightenment.

Through his performance Kamoji referred directly to the roots of traditional Japanese aesthetics and expressed his identification with the kind of painterly depiction that captures a fragment of the world as succinctly and exhaustively as possible in an act of consciously experiencing the 'here and now'. There are three notions (aesthetic categories) at the heart of *haiku*, as Beata Śniecikowska states: *sabi*, *wabi*, and *karumi*.[11] *Sabi* is connected to loneliness, distance and serene observation, while its components include experiencing the transience of beauty and the fragility of life, accepting loss and

Ill. 5. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, *Basho*, Galeria Rzeźby, Warsaw, 1988; still from a video recording of the performance, author: Wojciech Majewski, camera Jarosław Szoda, editing Joanna Wojtulewicz; courtesy of the artist

Ill. 6. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, *Basho*, Galeria Rzeźby, Warsaw, 1988; still from a video recording of the performance, author: Wojciech Majewski, camera Jarosław Szoda, editing Joanna Wojtulewicz; courtesy of the artist

[10] Cf. Dziamski (1984: 48–49). There were nine shows, including the 7th Syncretic Show – *Photo of a Hat* (1967), the 8th Syncretic Show – *Color Sensitization* (1968), and the 9th Syncretic Show – *Invitation* (1971). The list should also include: *Fubki Tarb* (1969). Cf. Włodzimierz Borowski (1997: 112–114).

[11] Śniecikowska (2016: 48–77). Cf. *Haiku* (1983); Gurga (2014: 89–92).

embracing helplessness (*shiori*), seeing value and beauty in all, even the simplest and most ephemeral of phenomena (*hosomi*), dignity and sublimity (*kurai*). This makes it possible to combine *sabi* with the beauty of something elusive, hidden, refined. *Wabi* stands for beauty marked by the passage of time, poverty, and patina, and is therefore somewhat close to *sabi*. But while the former, as perception of the uniqueness of ordinary things, refers to conditions of life and material objects, the latter most often refers to emotions. The third element of the triad, *karumi*, can be described as lightness and simplicity of praise, which was supposed to be a manner of describing the most profound truths and feelings. The *haiku* writer must also follow the principle of *fūga no makoto*, which requires aligning one's general attitude to life with one's aesthetic values, which in essence boils down to the authenticity of artistic creation. Also important were: *aware*, a kind of cry of amazement, admiration or emotion, the mark of sensitivity to beauty whose inalienable feature is the impermanence of life and of worldly things; *kigo*, indicating the season and setting an image or event within the appropriate scenery; and *kirei*, a syllable or word that marks a cut, making a given part an independent piece.

All this is very true of the art of Koji Kamoji. After all, *haiku* is a condensed record of spiritual trials and meditations, and this is also how we can view Kamoji's artistic creations, that is as an artistic equivalent of the *haiku*. One of the best examples of this attitude came into being in Koji Kamoji's artistic dialogue with Edward Krasiński. But it is not the only thing that made *Niebieski pasek i cień* (Blue Stripe and Shadow) (2004) a special exhibition. It was Krasiński's last show, but also paradoxically, the first time the artists had the Foksal Gallery all to themselves. After functioning in the said space for half a century, they finally met face to face – at Krasiński's initiative – which, in my view, completed the earlier exhibition at the House of the Visual Artist (1979).

The blue stripe, initiated many years earlier during Krasiński's 'spree' with a roll of scotch tape that he had received as a gift, had not stopped, continuing to unravel the 'real, previously unnoticed (the obvious)... It must all co-exist: the wall, the image and the stripe which reveals all this', as Krasiński explained.[12] Kamoji expected that he would have to enter a kind of 'spiritual circle' circumscribed by a continuous line with no beginning and no end, and so it was. At Foksal, he found the blue stripe around the exhibition hall and corridor, running through Krasiński's composition at the entrance, and rushing on. The walls and the entire stripe-marked area became an integral part of the installation. Kamoji took up the challenge (ill. 7). "I can't quite justify it, but I've decided to answer it with a shadow. The shadow as shadow, as an object, not as the shadow of something. Although it cannot exist on its own without an object, the shadow can, after all, exist as an entity."[13] The artist placed a small L-shaped metal object (figure?) in the middle of the main hall (ill. 8). The spotlight directed at it not only illuminated the darkness, but most importantly 'created' a long, dark trail of shadow on the floor. It was this trail that played the leading role as it moved towards the blue stripe, approaching it, engaging it in dialogue. What is more, Kamoji smashed a round hole in the wall between the archive room and the exhibition hall, from which emanated a uniform sound (ill. 9). Monika Małkowska rightly noticed that "its monotony [was] also a response to Krasiński's work: the graphical representation of its "music" would have been a stripe, running at the same height infinitely, uninterrupted. Only a Japanese brought up in the tradition of Zen philosophy could have come up with such a subtle, yet semantically rich metaphor."[14]

Where did Kamoji's proposal originate? As the artist himself explained: "The shadow figure needs a hole so that it is not trapped. The sound touches Edzio's blue stripe, passes through the hole and touches the figure standing on the floor and its shadow, quietly filling our space."[15] This is how an extraordinary encounter took place in a single seemingly ordinary exhibition. On the one hand, we have here a situation typical of a *haiku* poem, capturing a specific sensory 'point' of experience, in this case a shadow. The artist employed shadow and space, the most subtle artistic materials possible. Krasiński did something similar with the blue stripe, the only visible physical trace of his intervention. Perhaps Japanese imagery and poetics developed invisibly inside the space of the Foksal Gallery (ill. 10). Both represent a sparing attitude, veiling

[12] *Wystawa prac* (1979: 14).

[13] Kamoji (2004).

[14] Małkowska (2004).

[15] Kamoji (2004).

Ill. 7. Edward Krasiński, Koji Kamoji, *Niebieski pasek i cień* (Blue Stripe and Shadow), Galeria Foksal, Warsaw, 2005; view of the exhibition, with Koji Kamoji in the middle; photo. Jakub Ostałowski, courtesy of Galeria Foksal

Ill. 8. Edward Krasiński, Koji Kamoji, *Niebieski pasek i cień* (Blue Stripe and Shadow), Galeria Foksal, Warsaw, 2005; courtesy of the artist

Ill. 9. Edward Krasiński, Koji Kamoji, *Niebieski pasek i cień* (Blue Stripe and Shadow), Galeria Foksal, Warsaw, 2005; courtesy of the artist

emotion, paring down, ready to reveal the hidden and indiscernible. The whole thing was more reminiscent of a situation than of an 'art show' – quiet, ascetic, but at the same time suggestive and engaging. And in this artfully crafted situation one could poignantly experience *sabi* (the simplicity of fleeting phenomena, like shadow or a blue stripe), *wabi* (the 'indigent' beauty of plastic scotch tape running on for decades), and *karumi* (the light means of expression used by both artists), i.e. elements underpinning the Japanese tradition.

Blue Stripe and Shadow at the Foksal Gallery (2004) was chronologically the last work in the informal series of individual and group projects started with the 1979 exhibition, through the lens of which we can examine the relations between Koji Kamoji and his artistic friends on many different levels. There were also others, for example: 1980 – *Intermedia*, MDM Gallery, Warsaw (with Włodzimierz Borowski); 1988 – *Bashō*, Gallery of Sculpture, Warsaw (with Włodzimierz Borowski); *Koji Kamoji, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski* at the Foksal Gallery, Warsaw; 1993 – *Włodzimierz Borowski, Edward. Krasiński, Koji Kamoji*, Galeria Biblioteka, Legionowo; *Dno Nieba* (Bottom of the Sky) on the terrace of Henryk Stażewski's and Ed-

Ill. 10. Edward Krasiński, Koji Kamoji, *Niebieski pasek i cień* (Blue Stripe and Shadow), Galeria Foksal, Warsaw, 2005; photo. Sławomir Marzec, courtesy of Galeria Foksal

ward Krasiński's studio in Warsaw; 1995 – *Henryk Stażewski, Koji Kamoji*, Polish Cultural Centre in London.

As one can see, there is another artist whose everyday attitude showed that art cannot be confined within limits "but is created everywhere, while its makers need to interact".[16] Henryk Stażewski was one of the prominent artists whom Kamoji met after 'entering' the Foksal Gallery. Kamoji valued him both as an artist and as a person. This is how he remembered him: "He was very considerate towards younger artists, he also helped them out financially whenever he could (...). He was not reserved, on the contrary, he did away with formality, treating younger artists as colleagues. But the most important thing about him for me was his attitude towards work, and the work he did as such."[17] Stefan Szydłowski commented that Stażewski had become a mentor for Kamoji, embodying values whose direct experience required responsiveness and confrontation.[18] For this particular duo, these values certainly included abstraction and geometry. In Kamoji's works, geometric forms, pure colours, carefully constructed and balanced lines may suggest that he was inspired by constructivism. In fact, Kamoji participated in numerous group presentations of such art, including the German exhibition *Circle and Square*[19] (1981), where he was featured alongside other Polish post-constructivists (Zbigniew Dłubak, Andrzej Dłużniewski, Zdzisław Jurkiewicz, Edward Krasiński, Adam Marczyński, Henryk Stażewski and Ryszard Winiarski). It seems, however, that this comparison is not entirely accurate. Kamoji's art is not entirely geometric, its geometric rigour time and again broken for example by the organic shape of a stone or a vibrating line in a painting. Kamoji tempered this imposing European tradition with his own Japanese heritage and, on this basis, tried to assimilate 'Stażewski's lesson' over the course of the following years.[20] He saw it as embodying the attention, quiet and joy that were so close to his heart. Kamoji recalled that he had discussed painting with Stażewski, who told him to simplify his works, not to complicate them, and also to be slow to change. "It was an interesting statement...", Kamoji said. "I didn't really stick to it, I wanted to make violent changes, but still I wanted to keep something that does not change, something that remains. (...) Stażewski also told me to work at least 15 minutes a day. I am grateful for his words."[21]

Kamoji paid a kind of tribute to Stażewski for his support with *Bottom of the Sky* (1993), a work he made on the terrace of Stażewski's and Krasiński's flat (ill. 11). It was no accident that it was there, on the 11th floor of a skyscraper in Aleja Solidarności, that the artist laid out flat sheets of polished metal on the ground to "reflect the sky and all those who want to gaze at it, looking down".[22] From the beginning of the 1960s, Stażewski and his wife had lived in the flat with the Rogoyski couple, and after their death, Krasiński moved in. For many years, this spacious flat/studio functioned as one of

[16] Borowski (1995: 53).
[17] Piwowar (2018).
[18] Szydłowski (2013).

[19] *Kreis und Quadrat. Post-konstruktivismus in Polen*, Gallery Depolma – Ars Polona, Düsseldorf (1981).
[20] On this fascination with Stażewski's work, which was also a source of limitations for Kamoji, see: Kitowska-Łysiak (1998: 169–171).
[21] Mazur (2016).
[22] Stefan Szydłowski connected this work with the installation *Haiku – Water* (1994) realised in his Galeria Biblioteka in Legionowo, pointing to a peculiar axis in Kamoji's work, reaching infinitely down and infinitely upwards, literally and figuratively. Cf. Szydłowski (2013).

Ill. 11.
Koji Kamoji *Dno nieba* (Bottom of the Sky), terrace of Henryk Stażewski's and Edward Krasiński's former studio, Warsaw, 1994; view of the installation, with Koji Kamoji on the left; courtesy of the artist

Warsaw's artistic salons, connected by an invisible thread to the Foksal Gallery through the people who frequented it. The place had already seen an artistic intervention before (Daniel Buren, 1974).[23] Kamoji's interest settled on the terrace because it was easier to relate to the world of nature there, as in classical *haiku*. On the one hand, Kamoji's installation reflected an important feature of his *oeuvre*, i.e. the fact that his works were usually made with specific, individualised spaces in mind.[24] On the other hand, we can again see how, thanks to the simplicity of the means used, the artist transformed the space into an object of contemplation, triggering the viewer's emotions and forcing him to focus. A good *haiku* is open to the creative input of the audience because the author's lack of explicitness and closure – *mugon* – can also provoke *aware*, an exclamation of astonishment, as the 'bottom of the sky' materialises in a simple piece of sheet metal.

Without a doubt, Koji Kamoji found in Henryk Stażewski, Edward Krasiński and Włodzimierz Borowski demanding partners to develop his work. Although they were quite different, as representatives of a distinct, European, artistic tradition, there were also many common points. Kamoji functioned and thus set up situations between heaven and earth, line and shadow, geometry and feelings. His Polish artist friends were not an obstacle, but helpers in cultivating a sensitivity between East and West. According to Koji, after the Middle Ages Western art had lost its spiritual intensity, while the East had lost its ability to feel when it began trying to catch up with the West, hence it was crucial that art show first and foremost the things we have forgotten and the world that we are moving away from. This was important for him, this touching of reality when abstraction became something concrete. There was something deeply Japanese in this process, but it was understood by Polish artists. Nevertheless, it took "concentration, inner silence, a willingness to listen".[25]

[23] It is worth mentioning that after Stażewski's death, Edward Krasiński began an *in situ* installation inside this space, marking all the rooms with a blue stripe. Today, the unchanged space of the studio, with the works, equipment, mementos, photographs left by the tenants, nail holes and wires sticking out of the wall is an integral part of the Avant-Garde Institute.

[24] It should be remembered that Edward Krasiński had a similar attitude in some way. Wiesław Borowski stressed that 'Krasiński always concentrates on the place and circumstances of his exhibitions, he plays his game, a feat of the intellect and of pure gambling, with art, with the outside world and with himself, searching for the unfulfilled unity between them', Borowski (1991: 7).

[25] Kamoji (2003).

Bibliography

Borkowski 2013 = Grzegorz Borkowski, Włodzimierz Borowski, "Dialogi, Podkowa Leśna", *Obieg.pl*, 29.11.2013, http://archiwum-obieg.u-jazdowski.pl/kronika/30662. (accessed 15.05.2019)

Borowski 1991 = Wiesław Borowski, "Niebieski pasek", Życie Warszawy, 278 (1991): 7.

Borowski 1995 = Wiesław Borowski, "Stażewski wobec Europy", in: *Henryk Stażewski 1894–1988. W setną rocznicę urodzin*, Janina Ładnowska, Zenobia Karnicka, Jadwiga Janik (eds), exhibition cat., Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 1995: 53.

Borowski 1997 = *Włodzimierz Borowski. Ślady / Traces 1956–1992*, exhibition cat., Jarosław Kozłowski, (ed.), CSW Zamek Ujazdowski, Warszawa 1997: 112–114.

Borowski 2014 = *Wiesław Borowski. Zakrywam to, co niewidoczne. Wywiad-rzeka. Rozmawiają Adam Mazur i Ewa Toniak*, Warszawa 2014: 243, 267.

Dziamski 1984 = Grzegorz Dziamski, "Performance – tradycje, źródła, obce i rodzime przejawy. Rozpoznanie zjawiska", in: *Performance – wybór tekstów*, Grzegorz Dziamski, Henryk Gajewski, Jan St. Wojciechowski (eds), Warszawa 1984: 48–49.

Gurga 2014 = Lee Gurga, "Basho do Barthesa. Estetyka amerykańskich haiku", *Estetyka i Krytyka*, 6 (2014): 89–92.

Haiku 1983 = *Haiku*, transl. Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda, Wrocław 1983.

Kamoji 2003 = Koji Kamoji, "Widzieć poprzez słuchanie", in: *Koji Kamoji. Martwa natura*, exhibition cat., Galeria Foksal, 2003.

Kamoji 2004 = Koji Kamoji, *O niebieskim pasku Edzia* (for the joint exhibition at Galeria Foksal in Warsaw), dated to 5 November 2003 and 12 February 2004, typescript, Foksal Gallery Archive.

Koji Kamoji 1980 = *Koji Kamoji. Dziura – wiatr – kamienie, Instalacje – malarstwo*, exhibition cat., Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 1980.

Kitowka-Łysiak 1998 = Małgorzata Kitowska-Łysiak, "Haiku-melancholia", *Znak*, 7 (1998): 169–171.

Małkowska 2004 = Monika Małkowska, "Cień rozmowy w Galerii Foksal", *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 II (2004).

Mazur 2016 = Adam Mazur, "Zmieniaj się powoli. Rozmowa z Kojim Kamojim", *magazynszum.pl*, 04.11.2016, https://magazynszum.pl/zmieniaj-sie-powoli-rozmowa-z-kojim-kamojim (accessed 01.06.2019).

Piwowar 2018 = Małgorzata Piwowar, "Koji Kamoji, krnąbrny Japończyk w Polsce", *Rzeczpospolita*, 22.06.2018, https://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/306219940-Koji-Kamoji-krnabrny-Japonczyk-w-Polsce.html (accessed 23.05.2019).

Śniecikowska 2016 = Beata Śniecikowska, *Haiku po polsku. Genologia w perspektywie transkulturowej*, Toruń 2016: 48–77.

Szydłowski 2013 = Stefan Szydłowski, "Koji Kamoji. Między sztuką a życiem", *Exit*, 2/94 (2013), http://kwartalnik.exit.art.pl/article.php?edition=49&id=809&lang=pl (accessed 27.05.2019).

Wystawa prac 1979 = *Wystawa prac. Włodzimierz Borowski, Koji Kamoji, Edward Krasiński, Henryk Stażewski*, exhibition cat., Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków – Okręg Warszawski, Warszawa 1979: 6.

Joanna Zakrzewska
Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology in Gdańsk

The Influence of Japanese Calligraphy and Ink Painting on Contemporary Polish Artists

The influence of Japanese art on contemporary Polish art seems indisputable. Starting with the Modernist period (1892–1919) and such famous figures as Feliks Manggha Jasieński (1861–1929) and Julian Fałat (1853–1929), Polish artists were influenced by Japanese art on many levels. Suffice to mention Józef Pankiewicz (1866–1940), Leon Wyczółkowski (1852–1936), Olga Boznańska (1865–1940), Stanisław Wyspiański (1869–1907), Jan Stanisławski (1860–1907), Józef Mehoffer (1869–1946), Witold Wojtkiewicz (1879–1909), Karol Frycz (1877–1963), Kazimierz Sichulski (1879–1942), Henryk Szczygliński (1881–1944), Edward Okuń (1872–1945) and Wojciech Weiss (1875–1950).[1] Fascinated by the Japanese approach to art, and its unusualness from the standpoint of Western culture, they strove to employ Japanese means of artistic expression, including the Japanese approach to space, framing, decorative linearity, the flat colour patch or the active empty space.[2] It was a time of admiration mainly for Japanese woodcuts, while the fascination with the Japanese style, initially superficial, eventually became more profound. Many books and academic articles have been written about this first wave of fascination with Japan in Poland. I shall focus on a lesser-known aspect of inspiration by Japanese art, namely Polish artists active since the end of World War II until today and the impact of Japanese calligraphy and ink painting on the work of contemporary graphic artists and painters. I am particularly interested in the calligraphic sphere of my everyday practice, which seems to be *terra incognita* in Polish literature on the subject. My discussion of ink painting shall be restricted to similarities when it comes to materials and means of artistic expression. At the same time, the article is merely an overview of the subject and does not purport to be a comprehensive analysis of all Polish artists working in this vein.

There are several institutions that promote Japanese calligraphy in Poland. In Warsaw: the Murasaki Centre of Japanese Calligraphy, where calligraphy is taught by *sensei* Nakayasu Yoshimi (5 dan), the Warsaw School of Japanese Language with *sensei* Ryotaro Sakamoto (8 dan),[3] Kotonoha (*sensei* Tanaka Eri, 5 dan),[4] Aikido Aikikai Institute,[5] and the SOTO Far East Cultural and Sports Centre.[6]

[1] Lipszyc (1999: 94).
[2] Kossowski (2016).

[3] https://www.gakko.waw.pl/jezyk-japonski (accessed 6.08.2019).
[4] https://www.kotonoha.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[5] https://aikido.waw.pl/kaligrafia-japonska/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[6] https://soto.waw.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019).

Ill. 1. Scroll: *Matsukaze*…松風閣依山築. The beginning of the poem *Pine Wind Pavilion* by the Chinese poet, writer and calligrapher Kō Teiken (Chinese: Huang Tingjian, 1045–1105). One of the most famous and highly praised works in the cursive style. *gyōsho* cursive style, scroll 100/35 cm

In Gdańsk one can study Japanese calligraphy at the Matsuri School of Oriental Languages,[7] in Sopot at the Mandarynka,[8] and in Szczecin at the Kotoba School (*sensei* Ikushima Maho).[9] In Poznań, calligraphy workshops are organized by the Three Refuges Buddhist Mission,[10] in Katowice at the Ichigo School,[11] and in Kraków at the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology.[12] (ill. 4)

Despite the numerous classes offered, it should be noted that Japanese calligraphy is practised and promoted mainly by Japanese in Poland. Few Poles are serious practitioners of this kind of calligraphy. Those known to me include Zbigniew Urbalewicz, Mariusz Gosławski, Nyogen Nowak, Lidia Rozmus, Anna Zalewska and myself. Zbigniew Urbalewicz is a graphic artist and painter whose interests revolve around calligraphy, lettering and graphic design. His works are informed both by traditional Japanese calligraphy, including old calligraphic styles like *kōkotsu moji*[13] and *kanji kana majiri*,[14] as well as contemporary Japanese calligraphy, sometimes accompanied by *sumi-e*-style graphics, i.e. ink painting.[15] Mariusz Gosławski is an artist who, apart from calligraphy, makes paintings with coffee, icons, watercolours and pastels. Fascinated with Japanese culture, Gosławski makes ink paintings involving traditional means and classical motifs (bamboos, grass, mountains, flowers, cherries, Bodhidharma) as well as calligraphies inspired by Japanese contemporary calligraphy and *Zen*-style calligraphy.[16] Anna Zalewska is an assistant professor at the University of Warsaw; her interest in Japanese calligraphy is more of a hobby. Her style is informed by the mixed calligraphy of *kanji kana majiri* from the Heian period (794–1185) and dis-

[7] http://matsuri.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[8] http://mandarynka.edu.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[9] http://kotoba.pl/japonska-kaligrafia/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[10] https://mahajana.net/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[11] https://www.ichigo.pl/o-nas/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[12] http://manggha.pl/kaligrafia-japonska (accessed 6.08.2019).
[13] The oldest Chinese characters, mostly pictographic divination inscriptions on animal bones, see: Zakrzewska (2016: 56).
[14] The writing of Japanese using *kanji* ideograms in conjunction with the *kana* syllabic scripts, initiated in Japan around the tenth century, see: Zakrzewska (accessed 2016: 281).
[15] http://urbalewicz.blogspot.com/p/japanese-calligraphy.html (accessed 12.06.2019).
[16] http://mariuszgoslawski.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html (accessed 12.06.2019).

Ill. 2.
In principio. Black ink: the ideograms 言葉 (Word) combined with the Latin text (John 1:1-12,) Technique: black and purple ink on paper. Format: A3

Ill. 3.
太初，道已经存在. "In the beginning was the Word" (John, 1:1-2). Chinese, ancient Chinese *kokotsu moji* inscriptions. Technique: coloured inks on paper. Format: A3

tinguished by its subtlety and delicate, feminine line, characteristic of the calligraphy of the above-mentioned period.[17] Zalewska is also the author of the book *Kaligrafia japońska. Trzy traktaty o drodze pisma* (Japanese Calligraphy: Three Treaties on the Way of Writing) (2015), a translation of Japanese treaties on calligraphy with an academic commentary. The *zen sōtō* monk Nyogen Nowak lives in Sendai, where he creates *zenga* (paintings and calligraphies related to Zen). Faithful to tradition, Nowak writes and paints using a firm, spontaneous line characterised by subtlety and precision. In 1998, the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology hosted an exhibition of works by Nyogen Nowak and Ewa Hadydoń entitled *Zen*

[17] http://www.artinfo.pl/pl/blog/wydarzenia/wpisy/lech-zurkowski-i-anna-zalewska-stara-prochownia/ (accessed 6.08.2019).

Ill. 4. *Autumn Meadows.* Japanese poem by Fun'ya no Asayasu. Watercolour, ink, mineral gold. Script: rotunda, *renmeitai* Japanese continuous calligraphy style. Format: 35,5/23 cm

Dust.[18] Lidia Rozmus is another Polish artist who lives and works abroad, in the United States. She creates minimalistic, expressive *sumi-e* and *haiga*, i.e. ink images connected to *haiku* poetry. The poems are sometimes written in English, sometimes in Japanese. Rozmus tries to capture the essence of things. She focuses on gesture, the movement of the brush, which for her is a record of life and of the flow of energy.[19] I myself am learning calligraphy at the Seifū School, creating traditional calligraphy in the four basic calligraphic styles. In my artistic search I try to combine Japanese and Latin calligraphy. (ill. 1)

There are also a number of Polish artists who practice *sumi-e*, whether traditional or modern. Apart from Nowak, Urbalewicz, Rozmus and Gosławski, one should mention The Way of Ink, a group whose members include Lech Żurkowski, Anna Jóźwiak and Konrad Świtała. (ill. 7) Their work is a direct reference to Japanese ink painting and includes features like limiting the medium to ink of different densities, portraying nature as a microcosm, calligraphic lines combined with ink blots, abstract takes, or the active use of empty space.[20] A traditional approach to ink painting can also be found in the works of Mariusz Szmerdt, a member of the Tokyo-based International Calligraphy and Ink Painting Association. In particular, the artist takes up the idea of artistic creation as a singular act, in which the line must be immediately correct (according to the 'single touch – single brushstroke' principle). He emphasizes: "My paintings are inspired by space (...); the spontaneous space of the present, past and future."[21] (ill. 5)

When speaking of ink painting, one should also mention Andrzej Strumiłło, an artist who returned from his travels to Asia with *sumi-e*-style drawings made using local materials: ink, brushes, and paper. Although they are characterised by a synthetic idiom, the ability to trace a 'precise' line, and mastery of the gesture characteristic of ink painting, the artist is strikingly perceptive and stuns the viewer with his reflective, atypical subjects, for example shock workers, mothers with children, or peasants at work. One can also discern Eastern inspirations in the way he thinks of the plane, constructing it through a certain mysticism of form. The images showcase a remarkable variety of moods, often presented in a highly personalised way. One could say that Strumiłło has gone beyond *sumi-e* and created a unique style with its own creative expression.[22]

Themes connected to Eastern ink painting can also be found in the work of Jerzy Stajuda. His ephemeral landscapes, captured in the moment, show nature through the prism of grasses and spider webs, fragments of reality with empty spaces full of unspoken content.[23] In his drawings and illustrations, Józef Wilkoń, in turn, refers to the Eastern skill of synthesis and rendering reality with a limited number of brush strokes. Although

[18] Lipszyc (1999: 150, 143) http://zendust.net/pages_en/nyogen_ewa.html (accessed 12.06. 2019).

[19] http://www.lidiarozmus.com/ (accessed 6.08. 2019).

[20] Lipszyc (1999: 150, 95), https://www.wayofink.pl/index.php/2017/02/11/way-of-ink/ (accessed 6.08.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).

[21] http://sumi-e.pl/gallery (accessed 6.08.2019).

[22] http://magazyn.o.pl/2017/syn-europy-duch-azji-refleksje-rysunki-tuszowe-andrzej-strumillo/#/ (accessed 12.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).

[23] Lipszyc (1999: 150, 139); https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jerzy-stajuda (accessed 12.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).

Ill. 5. Agata Jóźwiak, *Mountain River II*

Ill. 6. Agata Jóźwiak, *Mountain River III*

extremely colourful, his drawings of animals and landscapes are characterized by spilled, painterly, somewhat accidental colour patches as well as graphical stringency and a synthetic approach to the subject, which make his works reminiscent of ink painting.[24] The works of Tomasz Tatarczyk (d. 2010), painted with short brush strokes, diverge significantly from the subject we are interested in. However, Tatarczyk's aptitude for synthesis as well as his fragmented presentation of the subject, its understatement, are quite close to ink painting. The artist used a monochromatic palette to depict his intimate encounters with nature, which is the main theme of his works.[25] Among younger artists working in the spirit of *sumi-e* it is worth mentioning Małgorzata Flis, whose works are distinguished by their simplicity and expressive lines;[26] Katarzyna Siwek, who uses black ink and white paper in her minimalist works;[27] and Zuzanna Gajos, who uses ink to highlight snippets of reality.[28]

And yet, returning to the subject of Japanese calligraphy, one wonders why so few artists have taken up this art. It seems that as a consequence of its utilitarian character in our culture calligraphy is not respected as an art form. The opposite holds true in East Asia, where it is considered the highest of the arts, combining three fields: literature, painting, and writing. The last of these requires both technical skill in wielding writing tools, familiarity with several calligraphy styles and, most important-

[24] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jozef-wilkon (accessed 12.06.2019).

[25] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/tomasz-tatarczyk (accessed 11.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).

[26] http://www.radiokrakow.pl/galerie/obrazy-malgorzaty-flis/5/#gtop (accessed 12.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).

[27] https://www.etsy.com/listing/712106579/set-of-2-artworks-a4?ref=shop_home_active_16&cns=1 (accessed 12.06.2019).

[28] http://www.zuzannagajos.pl/rysunek5.htm (accessed 12.06.2019).

Ill. 7.
Lech Żurkowski, *Green Tea*

ly, knowledge of a huge number of the ideograms that make up the Chinese and Japanese writing systems. When cultivating Japanese calligraphy in our cultural sphere, we must keep in mind that we are using writing, and therefore a language that is expressed in writing, as well as delving into another culture whose way of thinking is expressed in the said language and script. Without knowledge of the language and cultural codes of the ideograms along with the meanings constructed through their use, we will only be superficial imitators of a technique. Japanese calligraphy also involves special tools (ink, brush, and paper), rules, writing styles, line types and, most importantly perhaps, a deep philosophy based upon the idea of a 'way',[29] a spiritually enriching way of life. The creative act is grounded in the repetition of a gesture until the characters simply 'spill out' from under the brush 'by themselves', when the person is in a state of *mushin* (inner emptiness, silencing of the mind). This is a one-off act and must be performed exactly on the first attempt. This turns creativity into a kind of Zen meditation that manifests itself in the movement of the hand and the brush.[30] (ill. 6)

Although it is difficult for Western audiences to truly grasp the aesthetics of Japanese calligraphy without in-depth study, the latter seems to be extremely attractive both visually and aesthetically. Some of its features seem to inspire Western artists, including Poles. We should first of all highlight aspects such as graphicality, the working of the image into a sign, symbolism, minimalistic means of expression, naturalism, and showing the universe through fragments of reality. These attributes of Japanese calligraphy have been reflected in the work of Polish graphic artists, who have been drawn to the understatement, the 'gesture' of calligraphy, its linear dynamics and 'accuracy', i.e. capturing the essential features of an object.[31] The influence of Japanese calligraphy on Polish graphic arts can be traced on many levels, including in the approach to the subject, the artist's creative attitude, or the formal means used, i.e. tools, techniques, and composition. (ill. 3)

We can also find kinship with with Japanese calligraphy in the work of Mieczysław Wasilewski, an iconic Polish graphic artist. Sometimes called the 'master of the concise graphical sign',[32] Wasilewski employs visual synthesis, reducing the image to a sign, just like in *haiga*. His works are often simple, black-and-white graphic signs, faces, abbreviated elements of reality, minimalist, rendered using few calligraphic strokes. At the same time, this paucity of form, the seemingly simple expressive means, the naturalness and seeming randomness of

[29] Calligraphy in Japanese is *shodō*, literally 'the way of writing'.

[30] For more on the aesthetics of Japanese calligraphy, see: Zakrzewska (2016).

[31] Lipszyc (1999: 150).

[32] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/mieczyslaw-wasilewski (accessed 11.06.2019)

the gesture are achieved through multiple repetitions until the line is finally 'accurate'. Like in Japanese calligraphy, the artist uses both wash and dry brush techniques, leaving white space around the sign.[33] "For it is exactly a question of how to make wealth out of simplicity. (...) Through the diversity of the blot, line or brush stroke one can conjure up an unexpected number of effects, which sometimes can be put together into a concise and organized whole"[34], he says. Wasilewski also talks about his fascination with the Japanese graphic artist Shigeo Fukuda and the "philosophy of subtracting, removing the unnecessary".[35] The outcomes of his search can be seen in his minimalistic graphics, combining a delicate line with powerful ink strokes, making a compelling graphic impression while remaining semantically fertile.[36]

We can also trace the influence of Japanese calligraphy in the works of Henryk Tomaszewski, another Polish graphic art master. His work is characterised by an intelligent, synthetic translation of content into the language of visual form. Some of his works feature calligraphic 'gestuality' (e.g. Tomaszewski's poster for a staging of *Kordian*[37]), representations pared down to signs, free-flowing albeit sparing drawings or calligraphy with a message (the *Love*[38] poster).[39] The *ouevre* of Piotr Młodożeniec, who mainly used templates, may seem to have little in common with the calligraphic gesture, but Młodożeniec's minimalist of means of expression, limited to black and white, establish bring him close to Japanese calligraphy. The works he created together with Marek Sobczyk clearly refer to Eastern ideograms, where the visual form of the image and the meaning of the text are equally important.[40]

The calligraphic approach to writing as a sequence of signs can also be found in the work of Jan Tarasin. Tarasin's works consist of vertical or horizontal strings of abstract symbols/signs, like the characters of a non-existent alphabet, set on a white plane. The contour or silhouette-like forms have both visual and semantic value, similarly to Japanese calligraphy.[41] Looking further, features like asymmetry, the active role of empty space, linearity, an economy of expressive means, and understatement establish parallels between the works of Stanisław Fijałkowski and calligraphic ideas. The artist creates compositions by filling a white background with geometric shapes.[42] A certain closeness to the Japanese way of thinking can also be found in the works of Andrzej Pągowski, who uses a dynamic line, and whose works usually involve a single graphical sign.[43] Calligraphic traits, such as minimalism, manual skill, and sign-like quality are also characteristic of such artists as Tomasz Szulecki, Jan Bokiewicz, Józef Budka, Marcin Władyka and Ryszard Kajzer.[44] (ill. 2)

To sum up, it should be said that starting from the Modernist period one can observe a clear influence of Japanese art on Polish artists. After an initial wave of admiration, these influences became less spectacular, and yet they continue to inform themes, means of expression and the creative attitude and philosophy of artists. In the case of ink painting, thanks to the universality of the message, these influences are clearer than when it comes to Japanese calligraphy. Since it is closely connected to writing, language and culture, calligraphy has proven more inspirational when it comes to its means of expression rather than as writing. Nevertheless, even in the context of calligraphy, aspects such as sign-like quality, the expression of movement, minimalism, active empty spaces, compositional succinctness and asymmetry are applied in contemporary Polish art by graphic artists and painters alike.

Bibliography

Kossowski 2016 = Łukasz Kossowski, in cooperation with Małgorzata Martini: *Wielka fala. Inspiracje*

[33] Ibid.; Pałasz (2018); Lipszyc (1999: 141, 150).
[34] Pałasz (2018: 15).
[35] Ibid. (2018: 61).
[36] Ibid. (2018: 105).
[37] https:/https://www.galeriagrafikiiplakatu.pl/pl/plakaty/84/Henryk-Tomaszewski/ (accessed 11.06.2019): Lipszyc (accessed 1999: 150); Kossowski (2016: 119).
[38] https://www.galeriagrafikiiplakatu.pl/pl/plakaty/84/Henryk-Tomaszewski/16219/LOVE-/ (accessed 6.08.2019).
[39] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/henryk-tomaszewski-grafik (accessed 11.06.2019).
[40] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/piotr-mlodozeniec (accessed 11.06.2019).
[41] Lipszyc (1999: 150, 144); https://culture.pl/pl/search/jan%20tarasin (accessed 11.06.2019).
[42] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/stanislaw-fijalkowski (11.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).
[43] Lipszyc (1999: 140); https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/andrzej-pagowski (11.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).
[44] https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jan-bokiewicz (11.06.2019); https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/marcin-wladyka (11.06.2019); Kossowski (2016: 119).

sztuką Japonii w polskim malarstwie i grafice, PISnSŚ i Wydawnictwo Tako, Warszawa – Toruń 2016.

Lipszyc 1999 = Łukasz Kossowski, "O inspiracjach japońskich w sztuce polskiej", ed. Lipszyc, Henryk: *Chopin – Polska – Japonia: wystawa z okazji 80 rocznicy nawiązania stosunków oficjalnych między Polską a Japonią oraz Roku Chopinowskiego*, Komitet Organizacyjny Wystawy, Warszawa 1999: 148–150.

Lipszyc = ed. Henryk Lipszyc, *Chopin – Polska – Japonia: wystawa z okazji 80 rocznicy nawiązania stosunków oficjalnych między Polską a Japonią oraz Roku Chopinowskiego*, Komitet Organizacyjny Wystawy, Warszawa 1999.

Pałasz = ed. Elżbieta Pałasz, *Mieczysław Wasilewski, Janusz Górski 1x1*, Wydział Grafiki ASP w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2018.

Zakrzewska 2016 = Joanna Zakrzewska, *Prze-myśleć piękno. Estetyka kaligrafii japońskiej*, Kirin, Bydgoszcz 2016.

Online sources

https://www.gakko.waw.pl/jezyk-japonski (accessed 6.08.2019)

https://www.kotonoha.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

https://aikido.waw.pl/kaligrafia-japonska/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

https://soto.waw.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://matsuri.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://mandarynka.edu.pl/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://kotoba.pl/japonska-kaligrafia/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

https://mahajana.net/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

https://www.ichigo.pl/o-nas/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://manggha.pl/kaligrafia-japonska (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://www.lidiarozmus.com/ (accessed 13.06.2019)

http://mariuszgoslawski.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html (accessed 12.06.2019)

http://www.artinfo.pl/pl/blog/wydarzenia/wpisy/lech-zurkowski-i-anna-zalewska-stara-prochownia/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://zendust.net/pages_en/nyogen_ewa.html (accessed 8.06. 2019)

http://www.lidiarozmus.com/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

https://www.wayofink.pl/index.php/2017/02/11/way-of-ink/ (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://sumi-e.pl/gallery (accessed 6.08.2019)

http://magazyn.o.pl/2017/syn-europy-duch-azji-refleksje-rysunki-tuszowe-andrzej-strumillo/#/ (accessed 12.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jerzy-stajuda (accessed 12.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jozef-wilkon (accessed 12.06.2019)

http://www.zuzannagajos.pl/rysunek5.htm (accessed 12.06.2019)

https://www.etsy.com/listing/712106579/set-of-2-art-works-a4?ref=shop_home_active_16&cns=1 (accessed 12.06.2019)

http://www.radiokrakow.pl/galerie/obrazy-malgorzaty-flis/5/#gtop (accessed 12.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/mieczyslaw-wasilewski (accessed 11.06.2019)

https:/https://www.galeriagrafikiiplakatu.pl/pl/plakaty/84/Henryk-Tomaszewski/ (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/henryk-tomaszewski-grafik (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/piotr-mlodozeniec (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/search/jan%20tarasin (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/tomasz-tatarczyk (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/stanislaw-fijalkowski (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/andrzej-pagowski (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jan-bokiewicz (accessed 11.06.2019)

https://culture.pl/pl/tworca/marcin-wladyka (accessed 11.06.2019)

Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk
Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

Fragment of the whole: Traces of Japanese aesthetics in the silk works of selected contemporary Polish artists

The aim of the article is to highlight traces of the Japanese aesthetics and tradition in the silk works of three Polish artists: Gabriela Morawetz and Ewa Kuryluk living in France, and Joanna Stasiak living in Poland.

They chose silk as a medium being fully conscious of its origins and centuries-old tradition, but also because of its distinctive properties. All three treat it in unconventional ways, and each differently. For Joanna Stasiak, silk has become her principal medium; for Gabriela Morawetz and Ewa Kuryluk, a medium consciously selected when it suits their artistic objectives.

Each of the artists admits to a fascination with Japanese culture and art. I will discuss a number of their works as they relate to their other artistic pursuits and to Japanese aesthetics. I will also include references to selected aspects of Japanese aesthetics and art: form and composition (e.g. fragmentation, asymmetry, flatness, rescaling, the active role of empty space, understatement, simplicity, naturalness, minimalism), as well as categories and concepts such as *mono-no-aware*, *yugen*, *shibui*, *iki*, and *wabi sabi*.

By the eponymous 'fragment of the whole' I mean a single work, representative of only one aspect of each artist's creative output. It is also a frame, a fragment of their subjective vision of the reality they transpose.

Gabriela Morawetz: The half-light and the noble marks of age

Gabriela Morawetz is a Polish multimedia artist living in Paris. She is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków and has also attended graphic arts workshops in Switzerland. In 1975, she went on a scholarship to Caracas and stayed there for eight years. She then settled in France, working there since 1983. Morawetz's work is esteemed and recognisable in the Paris art community. It is also an important manifestation of Polish identity in exile. Her works done in a variety of media (painting, drawing, graphics, photography, video art, installation, sculpture and performance) have received acclaim in several European countries, South and North America, as well as Japan and China.

Morawetz grew up in a family whose members engaged in different forms of creative activity. Her parents were well-known Kraków journalists. Her grandfather had a photo studio in Rzeszów, and it was there that Gabriela learned traditional photography. She has had a passion for photography since a young age. Although educated as a painter and graphic artist, Morawetz has made photography her primary medium.

In the early 1990s, Gabriela began to explore new areas, experimenting with new media: photog-

Ill. 1.
Gabriela Morawetz, *The World far of the World*, 2010, installation, pigment print on tulle, Abbaye de Corbigny, France

Ill. 2.
Gabriela Morawetz, *Jeux du Regard*, installation, pigment print on tulle, lead, magnifying glass, 200x107x30 cm, each element, Chapelle Charles Foix, Ivry sur Seine, 2006

raphy, sculpture, and film, as well as a mixed-media installations featuring collaborators and dancers.

From the second half of the 1990s, the artist also occasionally employed silk. Her most spectacular work on silk is *The World Far from the World* (2010-13).[1] Monumental, almost 5 metres long, the 18-screen installation was created through the application of pigment printing on several layers of semi-transparent tulle (*Polyvoile*). Appreciating the transparency and lightness of the fabric, the artist used it as a kind of membrane. The multi-part installation consists of five triangular wings decorated with black-and-white photo prints, mainly negatives. In the middle are the figures of a walking man (a shaman) and a long-haired woman, as if suspended in space. They are surrounded by elemental symbols and signs (objects in space – a gate, a tree) that spark archetypal associations. These fragments are a record of a subjective perception of reality, suggestive and ambiguous at the same time. (ill. 1)

Amid the prose of everyday life which strips us of magic and ritual, Morawetz returns to the sources.

Caught in the semi-transparent triangular structure, all the representations seem close and distant at the same time. An additional 'open composition' effect has been achieved thanks to the possibility

[1] The installation was presented as part of the exhibition *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist* (Old Gallery, ZPAF, Warsaw, 9-21.06.2019) accompanying the international conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of the Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art*, 10-12.06.19, SARP, Warsaw.

of entering the installation space and getting lost among the individual wings and in the illusion of the representations. The artist says: "Illusion is not the opposite of reality, but a more subtle interpretation of it. The gaze gets lost in overlapping layers of screens, intermingling creatures, luminous fogs, fragments of nature and constructs. It is the experience of a labyrinth of impressions and their relations in an elusive part of time between the present and the memory of the present. The viewer is invited to literally and figuratively enter this installation, it is a matter of getting lost in order to come across oneself in surprise, as in a mirror image."[2]

Striving for visual perfection, Morawetz also employs understatement and optical blurring. The images are supposed to communicate a state of internal tension. The work is a record of visions in which the real mingles with the fantastic. It speaks of the need to remain close to the natural elements, to matter as such, which is essential for a fuller experience of both positive and negative emotions. Gabriela's ephemeral and visually seductive work touches on elementary issues related to man and nature: energy, transformation, and passing. Morawetz creates a sensual and spiritual record of an impermanent, transient reality. Here, as in her other compositions, whether photographic, graphical or painted, the created reality is seen to exist at the boundary of waking and dreaming, with hovering, levitating human silhouettes and elements of nature. The artist draws on her own dictionary of images, forms and props with metaphorical meanings, depicting defenceless, often naked figures or fragments of a derealised nature (trees with branches turned upside down, a stone road).

In the case of this work, the technique and the tulle substrate were to some extent a matter of accident. The artist experiments with different substrates, applying light-sensitive emulsion or pigment print.[3] Like her other works, she made the installation in question in her studio in Arcueil in the suburbs of Paris. Some of the photos were taken outdoors in nature – in the woods, amid wetlands and swamps. Working on them was more like a spiritual, shamanic séance with dancers and props rather than conventional work in a studio. *The World Far from the World* was made gradually over a period of several years, from 2010 to 2013. It was a continuation of the artist's previous undertakings, when she was fascinated by new technologies and the possibility of pigment printing on special silk. In the 1990s, she built rectangular screens with 2-3 superimposed tulles placed at a certain distance from each other; this served as the prototype for the installation in question. The work *Jeu du regard* (ill. 2) was first shown in 2004 at the Biwako Biennale within the setting of an old, abandoned Japanese house. Morawetz's tulle installations were often displayed in places with a peculiar atmosphere, such as church and monastery interiors (Ivry in Burgundy, Chartres), the Musée de La Poste in Paris, or the see+gallery in China. *The World Far from the World* has been part of different events, spaces and interiors. The artist adds that '(...) the work itself functions in a nomadic way – it travels all the time and is moved from place to place'.[4] (ill. 3, 4)

Points of contact with the Japanese tradition, culture and aesthetics

Gabriela Morawetz first encountered Japanese culture in the 1970s in Venezuela, mainly through Sankai Yuku and *butoh* dance. The Japanese way of feeling reality, art and beauty fascinates her to this day. Since 2001, Gabriela has regularly participated in the Biwako Biennale in Japan, absorbing various aspects of different Japanese traditions and art. This has resulted in installations, performances and video art pieces. The artist speaks of a peculiar osmosis in her relationship with this culture, so different from her own. She is particularly interested in subjects such as passing, transience, fragility, unfinished or ephemeral records, and the perishable and transient nature of reality, both sensual and spiritual.

Light and shadow

In her tulle installations Morawetz touches on the issue of light and shadow, which has always intrigued her. This is particularly visible in the works she has exhibited at the Biwako Biennale. As she

[2] G. Morawetz's commentary on the installation *The World Far from the World*, Stara Galeria ZPAF, Warsaw 2019.

[3] Morawetz's works on stone slates covered with light-sensitive emulsion were presented for example at Galeria Krytyków during the Warsaw Showcase. See: Morawetz (1996).

[4] M. Durda-Dmitruk's interview with G. Morawetz, 10.04.2019

Ill. 3.Gabriela Morawetz, *Illusions Sphere*, installation, pigment print on tulle, 200x107x30 cm, each element, 2005, Maya Polsky Gallery, Chicago

Ill. 4. Gabriela Morawetz, *Passage*, installation, pigment print on tulle,185x107x30 cm, 2007, Musée de la Poste, Paris

says: "There is a specific light there. It is never entirely light or shadow; in these strange interiors, every object inscribed in this space becomes extraordinary."[5]

She seems to be echoing the Japanese – "Were it not for shadows, there would be no beauty"[6] – sharing their love of a peculiar kind of lighting: semi-darkness, a cloudy, dim glow that ushers in a melancholy mood and brings back old events. We find the noble aura of age in her out-of-focus black-and-white or sepia images, but also in the refined, reticent format.

Theatricality

Another characteristic feature of Gabriela Morawetz's works is their 'theatricality', as manifest in the staging of spatial compositions featuring imagined or real figures. In her photographic installations, the spatial effect is achieved through a variety of devices, mostly via original techniques, i.e. covering all sorts of substrates with light-sensitive emulsion: the mirror surfaces of sheet metal, canvas, felt, or slates.

We also witness theatricality in the interplay of light and shadow, when: "(...) the delicate glow of fading rays [clings] to the surface of a dusky wall (...). We never tire of the sight, for to us this

[5] M. Durda-Dmitruk's interview with G. Morawetz, 10.04.2019.

[6] Tanizaki (2001).

Ill. 5. Gabriela Morawetz, *Almost in the Dark*, installation, 9 elements, pigment print on tulle, wood, glass fibre, water, diameter 500 cm, Museum of Contemporary Art, MACSI, Caracas, Venezuela

pale glow and these dim shadows far surpass any ornament."[7] (ill. 5)

Yugen

There is a need in Gabriela's art to make works that tell an unfinished story, for example dancers open to improvisation and the spontaneous participation of the viewer. "By not quite articulating the message, we leave the audience the opportunity to complete the idea, and it is thanks to this that great works of art rivet us so completely that it seems to us we've become part of them. For there is a void in them which we can enter and fill it according to our aesthetic emotions."[8] This approach echoes the Japanese notion of *yugen* which designates "(...) an emotional state evoking an infinite dimension outside the world of phenomena (...) a longing for an extrasensory reality provoked by a poetic image (...)".[9] (ill. 6)

The state of *yugen* "can be compared to a blooming flower, the essence of its mysterious depth is understatement, the renunciation of the fully uttered and finished in favour of phenomena in the phase

Ill. 6. Gabriela Morawetz, *Sleeping Beauties Awake*, 2007, pigment print on tulle and canvas, 180x106x6 cm

[7] Tanizaki (2001).
[8] Okakura (2007).
[9] Wilkoszewska (2003: 10).

of beginning and fading, when what is not yet or no longer is only hinted at."[10]

Morawetz's works exhibit minimalism, sophistication and elegance steeped in an atmosphere of melancholy and an aura of mysterious beauty.

Reflecting on Morawetz's works, one can also cite other notions from Japanese aesthetics – *wabi* and *sabi* or *shibui* – connected with understatement, tranquility born of restraint and simplicity.[11] While not trying to imitate or forcefully derive inspiration from Japanese art, Morawetz constructs her own world in which we find much of the Japanese spirit. It invites viewers to travel to distant dimensions and spaces and to complete the meanings of these works in their imagination.

Ewa Kuryluk: The photorealism of drifting everyday life

Ewa Kuryluk is an artist working with a variety of media. She is an illustrator, painter, photographer, installation maker and art historian. She has also authored essays, poetry and over 20 books on numerous topics: art (*Viennese Art and Literature Around 1900*, *Hiperrealizm – nowy realizm*, *The Grotesque in the Work of Aubrey Beardsley*, *Collected Essays*, *Veronica and her Cloth: History, Symbolism and Structure of a 'True' Image*), an autobiography (a trilogy recounting the story of her family – *Goldi*, *Frascati*, and *Feluni*) and a novel (*Century 21*). She leads a nomadic lifestyle. In her early youth, in the 1960s and 1970s, she lived in Vienna, and intermittently in London in the 1970s. At the beginning of the 1980s she settled in New York, and in Paris at the end of the 1990s. She still returns to Warsaw and Kraków.

She is known primarily for her autobiographical figurative works. In her large-format, photo-realistic painting, and in her textile installations covered with drawings we often recognize multiplied images of the artist herself and of her loved ones.

The Garden of Effi Briest

Of Kuryluk's works, the one in which references to the artistic traditions of Japan are most evident is *The Garden of Effi Briest*, a 30-metre-long silk installation.[12] Created in exile[13] in 1982, the installation was inspired by the nineteenth-century novel *Effi Briest* (1894) by Theodor Fontane, which the artist reread while in New York and found a contemporary context for.[14] Fontane condemned the Prussian system of oppression and terror, claiming the right to freedom and happiness for women. The book recounts the story of a teenage girl who is getting married at a young age to a well-off Prussian civil servant. After a happy childhood and youth in her family home with a beautiful garden with a swing and a sundial, she goes to live with her husband in an empty house on the Baltic Sea coast, where out of loneliness and boredom, fascinated by an older man, she has an affair. The fleeting romance is discovered after a few years by her husband who has found the couple's love letters; by then he and his wife and baby daughter are leading a happy life in Berlin. A moral scandal erupts. Effi is thrown out on the street by her husband, who also prevents her from seeing her daughter. Sick, just before dying prematurely, Effi is taken in by her parents. She dies with a view of the beautiful garden with a swing, where she had spent the happiest days of her life. The sundial is soon replaced by a tombstone.

Other novels written in the second half of the nineteenth century were also an important inspiration to Kuryluk. They described the emancipation of women, women who violated traditional moral norms or were considered 'fallen', e.g. those cheating in the name of love. These included Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856) or Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877). Read in her youth, these novels etched themselves in the artist's memory,

[10] Wilkoszewska (2003: 10).

[11] Wilkoszewska (2003: 11).

[12] Kuryluk proposed this work for the exhibition accompanying the conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of the Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art*, SARP, Warsaw, June 2019. In the end, the work was not shown.

[13] After the memorable 13 December 1981, Kuryluk, like several other Polish artists who found themselves abroad when martial law was imposed in Poland (for example the writer, playwright and screenwriter Janusz Głowacki, poster designer Rafał Olbiński), settled in the United States for the next dozen or so years. She was a scholarship holder from George Soros, among others. She has also collaborated with universities, including New York University, conducting a seminar on duplication in art, literature and theatre, the New School for Social Research and San Diego University in California. She wrote books, created installations and exhibited her works. Her career gained momentum. She spent time with outstanding artists (e.g. Alan Karpow), but also world-famous theorists and writers (e.g. Susan Sontag, Linda Nochlin, and McLuhan).

[14] This was her three-month stay in Nanjing, just after the Maoist Cultural Revolution, or referring Fontane's work to the practice of foot-binding in China (girls' feet were bound with silk).

each connected to a colour: red for *Anna Karenina*, white for *Effi Briest*. "Effi, the protagonist of Theodor Fontane's novel, was close to my heart because of the similarity of our names and our shared passion for swings."[15] Kuryluk reread the book at the Biblical Garden, a miniature botanical garden next to Saint John the Divine Cathedral in New York, close to where she lived.

The Garden of Effi Briest was painted with white acrylic on semi-transparent Shanghai silk. After drying, the acrylic paint produced a relief-like effect casting a discernible shadow. "The stronger the light, the more the silk disappeared and the shadows became clearer."[16] The installation is the size of Kuryluk's studio in the Upper West Side in New York, where it came into being. The drawings were made based on self-photographs taken in the aforementioned Biblical Garden and on a swing. The author describes the work as a garden of "memories, shadows and reflections".[17] Like her other works, this one is also full of autobiographical motifs. "My „discovery", imitating a window curtain, came from a longing for open space, loose and light. Like a mist, the crispy white of the silk allowed me to breathe in New York and catch my breath at this new historical turn. Uncertain how things would turn out for me, I wanted to feel in control of my fate, at least at work – a ship, a sail, wind, light. Smitten with my new utopia, I became little Ewunia again, dazzled by the white of snow and foggy sea."[18] (ill. 7)

The installation was first exhibited in 1982 for a group of friends in the artist's New York bedroom. In 1994, it was shown at the DAP ZPAP[19] gallery, where it was re-arranged in a new way, as a garden with white gravel paths and white garden chairs on which viewers could rest. (ill. 8, 9, 10)

Ill. 7. Ewa Kuryluk, Playing chess with myself, *The Garden of Effi Briest*, detail, bedroom at 110th Street, New York, 1982, photo by the artist (close-up), copyright by E. Kuryluk

Identifying with her favourite literary heroine, the artist drew a couple of images of herself among the bushes, trees and flowers, inscribing her own figure in the work, in harmony with the natural world and her immediate surroundings. We see her leaning out from behind a tree, playing chess with herself, reading a book, swinging on a swing, or sitting on a tree and on a fence.

The silhouettes, drawn with white acrylic on an empty background, become either semi-transparent or dark depending on the gallery lighting. At other times, it is the emptiness of the background that dominates. Plants, their sharp leaves and flowers, have been rendered in detail, though minimalistically, like on a Japanese *kakemono*. The compositions are framed in an interesting way – the way of seeing proper to photography has been used – from different perspectives, at angles introducing dynamism into the composition.

The installation – a kind of ephemeral fresco – functions much like Japanese scrolls. It is easy

[15] Kuryluk (2016: 152)
[16] Kuryluk (2016: 151)
[17] Kuryluk (2016: 153)
[18] Kuryluk (2016: 153)
[19] See Kuryluk (1994). One of the three parts of the exhibition, *The Garden of Effi Briest* was displayed in the lower part of the gallery. Works selected not so much chronologically as for their mood and colour were exhibited in the other two rooms, while room I housed Kuryluk's drawings in red on a white background as well as *Teatr miłości* (Theatre of Love) and *Kurtyna dla mężczyzn* (Curtain for Men). Works displayed in the second hall included *Niebo* (Sky) on light blue, *Ziemia* (Earth) on yellow silk, and Kuryluk's early drawings from 1977 in the spirit of the pre-Raphaelites and Art Nouveau. See Kawalerowicz (1994).

Ill. 8.
Ewa Kuryluk, *A Journey* (detail), 1980, Galeria DAP ZPAP, 1994, photo by the artist, copyright by E. Kuryluk

Ill. 9.
Ewa Kuryluk, *The Garden of Effi Briest* (detail), Galeria DAP ZPAP, 1994, photo by the artist, copyright by E. Kuryluk

Ill. 10.
Ewa Kuryluk, *The Garden of Effi Briest* (detail), Galeria DAP ZPAP, 1994, photo by the artist, copyright by E. Kuryluk

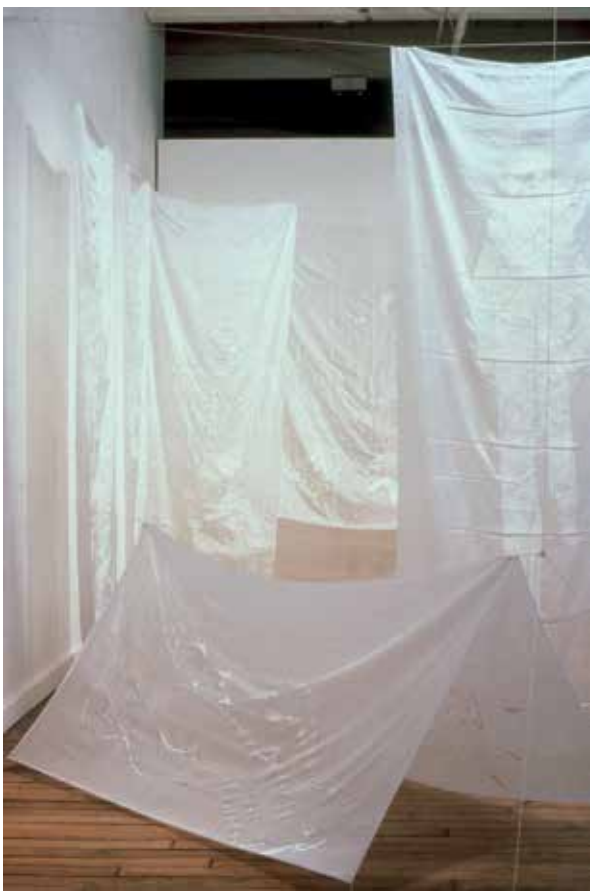
to transport and exhibit in different interiors and contexts.

Here, too, we can speak of theatricality. Walking between fragments of the installation, which inevitably sparks associations with Japanese painting, one can feel like during a performance in which everything is enacted, perfected and arranged, unequivocal and unobvious, inviting the viewer to decipher successive meanings, metaphors and symbols.

Works on airy substrates

The Garden of Effi Briest is not Kuryluk's first work on fabric. She has made a large number of such works. She began her adventure with drawing and painting on light fabrics in the second half of the 1970s. In her autobiographies she recalls that in 1977, after the foreign success (mainly in London; her collaboration with the Fischer Gallery of Art) of her photorealistic painting, experiencing a colour crisis she discarded it overnight in favour of monochromatic images on ephemeral, curtain-like, fabrics – silk and raw cotton. She presented her first ephemeral installation on fabric, *Within Our Four Walls*, at the Na Ścianie Wschodniej gallery in Warsaw in 1979. On pink, white and black silk lining[20] (the colours symbolising times of day) she depicted outlines of figures in intimate poses and everyday situations. The result was a peculiar house/tent or fresco/drawing telling the story of the everyday rituals of two people, their work and their intimate existence.

Kuryluk's change of medium – drawings with rust-coloured ink on silk and raw cotton, depicting the artist and her loved ones – had to do with traumatic events in the family.[21] The fabric represents a body (or its shadow), which the artist 'pins down', 'hurts', randomly attaches to a wall inside the gallery space, and then also outdoors, etc. Individual works evolve into a whole *environment* – a room, tent or garden. Formally, they are never quite finished, never fully defined. In novel ways they are integrated into successive exposition spaces.



Ill. 11. Ewa Kuryluk, *A Journey* (detail), 1980, Helen Shlien Gallery, Boston, 1981, photo by the artist, copyright by E. Kuryluk

The drawings on loose fabric resemble items of clothing, creating a kind of "autobiographical wardrobe: stored in drawers and packed in suitcases for the duration of the journey".[22] As substitutes of skin and memory, they evoke associations with the veil of Veronica or the Shroud of Turin.[23] In her dialogue with the art tradition she now begins to attach importance to notions like the print, the reflection, matter as witness to existence, the 'membrane of memory', but also contour and outline. These hail back to the origins of painting – the shadow and its outline.

Shanghai silk has played an important role in Ewa Kuryluk's work. She used it in several works from the early 1980s: the triptych *Red Black White*

[20] In an interview with M. Durda-Dmitruk from 1.10.2018 in Paris she recalls the purchase of white, pink and black milanese in one of the shops on Piotrkowska Street near the Film School in Łódź, where she gave lectures on contemporary art in 1978. Milanese – knitted fabric of natural or artificial silk or cotton used for the production of women's underwear but also e.g. lining.

[21] Her brother's illness, his self-immolation in hospital, and his suicide attempts. See Kuryluk (2019).

[22] Wadley (2002) http://www.kuryluk.art.pl/index.php?option=com_contentask=viewd=130temid=142ang=pl (accessed 10.04.2019).

[23] Kuryluk (1998).

Ill. 12.
Red and Black, 1980, studio, photo by the artist, copyright by E. Kuryluk

(ill. 12), made just after her return from China in 1980, the monumental installation *A Journey* (1980, based on holiday photographs of herself while backpacking and sleeping in a tent, ill. 11), and the *Garden of Effi Briest*. After settling in the United States, Kuryluk set up *Seven black chairs in the snow* at the Princeton campus, seating "on them like mourners, nude self-portraits, painted with white paint on black shantung".[24] She also installed and photographed her works in other places: on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, in the Alps, on Long Island, Hudson River, Paris, or the Imperial Gardens in Kyoto. Synchronizing with a different aura, weather, climate and *entourage* each time, they had a life of their own.

In the early 1990s Kuryluk began to cut silk and cotton and take it with her on her travels, walks and bicycle trips, hanging it on trees.[25] Around 2005, she created installations in the form of yellow silk and paper cut-outs, most of them inspired by her difficult or even traumatic experiences of childhood, the illness and death of her mother and the sudden death of her brother in 2004.[26]

The works – hung on walls, draped like a curtain, arranged into tents and rooms, thrown on the floor or taken outdoors, put on chairs in the snow or hung on trees – are material, even tangible, like torn skin. They describe human existence, everyday life, intimacy. On the other hand, because they have been rendered on an ethereal, perishable material, they also talk about memory, forgetting, momentariness. Like the Japanese *ukiyo-e*, they are images of a flowing world, condensed traces of memory.

Travels to the Far East

Kuryluk's Far Eastern inspirations had to do with her travels to China, Japan and Hong Kong. In 1980, the artist visited China.[27] In Shanghai she bought 35 metres of white silk, spending her whole lecturer's salary on it. Upon returning to Poland, she used some of it to make her installation *Journey*,[28] shown as part of the exhibition *Ogród poznania* (Garden of Knowledge) in 1981. A few months later in Boston, at the art gallery of Helen Shlien, an art critic promoting avant-garde works, she displayed the aforementioned *Journey* and *A Room of Memories*. Flying to the exhibition in the USA, she accidentally took the remaining silk, which in 1982 allowed her to create the most 'Japanese' of her works, the *Garden of Effi Briest*. In 1991, she went to Japan on a scholarship from the New York-based Asian Cultural Council which appreciated her contribution to comparative art and religious history and awarded her for her novel *Veronica*. The places Kuryluk visited during the three-month scholarship inspired some of the scenes described in *Century 21*, which are set in Kyoto (e.g. Djuna Barnes and Moses Maimonides' walk). Kuryluk also took her installa-

[24] Kuryluk (2016: 154).

[25] http://www.kuryluk.art.pl/index.php?option=com_contentask=viewd=116temid=118ang=pl (accessed 10.04.2019).

[26] The installations were shown at Galeria Artemis within the framework of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków in 2005 and at the Jewish Festival in Warsaw in 2006.

[27] She travelled to China to give lectures as part of the so-called experts' expedition with Helmut Kirchner in 1980, shortly after the death of Mao Zedong.

[28] The installation treated of the fading of memory, life as a journey toward pure whiteness which can be interpreted as nothingness or light itself. In the Far East, white is the colour of mourning.

tions and exhibitions to Japan. In April 1995, she installed some of her 'cut-outs' from the *Mysterious Boy* in the Imperial Garden in Kyoto. She returned to the Land of the Cherry Blossoms in 1998 to take part in a series of exhibitions presenting women's textile installations, *The Secret Lives of Clothes*, at the Atrium Gallery in Fukuoka.[29] [30]

The daintiness of fabric is a metaphor of Kuryluk's nomadic lifestyle, but it also speaks to the impermanence and temporality of human existence. "Drawings made with white acrylic paint on white transparent silk underline this impermanence and immateriality even more. They suggest the fading of colours and features; they remind us of how reality transforms itself into misty memory and shadow."[31]

Kuryluk says that she has been under the spell of the Japanese tradition since childhood, if only due to her admiration for van Gogh. In her installations constructed out of whites and shadows, we see this influence in evidence in the sharp contrast between the surfaces covered with images and colour and those based on transparency, in the flat laying down of colour spots, but also in Kuryluk's photorealistic drawings. What is most Japanese about these works is the way she sets up the composition – forceful foreshortenings, diagonal takes from different perspectives, rescaling, framing from the viewpoint of plants set up in the foreground. There is also a sense of restraint and of refined elegance. We feel ourselves communing with scenes from the flow of everyday life, drifting, slowly losing their focus and fading into oblivion.

Joanna Stasiak: Painting ideas - painting dreams[32]

Joanna Stasiak is an artist who lives and works in the village of Trękus in Poland's Warmia region. She studied painting with Janusz Kaczmarski at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. She also completed a postgraduate program at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford. In 1998, she visited Paris on a scholarship from the Fund for Independent Polish Literature and Science. For over a dozen years she has also lectured at the Institute of Art Education at Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw.

She has organised many valuable artistic events, including open-air workshops in Trękus (e.g. *Wielki Tydzień*, Święci Warmińskich kapliczek, *Trękusowe dell'arte*, *Bacchantki* and workshops within the series *Okruchy Atlantydy – Kapliczki Warmii*). She also runs her own gallery, In Spe.

Paintings on silk

Joanna Stasiak began to appreciate the qualities of silk as a surface to paint on in 2010 during her stay in Delhi, India. There, on the flat roof of the house she was living in, accompanied by curious monkeys, she began to paint on silk for the first time. Earlier, she had done oil paintings on canvas portraying idyllic, imaginary landscapes. Silk turned out to be a perfect medium for the story of passing and transformation. Joanna also appreciated its other advantages: its pearly gloss and changing colour intensity as well as the fact that it could be viewed from two sides, and thus worked spatially. Although airy and light, it can successfully be used for monumental installations. With the new medium, the format of her works also changed – from intimate canvases to large-scale compositions, hung on bars like banners. Her most recent works are done on several-metre-long parts of fabric sewn together like a kimono. Undoubtedly, the facility of transporting silk has also become important, including in a metaphorical way, as the medium also reflects the nomadism of the artist, always ready to embrace change.

After returning from India, Stasiak did more and more paintings on silk in her magical, special place – Trękus in Warmia.

Joanna Stasiak's works could be admired in June 2019 during the conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art*, at the solo exhibition *Cities of Fish* in the cellars of the ex-Camaldolese monastery in Warsaw's Bielany, and within the framework of the main exhibition accompanying the *Jikihitsu* conference at the SARP. (ill. 13) These

---

[29] The series of exhibitions was curated by the famous British art historian Nick Wadley. It was an overview of seven artists from Europe and America who used fabric in an unconventional way, with an elaborate semantics. For Ewa Kuryluk, the Japanese context turned out to be very important. Just before she left for Japan, she also had an exhibition at the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków (in 1997).

[30] Wadley (2002) http://www.kuryluk.art.pl/index.php?option=com_contentask=viewd=130temid=142ang=pl (accessed 10.04.2019).

[31] Kuryluk (1981).

[32] Shitao (2017: 33).

shows were preceded by a presentation of Stasiak's silks in Trękus, combined with improvised music and singing[33] at the site of her house which had burned down in the winter of 2018.[34]

The above exhibitions showcased Stasiak's latest monumental silk works from 2018-19, which combine the imaginary landscape motif with that of fish. These fish seem to have a lot in common with Japanese *koi*.

Koi, carp – is a representation inseparably connected with the Japanese tradition. Carp are seen as a symbol of love because they usually swim in pairs and are often offered to the bride as a wedding gift. They are also a sign of longevity, patience, happiness and health, and in Buddhism they are a symbol of absolute freedom, as they move freely in water. During our stay in Japan,[35] we often looked at carp in ponds, canals and rivers. Sometimes they had uncannily human faces...

What do fish symbolize in Stasiak's paintings? Perhaps the need to undo illusions, the desire for harmony and happiness. Maybe they also speak of human relations in a metaphorical way.

Katarzyna Stamm wrote in the *City of Fish* catalogue: "(...) On Children's Day in May in Japan, *koinobori,* kites of various sizes made of fabric and paper, fly in the wind – a symbol of carp, *koi*. They are wishes of fortitude and perseverance addressed to children. According to legend, carp swim up waterfalls against the current, against the logic of life, to turn into dragons as a reward and fly away.

I remember Joanna's old paintings depicting two ungarnished fish, the foreshadowing of nourishment for a hungry spirit. The fish is her personal insignia, a traveller on her inner spiritual sea."[36]

Painting the idea of landscape

Landscape is to Stasiak her most important theme. This is an imaginary landscape, born of the imagination.

Through landscape she traces her own creative life, recording different ways of understanding and defining the world. Following Shitao,[37] she seems to say: "The landscape forces me to speak up for it. I was born of it, and it was born of me. I shall fill myself with all these wonderful views and then I shall start painting. The landscape and I meet – I in it, and it in me, the result being a picture (*ziang*). Landscape painting is for my soul like searching for and finding traces."[38]

In her colour-saturated compositions, the artist preserves remembered views both from her native country and distant journeys.

We undertook such a distant journey to Japan in 2017 in connection with Joanna Stasiak's exhibition there. While hanging her work at the Setouchi City Museum of Art, we saw its continuation through the window – a picturesque, vast landscape dotted with the islands of the Inland Sea. We saw a huge resemblance between the views and the silk paintings, created long before the trip, without the artist knowing where they would be exhibited. These prophetic, dreamed up landscapes were fulfilling a dream of a long journey to the oldest places in Japan. Shitao wrote: "The true taste of landscape must be savoured in real nature. It looks (...) as if the painting before our eyes has dripped down from the tip of the brush. (...) the viewer cannot tell where it starts and where it ends."[39]

In her multi-plane, horizon-losing compositions with silvery grey water between hilly islands, the artist seems to be painting the same picture, trying to capture the very idea of landscape.

The fabrics vibrate with shimmering colours and various colour temperatures. The structure of the composition is well thought out, it comes from a sketch in which the picture is laid out. The end result is the outcome of 'thinking with the brush and palette', painted in a 'single stroke'[40] with a masterful touch of *alla prima*. The technique of working

[33] A performance by the Węgajty Theatre, Zofia Bartoszewicz, Igor Buszkowski and Jacek Szczepanek. The performance was also part of the opening of *City of Fish*.

[34] J. Stasiak is co-author of the *Jikihitsu* conference project. In mid-December 2018 her house in Trękus burned down. Its reconstruction is currently underway. In the near future, she is planning to create a new place there – the seat of the In Spe gallery and an artistic residence.

[35] In 2017, in connection with Prof. Stasiak's exhibition *Dimensions of Space – Landscapes of Silk* at the Setouchi City Museum of Art in Ushimado (24.09-1.10.2017).

[36] Stamm (2019: 3).

[37] Shitao (ca 1630 – ca 1724) – Chinese painter, theorist, thinker, and promoter of individualism in the Qing era.

[38] Shitao (2014: 22).

[39] Cited after: Shitao (2014: 35)

[40] Shitao (2014).

Ill. 13.
Joanna Stasiak, *Cities of Fish*, Piwnica artystyczna, Warsaw, 2–15.06. 2019, photo by D. Rumiancew

Ill. 14.
Joanna Stasiak, *Black Sun*, 2019, *Cities of Fish*, silk, 236x344 cm

on silk demands substantial concentration, without the possibility of correcting the brush strokes.

The 'iki' palette and the pathos of things

We find in these paintings elements characteristic of the structure of *iki*,[41] described by Shuzo Kuki in his 1930 metaphysical treatise on the drifting world. Noble simplicity, elegance, as described by *iki*, is the result of the colour palette used by the artist. Joanna mainly uses shades of brown, grey and blue, with varying degrees of saturation. The dim, mousy colours and smoky browns are a perfect expression of 'renunciation' and of an idealistic arealism. They meet the natural, opalescent white silk layer and the turquoise waters of the Inland Sea. Colours of varying intensity spread lightly over the silk surface. Magical views. '*Iki* lives in the future, holding the past in its arms.'[42]

Black Sun (350 x 236 cm, ill. 14) from 2019 is a special work. Monochromatic, it uses shades of grey and black on monumental pieces of silk, echoing the shape of a kimono. In its main, vertical part are two large fish playing with a small one, a kind of *yin-yang* symbol of balance and of the eternal dual-

[41] Kuki (2017: 10). The structure of *iki* is said to manifest itself in three key elements: coquettishness, haughtiness, renunciation.

[42] Kuki (2017: 11).

Ill. 15. Joanna Stasiak, *Inland Sea I*, 2018, silk, 50x140 cm

Ill. 16. Joanna Stasiak, *Inland Sea II*, 2018, silk, 50x116 cm

ity of reality. They twirl in a graphite pool. Below, one can see hills and fields at the edge of a floodplain, yielding to whirling clouds. The landscape is complemented by images on the 'arms' of the 'kimono': a bird's eye view of small coastal villages in a hilly landscape. The artist disciplines large patches of colour with a contour, at other times allowing them to spill freely. Stasiak's latest works reveal a new freedom linked to making a spontaneous record. (ill. 15, 16)

Her silks are melancholy, reflecting something like the Japanese aesthetic notion of *mono-no-aware*, the 'pathos of things'. They have a peculiar emotional climate conveyed through the image of a remembered nature, filled with sadness and nostalgia of the kind that "(...) arise in contact with the inevitably transient beauty of the outside world."[43]

In her paintings on silk, Joanna Stasiak preserves the essence of the world and the experience of old masters, inviting us to ponder the essence of being in a world of mundane dissipation.

The three artists – Gabriela Morawetz, Ewa Kuryluk and Joanna Stasiak – share not only Far Eastern inspirations but also a similar sensitivity, a way of feeling beauty in nature, art and everyday life. They share a poetic and ephemeral way of portraying images on silk, drawing on traces of memory and vague recollections, fragments of which hint at a greater fullness and completeness. "(...) The Universe can be born of a single image."[44]

[43] Wilkoszewska (2003: 9).
[44] Cited after: Shitao (2014: 34).

Bibliography

Kawalerowicz 1994 = Kinga Kawalerowicz, "Chusty i całuny Ewy Kuryluk", Życie Warszawy (1994) 9.09.

Kuc 1994 = Monika Kuc, "U wrót raju", *Gazeta Wyborcza* (1994) 16.09.

Kuki 2017 = Shuzo Kuki, *Struktura iki*, Karakter, Kraków 2017: 10, 11. English version: Shuzo Kuki, *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki*, Power Publications, Sydney 2011.

Kuryluk 1981 = Ewa Kuryluk, "Rysa, kontur, cień", in: Ewa Kuryluk. *Rysunki na bawełnie i jedwabiu*, catalogue, Galeria BWA, Piwnice, Kielce 1981.

Kuryluk 1994 = Ewa Kuryluk, *Rysunki i instalacje 1977-94*, catalogue, Galeria DAP, ZPAP, Warszawa 1994.

Kuryluk 1998 = Ewa Kuryluk, *Weronika i jej chusta*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1998.

Kuryluk 2016 = Ewa Kuryluk, *Manhattan i Mała Wenecja rozmawia Agnieszka Drotkiewicz*, Fundacja Zeszytów Literackich, Warszawa 2016: 151, 152, 153, 154.

Kuryluk 2019 = Ewa Kuryluk, *Feluni*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2019.

Morawetz 1996 = *Gabriela Morawetz*, catalogue, Galeria Krytyków Pokaz, Warszawa 1996.

Okakura 2007 = Kakuzō *Okakura, The Book of Tea, Stone Bridge Press 2007.*

Shitao 2014 = Shitao, *Rozważania o malowaniu mnicha. Gorzka Dynia*, oprac. Przemysław Trzeciak, Wyd. ASP, Warszawa 2014: 22, 33, 34, 35.

Stamm 2019 = Katarzyna Stamm, *Joanna Stasiak. Miasta ryb*, catalogue, APS, Warszawa 2019: 3.

Tanizaki 2001 = Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, Vintage, New York 2001.

Wadley 2002 = Nick Wadley, *Zagadki, które zadaje życie*, 2002 http://www.kuryluk.art.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=130&Itemid=142&lang=pl (accessed 10.04.2019)

http://www.kuryluk.art.pl/ (accessed 10.04.2019)

Wilkoszewska 2003 = Krystyna Wilkoszewska (ed.), *Estetyka japońska vol. 1. Wymiary przestrzeni. Antologia*, Kraków 2003: 9, 10, 11.

Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

European fairy tales and *kawaii* aesthetics in the photography of Ewa Doroszenko

Like the rest of her generation (to which the author of this article also belongs), Ewa Doroszenko (b. 1983)[1] first encountered Japanese culture through manga and anime, not through refined courtly or samurai culture. Popular since the 1990s, Japanese comics, animated series and computer games have electrified the imagination of Polish teenagers with their distinctive aesthetics, so different from the visual landscape of the Polish People's Republic. Interest in pop culture from the Land of the Cherry Blossoms was also fueled by fan magazines for young people like *Kawaii*, published since 1997 and by now legendary. For its readers, the title quickly became synonymous with Japanese culture.

The origins of *kawaii* aesthetics

According to American sociologist Sharon Kinsella, *kawaii* can be classified as a new Japanese aesthetic category as of the 1990s. Its harbingers appeared around 1970 along with a fashion among girls for a decorative, childish writing style.[2] It consisted in rounding Japanese characters and decorating them with sweet additions, such as hearts, flowers, cheerful smiles, etc. Its main propagators were female junior high and high school students.[3] Kinsella believes that young people's opposition to traditional Japanese culture was the reason for its emergence, in addition to identifying with Western culture, which young Japanese saw as being more playful than their own. The scholar writes:

"The spread of cute-style handwriting was one element of a broader shift in Japanese culture that took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s in which vital popular culture, sponsored and processed by the new fashion, retail, mass-media and advertising industries, began to push traditional arts and crafts and strictly regulated literature and artistic culture to the margins of society."[4]

Over time the fashion for 'cool' writing turned into a style of dress[5] and behaviour for young Japanese women, both teenagers and (mostly unmarried) thirty-year-olds. This aesthetics then also permeated into boys' subculture, whose members call themselves *otaku*.[6] Nowadays it dominates in

[1] In 2008, Ewa Doroszenko received a Masters degree in Painting, followed by a doctoral degree in the Fine Arts from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun in 2012.

[2] The female authors of children's writing called their styles for example *marui ji* (round writing), *koneko ji* (cat writing), *manga ji* (comic writing) and *burikko ji* (writing pretending to be childish). For more, see Kinsella (1995: 222).

[3] Kinsella (1995: 220–254).

[4] Kinsella (1995: 224).

[5] See Kinsella (1995: 228–230) for more on *kawaii*-style clothing.

[6] *Otaku* – a social group that emerged in Japan in the 1970s, maniacal adherents of various post-war Japanese sub-

the entire realm of pop culture and all branches of the entertainment industry.

According to young Japanese women, in the 1980s the word *kawaii* referred to things deemed childish, cute, innocent, charming, delightful, fragile, weak and inexperienced,[7] 'infantile and delicate, but pretty at the same time'.[8] However, nowadays, when uttered by Japanese as an expression of admiration, it is no longer unequivocal, as field research done by Klaudia Adamowicz and Kamila Sosnowska shows. The authors of the book *Oblicza* kawaii (Faces of *kawaii*) point to the cultural overlap between this contemporary aesthetics and traditional aesthetics, while emphasizing the dark and grotesque meanings of *kawaii*.[9]

Kawaii in contemporary art[10]

The first signs of the *kawaii* aesthetics in art can be traced in the work of *bijutsu no chōshōjo-tachi (super girls of art)* – artists born in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including Tomoko Sugiyama (b. 1958), Rei Naitō (b. 1961) and Emiko Kasahara (b. 1963). Their works were characterized by the inclusion of domestic ready-mades, fabrics and techniques related to clothing production, the use of pure colours, organic forms, ornamentation derived from the plant world, and ethnic motifs.[11] Pastel colours, mainly shades of pink, and an infantile line modelled on children's drawings were two forerunners of *kawaii* aesthetics in art. Minako Nishiyama (b. 1965) and Mariko Mori (b. 1967) perfectly illustrate its developed forms. The first uses *kawaii* to criticize Japan's large-scale sex business and the commodification of sexuality in today's world. Mori, on the other hand, creates imaginary worlds illustrating Japanese beliefs, myths and legends from various traditions, including shingon Buddhism, amidism, shintoism, and animism,[12] which coexist harmoniously in Japan. Her large-format photographs and video works feature futuristic and magical pastel-colour visions full of cute characters. These are the essence of *kawaii*.

The assumptions of *kawaii* are also reflected in works by artists associated with the Kaikai Kiki company founded in 2001 by Takashi Murakami (b. 1962), including Aya Takao (b. 1976), Chiho Aoshima (b. 1976) and Mr. (b. 1969). Their acrylic paintings also exemplify the principles of the 'superflat' current started by Murakami, a reference both to the Japanese art of woodblock printing and contemporary comic book styles. All include an idealised image of the young Japanese woman, characteristic of *otaku* subculture:

"They picture cartoon girls self-absorbed in adolescent sci-fi and dreams of a future paradise. It was mixed in with androgynous romance, naive sexuality, and full of images of injured doll girls and submission fantasies. It was sweet, colourful, girly – but a little disturbing."[13]

This imaginary ideal can be found in virtually all pop culture products: manga, anime, games, fancy foods, and the leisure market.

European fairy tales and fairy tales in Japanese culture

What is the reason for the incredible popularity of *kawaii* aesthetics in Japan? Yuko Hasegawa believes that it is due to *youjika,* the infantilisation of culture. The latter, meanwhile, has to do with the patriarchal system of control established after World War II to deal with the despair and shattered self-confidence of the Japanese after losing the war. This was particularly true of the male part of the population, locked into an ambiguous relationship with the United States.[14] As a result, according to Hasegawa, an immature male and female identity was formed:

"Instead of a mature male seeking a mature female, the dependent Japanese man, needing protection, seeks a mother figure as well as a girl whose sexuality is yet to emerge and who responds passively to his overtures. In this imbalanced situation, therefore, as women become increasingly self-sufficient and economically independent, they frequently find themselves forced into performing the contradictory roles of mother and young girl in personal relationships."[15]

cultures, including manga, anime, fantasy, computer games, fashion, etc. For more, see Azuma (2009).

[7] Hasagawa (2002: 128).

[8] Kazuma (1986).

[9] Adamowicz, Sosnowska (2018).

[10] For more, see Furmanik-Kowalska (2015: 97–136).

[11] Borggreen 2003: 181.

[12] For more, see Varley (2006); Blocker, Starling (2008).

[13] Favell (2011: 19).

[14] Hasagawa (2002: 128).

[15] Hasagawa (2002: 128).

In her interpretation, Sharon Kinsella also believes that the problem stems from a strongly patriarchal social system based on neo-Confucian principles that place excessive responsibility on the Japanese (*sekinini)*. They feel responsible for society, their families and the companies they work for. Once they have met all their commitments, they no longer have time for themselves. Based on her fieldwork, the American sociologist concluded that for the Japanese '[a]dulthood was directly understood to mean society, and vice versa; it was not viewed as a source of freedom or independence, it was viewed as quite the opposite, as a period of restrictions and hard work.'[16] The Japanese reaction to such a perception of adulthood is to escape into dreams of an idealised childhood, for which *kawaii* objects are a substitute. Especially young women want to prolong their short period of carefree living before they become *ryōsai kenbo*. Their fear of losing their freedom and youth is expressed in the aesthetics of *kawaii*.[17] They try to identify with the made-up heroines of the subculture.

The pantheon of idealised figures also includes characters from European fairy tales. As mentioned above, young Japanese saw Western culture as more 'fun' than their own. However, the Japanese subculture did not look to the dark European prototypes from the works of Hans Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, or Lewis Carroll but to their American pop-culture adaptations, mainly Walt Disney productions. Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, the Little Mermaid, Alice from *Alice in Wonderland* and many other female figures were transformed into long-legged, big-eyed, sweet *kawaii* characters in manga and anime, both those addressed to girls and young women and their erotic counterparts for men. The number and variety of takes on European fairy tales in Japanese subculture is astonishing. For example, one can find as many as 74 titles for *Alice in Wonderland* on anime-planet.com, a digital catalogue of Japanese cartoon and animated works. There is even a Hello Kitty comic book based on Sleeping Beauty. And the fancy goods market offers fans a wide range of products with their favourite heroes. Costumes that allow one to transform oneself into ones' favourite character (*cosplay*) are also popular.[18]

Bedtime stories for girls

In 2000, manga and anime were recognized as cultural heritage by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology and became an important element of Japan's cultural *soft power*. However, Japanese comics and animated films were popular among Polish youth as early as the 1990s, while their peculiar aesthetics, based on *kawaii*, had a significant impact on teenagers at that time. Ewa Doroszenko's photograph series made in 2005–2008, which eventually became known as *Bedtime stories for girls*, is an example of this generation's inspiration by Japanese pop culture.

The series includes photographs illustrating fairy tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood* (ill. 1), *Thumbelina*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, *The Red Shoes* and *Snow Queen* (ill. 2). Some of them served as illustrations for a collection of 18 short stories, feminist adaptations of well-known fairy tales, published as *Dziewczyńskie bajki na dobranoc* (Bedtime stories for girls) by Amea publishing house in 2008.

The photographs are characterized by asymmetric composition, close-ups obliterating the perspective or disrupting it, as well as intense, often contrasting colours. Because of these features, they are reminiscent of manga or anime stills. They are also an indirect reference to Japanese woodcuts. In addition, the girls depicted on them fit the image of the sweet heroine from Japanese subculture perfectly. However, the most *kawaii* of all is the *Alice in Wonderland* series (ill. 3, 4), created during the same period. In shades of pink, it recounts the adventures from Carroll's novel. As in her other series, Doroszenko uses peculiar ways of framing to depict a magical reality – mysterious but definitely friendly. In the artist's take on them, European fairy tales, just like their Japanese adaptations, lose their dark character.

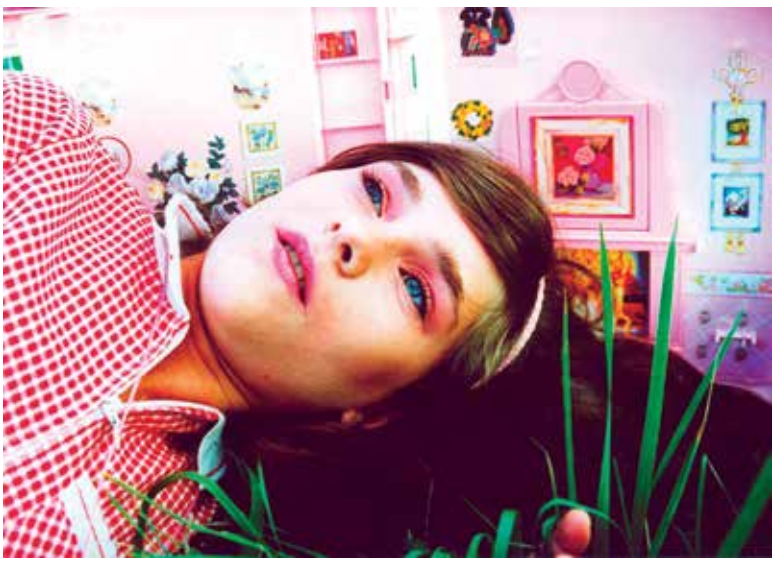
A whole different interpretation is offered by the photographs of Miwa Yanaga (b. 1967) from the contemporaneous series *Fairy Tales* (2004–2006). They reflect the original mood of European fairy tales and even exaggerate it. Grotesque and perverse, their mood is set by the choice of colour (black-and-white) and scenery – faint light, dilapidated interiors and rough props. The ambiguity of the scenes also reveals the mysteriousness and darkness of photography. It seems that the young girls shown here, traditionally oppressed, are now

[16] Kinsella (1995: 244).
[17] Kinsella (1995: 245).
[18] Adamowicz, Sosnowska (2018: 50–80).

Ill. 1. Ewa Doroszenko, *Little Red Hood* Series, 2006–2008.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

Ill. 2. Ewa Doroszenko, *Snow Quen* Series, 2006–2008.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

Ill. 3.
Ewa Doroszenko, *Alice in the Wonderland* Series, 2005–2008.
@ Ewa Doroszenko



Ill. 4.
Ewa Doroszenko, *Alice in the Wonderland* Series, 2005-2008.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

themselves becoming aggressors. They are far from the *otaku* ideal.

Your body is a battleground

The untitled collage by Barbara Kruger (b. 1945) repeating the phrase 'Your body is a battleground' dates back to 1989. This iconic work of feminist art was the inspiration for Ewa Doroszenko's latest series. Although 30 years have passed since its creation, its motto is still relevant. Doroszenko's *Body Editor* (2018) is a contemporary interpretation of this sentence.

The work is a series of digitally assembled collages 'made up of images of beautiful women and self-portraits [of the artist]'.[19] Doroszenko describes the process of making them as 'preparing three-dimensional collages, photographing these three-dimensional scenes, printing out large-format photographs, then physically manipulating the prints and digitally editing the final photos'.[20] The artist had already experimented with the structure and fabric of photography before, for example *Snow Queen* had been created by physically freezing prints and then re-photographing them. In another work, *An Aesthetic Memory Interface* (2009) the photographs were submerged in water or exposed to fire. In *Body Editor* (ill. 5, 6, 7, 8), the manipulation of the prints not only serves an aesthetic purpose, but is also connected to the message of the work. The artist states: "Formally, the series reflects my interest in the idea of error – the random imperfections of modern technologies which inevitably make errors. [...] In the final photographs I leave visible traces of digital intervention, partially revealing my working methods in order to provoke a discussion on contemporary photography. Where is the truth in photography?"[21]

The question can be extrapolated onto the title of the work itself. What is the truth of photographed female bodies? This is a relevant issue given the omnipresence of social media, the (originally Japanese) selfie and beauty apps, and in the context of girls and women disseminating contrived images of themselves on the web. According to the artist: 'The strong [present] need for imaging is increasingly replacing "real" experience and makes the photographic representation of the body compete with the "real" physical body.'[22] We see 'digital beauty' in cutely decorated photographs taken in *purikura* (*purinto kurabu)* or using special selfie cameras such as Casio's Exiilim MR1, also known as 'Kawaii Selfie by Mirror Cam'. Creating funny *kawaii* portraits in photo booths is fun, but altering one's appearance to create an idealised image is no longer amusing. The beauty canon of today is unattainable for many girls and women. Of course they can use beauty apps. But is this the solution? Do women still have to treat their bodies as a battleground in the twenty-first century?

Although it touches on significant social problems as well as issues linked to the perception of

[19] E-mail correspondence with the artist from 10.05.2019.
[20] E-mail correspondence with the artist from 10.05.2019.
[21] E-mail correspondence with the artist from 10.05.2019.
[22] E-mail correspondence with the artist from 10.05.2019.

Ill. 5. Ewa Doroszenko, *Body Editor* Series, 2018.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

Ill. 6. Ewa Doroszenko, *Body Editor* Series, 2018.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

Ill. 7. Ewa Doroszenko, *Body Editor* Series, 2018.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

Ill. 8. Ewa Doroszenko, *Body Editor* Series, 2018.
@ Ewa Doroszenko

photography, *Body Editor* does not overwhelm the viewer with these topics. The artist managed to achieve this through the use of *kawaii* aesthetics. The collages are sensual and intriguing. The fragments of naked bodies attract attention, drawing the viewer into the reality created by the artist, pulled in by whirlpools and other distinctive features.

Ewa Doroszenko is one of many Western artists seeking inspiration in Japanese culture. In contrast to other Polish artists, who mainly look to the courtly, samurai or bourgeois cultural heritage of the old Japanese eras, the author of *Body Editor* draws on contemporary culture, especially the youth subcultures of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. This is due to the experience of her own generation and her personal sensitivity to current social dilemmas. Both the series *Bedtime stories for girls* and *Body Editor* address the idea of defining 'women' and 'femininity'. However, apart from their content, they are also interesting in terms of form and aesthetics. These works are not a new variety of *japonaiserie* or Japanism, fruit of a fascination with the oriental and mysterious East, but stem from the global mutual permeation of cultures, mutual influences and, consequently, the emergence of new meanings.

Bibliography

Adamowicz, Sosnowska 2018 = Klaudia Adamowicz, Kamila Sosnowska, *Oblicza kawaii*, Kirin, Bydgoszcz 2018.

Azuma 2009 = Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku. Japan's Database Animals*, transl. Jonathan E. Abel, Shion Kono, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2009.

Blocker, Starling 2008 = H. Gene Blocker, Christopher L. Starling, *Filozofia japońska*, transl. Natalia Szuster, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2008. English edition: *Japanese Philosophy*, New York 2001.

Borggreen 2003 = Gunhild Borggreen, "Gender in Contemporary Japanese Art", in: *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, Joshua S. Mostow, Norman Bryson, Maribeth Graybill (eds), University Of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 2003: 179–258.

Favell 2011 = Adrian Favell, *Before and After Superflat. A Short History of Japanese Contemporary Art 1990–2011,* Blue Kingfisher Limited, Hong Kong 2011.

Furmanik-Kowalska 2015 = Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska, *Uwikłane w kulturę. O twórczości współczesnych artystek japońskich i chińskich*, Kirin, Bydgoszcz 2015.

Hasagawa 2002 = Yuko Hasagawa, "Post-identity Kawaii. Commerce, Gender and Contemporary Japanese Art", in: *Consuming Bodies. Sex and Contemporary Japanese Art,* ed. Fran Lloyd, Reaktion Books, London 2002: 127–141.

Kazuma 1986 = Yamane Kazuma, *Hentai Shōjō Moji no Kenkyū (Anomalous Teenage Handwritting Research)*, Kodansha, Tokyo 1986.

Kinsella 1995 = Sharon Kinsella, "Cuties in Japan", in: *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, ed. Lise Skov, Brian Moeran, Routledge, Oxford 1995: 220–254.

Varley 2006 = Paul Varley, *Kultura japońska,* transl. Magdalena Komorowska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2006. English edition: *Japanese Culture*, Honolulu 2000.

Tomasz Rudomino
Paris
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

The Japanese avant-garde: from Michel Tapié to GUTAI and Hori Kōsai

We are following the path that will lead to an international common ground where the arts of the East and the West will influence each other. And this is the natural course of the history of art.

Jirō Yoshihara, 1958

In February 1957, the president of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower, officially presented the first Guggenheim International Award. Its recipient was the British painter Ben Nicholson, the well-known abstractionist. The ceremony was held in Paris at the Hôtel de Crillon. The Polish painter Jan Cybis had taken part in the competition, of which he writes in his *Notes*: "(...) The Guggenheim vernissage is behind me, and so is everything. *Ce n'est pas mon affaire.* I have a feeling I was there by sheer luck. The main prize went to Ben Nicholson, an Englishman. Whether [he is] better than the others, I don't know (...)."[1]

The award for Nicholson, the first award of such standing in international art, ushered in the global recognition of abstract painting. A decade after the end of World War II, the words of Solomon R. Guggenheim (d. 1949) were cited in a letter to the laureates.[2] Guggenheim emphasised the importance of artistic freedom and freedom of expression, since abstract art expressed both liberalism, individualism and international community. In fact, at no point since the early days of the avant-garde had the pursuit of freedom of expression through art been so common and so clearly articulated. Now it was simultaneously being stated by the Americans, French and British, almost all over the world, and Abstract Expressionism, Informel, Cobra – all of these currents and schools became the artistic stigmata of that era.

Two monumental Japanese artists, Okada Kenzo and Yamaguchi Takeo, were included in the group of the world's greatest artists in the context of Nicholson. Both were part of the Japanese abstract current and had solid grounding in Western painting. Okada Kenzo worked in Paris for some time, exhibiting at the Salon d'Automne. His mentor at the time was Tsuguharu Foujita, an excellent painter and a vibrant figure, the hero of many Montparnasse legends. A little in the shadow of the école de Paris, constantly stuck in the modernist arabesque, Foujita was a role model for many Japanese studying in their homeland but dreaming of a career in the West. He lived for some time at the Odessa Hotel near Edgar Quinet and then at rue Delambre, sharing a room with the painter Kawashima Ruchiro, whom Diego Rivera mentions

[1] Cybis (1980: 69)
[2] Harry F. Guggenheim, letter from 28 November 1956.

in his autobiography.[3] The event took place during Rivera's visit to Pablo Picasso's in the company of the Chilean artist Manuel de Zárate; Foujita and Kawashima were there. Rivera made portraits of both of them. Tsuguharu Foujita is also mentioned because many years later, when he was baptised at the royal cathedral in Reims, taking the Christian name Leonard[4] and proclaiming the glory of classicism, the first avant-garde group, negating the traditional interpretation of beauty in art, came into being in Japan.

The West's discovery of the Japanese avant-garde was largely due to Michel Tapié. A legendary figure of French art criticism, art theorist and expert on abstraction, he was also the originator of its lyrical variety and the discoverer of Wols, Hartung, and Mathieu. Tapié also contributed to the worldwide career of the Japanese group GUTAI.

In 1950, Tapié began to fight for a new French art, moving in the direction of matter painting and discarding the old-school rationality of geometry in favour of a new, poetic and unlimited form, with a proclivity for irregular spots and lines.

In May 1947, during the Wols exhibition at the René Drouin gallery, Tapié met Georges Mathieu. This young painter, twenty-six years old at the time, was an advertisement designer. It was the beginning of an extraordinary personal and artistic friendship. Both shared a dislike of geometric abstraction, the dream of breaking free of the botox of *Abstraction-Création* which Mathieu hated, even though it had given the world Piet Mondrian, Jean Arp, Albert Gleizes, Naum Gabo, as well as the Japanese artist Tarō Okamoto.

For many Japanese and for Tapié himself it had all begun with Jean Dubuffet. Michel Tapié set up a veritable institution around this painter. It was 1948. Two *Art Brut* exhibitions were held at the René Drouin gallery. Dubuffet coined the term based on his earlier experiences and solo exhibitions. As early as around 1942, during World War II, he decided to return to painting, which he had earlier abandoned. It was then that he came up with the name, which stood in contrast to the notion of *Art Culturel* and designated mostly marginal art, still anonymous at that point and overshadowed by more prominent productions.

In the summer of 1945, Jean Dubuffet, the writer Jean Paulhan and the architect Le Corbusier travelled to Switzerland. It was there that they met Eugène Pittard, who introduced them to the work of Hélène Smith, a legendary medium, today still of interest to psychoanalysts. Dubuffet had the opportunity to peruse the collections of Charles Ladame and Walter Morgenthaler, who collected drawings, sculptures and paintings by psychiatric hospital patients. He began to study the "automatic" output of people suffering from mental disorders but gifted with artistic talent. It inspired his own work, which propelled him to the top of the contemporary art scene.

"*Art Brut* does not know modern art, but is much closer to it than anything else",[5] he said at the opening of an exhibition featuring the works of five patients from the Lille hospital.

Both then and many years later, this art inspired Japanese artists, too. The *Art Brut* phenomenon in Japan was a great success, becoming part of the country's contemporary culture.

From the winter of 1945, Michel Tapié shared his Montparnasse studio with Jean Dubufett (Tapié had started his career as a painter). As early as 1938 he wrote: "I think I have good technical competence, but absolutely no talent".[6] Perhaps that is why he turned to sculpture. Initially, he made two compositions in a style reminiscent of the works of Amédée Ozenfant. He also took part in the *H.W.P.S.M.T.B.* exhibition (Hartung, Wols, Picabia, Stahly, Mathieu, Tapié, Bryen) in 1948 at the Galerie Colette Allendy in Paris.

He was hired by René Drouin in his gallery (founded together with Leo Castelli), then located at 17 Place Vendôme. Leo Castelli, an escapee from Trieste, lived in Paris in the 1930s and together with his wife Ileana was trading in avant-garde paintings. The gallery was established in July 1939 and became a meeting place for young abstractionists and surrealists. The first exhibition featured drawings by the latter. Castelli, known as Leo Krauss at the time, left for New York after the surrender of France, taking the same road as that arranged for Henri Matisse by his *marchand*. As we know, the painter changed his mind during the train journey

[3] Rivera (1992)

[4] Foujita was baptised in the Reims Cathedral on 14 October 1959.

[5] Cited after: Letter to Jean Paulhan, 1947, in: *Dubuffet* (2003: 156)

[6] *Tapié* (2018: 9)

to Bordeaux and finally reached Ciboure near the port of Saint-Jean-de-Luz.

Castelli's career in New York and that of his wife, whom he later divorced (she became Ileana Sonnabend), is a story (to be told elsewhere) of the rise to fame of such artists as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol or Cy Twombly.

The René Drouin gallery did not survive the sweeping changes in contemporary art. The artists whom it had diligently promoted did not bring it any significant profit. In 1950, the Place Vendôme gallery closed, reopening four years later at 5 rue Visconti. In 1965, an extensive catalogue of Wols's works, edited by Jean-Paul Sartre, was published.

Michel Tapié was an advisor to the gallery. He compiled a catalogue of artists whom art history has generously rewarded as exponents of the contemporary avant-garde: Wols, Mathieu, Fautrier, Hartung, Soulages, Riopelle, Shiraga, and Francis.

A separate chapter should be written on each of them to give us an idea of Tapié's work and how this humble man, who hailed from the small town of Céleyran, came to create a world format (lyrical abstraction) and at the same time a collection of names that set the tone of contemporary painting. An unmatched genius. A symbol of the path followed by galleries, artists and art critics. After all, it is all about talent, a sense of mission, combined with a venue that supports the explosion of any vision. Even a utopian one. The careers of Mathieu, the GUTAI artists, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Sam Francis, Hans Hartung and Joan Mitchell are only a handful of examples of Tapié's intellectual astuteness and passion for art.

This was also the fate that awaited the Japanese artists from the GUTAI group, whom Tapié met through his contacts with the famous art critic Sōichi Tominaga. It was the latter who called Mathieu, during the latter's stay in Japan, the greatest artist since the time of Picasso.

Georges Mathieu. His name is inextricably connected with the impression he made on the Japanese. Even the later visits to Japan of French painters such as Pierre Soulages were not as exhilarating as as Mathieu's performance, despite many similarities of language, gesture and painting philosophy.

Mathieu's trip to Osaka was of course linked to the emergence of the GUTAI movement. Mathieu and Tapié went to Osaka at the invitation of Jirō Yoshihara. It was 1957 when Mathieu, watched by an audience, painted his huge canvas *The Triumphant Entry of Go-Daïgo into Kyoto*. Go-Daigo was an emperor. Tenryû-ji, the most important Zen temple in Japan, is connected to this historical figure. It is an hour's ride on a suburban train from Kyoto to Arashiyama. And it was precisely in an hour that Mathieu painted his masterpiece, dressed in a kimono with a samurai headband, followed by a second painting in the courtyard of the Daimaru department store. (ill. 1, 2)

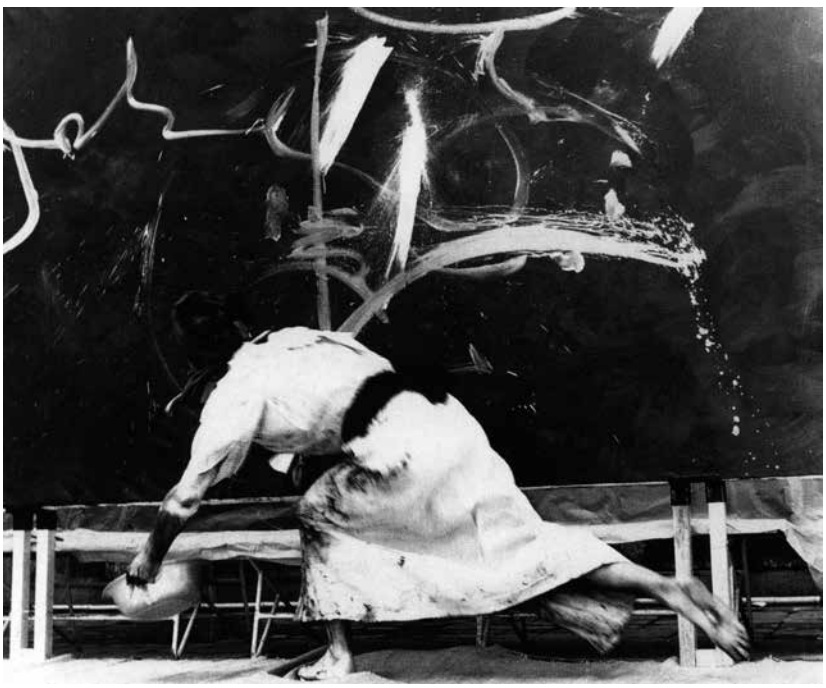
Jirō Yoshihara, the founder of the GUTAI avant-garde movement, met with them. He was already a well-known painter in Japan and beyond. He made abstract paintings when Foujita was at the front in China creating visions of the annihilation of humankind. Yoshihara clearly grasped what Mathieu had done to make his work attractive: actionism. It was not a pure happening in the spirit of Allan Kaprow (well known in Japan), but welcomed with equal enthusiasm as a creative act.

Before GUTAI adopted the happening/action formula and before Georges Mathieu appeared with his painting spectacle in Osaka, Yoshihara had already done one important experiment, known as *Please Draw Freely*. This creative process, recorded in Ashiya in 1956, became an important influence on Japan's main artistic formations over the next two decades.

Eventually Jirō Yoshihara became a monumental figure in Japanese art. He had started painting as early as the 1930s, fascinated by cubism and surrealism. But he achieved iconic status when he turned to abstraction and action art. His saying, "do what has never been done before",[7] has come down in the annals of art history. (ill. 3)

But it was Georges Mathieu who captivated the Japanese. Perhaps they found a trace of their own poetics, or a hidden meaning in his line, gesture and writhing lyricism. Maybe it was the simultaneous intellectual experience of fullness and emptiness that intrigued them? GUTAI grew out of the lyrical gesture that Mathieu brought from Paris. Over the next two decades, it became the training ground of the new Japanese avant-garde. But of course GUTAI was not only about painting. It was a combination of different artistic activities, meetings, performances, and finally a philosophy. In this broad context, Jirō Yoshihara's and Michel Tapié's

[7] Jirō Yoshihara, *GUTAI ART Manifesto*, 1956, in: *GUTAI* (2013:18)



Ill 1.
Georges Mathieu, action painting *Hommage au général Hideyoshi*, Osaka, 1957, photo archives: Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris 2002

Ill. 2. Georges Mathieu, *Daimaru*, action painting *Hommage au général Hideyoshi*, Osaka, 1957, photo archives: Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris 2002

handshake in front of a Jackson Pollock painting is strikingly symbolic. It was this peculiar symbolism that heralded the advent of the GUTAI era. It was all connected with the philosophy of action and actionism, fundamentally different from gestural painting in its use of the whole body in the process of creation, thus going one step further than Pollock.

The figure of Shiraga Kazuo, an artist from Amagasaki, a city in Hyōgo Prefecture, comes to the foreground here. Critics emphasised that it was the two types of action in the paintings of Jackson Pollock and Shiraga Kazuo that gave rise to the discourse on the continuity of gesture in abstract art.

Ojio Yūshō, a prominent, historical figure in Japanese art, said that an artist cannot be a slave. He must follow the rules, but at the same time bend them; obey the laws, but at the same time transcend them. These are the definitions for painters in the Japanese school, the basics of their conceptualisation of painting. Yūshō recommended the spontaneous expression of emotions. He lived in the seventeenth century, long before Pollock.

He used to say: "When picking up the brush, straighten your body and maintain a righteous spirit. Be aware of the sweep of the brush; be vigilant so that the movement of your brush does not diminish."[8]

There would have been no Mishima without Bushido, and no Japanese painting without Ojio Yūshō.

Shiraga was, therefore, his faithful disciple

Another member of the GUTAI group, Murakami Saburō, proposed that painting should be a full-body experience. We have here parallel artistic practices: the one that Michel Tapié introduced the Japanese to, that is abstract art, Informel and the lesson of the father of the happening, which Japanese artists were much inspired by. Experiments in post-war Japan based on the experimentation of Fluxus and the work of John Cage would require a separate paper.

[8] Cited after: Wilkoszewska (2005: 142).

Ill. 3.
Jiro Yoshihara, *Circle*, oil on canvas, 1964, source: http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/2016/modern-contemporary-asian-art-evening-sale-hk0628/lot.1002.html (accessed: 22.11.2019)

Through actionism, the gesture as a synthesis of action, GUTAI brought together two schools. Of course, this multifaceted creative process went on for over a decade and took many forms.

GUTAI means "concreteness". But the word is also an amalgam of "gu" (tool, method, way) and "tai" (body, substance). It is also, therefore, a play on words, referring to the nature of the group's activity and philosophy. The dialogue between the members of GUTAI and Jackson Pollock produced something that critics later dramatically (and yet aptly) dubbed the "boldest steps".

The notion of "killing the paintbrush"[9] was coined by the already mentioned Shiraga Kazuo and became the main theme of the group. Shiraga painted with his feet, Kanayama Akira with an automatic car toy, Yoshihara Michio by riding a bicycle, and Shimamoto Shōzō with a glass bottle.

For the first time in 1954, the seven future members of the group appeared together at the Ashiya City Exibition in Seidō, but it was not until 1955 that the group informally identified itself as GUTAI, performing under the name.

In 1958, during *International Art of a New Era: Informel and GUTAI*, artists from all over the world, including Tanaka Atsuko, Yoshihara Jirō, Robert Motherwell, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Paul Jenkins and Carla Accardi performed at the same event. (ill. 3, 4, 5)

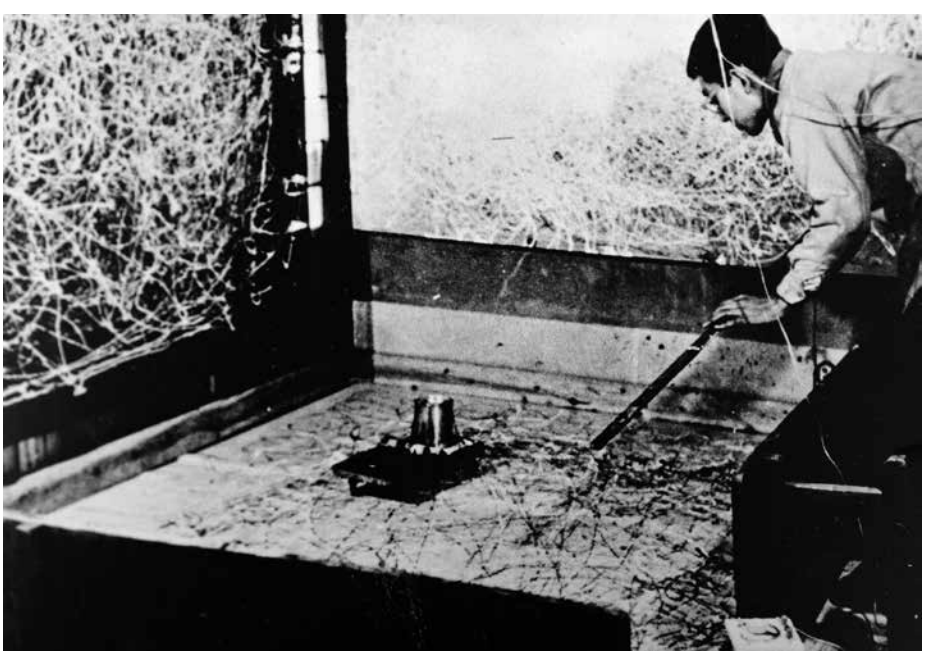
1962 saw the inauguration of the GUTAI Pinacotheca. Two old warehouses in the centre of Nakonashima in Osaka were adapted for this purpose. From that moment on, the Pinacotheca was not only the group's headquarters but also its gallery. (ill. 6)

In 1964–1971, works by the GUTAI artists were featured as part of many exhibitions and shows in the United States, Switzerland, France, Italy and Great Britain.[10] The formation had become the cornerstone of Japanese contemporary art. For many years, efforts were made to make it less dispersed and more systematic. The artists in the group differed in their type of expression, idiom and direction. They also pursued different experiments of their own, parallel to developments in world art, as exemplified for instance by Takesada Matsutani, a veteran of the movement who spent many years in France. He was initially an Informel painter. Fascinated with colour, gesture, line and the eternal question concerning the path of the artist, he succumbed to the magic of abstraction, matter and the spot. This was an important stage in his creative development, full of expression and creative motifs. This is the GUTAI era in full

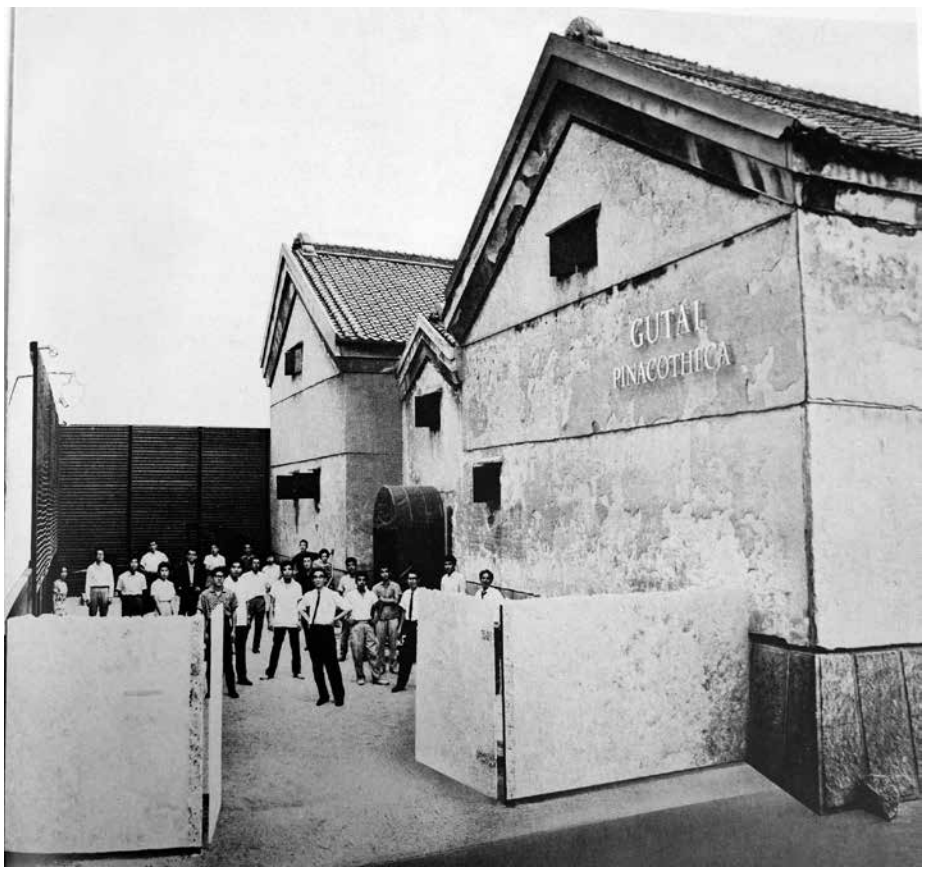
[9] Shoichi (2015).

[10] See more: *GUTAI* (2013).

Ill. 4.
Jiro Yoshihara, Free Draw Freely, installation, Gutai Art Exibition, 1956, Ashiya Park, Courtesy of Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka



Ill. 5.
Akira Kanayama, action – paint with an automatic toy car, 1957, Osaka, archives GUTAI PINACOTHECA and Benoit Decron (exhibition: GUTAI l'espace et le temps, Musée Soulages, Rodez)



Ill. 6.
Detail - GUTAI PINACOTECA, Osaka, 1962, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History. Courtesy of Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka

bloom: the playground, intellectual exercises, manifestos, and youth. But before that, Matsutani had been enchanted by French painting, teeming with symbols, sunlight and colours. Yet even before this happened, he had to come a long way from the tangled Bretonisms floating in the heavy clouds over Hiroshima and the poetry of Alain Jouffroy. In the meantime, like his colleague from GUTAI, Kazuo Shiraga, he spent weeks in a tuberculosis hospital, suffering, spitting out phlegm and coughing, stuck, like Suguro from Shūsaku Endō's famous novel,[11] amid dirty beds, where other people slowly withered away. The war. The sea. Poison...

In Paris he encountered Hard-edge painting. A new art jewel, which struck a chord with him. It spoke to him in a language he had known for years. As a Japanese, he had always known it. This austerity, linearity and geometric shapes opened new horizons for him. Matsutani's exit from the ghetto of counter-culture gave him a fresh start.

He was also familiar or at least had come across conceptualism, especially Kosuth, which allowed him to build a new language.

In Paris, he met Stanley William Hayter, a painter and graphic artist, who had been living in the French capital since 1926, where he founded *Atelier 17*. It was one of the most symbolic places in Paris at the time and perhaps, aside from Leo Castelli's gallery, the most important forge of the young avant-garde. Hayter exhibited Willem de Kooning, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Roberto Matta and Marc Rothko.

Matsutani worked at *Atelier 17* as Hayter's assistant. There he met his future wife, Kate Van Houten, an American artist who also practised at *Atelier 17*. Stone, metal, signs. The new language of the Japanese artist has become an established tradition in contemporary art. By infusing it with an original symbolism, Matsutani made it part of the canon as the obvious result of a developing process in which we now are participating because the views, preferences and needs of art reception are still undefinable. Because according to these assumptions, Matsutani always looked for the simplest signs to convey his meaning.

Jirō Yoshihara died in February 1972. A great era in contemporary Japanese art came to an end. One month after his death, the remaining members dissolved GUTAI. Its three most important members died, respectively: in 2008 (Shiraga Kazuo), 1996 (Murakami Saburō), and 1972 (Jirō Yoshihara), as already mentioned.

[11] Endō (1974)

Ill. 7. Kazuo Shiraga, Untitled (detail), oil, 1962 (exhibition: GUTAI l'espace et le temps, Musée Soulages, Rodez)

As we know, Kazuo Shiraga painted with his body, hip, hand and feet. But mostly with his feet. He painted on large canvases or paper. He would spread them on the floor and, holding on to a rope, paint using his feet instead of a brush. As in Yves Klein's case, it was all about corporeity, a painterly gesture qualified by direct touch. Kazuo used his own feet and all the colours, while Klein preferred monochromes, pink and blue as well as the female body. In the history of Japanese art, Shiraga has come down as a co-founder of Zero-kai. Founded a few years before GUTAI, this group was a forerunner of the movement. Perhaps Kazuo's personal experience influenced the character of its work, the need for touch, stressing willpower and the fight for survival.

Kazuo Shiraga was 21 when the war ended. He spent a few months in hospital suffering from tuberculosis. He described the experience as "a nightmarish wait for dawn". This comparison, taken from Shūsaku Endō's novel *The Sea and Poison*, somehow reflects the trauma of young Japanese people who grew up during the war.

Shiraga's father constantly repeated to him the teaching of Tosa Mitsuoki: a painting is too weak when it is beautiful. And Mitsuoki is the greatest painter in the history of Japan.[12]

Shiraga's father was also a painter. He did not make many works and was more of an amateur, as he never graduated from any school. But because of his love of drawing, he enrolled his son in a course when he was 13 years old. When Kazuo brought him his first watercolour to show, he pronounced the words of Mitsuoki, whom he adored and who was the hero of all the conversations during his son's drawing lessons.

Kazuo was conscripted in 1944, then underwent military training in Osaka, but never took part in the fighting. For several years he studied Nihonga at the Kyoto City University of Arts, where he was enrolled by his father, who also paid his tuition, following his son's budding artistic career with attentiveness and, perhaps, some envy.

A year after he saw Jackson Pollock, he and a group of friends founded *Zero-kai* whose program was: art must now start from point zero.

The group included: Akira Kanayama, Atsuko Tanaka and Saburō Murakami. These names will eventually become legendary in Japanese contemporary art.

Kazuo's friendship with Atsuko, the first to join Zero-kai, survived all manner of artistic storms. This great lady of Japanese art, who hailed from Nara, was associated with Osaka all her life.[13]

Zero-kai was a prelude to GUTAI.

Shiraga unexpectedly fell silent around 1971. He joined the monks of Enryaku-ji, a Buddhist monastery on Mount Hiei. A few months later, Jirō Yoshihara passed away. The GUTAI era was over.

But after a while Shiraga went back to painting in his seclusion. Silent, focused, almost exclusively in black-and-white. Synthetically, calligraphically, evoking signs from the palette of thoughts of master Yūshō. And he used... a paintbrush.

The Galerie Stadler organised an exhibition for him in Paris in 1986. But Shiraga Kazuo remained in his cell to disappear forever from the world of hustle, bustle and fame. Known as Sodo, i.e. the Meditator, Shiraga painted his last painting in 2007. He died in Amagasaki a year later.

Murakami Saburō can be said to have been a multi-instrumentalist. He painted and engaged in happening and performance. His action *Passing Through* has gone down in the international history of contemporary art. It sprung from a fascination with the inner essence of life, the destruction and disintegration of things that constitute our everyday existence. This is nothing more than a reference to *wa*, the old Japanese philosophy of inevitable passing, expounded in many other forms in the

[12] Cited after: Wilkoszewska (2005: 163).

[13] De Bevoise (2011). See: Kazuo Shiraga, *I challenged Mud (conversation with Reiko Tomii)*, 1955/2011

Ill. 8.
Saburo Murakami, *Passing Through*, performance, 1956, @MUSASHINO ART UNIVERSITY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

art of the same period. Therefore, *wa* or harmony, including the transience of perishable things.

Mitsuko used to say: "the work will acquire charm, not so much through resemblance to nature as through an idea, because the idea of painting does not come down to the shape or colour, but the way the artist captured things."[14]

Murakami was the person who infused GUTAI with energy, pushed all the limits, went against all established order. He was a destroyer and an animator. He pieced together what was smashed and broken. He identified with various forms of gesture and action painting and with the happening, which gave him a sense of constant play, like a child in a playground. And yet the Kobe-born artist went down in history thanks to *kami-yaburi*, a series of works using packaging paper, including the aforementioned happening consisting in passing through a series of paper walls (Tsūka). He never left Japan to gain experience in the West, France or the United States. (ill. 8)

Meanwhile, after the global success of GUTAI, other informal groups emerged with a slightly different orientation, such as Mono-Ha, with Jirō Takamatsu becoming its most recognisable exponent. The group's manifesto appeared a year after Jirō Yoshihara's death and simply referred to a school of thought. Takamatsu came from Tokyo, where he had been a member of the Hi-Red Centre and studied painting at the legendary Tama Art University, where he befriended the artists who later made up the Mono-Ha movement. He took part in many world events, such as Documenta 6 in Kassel and the Venice Biennale (1986). His best known works are *Shadows* – painted compositions which took the Pantheon of world conceptualism by storm.

The Hi-Red Centre also represented a network of Fluxus influence in Japan. The artists from the group contacted George Maciunas several times. The leader of Fluxus even tried to include the Hi-Red Centre in his formation's activity. Yoko Ono, who was married to Toshi Ichiyanagi, a composer associated with John Cage, participated in several Fluxus experiments. Although she had lived in New York since high school, she will always be associated with Fluxus activities in Japan. In 1962, together with her husband, she returned to her home country for two years, where she met Nam June Paik and artists from the Hi-Red Centre. Around 1968, when the Plastic Ono Band was founded, she was involved in a number of artistic experiments in Japan and the United States, but her later activity, especially in the field of pop music, was not as significant as in 1962–1964, when she collaborated with Cage during numerous performances in Japan.

At that time, Akasegawa Genpei, identified by critics as the leader of the Japanese formation Neo-Dada Organizers, took part in many Hi-Red Centre happenings. At the beginning of 1970, he for-

[14] Cited after: Wilkoszewska (2005: 159).

Ill. 9.
Naoyoshi Hikosaka, *Revolution 6*, Floor Event, 1971, photo. Getty Research Institute

mulated a new Hype-Art manifesto (*chōgeijutsu*),[15] a personal version of *objet trouvé.* His most famous work from this period is *Vagina no shitsu*, influenced by *assemblage*.

Akasegawa Genpei spent three months in prison following the "Thousand-Yen Bill Incident"[16] in which he had allegedly counterfeited 1000 Yen banknotes. This subject spurred him to create a morphology of the art of revenge, as the artist himself later called it. He was an enthusiast of old photo cameras. Along with other well-known artists – Yutokutaishi Akiyama and Yutaka Takanashi – he set up the Leica Alliance, a group which produced numerous books, essays and photographs taken with Leica M2, M3 and Contax G2 cameras.

The late sixties marked the beginning of the career of another formation known as Bikyōtō, which meant Artists' Joint-Struggle Council or Revolution Committee.

The movement was headed by the painter and performer Kōsai Hori. In October 1969, he and his friend Hikosaka Naoyoshi barricaded themselves inside the Tama Art University, protesting against the dictate of state art patronage. The Japanese avant-garde scene was dominated by issues of power and identity, i.e. the content had to be controversial, radical and entangled in philosophical contexts, in short, the consequences of war, manipulation by the authorities and the media, and finally social conformism and omnipresent consumerism. (ill. 9)

Stereotypical engaged, contestatory art appeared in Japan quite quickly. The motivations of the participating artists had to do with the war, the not overly dramatic but humiliating American occupation and, very importantly, with the demise of the social clan, considered the foundation of both the family and the state.

Thus, Kōsai Hori's work ran counter to the Japanese tradition, which had for centuries sung the praises of harmonious illusion.

It was also the time of Mishima Yukio, initially a romantic who sensed the approaching end of the world and saw death as the domain of youth, which in Japan is a long-standing part of life and its decadent ending. In combination with Shintarō Ishihara, the guru of Japanese youth during the period of protest, the spirit of the ideology of death, perennial emptiness and the "cold flame" provided the intellectual foundation and paved the way for the talents of such artists as Kaoru Abe, Doji Morita, and Kōsai Hori in painting.

It all began with the Tama Art University. A great destination for those seeking an art education and an even more excellent museum of contemporary artists. The best known graduate of the school is Issey Miyake, fashion designer and perfume giant, but it was Hori who won in the avant-garde department. His abstractionism appeared quite late. As usual in such cases, an artist on the verge of conceptual rebellion went to Paris and there, infected with pure form, decided to question everything he

[15] Akasegawa (1987: 495).
[16] http://keithwhittle.org/blog/genpei-akasegawas-1000-yen-note-incident/ (accessed 20.09.2019)

Ill. 10.
Hori Kosai, detail, photo.
Mizuma Art Gallery,
T. Rudomino
collection

had done so far. It should be mentioned here that a common feature of the Japanese is the use of pigments. And Hori made this his hallmark. Together with the composer Yasunao Tone, he founded the group Bikyōtō Revolution, a kind of a spiritual village, which brought to Japan the conviction (well-known in Europe) that collectivity in art is a recipe for eternal survival.

In Paris, Hori was initially influenced by Jean Dubuffet. The latter's sand, stone and glass compositions fascinated the Japanese artist, who also showed an interest in the works of Pierre Soulages and Klein's paintings. The language of the former was largely explained by the phenomenon of calligraphy. Undoubtedly, all these experiences made Hori turn to abstract painting after returning to Japan.

He painted with oils, pencil, pastels, and coal. He was predatory, although one is tempted to say that his paintings were a prelude to supremely virtuous and serious artistic practices. Among twenty or so exponents of the avant-garde on both sides of the Pacific, only Kōsai Hori's connections with broader culture, and thus with intellectual material from the world of literature, cinema and Mediterranean art, make him the most distinctive figure in Japan. Hori rejected globalization and the traditional view of art. He also rejected the notion of progress in art, which he only saw as the activity of successive generations of artists. In his view, an artist is born in a specific time and place, and this – rather than his school or art categories – should determine his work. (ill. 10, 11)

Ill. 11. Hori Kosai, *Garden of the Fall and Rebirth*, photo.
Mizuma Art Gallery, 2015, T. Rudomino collection

Hikosaka Naoyoshi, meanwhile, is a painter associated with relief paintings, characterised by a practical vision of painting, which boils down to a version of the literary notion of *tanka*, which he adopted as a special rejection of perspective. Born in Tokyo, he studied at Tama Art University, which, as we already know, became a hub of the

Japanese avant-garde in the 1960s. He also went to the Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts on a fellowship. He painted large-format acrylics, on which he first arranged wooden structural elements which he then coated with paint. He arranged these structures in groups of 5 + 7 + 5, like the syllables in traditional Japanese *tanka* poetry.

Hikosaka Naoyoshi also did a series of performances called *Invitation to Floor Event*. The action, initiated during Art Basel in 1970, eventually became the hallmark of the painter, a contester of the traditional understanding of art and the artist. *Floor Event* became a symbol of Non-Art or Anti-Art and has come down in the history of Japanese contemporary art.

Phenomena like GUTAI, Mono-Ha, the Hi-Red Centre, and finally Kōsai Hori and the artists from his Bikyōtō formation marked turning points in the history of contemporary art in Japan and are familiar to audiences all over the world. They also cemented the standing of artistic achievements growing out of the modernist tradition of transformation as a strong voice in the global village of contemporary art and in the avant-garde of the second half of the twentieth century.

Bibliography

Akasegawa 1987 = Genpei Akasegawa 赤瀬川原平, *Chōgeijutsu Tomason* 『超芸術トマソン』, Tokyo, Byakuya Shobō 白夜書房, 1985, rééd. Chikuma Bunko ちくま文庫 1987: 495.

Cybis 1980 = Jan Cybis, *Notatki malarskie. Dzienniki 1956–1966*, PIW, Warszawa 1980: 69.

DeBevoise 2011 = Jane DeBevoise, *Conversation with Reiko Tomii* (on the occasion of a historical investigation of Shiraga's work, Challenging Mud, as restaged at MoMA NY on July 23 2011) http://www.aaa-a.org/programs/conversation-with-reiko-tomii/ (accessed 20.09.2019)

Dubuffet 2003 = *Jean Dubuffet, Jean Paulhan: correspondance, 1944–1968*, Gallimard, Paris 2003: 156.

Endō 1974 = Shūsaku Endō, *Morze i trucizna*, przeł. Izabella Denysenko, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1974. English version: Shūsaku Endō, *The Sea and Poison* (海と毒薬 *Umi to Dokuyaku*), A New Direction Book, London 1992.

GUTAI 2013 = *GUTAI: Splendid Playground*, catalogue, Guggenheim Foundation, New York 2013: 18.

Harry F. Guggenheim, letter from 28 November 1956 https://www.guggenheim.org/finding-aids/file/ben-nicholson-first-winner-of-guggenheim-international-award (accessed 20.09.2019)

Le grand œil de Michel Tapié, catalogue, Skira, Paris 2018: 9.

Rivera 1992 = Diego Rivera, *My Art. My Life. An Autobiography*, Dover Publications, New York 1992.

Shiraga 2015 = Kazuo Shiraga, Body and Matter, The Art of Kazuo Shiraga, New York 2015.

Shoichi 2015 = Hirai Shoichi, *The Action painting of Kazuo Shiraga*, catalogue, New York 2015.

Ueda Makoto, *Modern Japanese Writers and the Nature of Literature*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1976.

Wilkoszewska 2005 = Krystyna Wilkoszewska (ed.), *Estetyka japońska vol. 2 Słowa i obrazy. Antologia*, Kraków 2009: 142, 159, 163.

Jerzy Uścinowicz
Faculty of Architecture, The Białystok University of Technology,
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

The New Temple of Saint Nicholas of Japan at the Kamennaya Gorka in Minsk, Belarus

The Near Tradition of the Far East Borderland

Poland and the countries neighbouring it are a borderland. The borderland between East and West. The East that is close to us, also spiritually, and the geographically remote Far East. Since time immemorial it has been a meeting point of nations and religions.

For centuries, the cultures of different national and ethnic communities met here. It was also here that the world's smaller and bigger religions crossed paths. The bigger ones had been around for a long time: the Christian religions of the European West and East (Roman Catholicism and Graeco-Slavic Orthodoxy as well as their later offshoots), Judaism and Islam. There were also the smaller, more recently arrived religions: Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and others.

They built and continue to build their temples here: Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches, shrines, molennas, synagogues, mosques, kenesas, Kingdom halls, prayer houses and other religious buildings, old and new. Their monuments, commemorating history and tragedy, are here, too. Symbols of collective memory. It is here, in ecumenical cemeteries, that their forefathers rest, their memory honoured by successive generations.

An eternal memory.

The existence of borderlands of nations and religions, where nations and religions meet and are in dialogue, is an extremely intriguing phenomenon, thought-provoking, discussion-worthy and inspiring, stimulating the mind and the imagination, and sparking emotions. It is also threatening, sometimes casting light on old, ancient, conflicts, but also inspiring joy and hope. After all, is there anything more painful than spiritual humiliation or religious strife? And what can be more joyful than authentic and sincere communication, the sharing of thoughts and feelings, the meeting of spiritual and religious values in truth and love?

The world is somewhat different today. Long-standing cultural and religious barriers are melting. Religion is no longer territorially confined. It spreads. Migrations, the opening up of cultures and uninhibited communication have contributed to the emergence of multicultural and multi-religious societies. Whether we like it or not, the world is becoming one great borderland. Should we therefore not try to set it up on a new footing? For, as Saint Maximus the Confessor beautifully and wisely said, the world 'is a cosmic temple in which man is a priest because he sacrifices to God in his heart and on the altar' (*Mystagogia*; P.G. XCI, 672). How true!

Although in the past, meeting was almost impossible because all the religions were somewhat cloistered, not to say isolated, today, with information about them at our fingertips and in an era of direct contacts, their real, living mutual interest increasingly comes to the fore. Much more so than in the past we are seeing symptoms of the mutual exchange of ideas and values, even of forms of worship and of different types of artistic expression in architecture and art.

Are these the first signs of an ecumenical meeting of religions?

Is this the *meeting in truth and love* that different religions and Churches have called for?

Mission

Human beings have a deep sense of mission. Its roots reach down into our very core. It has always been this way. Everyone praises his own nest and wants to share his culture with others, transmit it, experience joy and sorrow together. The desire to spread one's religious beliefs is no less natural. It is part of human nature. For man, by nature, is a missionary.

Christians have always conducted active missionary activities. Especially Roman Catholics. Orthodox Christians also have missions whose reach in the Modern period, after the Islamic conquest of Byzantium, became quite limited. Oriental Christianity conducted missionary activities in Asia, even as far as China. However, with the conversion of the Mongols to Islam, Orthodox Christianity practically disappeared from the continent. Protestants also have missions which are very vibrant thanks to the Pentecostal Church. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are also actively engaged in missionary activity. Islam, too, is a missionary religion. Missionary activities have also been undertaken by Buddhism and the Hare Krishnas.

So nearly all religions have some kind of mission. They want to pass the learning of their faith to others.

With Christ

The Christian church is a missionary one. This is what Christ Himself willed. From the very beginning the Church was driven by a sense of mission. Christ's words 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19) were its motto. The Apostolic Letters of the New Testament also put this injunction into practice.

The Church began to think about missions as early as the middle of the first century AD at the Council of Jerusalem. It was also there that cultural accommodation was adopted as the missionary strategy. It was supposed to facilitate relations with the local communities, whom missionaries carrying forward Christ's message wanted to reach. The main principle of this method was: 'but test everything, hold fast what is good' (1 Thessalonians 5:21). This was the method referred to by Pope Gregory I.

The activity of Christian missionaries covered all of Europe. In Asia and Africa it was stopped by Islam. But the great geographical discoveries ushered in a new era. In the Western Church, missions were largely organised by the Jesuits according to the inculturation model. Although they strove to respect local traditions, after many centuries they had to abandon their methods when Pope Innocent IV openly condemned all pagan values. The pope also forbade intercultural dialogue. In Asia this sparked violent conflict between the Jesuits and the Franciscans, which undermined Christian missions in the Far East altogether.[1] Despite this, in the first half of the twentieth century missions developed anew during European colonial expansion in Africa and Asia. Missionaries often became allies of the local peoples in the fight to maintain their identity.[2]

The missionary mandate was thus implemented in a variety of ways. The Western Catholic Church took an active part in this process. The Eastern Church was less active; it was only in the nineteenth century that it took up evangelisation efforts, especially the Russian Orthodox Church, which developed interesting new missionary methods.[3] As the well-known Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov wrote: 'The standard missionary method consisted in raising a temple or chapel in a given place and immediately setting liturgical life in motion, which put the natives in the presence of God. Paying close attention to the particular character of the people that they were to evangelise, the missionaries translated the Bible and liturgy books into the language

[1] Prohibitions regarding cultural accommodation and the intermingling of cultures were included in the decrees of 1645, 1693 and 1709. In the eighteenth century Benedict XIV deemed these methods heretical.

[2] See Kość (2010: 153–173)

[3] Marek (2018: 105–121)

of those peoples to give everyone the opportunity to take part in the divine service and to read the Holy Scriptures. Many times they even had to create a new alphabet and literary language, which is proof of their great sensitivity and deep penetration of the soul of these peoples. Everything came second to a great respect for everyone's destiny and free choice.'[4]

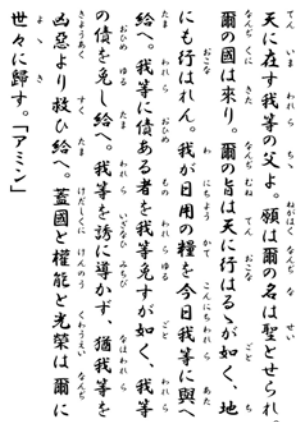
Although prayer remained the primary missionary method in Christianity, the Eastern Christian missions, in addition to carrying forward God's word, also disseminated another message. They brought art, great art. For as David Jacobus Bosch rightly observed, knowledge is also acquired through 'philosophical insight'.[5] Faith is born of the co-operation of all the senses, not only of listening, but also of looking. It was on the foundation of Greek culture, especially Greek art, that Christianity built Eastern Orthodoxy. This is why the beauty of the liturgy, its mysticism and conceptual richness always attracted local populations to Christ. It sparked interest. It intrigued and awoke a desire to learn, to check what it was like inside.

Saint

A temple is going to be built at the Kamennaya Gorka in Minsk, Belarus.[6] It is being conceived and constructed in the distinctive cultural climate of the borderland between East and West – including the West near to us and the Christian East as well as the East far from us geographically, although quite close culturally. We are pulled in its direction by the tradition of Orthodox Christianity which emerged in Japan and put down roots there thanks to Eastern (mainly Russian) missionaries.

The Orthodox Church at the Kamennaya Gorka is a special church, just as its patron, Saint Nicholas of Japan, was a special figure.[7] He was God's unparalleled envoy. A saint of the Russian Orthodox Church, its missionary and the sower of Orthodox Christianity in Japan. The first preacher

Ill. 1. Ivan Dimitrovich Kasatkin (Saint Nicholas of Japan); photographer unknown (http://www.faceofrussia.ru/img/pict/grandfa/kasatkin.jpg)



天に在す我等の父よ。願はくは爾の名は聖とせられ。
爾の國は來り。爾の旨は天に行はるゝが如く、地
にも行はれん。我が日用の糧を今日我等に與へ
給へ。我等に債ある者を我等免すが如く、我等
の債を免し給へ。我等を誘に導かず、猶我等を
凶惡より救ひ給へ。蓋國と權能と光榮は爾に
世々に歸す。「アミン」

Ill. 2. The 'Our Father' prayer translated by Father Nicholas and Paul Nakai Tsugumaro into classical Japanese (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LordsPrayerJapaneseSeikyo.svg)

and hierarch of the Orthodox Church of Japan. Initially the chaplain of the Russian consulate on Hokkaido, then a monk and hieromonk in Hakodate, he became the archimadrite of Tokyo and later bishop and archbishop of All Japan (ill. 1).

He studied Japanese and Chinese. He applied himself to Buddhist philosophy. He translated fragments of the Bible and of the liturgy into Japanese, adapting them to the local culture. He also translated the 'Our Father' into classical Japanese with Paul Nakai Tsugumaro (ill. 2). He founded the Religious Seminary with Japanese as the language of instruction as well as six religious schools for girls and boys (ill. 3), a library and a shelter. He published the Japanese-language Orthodox daily *Church Herald.* In 1868 he baptised the first cate-

[4] Evdokimov (1986: 186).
[5] Bosch (2010: 212–213. 224). See: Marek (2018: 114)
[6] Uścinowicz (2015: passim).
[7] Ivan Dimitrovich Kasatkin (Russian: Иван Дмитриевич Касаткин), monastic name Nicholas. Born 1/13 August 1836 in Smolensk, died on 3/16 February 1912 in Tokyo. A saint of the Russian Orthodox Church, Russian missionary, founder of the Orthodox Church of Japan. In the hagiographical literature he is known as Saint Nicholas of Japan (Russian: Николай Японский).

Ill. 3. The community of the Orthodox Seminary in Tokyo with Father Nicolas at the centre (https://foma.ru/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/nikjap138_6.jpg)

Ill. 4. Orthodox Cathedral of the Resurrection – the Nikorai-do in Tokyo, engraving by K. Veyerman after a photograph from: *Всемирная иллюстрация*, Vol. 46, № 1177, Санкт-Петербург 1891, p. 108

Ill. 5. Icon of Saint Nicholas of Japan. Iconographer: J. Kolesnikova (Е. Колесникова) (http://icon-anastasis.ru/portfolio)

chumens, for which he faced expulsion from Japan. He was also a builder, raising the Holy Resurrection Cathedral – the Nikorai-do (ニコライ堂) in Tokyo, consecrated on 8 March 1891 (ill. 4). He was also a mission theorist. He published the 'Missionary Instructions' describing the methodology of the Japanese mission which included the involvement of laypeople in the evangelisation of their fellow countrymen. As a bishop, he travelled throughout Japan, celebrating the liturgy and preaching the Divine Gospel in Japanese, an unprecedented novelty in missionary practice.

In 1880, he was behind the founding of a new eparchy in Japan, which already had as many as 6000 adherents of Orthodox Christianity. In 1917, missionaries estimated the number of Japanese who had converted to Orthodoxy at 33,000 and the number of temples at over 200. It was the Russian Orthodox Church's numerically most successful mission outside the Russian Empire.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Saint Nicholas remained with his faithful in Japan. He did not take part in services because, in line with the standard formula, Japanese Christians had to pray for their country's victory over Russia. He said: 'I serve at the cathedral but from now on I shall no longer take part in services. Till now I have prayed for the prosperity and peace of the Japanese Empire. But now, after the declaration of war between Japan and my country, I, as a Russian citizen, cannot pray for Japan's victory over my fatherland. I also have duties towards my homeland, but I will be happy to see you perform your duties towards yours.'[8]

He was very attached to his new, beloved homeland, as he proved when he sung the *Te Deum* after Japan prevailed over Russia.[9] He died in 1912 and was buried in Tokyo with the personal consent of the emperor of Japan. There is a chapel dedicated to him near the Nikorai-do. He was canonised in 1970 as the evangelist of Japan.

[8] *«Сегодня по обычаю я служу в соборе, но отныне впредь я уже не буду принимать участия в общественных Богослужениях нашей церкви... Доселе я молился за процветание и мир Японской империи. Ныне же, раз война объявлена между Японией и моей родиной, я, как русский подданный, не могу молиться за победу Японии над моим собственным отечеством. Я также имею обязательства к своей родине и именно поэтому буду счастлив видеть, что вы исполняете долг в отношении к своей стране»*, cited after: Шкаровский 2012: passim).

[9] Kurek (2000: 942).

Ill. 6.
Future location of the Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas on the 'Kamennaya Gorka' in Minsk, view from the north-east, photo. J. Uścinowicz, 2014

Saint Nicholas of Japan was therefore not only a priestly administrator and the confessor of the Russian diaspora in Japan. He was a spiritual teacher of its native people, a scholar of the Far Eastern tradition. A saint of the Orthodox Japanese borderland (ill. 5).

A New Paradise, the New Jerusalem

The architecture of the new Orthodox church in Minsk is supposed to reflect the name and saint-hood its patron, Saint Nicholas. It is to be both traditional and modern, Eastern-Christian and Far-Eastern. The idea is that it should be open to the world, steeped in universal, conflict-free symbols accepted by all Christians, the local community and Japanese alike. Without excessive ornamentation or puritan minimalism. Without strong national accents. Discreetly Japanese in its convention.

The whole parish will be located where a housing district meets a park, on a tall, 12-metre hill, with a steep incline on the western and northern sides and a gently falling slope on the eastern side. From the west it is covered by a thicket of trees and shrubs, while to the south lie meadows full of unique fauna and flora. It is like the Garden of Eden (*image 7*). The view is impressive and the site is visible from three sides. From the north, however, it is set off by twenty-storey high-rises. It cannot compete with them, nor does it need to. Today, height no longer determines the worth of architecture. Quality is not measured in metres. Holiness is today conveyed by theological, symbolic values. Especially in Orthodoxy, by mystical, spiritual values expressed in eschatological terms. They accompany the waiting for the New Jerusalem, which they mainly build inside the temple. But they are set in nature, in the Paradise that man has lost as a result of original sin. The external architecture corresponds to this natural realm.[10]

Idea

The complex consists of five principal buildings (ill. 7):

– the temple of Saint Nicholas of Japan,
– the bell tower of the Annunciation,
– the chapel of the Holy Cross of Christ,
– the chapel of Saint John the Baptist with a well for the blessing of water on Epiphany,
– a parish house and education centre.

The entire sacred complex has been set along an East-West axis. It represents a sequence, spatially and theologically, of places of worship. Starting with the well, with its deep symbolic meaning in Christianity, as seen in the sacrament of Baptism, through a natural zone, a symbolic Garden of Eden on the western slope, followed by the *torii*-gate-like bell tower, a small courtyard, the temple of Saint Nicholas and the chapel of the Life-giving Cross of Christ in the large courtyard of the symbolic New Jerusalem – opening eastward in expectation of the Parousia, the Second Coming of Christ. All of this is set with precision in the landscape and spatially and functionally strung along a pilgrim trail

[10] Ustinovič (2016: 94–105).

connecting the region's major spiritual and natural sites.

The main temple – the Church of Saint Nicholas of Japan – has a longitudinal-centric arrangement, being set along an East-West horizontal axis and distributed around a central cupola (ill. 8). The horizontal axis points to sunrise on 16 February 1912, the day of Saint Nicholas's earthly death. This orientation also indicates the direction of Tokyo. The temple also has a clear vertical axis, with a distinctive rising centre – a dominant cupola set on a steel-and-glass drum.

The church has two separate sections which constitute two complementary parts of the composition:

– the temple body, the most important, dominant feature of the whole,

– a free-standing bell tower serving as the field chapel of the Annunciation. It is a like a gate to a sacred realm – the Shinto *torii* gate into a shrine.

The two buildings enter into mutual interaction. The spatial relationships also influence the surroundings, creating structure. A circular procession area runs around the sanctuary, adjacent to the large courtyard near the chapel of the Holy Cross. A spiral path leads here from the chapel of the Epiphany – the well for blessing water on Epiphany. Successive elements of the structure also form their own compositions and establish geometric/numerical relations with symbolic connotations. Like a temple interior or icon compositions, the interplay of the temple's geometry, the circular procession area and the courtyard is a reference to squaring the circle, the divinisation of matter (ill. 7).

The temple and parish house form a half-closed, U-shaped composition.

The Temple as a Shrine

The principal idea informing the shape of the temple is its division into a kind of plinth, a postument with the smaller main body superimposed on top. Like the lower part of the body, the plinth is made of natural field stone. This creates the impression of the temple growing out of the land and conversely, of it being firmly rooted in the earth (ill. 8–10).

Another idea is to 'set' the temple into the landscape, in between the trees already growing there. These will be kept intact in their entirety. There is to be an organic correspondence between the two. The play of light and shadow due to the movement of foliage creates a living, organic, shifting texture. Some of the trees grow in important places. They are symbolic holy trees. They form the stations of the pilgrim trail, today called the ecological trail.

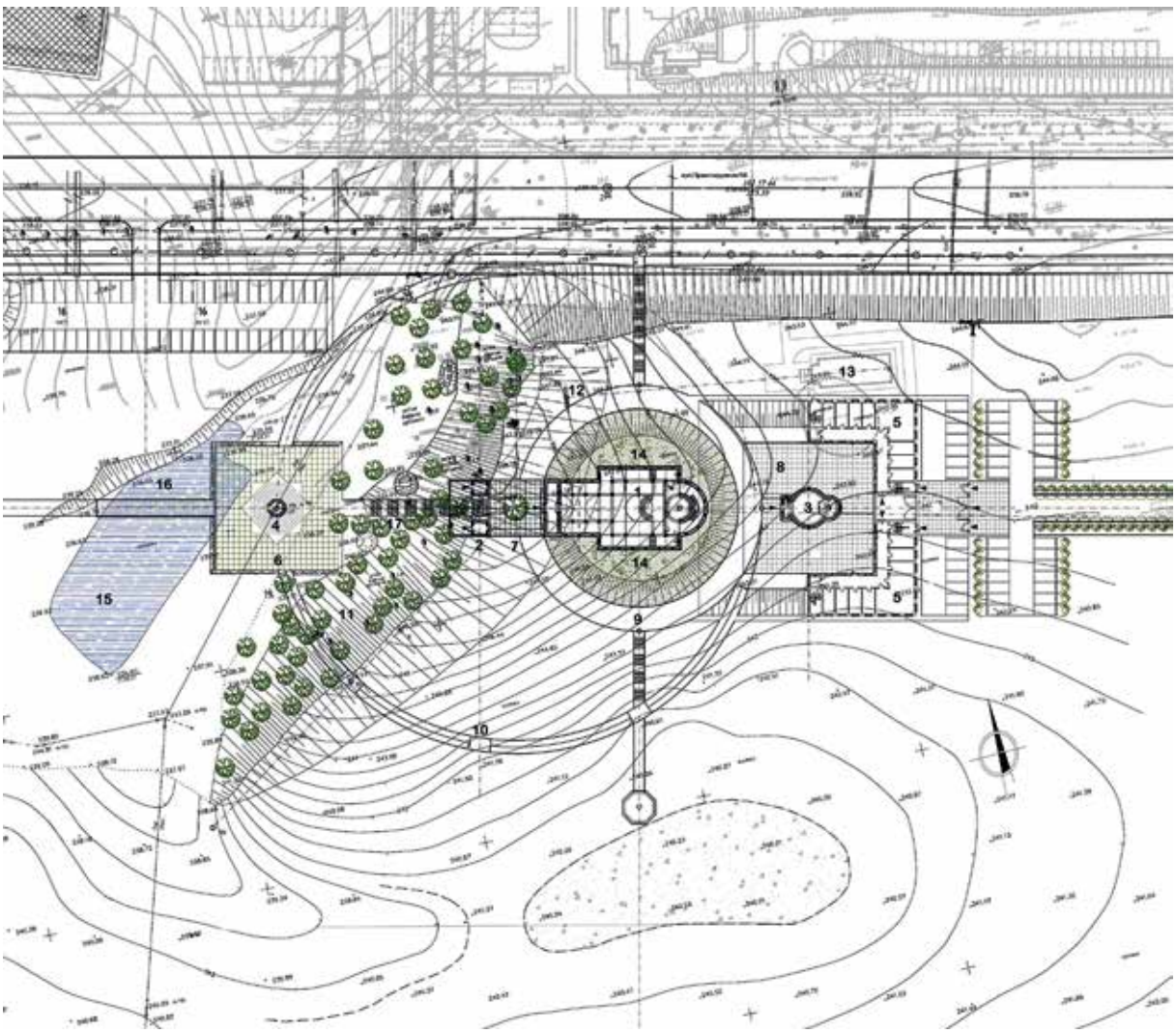
The four sculptural reliefs on the corners are a reference to ancient temples. Like their predecessors, they are placed in the middle of the wall. This is the feast row of an external iconostasis. Inspired by icon covers, they are a symbolic depiction of the 'lives of the saints in the orchard of paradise'. The reliefs of saints, bushes, trees and animals represent heaven and holy beings, intermediaries between the divine (the upper part of the temple walls and roof) and the earthy realm (lower part). They depict the lives of the saints as the 'fruit of earthly heroism in professing their Faith and living true to Divine Law'.

The temple is going to have two levels (ill. 9).

The upper temple consists of a rotundal sanctuary – a hierateion, a typological transposition of the Anastasis from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; additionally, in its dedication, it refers to the Nikorai-do in Tokyo. It also includes the cubic main body – the naos, elongated pronaos and narthex (ill. 8). The temple includes the full liturgical programme which is laid out in classical fashion inside, in three distinct phases along a longitudinal axis. The pilgrim ambulatory runs around the main body, marked with poles. The church also has an iconostasis in the form of an ancient templon with a row of local icons and a row of festive icons as well as three characteristic golden altar arches. The appearance is very simple, minimalistic (ill. 11).

The structure of the lower temple repeats the upper. It is a kind of introduction and development of the liturgical function of the underground temple. It is here that baptisms and funerals take place in addition to the blessing of water, prayers and occasional services. The depression in the centre of the nave is typical of early Christian churches. It is like a niche, a cave of the Nativity. In its middle stands the baptismal font.

The bell tower of the Annunciation is the gate to the main temple, its *torii*. It is a type of external iconostasis but different from the typical historical model. Here it is formed not so much by the icon surfaces of the successive tiers and the Royal Doors and Deacons' Doors, closed and opened during the liturgy, but by the surfaces of the internal walls of the passage connecting the soleas and the entrance courtyard, which here stands for the sanctuary/hi-

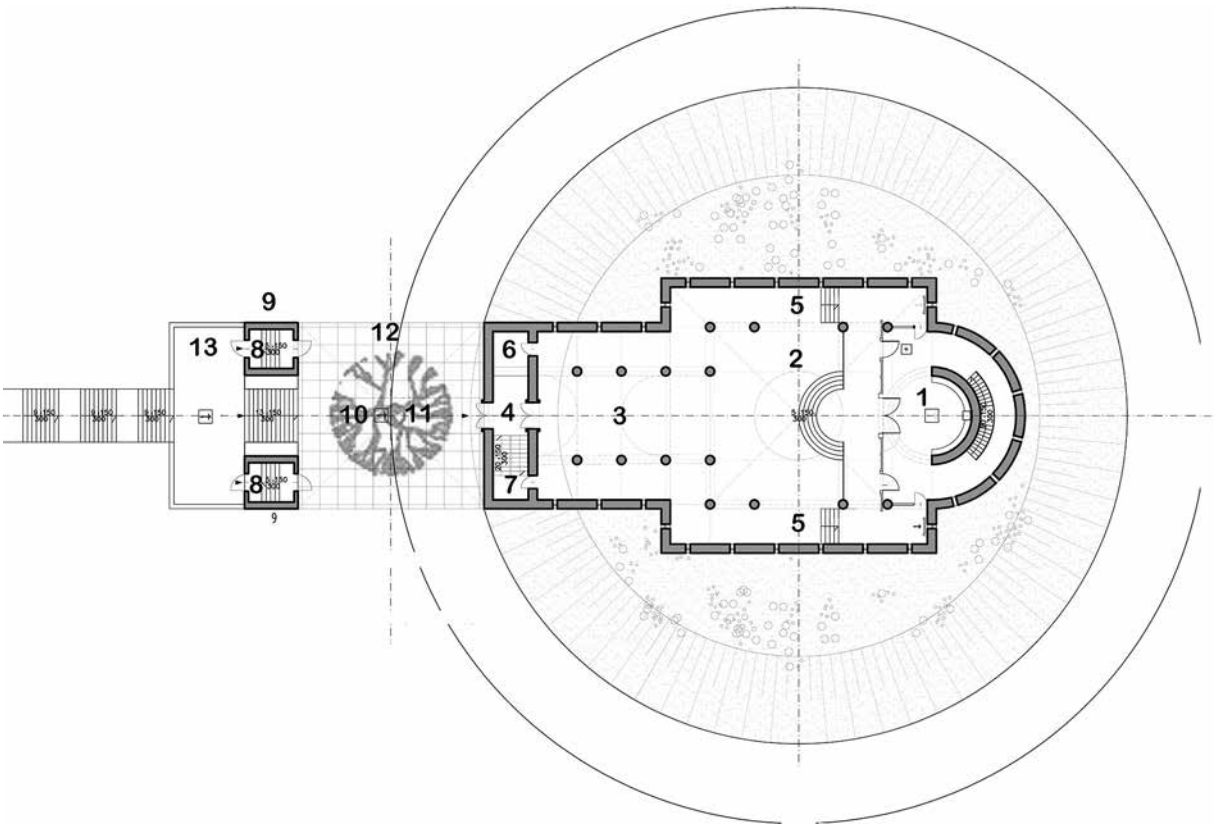


Ill. 7. Urban plan of the Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas complex on the 'Kamennaya Gorka' in Minsk. Orthodox church of Saint Nicholas of Japan; 2. bell tower of the Annunciation of the Holiest Mother of God – *torii*; 3. chapel of the Holy Cross of Christ; 4. chapel of Saint John the Baptist Prodromos; 5. parish house, education centre and pilgrim hostel; 6. courtyard of the Epiphany; 7. courtyard of Eden with a symbolic 'Tree of Life' and field altar; 8. courtyard of the New Jerusalem; 9. processional way; 10. spiral ecological pilgrim trail with 12 stations; 11. the existing woods – the Garden of Eden; 12. prostration cross; 13. temporary wooden temple; 14. escarpment and hillsides of the 'Kamennaya Gorka'; 15. symbolic Sea of Galilee; 16. bridge ofthe Epiphany; 17. pilgrim steps; 18. gazebo/stage; J. Uścinowicz, 2015

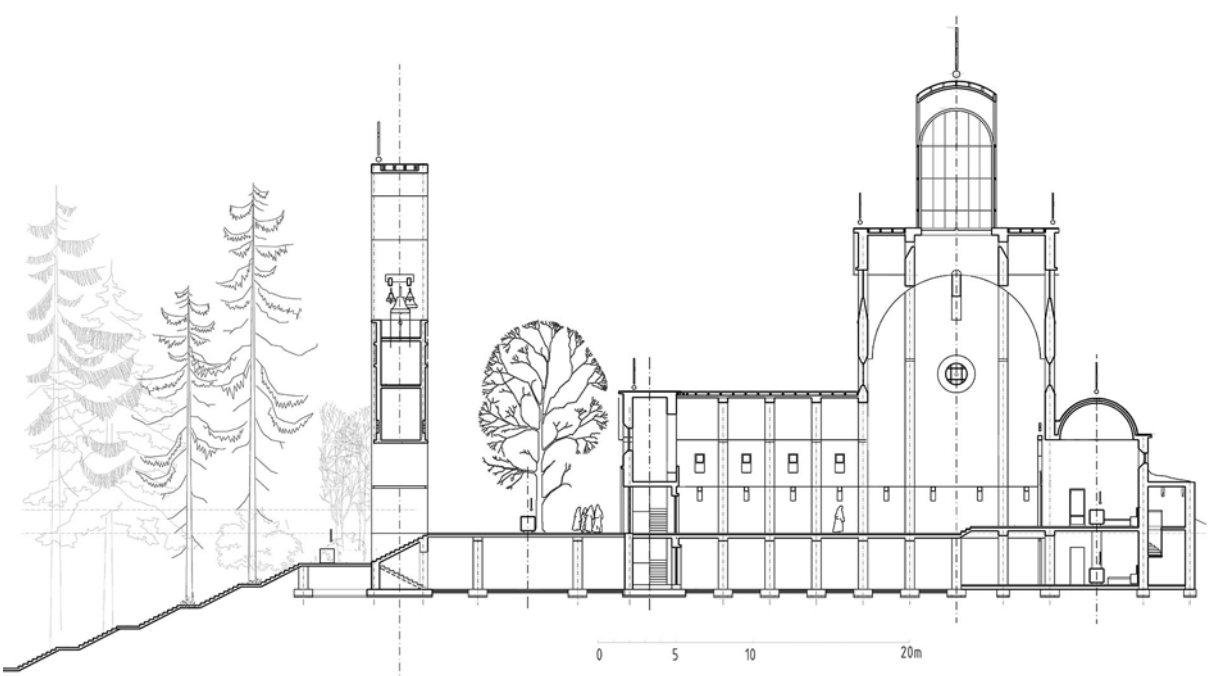
erateion. An iconic *katapestasma* functions as a curtain on the façade side. This external iconostasis is topped by the triple arcade of the bell tower, above the level of the bells. Below the bells, in an upper blind window, is an icon of the Mandylion (ill. 10).

Between the bell tower and the main temple, inside the square courtyard/garden, is the open temple of nature. In its is an altar for celebrating the liturgy under a symbolic 'Tree of Life'. The branches of this tree, with a generous wide crown, form a cupola ceiling over the altar – a celestial ciborium. Along with the cross behind the altar, this establishes a typological link to Golgotha. Like crosses whose shape is reminiscent of the tree of knowledge, the cross behind the altar – an icon of the Crucifixion – typologically connects this temple, open to the heavens, with the Garden of Eden.[11]

[11] Christ's cross should be typologically identified with the reality of the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life as well as the four rivers flowing in four different directions. In Greek, the word ADAM is an acronym of the four corners of the earth: Anatolé (east), Dysme (west), Arktos (north) and Misembria (south), and of the two cardinal axes of which the sign of the cross is composed AD (east-west) and AM (north-south). This establishes an essential connection between all levels of the typological figure of Adam and the 'New Adam' – Christ. Hani (1994: 57).



Ill. 8. Layout of the Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas of Japan on the 'Kamennaya Gorka' in Minsk. hierateion, 2. naos, 3. pronaos, 4. narthex, 5. ambitus, 6. offertory, 7. steps to the basement bell tower steps, 9. bell tower, 10. field altar, 11. 'Tree of Life', 12. courtyard – Garden of Eden, 13. soleas; J. Uścinowicz, 2015



Ill. 9. Cross-section of the Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas of Japan on the 'Kamennaya Gorka' in Minsk, J. Uścinowicz, 2015

Ill. 10. The Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas of Japan on the 'Kamennaya Gorka' in Minsk, J. Uścinowicz, 2015

This temple is very ascetic. It only includes the most essential liturgical elements, without excessive decoration or stylisation. It is archaic. It sheds the centuries-old burden of history and attempts to appeal to the present using different aesthetic means, architectural and iconic. It does so in a semi-traditional and semi-modern way.

The glass drum supporting the cupola is an innovation. It invokes the old, hierarchical principle of introducing light into the temple and having it work on the iconography. Thanks to its transparency the drum provides a view of the heavens and, from the outside, a glimpse of the icon of Christ Pantocrator beneath the cupola.

The chapel and parish house derive from monastic architecture. As in ancient Greek monasteries, the composition is distributed around a square inner courtyard, a symbolic reference to the New Jerusalem (Apocalypse 21:12–22). It has symbolic connotations. At its centre, where the main axes cross, is the chapel of the Life-giving Cross of Christ as the 'Tree of Life'. The shape of the building is very simple, restrained. It does not compete with the temple but strives to support it. Even the main elements remain in the background.

Ill. 11. The Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas of Japan on the 'Kamennaya Gorka' in Minsk. Interior, J. Uścinowicz, 2015

The Spirit of the Far East

Respect for nature is a characteristic feature of Japanese culture. Unlike the Europeans, the Japanese do not lord over nature, like Cain, but consider themselves part of nature. This is also due to the religious spirituality of *shintō*. Japanese architecture attains its full distinctive expression when in harmony with the surroundings and in the purity and minimalism of its forms. A discreetly restrained expression. This reflects the culture and mentality of the Japanese. This cult of nature is especially visible in the architecture of temples and temple surroundings. The natural colours of the materials bind the buildings to the natural environment, creating the impression of organic growth, of an extension of nature. Japanese architecture is immersed in gardens, with the *zen*-style composition as its model. Its building blocks are stones and water. Its purpose is to support contemplation in accordance

In reference to the symbolism of the tree as the cross and the idea of the cosmic tree, Saint Irenaeus of Lyon described the biblical tree of knowledge as a figure of Christ's cross: 'And the trespass which came by the tree was undone by the tree of obedience, when, hearkening unto God, the Son of man was nailed to the tree; thereby putting away the knowledge of evil and bringing in and establishing the knowledge of good' (*The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,* XXXIII-XXXIV). Cited after: http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0130–0202,_Iraeneus,_Demonstration_Of_The_Apostolic_Preaching,_EN.pdf (1920: 49) (accessed 10.09.2019).

with the principles of *zen* – 'it has minimum expression', both in terms of size and content. All we have is whiteness, natural greenery, and the blue of water and sky. The Japanese village of Shirakawa-gō is considered the paragon and symbol of this aesthetic.[12] It is worth noting that the name Shirakawa comes from the pure, white water of Shirakawa river (*shiro* – white, *kawa* – river).

The creative ordering principle, deeply rooted in the tradition of Japanese culture, is asymmetry. Although new, Chinese, patterns involving compositional alignment and symmetry were embraced along with the arrival of Buddhism in Japan, asymmetry stayed, too. The practice of setting buildings on a stone foundation and covering roofs with ceramic tiles was also introduced. These have become traditional by now.

The *torii* gate is also an organic offshoot of Japanese culture. Every *torii* in front of a *shintō* shrine symbolises the pilgrims' appeal to one of the gods, while going through the gate symbolises leaving the everyday world and entering the divine realm. *Shintō* shrines are usually accessed by a long road crossing under several free-standing *torii* gates. They are also the mobile signs familiar to us from Eastern-Christian orthodoxy, announcing successive levels of initiation, with their proper rites of passage.

Here on the Kamennaya Gorka, this fusion of natural and architectural forms follows a similar pattern (ill. 10). Like a *torii*, the bell tower over the gate leads into a sacred sphere. It marks the agreed boundary between the outer Paradise and the inner New Jerusalem, bringing them together.

Like the *jinja* in shintoism, the main shrine of Saint Nicholas is the main place of worship. It is similar in structure. White, ascetic, symmetrical in form and asymmetric in the composition of the whole complex.

A jinja is usually made up of a *honden*, the main pavilion, in which sacred implements are kept, and a *haiden* – a building for praying and rituals. In the temple of Saint Nicholas these are mirrored by the sanctuary and the naos. There are also additional buildings like the *heiden*, a sacrificial pavilion, *norito-den*, a pavilion for religious ceremonies, and *kagura-den*, a pavilion with a stage for ceremonial dances and the performance of *kagura* music. In the Orthodox Christian church these spaces are reflected in the pastorial prothesis, skevophylakion and pronaos, the courtyard and the outdoor gazebo/stage (ill. 6–7).

Aren't these structures similar? Although referred to by different names, is their division, function and relationship not genetically the same?

Resumé

In Christianity, the temple is the space of the liturgy. The external architectural forms follow the internal message of the cult. This is how it has been historically, so that is how it should be today. The liturgy is the road to man's divinisation, the road to his salvation, and the aim of sacred architecture is to help liturgy point the way. One of the many ways that God has assigned to man.

Architecture and art can therefore take many forms and put on many costumes. Just as the nations among whom the seed of the Gospel was sown differ in their cultures. The seed has taken root and continues to bring forth new fruit. That is the point.

The architectural design of the Orthodox church on the Kamennaya Gorka in Minsk is part of the search for such a form along the pilgrim road of Saint Nicholas and his disciples, the road towards oneness with God – in Japan. The search for a Paradise lost there and for a future Heavenly Jerusalem. Through the symbolic transposition of the formal values and spaces of temple architecture and through the relationship between living nature and art – so important in Japanese culture. Like the Garden of Eden, it is supposed to be a new, sacred, paradisial site. A holy hill of 'living stones'.

Just as Saint Nicholas on his mission carried the Gospel to Japan, so now the hospitable Belarusian land of Christian Eastern Europe can thank Japan for the harvest of Saint Nicholas. Erect remote Japan on nearby Kamennaya Gorka in Minsk. Perhaps this is the right idea of cultural exchange – *a meeting in truth and love*?

Colophon

There is a little temple in Pasłęk, in the Warmia region of Poland. Inconspicuous, perhaps a bit forgotten by civilisation, but very beautiful and authentic. But above all, good in its servitude. Ordinary on

[12] Due to its outstanding universal value, the village of Shirakawa-gō has been added to UNESCO's World Heritage List.

the outside and extraordinary on the inside. It was originally a Protestant temple and remains one to this day; it is also an Orthodox temple, with which the former has been sharing its building since the end of World War II. Equally in half, across the nave. These two halves of the temple and the people who pray there can no longer exist without one another. They enter through a single door at the boundary of their properties. There is no wall or divider in place. And whether they like it or not, they are together. They share the same space, living side by side, praying to one God, perhaps in different ways, but collectively, face to face, altar to altar.

This probably isn't the only example of magnificent *oecumene* here in Poland. I hope there are more such 'spiritual places', many more. Not just in Poland and in Japan, but all over the world.[13]

Bibliography

Bosch = David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (20th Anniversary Edition), American Society of Missiology Book 16, Kindle Edition, Orbis Book, Meryknol, New York 1991, 2011; (Polish translation) *Oblicza chrześcijańskiej misji. Zmiany paradygmatu w teologii misji*, Katowice 2010: 212–213, 224.

Evdokimov = Paul Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie*, Delachaux et Niestlé 1959; (Polish translation) *Prawosławie* (transl. Jerzy Klinger), Inst. Wyd. PAX, Warszawa 1986: 186.

Hani = Jean Hani, *Le Symbolisme de Temple Chrėėtien*; (Polish translation) A. Q. Lavique, Jean Hani, 'Symbolika świątyni chrześcijańskiej', *Znak*, Kraków 1994: 57.

Kość = Antoni Kość SVD, 'Chrześcijaństwo a kultura japońska', in: *Studia Nauk Teologicznych PAN*, Vol. 5, *Chrześcijaństwo w dialogu*, Komitet Nauk Teologicznych PAN, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2010: 153–173.

Kurek = Antoni Kurek, 'Kasatkin', in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*. Vol. 8, Lublin 2000: 942.

Marek = Leopold Bartłomiej Marek, 'Działalność misyjna Rosyjskiej Cerkwi Prawosławnej w XIX wieku', in: *Kwartalnik Naukowy Kultura – Media – Teologia*, no. 31/2018, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, Warszawa 2018: 114.

Myszor = Wincenty Myszor, 'Symbolika krzyża według św. Ireneusza', in: *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne*, 30 (1997), Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach, Katowice 1997: 98.

Шкаровский = Михаил Шкаровский, 'Русско – японский святой', in: *Журнал «Вода живая. Санкт-Петербургский церковный вестник»*, № 2 (февраль) 2012, Санкт-Петербургское епархиальное управление, официальное издание Санкт-Петербургской епархии Русской Православной Церкви, Санкт-Петербург 2012 (http://aquaviva.ru/journal/russko-yaponskiy-svyatoy)

Uścinowicz = Jerzy Uścinowicz: *Projekt architektoniczny wraz z generalnym planem urbanistycznym zespołu sakralnego cerkwi i ośrodka parafialnego w Mińsku-Kamiennej Górce na Białorusi (Приход Храма Святителя Николая Японского в г. Минске Минской Епархии Белорусской Православной Церкви)*, Białystok – Mińsk 2015: passim (parish archives).

Ustinovič = Ustinovič, 'Sovremennost' tradicii v praktičeskoj teologii arhitektury. Hram Svâtitelâ Nikolaâ Âponskogo v g. Minske', in: *Arhitektura. Sbornik naučnyh trudov*, Vol. 9, ed. A. S. Sardarov, Belorusskij nacional'nyj tehničeskij universitet, Минск 2016: 94–105.

Всемирная = Всемирная иллюстрация, Vol. 46, № 1177, Санкт-Петербург 1891: 108.

[13] The research for this paper has been carried out within the framework of research project no. S/WA/3/2016 at the Białystok University of Technology and financed from a grant awarded by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

II. Institutions

Radosław Predygier
Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan, Polish Institute of World Art Studies

The Polish Trail in Okayama: The Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan

The Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan is an organisation founded thanks to a social initiative. It was established in 2014 as part of the Polish Institute for World Art Studies and launched its activities in the last decade of the Heisei era.

The Mission's objective is to "develop cooperation between the Republic of Poland and the Empire of Japan in the field of humanities, in particular the arts, artistic activity and cultural exchange, in particular through:

Public activities, including research on world art, the protection of goods and traditions, and the promotion of tangible and intangible heritage.

Popularization of the achievements of Polish science, culture and art.

Cooperation with Japanese and Polish academic, cultural and artistic institutions, foundations, Japanese government institutions, local authorities, Polish diplomatic missions and cultural centres.

Organisation and co-organisation of conferences, lectures, seminars, exhibitions, concerts, art and conservation workshops.

Publishing."[1]

Having been around for only a few years, the Mission has already managed to implement a range of worthwhile projects, including exhibitions, concerts, artistic events, etc. promoting Polish culture and art in Japan and selected aspects of Japanese art in Poland.

A Short History of the Mission

The Mission was founded at the initiative of prof. Jerzy Malinowski and Radosław Predygier, an artist who has been living in Okayama Prefecture in Japan since 2004. Prof. Malinowski visited Okayama many times to give lectures at Japanese universities (1997, 2007, 2014) and for a conference organized in 2007 with prof. Suzuki Michitaka.[2] In 2014, cooperation between Kibi International University and Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Jerzy Malinowski's home university, was formalised and an inter-university agreement was signed.

Prof. Malinowski established his first contacts with the University of Okayama in 1997 during his visit to deliver lectures there. He travelled to Japan with his wife, Barbara Brus-Malinowska, also a renowned art historian.

[1] Statute of the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan (2014: par. 4)

[2] *Modernism in Oeriphery, Art in Eastern Europe and Japan*, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Okayama University (28.02.2014).

In 2007, during a meeting in Okayama with the author of this text, the idea of creating an association promoting Polish-Japanese cultural exchange and Polish culture in Japan emerged. It slowly began to crystallize, and in 2014 the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan (affiliated with the Polish Institute for World Art Studies) was established.[3] The Mission soon began to organise a variety of artistic and academic events promoting artistic, academic and cultural exchange between Japan and Poland.

Inspirations for the Establishment of the Mission

When I found myself in Japan in 2004, in the small but beautifully situated city of Setouchi in Okayama Prefecture, I was completely isolated from my homeland and the European culture that had shaped my artistic sensitivity and personality. On the other hand, I faced a world of fascinating difference in culture, art, aesthetics or even landscape design. The town I live in is very picturesque and set in a beautiful location.

From my isolation and uprooting there sprung a need to bring these two distant and different worlds together, to build a kind of bridge or a system that would make an exchange of the Goodness and Beauty of both countries possible. The purpose of this exchange would be to introduce the Japanese public to Polish culture and art, which, being so far away from home, I also wanted to stay close to, and to introduce the Polish public to the extraordinary Japanese culture that had been my everyday environment since 2004. It was also important to enable artists from both countries to come and stay in the other country in order to experience the unique features of Japan and of Poland first hand.

In cooperation with my friends from Poland, Warsaw and Japan, a variety of artistic and cultural events began to mushroom spontaneously.

Okayama Prefecture

Okayama Prefecture[4] is located in the central part of Honshu Island, between Osaka and Hiroshima. The Japanese call it *Heiwa no kuni*, which means 'land of peace', as it is very rarely hit by the natural disasters that sometimes violently and viciously affect the Nippon archipelago.

It is a land that has given Japan many of its famous and outstanding artists, including the fifteenth-century painter Sesshu Toyo, a Zen monk and author of ink landscapes; the painter Yasuo Kuniyoshi (1889–1953), who emigrated to the United States, where he lived through World War II; and Takehisa Yumeji (1884–1934), born in Oku, a self-taught artist of the Taishō era, creator of romantic images of women known as *bijinga*.[5]

The Ohara Museum[6] in Kurashiki (Okayama Prefecture), a picturesque township with an old town dating back to the Edo period, houses one of the earliest and largest collections of European painting in Japan. It boasts works by El Greco, C. Monet, P. Gauguin, H. Matisse, A. Renoir, P. Picasso and others.

In the Setouchishi region, with its picturesque coastline, often referred to as *nihonno eigekai*, the 'Japanese Aegean Sea', the town of Ushimado has a rich history associated with the diplomatic missions of the Kingdom of Korea. These missions, initiated during the Tokugawa period, from 1607 to 1811, would reach the port of Ushimado. They were a rare and exceptional event in Japan, which was closed to foreigners at the time. A group of almost 500 people (including diplomats, scholars, doctors, painters, and craftsmen) arrived in Ushimado on the first of the 12 missions in 1607. They continued onwards to meet the Tokugawa shogun in Edo.

Ushimado is also home the Setouchishi City Museum of Art,[7] where two Polish exhibitions have been held in recent years.

[3] "Sprawozdanie z działalności Polskiej Misji Artystyczno-Naukowej w Japonii" (Report on the activities of the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan), *Sztuka i Krytyka* (ed. Jerzy Malinowski, Grażyna Raj, Marcin Teodorczyk), 2019, nr 4 (79): 12–16.

[4] https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/chugoku/okayama/ (accessed 6.05.2019)

[5] *bijinga* (Jap.), the term for portraits of beautiful women in Japanese art. They were often created in the form of woodblock prints, *ukiyo-e*.

[6] http://www.ohara.or.jp/en/ (accessed 6.05.2019)

[7] http://www.city.setouchi.lg.jp/museum/ (accessed 5.05.2019)

The city of Bizen and its vicinity are famous for their Bizen-style[8] ceramics – one of the three great Japanese ceramic styles. *Bizen* derives from a centuries-old tradition of firing ceramics in large furnaces (usually) heated with a special variety of pine wood. It is characterised by a rustic, austere beauty and simple, unglazed forms whose only decoration is due to the natural firing process. It bears decorative traces of fire and ash and often also resin melted at high temperatures (about 1300 degrees Celsius).

The Bizen region is also home to the Shizutani Gakkou[9] (Shizutani School), one of the oldest public schools in the world and the oldest in Japan, founded in 1670.

The city of Osafune is home to the famous Sword Museum dedicated to the Japanese sword, the katana.[10] Selected exhibits from the collection will be on display in Poland at the Manggha Museum in Kraków in October 2019. Osafune is one of Japan's most important historical centres of sword production. Of the 111 swords classified as national treasures of Japan, almost half were forged in this town. There are active workshops making katana swords there to this day.

And finally, the museum dedicated to Takehisa Yumeji – self-taught painter, poet and traveller – in Oku,[11] located in the artist's family home and studio, a storey house in the European style moved from Tokyo.

It is in these surroundings that the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan carries on its operations.

The Activities of the Mission in 2012–2018

The Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan was formally established in 2014. However, it seems worthwhile to present its activities from before this time, which provided the impetus for its establishment.

The first major event in the Mission's pre-history was the co-organization, with Karol Czajkowski and Kuba Borysiak, of the Festival Without Borders[12] at the St John Bosco Salesian Educational Centre in Różanystok in 2012. My task was to find Japanese musicians and arrange their travel to Poland. Two Japanese duets came: Kazuhiko Nakagawa and Chie Inoue, playing traditional Japanese music on *shakuhachi* and *koto*, i.e. bamboo flute and Japanese harp, and Mao Tsuji (voice, guitar) and Rui Kitagawa (percussion, *suzu* drum) performing their own contemporary compositions.[13]

The Festival led to workshops and concerts in many concert venues and schools in Podlasie Province as well as meetings with young people, who in most cases were experiencing Japanese music and culture (traditional and contemporary) live for the first time (ill. 1). The Festival also resulted in the release of a CD, a documentary film and music videos. Articles about the events were also published in the Polish and Japanese press.

Afterwards, the city of Okayama, in gratitude for the festival and the invitation of Japanese artists to Poland, invited Polish musicians to perform in Japan in 2013.[14] The *Neurasja* ensemble composed of Asja Czajkowska (voice), Wojciech Traczyk (bass), Hubert Zemler (percussion), Marcin Ciupidro (vibraphone), and Karol Czajkowski (guitar) gave concerts in Tokyo, Kyoto, Setouchishi and Okayama at the renowned Shiminkaikan hall. The ensemble also conducted music workshops for the residents of Okayama, introducing the participants to the basics of Polish folk music (ill. 2). The events enjoyed the patronage of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and of the Polish Institute in Tokyo.

A year later, in 2014, the *New Painting from Poland and Japan*[15] exhibition was held at the Tenjinyama Bunka Plaza city gallery in Okayama (ill. 3). It was an important event, featuring over forty works by artists from Poland and Japan, organized with the support of the Polish Institute in Tokyo. The featured artists included Tomasz Milanowski, Radosław Predygier, Agnieszka Brzeżańska, Marcin Dutka, Monika Michalczewska, Agnieszka Słodkowska, Miłosz Koziej, Korenaga Kazuhiro, Ryouta Sato, Raku Gaki, Skat Linda and Hyuga Hiroe (ill. 4). A film was also screened inside the

[8] https://japan-brand.jnto.go.jp/crafts/ceramics-crafts/54/ (accessed 5.05.2019)

[9] http://www.city.bizen.okayama.jp/english/sizutani/detail.html (accessed 6.05.2019)

[10] http://www.city.setouchi.lg.jp/token/index.html (accessed 5.05.2019)

[11] https://yumeji-art-museum.com/ (accessed 5.05.2019)

[12] http://www.festiwalbezgranic.com (accessed 6.05.2019)

[13] The musicians were accompanied by Ae Kitagawa, Cultural Officer of Okayama Prefecture.

[14] https://instytut-polski.org/event-archives/archives-music/4272/ (accessed 6.05.2019)

[15] Młodawska-Bronowska (2014: 114)

Ill. 1.
Music Festival *Bez Granic* in Różanystok, Poland. Concert of the duo: Mao Tsuji, guitar and Rui Kitagawa, drums, 2012 (photo. Grzegorz Śledź)

Ill. 2.
Concert and workshop of the polish group Neurasja, Nishigawa Ai Plaza, Okayama 2013

Ill. 3.
Poster of the exhibition *New Painting from Poland and Japan* in Tenjinyama Bunka Plaza, Okayama, 2014

Ill. 4.
Exhibition *New Painting from Poland and Japan* in Tenjinyama Bunka Plaza, Okayama 2014

exhibition, the interview *Z wizytą u profesora Gierowskiego* (Visiting Professor Gierowski).[16]

2014 was also the year Prof. Jerzy Malinowski travelled to Okayama University with a series of lectures. It was an opportunity to meet the professor again. After talks and a presentation of my activities, a proposal was put forward to set up the Polish Art and Scientific Mission in Japan, which was finally established in 2014. Since then, things have accelerated.

2015 saw an international event, co-organized by the Mission – *Arte Ocupa*[17] – an artistic residency in Fukiya and Fuyori in Okayama Prefecture. The participants included artists from Japan (Raku Gaki, Skat Linda, Kazuhiro Korenaga, Matsumoto Gotaro), France (Bruno Dumont and Etsuko Kobayashi, a Japanese artist living in Paris), Poland (Radosław Predygier), Portugal (Nelson Cardoso, Carlos Henrich, Zambeze Almeida), Brazil (Veruscka Girio), Italy (Raffaele Collu) and Germany (David Hardy aka Suisse-Marocain). An abandoned 100-year-old school in Fuyori, in which the artists set up their studios, was adapted for the project. A film dedicated to *Arte Ocupa – Peace of Art*[18] was made with the financial support of the Polish Institute in Tokyo.

Additionally, the works created during the residency were displayed in an old wooden *shoju* factory in Takahashi. The exhibition and the residency garnered quite a lot of interest, with about 10,000 visitors. The event was held within the framework of Art Bridge Okayama.[19]

An Event Organised Within the Framework of Art Bridge Okayama

In the winter of 2015, the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan co-organized an exhibition of Polish posters, *Eye on Poland, New Graphic Design from Poland*,[20] at the Setouchi City Museum of Art in Ushimado (ill. 5). The exhibition of over a hundred contemporary Polish posters, books and CDs, prepared by curators Artur and Magdalena Frankowski, was shown in Japan, South Korea and India. The curators also gave a lecture on the Polish poster tradition (ill. 6). A catalogue was published.[21] Both the exhibition and the lecture met with considerable interest from the Japanese audience.

In the autumn of 2016, the Polish string ensemble Vołosi played a concert at the Oku Chuo Kominkan hall in Setouchishi, Okayama Prefecture (ill. 7). Performing were: Krzysztof Lasoń (violin), Stanisław Lasoń (cello), Jan Kaczmarzyk (violin), Zbigniew Michałek (violin), Robert Waszut (double bass). The concert was held under the auspices of the Polish Institute in Tokyo and was attended by over 400 people.

[16] *Z wizytą u Profesora Gierowskiego*, 2014: https://vimeo.com/89845418 (accessed 6.04.2019)

[17] http://noillyprattle.blogspot.com/2015/10/arte-ocupa-in-okayama.html (accessed 6.05.2019)

[18] "Peace of Art" https://vimeo.com/152004019 (accessed 6.04.2019)

[19] Financed by Okayama Prefecture, Fukutake Foundation, the Polish Institute in Tokyo and Japan Blue.

[20] https://culture.pl/en/event/eye-on-poland-new-graphic-design-from-poland (accessed 6.04.2019)

[21] The exhibition was financed by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw and supported by the Polish Institute in Tokyo.

Ill. 5.
Exhibition of the Polish Poster *Eye on Poland*, Setouchishi Museum of Art, Ushimado 2015

Ill. 6.
Curators Magdalena and Artur Frankowski giving lecture at the exhibition „Eye on Poland", Setouchishi Museum of Art, Ushimado 2015

Ill. 7.
Poster of the concert of polish group Volosi, Setouchishi Chuou Kouminkan, Oku 2016

Ill. 8.
Exhibition *Dimensions of Space* of professor Joanna Stasiak, Setouchishi Museum of Art, Ushimado 2017

Ill. 9.
Lecture of dr Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk *Polish Tradition of Painting on Silk*, Setouchishi Museum of Art, Ushimado 2017

The mission also supports events initiated by Polish institutions in Japan, including the Polish Institute in Tokyo and the Polish Film Festival in Okayama.[22] Films shown at the festival included Tadeusz Chmielewski's *Ewa chce spać*, Borys Lankosz's *Rewers*, Aneta Kopacz's *Joanna*, and Tomasz Śliwiński's *Nasza Klątwa*.

The mission also helps organise exhibitions (or initiates its own). In 2017, in cooperation with the College of Artistic Education at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, an exhibition of silk paintings by prof. Joanna Stasiak was presented at the Setouchi City Museum of Art in Ushimado.[23] (ill. 8) About twenty large and small-scale works on silk, made using a unique technique developed by Stasiak, were shown. Apart from the meeting with the author, the exhibition was accompanied by a lecture by dr Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, entitled *The Polish Tradition of Painting on Silk*. (ill. 9) The event was held with the patronage of the Polish Embassy in Tokyo, the Polish Institute in Tokyo, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw, and the Maria Grzegorzewska University.

The Mission also co-organised the exhibition of an art collective from Okayama in Paris at 59 Rivoli Chez Robert Electrons Libres.[24] Artists taking part in the exhibition included: Kazuhiro Korenaga, Yui Koretomo, Skat Linda, Raku Gaki, and Radosław Predygier. A film about the activities and residencies organised by the collective over the last couple of years in Okuyama, mostly in the town of Ohaga, was also featured during the show in addition to documentation from these activities. The event enjoyed the patronage of the Mairie de Paris, Chez

[22] https://pl.instytut-polski.org/event-archives/archives-film/5507/ (accessed 6.04.2019)

[23] http://iea.edu.pl/index.php/iea/index/pl/news/680 (accessed 16.04.2019)

[24] https://www.59rivoli.org/2017/04/19/de-paris-a-okayama/ (accessed 16.04.2019)

Ill. 10. Poster of the Polish Poetry event *Some People Like the Poetry*, Reness Hall, Okayama 2017

Robert Electrons Libres, 59 Rivoli, Japan Blue and Misaki Art World.

There was also an evening to popularise Polish poetry, *Some Like Poetry*,[25] held at the Reness Hall in Okayama (ill. 10). The lives and works of Adam Mickiewicz, Wisława Szymborska, Czesław Miłosz and Julian Tuwim were presented. The poetry was set to the music of Fryderyk Chopin, Michał Kleofas Ogiński, Jan Edmund Jurkowski and others, performed by Damian Kłeczek (classical guitar). The poems were recited in Polish by Radosław Predygier and in Japanese by Nobuko Akiyama, author of translations. It was probably the first presentation of Polish poetry in Polish in Japan, or at least in Okayama. The Polish Institute in Tokyo gave its patronage to the event.

Ceramic workshops were organised at the studio of the ceramic artist Shota Terazono in Ushimado, with Polish artists Maria Łoboda and Agnieszka Brzeżańska participating. They made ceramic items and learned the *noyaki* low-temperature firing technique.

In 2018, the Mission also extended its patronage to the puppet performance *Seasons of the Year* by Teatr Animacji from Poznań at the Hyakka Plaza in Saidaiji (Okayama Prefecture).[26]

Due to a series of serious natural disasters (typhoons, heat waves, earthquakes and floods) the remaining events planned for this year have been cancelled.

* * *

The activities of the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan in culture and art have also influenced economic developments, leading to the employment of Poles in the region. After many successful projects and events organized by the Mission, the director of a luxury hotel in Ushimado decided to hire Poles. Thanks to the Mission's efforts to link the hotel to an employment agency in Poland, about 10 Poles have found employment at the hotel so far.

* * *

The Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan is a rare example of a smoothly running civic initiative abroad, implementing large-scale, complex projects and artistic events, bringing Polish culture and art to the Japanese public, still largely unfamiliar with them, and to audiences who are far away from large cultural hubs like Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. It is an organisation created out of the need to stay close to Poland, to display Polish art even in distant parts of the globe, and to share Poland's Goodness and Beauty with other communities.

[25] https://pl.instytut-polski.org/event-archives/6654/ (accessed 16.04.2019)

[26] Directed by Kusunoki Tsubame, Watabe Shouhei lighting, Kuwahara Toshihiko music, art producer: Yoshizawa Ayumi. Actors: Marcel Górnicki, Aleksandra Leszczyńska, Marcin Chomicki, Mashu & Kei.

Bibliography

"Sprawozdanie z działalności Polskiej Misji Artystyczno-Naukowej w Japonii" (Report on the activities of the Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan), Sztuka i Krytyka (ed. Jerzy Malinowski, Grażyna Raj, Marcin Teodorczyk), 2019, nr 4 (79): 12–16.

Reiko Chiba, *Sesshu's Long Scroll*, Literary Licensing, LLC or

Statut Polskiej Misji Artystyczno-Naukowej, typescript, 2014

Wolf 2015 = Tom Wolf, *The Artistic Journey of Yasuo Kuniyoshi*, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington 2015

Nozomi Naoi, *Takehisa Yumeji*, Brill, Leiden 2015

Ohara Museum of Art, Vol. 1, Ohara Museum of Art, Ohara 1973

Kwangsik 2005 = Kwangsik, Kim, 'Route of the Korean envoys of Chosun Dynasty and their cultural legacy in Japan', paper at: 15th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: *Monuments and sites in their setting – conserving cultural heritage in changing townscapes and landscapes*, 17–21 October 2005, Xi'an, China

Eye on Poland 2015 = *Eye on Poland*, catalogue, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warszawa 2015

Online sources

https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/chugoku/okayama/ (accessed 6.05.2019)

http://www.ohara.or.jp/en/ (accessed 6.05.2019)

https://japan-brand.jnto.go.jp/crafts/ceramics-crafts/54/ (accessed 5.05.2019)

http://www.city.bizen.okayama.jp/english/sizutani/detail.html (accessed 6.05.2019)

http://www.city.setouchi.lg.jp/token/index.html (accessed 5.05.2019)

https://yumeji-art-museum.com/ (accessed 5.05.2019)

http://www.festiwalbezgranic.com (accessed 6.05.2019)

https://instytut-polski.org/event-archives/archives-music/4272/ (accessed 6.05.2019)

Młodawska-Bronowska 2014 = Jolanta Młodawska-Bronowska, *New Opportunities for Polish-Japanese Cooperation: Diagnosis and Prospects*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2014: 114.

http://dspace.uni.lodz.pl:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11089/16379/11–107_126-Rodowicz-Czechowska.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 6.05.2019)

http://noillyprattle.blogspot.com/2015/10/arte-ocupa-in-okayama.html (accessed 6.05.2019)

https://culture.pl/en/event/eye-on-poland-new-graphic-design-from-poland (accessed 6.0.2019)

https://pl.instytut-polski.org/event-archives/archives-film/5507/ (accessed 6.04.2019)

http://iea.edu.pl/index.php/iea/index/pl/news/680 (accessed 16.04.2019)

https://www.59rivoli.org/2017/04/19/de-paris-a-okayama/ (accessed 16.04.2019)

https://pl.instytut-polski.org/event-archives/6654/ (accessed 16.04.2019)

Films

Peace of Art 2015 = *Peace of Art*, dir. Radosław Predygier, 2015, 42 mins, Japan https://vimeo.com/152004019 (accessed 6.04.2019)

Z wizytą u Profesora Gierowskiego 2014 = *Z wizytą u Profesora Gierowskiego*, dir. Radosław Predygier, 2014, 35 mins, transl. Patrycja Niedbalska-Asano, Masaru Asano https://vimeo.com/89845418 (accessed 6.04.2019)

Kazuhiro Korenaga
Akaiwa Art Rally, Soja Artists Residence

To Connect Region and People through Art

Okayama is located on the west side of Japan, between Osaka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima.

The climate is warm, with wonderful nature, tasty fruit, and a rich culture and history.

Okayama City is known for its Japanese garden, Koraku-en, which is one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan.

The prefecture is also famous for its tradition of making Japanese katana swords in Osafune City. Some swords from the Osafune Sword Museum will be exhibited in Kraków in November 2019.

The Prefecture is also famous for Bizen-style pottery, one of the three main pottery styles in Japan.

There are three unique museums in Okayama Prefecture.

The first is the Ohara Museum of Art, located in the city of Kurashiki, famous for its traditional streets and buildings in the Old City area.

The Ohara Museum of Art is the first collection of Western painting in Japan, with paintings by El Greco, Matisse, Picasso and many other famous European artists.

The second is the Nariwa Museum of Art, which displays the works of Torajiro Kojima, a painter who collected works in Europe for the Ohara Museum of Art in Kurashiki.

This building is the first art museum created by the world-renowned architect Tadao Ando, who afterwards built art galleries all over the world.

For example, on Naoshima Island near Okayama, he also designed a unique art museum, Chichu Museum, which is located underground.

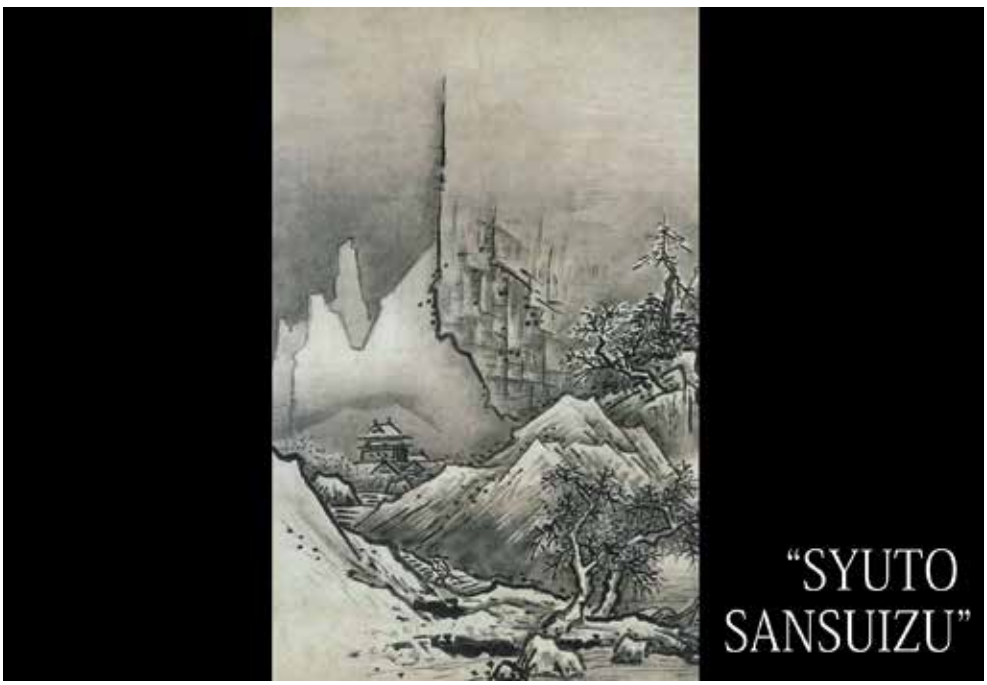
The third museum is the Nagi-cho Contemporary Art Museum, located in the north of Okayama. It was designed by Isozaki Arata, the same architect who designed the Manggha Museum in Kraków, Poland.

This museum is the effect of the architect's collaboration with three artists: Shusaku Arakawa, Aiko Miyawaki and Kazuo Okazaki, with whom he created a permanent exhibition of three rooms devoted to the Earth, the Moon, and the Sun.

And three famous painters were born in Okayama.

The first is Sesshu Toyo (1420–1506). He was born at Soja City and drew original landscapes based on Chinese paintings. One of his ink paintings, a winter landscape called *Shuto Sansuizu*, is designated as a national treasure. (ill. 1)

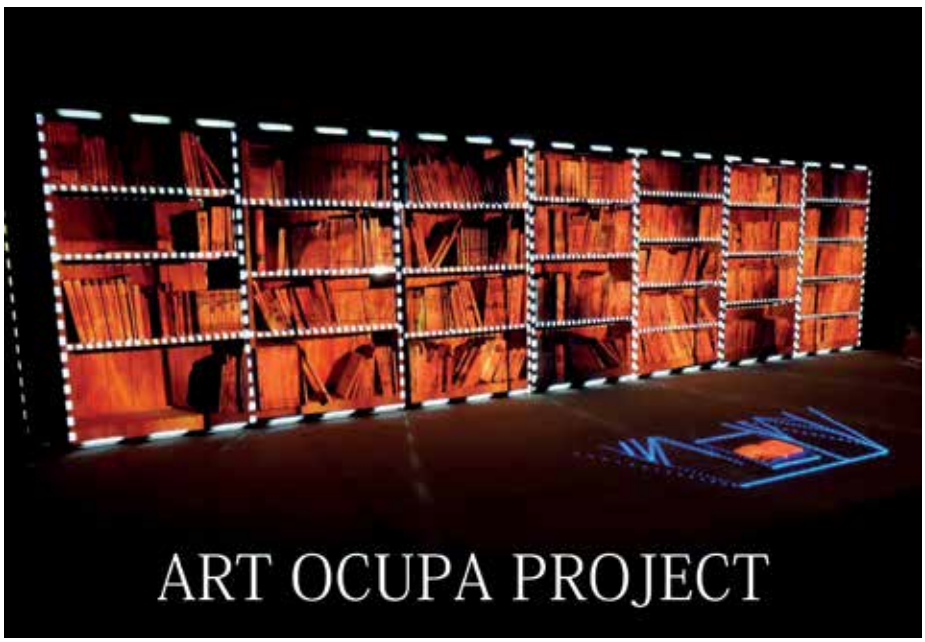
What is very interesting for me about this painting is the fact that the upper half of this picture is drawn in an abstract manner. Leonardo da Vinci played an active part in Italy at the same time.



Ill. 1.
Sesshu Toyo,
Sansuizu Fuyukei,
ink on paper, Tokyo
National Museum

Ill. 2.
Kazuhiro Krenaga,
視座, view Point –
HIROSHIMA, 2016,
paper, ink jet,
800×1520 mm

Ill. 3.
Kazuhiro Krenaga,
視座, view Point
– *AUSCHWITZ*,
2016, paper, ink jet,
800×1520 mm



Ill. 4.
Art Ocupa project, Verscka Girio, 2015

However, landscape painting was not yet an independent art genre there.

Last year, I also exhibited a project with the motif of these two great masters: Leonardo da Vinci and Sesshu Toyo. (ill. 2, 3)

The second artist is Takehisa Yumeji (1884–1934). Born in Oku-cho, he is famous for his drawings and paintings of female *ennui* – melancholic and sad-looking women. He was also a poet and travelled a lot around the country. He also travelled to the United States and Europe.

The third artist is Kuniyoshi Yasuo (1889–1953). He was born in Okayama City and worked in New York. During World War II, he was persecuted because he was Japanese.

In recent years, a number of large-scale art events have been held in Okayama.

The most famous is the Setouchi International Art Triennale. During this art festival, artworks by artists from all over the world are presented on the islands of the Seto Inland Sea – a sea very similar to the Aegean due to its picturesque landscape with a lot of small islands. The idea of the event is to attract visitors from around the world to come and see not only the artworks, but also their location and landscape.

I have also organized various art events at the request of Okayama Prefecture.

One of them is the ART OCUPA PROJECT, which we realized in 2015. (ill. 4)

Thirteen artists from Portugal, France, Brazil, Poland, Italy, and Japan stayed for one month in Fukiya, a small mountain town in the north of Okayama Prefecture.

Three artists came from Portugal: Carlos Henrich created drawings with Indian ink and bengara, a locally extracted red pigment. He also made bamboo flutes. Zanbeze Almeida created a range of small accessories made from scrap plastic and metal. Nelson Cardoso sculpted a three-dimensional figure of a bowing Japanese. He used laminated and glued cardboard paper as material.

Three artists also came from France:

Suisse Marocain created energetic drawings with fantastic figures and animals, Bruno Dumont made an ecological 'art toilet', Etsuko Kobayashi (a Japanese artist living in Paris) created paintings with girls as the motif.

Verscka Girio, who came from Brazil, created computer graphics and used projection mapping to display them in the local interiors.

Radek Predygier from Poland made videos and painted very long paintings on cotton canvases.

Raffaele Collu from Italy painted images with Japanese-style flowers.

Four artists came from Japan. Kazuhiro Korenaga made a series of silkscreens using bengara red and black pigments. Rakugaki and Skat Linda produced various paintings and objects, and Gotaro Matsumoto produced a series of reliefs using numerous materials such as cloth, cotton, wood and metal on 90 x 180 cm wooden boards.

For this event we rented an old elementary school in Fuyori, for many years abandoned, and

Ill. 5.
Soja Art House – 100 year old building

Ill. 6.
Ancient and modern Iron work – comparative exhibition, Soja Art House, 2017

there we produced artworks, hosted visitors, and made performances.

I was also asked, for the purposes of this event, to reopen the International Villa – a very beautifully located hostel in Fukiya.

Constructed for travellers from abroad, the building had not been used for seven years because of an insufficient number of visitors and stood abandoned and empty.

Not only did we open the place again, but it has now been reborn as a guest house which serves as a place to stay for visitors coming to enjoy the charm and quiet of Fukiya.

Fukiya is famous for mining a red pigment called bengara which is known not only locally but across Okayama. It is also renowned for a high-class mushroom called Matsutake in Japan, which we sometimes enjoyed together with the locals while creating and interacting with them for a month during our art project there.

The ambience of this residence was very inspirational for many visitors who either took part in the creation process – like a musician who spontaneously gave an impromptu concert, or a young man travelling across Japan on a bicycle who came an especially long way to visit the place.

In the small towns, where people don't usually get much art, doing art events revives buildings that had not been used for many years and creates

exchange with the local people, bringing back to them the energy and joy of life.

The Soja Art House is located in the Soja area, where the previously mentioned artist Sesshu was born. (ill. 5, 6)

This building is a large, 100-year-old Japanese-style wooden house with a garden and a storehouse.

I have renewed this house, which has been vacant, and transformed it into a gallery, with a bar and a guest room where one can stay, as it also serves as an artist in residence project.

There are various exhibitions, music and performances there.

One of them was an exhibition designed to compare the ancient and modern iron-making process, another one, an exhibition and a talk devoted to the life and work of two great artists of old times – Leonardo da Vinci and Sesshu.

Katarzyna Nowak
The Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology, Krakow

Japan's Living National Treasures and their exceptional presence at the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology

Living National Treasure (*Ningen Kokuhō*) is an honorary title conferred by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology of Japan to outstanding Japanese artists preserving cultural properties designated as national treasures (Article 71(1)). According to the relevant act of 1950 (art. 71(1)), these may include intangible cultural properties such as: *gagaku, nō, bunker, kabuki, kumiodori* (music, dance and performing arts, ceramics, fabrics, lacquerware, metal, dolls, wood, paper), namely artistic craftsmanship. The category includes the exceptional artistic skills of persons who have reached a high level of mastery in their field and are authorized to sustain, promote, pass on and perfect their work for the sake of Japanese tradition.

There are three types of certificates in Japan:

Individual Certification, 各個認定 *Kakko Nintei*

Collective Certification, 総合認定 *Sōgō Nintei*

and Preservation Group Certification, 保持団体認定 *Hoji Dantai Nintei*

Of these three types, the individual Living National Treasure certificate is only awarded to persons who have achieved high mastery in a given field of art. As a rule, only these persons are referred to as Living National Treasures.

The collective certificate is awarded to small groups working together which have achieved exceptional mastery in an art or craft.

A group certificate refers to larger groups that have a high level of mastery in one of the arts or crafts listed above.[1]

Every year, the Japanese government allocates big scholarships for the activities of Living National Treasures. Some of them are expended in Japan itself, but the presence of their holders outside the country is no less important. Japanese culture is promoted abroad through the activities of the Japan Foundation, embassies and other institutions, exploiting the cultural potential of Japan and indirectly building its unique presence in the world.

From the very beginning, the Manggha Museum has offered a sophisticated and unique cultural programme. Apart from the tea ceremony, *bonsai, origami*, traditional and popular elements of Japanese culture, unique events have also been held: *isekatagami*, *wagashi*, nō and kyogen, *bunraku*, *kamigata*, *hikifuda*, *heike biwa*, *yakumogoto*, *bugaku-hoe*, *shinnai*, *gagaku*, *nihon buyō*, and *jiutamai*. From the very beginning, outstanding artists –

[1] https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/ (accessed 8.05.2019).

Living National Treasures – have made appearances at the museum.[2]

Tamasaburuo Bandō V is an outstanding *onnagata* actor of *kabuki* theatre.

Born in 1950, he received the title of Living National Treasure in 2012.

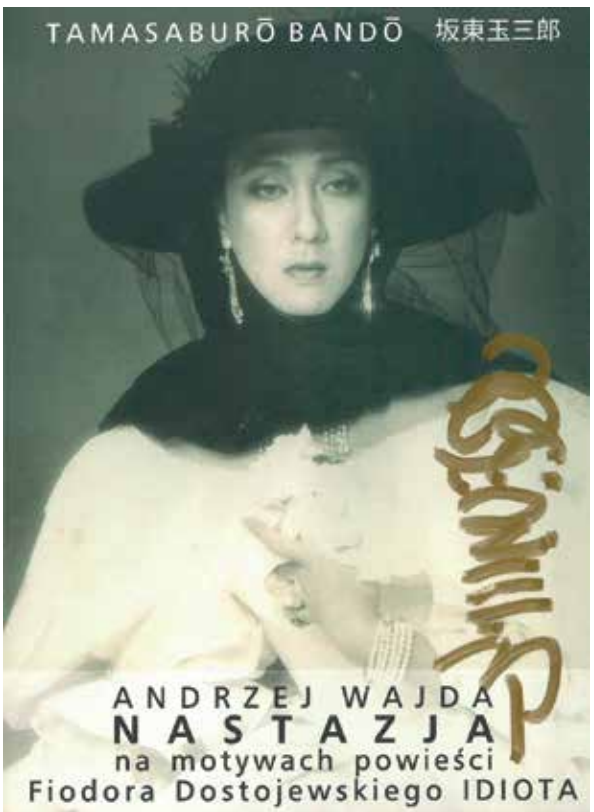
Tamasaburō Bando is an exceptional figure in the world of *kabuki* theatre. Like almost all of the most famous *kabuki* actors, Tamasaburō devoted his life to theatre from a very young age. At the age of six, he began to perform under the name Kinoji Bandō as a student of Kan'ya Morita XIV. He quickly assimilated the skills of the *onnagata*, i.e. female role player. During the *shūmei*, the stage name ceremony, in 1964, he took on his current name, Tamasaburō Bandō V. At present, Tamasaburō Bandō is considered the most outstanding *onnagata* in Japanese theatre.

He played a unique double role in Andrzej Wajda's 1989 Tokyo production *Nastasja*, starring as both Prince Mishkin and Nastasja. In 1994, Wajda made a film with the same actor and title.

We can read about Wajda's encounter and cooperation with this outstanding Japanese artist on the website www.wajdaarchiwum.pl in a description developed by Wioletta Laskowska-Smoczyńska:

"In 1981, Krystyna and I went to Japan and in Kyoto we see a poster over a theatre entrance: a woman of exceptional beauty. They are playing La Dame aux Camélias. Let's go and see. At eleven o'clock in the morning the show begins, I turn around; the audience is grey-haired and I am the only man. The curtain rises and the adaptation of La Dame aux Camélias begins, but the title role, as I quickly find out, is played by an onnagata – a kabuki theater actor, a man who looks just like the woman in the photograph. He is surrounded by actors, some men, but there are also actresses, and it was simply astonishing that he was much more feminine on the stage than they were. 'This is my Nastasja!', I thought then."[3] (ill. 1)

The sight of the beautiful woman on the poster got Wajda intrigued. When he found out that she – he – was the most outstanding contemporary *onnagata*, he dreamt of casting him in two roles at the same time: the first typical of Tamasaburō's repertoire, as Nastasja Filipovna, and the second –



Ill. 1. Cover of a limited edition DVD of *Nastasja*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, starring Tamasaburō Bandō V, with the actor's autograph

unusual, Tamasaburō's debut in a male role, that of Prince Mishkin.

But he had to wait. For many years he joked that it was the longest time he ever had to wait for a woman. A few years passed before the project began to take shape. This was due not so much to the busy schedule of both artists as to the Japanese actor's hesitation with regard to Mishkin's role. Here it is worth mentioning a story told by Krystyna Zachwatowicz-Wajda, who prepared a very simple, white suit for the artist. When Tamasaburō put it on, he was somewhat embarrassed and asked if he did not look strange it in. Playing a male part, as it turned out, was quite a challenge for him.

Thanks to the involvement of many people, especially in Japan (including Misako Ueda – producer and artistic director of Theatre X, who had been cooperating with Poland and performing a Polish repertoire for many years; Takashi Wada – the producer of *Nastasja*; and Etsuko Takano), the premiere of *Nastasja* took place at the Benisan Pit Theatre in Tokyo on 1 March 1989.

This is how Andrzej Wajda remembered that day in his notebook:

[2] For more, see: http://manggha.pl/ (accessed 8.05.2019).

[3] http://wajdaarchiwum.pl/sciezki-tematyczne/zwiazki-z-japonia-1 (accessed 8.05.2019).

Ill. 2.
Andrzej Wajda and Wakasanojō Tsuruga XI during the meeting at Manggha Museum, photo. A. Janikowski

Ill. 3.
Andrzej Wajda, Krystyna Zachwatowicz-Wajda, Wakasanojō Tsuruga XI (second from the left), Akira Matsui (first on the right) and members of the Shinnai ensemble before the performance at the Manggha Museum

"Today is the premiere. A happy day, joy that one's dream from many years ago has come true. That I could work with Tamasaburo, admire his talent close up and every day." He wrote the following about Tamasaburō himself:

"Independence is a mark of the artist. That's what Cybulski was like and that's what Tamasaburo is like. When he starts playing, I can see there isn't much of my work there. What was the subject of deliberations, trials, talk is in the background somewhere. There was so much trouble, and now we're in a different place."

Fortunately, after many years, one can get a taste of that production, at least partly, thanks to the film *Nastasja* which Wajda made in Warsaw in 1994 after the actors already had some 100 performances in Tokyo and Osaka behind them.

The film *Nastasja* is unique in Polish cinema. It also exposed the Polish audience to an outstanding Japanese *onnagata* actor.

Wakasanojō Tsuruga XI, a cantor, *shinnaibushi*, received the title of Japan's Living Treasure in 2001. *Shinnai* – a traditional Japanese sung narrative genre – is a story partly sung and partly told by a cantor (narrator), who is accompanied by two musicians playing the shamisen. (ill. 2, 3)

Tsuruga XI Wakasanojō was born in 1938 in Tokyo as Yukichchi Takahashi. He began his education at the age of 10 under the guidance of his father, Isedayu Tsuruga I, who was also a *shinnai* cantor. In 1999, he became the 11th *iemoto* (director) of the Tsuruga School and since 2000 has been known by his current name, Wakasanojō Tsuruga,

which the head of the school has been entitled to hold since the times of Wakasanojō Tsuruga I.

Outside Japan, he has performed in many countries across Europe, North and South America and Asia. He is widely appreciated for his skill and exceptional vocal range. Besides performing and reactivating classic *shinnai* works, Wakasanojō also writes uncomplicated plays in order to popularize the genre among the general public. He also composes music to *rakugo* stories (told on the stage) and collaborates with traditional theatre companies.

S*hinnai* was created by Wakasanojō Tsuruga I (1716–1786), who began to compose and perform sung narratives in the 1770s. This musical style became very popular thanks to the exceptional performances of his talented disciple Shinnai Tsuruga, after whom the genre was ultimately named. *Shinnai* is still performed without major changes in the original, austere eighteenth-century style. It is distinguished from other types of dramatic art by a strong emphasis on human feelings and passions, emotionally conveyed by the cantors during the performance.

The performance featuring Wakasanojō Tsuruga XI was held at the Manggha Museum on 18 March 2011, only a few days after the devastating tsunami and biggest earthquake in Japan in recent years.

The Kraków audience, moved by the events in Japan, came out in great numbers. The event turned into a very moving and exceptional display. Right after the performance all of the revenue was donated to Wakasanojō Tsuruga for victims in Japan, and many people bought several tickets to support the Japanese. The cantor's extraordinary artistry, the repertoire and the emergency situation in Japan as well as the extraordinary, memorable presence of this Living Treasure of Japan will always be remembered in our museum.

Manji Inoue, born in 1929, received the title of Japan's Living Treasure in 1995. He is a ceramic artist specialising in *hakuji* white porcelain and one of the most outstanding contemporary makers of *hakuji*. (ill. 4)

Hakuji (literally: *white porcelain*) is a type of Japanese porcelain made of high-quality white clay covered with a colourless glaze. White porcelain was invented in China towards the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589). At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Nabeshima Naoshige, a Japanese feudal lord from the Saga clan, brought a group of Korean ceramists to Japan. Among them was the famous maker Ri Sampei, who discovered high-quality white clay in the vicinity of Mount Izumi (Japanese *Izumiyama*) in 1616. Its use gave rise to the production of *hakuji* vessels. The production technique in this particular case is considered to be extremely difficult, as fine pollen can easily drift into the furnace during the firing, staining the porcelain and spoiling the painstaking process.

The master's approach to his art is characterized by exceptional austerity and formal discipline. As he says himself, 'the most important element in the process of making white porcelain is the shape, because the shape is a project in its own right'. His works can be found in the collection of the Manggha Museum. Manji Inoue has visited our museum twice. Here is what he said during his stay in Kraków:

"Getting to know the secrets of ceramics is not an easy task. The extraordinary effort to be made in order to successfully realize the original idea (project), the rules to be followed by the artist who constantly improves his technique, or talent, should always be supported by a look into the soul and severe self-criticism. Once chosen, the 'porcelain path' – based on constant skill improvement and an awareness of one's own capabilities – is more difficult the more thoroughly we want to get to know it. On the other hand, however, it involves an extraordinary joy and pleasure. In this field it is not possible to achieve proficiency within a short period of time because the process is a result of the enormous amount of work that we have to put into each action.

And I don't only mean the rules imposed by the old tradition. It is a constant struggle with the nature of the furnace, the raw material and the fire. An important role is also played by the search for and development of new forms. However, it should be done in such a way that the creator does not lose what is traditional and historical. Working within the tradition, we must also remember that it is our obligation to cultivate a sense of beauty. This should be the overarching goal both in relation to the values associated with education (the transfer of skills to successors) and the emotions due to the young age of students." [4]

[4] From a lecture given by Manji Inoue on 26 May 2007 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. The lecture accom-

The history of craftsmanship in Japan dates back many centuries to ancient times and is full of numerous influences, mainly Chinese and Korean. These influences were gradually absorbed and elaborated, which led to the creation of works expressing the Japanese artistic temperament. In 2016, the Manggha Museum held an exhibition of contemporary Japanese craftsmanship. The exhibits reflected various materials such as ceramics, glass or lacquer. One of the featured artists was Sayoko Eri, born in 1945, who received the title of Japan's Living National Treasure in 2002. (ill. 5)

Kirikane is a decorative technique using gold, silver and platinum flakes, usually applied to Buddhist statues and paintings. The technique itself was imported from China during the Tang Dynasty (618–907). The oldest example is Tamamushino Zushi at Horyuji Temple. *Kirikane* developed intensively from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. This was followed by a long period of stagnation, which is why the knowledge of those familiar with the technique and promoting it today is of such value.

Sayoko Eri was born to a family of Japanese embroiderers, where she learned Japanese painting and dyeing at an early age. She started doing *kirikane* in 1974, significantly influenced by her husband, Eri Kokei, a sculptor of Buddhist reliefs. After gaining mastery, she tried to expand her reach as an artist, actively using the *kirikane* technique not only for traditional Buddhist paintings, but also in modern craftsmanship. Sayoko Eri's work includes items such as boxes, trays, incense burners, green tea containers and other items for everyday and extraordinary use. She has received several awards for her knowledge of *kirikane*.

The exceptional presence of Living Treasures of Japan allows the Polish audience visiting the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology to come into contact with world-class specialists and experience the direct transmission of Japanese traditions by outstanding artists.

Ill. 4. Manji Inoue

Ill. 5. Contemporary Japanese Crafts from the Japan Foundation collection, 1.03–15.05.2016, poster

panied the opening of Manji Inoue's *hakuji* porcelain exhibition at the Manggha Museum (on display from 26 May to 29 July 2007). Translation into Polish: Wioletta Laskowska-Smoczyńska.

Online Sources

https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/ (accessed 8.05.2019).
http://manggha.pl/ (accessed 8.05.2019).
http://wajdaarchiwum.pl/sciezki-tematyczne/zwiazki-z-japonia-1 (accessed 8.05.2019).

Sources

A lecture given by Manji Inoue on 26 May 2007 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.

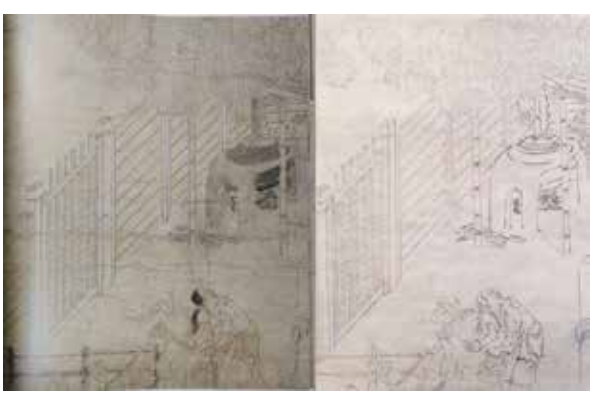
Rina Matsudaira
Sony Music EPIC Records Japan

Inspired by the Classics of East Asia. Searching for a meeting place of narratives and paintings

The classical painting technique that I studied at Kyoto City University of Arts, in the Japanese Painting Department, motivated me to think about what it is based on and how it has been influenced by multiple factors such as societies, technologies, and people's habits or ideas. But what I have been interested in most is the relationship between the techniques and the painting subjects, such as anecdotes and historical subjects.

Above is the picture of a 'reproduction', the traditional method of learning Oriental painting techniques. The left side of the photo is the copybook[1] and the right side is what I drew. (ill. 1) By reproducing the work, we try to experience and understand the author's intention. But it's not easy to know what they truly felt inside. That made me interested in the historical background of artworks.

For centuries in the Western art world historical painting was at the top of the painting hierarchy. In Japan during the Meiji period, when a new painting genre called 'Japanese painting' was born, paintings on historical subjects were given high status, for example narrative paintings and *intaiga* historical paintings (a type of Chinese painting associated with the Imperial Court Academy during the Song Dynasty in China).



Ill. 1 Shigemi Komatsu, series: *Nihon no emaki (4) Shigisan Engi Emaki*, Chuou Kouron, 1987

At that time, Chinese historical events and classical literature were widely known in the countries of East Asia, and a lot of people there were familiar with both their own domestic classics and Chinese classics.

I believe it is still meaningful for us to paint anecdotes, even though we have less knowledge of classics than the people of those times.

Historical subjects have often been associated with nationalism. In modern Japan, in order to lift the spirit of the war, such subjects were often drawn.

[1] Shigemi Komatsu, the series *Nihon no emaki (4) Shigisan Engi Emaki*, Chuou Kouron, 1987.

Ill. 2. Instalation view: Rina Matsudaira solo exhibition *Gazing at Evil Retribution – Painting the images of The Record of Miraculous Events in Japan* (Nihon, Ryōiki), 1–11 November 2018, KAHO GALLERY, Kyoto

Ill. 3. Kyokai, *The Record of Miraculous Events in Japan (Nihon Ryōiki)*, Kofukuji temple, 904

After World War II, reflecting upon this and taking advantage of the economic boom, 'Japanese painting' for the domestic market was produced on a large scale. By this time it was the market that defined 'Japanese painting' rather than subject matter or technique.

To counter this trend, especially after the 1990s, strategic uses of 'Japanese painting' have been made by world-renowned artists like Takashi Murakami.

Today, the definition of 'Japanese painting' is becoming vague. It cannot be defined by reference to painting technique or subject. This has led to the loss of the technique itself. I think we should reassess the history of interaction between the techniques and the subjects to convey the painting techniques of East Asia. So I am trying to construct a new type of historical painting that references narratives.

I had a solo exhibition in Kyoto in autumn 2018 – its title was *Gazing at Evil Retribution – Painting the images of 'The Record of Miraculous Events in Japan (Nihon Ryōiki)'*. The venue was KAHO Gallery, a gallery in the *Sukiya-zukuri* style whose architecture is based on the style of a Japanese tea ceremony building. (ill. 2, 3)

The Record of Miraculous Events in Japan[2] is the oldest collection of 'Buddhist anecdotes' in Japan, with multiple mysterious tales from the fifth through ninth centuries. They are based on the principle of 'karmic retribution' (*inga ōhō*), where a good deed brings about happiness and an evil deed leads to misfortune.

They were compiled by Kyōkai, a Buddhist monk in late eighth- or early ninth-century Japan, for the purpose of spreading Buddhist teaching among ordinary people and adapting the principles of Buddhism to the conditions of Japanese society. He also intended to translate orally transmitted Japanese anecdotes into Chinese and introduce them to China.

This story also has modern translations from several publishers.

In my exhibition, I focused on the 'anecdotes of evil retribution' as the main subject. As Kyokai had changed the 'sound' of the anecdote into its 'character', describing the minds of people at that time, so I attempted to depict the minds of people living in today's modern society.

Each picture corresponds to one story. For example, these three stories illustrated with pictures are warning against killing life.

This refers to the story of a man who caught a rabbit, skinned it alive, and then turned it loose in the fields. Afterwards, pestilent sores broke out all over his body and he finally died.

In this picture, a man in modern clothing wearing rabbit headgear sits with his smartphone on his lap. The rabbit here, bound and hung from a tree, suggests a person who has been hurt by someone. He treats rabbits cruelly because he has no mercy, but he deceives his weak heart by attacking other people. (ill. 4)

This is the story of a young man who ate eggs and died. At that time, eating eggs was considered to be a crime of killing life, so his legs were burnt in retribution for eating them. Red peppers are used here to represent flames. I don't think eating eggs is a bad thing, so I expressed the surprise of being accused of an unexpected crime. (ill. 5)

[2] Kyokai, *The Record of Miraculous Events in Japan* (*Nihon Ryōiki*), Kofukuji temple, 904.

Ill. 4. *Fate of Rabbit – quoted from The Nihon ryōiki*, colour on silk, 2018

Ill. 5. *Fate of Egg– quoted from The Nihon ryōiki*, colour on silk, 2018

Ill. 6. *Fate of Boar– quoted from The Nihon ryōiki*, colour on silk, 2018

The young woman in this story applied wild boar oil to her hair and went to listen to Buddhist teachings. The monk used his divine insight and saw that she was using animal oil, scolded her, and drove her out of the temple. This painting depicts vanity and the feeling of shame when someone sees through it. (ill. 6)

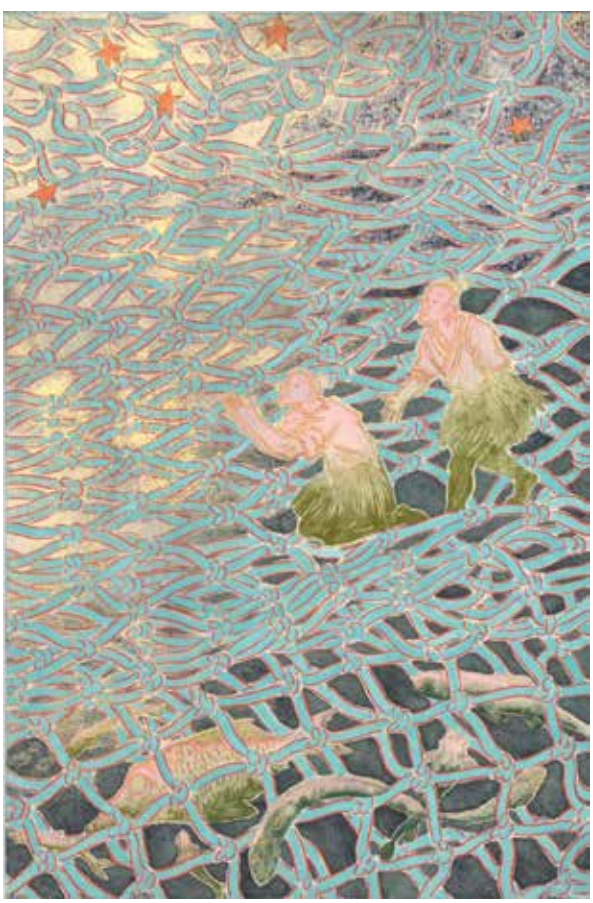
This is painted on a *Furosaki Byobu*, a folding screen for the tea ceremony. It is the story of a man who overuses his horses and kills them. In the end his eyes are boiled with steam from a large pot. I replaced the horses with workers who work for a company in terrible working conditions. I also drew the horses who secretly avenged themselves. (ill. 7)

The two men in this story were employed by a bad fisherman and had a hard time. On a stormy day, when their employer told them to go out on the river, they were carried out to sea and lost. They chanted '*Namu Amidabutsu*' while being swallowed by the waves and miraculously survived and eventually became monks. They were saved in spite of their job of killing life. The author seems to have empathy for suffering workers. (ill. 8)

When I read this story, I thought of the scene of the *Calling of the Apostles* in the Bible.[3] (ill. 9) There is a cultural gap between the two stories, but

[3] Matthew 4: 18–22; Mark 1: 16–20; Luke 5: 1–11.

Ill. 7. *Fate of Horse – quoted from The Nihon ryōiki*, colour on paper, Furosaki Byobu (folding screen), 2018



Ill. 8. *The Miraculous Draught* – quoted from *Nihon Ryōiki*, colour on paper, 2018

Ill. 9. Raffaello Sanzio, *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, 1515

the common motifs of fishing and salvation seem to suggest a calling.

Visitors to the exhibition finally reach the tea room in the inner part of the gallery. This is where the story of a mother and daughter is told. In the original story, the daughter refuses to give her mother food and dies by having a nail stuck in her chest for not being dutiful. I put a short novel based on this story beside the painting. It was written imagining why the daughter refused her mother from the viewpoint of each of them. I wrote it because I felt there was a problem that could not be judged in terms of just good and evil. (ill. 10)

In this exhibition, I prepared copies of the old text with modern translations beside every work, because most people will be reading these stories for the first time. I believe that it is important for

Ill. 10. *Nail in The Chest - quoted from The Nihon ryōiki*, ink on paper, 2018

Ill. 11-12. Japan Bible Society, Tokyo 1987–1988

Ill. 13. Harumachi Koikawa, *Kinkin-sensei's Dream of Splendor,* property of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, 1775

everyone to encounter a story as a living experience. I think it is desirable for artworks to help that.

Finally, I would like to talk a little about a project in progress at the National Institute of Japanese Literature, a research institute that archives Japanese literature and promotes collaborative research on it. As artists-in-residence there, artists are invited to the institute for a certain period of time, and through the classic literature they have, researchers and artists work together to create new art. (ill 11, 12)

The collection that I am most interested in is the work *Kinkin-sensei's Dream of Splendor*.[4] (ill.13) It is a small humorous illustrated book published and circulated in the middle of the Edo period in the eighteenth century, and it contains a lot of cynical things about society. The researchers leading the project specialize in this field, so I had them teach me how to read this book.

It tells the story of a man who comes from the countryside and dreams of being adopted by a rich man. He indulges in debauchery while called '*Kinkin-sensei*', but is later disowned by his adoptive family and, realizing the vanity of his glory, returns to his hometown.

To understand the structure of the book, I reproduced it and made a copy. Now I am studying what the author's life was like by asking the researchers. I plan to create a work that simulates the background of this book. Through these approaches, I hope to promote a better understanding of the close relationship between texts and images.

[4] Harumachi Koikawa, *Kinkin-sensei's Dream of Splendour*, property of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, 1775.

Akiko Kasuya
The Kyoto City University of Arts

Celebration: Between the Aesthetic and the Critical

Celebration: Japanese-Polish Contemporary Art Exhibition was organized to mark the centenary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Poland. It started in May 2019 at the Kyoto Art Centre, Nijojo castle, Rohm theatre Kyoto and Terminal Kyoto, and in Poland in Poznan at the end of May during Poznań Art Week and in June at TRAFO Szczecin. We selected 21 mostly emerging or mid-career artists from both countries, not only to show their respective works, but also to have them mutually cooperate and present the results of their collaborations, while taking steps to encourage ongoing and future exchange.

The exhibition was co-curated by Paweł Pachciarek and myself, and we carried out an investigative survey while the show's theme was being considered. We decided to focus on contemporary manifestations of an ephemeral and poetic aesthetic sensibility that can be expressed in Japanese as *mono no aware*, and on the keen critical gaze artists direct towards present-day society.

Refinement, affinity for nature, and the *mono no aware* sense of the transience of all things, are characterized as quintessentially Japanese traits and are visible in the work of emerging and mid-career Japanese artists as they are in the traditional arts, coming to light as a clear commonality during the preliminary survey of works. The prominent characteristics of Polish artists that one could cite include a sense of humour, sharp social critique, wit and intelligence. As Japan and Poland are geographically far removed and have very different histories and cultural backgrounds, at first glance they may seem to have little in common. However, despite the differences, with close observation certain noteworthy similarities come to light.

The sense of *mono no aware* often viewed as intrinsically Japanese can be seen in the work of Polish artists, and conversely, a close look at Japanese artists' work reveals a keen critical sensibility concealed beneath the serene surface. Here I would like to reexamine this zone 'between the aesthetic and the critical'.

100 Years Ago

As a nation, Poland disappeared from the map for more than a century, from 1795, when it was divided into three parts by the neighbouring powers, Prussia, Russia, and Austria, to 1918, when it regained independence. During this period, art played a major role in preserving the Polish identity. In the early twentieth century, when it attained long-sought independence, formalist artists sought to cast off academic influences and explored new modes of expression in a new social context against

the backdrop of Expressionism, heavily dominant in Europe at the time. Later, under the influence of Russian Suprematism and Constructivism, a distinctively Polish Constructivist movement appeared and many magazines were established in search of connections to broader society as well as to the international avant-garde of the day, including interactions with the Japanese art movement Mavo. New ways of relating to art, architecture and design in the machine era were pioneered.

Meanwhile, in Japan, the late nineteenth century had been a time of emergence from national isolation, and lifestyles changed drastically during the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho (1912–1926) eras. The search for artistic paradigms for this new era continued, even as the storm clouds of war gathered on the horizon. With the development of modern cities, popular culture took root, the glamorous Taisho Modern age unfolded, and the crucial cultural foundations of the Japan of today were laid. There were various new movements including the Shirakaba school, rooted in aestheticism, neorealism, and humanism, the proletarian cause, and Mingei (folk art), and the avant-garde gained momentum while absorbing overseas influences from Futurism and Dada.

Japanese Aesthetics: *Mono no aware* and a Critical View

Mono no aware is a concept difficult to define or translate, and is often left in the original Japanese in translations, as it is here. It was regarded as an aesthetic ideal in the court literature of the Heian Period (794–1185), and refers to certain emotions elicited by *mono* (things or objects). The heart is moved in a refined and graceful manner by a sense of *aware* (melancholy) at the transience of all things. It came to be associated with the aesthetic ideals developed in tandem with the tea ceremony in the late Muromachi period (the early sixteenth century), of *wabi* (the beauty of imperfection) and *sabi* (serenity evoked by aged and weathered things).

This aesthetic can be seen in the work of Tomohiro Higashikage. Higashikage was born in Takasago, Hyōgo Prefecture, in 1978. He completed the printmaking course at the Musashino Art School. In his early period he specialized in chalcography but gradually began to create three-dimensional works. He is known for his super-realistic heads of animals: a dog, hare, cow, hippopotamus, or a camel. The 'fur' he creates on the surface of the animals spreads out onto driftwood, the window frame of the exhibition venue, doorknobs, or handrails, becoming an expression of a completely covered world. The animal heads and fur are made by pasting soft, thin resin piece by piece onto the surface of the base like skin. Since the resin hardens and becomes difficult to process with time, the hairs of the fur must be painstakingly inserted using a needle, a work process requiring continual perseverance and delicacy. The artworks resulting from this patient task emit a powerful presence within a certain tranquillity. The facial expressions of the animals make them look like they are quietly meditating, though parts are also visible where the damaged skin is peeling off, and from certain angles the clear eyes evoke a feeling of eternity, while, from other angles, it looks as though the animals are sleeping, in this way conveying a sense that life and death are indeed two sides of the same coin. Higashikage spent a year in Kraków from 2017 on a grant from the Gotoh Memorial Foundation, sedimenting that experience and incorporating it into his body, presenting a new work on his return to Japan that more strongly reflected somatic sensations, and in which changes in light and shadow as well as the conflict between life and death visible even in daily life were more elaborately and dynamically expressed.

Another artist in the *Celebration* show, Meiro Koizumi, was born in Gunma in 1976 and lives and works in Yokohama. He has presented work at home and abroad that employs theatrical approaches to pose astute questions about various problems intrinsic to the relationship between the individual and the public, history, and memory. For *We Mourn the Dead of the Future*, featuring footage shot over a two-day workshop for high school, undergraduate, and postgraduate students, the young participants were asked to consider if they could sacrifice their own lives for someone or something, and if so, for whom and why, and if not, why not. They then read out a statement they wrote. In the resulting film, bodies lying prone on the ground like corpses are picked up one at a time, coming back to life after the declarations through an execution-like gesture (only for the footage then to wind backwards in the second half, bringing to mind a massacre). The participants were divided almost evenly between those who said they could sacrifice their life and those who said they could not. The shoot took place at what seems to be the

Ill. 1. Tomohiro Higashikage, *Conversion II*, 2018, photo by Takeru Korada / courtesy of Kyoto Art Center

Ill. 2. Tomohiro Higashikage, *Exist*, 2019, photo by Takeru Korada / courtesy of Kyoto Art Center

former site of Camp Drake, a United States army base. The scene evocative of a rebirth carried out in heavy rain is filled with tension and appeals directly to and shakes the emotions of the viewer. The solemn gestures of the participants advocate what is just and appeal for peace in the face of the many young lives lost in the wars of the past as well as the absurdity of our world where so many continue even today to perish through warfare, but also ultimately overlap with the reality whereby conflict is prolonged and the cycle of hatred never ceases. The reversing of time that happens partway through functions to block emotional immersion and would seem to leave the viewer in a strange state of limbo. Such manipulation brings about relative distance, resulting in a work in which aesthetic elements that include a certain resignation vividly coexist with caustically critical intervention.

The Polish 'Critical Gaze' and Sorrow

Karolina Breguła was born in Katowice in 1979. She graduated from the Film School in Łódź. She is active in photography, multimedia, installation art, and happening. Her highly valued work successfully conveys a spectrum of moods ranging from sadness to humour, in addition to analysing, with insight and delicacy, objects and people with which and whom she engages in profound relations. Her works have been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and at the 55th Art Biennale in Venice. She received the Deutsche Bank Foundation's VIEWS 2013 Award. She keenly and delicately analyses her subjects while engaging widely with the community, and is highly lauded for comedic works with a tragic edge. She consistently addresses various issues of community and shared memory, and in Japan she participated in the Tatsuno Art Project 2017 Tatsuno Art Sketch, where I serve as artistic director. She presented her operatic musical *The Tower*, humorously depicting utopian visions of, and disillusionment with, modernist architec-

Ill. 3.
Meiro Kozumi, *We Mourn the Dead of the Future*, 2019, photo by Takeru Korada / courtesy of Kyoto Art Center

Ill. 4.
Karolina Bregula, *Square*, 2018, photo by Takeru Korada / courtesy of Kyoto Art Center

Ill. 5.
Alicja Rogalska, *Onodera San's Dream for the Future*, 2018, photo by Takeru Korada / courtesy of Kyoto Art Center

ture, and the various problems of apartment blocks. Also, she and local residents held a filmmaking workshop called *Sketching Stories*, and created a short film entitled *Drifting*, inspired by a story about the poet and Tatsuno native Rofu Miki, who was separated from his mother as a young child and every day continued to wait for her return at the foot of a mountain, based on a script on the theme of waiting created with the residents. In the 2018 Tatsuno Art Project *Hybrid Orbit*, she presented the video work *Office for Monument Construction*, metaphorically portraying the establishment of virtual spaces as homes for people who are losing their identities and seeking comfort after the demolition of structures. In 2019, for the *Celebration* show at the Kyoto Art Center, she presented *Square*, produced in Taiwan. *Square* more directly addresses a sense of looming crisis and anxiety, and while bizarre and allegorical, asks the viewer how we ought to act in an age of crisis. In its adoption of a quiet but firm critical stance, it can be said to continue Poland's avant-garde traditions, but at the same time we can see turmoil and hesitation against the backdrop of reversals and the confusion of value systems in the post-Cold War era. And while its ambiguity challenges the viewer to think, the quality of the gentle, fleeting and beautiful images conveys the impermanence of all things and a sense of sadness and melancholy, *mono no aware*.

Alicja Rogalska was born in Ostrołęka in 1979, and is today based in London and active internationally. Her research-centred practice sees her engage in collaborations across various disciplines to produce work with a focus on social structures and the political subtexts of the everyday. Her main output comprises installations, films, performances, and situations within particular contexts. Adopting a straightforward stance whereby she tries to seek a 'better future', she has caused a stir in this era of contradictions. Against a backdrop of expansive fields in a sedate country town, *Broniów Song* (2012) saw Rogalska compose a song with a local folk music group that was rooted in everyday lifestyle. The performers sing its sad yet beautiful melody while dressed in vibrant folk costumes. The beautifully sung lyrics sonorously describe how Poland's democratization in the Eastern European revolutions of 1989 and joining the EU in 2004 ushered in continued economic growth for the whole country while also opening up disparity between the regional cities and farming villages, and leading to many problems such as increased unemployment and the emigration of young people. The viewer is struck by the gap between the tranquil and attractive pastoral landscape and the gravity of the lyrics, conveying a sense of anguish in the sorrow of the melody and the ambivalent facial expressions of the people at the same time as beguiling the viewer with the beauty of the footage and the heart-rending pain and humour of the lyrics. *Dreamed Revolution* (2014–2015) shows a workshop in which young people working for equality have been hypnotized and asked about the future 100 years from now. It reveals the difficulty of portraying an ideal future as well as, in particular, of imagining forms that can replace capitalism. *Mr Onodera's Dream of the Future* (2018) focuses on a male caregiver, comprising footage showing his daily life as well as elderly people's dreams of the future along with footage of his and Rogalska's conversation translated by Google software into imperfect English text, and then retranslated back into Japanese. Emerging from Rogalska's actual experience in Japan of imperfect yet somewhat funny communication that uses Google Translate, the reality of caregiving, and the 'jug' that she designed herself (and which it is possible to fill with your discontents), the artist plans to build on this opportunity to present the work in Kyoto and continue it as an ongoing project.

Summary

In this essay I have briefly examined some qualities of the works of Higashikage, Koizumi, Breguła and Rogalska. We can also find their common aesthetic quality and ephemeral poetics in the well-known works of Koji Kamoji (b. 1935) and Miroslaw Balka (b. 1958). In the past, I have discussed a feature of Polish art, which I call 'applied fantasy' that emerged during the country's troubled history. It was crucial that people support one another and share their wisdom in order to stand up and fight again, unbowed no matter how many times they are beaten down. The penetrating insight and humour, and the pathos from which they are inseparable, are actually values held in high regard in the small island nation of Japan, and found in traditions nurtured here over many years. Although the Polish sensibility and critical gaze, cultivated over the course of a long history, may on the surface differ from those of Japan, there are similarities to

be found between works by artists of the younger generations. Meanwhile, the aesthetics of defeat and the taste of tragedy, the sensibilities of *mono no aware,* a kind of sorrow – described as the poetics of the ephemeral, celebrating the beauty of something all the more because we know it is transient, of the moment destined to vanish – and sympathy for the underdog, support for the weak and the disadvantaged, thought of as distinctly Japanese, are also cited as characterizing the works of Polish artists. Poetic emotion that celebrates loneliness and a critical spirit that incorporates humour are seen in the work of artists from both countries.

* This article was supported by AMI, JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15K02116 and ICC Thesaurus Poloniae Research Fellowship 2019

Yoko Nakata
The BIWAKO Biennale, Osaka

20 years of the BIWAKO Biennale

The BIWAKO Biennale, which raised its voice on the shores of Japan's mother lake at the dawn of the twenty-first century, is about to turn 20. It once took place every three years, but since 2010 it has become a biennial taking place every two years.

Launched by the volunteer group Energy Field in 2000, the first BIWAKO Biennale was held in 2001 in Otsu.

After that, I moved the base to Omi Hachiman, and since then the activities have largely taken place in this town.

At the beginning, there were very few art festivals in the Japanese countryside (the Yokohama Triennale was in an urban area and the Niigata art festivals in rural areas started at roughly the same time as the BIWAKO Biennale). Although the awareness of the residents is low and they have had a hard time understanding, they have come out in increasing numbers to each new edition.

Having lived overseas for 20 years as of 2000, I started the BIWAKO Biennale because I had doubts about the state of 'development' in Japan. Postwar Japan's development had been remarkable, and the country has become an economic powerhouse, but is its spirituality equally rich? Everywhere in Japan, every station has a similar appearance. There is always a big supermarket filled with the same mass-produced goods. The station is the first place that travellers see. Despite being a place that should be the town's face, stations are the same all over Japan. Moreover, in the name of development, the culture and buildings unique to areas have been lost, and I felt nothing short of a sense of crisis to see town after town turned into a standardised monstrosity.

The BIWAKO Biennale sent the message that if there is something to be done in Japan, which has an old history and culture, it needs to be done urgently.

Fortunately, in Omi Hachiman, where my work is based, there are still many historical buildings, and by setting art and performances inside them, I admire the greatness of the buildings and recognise their value. When I first started, the buildings that were valuable to me were nothing but old and dirt-covered relics of the past, and many had been left for years without anyone living there.

It is a great task to rent buildings that are so damaged and haunted, to clean up inside and put works on display, but once that has been done and the works are in place, the building, which had been so desolate and dead before, enjoys a lively revival and an injection of new life. I always aim to integrate the work and the space, the latter also being a work of art itself, and to carefully build up the BIWAKO Biennale. It is a joy to see buildings

with a long history regain their original dignity. The greatness of every single interior is filled with an inspiring joy and non-verbal ambiance.

Omi Hachiman City is located in the eastern part of Shiga Prefecture, near Kyoto, and is a castle town built in the sixteenth century by Hidetoshi Toyotomi (Toyomi Hideyoshi's nephew). After that, utilizing the water transport of Lake Biwa, it prospered as the birthplace of the Omi merchant, and there are still scattered townhouses and remnants of this period. In a sense, I was lucky that I was spared great development because I was located a little away from the station.

However, many towns have been deprived of their original homes, with old properties turned into parking lots and modern buildings. In other words, the problem of many local cities is the outflow of young people and an ageing population.

Population is concentrated in cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, and local cities are suffering from population decline and depopulation. 'Art' is now in the limelight as a remedy.

In recent years, art festivals such as the Biennale and the Triennale, which initially went unnoticed, are being held in local towns.

As art intervenes in the town, young people flow in and revitalize the place. At the beginning, there was nothing left to visit in Omi Hachiman, but gradually the migration of young people has increased and a virtuous circle has been established in which cafés and boutiques etc. are beginning to flourish.

Plans are also underway to launch a new art centre and an artist-in-residence programme in 2020 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Biennale.

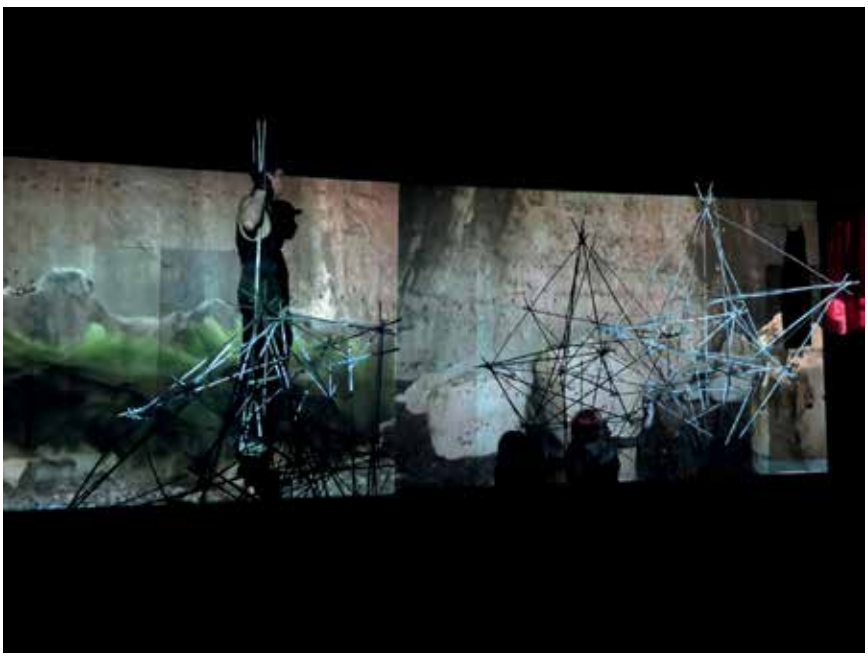
Bibliography

Biwako Biennale 2016, Eternal Dream, [catalogue], Osaka 2016.

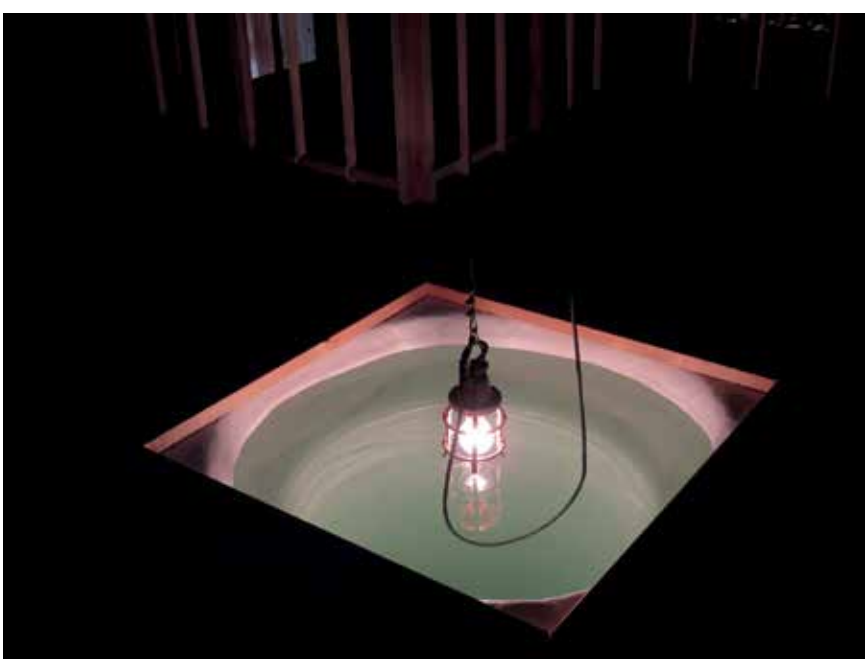
Online sources

https://energyfield.org/biwakobiennale/ (accessed 20.08.2019)

Ill. 1.
Mika Aoki, *Aquarium of life and death*, glass, 2010



Ill. 2.
Gabriela Morawetz, *Chronology of a Dream*, video installation, performance, Shoyu Factory 2016. Performer: Eri Ito (Sho player). Tarinainanika (Corporeal Mime performer)



Ill. 3.
Masato Tanaka, *The Paradox of the Blue*, water, wood, acrylic, light, motor, Japanese Sake brewery, 2016

Ill. 4.
Motoi Yamamoto, *Floating Garden*, salt, Japanese Sake brewery, 2016

Ill. 5.
Shimpei Kawai, *Magasanoaplas*, vinyl hose, mao pin, LED, etc., stock room of Japanese footwear, 2016

Ill. 6.
Makoto Egashira, *Blanket full of roses III*, blankets, 2016

Ill. 7.
Yu Tanaka, A bag containing something ceramic

Yasuyuki Saegusa
Faculty of Art, SOJO University, Kumamoto

Artists in residence in Kumamoto Prefecture 2010–2018

In Kumamoto Prefecture, artist in residences and art festivals are held in the Aso area surrounded by volcanoes. 'Genesis Exhibition' Art Fest was held for 6 years from 2010 to 2015 at the Aso Folk School in Takamori Town. In addition, the residency project 'Artist-in Aso' sponsored by Kumamoto Prefecture was held from 2014 to 2018. Both were held at Aso Volcano, a special location which has become a cross-cultural exchange art event site. 'Artist-in Aso' is a group of 5-7 artists staying in Aso's municipalities for three months. They stay in an area with old Japanese culture and engage in cultural exchange with residents there. Every year, artists from many countries apply for the project but 24 people have been invited (7 in 2014, 7 in 2015, 5 in 2017, 5 in 2018), of whom five were Polish. They interacted with many Japanese people, experienced nature and culture, and created new art works.

The 'Genesis exhibition' started in 2010 centering on exhibitions and discussions at elementary schools under the message 'Let's listen to the voice of the earth apart from a human-centered viewpoint' with the theme of 'volcano · art · human'. Nature sounded like a manifesto or a prophecy. The unprecedented natural disaster, the Great East Japan great earthquake, occurred on March 11, 2011, the following year. A massive nuclear accident also occurred, so Japan experienced devastating blows. In August of that year we held the exhibition 'Genesis – 2'. We set up an outdoor installation mainly with refugees from the earthquake disaster, with Ichi Ikeda, one of Earth Art's leaders there. The installation made with Kaya* was struck by a thunderstorm in the summer, and the fire was released at the end, connecting the heaven and the earth. Drought was followed by the heaviest torrential rain, in 50 years in 2012. A wide area of Kumamoto was hit by significant flood damage. Among these repeated natural disasters, an exhibition was planned in 2013 with the theme of 'What should

Ill. 1. *GENESIS - 1, Looking for NEW EARTH*, Aso International Art Medium "AIAM", 2010

Ill. 2
Ichi Ikeda, *L-shaped line segment to peace*, 2010

Ill. 3.
Ichi Ikeda, L-shaped line segment to peace, 2010

we leave in the future?' Activities from a series of Genesis exhibitions centering on themes such as 'nature, art, and human beings' led to an invitation from Tomasz Wendland of Poland to present at 'We Curate' in the Venice Biennale in June. In October 2014, at the international conference 'Post Global Future' in Poznan, Poland, we presented the activities of the Genesis exhibitions. At the same time Kumamoto Prefecture's cultural project 'Artist in Aso' began in Aso, and Katarzyna Szeszycka came from Poland to begin to create a residence.
For the 2015 'Genesis Exhibition' we invited Tomasz Wendland, the organizer of the Mediations Biennale, to be a panelist on a discussion with the director of the Kumamoto City Contemporary Art Museum. Finally, two artists from Poland, Pawel Jasiewicz and Agnieszka Roznowska, have participated as resident artists from 'Artist in Aso'.

Contemporary art is not only about individual expression; it is also a practical activity that creates new culture in various genres.

Mt. Aso is regarded as a 'power spot'. This is a place where the earth's core is linked to the earth's surface by a group of 300 thousand-year-old volcanoes.

The Genesis project connects artists from all over the world and symbolizes human activity and culture in relation to the natural environment.

The project takes place at the base of Aso, known as the 'womb of the earth' and a symbol of the origin of the earth and human endeavour.

Ill. 4.
GEO-GENESIS 2012'

In September 2010, the Genesis exhibition took place and about 6 months later, on 11 March 2011, there was a huge earthquake in Miyagi-oki. The earthquake on the east coast of Japan was followed by a giant tsunami wave from Touhoku's Pacific coast. The TV was broadcasting the tsunami as it covered fields and towns near the coast, turning them into piles of rubble. This scenery showed how man-made culture can be easily destroyed in the blink of an eye. The earthquake and the huge *tsunami* wave also destroyed the symbol of human advancement in technology – a nuclear power plant.

Strangely, the year before, in 2010, there had been a Genesis exhibition whose main message was 'if we look closely at this highly developed human-made environment, we realize that we must be more cautious about nature.'

After this incident, in August and September 2011, there was an exhibition took place. Artists participating in the theme of natural environment participated here:

Senri Nojima: installation titled *Walking people – ethics and art*, which gives a feeling of walking in the Aso forest.

Ichi Ikeda, a famous environment artist, made *L-shaped line segment to peace*, a large installation set up with the help of many volunteers in a school yard.

Many of the volunteers were young families who had fled Kantou because of their fear of radiation. Because of the threat of radiation, parents wanted to protect their children and decided to live in remote places. The people who took part in the exhibition included many young families taking refuge from the earthquake and very much aware of the power of nature.

They are an example of environmental migration.

Music instruments from scrap wood / Sound renovation in Aso 2011. Artists from the Sound Renovation group. About this work: instruments created from scrap wood. The wood hadn't been used for years and because of its specific form and material (scrap wood exposed to wind and rain), it started to make specific sounds.

The instruments were given an opportunity to start a brand new life.

Artist Kumi Kawashima made an installation entitled *Fictional Creatures*. About this work: based on the idea that 'a lot of fictional creatures are probably hiding in Aso'. Motifs of wind, grass, shadow, cloud and blank form. The audience draws a fictional creature referring to these four motifs, creating an exhibition of different kinds of creatures.

Performance artists Anna Grunemann and Christiane Oppermann from Germany. Their performance took place in the Aso caldera.

Ilka Theurich – also a German artist. Her performance was entitled *Fire Jump*. About this work: *Fire Jump* represented radioactivity as the element of fire. It was a roadside performance.

Ill. 5.
Tetsuo Yamamoto, *PARAISO,* installation, in frame of Genesis-4, 2013

Ill. 6.
GENESIS-5, Aso Earth Art Museum Project, 2014

Ill. 7.
The Kumamoto Prefecture artist-inresidence project started in 2014. This is a courtesy call visit for the governor of Kumamoto

Ill. 8.
The Kumamoto earthquake, 2016

Ill. 9.
From right: Mr. Sakurai, director of the Kumamoto City Museum of Contemporary Art. Next is Ikeda. The third is Tomasz Wendland, 2015

Anna Grunemann's work was *Zigeunerschnitzel* / intervention – video installation. She showed a cooking video. The same food prepared in three minutes in a microwave was placed near it. The audience thinks about the difference between the recipe they are preparing and the image on the screen. The meal and the scene of the meal start to make more sense, and the audience is both watching and eating at the same time.

We held another discussion panel, *Nature and humans*, in 2011. It was a time of big changes in people's way of thinking, not only in Japan but all over the world, because of the problem of radioactive pollution caused by the accident in the nuclear power plant. Not to mention the damage caused by natural disasters such as tsunamis or earthquakes.

About six months later, in May 2012, the 5th International UNESCO Conference on Geo Parks in the Unzen Volcanic Area and the Global Geopark commemoration exhibition took place at the Unzendake Museum of Natural Disasters. There was also an exhibition about searching for a new earth, 'GEO-GENESIS'.

We believe that contemporary art has a lot of value. We think that the Genesis exhibitions will trigger cooperation between people and the environment and that they are an excellent way to start talking about the future.

Ill. 10.
The artists-in-residence at Kumamoto Prefecture in 2018

The Genesis-4 exhibition took place 2013. Ichi Ikeda made an environmental installation entitled *Rest stand for the earth*. The system and the differences which have divided human beings, such as occupation, gender and nationality, have begun to melt. We are all one under the sun.

Nobuki Yamamoto arranged a cross from photographs taken after the earthquake and nuclear plant disaster and made a *goat hut without a master*.

Mamoru Abe made a sculpture, *A tree's spirit of the wind*.

Tetsuo Yamamoto made the installation *PARAISO*, whose theme is communication with the volcano.

That year, Ichi Ikeda also made a work. He said: 'I do not make the work. I let art appear from nature.' This is the same as: 'It is an appearance, not moulding.' This exposed root is a metaphor of origin in the future. It stands at the entrance to the Aso Earth Art Museum. 'Art for the Future, not Future for Art.'

2014 saw the Genesis-5 exhibition whose theme was the Aso earth art museum project.

We had a keynote lecture by Mrs Hiroko Shimizu. She gave a Message for the Genesis Exhibition. Aso is the world's largest caldera, where 50,000 people are living. This spiritual place, full of the earth's energy and myths about nature and man, has attracted people since ancient times.

Now, in addition to the traditional farmers, especially after the East Japan Great Earthquake Disaster of 2011, newcomers have arrived from cities, seeking a new community model deeply rooted in nature. The old and new residents are of different ages, while their purposes and interests are diverse.

Using local reeds, Ichi Ikeda created a huge folded book in which the story is not yet written. Visitors are encouraged to write each story in the book using their imagination.

There was also the Artist-in-Residence program initiated by Kumamoto Prefecture. This time, in 2014, seven artists from abroad were invited for the first time. Diverse artistic interventions opened up interaction between people with different interests and backgrounds.

This is Genesis-6 in 2015.

To this meeting we invited Tomasz Wendland, the organizer of the Mediations Biennale from Poland.

The artists-in-residence at Kumamoto Prefecture in 2014 were:

Pascal Brateau from France. His theme was Home.

Korean-German installation artist Nana Heim-Kwon. In her installation, everyday items and antiques were arranged on a rice floor.

Graphic Designer Rinna Clanuwat from Thailand. As an illustrator and graphic designer Rinna developed a very dexterous original character for various tools.

Jonathan Sitthiphonh from France. He made a wooden casket, King of Apes Monkey King, by hand from Oguni cedar.

Katarzyna Szeszycka from Szczecin, Poland. The works she made were a transdisciplinary representation that never fell into one category.

Arabella Murray-Nag from the United Kingdom. She deepened exchanges with the people of Kumamoto, such as workshops with elementary school students from Aso and lectures at the university, and I think that international exchange through art was achieved.

Uliana Apatina from Siberia, Russia. She resided in a mountain house in the south of the country and set up a site-specific work. The vermilion of the work was directly felt by the shrine's Torii.

In 2015, Agnieszka Rożnowska and Paweł Jasiewicz from Poland visited. Agnieszka captured the human form and expressed it with large-scale prints. Paweł's creation was focused on design research and process using Oguni cedar.

Mestiyage Don Kingsley Gunatillake from Sri Lanka. He made the god of chopsticks in Japan.

Maxime Thoreau from France. Although his work was a sculpture, the basic thing that it explored was 'image'.

Katy Hassall from New Zealand. She explored the pottery tradition in the Aso area and created installations with local clay.

Angela Pauly from Costa Rica. She drew pictures and 2D animations and made the space an installation.

Gaby Taplick from Germany. She made a house rebuilt with scrap wood. The idea of her work was to look / understand / receive / reshape / leap.

In 2016, neither Genesis nor the Aso artist-in-residence programme could go ahead due to the impact of the Kumamoto earthquake. The Kumamoto earthquake had a magnitude of 7, and a large bridge collapsed, leaving 267 dead. We were also forced to evacuate.

2017 was a year with many artists from France.

Francois Roux from France. In Ubuyama village he made a short movie with a spiritual meaning, touching nature and the traditional local religions: Shintoism and Buddhism.

Sarah Clerval from France. She made an installation related to Japanese culture.

Sonia Bazantay from France. When she makes land art, she thinks of works that reproduce what the land has experienced.

Mihajlo Jevtic and Jelena Krneta from Serbia. They focused on the relationship between nature and people in the Aso area, and made a film.

The 2018 invited artists were: Jana Marie Cariddi from the USA, currently working in Berlin. Her illustration was based on the inspiration she got from Aso during her stay.

Florent Poussineau from France. His food art was a very unique exhibit and performance.

Bill Claps from America (American and Italian national). His *Natural Abstractions* series is a tribute to nineteenth-century Japanese masters whose graphic styles had a profound impact on European Impressionism.

Maria Wasilewska from Kraków, Poland. For her, cognition and behaviour in space are the most important elements of creation. Its purpose is to create a clear reality model for the audience. She is expressing a new environment or site-specific.

Agata Kadenacy from Kraków, Poland. Like a painter, she tries to create a world that feels like a dream as well as reality, to make the viewer of her photo experience the dream in reality.

This residence is attended by many Polish artists.

People are discovering that important concepts and values are becoming increasingly homogenised. However, there is one thing that cannot divide and represent the world and that is site-specific inherence.

What is the site-specific inherence?

I believe that it is something like 'the aura' suggested by Walter Benjamin.

The Genesis exhibition and the Artist-in-residence programme in Aso envisage the harmonious co-existence of nature with the artificial environment.

This project is a post-globalization endeavour but, at the same time, offers a creative path to a community of world citizens.

Art for the Future, not Future for the Art and Polish-Japanese friendship in the future from now on!

III. Artists

Agnieszka Rożnowska
Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw

Mono no aware: Memories of Kyushu

Thus the box acts the sign: as envelope, screen, mask, it is *worth* what it conceals, protects, and yet designates; it *puts off* – if we can take this expression in French – *donner le change* – in its double meaning, monetary and psychological; but the very thing it encloses and signifies is for a very long time put off until later, as if the package's function were not to protect in space but to postpone in time; it is in the envelope that the labor of the confection (of the making) seems to be invested, but thereby the object loses its existence, becomes a mirage (...).[1]

There are a number of things that fascinate and inspire me.

My ASO Artist in Residence stay was an extraordinary time, an opportunity to deepen my knowledge of areas that my work had revolved around for many years: the phenomenology of the body, clothing as a form of packaging, and the semantics of signs and meanings.

In the everyday life of the Ubuyama community I found the ephemeral, closeness to nature, and the ability to savour the beauty of the world.

For me, clothing is a form of packaging that adapts itself to the shape of the wearer and absorbs and continues to carry his energy, preserving the memory of the body.

The kimono, which served as the starting point of my research during the residency, is a cultural element with deep semiotic roots in the history of Japan.

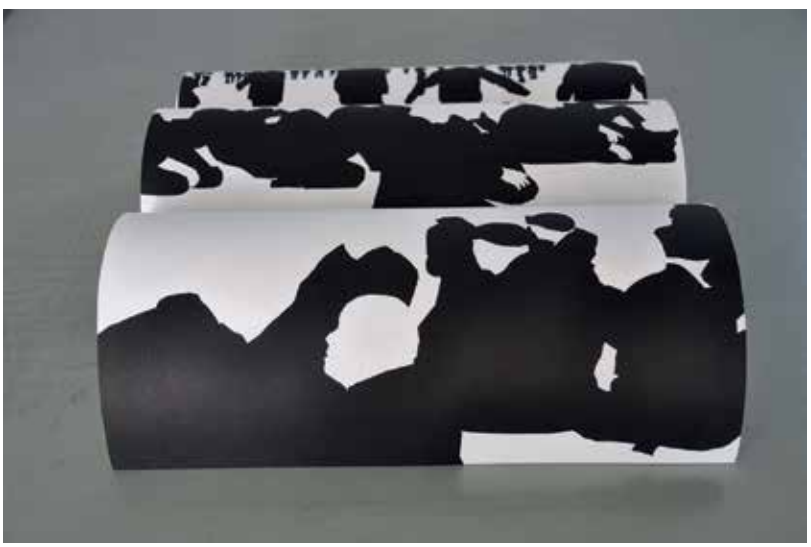
The *Wafuku* monotype series was made on *washi* paper, handmade from rice and adapted for drawing and painting. The paper was prepared by a local craftsman, Hiroishi. The starting point for *Wafuku* was the complicated ritual of folding and storing traditional Japanese attire. *Wafuku* (和服) stands for classic Japanese clothing, as opposed to Western clothing, *yōfuku* (洋服). I had the opportunity to watch Naoko Watanabe live as she folded and stowed away a kimono. The packaging and the process became an interesting ritual for me, the idea going back to Roland Barthes's reflection on the 'Japanese exercise of the void', which does not focus on content, so important to the Western audience, but on form.

By rescaling the elements of the *wafuku* I obtained a completely new expression; I also created a series showing the ritual in stop motion, like the successive fragments of a film.

In *Wafuku*, the kimono ceases to be an item of clothing, becoming instead a form that wriggles, folding and unfolding, its individual parts revealing their structure. The work highlights the analogies between *microcosm* (man) and *macrocosm* (the

[1] Barthes (1989: 46)

Ill. 1.
Wafuku, monotype series on *washi* paper,140 cm x 160 cm, 2015



Ill. 2.-3.
Keō no hi (敬老の日), 3 rolls 1200x40 cm, digital printing on *washi*, 2015

Ill. 4.
Linear Notebook,
sketchbook, 2015

universe), leaving room for the imagination and abstaining from imposing meanings.

The drawn structures could be anything: a landscape, organic matter, floral structures. The drawn form only anticipates the first association and consequently becomes a new, freely flowing element.

Clothes belong to a person, carry him; they are like living beings impressed with the memory of someone's presence. The body is born into clothing and dies surrounded by things. Jean-Toussaint Desanti said that they are what binds man to the world. Clothing preserves a person's memory and shape; we sometimes have the impression as if it were alive and moving against the rules of logic. We keep clothes that once belonged to our loved ones, we feel close to their owners when putting them on, and the association only becomes stronger with the passage of time.

Keiro no hi is a graphical record showing older people, or more precisely clothes that, reduced to a sign, make up homogeneous figures, rhythmically interweaving and forming arabesques. Their black colour makes them universal and timeless. Stopped in motion, in the dance of life and passing that affects us all. They are printed on long strips of *washi* paper like the fabric for a new kimono.

On many levels of perception the work refers to my encounter with Japanese culture. The use of a narrow, long roll is reminiscent of the silk rolls from which kimonos are sewn.

The paper is, again, a traditional Japanese *washi* from the Awagami Factory run by the Fujimori family in Tokushima, this time quite flexible and absorbent. The digital printout of *Keō no hi* refers to Respect for the Aged Day, a Japanese national holiday celebrated in September since the 1960s, a fascinating event which inspired me to explore the interesting process of passing and the social role of elderly people, a marginalised theme in Western art.

The work features silhouette takes of elderly Ubuyama-mura residents, whom I met during the local celebrations of the holiday, reduced to a minimum and stripped of superfluous detail.

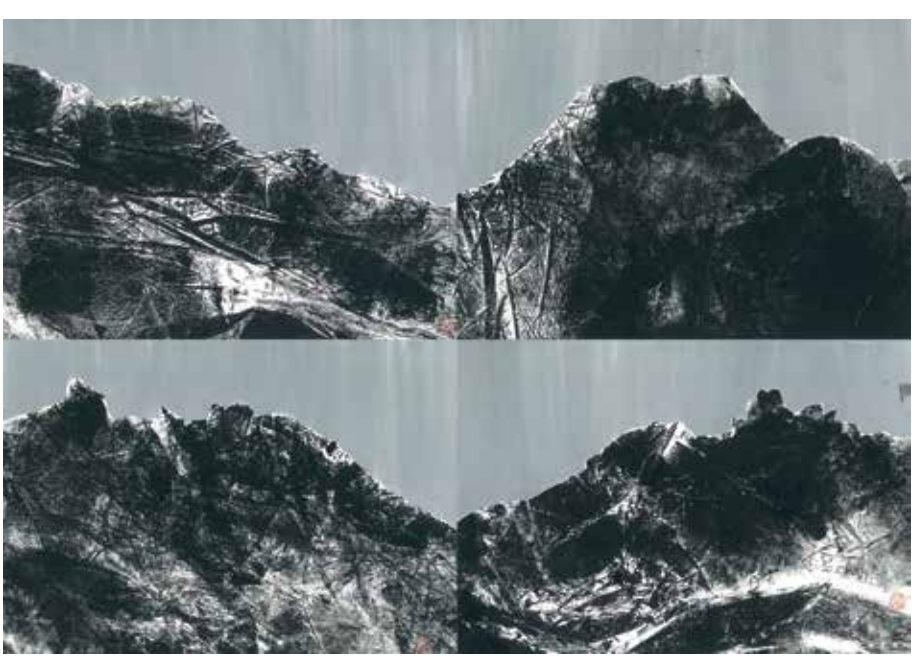
I created the graphical forms of *Keiro no hi* at the same time as the *Linear notebook* – linear drawings which spark spontaneous associations through through layered overlapping. Sometimes they form a dragon. Moments later I decipher from them the volcanic landscape that I have been surrounded by for the last two months: structurally varied, layered, and shifting. Another idea behind the sketchbook was also to play with visual perception, where the image is supposed to evoke the desired phenomenon or optical association.

The linear drawings notebook was also created for the viewer who, by filling the blank fields with colour, can continue whatever drawing his imagination suggests.

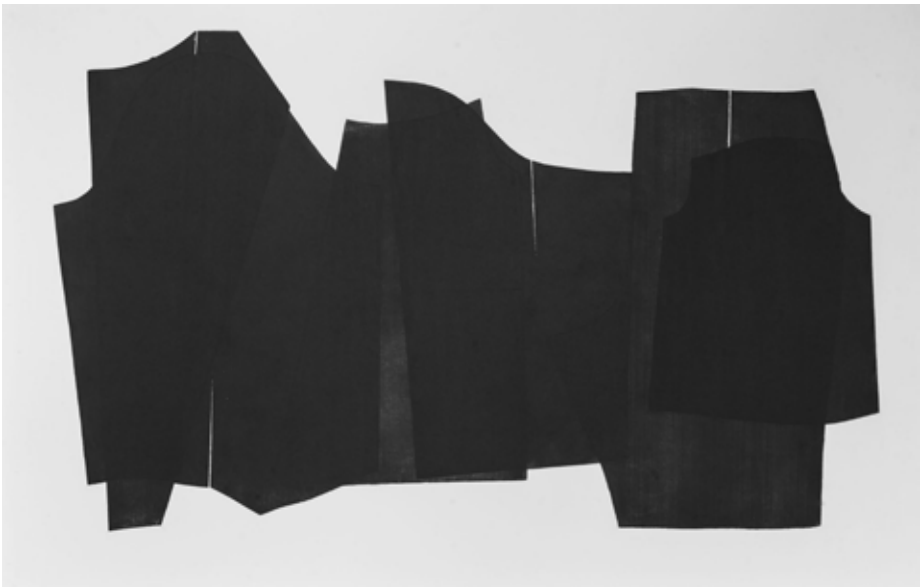
Linear Notebook is a summary of all Japanese works and refers to the old idea of the sketchbook in which the artist used to record his thinking, document his memories from an erudite journey, and collect ideas and observations sparked by exotic stimuli. I pared Japanese views and the silhouettes of elderly people down to a minimum, condensing them into subtle linear forms. For this work I used *washi* paper, tracing paper-thin and arranged into layers. Its transparency corresponds to the idea

Ill. 5.
My katagami, *washi* paper, 31x39 cm, 2018

Ill. 6.
Dikambo, photo-objects, stop-motion projection, 2015



Ill. 7.
Aso – Kujū, Kujū – Aso, monotype series, 35x25 cm, 2015



Ill. 8.
Out of Context, intaglio series, 120x80 cm, 2014–2017

of layered, overlapping memories. Multisensowy memories that produce a peculiar image in our minds, as Edward Hall described it in *The Hidden Dimension*.[2]

Linear outlines were also at the origin of another work of mine, *My katagami*.

Katagami (型紙) or *Ise-katagami* (伊勢型紙) is a Japanese craft having to do with the production of special *washi* templates for dyeing textiles. Like the production of *washi*, it has been added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The art also includes the creation of special tools for making the said templates.

After returning from Kyushu I had the opportunity to see a collection of *katagami* at the National Museum in Warsaw and, full of admiration for this precise and artful method of preparing templates, I decided to translate these ideas and concepts into a modern idiom by cutting my drawings from Ubuyama.

Dikambo is an area, a caldera around Aso, today a protected park, a reserve. *Signs from Dikambo* is a continuation of my project *Signs in Space*, which I create each time within a new open space typical of a given area. By setting the sign in the space, I violate the latter and at the same time I give it a new meaning. By creating geometric figures, I cut through, interrupt its continuity, or emphasise special places.

Signs from Dikambo are a continuation of the alphabet I write with my body, describing whatever space I find onsite, in which each sign form is an intervention and a violation of a certain continuity. The work continues my search from a series of spatial activities carried out in various places around the world since 2003, including Poddąbie, Koszalin, Poznań, Paris (France), Granada (Spain) and Jurva (Finland). The photographic record shows various experiments with the bodily figure, the sign and the space, and Heidegger's[3] understanding of being in the world already through dwelling itself.

This monumental series inspired by the volcanic landscape of the region is a graphical image of a view from a window, each window providing a thought-out view of the most beautiful sites, especially of Aso volcano and the highest peak, Kujū.

The volcano has an astonishing (from the European perspective) impact on the lives of the local population, who are accustomed to living in its shadow. Aso is the largest active volcano in Japan and one of the largest in the world, yet life goes on peacefully in its vicinity and people simply go about their daily business. After a longer period of exposure, however, its sheer size proves terrifying, a reminder of man's submission to nature.

This work is a continuation of the project *Looking Is an Act of Choice*. At its centre I have placed cuts of fabric from clothes. Things that we perceive as whole in everyday situations have here been broken down into details and component parts. On the one hand, clothing is like a living being, part of a person, a second skin, a representation of its owner. For decades it was indicative of one's social or material status or world view. Deconstructed and

[2] Hall (1990)

[3] Heidegger (2001: 141–159)

reassembled, it turns the viewer's attention to another dimension, while the black structural compositions stir the imagination without imposing any given associations.

Seventy days spent in the midst of a beautiful and at the same time a forbidding landscape scattered on specks of land allowed me to observe the dialogue that goes on between man and space, with objects whose aesthetics differ significantly from the European understanding of beauty.

Bibliography

Barthes 1989 = Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, transl. Richard Howard, Noonday Press, New York 1989: 46.

Hall 1990 = Edward Hall: *The Hidden Dimension*, Doubleday, New York 1990.

Heidegger 2001 = Martin Heidegger: 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' in: *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. Albert Hofstadter, Harper & Row, New York 2001: 141–159.

Paweł Jasiewicz
Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw

Every Timber Has Its Own Sound – Every House Has Its Song

Tanoharu farm in Minami Oguni has two houses. The old one, a century old, and the new one, standing right next to it. Crowded in between cedars and bamboo on the left and the river on the right. Between the houses is a narrow slate-paved path and a small koi pond. This is where I had the opportunity to get to know local woodworking techniques and the properties of cedar (*Cryptomeria Japonica*). By working with local artisans, I was able to gain in-depth knowledge of woodworking techniques and to develop the kind of relationships that can only be formed when working together. As the projects progressed, the artisan–designer relationship developed, and, as a result of the exchange, the objects produced reflected the creative effort of those involved in making them. Understanding the work of the artisan, the material, and proper use of the technique allowed me to bring out a richness of matter, form and pattern from a simple block of wood. In this text I will try to present the work of a designer from the perspective of dependence on cultural context, place of residence and contacts with woodworking artisans. This is how the *Sagi*, *Mizu*, *Hani*, *Melon* collection was created. It is the outcome of my ASO *Artist in Residence* stay on Kyushu island, where I spent 70 days in 2015.

I came to Kyushu in the south of Japan to learn about the Japanese cedar – *sugi* (*Cryptomeria japonica*) from the *Cupressaceae* family. The Japanese cedar, or cryptomeria, is an evergreen conifer species. It can reach a height of up to 50 m and a diameter of up to 3 m at breast height. The young trees have a pyramidal crown, which thickens over time and becomes dome shaped.[1] The scythe needles – with a rhomboid cross-section, gradually converging towards the base along the shoot, and sharpened at the apex – are arranged in a five-row spiral of green and blue-green.[2] The bark of the tree is fibrous, reddish-brown and dark grey. Japanese cedar timber is characterised by a reddish-brown heartwood and clearly separated, straw-coloured sapwood.[3] It is resinless, soft, light, fragrant, decay-resistant and easy to process. It is used in architecture, furniture, interior woodwork, kitchen accessories, siding, etc.[4] *Sugi* is grown on plantations that make up over 40% of forest areas in Japan.[5] The history of growing the cryptomeria goes back to the 255 year-long Edo period (1603–1868). The Oguni region in Kumamoto prefecture was very well suited to starting a plantation, and one was established there

[1] Cryptomeria (2018: 11.11.2018)
[2] Seneta (1987: 185–188)
[3] Sugi (2018: 11.11.2018)
[4] Sugi
[5] Ito (2003: 23)

in 1728.[6] *Sugi* plantations constitute approximately 62% of all the forests in Oguni. 91,7% of these are private plantations managed by local institutions.[7]

My quest to understand the Japanese cedar started with a visit to the local woodworker, Mr Yoshino, a carpenter, and two sawmills, whose owners, Mr Anay and Mr Awazu, pursue their passion in their leisure time. The first had started a brand, which produces Onsen accessories and stationery. I was surprised by a document folder made of veneer folded like a sheet of paper. The scent and texture suggested wood, but the folding in half did not fit the picture. I found out that the veneer had been pressed between two layers of synthetic material. As I stroked the folder with my fingertips, smelled it, bent it, I felt that this was going to be the material that I would be working with.

I therefore made concept notes, which are also part of the process itself, as they developed over the course of working with the material.

I started folding the veneer at various angles to determine bending possibilities.

It turned out that the fibres crack when folded across; micro-cracks can appear wherever narrow rings occur; and the tangential rings are more difficult to bend; creasing can be tuned by slightly cutting the edge of the veneer.

I decided to exploit the features of veneer (transparency, flexibility, creasing ability, durability, lightness, no need to protect the surface, ease of cutting with a laser or knife) to design a collection of lamps.

The most important thing for me was to experience this new type of veneer. After numerous attempts, I managed to achieve a satisfying result. In the end, I made a pleated lamp, which became a starting point for two collections:

1. Pleated and polygonal hanging lamps with geometric lampshades of various sizes. I tried to highlight the impossible – the creasing of the veneer.

2. Strange birds – a series of birds made from folded veneer.

The owner of the second sawmill, Mr Awazu, creates wooden ornaments by gluing pieces of wood together and then cutting them. The technique is called *yosegi*; it was developed in the Hakone mountains near the end of the Edo period. It was pioneered by Ichikawa Nihei from Hatajuku.[8] There are many species of trees in the Hakone mountains, of different colours and hardness. Ichikawa set out to create a technique that would exploit the aesthetic aspects of different types of timber. It was called *Hakone yosegi zaiku*, which means: *Yose* – select, *gi* – wood, (to make) *zai* – small, *ku* – work.[9]

There are two types of *yosegi*:

1. *Hakone yosegi zaiku* – the timber of two or three types of wood is sawn into boards and claddings, which are glued together alternatingly, forming multi-coloured layers in the cross-section. The ready planks are cut at an angle into strips from which an element with a geometric pattern visible in the cross-section is assembled. The next step is to glue the elements together, to create a so-called *Tanegi block* with the finished geometric ornament composed of strip ends. The *Tanegi block* is sliced with a specially structured hand plane to create a thin veneer called *taneita*. Every slice has an identical ornament. Veneers created using the *yosegi zaiku* technique are used to decorate the surfaces of boxes, chests and other everyday objects.

2. *Hakone yosegi muku* – the timber from different types of wood is sawn into boards and planks, which are glued into geometric patterns. The resulting block of wood is mechanically processed, e.g. turned, milled, or sawn in order to obtain bowls, disks, or trays with a uniform ornament.

My third visit was to Mr Yoshino, a cabinetmaker from Oguni, who makes furniture and provides various woodworking services to the local community. His workshop is attached to one of the numerous sawmills in the region. Mr Yoshino stepped out to meet me. He is of medium height, about sixty years old, slim but with a strong build. His workshop looks like most small woodworking workshops do. It is equipped with lathes from the 1980s and smells of *sugi* inside. In one of the corners there are finished pieces of furniture. I watch the classically shaped chairs, somewhat heavy visually. Next to them, a wooden dog on wheels, a not-so-attractive toy, almost folkloresque. The visible grain makes the objects look somewhat tawdry. As I hold the wooden toy, I make a decision: I am going to work on exposing the aesthetic nobility of the *sugi*. I am going to apply the *muku yosegi* technique to irregularly-shaped objects. I feel Mr Yoshino's pa-

[6] Shioya (1967: 16)
[7] Fabusoro (2013: 3)
[8] Davey (2015)
[9] Waterson (2011)

Ill. 1.
Hani lamp/Pleats. folded cedar veneer. height 30 cm, Fi:60 cm

ill. 2.
Sagi/Heron 1, glued and turned cedar wood, height 15 cm; Fi: 8 cm

Ill. 3.
Sagi/Heron 1 and 2, glued and turned cedar wood, various sizes

Ill. 4.
Sagi/Heron 3, glued and turned cedar wood, height 25 cm, Fi: 10 cm

Ill. 5.
Koi/Carp, glued cedar wood, length 35 cm, Fi: 10 cm

tient gaze on me. He is waiting, watching what I am doing. We don't understand each other, so in this moment all we can do is watch. And I keep touching the furniture and the toys with my fingertips, smelling them, trying to gain an understanding of the Oguni cedar. For the moment, I am building a library of impressions through touch and smell: lightweight, soft + smooth = easy processing, resinless, monotonous grain, not palpable, but visible. The colour of straw, and sometimes buckwheat honey, indicates a clear separation between sapwood and heartwood. The scent is pleasant, fresh but heavy, dark green in colour. The scent is important to me, as it allows me to recognise most types of timber. Ash smells like wine poured over a board, beech – sunlit sea sand, oak is tart and bitter, linden is sour and bitter, choking. Japanese cypress is fresh, light, very pronounced, a bit like lemon.

I raise my head. Mr Yoshino and I look into each other's eyes for a moment. He is inscrutable. I know that the following days and weeks will be important and will influence our mutual relationship at work. We will watch each other furtively. I will be trying to grasp the sequence of actions, the technique, logic, tools and equipment used. Mr Yoshino will look at the results of my thinking at the design stage, he will be curious about what I am coming up with and why, and how I will use the wood he has known for so many years.

I decided to design toys – a heron (*sagi*) and a carp (*koi*). For both objects, I used *muku yosegi*

technique and two different manufacturing processes:

1. *Sagi* – three types of figurines, which are interpretations of a heron. The first prepares to take flight, the second stands and waits, the third also stands, but its body is worked differently than that of the previous one. Assumptions:
   - using *yosegi muku* technique,
   - the object is to emphasize the grain of the Japanese cedar,
   - the object is to be pleasant to look at,
   - the objects are designed, but no technical drawings will be made,
   - the objects are to be created by an intuitive use of the chisel, adapting the form to the grain of the cedar,
   - verification of the replicability of the mechanical hand and chisel motions when creating similar figurines.
2. *Koi* – two mobile koi fish figurines. The object is divided into three parts, a total of five elements: head (1 element), body (3 elements), tail (1 element), connected by a rubber rod. The head and tail are glued together from planks, which, after turning, form a pattern with a longitudinal cross-section, while the body has the pattern of a transverse cross-section. The assumptions were:
   - using the *yosegi muku* technique,
   - the object is to be pleasant to look at,
   - the toy is to be mobile and imitate the movements of fish,
   - the design is to be replicable and adapted for reproduction.

The work on the figurines began with wood chips, which were processed into planks and glued together in a specific order. I watch Mr Yoshino at his daily work. Sometimes he comes over to help me, we do the gluing together. I watch him prepare his work table, in how many moves he spreads the glue, what he prepares to keep on hand.

The *koi* is the biggest challenge. We use drawings to communicate. I present the design, all the components are drawn, the desired grain pattern marked on each of them. Mr Yoshino is interested in everything I show him. He tries to understand what I am doing, in what order I am going to cut and join the pieces, how I am going to achieve mobility. Sometimes he offers a helpful suggestion or rather, an alternative solution. This is called amassing as many solutions as possible to find the one that will have the best effect. We plan and consider the sequence of operations after the squared timber and glued boards have been prepared:

- gluing one block of wood according to the designed grain arrangement. The boards that represent the scales are to be positioned perpendicular to the turning direction. They are arranged in such a way as to avoid mirror reflections and rhythmic geometric holes, which would draw attention away from the whole object.
- gluing together the three blocks of wood: head, body, tail,
- determining the division of the glued wood blocks into: head, three-part body, tail. The decision is made on the cutting sequence: cutting in an arc into five elements.
- determining how to connect the five elements together for turning. The following options were considered: gluing on paper and, after turning, separating; turning clamped (i.e. clamping all the pieces between the lathe claws),
- selecting the material to assemble all the components together,
- turning and drilling holes for flexible plastic rods,
- lacquering,
- assembling all the parts into the finished toy fish.

Conclusions:

The benefit of conducting two projects in Minami Oguni Matchi was to have indicated opportunities for using the *Oguni* cedar to both local artisans. I was not trying to achieve predetermined objectives, but rather to fine tune the objectives during my work with the artisans. My readiness to learn new things about *sugi* allowed me to reinterpret the techniques and materials known to the Japanese. Mr Yoshino and Mr Anay have no time to experiment with new uses and to develop new products in their daily work. My search and unconstrained ability to experiment made possible an exchange of experiences. What I left behind was not an object that could be produced, but knowledge that both gentlemen can use in their future projects. This is confirmed by Mr Yoshino's words to me: 'Thank you. What you have done is important. Do not be surprised if in the future someone here uses the things you showed Sensei.' I reciprocated with a similarly formulated sentence. Mr Yoshino's words have taken root deep in my heart. If a crafts-

Ill. 6. *Exhibition Meetings,* Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology, Kracow 2018

Ill. 7. *Figurines collection.* glued and turned cedar wood, various sizes

man rewards another craftsman's work with praise and shows him respect as a master, it indicates his professionalism and openness to learning. A master craftsman improves and hones his skills all the time. This goes for new skills, techniques and the understanding of one's profession. In this case, the point was not so much to show the *yosegi muku* or *yosegi zaiku* technique, as to interpret it in a simple and usable way through the objects I created in Mr Yoshino's workshop. Once the student reaches the master's level, he becomes a student again, a conscious apprentice, who improves his skills by observation and reasoning.

I classify my experience with *sugi* as an innovation when it comes to the interpretation of techniques and veneer by demonstrating possible directions of their use.

In 2018, the figurines and *Hani* lamps, created during my residency in Minami Oguni Matchi were displayed as part of an exhibition at the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków.

Bibliography:

Cryptomeria 2018 = Cryptomeria Japonica, Plant database, Department of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, University of Conneticut, www.hort.uconn.edu\plants\detail.php?pid=150 (accessed 5.04.2019)

Davey 2015 = Ruth Emily Davey: *Generations of Craft: A study into the preservation of Ancient Crafts and the passing down of skills in our modern day world*, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust 2015, www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/report-documents/Davey%20R%20Report%202015%20Final.pdf. (accessed 5.04.2019)

Fabusoro 2013 = E. Fabusoro, E. Maruyama, K. Shoyama, A.K. Braimoh: "Community Institutions, Sustainable Forest Managment and Forest Cover Change in Southern Japan", *The Journal of Sustainable Forestry*, Vol.33(1)2013.12.23: 3

Ito 2003: Satoshi Ito et al., *Species richness in sugi (Cryptomeria japonica D. DON) plantations in southeastern Kyushu, Japan: the effects of stand type and age on understory trees and shrubs*, The Japanese Forestry Society and Springer-Verlag, Tokyo 2003: 23

Seneta 1987 = Włodzimierz Seneta: *Drzewa i krzewy iglaste*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1987: 185–188.

Shioya 1967 = Tsutomu Shioya: *A Short History of Forestry and Forestry Research in East Asia*; *International Review of Forestry Research*, Academic Press, New York–London 1967: 16.

Sugi 2018: Sugi (Cryptomeria Japonica), www.wood-database.com\sugiwww.wood-database.com/sugi (accessed 5.04.2019)

Waterson 2011 = Christina Waterson, *Hakone Yosegi Zaiku*, www.tracepattern.wordpress.com/2011/09/15/hakone-yosegi-zaiku. (accessed 5.04.2019)

Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados
Faculty of Art, Pedagogical University of Krakow

Exercises in Mindfulness: My Japanese Experience in Creative Work

Beginnings

In 2002, I qualified for an artistic residency programme in Japan, the Mino Art Paper Village Project,[1] during which I had an opportunity to discover the history of Japanese *washi* paper[2] and to learn to make this type of paper using traditional methods. One autumn Sunday I stopped inside an underground passage in the city of Nagoya. Around me were hundreds of bodies: faces, heads, torsos, and hands, all alike, yet somewhat unlike mine. In that moment, I experienced the contours of my body being clearly, physically 'cut away' from the bodies surrounding me. I realised that the body can take on different identities, or none at all, and become 'other' all the same. This peculiar experience opened a new field of exploration in my art, even though I had already searched for an artistic way of conveying universal human qualities before.

The experience of the presence of 'other' bodies made me reconceptualise the artistic project that I had planned to do during the residency. I changed the titlefrom *Twins*to *Ningen*.[3] The ideogram *ningen* (where *nin* means person and *gena* gap or space) suggests that we only ever become truly human by interacting with other people.[4]My Japanese project consisted of seven *mino washi* paper figures (ill. 1). When making them, I selected types of paper whose texture or colour resembled skin. Among the 'white' figures there is also a black, weeping figure. The figures have no defined sex, with the exception of one, a pregnant woman. The idea was for the figures to set up a space (*gen*) between themselves and the viewer (*nin*). In line with the meaning of the ideogram *ningen*, this interdependence of the art object and the viewer defined the human person. I had doubts whether the idea would be understood, meanwhile the Japanese treated the figures as people and identified with them. It was one of my first artistic projects in which I took up the idea of the *universal body*. This experience, and some of my later observations, led to me to develop the ar-

[1] Mino, Gifu Prefecture, Japan.

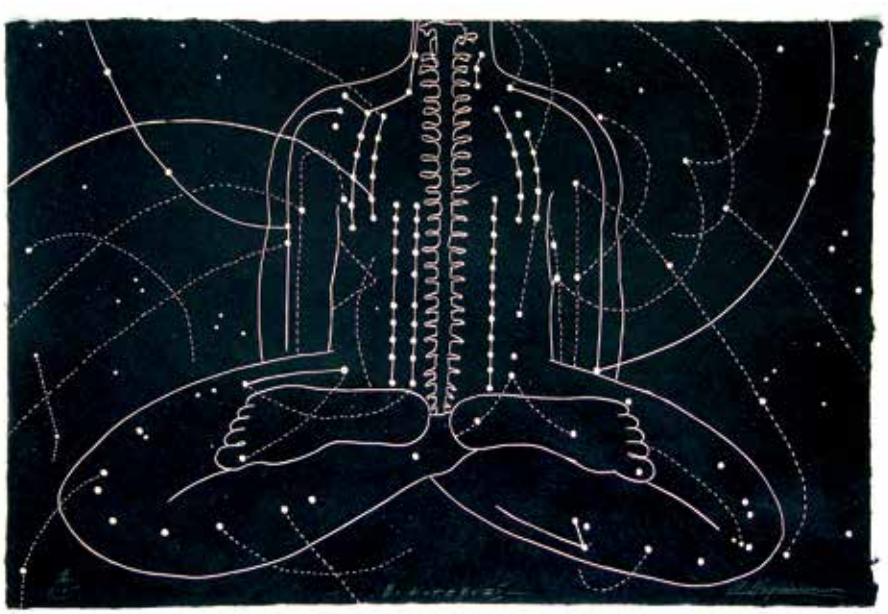
[2] *Washi* – Japanese paper made using traditional methods from the fibres of the outer bark of the kōzo bush (*Broussonetia kazinoki Sieb*., family *Moraceae*, paper mulberry), the *mitsumata* bush (*Edgeworthia papyrifera Sieb.*, family *Thymelaeaceae*) and the inner bark of the gampi tree (*Diplomorpha sikokiana Nakai,* family *Daphne*).

[3] Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Ningen*, 2002, three-dimensional installation, Mino Washi Paper Museum, Mino, Japan.

I sign my artworks M. Niespodziewana, while additionally using the pseudonym Malwina in exhibitions. I only use the surname Rados in formal contexts.

[4] Wilkoszewska (2003).

Ill. 1.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Ningen* (fragment), 2002



Ill. 2.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Jewellery II*, 2005

tistic concept of the *universal body* which became the basis of my doctoral dissertation. I have been using this Leitmotif and theoretical foundation in my artistic projects since. I autograph these works with a red seal with an image of a human figure.

The Artistic Concept of the *Universal Body*

"The universal body is the set of physical, psychological, cultural and mental traits that we can find in every body, or whose likes we can find in every body.

The artistic concept of the universal body embraces many different identities but is not based on the canon of the beautiful, ideal body. Elements of the universal body include for example tears, hair, blood, the heart – in other words elements that we can find in any human body without classifying it by sex or race."[5]

My stay in Japan allowed me to daily observe of the human body within the context of another type of culture and dependence. It was an extremely valuable experience that broadened my reflection on the problem of the body in the visual arts. From

[5] Niespodziewana-Rados (2006).

that moment, I could no longer consider the issue only from the standpoint of Western culture. I had for a long time been fascinated by Andreas Vesalius's 1543 anatomical treatise *De humani corporis fabrica* (*On the Fabric of the Human Body*) as well as by other anatomical treatises presenting the human body from a medical angle. At the National Museum in Tokyo I had the chance to view old Japanese and Chinese medical treatises and anatomical models that presented a whole different picture of the human body. In terms of depiction, the figures were not proportional or anatomically correct. Western medicine takes a more analytical approach to the human body, while Eastern medicine tries to look at it synthetically (holistically). I have tried to account for both of these attitudes in my artworks (*Jewellery I-II*, 2005, ill. 2), but it was the Japanese experience that inspired me to delve deeper into the subject. In 2004, I travelled to India and Nepal to further develop the assumptions of my *universal body* concept. While there I kept a journal and sketchbook close at hand, jotting down any observations concerning the body in Far Eastern art and culture and making sketches for future projects. Every sketch is dated, which now affords me an overview of the entire creative process of making different graphics, drawings and objects.

The main assumptions of the *universal body* concept underlie all of my artworks. I have returned to some motifs like hair (*Burn that Body*, 2006), blood (*Lovers*, 2003/4, *Hearts*, 2004, *Blood*, 2003 and 2005, *Kumari Devi's Blood*, 2005) or tears[6] (*Tears (male),* 2005, *Boys do cry*, 2006) on several occasions. I eventually began to use not only paper but also fabrics, especially silk. In the work *Vows* (2005, objects, video) my husband cuts off locks of my long hair and embroiders the words of the marriage vows on a silk surface. Audible in the background are real marriage vows taken during a ceremony. The work is followed by a sequel, the piece *Spools* (2005), in which my hair is threaded onto spools.[7] These are not the only works in which I have used human hair. In one of my recent works I embroidered the text 'I am going to close my eyes now and I will never open them again' on a silk fabric (2018). The poetic quote comes from one of my conversations with my daughter.

Mino *Washi* Paper

During my artistic residency in Mino, Japan, I had the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about *washi* paper from this region. *Washi* paper has a long history and was used as early as the Nara era (710–794). Today, as in the past, *Mino washi* isused both in beautiful Japanese handicrafts and art; it is also found in everyday objects. It is used to make *shoji* sliding doors, fans, lanterns, umbrellas or even socks and clothing. Japan has a long tradition of papermaking. The manufacturers in existence today (Awagami, Echizen, Kochi and others) produce paper and promote knowledge about *washi*.[8]

The process of making Japanese *Mino washi* paper is long and arduous. It usually takes a year from the time of gathering the *kōzo* plant – *Broussonetia kazinoki Sieb.* Family *Moraceae* (paper mulberry), through the process of preparing the right kind of material, all the way to making a piece of paper. We start by gathering raw *kōzo*, then soak it in crystalline river water, boil it, adding soda, until soft (ill. 11), carefully clean it, beat it to a pulp with special wooden hammers, and then add hibiscus root glue (*tororo-aoi–Abelmoschus manihot* – also known as *nebeshi*) and water to the pulp. Everything is carefully mixed using a wooden tool that looks like a rake. Paper from the Mino region is drawn using an old method perfected over the years. A special frame (*geta*) is gently rocked back and forth and sidewise[9] to ensure that the pulp forms an even layer on the surface of the bamboo *su* (the screen inside the *geta*). This is not easy and requires experience and patience. It is worth noting that *washi* papermaking differs from the European method. In the latter, the mould is simply immersed in cellulose or another type of pulp and excess water is allowed to trickle down into the container. In the Japanese method (ill. 12), with each movement of the *geta* we control and get rid of excess water through special flowing movements,[10] and then use a press to get rid of excess fluid. Japanese

[6] The first drawings of tears in my Japanese sketchbook are dated 7.10.2002.

[7] Works reflecting the concept of the *universal body* can be found in the catalogue *Prace / Works*, Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana (2006).

[8] *Handbook on the Art of Washi* (1991).

[9] The *nagashizuki* technique.

[10] It should be noted that the European paper mould differs from the Japanese mould (*sugeta*), consisting of two parts: an openable wooden frame – *geta*, inside of which is a take-out screen – *su*.

Mino washi paper is dried in the sun on chestnut boards. The final part of the process is cutting the paper to size and making a selection – only the best pieces of paper are chosen. The thinner the paper, the more skill it takes to make it. This kind of paper also has uneven edges, which is an advantage and attests to its manual production. Currently *Mino washi* has three quality certificates, each with a logo in the form of a characteristic M-shaped mark and a superimposed letter designating a specific maker. Each 'M' is of a different colour: purple (*hon-minoshi Japan*: *hon-minoshi, usu-minoshi* paper) means that the paper has been obtained through traditional production processes fulfilling set criteria, while the material is pure *kōzo*; a green 'M' (*mino-tesukiwashi Japan*: *kigami*, *unryushi*, *rakusuishi*, *chiriirigami* paper) means that the paper has been obtained from domestic materials only using the *nagashizuki* method, and has been machine-dried; while a vermilion 'M' (*mino-kikaisuki washi Japan*: *ogurasi*, *gampishi* paper) stands for machine-made paper from a variety of materials.[11] The city of Mino proudly boasts its papermaking traditions by organising paper festivals such as the Mino Festival, Mino Washi Akari-Art, Mino Paper Festival, and Washi Christmas, and has for many years organised Artist in Residence programmes in which over 100 artists from all over the world have taken part.

The tradition of *washi* papermaking, 1300 years old, is the outcome of the work and effort of many generations. In 1969, *hon-minoshi* paper was recognised as an Important Intangible Cultural Property in Japan, and in 2014 it was added to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Register. As an artist, I was amazed by the structure, beautiful colour and softness of this paper. It resembles skin – delicate on the one hand and durable on the other, which made it ideally suited for my project, consisting of three-dimensional objects resembling human figures (*Ningen*, 2002).

During my stay in Mino I had the opportunity to make paper using the traditional method described above. I eventually learned to tell good paper from bad: the paper should be examined against the light; this is when one can see whether one's *geta* movements were correct, if one's control of the pulp was sufficient to spread it evenly across the whole surface of the *su*. I also met an outstanding master in Mino – Akira Goto, who is the only person to have made silk paper in Japan. It was the most beautiful paper I had ever seen and touched in my whole life, and its maker's humility and personality will stay with me for a long time. The experience had a tremendous effect on my art. The paper I now choose for my works is chiefly handmade by me or by craftsmen from Japan, India, China or Nepal. I am able to appreciate each bit of its beauty and strive to use it to its fullest potential.

Exercises in Mindfulness

During my first and second trip to Japan (in 2002 and 2006) I was lucky to live next to a Buddhist temple on a hill. I was cared for by the Takahashi family – Atsuko and Joshin. At my disposal I had a house made using traditional techniques – with a beautiful small garden whose colours changed with the seasons. Inside were several rooms laid with tatami, and *kakemono* hung in the niches.[12] The whole was encased by wooden sliding doors, with *washi* paper instead of glass, against which I watched the play of light and shadow from dawn to dusk. In the evening I would listen to the symphony of nature outside – the sounds of animals, cicadas, and in the morning the sound of drums and bells coming from the temple. I tried to take part in Japanese culture and in the life of my host family. Because I did not speak Japanese, silence and attentiveness gave me additional focus, while the arduous process of learning to make and use *washi* paper and the striving for excellence augmented my attention to detail. The surrounding nature – beautifully sculpted mountains, pure rivers and the fresh air, the fragrance of plants, all gave me comfort and became an important source of inspiration. I also regularly wrote in my journal and drew in my sketchbook.

Since returning from my voyages to the Orient I have made several works relating to Japanese culture, art, and customs. My drawing series *Madame Butterfly*[13] was inspired by Giacomo Puccini's 1904 opera, the prints of Katsushiki Hokusai, *manga* comic books, and *shunga* – Japanese erotic prints and scrolls.

[11] *The Mino-Washi Brand Book* (2017).

[12] *Kakemono* – a Japanese vertical hanging scroll with painting or calligraphy, chosen to match the season or occasion.

[13] Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana: *Madame Butterfly*, series, on display at the Galeria M Stare Jatki, Wrocław, June 2013.

Ill. 3.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Madame Butterfly*, 2013

Madame Butterfly (ill. 3) is a love story – full of sacrifice on the part of the heroine, her expectation, and Japanese honour. For me the most interesting aspect of the plot was the heroine's desire to change her identity in the name of love (she abandons her traditions, religion, name), which unfortunately leads to her death. When working on the drawings and tempera paintings I drew more on the libretto (text) rather than the musical setting, although the aria *Un bel dì vedremo* (*One Fine Day We'll See*) performed by Maria Callas was a great inspiration to me. In the series I combine figurative drawings with abstraction and decorative motifs from Japanese design.

In my most recent works from this year prepared for the Manggha Museum in Kraków, the Museum of Papermaking in Duszniki Zdrój, and the Mino Washi Paper Museum in Japan,[14] I take up the notion of sleep and sleeping rhythms in the context of form, hidden meanings, and memory. The series *Tsukimi* (*Tsukimi I-V*, 2019, ill. 5) refers to the Japanese tradition of admiring the moon in the autumn. The dominant colour is indigo, which is very popular in Japan. The three-dimensional installation *Nagara (river)* (ill. 4) on the other hand is a work dedicated to river (ill. 8, ill. 9) that runs through Mino and which ordered my work and leisure when in Japan. The installation is made up of two main elements: paper sculptures hanging in space and a seven-metremirror which reflects the whole composition and the viewer. Some of the hanging sculptures have little bells attached which, when moved, make a subtle noise. This is a crucial Japanese experience – a sound elicited by the wind, a movement of the body, a gesture. The installation is accompanied by a series of drawings on *Mino washi* paper I made during my first stay in Mino (*Movement I-III, Rhythms and Movements I-III, Stillness, Sleep, Rhythm,* 2019).[15] I tried to make the most of the softness of the paper surface using colour pigments, crayons and silver ink.

One of the works in this year's series is an item of Japanese dress that I have designed and which I use in the performance *I, Nagara* (ill. 6).[16] During the performance I pass between people, dressed in a kimono with a printed-on wave-like green pat-

[14] *Washi no fushigi / Tajemnica papieru / The Mystery of Paper*, exhibition at the Manggha Museum, Museum of Papermaking in Duszniki Zdrój and the Mino Washi Paper Museum in Japan, 2019–2020.

[15] *Washi no fushigi / Tajemnica papieru / The Mystery of Paper* (2019).

[16] The first performance of *I, Nagara* took place during the *finissage* of the exhibition and conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art*, 11 June 2019 at SARP, ul. Foksal 2 in Warsaw.

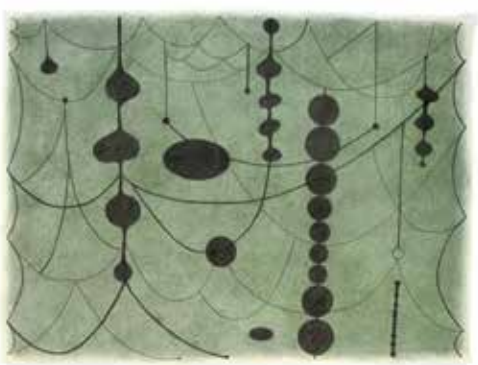
Ill. 4.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Nagara* (installation – fragment), 2019, The Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology, Krakow

Ill. 5.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Tsukimi*, 2019

Ill. 6.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *I, Nagara*, 2019

Ill. 7. Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Water 1*, 2019

Ill. 8. Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Movement I*, 2018

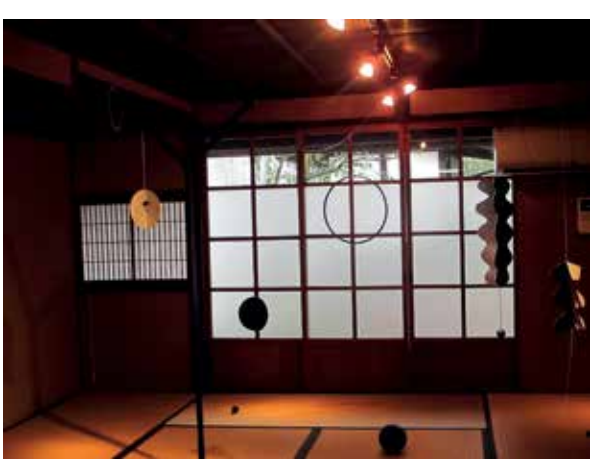


Ill. 9. Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Rhythms and Movements I*, 2018

ternand a set of specially made silver jewellery. As I move, the sound of bells comes from my kimono, while very long ribbons braided into my hair undulate rhythmically on the moving air. In the performance I impersonate the river Nagara, I do not speak and I essentially do nothing out of the ordinary. I am simply there, I accompany the audience the way the Japanese river has done for centuries. Only those who are attentive and reflective are able to notice the subtlety of my artistic gesture.

No more, No Less

Getting to know Japanese traditions and art during my stay in Japan in 2002 and then in 2006, breaking out of routine perceptions of many different phenomena has defined my artistic identity. In the world of the Far East everything has its proper time and place. Every action matters, while for every object the time taken to make it is important. My nostalgia for this part of the world comes from the fact that living in keeping with tradition is as important as the desire to live in a modern way. When in Japan, I used English to communicate with people, but the spoken words meant something else for each of us. For a long time I could not grasp who



Ill. 10. Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, *Movement of the Moon in Space* (installation detail), 2019

Ill. 11.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, Making *Mino washi* paper, Mino, Japan

Ill. 12.
Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, Making *Mino washi* paper, Mino Washi Paper Museum, Japan

the Japanese were because the scheme I had adopted for communicating with them failed in several different situations. This regularity reminded me of Japanese writing – the signs are simple yet when combined, they have many meanings, sometimes an additional hidden sense. This realization shed light on many roads that I can follow in my artistic creation.

My voyages to the Far East led me to coin and develop my concept of the *universal body*, which is still a work in progress. Ahead of me is my third journey to Japan which will doubtless push me to continue my research and artistic undertaking (ill. 7, ill. 10).

Bibliography

Handbook on the Art of Washi, All Japan Handmade Washi Association, Wagami – for K.K., Tokyo 1991.

Niespodziewana-Rados 2006 = Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados, *Ciało. Artystyczna koncepcja ciała uniwersalnego*, dissertation, Faculty of Graphic Arts, Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, Kraków 2006, Archive of the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, Kraków.

Prace / Works, Małgorzata Malwina Niespodziewana, catalogue, Wydawnictwo Grafia, Kraków 2006.

The Mino-Washi Brand Book, catalogue, Minowashi Brand Value Improvement Research Group, Mino 2017.

Washi no fushigi / Tajemnica papieru / The Mystery of Paper, catalogue, Manggha Museum, Krakow 2019.

Wilkoszewska 2003 = Wilkoszewska, Krystyna (ed.), *Estetyka japońska*, *Wymiary przestrzeni. Antologia* (vol.1), Universitas, Krakow 2003: 162.

Joanna Stasiak
Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw

Immersed in Seeing

I once painted my master, Janusz Kaczmarski, as a Fool. I did this in order to convey his extraordinary wisdom. (ill. 1)

I have mentioned the first card of the Tarot deck, the Fool, which can also stand for a pilgrim at the end of his journey or someone who does not know the way. It symbolises the one setting out on a journey and completing it by returning to where he started. True wisdom is the skill of being able to begin again from the beginning.

Towards end of his life, Janusz Kaczmarski spent months painting and repainting a single work, *Self Portrait with an Easel*. He treated each attempt as his final assault, full of determination and resolve. He would audaciously restructure the composition of this small painting, barely 40 cm in height. The changes always seemed final. He experimented with the scale – sometimes the easel would grow out of proportion, and sometimes the paint box would open its jaws. He moved around the value accents and shifted focus to different parts of the composition. He never finished the work. For me, my teacher's final painting represented deep wisdom and served as a spiritual pointer like the Zen injunction to remain one who does not know. (ill. 3)

Master

It was in Janusz Kaczamarski's studio that I first came to appreciate the power of mindful observation. I remember one of the first exercises he gave us: a still life with tilted straws and crossed wooden planks. I could hardly look at this cold arrangement of objects. I was supposed to mix four tonalities of grey in containers and use them to paint the still life, starting with the lightest and finishing with the darkest. I felt helpless and discouraged faced with this exercise. At the time, I saw Kaczmarski as a pedantic educator, someone who limited me. Sensing my hostility, he said that all complicated things are made up of simple elements and added that I should think of the four paint containers as the four elements which were all that the Greeks needed to describe the universe. I felt my resistance melting away and myself beginning to accept the teacher and understand the purpose of his requirements. The requirements were multiple: discipline, regular practice, rules to be followed in the studio, for example washing the brushes carefully at the end of work. I only came to understand the meaning of some of these rules much later, perhaps only recently. Kaczmarski could alter the direction that a work was going with a single question. He once asked Aleksandra Simińska, who was painting large-format landscapes during an open-air work-

Ill. 1. Joanna Stasiak, *The Fool*, 2015, silk, 118x118 cm

Ill. 2. Janusz Kaczmarski, *Self-portrait with a double mirror image I*, 1998, oil on board, 48x33 cm

Ill. 3. Janusz Kaczmarski, *Self-portrait*, 2007–2008, oil on canvas 40x35 cm

shop: 'How to connect the sky with the earth?' The answer to this question became the topic of Aleksandra's graduation project. For me at that time the difficulty lay in connecting a figure with the background. My attention was fully focused on the figure. Kaczmarski told me that the presence of a figure disrupts the space and, citing Buber,[1] he reminded me that dialogue continues even when one is all alone. I realised that even a lone figure affects its surroundings. Kaczmarski's remarks on painting were often astonishing, forcing me off the beaten track of my thinking. When I began to read the Zen masters, I discovered that their statements were just as unexpected – like the sudden leap of a goat.

Stopping

I experienced silence amid the commotion of the Louvre. For two months I had the opportunity to work in front of Poussin's final painting, *Apollo in Love with Daphne*. It was difficult at first, with a steady flow of people behind me. But at some point everything went quiet. Although I still heard the voices and comments in different languages,

[1] Cited after: Baran (1991).

I felt as if I was alone with the painting. My seeing began to change, to widen. A landscape shone out of the semi-darkness with a great gaping tear in the middle, separating the gods from the mortals.

At the beginning I was interested in the dark silhouettes in the background in Poussin's composition, half steeped in shadow. Back then I was convinced that landscape would never be my principal motif. For all its mutability and impressionist richness it left me indifferent. It was only Poussin who made me see the landscape as an amazing network of spots across a space, a stage, man's appearance on which determines the meaning of the composition. It was an illumination that altered the course of my work completely.

Stanisław Baj paints a river. "Only from one place, the escarpment at Sugry, can one glimpse the distan bends of the slithering Bug river. It is this place, this very spot, that provides the best view of time. I have been painting the Bug river for over twenty years, but the dark curtains of the water continue to hold their secret, in fact they withhold it from the world more and more as time passes. You have to look south, against the light, to the source, meaning upstream. In this view the river fully reveals its threatening, independent face, monotonous movement, but also perfect peace."[2] The river, its changing and unhurried current, stopped the painter in his tracks. The monk Shunryu Suzuki was stopped by a humming stream. He followed it and, step by step, in the unceasing murmur of water he listened for and heard the unmoving. (ill. 4, 5)

Seeing

In Ushimado, by the Inland Sea, I saw wooden houses with black façades. The burnt wood and the graphite traces of rings on the surface were the product of a traditional Japanese conservation method, Shou Sugi Ban. This wood-firing technique is an effective impregnation method. The charred houses hypnotised me. They looked like black arcs. They were menacing but seemed familiar at the same time. I was seeing something that transcended my understanding. A few months after returning from Japan, my house burnt down. After five months of cleaning up the burnt wood I understood that I wanted to use it to build a new home. I can image my new black house on the site – my studio, a meeting place. (ill. 6)

Janusz Kaczmarski once told me: "the inside of my studio is my self-portrait"[3]. He had a unique way of seeing the world as a place where the inarticulable expresses itself through tangible objects. In his *Self-portrait with a Double Mirror Image* from 1998, (ill. 2) a mannequin's back guards the space of the studio reflected in two mirrors. Behind the painter's back a third mirror reflects a sea of green. The artist paints himself attired carelessly, as if trying to highlight the mundane nature of his work, being alone with himself. He adds: 'I once wanted things to speak for me.'[4] In the 1987 *Painting with Still Life*, a discoloured ball on a geometric pedestal emerges from an ominous black background, an abstract echo of living things – the shining red fruit on a glass plate. Roshi Kwong likened the courage to take note of the truth to a drastic image: "(...) the body falls away, the bones fall away, everything is like it is here, like it is now".[5] We do not add anything to reality, we do not embellish it and we do not turn away from it even if we are to glimpse something menacing in ourselves or the world. (ill. 7)

This is exactly how Józef Czapski thought both about the Soviet gulag and the painter of everyday beauty, Bonnard, in his book *Patrząc* (Looking). Towards the end of his life he wrote to a friend, also a painter: "After all, vision is that extraordinary moment when you are given the blessed chance to see the simplest object, the simplest angle of a room, every face and every landscape as though you were seeing it for the first time. I am retelling you old truths, it was Cézanne who said that looking at a landscape he has the impression of seeing it for the first time; it was Matisse, I think, who claimed that a painter who intends to express what he sees has to be like a troglodyte looking at the world for the first time".[6] For painters, light, shadow, reflexes, which are not actual entities in the real world, capture the singular meaning of the world and of each seen moment. Shunryu Suzuki calls this the mind of the beginner, a mind constantly astonished by the world.[7] (ill. 8, 9)

[2] Baj (2018: 18).

[3] Kaczmarski (2000: 29).
[4] Kaczmarski (2000: 33).
[5] Kwong (2003: 75).
[6] Czapski (2009: 23).
[7] Suzuki (2010).

Ill. 4.
Stanisław Baj, *The Bug River*, 2016, oil on canvas
100x120 cm

Ill. 5.
Stanisław Baj, *The Bug River*, 2017, oil on canvas,
100x120 cm

Ill. 6.
Joanna Stasiak, *After the fire,* 2019, silk
220x174 cm

Ill. 7.
Janusz Kaczmarski, Untitled, 1997, oil on canvas, 50x60 cm

Ill. 8. Józef Czapski, Untitled, 1954, pencil and watercolour on paper, 16.5x23 cm, collection A. Mietkowski

Ill. 9. Józef Czapski, Untitled, undated, pencil and watercolour on paper, 12x17 cm, collection A. Mietkowski

Ill. 10.
Jan Dziędziora,
Cimochowizna, 1978-79,
gouache on paper,
51x72.5 cm

Ill. 11. Jan Dziędziora, *Silent figure*, 1983-84, oil on canvas, 100x81 cm

Getting to know Oneself

Dōgen Kigen, a Zen master from the thirteenth century, wrote: "To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things."[8]

The painter Jan Dziędziora wrote in his notes: "I see and feel the world and want to express it. I can only do so through myself. Which means I have to talk about myself."[9] When considering the tortured figure he depicted in the painting *Zbity* (Beaten), he wrote: "The beginning was in me. My own self, which I think about obsessively. Because, well, what can you say about humanity? What can you say about yourself? But there's perhaps more [to say] about yourself if you get up the honest courage. But you have to bring yourself to honestly, courageously look. And then, perhaps, you'll be able to say something about people, too."[10]

Talking about oneself to shed light on the world is the opposite of the artist vainly saying 'ME'. The signature can be a trace of the author's energy on the picture, while its absence may signify a question asked of oneself: 'Am I a painter at all?' Dziędziora,

[8] Zenji Eihei Dogen, *Genjo Koan*, unpublished translation from the Japanese by Kazuaki Tanahasi, Robert Aitken: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/GenjoKoan_Aitken.htm (accessed 18 August 2019).

[9] Dziędziora (1994: 59).

[10] Dziędziora (1994: 67).

who did not sign his paintings, painted no more than twenty. He also left many landscape sketches behind, which show the ease with which he could have worked. But it is clear that he did not wish to seek a form that would be recognised as a signature. He wanted to 'strip himself of lies', as he wrote in his notes. Roshi Kuong spoke of 'stripping of bones and body', the absolute necessity of truth when faced with the test of every passing moment and of death. (ill. 10, 11)

Ruminating on what Polish painters who are important to me have said about the process of painting itself, I see a certain kinship with how Zen teachers have described the essence of meditation and the practice of mindful seeing.

The master – whether current or ancient – is the measure of his own path. He is also the one we struggle against in order to find our true selves in what we do. This mental encounter proved decisive in my painterly practice, in striving to capture the talisman of seeing.

Bibliography

Baj 2018 = Stanisław Baj, "Rzeka Bug", *Kraina Bugu*, no. 22, 2018: 18.

Baran 1991 = Bogdan Baran (ed.), *Filozofia dialogu*, Kraków 1991.

Czapski 2009 = Józef Czapski, *Listy o malarstwie*, Mateusz Bieńczyński, Janusz Marciniak (eds), Uniwersytet Artystyczny w Poznaniu, Poznań 2009: 23.

Dongen 2010 = Dogen Zenji Eihei, *Genjo Koan*, unpublished translation from the Japanese by Kazuaki Tanahasi, Robert Aitken:
http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/GenjoKoan_Aitken.htm (accessed 18 August 2019).

Dziędziora 1994 = *Jan Dziędziora, 1926–1987. Malarstwo i rysunek*, Katarzyna Kasprzak (ed), catalogue, Narodowa Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej Zachęta, Warszawa 1994: 59, 67, 68.

Kaczmarski 2000 = Janusz Kaczmarski, *Wizerunek własny. Autoportrety-wnętrza*, Anna Wrońska (ed), catalogue, Galeria In Spe, Warszawa 2000: 29, 33.

Kwong 2003 = Jakusho Kwong, *Bez początku, bez końca. Intymne serce zen*, Wydawnictwo Charaktery, 2003: 75.

Suzuki 2010 = Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen mind, beginner's mind: Informal talks on Zen meditation and practice*, Shambhala, Boulder, Co., 2011.

Elżbieta Banecka
Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw

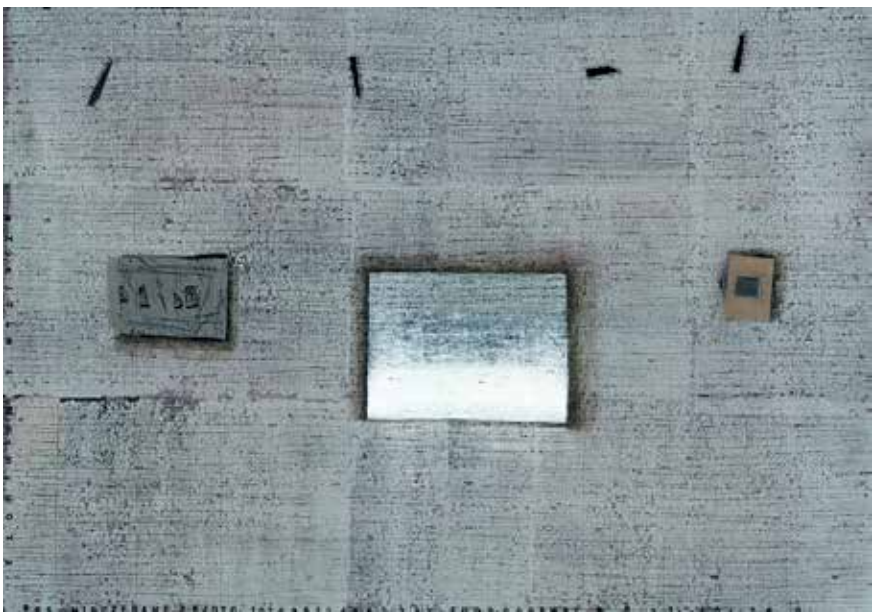
Uncombed from Kyoto

In 1991, I submitted one of my works to the International Graphic Art Triennial in Osaka. After winning a bronze medal, I was invited to Japan. Once there I decided to travel through the Land of the Cherry Blossom. As a young graduate of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts I was very excited by this opportunity because I only knew Japan from the works of many outstanding printmakers (including Katsuhiko Hokusai, Utagawa Hiroshige) and from Japanese posters (e.g. Makoto Saito).

In Kyoto, I stayed with my friend Maji Tocho, thanks to whom I was able to see sites inaccessible to regular tourists. I visited several Buddist temples and Shinto shrines, gradually becoming familiar with the differences in religious worship and the poetics of prayer gestures. But it was the stone garden at Ryoanji temple, considered one of the foremost examples of Zen art, that impressed me most. I was also lucky to witness the incredible ritual of 'combing', the gravel. Each day one of the monks from the temple would carve out a new drawing of parallel furrows, tracing concentric circles around mossy stones with a harmonious, almost dancelike succession of ceremonial movements.

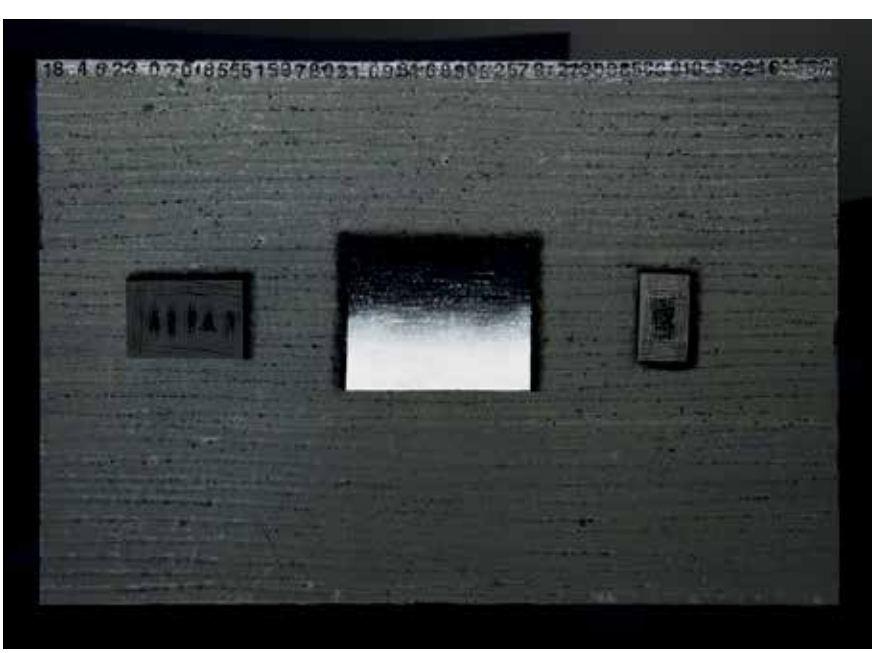
After my journey to Japan I made a series of over 25 prints entitled „Z Ryoandżi" ("From Ryoanji", ill. 5, 6, 7) (1996–2001, woodcut, mixed media, own technique). They are the quintessence of a perfect combination of a simple compositional arrangement with an intriguing structure, texture, the illusion of perspective and sublime colours. The series also gave closure to my previous artistic activities, as from the very beginning I had been searching for the perfect composition. I was also increasingly fascinated by the notion of irreplicable repetitiveness, as exemplified by the daily ritual performed in the Ryoanji gardens. In graphic art, it was precisely this uniqueness, irreplicability, that had always fascinated me in a a special way. And even if I do make several prints from the same matrix, I make changes every time. Like the monk who each day creates a new arrangement of sand and stones, repeating the ritual gestures.

I felt close to the country so remote to us, Europeans. A few years later, the emotions I felt in this encounter with a foreign, although astonishingly kindred art led me to produce another series of several dozen prints entitled „Nieczesane z Kioto" ("Uncombed from Kyoto", ill. 1, 2, 3, 4) (2001–2017, woodcut, mixed media, own technique). From that time onwards I have made several series of graphics connected to Japanese culture. The series „Uncombed from Kyoto" is a direct reference to the rock garden and temple of Ryoanji. I was captivated by the restraint of perfectly matched elements and their arrangement, a composition that stimulated

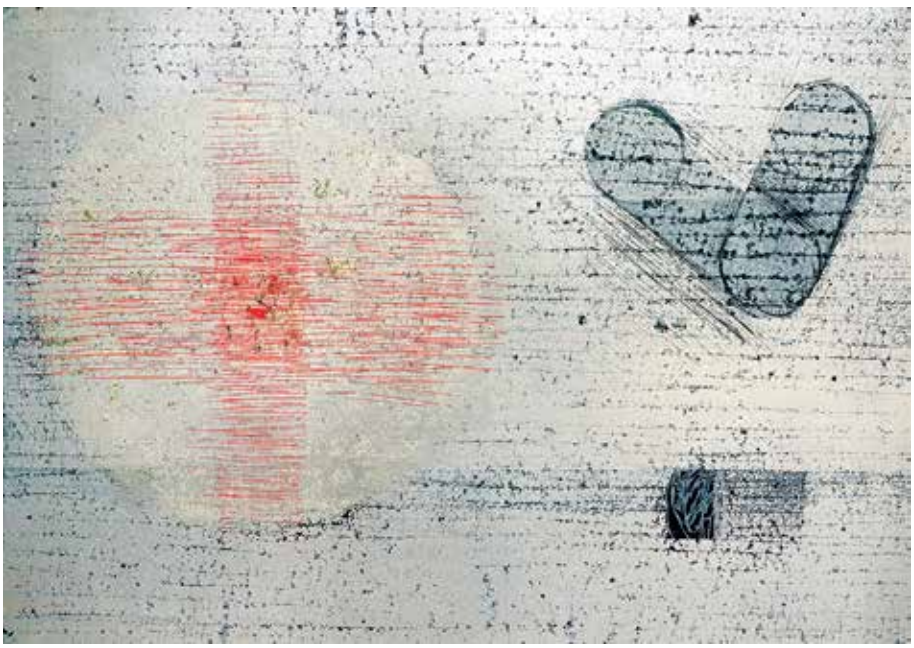


Ill. 1. From the series "Uncombed from Kyoto", 2014, 140x200 cm, linocut, mixed media, own technique

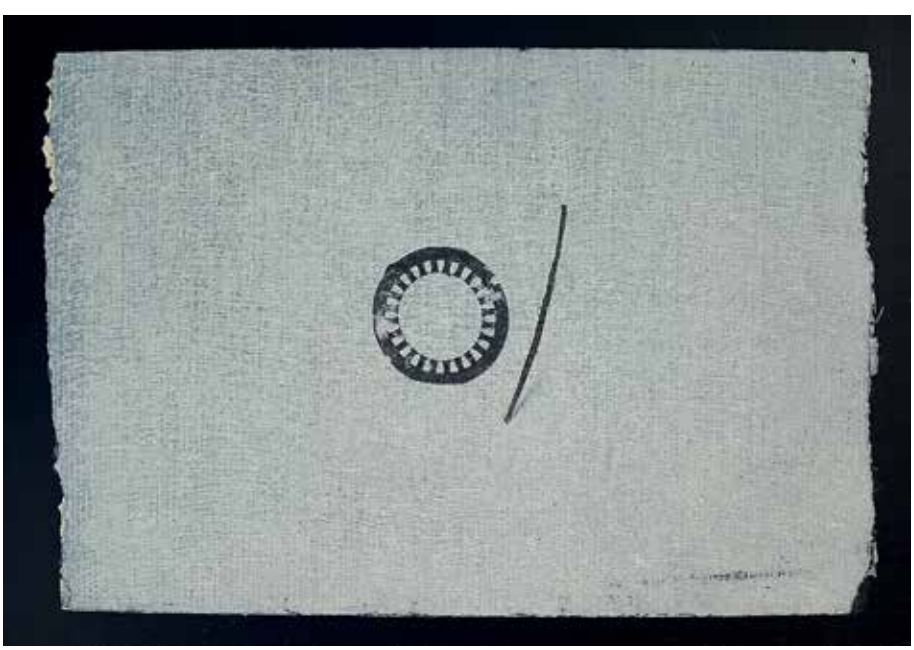
Ill. 2. From the series "Uncombed from Kyoto", 2010, 70x100 cm, linocut, mixed media, own technique



Ill. 3. From the series "Uncombed from Kyoto", 2016. 78x112 cm, linocut, mixed media, own technique



Ill. 4.
From the series "Uncombed from Kyoto", 2017, 70x100 cm, woodcut, mixed media, own technique



Ill. 5.
From the series "From Ryoanji", 2001, 70x100 cm, woodcut, mixed media, own technique

the imagination. The space of the garden, on an irregular trapezoid plan, is full of white sand with stones of varying shapes, sizes and colours placed in the garden (grouped into sets of 5, 2, 3, 2, and 3). The whole giant picture (or in my case, the print) can only be taken in from a bird's eye view. Looking at the garden from the gallery of the *hajo* pavilion we succumb to the illusion that there are only three groups of stones on the sand-covered plane.

In the prints from the "Uncombed from Kyoto" series new elements in the form of numbers and letters appeared for the first time. Arranged into parallel sequences, they remind me of the grains of sand which, raked daily at Ryoanji, change their arrangement, value and colour. Similarly, in my 'garden', the numbers and letters change on each print; they are printed in different intensities, in their mass creating anonymity of form and line. My use of font is a reference to the beginnings of Far Eastern calligraphy, when the latter was an important element in ink painting or woodblock printing. The numbers turned into graphical signs speak of time, place, and are at times a symbol, a mantra, a meditation.

In my subsequent prints and paintings I also try to bring back echoes of my journey to Japan, while striving for simplification and a clear arrangement of forms. I build up the background with a rhythm of parallel lines, sometimes stripes of lettering, or I 'comb' designated parts of the composition, creating a kind of relief. On the one hand I relate to

Ill. 6.
From the series "From Ryoanji", 2016, 78x224 cm, woodcut, mixed media, technique own

Ill. 7.
From the series "From Ryoanji", 2016, 70x65 cm, woodcut, mixed media, technique own

Ill. 8.
From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 120x100 cm, oil on canvas, acrylic, leaves of gold

the Japanese tradition, while standing firmly in the daily world of objects and shapes that surround me. Found objects, natural entities, but also waste, crumbs, undefined scraps of matter with an interesting structure stimulate my imagination. They compel me to work on new matrices. The inscriptions sometimes take the form of signs, and sometimes of specific objects, often portrayed from multiple angles in a single composition; sometimes they also create illusions, like the rock garden.

Focus and meditation are extremely important factors in my artistic practice. Creativity combined with meditation means feeling that one is in harmony with the world; it is also self-purifying. To me, in order to be powerful, art must be projected from the depths of one's being, without the slightest hint of falsehood. It is a kind of meditation that does magic. Today, after many years, I know that it is possible to achieve this mental state and that every day has a different colour and each line a different intensity.

In his advice to those practising haiku, my favourite Japanese haiku poet, Matsuo Basho (1644–1695), points out that it is necessary to renounce one's self and to consider the object we are writing about from the inside. This is one of many examples that highlight the colossal differences between the culture of the Far East and Europe. I am thinking of the reversed relationship between subject and object. Basho writes: "we should learn about the pine from the pine, about the bamboo from the bamboo".[1] Doho, his disciple, thus interpreted his master's teaching: 'he wanted to say that the poet should turn his mind away from himself. Of course some poets interpret the word „learn" in their own way and never learn. Because learning means entering the object, grasping its delicate life and intuiting what one is feeling, and then the poem will take shape by itself. An accurate description of the object is not enough. The poem must contain the feelings that were spontaneously offered by the object, otherwise it will turn out that the object and the poet's „self" are separate wholes, which prevents a real poetic impression. The poem will be „contrived", since composed by the poet's subjective self.'[2] It is not a coincidence that I am citing a poet's thoughts on the matter. What to Basho is the prerequisite of true poetry is equally important

Ill. 9. From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 120x100 cm, oil on canvas, leaves of gold

to me; it is an integral part of visual creation and determines its genuineness and value. In my opinion, there is no creativity without authentic experience. And it doesn't matter whether the impulse for a work comes from this or that object or a form found in nature. Of course this rough 'theme' inspires us, it either suits us or not, but we can only reveal its truth by going into the structure of the object. It will get us so interested as to make us elicit its whole story. A story to which we add our basic sign, also reflecting our most profound idea.

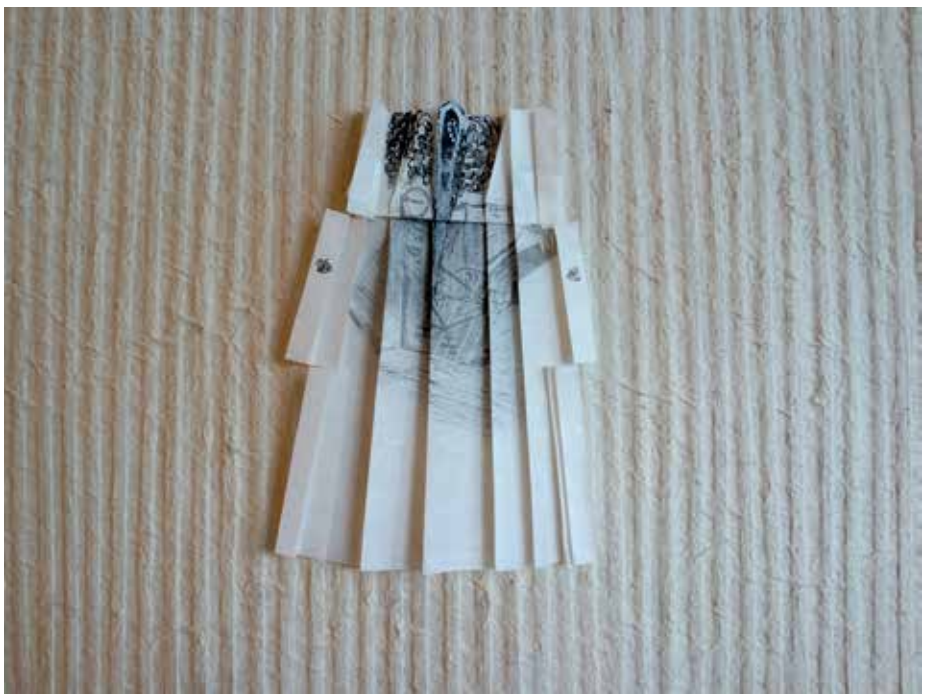
Almost three years ago I made a new series, „Tokimono" (2017, ill. 8–14). It consists of paintings, graphics and spatial forms made of rice paper, Japanese paper and other materials which harmonise with or stand out from the background. I often use things/props that I have amassed long ago but which only become an important inspiration to me after many years. A few years ago I found a forgotten box in my studio. Inside were curios brought back from my first journey to Japan, including a beloved poster by Makoto Saito. This is how the idea for a new series starring the kimono was born. The most basic definition of a kimono states that "*Kimono* (Jap. 着物) literally means „something

[1] Cited after: *Haiku* (2001: 14)
[2] Cited after: *Haiku* (2001: 14)

Ill. 10.
From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 40x50 cm, acrylic, linocut, mixed media, own technique, object

Ill. 11.
From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 50x50 cm linocut, own technique, mixed media, object

Ill. 12.
From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 100x90 cm, linocut, leaves of gold, mixed media, own technique, object



Ill. 13.
From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 50x50 cm, woodcut, mixed media, own technique, object

Ill. 14.
From the series "Tokimono", 2018, 50x50cm, linocut, mixed media, own technique, object

to wear".[3] In Japan clothing is close to the religious sphere and very much rooted in tradition.

My idea was not to mimetically reproduce reality. I made an attempt to find my own kimono. In Far Eastern culture, wearing a kimono is a declaration of harmony, respect, and beauty. Behind every kimono is a person, his or her history. I drew inspiration from the traditional kimono, especially of the men's variety, *haori*. The older it was and the more garments went into its sewing, the more it stimulated my imagination and enticed me to explore material, colour and texture. I was also inspired by origami. The key factor here was paper, which I folded intuitively. Paper had always played a very important role in my art. Up to this point it had served as an ideally pure, unbroken medium. I decided to break it by crumpling it, folding it into

[3] https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono (accessed 20.05.2019)

new forms, making it three-dimensional. „Tokimono" for me was also the discovery of meanings and symbols in Japanese culture. It is also a kind of attempt to convey the energy of real kimonos. The very act of creation was in this case an important part of the work. According to Zen philosophy, the aesthetics of the kimono should be to harmonise with the surroundings rather than to stand out.

Form is very important to me. The kimono is an example of perfect form. The longer I searched for perfection, the more I understood the words of Hokusai, a humble, brilliant and extremely prolific Japanese printmaker, who said the following about his skills at the end of his life: "From the age of six I had a mania for drawing the shapes of things. When I was 50 I had published a universe of designs. But all I have done before the age of 70 is not worth bothering with. At 75 I'll have learned something of the pattern of nature, of animals, of plants, of trees, birds, fish, and insects. When I am 80 you will see real progress. At 90 I shall have cut my way deeply into the mystery of life itself. At one hundred I shall be a marvellous artist. At 110 everything I create; a dot, a line, will jump to life as never before. To all of you who are going to live as long as I do, I promise to keep my word."[4]

Evidence of my inspiration with the art and culture of the Far East can be found in my art, working methods and exploration which comes close to thought that has its origins in in Indian, Chinese and Japanese Buddhism.

Bibliography

Haiku 2001 = *Haiku*, Czesław Miłosz (selection and translation), księgarnia Haiku, Kraków 2001: 14.

https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Hokusai (accessed 13.10.2019).

https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono (accessed 20.05.2019)

[4] https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Hokusai (accessed 13.10.2019).

Atsushi Hosoi
Musashino Art University, Tokyo

A report on the progress, development and background of the work of young Japanese wood sculptors today. And about my own work

There are various sculpture expressions in the world today due to the development of computer technology and the spread of 3D printers. However, in Japan, young artists use classical wood carving techniques to create their works. And they are creating works of interest.

The reason why I would like to focus on wood carving in my article is not only because I am interested in and inspired by the skills and abilities of current artists, but also because I feel that they are trying to overcome the problems of Japanese sculpture with traditional Japanese wood carving techniques and new ideas.

It is to live and create amid the fluctuation of the Japanese sensibility and the influence of contemporary Western art.

Before I introduce a few works of these artists, first I would like to bring closer my work, which I have been working on while sharing this consciousness.

I learned mainly human sculpture in the 1980s. It was the era of postmodernism and at that time human expression was already regarded as obsolete.

It was 'my concept' that got me working under those circumstances.

My interest is to sculpt the unvisualized world.

If I roughly classify my work, it can be categorized into three series.

1. Made by Iron LINE *Retina Series: Beyond the retina*

2. *shōsenmon: posterior fontanelle* on the theme of skull cracks

3. Breath-themed *Hitoiki no chōkoku: One breath sculpture*

1. *Retina Series: Beyond the retina*

This work was an attempt to embody space and to release sculptures from gravity. I started with a rebar that I picked up on the road.

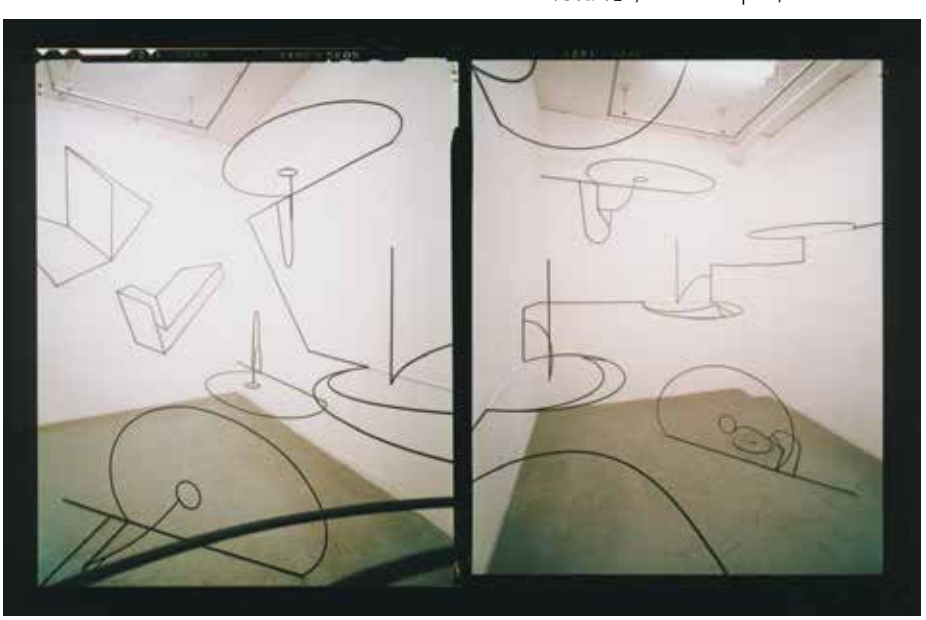
I had to use material to express what I couldn't see.

It's just the same as having to make a doughnut in order to make a hole in the doughnut.

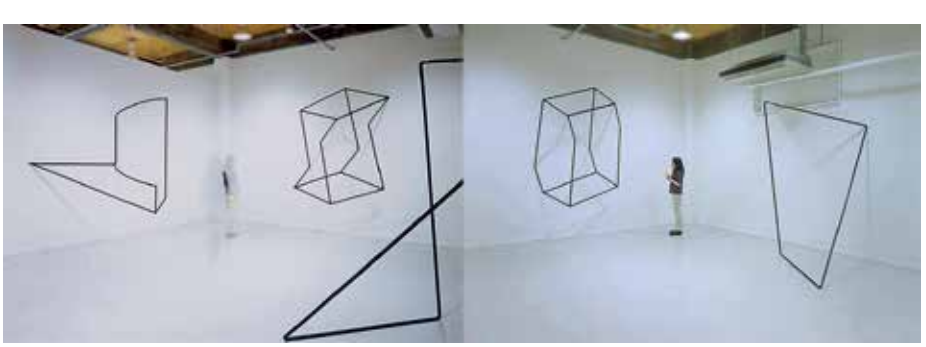
A stick set in space makes you recognize the air and signs that should be invisible.

Because it is a work that cannot be conveyed by an image, I dared to use a symbolic form that is easy to understand. (ill. 1–6)

Ill. 1.
Hosoi Atsushi, *Peculiarity – looking like a bird*,「鳥瞰覗覗癖」, steel. lacquer, 1993



Ill. 2. Hosoi Atsushi, *Where the sky meets the sea*,「空と海の交わるところに」, steel, lacquer, 1993
Ill. 3. Hosoi Atsushi, *The point where all is fulfilled*,「すべてを満たす1点」 , 220x225x82 cm, steel, wax, 1999, Kohji Ogura Gallery, Nagoya



Ill. 4. Hosoi Atsushi, *Repose in action*「休息の運動」, 230x165x67 cm
Ill. 5. Hosoi Atsushi, *One space in infinity is finite*「有限に等しい無限の 1 空間」, 250x131x184 cm

2. *shōsenmon: posterior fontanelle* on the theme of skull cracks

"shōsenmon"(ill. 7) is a work that I started making when my son was born.

We are the inhabitants of the mother's womb and of the present world.

This work symbolically represents the existence of these two worlds.

There are six or four kinds of fountain gates. When the child emerges into this world through the birth canal from the mother's womb, the fountain gates contract and help to give birth.

For a while, this gap exists, but as the child grows, this gap closes.

In *Borders game* (ill. 8–11) when I was creating the works from this series, I layered plastic putty over and over again to create form and surface. All the works are concealed by painting.

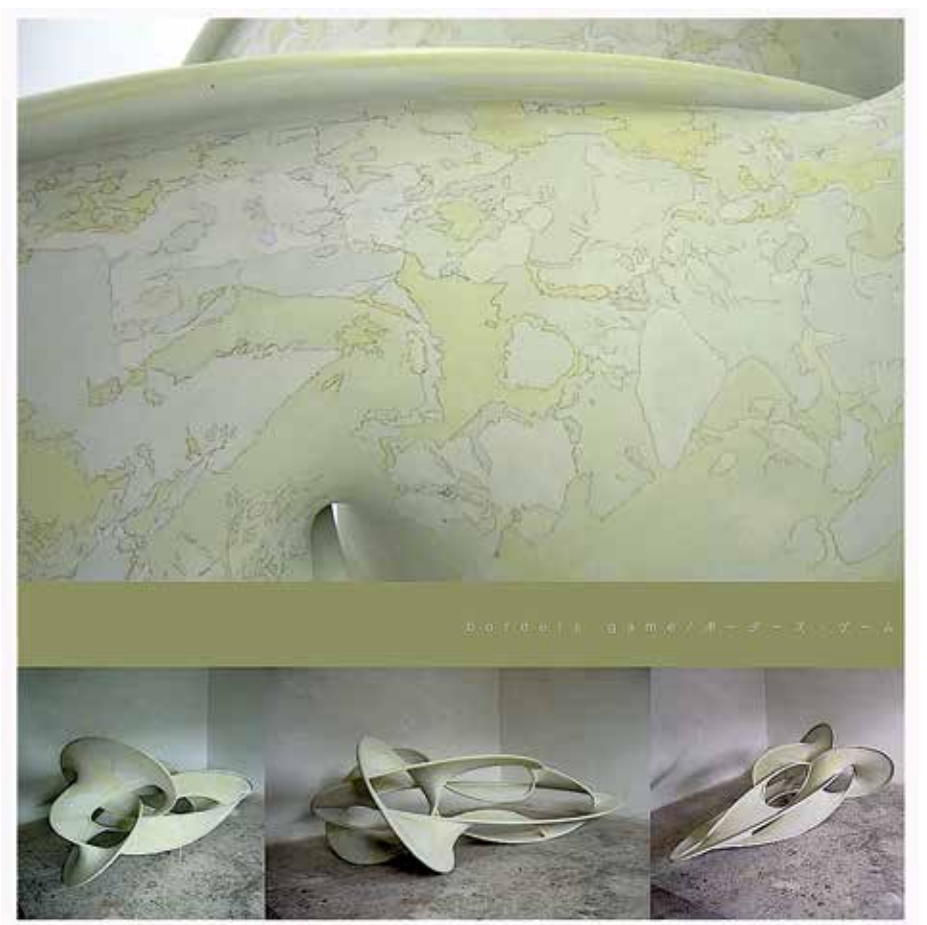
I focused on the accumulation of superimposed substances and their action in this work. I traced the gradation of the putty left on the surface with a pen, and showed the time and the act. The gradients and lines of putty that appear are reminiscent of the earth and of borders.

The world is full of conflict and disasters.

Ill. 6. Hosoi Atsushi, *It must be something other than a material object*,「それは何か物質的でない物に違いない」, 296 x146.5x64.5 cm, steel, wax, 1999, Kohji Ogura Gallery, Nagoya

Ill. 7. Hosoi Atsushi, *'shōsenmon': posterior Fontanelle* (Hold, held and be closed for leaving)「小泉門」, nylon, steel, 1996, Gallery 21+yo,Tokyo

Ill. 8. Hosoi Atsushi, *borders game*「ボーダーズ・ゲーム」, 105.5x223x85 cm, FRP, steel, polyester filler, (It is traced gradation with a brown pencil), 2004, Public Collection: AICHI PREFECTUAL MUSEUM OF ART, Nagoya



Ill. 9 Hosoi Atsushi, *borders game* – detail

Ill. 10. Hosoi Atsushi, *Think of someone*「知らない誰かを思う」, 21.3x 57x36 cm, plywood, resin, 2004

3. Breath-themed *Hitoiki no chōkoku: One breath sculpture*

In the series *Breath sculpture* I attempted to sculpt breathing.

This work does not have a fixed form as a sculpture should have. Its form changes constantly depending on the air and the environment.

The form, which keeps the circle in movement although the shape is changed, is like human beings and history, which repeats itself and continues endlessly. (ill. 12–15)

The theme of my work titled *Red shoes* was to sculpt the invisible, unvisualized world, but there is a human being at the root of it.

Ill. 8. *A scenery of Red Mill Gallery in VSC,* Hosoi Atsushi, from the series *Red Shoes*「レッドシューズ」, 170x270x25 cm, thread, wood, acrylic tube, steel, air

Ill. 9. Hosoi Atsushi, *A breathing sculpture*「一息の彫刻」, thread, plastic pipe, breath, 2002, Vermont Studio Center Red Mill Galley, USA

Ill. 10. Hosoi Atsushi, *It must be something other than a material object*,「それは何か物質的でない物に違いない」, elveteen, latex, rubber tube, plastic pipe, air, 2002

Ill. 11. Hosoi Atsushi, *One space in infinity is finite*「有限に等しい無限の一空間」, 275x400x180 cm, thread, elveteen, latex, wood, steel, plastic pipe, air, 2002, exhibition: "eleven & eleven – Japan Korea Contemporary Art 2002", The Year of Korea-Japan National Exchange in 2002, Songkok Art Museum, Seoul

Japanese Contemporary Wood Sculpture

I have to briefly explain the path Japanese sculpture has taken so far.

First of all, the words 'art = *bijutu*', 'sculpture = *chōkoku*', and 'painting = *kaiga*' are the words used in Japan today. They are relatively new words dating back to the Meiji era.

Just 150 years ago, Japan decided to embrace rapid Western modernization in order to confront the Western powers, and the Meiji era (1867) began. The friendship with Poland started during this age.

Before the introduction of Buddhism, Japan's religion was 'Shinto = *shintō*', and there was an 'animist' sensation that the soul dwells in all things such as the 'Sacred tree [faith] = *reibokushinkō*'.

And a lot of Buddha images were made with the introduction of Buddhism during the Asuka period.

The Buddha statue was originally a gold-and-copper Buddha or a de-dried lacquer image. However, these began to be made from wood suited to Japan's climate and sensibility, becoming the Japanese-style Buddha. This practice continued without interruption until the end of the Edo period.

The transformation brought about by Western-style modernization during the Meiji era had a great influence on the world of art, both good and bad.

In 1876 (Meiji 9), the Kōbu Art School was established and Western art education was introduced.

In 1889 (Meiji 22), the Tokyo Art School was opened, replacing the Kōbu Art School.

At this time, the only subject taught at the sculpture department was wood carving.

It seems to me that many of the artists I will be describing consider this the starting point of contemporary Japanese sculpture.

While Western artistic ideas and Western sculptural expressions were imported, the tradition of Buddhist sculpture did not disappear. Nevertheless, many craftsmen changed the shape of fang carvings, figurines, living dolls (*Ikiningyō*), etc., and handed down their techniques.

In the background of this is the abolition of the Buddha, the participation of Japanese artists in the Vienna World's Fair, the incredible career of *Japonisme*, and these works still shine uniquely today. The passion and ability of the craftsmen is remarkable.

These developments were once forgotten, but in recent years they have been re-evaluated and have had a great influence on today's young sculptors.

From the end of the Meiji era to the Taisho period, Rodin's sculptures were introduced.

Morie Ogiwara (1879–1910) and Kōtarō Takamura (1883–1956) absorbed Western thought and practised sculpture as an expression of life and individuality.

Kotarō's father, Kōun Takamura (1852–1934), taught at the Tokyo School of Art and was a Buddhist artist.

While Kotarō criticized his father's pre-modern ideas, he continued to make works spanning Japanese sensibilities and modernization, and left behind excellent wood carvings.

In the 1920s and 1930s, sculptors who had returned from studying in Europe produced fresh expressions. At the same time, they also explored traditional Japanese Buddhist statue-making and wood carving techniques, and reinvigorated sculpture.

After World War II, we faced the trends of the new art era in the West, and various advances were made in the field of abstract sculpture.

The sculptors I would like to bring closer are grounded in this history. They try to combine the fluctuations of their hearts with a modern perspective and traditional Japanese woodcarving techniques. I feel sympathy for their attitude.

A few of them, like Katsura Funakoshi and Yoshihiro Suda, I think, are quite well-known in Europe.

Yoshitoshi Kanemaki was born in Chiba in 1972.

He graduated from Tama Art University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Sculpture, in 1999. Kanemaki himself says that there is no message in his work. But his sculptures are a beautiful representation of modern solitude, vague anguish, and a sparse reality.

They are neither a return to tradition, nor a modern emphasis.

I feel sympathy for the moderate balance expressed in them.

Kanemaki is a very flexible artist. (ill. 12–15)

Ill. 12. Yoshitoshi Kanemaki, *Yula(Shaking)-Caprice*「揺・カプリス」, 71x23x17.5 cm, painted on wood, 2016

Ill. 13. Yoshitoshi Kanemaki, *Inherit- Persona*「継刻ペルソナ」, 210x100x65 cm, painted on wood, 2016

Ill. 14. Yoshitoshi Kanemaki, *Inversion dualism*「反転デュアリズム」, 65x27x31 cm, painted on wood, 2016

Ill. 15. Yoshitoshi Kanemaki, *Delicate Existence*「朦朧イグジステンス」, 22x28 x28 cm, painted on wood, 2019

Ill. 16. Atsuhiko Misawa, *Animal 2016-01*「白ライオン」, 162x120x180 cm, painted on wood by oil paint, 2016

Ill. 17. Atsuhiko Misawa, *Animal 2018-01*「麒麟」, 234x127.5x203 cm, painted on wood by oil paint, 2018

Taku Obata – an artist who claims to be a 'B-Boy break dancer' sculptor and continues to create works inspired by break dance, one of the four major elements of hip-hop.

He says: "It's important to have a sense of creating space, not sculpture. This also changes the way we think about shape."

Break dance originated in America. Obata expresses the tension and weightlessness of break dancers using Japanese wood carving as a weapon. This is hip-hop sculpture full of originality from Japan.

Makoto Sasaki was born in Tokyo in 1964.

This work seems to express the awe and dignity of gods which has continued from ancient times. The shape and appearance makes you think that God is something like that, an overwhelming power which springs from the inside, even though it is quiet. When confronted in silence, a breath seems to be heard from the earth.

Atsuhiko Misawa was born in Kyoto in 1961. Graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts in 1989.

Atsuhiko Misawa's almost life-size animals give the work a vivid life force, with traces of sculpture. He doesn't observe actual animals when producing them.

The balance of realism and deformity gives the viewer a new perspective on the existence of this force as well as its attachment to animals. (ill. 16–17)

Fuyuki Maehara was born in Tokyo in 1962. Graduated from the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Painting (Oil Painting).

Maehara Fuyuki works with a single wooden form reproducing the details thoroughly. Along with his skill, the poetic nature of his works has become an attraction that draws viewers.

As the artist Shiraji says: "There is an obsession with forgotten landscapes and the beauty of decaying times". A sense of nostalgia for the past is also evoked.

Koji Tanada was born in Akashi, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1968. (ill. 18–20)

Koji Tanada has consistently been working using a traditional Japanese technique called 'one-wood' to mould seamless wood sculptures by carving a single piece of wood from the outside. In

Ill. 18.
Koji Tanada, *Nagi*「ナギ」, 102.5x243x48 cm, paint on wood (camphor tree), single wood-block construction, 2011 and *Nami*「ナミ」, 102x243x43 cm, paint on wood (camphor tree), single wood-block construction, 2011, Tokyo

Ill. 19.
Koji Tanada, *Nagi* and *Nami,* 2011 / Night scene, Nerima Art Museum

Ill. 20.
Koji Tanada, *Nagi* and *Nami,* 2011 / Day scene, Nerima Art Museum

addition, he has continually focused on the motif of 'boy and girl'.

His theme is an ambiguous entity, somewhere at the boundary, no longer a child but not yet an adult.

With their instability, delicateness, and danger, they may be the ones who expose the essential parts of human beings that we are not aware of.

Conclusions

In the works of artists living at present, in the post-Meiji era, one can observe the Japanese sensibility of interacting with wood in the same way as our predecessors and carving out a new life.

The act of finding spirituality in natural trees may have been passed down since ancient times.

Perhaps the artists are attracted to the idea of shaping and developing their own expressions using wooden carving, while respecting the classics.

And during *Jikihitsu* conference and accompanying events, I have met artists who are building a new Japanese art based on Japan's unique culture (like Rena Hiramatsu and Tomohiro Higashikage).

I have high expectations for them.

I hope that universal sculpture will be created based on the history of Japanese sculpture that has been promoted by Western modernization and various sculptures derived from the Japanese context.

Bibliography

Art Collectors' June 2015 Seikatsu no Tomo Co.
月間アートコレクターズ 6月号 2015 （株）生活の友社

Art Collectors' November 2017 Seikatsu no Tomo Co.
月間アートコレクターズ 11月号 2017 （株）生活の友社

Art Collectors' November 2018 Seikatsu no Tomo Co.
月間アートコレクターズ 11月号 2018 （株）生活の友社

Meiji 150 Commemorative Special Exhibition "The beginning of sculpture_ Choukoku Kotohajime", catalog, Kodaira Hirakushi Denchu Art Museum 2018
明治150年記念 特別展 「彫刻コトハジメChoukoku Kotohajime」図録 小平市平櫛田中彫刻美術館 2018

Modern Age in Japanese Sculpture, From its Beginnings through the 1960s, KODANSHA LTD 2007
「日本彫刻の近代Modern Age in Japanese Sculpture, From its Beginnings through the 1960s」 （株）講談社 2007

Tanaka Shuji, *History of Modern Japanese Sculpture*, Kokusho Kankokai Inc. 2018
「近代日本彫刻史」 田中修二 著 国書刊行会 2018

The arrival of Susanowo _Life, Anger, Prayer, catalog, The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Japan Association of Art Museums 2014
「スサノヲの到来__いのち、いかり、いのり」展図録 読売新聞社、美術館連絡協議会 2014

The Record of International Symposium "A Study of Modern Japanese Sculpture" Department of Sculpture, Musashino Art University 2015
「国際シンポジュウム記録集 "A Study of Modern Japanese Sculpture"」 武蔵野美術大学 彫刻学科 2015

Gabriela Morawetz
Paris

Permeation / Image and Movement / Collaboration with the Tarinainanika Duet at the Biwako Biennale

The Touch of *Butoh* and Sankai Juku

My first important encounter with Japanese culture took place in 1981 in Caracas, during the Fifth International Theatre Festival. I had lived in Venezuela since 1975.

It was an international event bringing together leading avant-garde theatre groups such as Pina Bausch, Bread and Puppet, Kazuo Ono and Sankai Juku. Two Polish groups from Kraków – the Cricot Theatre with Tadeusz Kantor and Teatr Stu – were there as well.

I discovered *butoh* mostly thanks to Sankai Juku and Ushio Amagatsu, who successfully continue on their creative path to this day.

The experience had a pivotal impact on my perception of dance. In Caracas, I saw the 1978 performance *Kinkan Shonen*. It was structured around a young boy's dream about the beginning of life and death. A group of five dancers, covered in white powder and moving in a somewhat oneiric rhythm, had a hypnotic effect on me. I experienced a very strange and unfamiliar world which was nonetheless incredibly close to me and permeated my consciousness. The experience was very unsettling.

A few years after that meeting, I was able to see most of Sankai Juku's creations, this time in Paris, where I have lived since 1983.

Another important event took place in 2005. During one of the seasons at the Théatre de la Ville in Paris, Sankai Juku delivered two new performances: *Toki* and *Kagemi*. By a lucky coincidence, I met one of the dancers, Matsuo Shoji. He visited me at my atelier, and in a way it seemed perfectly natural that we were able to communicate on a common visual plane, beyond the realm of words.

Matsuo agreed on a collaboration and posed for a number of photographs for me. We started the session with the motto "I stretch in time", drawn from the poetry of the French writer Jean Tardieu (1903–1995). It was only later that I discovered that this understanding of time was the very field in which Ushio Amagatsu and Sankai Juku operate.

Thanks to this short but intensive collaboration I created a series of photo objects entitled *Eye of Time*. It comprised works created using a mixed technique on two overlapping surfaces. The first was an analogue photograph on convex glass, 100 cm in diameter, the second – a photograph on paper, and natural stones. In my subsequent works, I returned many times to those photos, the outcome of our mute cooperation.

I also made my first video, *Uno*, which was soon after exhibited at the Caracas Contemporary Art Museum (MACSI). It oscillated between reality and the imagination through kaleidoscopic meta-

Ill. 1. Gabriela Morawetz, *Sphere of Being*, silver emulsion on convex glass, pigment print on paper, stones, 100 cm of diameter, 2006

Ill. 2. Gabriela Morawetz, *Uno*, video, 7 min.14″, performing Matsuo Soji, 2005

morphoses of internal visions and expressions of the body. The subject of the work was striving for unity as an ideal.

Biwako Biennale: My Works from 2001–2018

In 2001, I was invited to participate in the Biwako Biennale for the first time. It was taking place in the very modern Biwako Hall in Otsu, where a few years later, in 2005, Sankai Juku performed *Kinkan Shonen*, the performance that had made me discover their dance and enraptured me back in Venezuela. Since then, I have returned to Japan on a regular basis. The Biwako Biennale has moved from Otsu to the historic city of Omi Hachiman near Kyoto, where it is held to this day.

In 2009–2011, I worked on the *Closer to Me Than Myself* series based mostly on photography, but also involving installation elements, silk threads and mirrors. One very important step in constructing the series was working with a model, which I believe was a separate experience and worthwhile in itself.

During the same period, I made two videos. The first, entitled *Twins*, illustrates the binary relationship between closeness and an absolute need for separation and severance. The performance was delivered by twin brothers, using special costumes and accessories in three different open air locations. As I worked on *Closer to Me Than Myself*, I proposed to Tania Coke and Kentaro Suyama to create a performance that would reinterpret the issue raised in *Twins*. The first and only performance took place in a traditional old Nakamura family home in a small room with ten tatamis. The centuries-old villa had been destroyed by fire in 1745, but 100 years later it was rebuilt by the sixth generation of Nakamura family. Today, it is one of the permanent exhibition venues hosting the Biennale.

The second video, entitled *Into Lucency,* also focuses on the issue of duality, but this time the protagonist is a woman, who walks in a different dimension of reality. She supports one of two mirrors facing each other, connected by a membrane of silk threads. It is, in a way, a metaphor for *ego* and *alter ego*. Similar to the previous show, in *Into Lucency* I am interested in aspects of doubling, dividing, and connecting.

Ill. 3.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Performance *Closer to me Than Myself* with the dancers Kentaro Suyama&Tania Coke, Biwako Biennale 2014

Ill. 4.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Performance *Closer to me Than Myself*, dancers Kentaro Suyama&Tania Coke, Biwako Biennale 2014

The dancers, as they blend into the space of the video and installation, are connected by a membrane-like object; sometimes they hold it close to their faces, reflecting in it, and sometimes they are connected through objects placed on their backs. Such an obstacle, creating certain limitations, forces them to search for new possibilities of movement. This very aspect was the main theme in my collaboration with Tania Coke and Kentaro Suyama.

Collaboration with the Tarinainanika Group

I met the dancers Tania Coke and Kentaro Suyama in 2010 during their performance at the Gokashio Festival. Our first joint performance was created in 2012, followed by two others in 2014 and 2016. This type of work is unique in my artistic practice, and so far, I have only had the opportunity to show it during events in Japan.

Tania and Kentaro define themselves as successors to Etienne Decroux (1898–1991), who established the 'grammar' of mime art. Decroux collaborated with Antonin Artaud and Louis Jouvet, among others, and Marcel Marceau was his student. In the 1940s, he opened his own school in Paris, seeking a new expressive technique, which he described as the 'dramaturgy of pantomime'. Tania and Kentaro had also studied and performed under the direction of Steven Wasson and Corinne Souma, creators of the Théâtre De L'Ange Fou.

It is with that theatre that they performed in Warsaw, at the Teatr Mały, as part of the Stefan Niedziałkowski Festival in 2008. Their show was a reconstruction of part of Etienne Decroux's repertoire.

Tania and Kentaro then established their own group, Tarinainanika, in Tokyo and recently moved to Osaka. As I worked with them, I was curious whether there was any kinship between mime art techniques and *butoh* theatre. My hunch turned out to be right. In 1950, the dancer Oikawa, who studied with Decroux, having returned to Japan in the 1960s, taught Yoshito Ono and Tatsumi Hijikata, the pioneers of *butoh*.

Both Oikawa and Yoshito Ono also performed at the VIII International Mime Art Festival in Warsaw in 2008.

One fascinating part of our collaboration involved seeking substitute signs for a new form, in which both their own bodies and my vision of interpretation through movement would come together. I wonder how the image and its poetics might influence their expression, which is governed by very clear rules and techniques.

By working this way, we try to express ourselves through signs, which we do not fully define in advance, but rather whose meaning we seek. We try to achieve a synthetic form that conveys the imprecise edges of the cultures we come from. In a sense, we work based on the mutual inter-permeation of our visions and by seeking their counterparts in movement.

This is the experience of going through the creative process in front of an audience. Our collaboration is based on something like 'directed improvisation'. It is an open form, in which a lot can change depending on the place and situation. The awareness that this moment is exceptional, unique, is a very important element of our work.

I feel that this experience truly reflects the notion of movement in its continuity, as opposed to photography, which stops it. It is fascinating, as it encompasses the notion of infinity.

At the next Biwako Biennale, *Utakata,* in 2014, I showed an installation entitled *Continuum*, which was exhibited at the Kanekichi villa. It is a dark interior with a two-level with an impressive number of criss-crossing beams, which create a mysterious atmosphere. The irregular space, full of surprises, imposed a certain form of deconstruction, both with regard to the installation and our work on the performance itself.

A set of costumes, designed specifically for the show, played a crucial role in it. The costumes were crafted as a place for the body in relation to its surroundings. It was as if every costume was a separate planet and limited the scope of movement. The costumes were also a bit like traps. When the dancers tried to get out of them, as in the process of mutation/metamorphosis, it was possible to interpret this in a variety of ways, both emotionally and spatially. The performance also touched upon the notion of duality, seeking equilibrium and harmony in a perpetual striving for the ideal.

Members of the audience were able to enter the installation space, composed of undulating tapes and images, and the presence of the dancers became a tangible experience. Every viewer watched the performance from a different angle, often limited by elements of the construction and installation; the viewer's eye was forced to seek one dancer, then the other, as they were practically never visible at the same time, on the same plane.

In 2016, I presented a new video-installation at the Biennale, entitled *Chronology of a Dream*. The topic of that work was levitation as a metaphor for leaving the ground and rising above obstacles. It is a metaphor for moving from one dimension into another in a state of weightlessness, like in a dream.

The video was filmed in a place, where the sea is separated from the rest of the world by a tall rocky cliff, which closes the field of view completely. It is like the boundary of two worlds.

A huge rock is a looming obstacle, which cannot be traversed in any way other than rising above it, levitation.

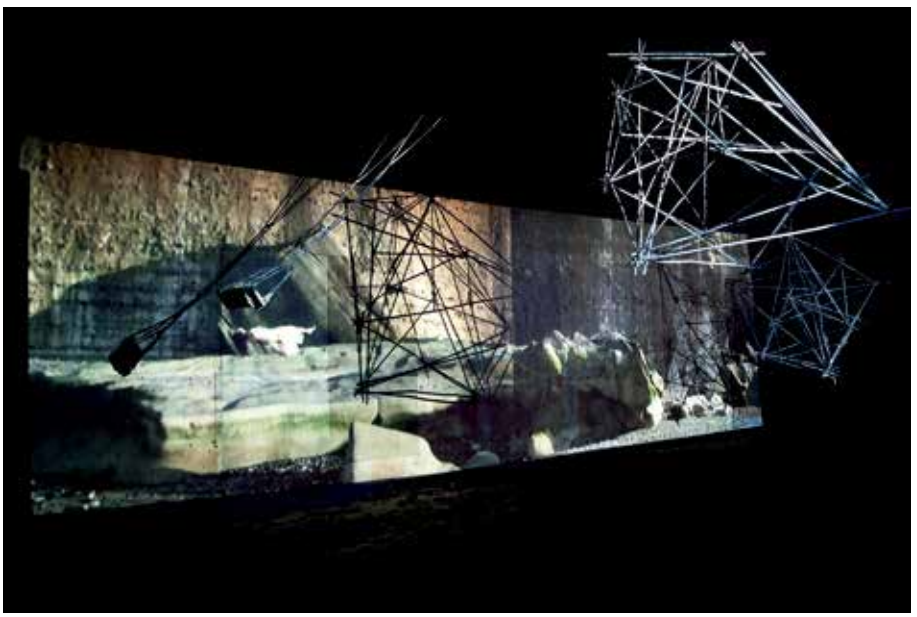
Screenings took place in an old soy factory. It is an old building, with a very high ceiling of impressive beams, and a simple hard earthen floor, still black from spilled soy. In such a scenery, we worked on a way to convey the idea of a rising flight, or the state of weightlessness, often experienced in the moments between sleep and waking.

Thanks to an invitation for an artistic residency, this time we had more time to work on the project. The residency was housed in a very beautiful, albeit dilapidated manor. It was spring, when Japan is all pink with blooming cherry trees, which are worshipped like deities. This creates the impression of complete detachment from the real world. The emotions linked to this ephemeral moment become supremely important when weighed against other values.

An important new element of working with the dancers was the participation of Eri Ito, a traditional Japanese flute soloist. Eri Ito introduced sound, an almost parallel performance on a par with the cho-

ill. 5.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Continuum, installation
and performance, dancers
Kentaro Suyama &Tania
Coke, Biwako Biennale 2014

ill. 6.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Continuum, installation
and performance, dancers
Kentaro Suyama &Tania
Coke, Biwako Biennale 2014



Ill. 7.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Chronology of a Dream,
video-installation, 3 chanels-
loop, Biwako Biennale 2016

Ill. 8.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Chronology of a Dream,
performance, dancers
Kentaro Suyama &Tania
Coke, Biwako Biennale 2016

Ill. 9.
Gabriela Morawetz,
Chronology of a Dream,
performance, Eri Ito, flute
soloist, Biwako Biennale
2016

Ill. 10. Gabriela Morawetz, *Eldrun*, video installation, 3 chanels 30", Biwako Biennale 2018

Ill. 11. Gabriela Morawetz, *Voluspa* poem and pigment print on paper mounted as a make mono, 700x30 cm, 2018

reography and the images. She improvised, walking in her traditional costume, while at the same time she faded into the image, as if camouflaging herself in the video projection.

The most recent edition of the Biwako Biennale took place in 2018. This time I presented a video triptych entitled *Eldrun* that I had created while on an artist residency programme in Norway.

I realised that the archetypal nature of the poem *Voluspa*,[1] which was a semi-conscious inspiration for the work, had acted upon me as echo of Japanese rituals and oracles. To accompany the projection, I also made a seven-metre *makemono* with the poem *Voluspa* in Japanese in addition to a photo sequence illustrating the ritual of reading history and prophecies for the future.

The presentation of this work in Japan was a very interesting experience for me and once again I realized that most cultures have in their resources a mechanism of symbols and metaphors that can be very similar to each other.

The next Biwako Biennale whose title is to be *Cosmic Dance will be my next step in Japan*. This time, too, I will try to create a new performance based on the dialogue between the the body and my own visual language.

The main part of the project will be a sculpture which is similar to the topography of the earth, with various irregularities, wholes, wrinkles,

[1] *Völuspá* is an anonymous poem from Norse mythology, probably composed in the tenth or eleventh century. It is a cosmogonic and eschatological text in the form of a long monologue – a seer recounts to Odin a detailed vision of world history and speaks about the destiny of gods and people, from the beginning of the world until Ragnarök, when the universe shall be reborn.

hills and breaches. It is a big ring of approximately 300 cm of diameter and about 30- 40 cm high. The inspiration for that work came from two quite distant places: La Camargue in South of France and from my travel to Beppu in Kyushu. Few years ago. It is also related to my perception of the Earth as my hometown. Since my early youth I live out of my country of origin, which is Poland and the multiples experiences of crossing the space high over the Earth have revealed me the necessity to find a particular point of vue which would give me the feeling of belonging.

Traditionally, circles were believed by ritual magicians to form a protective barrier between themselves and any other negative forces. They would contain energy and form a sacred space. It may be marked physically, drawn in salt or chalk, or constructed with stones for example, or merely visualized.

Bibliography

Ne faire qu'un, texts by Alin Avila, Marek Bartelik, Serge Fauchereau, Christine Frérot, Edouard Glissant, Joanna Sitkowska Bayle, Anne Tronche, ed. Area-Descartes & Cie, LIVRE, Paris 2011.

Jeux du Régard, preface by Anne Tronche, texts by Juan Manuel Bonnet, Monika Poliwka, ed. Thessa Herold Gallery, catalogue, Paris 2005.

Continuum, text by Laura Serani, ed. Vent d'est, Bordeaux 2013

Filmography:

Uno, video, 7 min.14', Gabriela Morawetz, 2006, Paris

Twins, video 12 min., Gabriela Morawetz, 2011, Paris

Into Lucency, video, 8 min. 33', Gabriela Morawetz, 2011, Paris

Chronology of a Dream,15 min., video, Gabriela Morawetz, 2016, Paris

Eldrun/Voluspa, 31min. 15', 3 channels, Gabriela Morawetz, 2018, Paris

Performance – cooperation with the Tarinainanika / Tania Coke, Kentaro Suyama:

2012 – *Closer to Me than Myself*

2014 – *Continuum*

2016 – *Chronology of a Dream*

Joanna Sitkowska-Bayle
Paris
AICA [International Association of Art Critics]

Meetings with Japan: The works of Aliska Lahusen and Gabriela Morawetz

I discuss the work of Aliska Lahusen and Gabriela Morawetz – two Polish artists who have been living and working in France for several decades – in the context of their encounters with Japan. Both left Poland in the 1970s shortly after graduating – Lahusen from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, and Morawetz from the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts. After spending several years in Switzerland, Aliska Lahusen moved to France and now divides her time between Paris and Burgundy. After several years in Venezuela, Gabriela Morawetz has settled down in Paris. Their creative journey took them from Poland to the West, and then from the West to the cultures of the East. My intention is to present this second stage of their artistic development. Despite the fact that it took on a different face for each artist, they both share a fascination with non-European art and culture as well as a sensitivity to universal symbols, archetypes and rituals. In spite of settling in France and travelling and exhibiting in many countries, they have also participated in a number of collective and individual exhibitions in Poland. Having thus delimited my focus, I will only discuss a number of emblematic works by each artist.

* * *

Aliska Lahusen is a sculptor, painter, installation and graphic artist. Frequently, her starting point and first impulse for beginning a work is the material. In recent years this has usually been lead and lacquer. By recognising the material as her ally, she remains faithful to object art. Her work stems both from personal experience and cultural inspirations. Her pieces often make us enter a contemplative area of silence and reflexion.

In the series "Beds" started in the late 1990s, the beds – places of sleep, birth and love, but also one's last place of rest – preserve a trace of the body that once laid in them, a delicate hollow in the leaden shell. We do not know whether the person will come back or not. Although "Beds" is an evocative illustration of absence, it is difficult to avoid questions tinged with hope. The memory of matter in the form of temporal signs and the imprints and traces left behind affects us with a great force. That which is invisible to the eyes is not quite absent. The art of Aliska Lahusen has a unique suggestive power.

In the years that followed, Lahusen created elongated and bulging (as though pregnant) silhouettes of a strange barge (*Burning boat*, 2007; *Wandering boat*, 2017). A symbol of one's inevitable final voy-

Ill. 1.
Aliska Lahusen, *Burning Boat*, 2017, Galerie Piece Unic, Geneva, photo. Henri Skrobeck

age, Aliska Lahusen's boats are also like heralds announcing the passage to one's last harbour, but also (above all) transformation and journeying towards unknown horizons. Coated with a blood-red lacquer, the boats are more reminiscent of vitality than of coffin darkness. (ill. 1)

When the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków organised an individual exhibition of Lahusen's works in 2009, its very title, *Impermanence*, brought to mind the Japanese term *ukiyo-e*, which is still used to describe representations (images) of the flowing, ephemeral world of earthly pleasures enjoyed by the rich middle class of the Edo era (17th-19th centuries). However, the artist was closer to the earlier sense of *ukiyo*, referring to the world being in a constant state of flux and transience, accompanied by a sense of nostalgia and sadness over the tragedy of the human condition, the realisation that human existence is only temporary. In the Japanese tradition, transitoriness is an immanent feature of beauty, and the accompanying sadness or contemplation of the mystery of existence do not diminish the aesthetic and spiritual pleasure derived from the beautiful.

Aliska Lahusen was also fascinated by the idea of mirrors, in the Japanese tradition associated with darkness since they absorb and store light. In the myth of Amaterasu, the mirror carries the light which the Japanese goddess sends out from a dark cave, indirectly becoming a source of life-giving energy. Lahusen's lacquer *Mirrors* have incredible depth obtained through a long process of applying and polishing successive layers of pigment, which requires precision, concentration and inner calm. Apart from temporality, these mirrors are also a container for stored images and, as the artist intends, states of consciousness which, layer by layer, become a soundless echo, reflecting and emerging endlessly thanks to the play of colour, light and transparency made possible by the traditional lacquer technique, here used in a masterful way.

Marked by the flow of time, these sculptures are set in space, often evoking the idea of movement or gesture. Opening upwards like the *Chalice* from the beginning of 2000, they invite one to look inside. As if opening up to the viewer, they are waiting to receive a gift, the viewer's gaze. But the gaze directed inwards encounters no obstacles, plunges into a soft white interior, dissipating into shades of grey. The longer we look inside, the more difficult it is to see the contours of the object. They lose their focus, becoming blurred, producing an illusion of immateriality. "[We] are overcome with the feeling that in this small corner of the atmosphere there reigns complete and utter silence; that here in the darkness immutable tranquility holds sway."[1] This sentence, from Tanizaki's essay *In Praise of Shadows* (1933) describing *tokonoma* (niches) in traditional Japanese homes, can fittingly be applied to Lahusen's *Black Bowl of Heavenly Ashes* (2017, ill. 2).

When the artist's works returned to the Manggha Museum in 2018, this time sharing the space

[1] Tanizaki (2001: 33).

Ill. 2. Aliska Lahusen, *Black Bowl of Heavenly Ashes*, 2017, Manggha Museum, Kraków

Ill. 3. Aliska Lahusen, *Hiroshi's Rain* 2, 2014, photo. Henri Skrobeck

with the Japanese artist Takesada Matsutani within the framework of an exhibition titled *Confluence,* newer works were added to the older ones, for example paintings from the series *Rain* (2017) and *Hiroshi's Rain* (2015). By applying irregular streaks of dull white and deep black and light blue stripes on the nuanced grey of lead or tin surfaces, the artist, in her own unique, elegant style, started a dialogue with one of the most famous *ukiyo-e* woodcut series – Utagawa Hiroshige's *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* from 1833–1834. Interpreting the work of the Japanese master, she created compositions consisting of spots and lines in which empty areas coexist with discreet elements of fullness, arranging themselves into a harmonious whole. (ill. 3)

Like in all of her other works, what strikes us here is the economy, or even the minimalism of the media, which produces such a suggestive effect, while, as the artist wishes, becoming 'emotionally beautiful'.

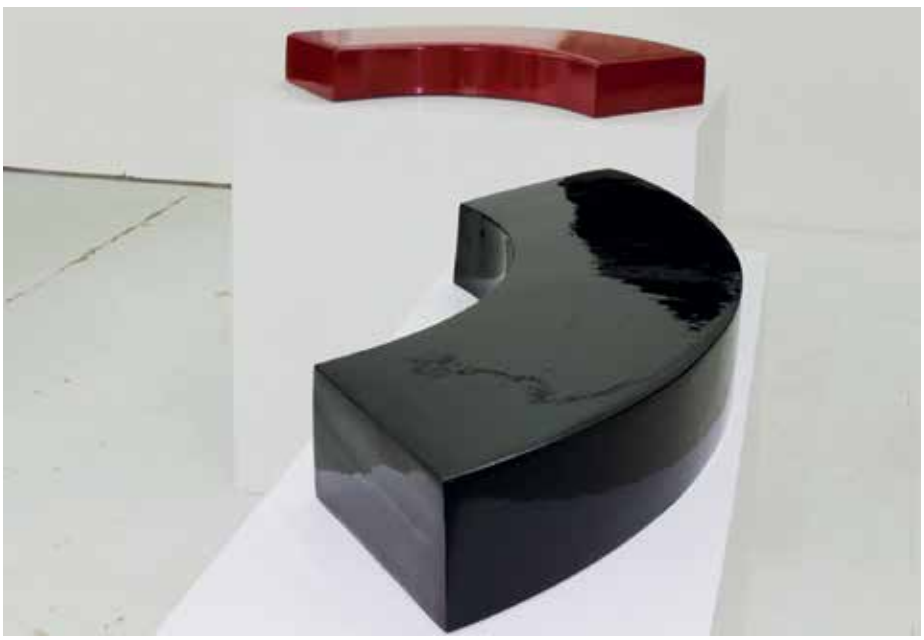
This suggestiveness is also characteristic of the smaller sculptures evoking the form of a pillow, *Sleep Headrest*, or a writing box, *Scriptorium* (we should add, also featured on Hiroshi's woodcuts). They attract our eyes like a magnet. The artist seems to embrace the Japanese idea that beauty does not only manifest itself in art, but also in many everyday objects. The sense of and need for beauty pervade everyday life. The simplicity, elegance, and restraint characterising these objects, especially in the sublime form that the artist gives them, contains a richness of possible interpretations and opens up a field of ambiguity for the viewer. (ill. 4)

The artist holds close the concept of *ma* which refers to the notion of emptiness and means, to put it simply, 'between'. When exhibiting, she takes special care to arrange her works taking into account their mutual relations, the light, the impact of colour and texture. She considers not only the perception of one work, but also creates a kind of poetic narrative inside the exhibition space, of which we, the viewers, also become a part, invited to join in this subtle emotional dialogue, to listen to the murmur of rain, the breath of a sleeping traveller, the sound of a gong....

* * *

Turning to the work of Gabriela Morawetz, I will focus on just a few of her pieces in an attempt to highlight aspects that relate to her encounter with Japan and 'Japaneseness'.

To this end, I would like to return to the period when she started using photography, which entered her work in a very unconventional manner. One of her first and most original applications of photography included works on slate. On the one hand,



Ill. 4.
Aliska Lahusen, *Black scriptorium*, 2015, *Skryptorium rubinowe*, 2015, photo. Henri Skrobeck

they were associated with rock painting and the daguerreotype, and on the other hand their originality lay in the contrast between the stone base and the photographic image. A liquid emulsion spread on the stone plates acquired the quality of an imprint, a permanent mark patinated by time. The artist went on to use it on various substrates like canvas, metal, paper, silk, felt, and glass.

Along with photography, a kind of realism appeared in Gabriela Morawetz's art, although she questioned and ceaselessly interrogated realism. The chemical reactions of the photo emulsion, which could not be entirely controlled, were not a technical procedure that could be executed perfectly to produce a realistic representation, but an artistic gesture. The artist did not strive to create specific, finite forms. Instead, she wanted to visualise states and to translate the (perennial) dynamics of change into the language of images. Moreover, the very technique of developing images using a photographic emulsion already brings on associations with the act of revealing or fading away and is a process that extends in time. In the context of her later exhibitions and performances in Japan, this seems to be the most important feature of Morawetz's work.

Looking back, the artist's exhibition *Materia Prima*,[2] held in 2001 at the Kordegarda Gallery in Warsaw, turned out to be significant in this respect. One can even view it as a foreshadowing of Morawetz's future projects which came about in a unique way at the Biwako Biennale in Japan.

In its intriguing, multi-form visions of a pulsating liquid matter, the series *Whirlpools* depicts the movement that underlies all becoming, the tension between renewal and continuity. In the sculpture/installation *Time was a peaceful river*, two water surfaced, fed by droplets condensed from vessels suspended above them, are united by a life-giving breath. In a strange landscape, seen from a bird's eye view, rivers diverge and come together again, while the surface of the water touches the clouds. One is tempted to add 'No beginning' to the artist's title for this piece, *No end*. (ill. 5)

A desire to convey a sense of the infinite will accompany the artist in many of her subsequent works. Gabriela Morawetz will translate this peculiar phantasmagoric spectacle, the dynamics of change, which so far had mainly been the domain of nature, into the language of movement and gesture. The human figure, central to many of her works, will appear again – never static, as we should stress right away.

Frozen on photographs, the poses of a dancer from the famous Japanese ensemble Sankai Juku became the basis for the photo or photo-object (as the artist says) series *Spheres of being* (2006). Morawetz coated her previous images, made using light-sensitive photo emulsion on canvas, with a thin layer of wax. Thanks to this, the contours became slightly foggy, the forms lost their literalness. Our gaze settles on a delicate, translucent

[2] Wróblewska (2001).

coating, impermeable, protecting the work against total penetration. In *Spheres of being*, the wax is replaced by convex glass. Our gaze, repelled by the transparent glass, needs time to get through; we only have the illusion of reaching the actual image, of knowing it fully. Morawetz's collaboration with the dancer Matsuo Shoji also resulted in her first video, *Uno*, in which a mystery – born of attempts and the desire to be united, to be one – plays itself out via slow rhythmic movements. (ill. 6)

(ill. 7)

Let us now turn to *Continuum* (2014), a work first exhibited inside a former monastery in Bordeaux, France, and then inside a traditional Japanese wooden house on the occasion of the performance at the Biwako Biennale. Let us notice how differently we perceive this polysemous work when it is placed inside a different environment. We have the impression that in a bright interior with stone walls the undulating band cuts through the space with its thin shiny ribbon, we feel its distinctness from the architecture even though it seems to formally correspond to some elements of the sacred space. We can see the images on it, a bit like frames on a magnified film reel – a stream of images flowing through the building. In an old simple Japanese house, however, it winds through a room whose dark interior does not allow a clear glimpse of the images; it is difficult to take it in its entirety. During the performance, waves of this peculiar scroll limit the dancers' movements, organising them, as it were. The dancers, revolving close to the spectators, gradually free themselves from their costumes, shedding successive membranes and external attachments, getting rid of successive burdens and undergoing a spectacular metamorphosis. Just like the earlier figures from the pictures, emerging and disappearing or freezing in their incomplete movements, they pose questions about the nature, the condition of existence, about how we can develop as individuals, about our relationship to ourselves and to the 'other'. The interior, shrouded in darkness, is an important part of the work. The shadow, so important in Japanese aesthetics, "seems not only to be the result of light and darkness, but something primitive, underpinning being as such",[3] as Krystyna Wilkoszewska has emphasised in her considerations.

Ill. 5. Gabriela Morawetz, *Time was a peaceful river*, 2001, Galeria Kordegarda, Warsaw, photo. Pierre A. Bayle

Ill. 6. Gabriela Morawetz, *Sphere of Being*, 2006, photo. Gabriela Morawetz

In her earlier works, Morawetz applied photographs onto flimsy, translucent fabrics. Thanks to the lightness of the material and the delicacy of the contours, the images of figures, objects, fragments of buildings, sometimes in several layers, highlight their phantom character, became poetic and fleeting as a dream. The figures from the series *Étonnement* (2004), displayed in a traditional Japanese interior, enjoy the same rights as the original dwellers, the framed fabric harmonising with the sliding paper walls. Both are characterized by a 'round softness',

[3] Wilkoszewska (2005: 15)

Ill. 7.
Gabriela Morawetz, *Continuum*, 2013, Cours Mably, Bordeaux, France, photo. G. Morawetz

Ill. 8. Gabriela Morawetz, *Weightless Room*, 2018, photo. G. Morawetz

of which Tanizaki wrote in the already mentioned essay when praising the beauty of objects and materials possessed of a 'cloudy translucence'.

In *Weightless Room* (2018), Gabriela Morawetz's latest series of works, I was fascinated by the compositions with their tension between weightlessness, the state of suspension, the uncertainty of the figures and the dynamics of the line. I must admit that I could not resist tracing these graphic signs and drawings to to the art of calligraphy in which, as specialists explain, the calligraphic line, perceived in visual terms, is endowed with features such as direction, length, thickness and saturation, as well as temporal features such as speed, rhythm and momentum, so that we can feel differences in the intensity of the line and even hear its music.[4] (ill. 8)

* * *

As if in spite of, but also thanks to the material they used, both artists have appropriated the idea of ceaseless becoming, instability and transitoriness, which is closer to Eastern cultures than to the European tradition (dominated by a finite understanding of form). They also share a holistic understanding of the universe and a concern for the balance of opposing elements. For Gabriela Morawetz, her encounter with Japan enriched and enhanced her artistic message, taking up dialogue and resonating with a different cultural context. These are not accidental vibrations and I hope that I was able to show in this very fragmentary treatment that at many times they create harmony, speak almost in one voice. Aliska Lahusen, meantime, embraces elements of Japanese art and culture in a more conscious and targeted way, and internalises them

[4] Wilkoszewska (2005: 149)

before the creation of a work, and then in the act of creation itself. Creation preceded by a cognitive experience that goes hand in hand with a deep sensitivity and openness, helping her to articulate her artistic vision. Thus, the art practised by both artists becomes a beautiful proof of the existence of a common spiritual space shared by distant cultural circles.

Bibliography:

Tanizaki 2016 = Juni'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, Vintage, New York 2001: 33.

Wróblewska 2001 = Danuta Wróblewska, *Gabriela Morawetz. Materia prima*, [catalogue] Galeria Kordegarda, Warszawa 2001.

Wilkoszewska 2005 = Krystyna Wilkoszewska ed., *Estetyka japońska. Estetyka życia i piękno umierania. Antologia*, vol. 3, Universitas, Kraków 2005: 15.

Wilkoszewska 2005 = Krystyna Wilkoszewska ed., *Estetyka japońska. Estetyka życia i piękno umierania. Antologia*, vol. 2, Universitas, Kraków 2005: 149.

Przemysław Radwański
Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw

The Artist's Craft as Meditation: Zen Practice and the Creative Process

In contemporary times creativity is increasingly seen as a process, an act, the present response of a changing person to a changing reality. This shift in our understanding is part of the performative turn in Western culture. It marks a change with respect to the traditional Western paradigm in which the work of an artist was viewed through the prism of *techne*, skills and outcomes – the generation of goods. Over the last century, the reception of Zen Buddhism and Japanese art in the Western world has doubtless shifted this perspective. This influence continues.

Zen is a study of the mind. Here is what Eihei Dogen, founder of the Soto sect, one of the two main Zen schools in Japan, which preaches gradual enlightenment, has to say about it:

"To study the *buddha* way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly."[1]

On the superficial level of reception, Zen is seen as exotic, while meditation is seen as coming down to isolating oneself from the world. Meanwhile, Zen is full and direct experience of reality as it is. This is why, if practised, meditation informs our every act at every moment. This is obvious in Japan, although it is sometimes misunderstood in Europe.

I would like to demonstrate how the above quote not only aptly captures the efforts of monks or Zen practitioners but also the practise of art or any other focused creative endeavour.

Let us then replace the words 'to study the buddha way' with 'to study art or painting'. We end up with 'to study art or painting is to study the self'. In Dogen's understanding, in keeping with the original meaning of his words, study is not an intellectual activity. It involves our entire body and mind. We can liken the process to a bird's learning to fly. When learning art we find that the external repertory of forms and techniques arrived at through intellectual combination and the pursuit of originality has little vitality, quickly runs out of steam and does not leave any enduring traces. In order to embrace his role, the artist cannot avoid confronting himself and reality. We see this clearly when accompanying our students, almost none of whom manage to avoid deep crises and long-term struggles to finally reach the other shore, already as changed individuals, much more mature, capable of renouncing their earlier ideas in favour of something simpler but personal, their own, spring-

[1] Dogen n.d.

ing from their own sensitivity and ongoing effort to find themselves.

And then comes the second sentence of the quote: 'to study the self is to forget the self'. Hence to study the self is not equivalent to studying one's own idea of the self. On the contrary, it entails renouncing this idea in order to meet one's other, unfamiliar self. To realise that what we believed to be the *not-I* is actually ourselves. That the boundaries of who we are and who we are not are relative, an aspect of our way of seeing the world and not an objective property. This realisation paves the way for a different experience of oneself, a self that is not identical with the *ego* or our self-image. It also allows us to experience reality as not separate from our existence in the present.

We embrace a different identity, one that is not trapped in the *ego* and separate from the boundless reality around us, an identity open to the experience of difference. We are in touch with reality at every passing moment. And in touch with reality as such rather than an intellectual or conceptual representation of it. This contact is continually renewed, since it can only happen at the single point when we are actually in touch with reality, namely in the present. All else is to immerse oneself either in the fiction of memory or in ideas about the future.

It is a transformative experience that unleashes the potential of sensitivity and opens the gates of perception. Experiencing oneself outside or beyond what we believed ourselves to be.

Therefore, 'To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things.' To forget the self is to set out on the path towards enlightenment. To experience reality not through the filter of ingrained stereotypes but in direct experience, in the flash of the moment, within a perspective that is not mediated by expectations or some imagined utility but inherent in experience itself. We can do this by confronting the present moment and observing the shifting shapes of a dynamic reality. When we let the *ego* fall silent we let all of reality resound within ourselves. Works created in such a state of open-mindedness are strikingly authentic, fresh, intuitively original. The impression is that the world speaks to us directly through such works.

It then comes to pass that 'When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away.' Practise, discipline and the effort to transcend oneself in creation allow one to rise above routines, roles, mental and physical habits, and forms of being. We leave our limitations behind and find freedom. Freedom that comes from having a sense of the truth of what we are doing. It is not only the intellect that opens up under such circumstances. Recall a situation in which you reacted not only intellectually, not even only emotionally. When you reacted with your whole being, body, emotions and rationality to that which appeared before you. Jerzy Grotowski spoke of untraining. We leave habitual thought and reaction patterns behind because the experience of what is happening in the present is more authentic and important than whatever we had previously amassed in the form of skills and habits. This transforms us, as we enter a previously unknown realm. We not only feel free, liberated, but also take action.

And the essence of the journey is: 'No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly.' Faced with such a situation, there is no external sign or gain that is important or at least more important. It is a situation whose whole gain and utility lies in the inarticulable trace left within us. Thanks to this trace we are no longer the same. And this is how, as changed beings, we confront what comes next. We carry within us a kind of light that illuminates us, others, and everything that happens to us.

One cannot overestimate how important it is that we don't become attached to this trace. That we don't turn it into the belief that we can sustain the said state of internal bliss, that we have acquired some kind of wisdom or way that alters our professional or social status. If we fall into this trap, we lose our unique insight, while any attempt to recapture the moment loses meaning, ridicules and casts doubt on the authenticity of the original experience. It puts us back in a situation in which we have exchanged one stereotype for another – a stereotype no less – and have lost lour living bridge to the world.

Zen is therefore about the truth of being and living, which is not to be mistaken for comfort and a sense of having gained something. In his book *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*,[2] Chogyam Trungpa, a Tibetan Buddhism master, points to a feature of the human, especially the Western, mind. Namely the desire to gain something, which permeates every type of action. He writes not only

[2] Trungpa (2002)

of self-evident economic and social gains but focuses primarily on the way we pursue inner gains like attractiveness, attention and self-satisfaction. Attaching ourselves to these and expecting them has destructive and alienating consequences. Meanwhile, to be disinterested is to be ready to confront the truth of the moment, including discomfort, suffering, boredom, the unexpected... one cannot list all the things a moment can bring.

This is why the principle of non-achievement, non-intentionality, disinterested, full presence in the moment is a condition of the true path. It is only when our actions are disinterested or, to use the language of the humanities, autotelic, meaning that we pursue what we pursue for its own sake and not for the sake of anything external, that our creative work becomes a path in the true sense. Any attachment or self-interest make us stray from it.

And so a trace can go on and radiate indefinitely only when we abandon the idea of gain. Then: ' No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly.'

It is worth citing other Zen masters who demonstrate that expecting the practice of Zen to help us gain something, achieve something or become prepared for something is misplaced. Zen practice is, above all, about loss. Kodo Sawaki, Kōshō Uchiyama[3] and Jakusho Kwong[4] write of 'active participation in loss'. Of Zen as a path on which we lose our comfort, inflexible beliefs, our attachment to the *ego*, our habits, the safety of well-travelled roads and time-honoured schemata. And in experiencing this loss we are conscious, present and active.

Similarly, Jerzy Grotowski, theatre master and performance teacher, warned his students that if they come to him to gain something, they are mistaken. For the real goal is to lose: to shed techniques, skills, habits, the desire to please. All in order to make the ultimate sacrifice, having stripped oneself completely bare.[5]

This is an image of striving to be completely present, to renounce all techniques and manners of being in and perceiving the present moment. To abstain from arriving in it with a pre-determined idea. The readiness to take risk, but also to perceive something utterly novel and unknown. For the artist never depicts the objective world. He portrays the world as he perceives, receives and transforms it. In art, there is no objective world, only the human world.

The words of a ninth-century master, Tozanzenji, come to mind:

Do not try to see the objective world.
You which is given as an object to see is quite different from you yourself.
I am going my own way and I meet myself which includes everything I meet.
I am not something which I can see (as an object).
When you understand self which includes everything,
You have your true way.[6]

Perhaps this interpretation raises doubts. This perspective comes out of my inspirations, my experience of them, and conversations with my students. Try it yourself. The cited texts are a record of two and a half millennia of working with the mind. They describe a road well known to Japanese creators which is gradually also becoming recognised in the Western world.

Bibliography:

Dogen n.d. = Zenji Eihei Dogen, *Genjo Koan*, unpublished translation from the Japanese by Kazuaki Tanahasi, Robert Aitken:
http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/GenjoKoan_Aitken.htm (accessed 18.08.2019).

Grotowski 2012 = Jerzy Grotowski, *Teksty zebrane* (Collected Papers), Instytut im. Jerzego Grotowskiego, Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Warszawa 2012: 255–262, 315, 379–395, 638–652.

Kwong 2003 = Jakusho Kwong, *No beginning. No end. The Intimate Heart of Zen,* Harmony Books, New York 2003: 128–137, 214, 236.

Trungpa 2002 = Chogyam Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, Shambala Publications 2002.

Uchijama 2005 = Kosho Uchiyama, *Opening the Hand of Thought: Foundations of Zen Buddhist Practice*, translated and edited by Tom Wright, Jisho Warner, and Shohaku Okumura, Wisdom Publications, Boston 2005.

[3] Uchijama (2005)
[4] Kwong (2010: 128–137)
[5] Grotowski (2012: 255–262, 315, 379–395, 638–652)
[6] Kwong (2003: 236)

Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk
Institute of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw
Polish Institute of World Art Studies

A few words after the conference and the accompanying events

This publication is a sequel to the international conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art* which took place on 10–12 June 2019 at the pavilion of the Association of Polish Architects in Warsaw. The conference was organised by the College of Art Education of the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, the Polish Institute of World Art Studies and the Association of Polish Architects. It received support from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, and was organised with the involvement of the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, the Polish Institute of World Art Studies and the Association of Polish Architects. (ill. 1, 2, 3)

The conference was accompanied by an array of important side events, including exhibitions, performances and workshops. Both the conference and these events were part of a programme marking the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan.

The conference featured reflection and discussions on the nature of Polish(European)-Japanese relations today in an era of unprecedented mobility, globalisation, transculturalism, new media, new communication channels and availability of information (thanks to the internet, social media, etc.).

During the conference we examined the phenomenon of the unwavering (since the second half of the nineteenth century) European and Polish fascination with the culture and art of the Land of the Cherry Blossom. We also tried to sound the depth of this fascination and identify its manifestations. What do the terms Japonism and *japonaiserie* reference today? How visible is the influence of Far-Eastern philosophy and religion on the creative process of contemporary artists (in printmaking, sculpture, digital media, dance, etc.)? What is it that intrigues and inspires them in this culture, so distant from their own, and what kind of results have these fascinations given rise to?

Contemporary Polish-Japanese relations were examined through the prism of meetings, cyclical events, thematic presentations, exhibitions, festivals, artistic exchanges and residencies as well as the ongoing presence of Polish artists and their works in Japan or of Japanese artists and their productions in Poland as well as the living traces of Japan in Polish museum collections. The context of works by selected Polish artists active in France in 'symbiosis' with Japanese art and culture was also an important topic of discussion. A closer look was also taken at inspirations present today in various branches of art – not only the visual arts (from traditional to digital art), but also theatre, dance and performance.

Ill. 1. Participants and guests of the conference *Jikihitsu,* the Zamoyski palace and park, Warsaw, June 10–12, 2019

Ill. 2.
Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art, June 10–12, 2019, SARP, Warsaw – entrance, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 3.
Opening of the conference (from the left side): Juliusz Gałkowski. Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Jerzy Malinowski, Joanna Stasiak, Marcin Wochyń, Aleksandra Wiśniewska and guests

Ill. 4.
Lecture of Prof. Shigemi Inaga, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 5.
Lecture of Prof. Yuko Nakama, photo. D. Rumiancew

There were also references to the eponymous *jikihitsu*, the artist's signature, which we treated quite broadly – not only as the mark confirming an artist's authorship of an artwork or a compositional element, but also as a kind of metaphor of one's creative path or attitude, the mark of an artistic individuality gradually taking shape in the encounter with a different culture and tradition.

Presentations by several speakers from Japan, who talked about their relationship with contemporary Polish and/or European culture and art, introduced their fascinations as well as their often highly unexpected outcomes were an important component of the conference. The speakers included eminent art historians as well as artists lecturing at Japanese universities.

The invitation to take part in the conference was accepted by experts on Japanese art (as well as Polish art inspired by the traditions of Japan) in Poland as well as esteemed scholars from art universities and cultural institutions in Japan and a number of European countries. The conference was overseen by an academic committee headed by Prof. Jerzy Malinowski and assisted by Prof. Akiko Kasuya.(ill. 4–6)

There were 43 speakers. They included representatives of various branches of art and academia: historians, art theorists and critics, cultural studies scholars and artists representing important academic centres in Poland and Japan as well as organisers of artistic events whose purpose is to bring both cultures into dialogue.

It was not the first event organised in Poland to facilitate reflection on Polish-Japanese relations in the sphere of contemporary culture and art. As the initiator of a number of Polish-Japanese conferences, the Polish Institute of World Art Studies which examines these relations especially within

Ill. 6.
Lecture of Masako Takahashi, photo. D. Rumiancew

the context of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century art, has frequently promoted papers treating of contemporary issues. Since this is a very broad area and, moreover, still largely unexamined, we believed that there was a great need to introduce some of its selected aspects from a range of perspectives – historical, theoretical as well as artistic. We also hope that the attempts made to identify and analyse artistic points of contact between Poland and Japan today – countries geographically and culturally remote from each other – shall be continued during future meetings, exchanges and on the pages of successive publications.

Conference participants:

Elżbieta Banecka, Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Anna Dzierżyc-Horniak, Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska, Michio Hayashi, Tomohiro Higashikage, Atsushi Hosoi, Shigemi Inaga, Magdalena Janota-Bzowska, Paweł Jasiewicz, Konrad Juściński, Akiko Kasuya, Anna Katarzyna Maleszko, Yuko Nakama, Kazuhiro Korenaga, Łukasz Kossowski, Marta Kowalewska, Ewa Latkowska, Jerzy Malinowski, Rina Matsudaira, Gabriela Morawetz, Yoko Nakata, Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados, Nonki Nishimura, Katarzyna Nowak, Paweł Pachciarek, Chie Piskorska, Radosław Predygier, Przemysław Radwański, Agnieszka Rożnowska, Tomasz Rudomino, Yasuyuki Saegusa, Michael Schneider, Joanna Sitkowska-Bayle, Joanna Stasiak, Milada Ślizińska, Zbigniew Urbalewicz, Jerzy Uścinowicz, Masako Takahashi (Miura), Zbigniew Wałaszewski, Aleksander Woźniak, Joanna Zakrzewska, Anita Zdrojewska

Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist – side events

The three-day international conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art* was accompanied and enriched by a series of side events, including a main exhibition, a number of individual presentations, a *butoh* spectacle, workshops and performances. The events took place in June 2019 in a number of prestigious galleries across Warsaw. They brought together prominent artists from Poland, Japan and France. Their aim was to highlight the influence of Japanese traditions, culture, philosophy and aesthetics on contemporary Polish art and to showcase works by Japanese artists and their fascination with European culture. (ill. 7–11, 13)

46 Japanese and Polish artists belonging to different generations exhibited as part of the two-part main exhibition *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist* (the Association of Polish Architects Pavilion and the Old Gallery of Association of Polish Art Photographers). These were renowned and acclaimed artists, most of whom are also active in teaching and research (lecturers at universities in Poland, Japan, and France), who have an ongoing artistic practice, contacts with Japanese artists or traditional Japanese workmanship and crafts (e.g. thanks to having participated in artist-in-residence programmes, exchanges or research projects, etc.).

The artist's signature, the *jikihitsu*, was the Leitmotiv of the show. Defined quite liberally – not only as the artwork's inalienable identifier or a signature in the strict sense of the word, but above all as a kind of metaphor of one's creative path, the mark of an artistic individuality gradually taking

Ill. 7. Exhibition in SARP, works of (from the left side): K. Fujioka, S. Michiko, K. Juściński, S. Baj, J. Stasiak, M. Kiesner, A. Rożnowska, G. Mroczkowski, E. Banecka, A. Lahusen (red barque), photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 8. Exhibition in SARP, works of (from the left side): N. Nishimura, B. Becker, Tokushige Emiko, P. Jasiewicz, Kobayashi Naomi, J. Wilkoń, S. Baj, J. Stasiak, M. Kiesner, A. Lahusen (red barque), photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 9. Exhibition in SARP, works of (from the left side): J. Wilkoń, J. Woynarowski, R. Predygier, A. Waliszewska, J. Paszko, A. Hosoi, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 10.
Exhibition in SARP (Mirror Room), works of (from the left side): A. Waliszewska R. Matsudaira, W. Rosocha, M. Wasilewski, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 11.
Exhibition in SARP (Mirror Room), works of (from the left side): A. Hosoi, J. Zakrzewska, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 12. Anita Zdrojewska's and Joanna Sarnecka's *butoh* show.

shape under the influence of a different culture and tradition. (ill. 14–18)

Using selected examples we tried to illustrate what kind of new creative activities, concepts, technical solutions, research topics and inspirations arise in the encounter between cultures. By juxtaposing artists from Poland and Japan working on different problems and using a variety of media we wanted to highlight the role of bringing tradition and contemporariness together.

Aside from the artist's signature cited in the title, the works also served to illustrate a variety of issues, including the definition of space, the notion of active empty space, minimalism, references to Japanese philosophy, spirituality and aesthetics as well as the impact of globalisation or Europeanisation on Japanese art.

The exhibition was interdisciplinary and multimedia. The featured works were made both using traditional painting or printing techniques (e.g. paintings on canvas, wooden boards or silk, woodblock printing, posters, mangha) as well as new media (including photography, video-art etc.). There were also numerous three-dimensional installations, fabrics, and monumental sculptural forms.

The program was also supplemented with individual shows: an exhibition of illustrations and objects titled *The Art of Józef Wilkoń in Japan* (Galeria APS of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw in cooperation with the J. Wilkoń ARKA Foundation), (ill. 19) a screening of video documentation from Krzysztof Wodiczko's projects in Japan, including *Hiroshima*, *Rozbroji* (Profile Foundation), and an exhibition of silk paintings by Joanna Stasiak (*Cities of Fish*, Piwnica Artystyczna, ill. 20), whose vernissage was accompanied by a performative concert inspired by the paintings (performers: Zofia Bartoszewicz, Igor Buszkowski and Jacek Szczepanek). The vernissage at the Old ZPAF Gallery was preceded by a Chopin concert performed by Piotr Latoszyński and dedicated to the Japanese conference participants, while the finissage of the main exhibition at the at the Association of Polish Architects was graced by Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados's performance and Anita Zdrojewska's and Joanna Sarnecka's *butoh* show. (ill. 12) Art therapy workshops led by artist Masako Takahashi were also held within the framework of Art Hospital.

Ill. 13. Józef Wilkoń describes his works, SARP.

Ill. 14. Entrance to the Old Gallery, Warsaw, photo. M. Takahashi

Ill. 15. Gabriela Morawetz, *The World Far from the World*, the Old Gallery, Warsaw, photo. D. Rumiancew

All of the events unfolded in a very warm and heartfelt atmosphere in beautiful surroundings – the Zamoyski palace and park, galleries in the Old Town and in the centre of Warsaw.

Ill. 16. Works of: D. Rumiancew, A. Rożnowska, Hiroo Kikai, the Old Gallery, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 17. Works of: M. Bałka, D. Rumiancew, A. Roznowska, Hiroo Kikai, the Old Gallery, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 18. Works of: Y. Korenaga, S. Paruch, the Old Gallery, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 19. Józef Wilkoń's show, galeria APS of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw, photo. D. Rumiancew

Ill. 20.
Joanna Stasiak's show, *Cities of Fish*, photo. D. Rumiancew

Participants of the exhibitions

Yui Akiyama, Stanisław Baj, Elżbieta Banecka, Mirosław Bałka, Bogna Becker, Fujioka Keiko & Michiko Sakuma, Toshihiro Hamano, Joanna Hawrot, Tomohiro Higashikage, Atsushi Hosoi, Daisuke Ichiba, Paweł Jasiewicz, Konrad Juściński, Maria Kiesner, Hiroo Kikai, Naomi Kobayashi, Shoukoh Kobayashi, Kazuhiro Korenaga, Aliska Lahusen, Ewa Latkowska, Monika Masłoń, Rina Matsudaira, Gabriela Morawetz, Grzegorz Mroczkowski, Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados, Nonki Nishimura, Stefan Paruch, Małgorzata Paszko, Radosław Predygier, Wiesław Rosocha, Agnieszka Rożnowska, Daniel Rumiancew, Yasuyuki Saegusa, Koichi Sato, Michael Schneider, Jarosław Sierek, Joanna Stasiak, Magdalena Świercz-Wojteczek, Masako Takahashi, Emiko Tokushige, Aleksandra Waliszewska, Mieczysław Wasilewski, Józef Wilkoń, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Jakub Woynarowski, Aleksander Woźniak, Joanna Zakrzewska.

The exhibitions were created courtesy of artists from Poland, France and Japan and used items from the collections of various museums and galleries, including the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź and the Manggha Museum in Kraków.

Heartfelt gratitude for their assistance in organising the conference and the side events as well as preparing this publication is due to:

Prof. Jerzy Malinowski and Dr Agnieszka Kluczewska-Wójcik (Polish Institute of World Art Studies) and Prof. Akiko Kasuya (The Kyoto City University of Arts) and Radosław Predygier (Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan, Okayama)

Director Juliusz Szymczak-Gałkowski of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Director Krzysztof Olendzki and Barbara Trojanowska and Aleksandra Wiśniewska of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute

President Mariusz Ścisło and Prof. Jerzy Uścinowicz from the Association of Polish Architects

Prof. Jarosław Rola, Prorector for Academic Affairs, and Marcin Wochyń, Chancellor from the Maria Grzegorzewska University

Presidents: Jolanta Rycerska and Magdalena Wdowicz-Wierzbowska of the Association of Polish Art Photographers

Directors: Bogna Dziechciaruk-Maj and Katarzyna Nowak of The Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology

Chief Curator, Marta Kowalewska of the Central Museum of Textiles, Łódź.

I would also like to thank Prof. Joanna Stasiak, co-author of the project, and our team:

Katarzyna Stamm, Anna Wrońska, Hanna Kaszewska, Dr Magdalena Świercz-Wojteczek, Daniel Rumiancew, Prof. Grzegorz Mroczkowski, Prof. Agnieszka Rożnowska, Prof. Stefan Paruch, Prof. Maria Kiesner, Dr Aleksandra Chmielnicka-Plaskota, Dr Magdalena Janota-Bzowska, Dr Przemysław Radwański, as well as the interpreters and translators: Dominika Gajewska, Anna Mrozińska, Izumi Yoshida, Artur Zapałowski.

Many thanks to the already mentioned Participants of the conference and accompanying events: Speakers and Artists.

PROGRAMME

JIKIHITSU 直筆
THE SIGNATURE OF THE ARTIST

THE PRESENCE OF JAPANESE TRADITION IN CONTEMPORARY POLISH ART

10-12.06.2019 | THE ASSOCIATION OF POLISH ARCHITECTS | FOKSAL 2 | WARSAW

月曜日

MONDAY | 10.06.2019

9.30-10.00
registration of participants, coffee

10.00
official opening of the conference

10.20-10.40
prof. Jerzy Malinowski
(Polish Institute of World Art Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń)
- *Polish and Japanese Approach. Activity of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies*

10.40-11.00
prof. Akiko Kasuya
(The Kyoto City University of Arts)
- *Celebration – Polish-Japan Contemporary Art Presentation*

11.00-11.20
Paweł Pachciarek
(Osaka University, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Poznań, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *Japaneseness in the Activities of Cotemporary Polish Artists on the Example of a Polish-Japanese Contemporary Art Exhibition Celebration*

11.20-11.40
prof. Michio Hayashi
(Faculty of Liberal Arts, Sophia University Tokyo, Japan)
- *The Euro-Japanese Relationship through the Concept of Ornament/Decorative Art*

11.40-12.00
Katarzyna Nowak
(Manggha Museum, Cracow)
- *Living National Treasures of Japan – Exceptional Presence at Manggha Museum*

12.00-12.20
discussion, coffee

12.20-12.40
prof. Michael Schneider
(The Tokyo University of the Arts [Geidai])
- *Cultural Interrelations between Europe and Japan Observed in Printed Art – an Artist's View*

12.40-13.00
Katarzyna Anna Maleszko
(National Museum in Warsaw, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *What is the East to the West? On Our Inspiring Meetings*

13.00-13.20
prof. Shigemi Inaga
(International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, Kyoto)
- *Ushushi and Usturoi, Metempsychosis and Transition*

13.20-13.40
Łukasz Kossowski, Ph.D.
(Museum of Literature, Warsaw; Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *Point of View. Japanese Signature. Polish Signature*

13.40-14.00
Magdalena Janota-Bzowska, Ph.D.
(Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw)
- *Sign of the Artist, the Artistic Sign – the Autonomy of the Artist's Signature*

14.00-14.20
discussion

14.20-15.20
lunch

15.20-15.40
prof. Yuko Nakama
(Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto)
- *New Digital Art and Japanese Aesthetics*

15.40-16.00
Zbigniew Wałaszewski, Ph.D.
(Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw)
- *Fascinating Strangeness. Japanese Culture in the Eyes of Western Filmmakers*

16.00-16.20
Radosław Predygier
(Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan, Okayama; Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *Polish Trace in Okayama. Polish Art and Science Mission in Japan*

Ministry of Science and Higher Education

16.20-16.40
Tomohiro Higashikage
(Nomart Gallery, Osaka)
- *Life and Death – The Quiet Talking with the Existence*

16.40-17.00
prof. Jerzy Uścinowicz
(Bialystok University of Technology, Białystok; Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *New Church of Saint Nicholas of Japan at Kamienna Górka in Minsk. The Close Tradition of the Far East*

17.00-17.20
discussion

18.00
dinner

火曜日

TUESDAY | 11.06.2019

9.00-9.20
Milada Ślizińska
(Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw)
- *Magdalena Abakanowicz and Japan*

9.20-9.40
Masako Takahashi (Miura)
(Wonderful Art Production, Japan)
- *From Hospital Art to the Irreplaceable Cooperation with Polish artists: Józef Wilkoń and Lidia Dańko*

9.40-10.00
Anna Dzierżyc-Horniak, Ph.D.
(The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *What Is Needed Is Concentration, Inner Silence and Willingness to Listen. Koji Kamoji in Creative Dialogue with Polish Artists*

10.00-10.20
Marta Kowalewska
(Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź)
- *Woven Ties. Naomi and Masakazu Kobayashi*

10.20-10.40
Joanna Sitkowska-Bayle
(International Association of Art Critics, Paris)
- *Meetings with Japan – artistic output of Aliska Lahusen and Gabriela Morawetz*

10.40-11.00
discussion, coffee

11.00-11.20
Anita Zdrojewska
(Pompka Foundation, PUBLINK Agency)
- *BUTOH – Experiments, Provocations and Inspirations: an Endless Trip in the Footsteps of Kazuo Ohno & Tatsumi Hijikata*

11.20-11.40
Yoko Nakata
(Biwako Biennale, Japan)
- *Biwako Biennale – Art Festival in the Historical City*

11.40-12.00
Gabriela Morawetz
- *Permeation – Image and Movement/Cooperation with Tarinainanika Duo in Context of Biwako Biennale*

12.00-12.20
Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Ph.D.
(Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw; Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *A Fragment of the Whole. The Traces of Japanese Aesthetics in the Works on Silk of Selected Polish Female Artists*

12.20-12.40
Rina Matsudaira
(Sony Music, Kyoto)
- *Inspired by the Classics of East Asia Searching for a meeting place of narratives and paintings*

12.40-13.00
Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska, Ph.D.
(Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
- *European fairy tales and kawaii aesthetic. Experimental photography by Ewa Doroszenko*

13.00-13.20 discussion

13.20-14.20 lunch

14.20-14.40
prof. Yasuyuki Saegusa
(Faculty of Art, SOJO University, Kumamoto)
- *Volcano · Art · Human - Residency Project in Kumamoto, Japan*

14.40-15.00
prof. Agnieszka Rożnowska
(Fine Arts Academy, Warsaw)
• *Mono-No-Aware. Memories from Kyushu*

15.00-15.20
prof. Aleksander Woźniak
(Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn)
• *Negative Space and the Issue of Transformation in the Process of Artistic Creation. Based on a Project Looking at Tokyo*

15.20-15.40
Kazuhiro Korenaga
(Akaiwa Art Rally, Soja Artists Residence)
• *Art as a Mean to Connect Area and People*

15.40-16.00
Chie Piskorska
(Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology)
• *New Japonism and the Idea of BUNKASAI Japanese Arts Festival*

16.00-16.20
discussion

18.00
finissage of the exhibition, SARP
with performance of Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados and butoh performance: Anita Zdrojewska, Joanna Sarnecka
Wedding – kekkonshiki. BUTOH at Matsuri

WEDNESDAY | 12.06.2019

9.00-9.20
prof. Joanna Stasiak
(Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw)
• *Immersion in Seeing*

9.20-9.40
Przemysław Radwański, Ph.D.
(Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw)
• *Artist's Work as Meditation. The Influence of Practising Zen on the Creative Process*

9.40-10.00
prof. Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados
(Faculty of Art, Pedagogical University of Cracow)
• *Practising Mindfulness – On Japanese Experience in Creative Work*

10.00-10.20
Joanna Zakrzewska, Ph.D.
(Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology in Gdańsk)
• *The Influence of Japanese Calligraphy and Ink Wash Painting on Contemporary Polish Artists*

10.20-10.40
Zbigniew Urbalewicz
(Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn)
• *Creative Journeys to the World of Japanese Calligraphy. The Analysis of the Areas of Influence of Aesthetics and Artistic Experiences*

10.40-11.00
Tomasz Rudomino
(Paris)
• *Two Faces of Avant-garde: Gutai and Kosai Hori*

11.00-11.20
discussion, coffee

11.20-11.40
prof. Elżbieta Banecka
(Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw)
• *Uncombed from Kyoto*

11.40-12.00
prof. Ewa Latkowska
(Academy of Fine Arts, Łódź)
• *The Art of Paper. Paper in Art*

12.00-12.20
Konrad Juściński, Ph.D.
(Michał Iwaszkiewicz Poznan School of Social Sciences in Poznań)
• *Two Roads, One Direction*

12.20-12.40
Nonki Nishimura
(AT ARTS)
• *The Eyes of Truth*

12.40-13.00
Atsushi Hosoi
(Musashino Art University in Tokyo)
• *On the Progress, Development and Background of the Work of Contemporary Young Wood Sculptor*

13.00-13.20
Paweł Jasiewicz
(Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw)
• *Every Wood Has Its Own Tone, Every House Has Its Own Song*

13.20-13.40
discussion, wrap-up of the conference

JIKIHITSU.
THE SIGNATURE OF THE ARTIST

Science Committee

Professor Akiko Kasuya (Kyoto City University of Arts)
Professor Joanna Stasiak (Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University)
Professor Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi (The University of Warsaw, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
Professor Jerzy Malinowski (Head of the Committee, Polish Institute of World Art Studies, The Nicolaus Copernicus University)
Professor Jerzy Uścinowicz (Białystok University of Technology, Association of Polish Architects, Polish Institute of Worlfd Art Studies)
Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Ph.D. (Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
Magdalena Furmanik- Kowalska, Ph. D. (Polish Institute of World Art Studies)

Honorary patronage

Embassy of Japan in Poland
The Maria Grzegorzewska University
Polish Institute of World Art Studies
Year 2019 POLAND-JAPAN
Association of Polish Architects

Organiser

Collegium of Art Education,
The Maria Grzegorzewska University

Project authors: Joanna Stasiak,
Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk

Co-organisers

Polish Institute of World Art Studies
Association of Polish Architects

Partner

Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Project financed by

Ministry of Science and Higher Education
The Maria Grzegorzewska University

Coordinator: Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Ph.D.
magdad15@wp.pl

Assistant Coordinator: Hanna Kaszewska
kaszewskah@gmail.com
+48 603 710 364

jikihitsu@wp.pl
www.jikihitsu.pl
facebook.pl/jikihitsu

Cooperation

Media patrons

JIKIHITSU
THE SIGNATURE OF THE ARTIST

JAPANESE TRADITION IN CONTEMPORARY POLISH ART

CONFERENCE AND ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

22 May, 14.30: vernissage "Art of Józef Wilkoń in Japan", exhibition of illustrations and sculpture,
The Maria Grzegorzewska University Gallery, Szczęśliwicka 40, 22 May-21 June 2019

2-13 June 2019: main exhibition
"Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist" painting, textiles, graphics, drawing, sculpture, installations,
Pavilion of the Association of Polish Architects, Foksal 2, Warsaw

2-15 June 2019: Joanna Stasiak, "Cities of Fishes",
Piwnica Artystyczna, Dewajtis 3, Warsaw

7-14 June 2019: Krzysztof Wodiczko, show of projects' documentation performed in Japan, Profile Foundation, Franciszkańska 6, Warsaw

9 June 2019, 13.00: vernissage: Joanna Stasiak, "Cities of Fishes", Piwnica Artystyczna, Dewajtis 3, Warsaw.
Performative concert inspired by Joanna Stasiak's paintings. Zofia Bartoszewicz – intuitive singing, Igor Buszkowski – bass guitar, Jacek Szczepanek – sounds' collage.

9 June 2019, 19.00: vernissage "*Jikihitsu.* The Signature of the Artist" – the main exhibition: photography, new media, installations, film, video art,
Stara Galeria and Galeria Obok ZPAF,
pl. Zamkowy 8, Warsaw, 7-21 June 2019

10-12 June 2019: An international conference: "*Jikihitsu.* The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art", Pavilion of the Association of Polish Architects, Foksal 2, Warsaw

11 June 2019, 18.00: official finissage of the main exhibition "*Jikihitsu.* The Signature of the Artist"
with the performance of Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados and butoh performance by Anita Zdrojewska and Joanna Sarnecka "Wedding – kekkonshiki"
Pavilion of the Association of Polish Architects, Foksal 2, Warsaw

Shows' participants:

Yui Akiyama
Stanisław Baj
Elżbieta Banecka
Mirosław Bałka
Bogna Becker
Fujioka Keiko & Michiko Sakuma
Toshihiro Hamano
Joanna Hawrot
Tomohiro Higashikage
Atsushi Hosoi
Daisuke Ichiba
Paweł Jasiewicz
Konrad Juściński
Maria Kiesner
Hiroo Kikai
Naomi Kobayashi
Shoukoh Kobayashi
Kazuhiro Korenaga
Aliska Lahusen
Ewa Latkowska
Monika Masłoń
Rina Matsudaira
Gabriela Morawetz
Grzegorz Mroczkowski
Małgorzata Niespodziewana-Rados
Nonki Nishimura
Stefan Paruch
Małgorzata Paszko
Radosław Predygier
Wiesław Rosocha
Agnieszka Rożnowska
Daniel Rumiancew
Yasuyuki Saegusa
Koichi Sato
Michael Schneider
Jarosław Sierek
Joanna Stasiak
Magdalena Świercz-Wojteczek
Masako Takahashi
Emiko Tokushige
Aleksandra Waliszewska
Mieczysław Wasilewski
Józef Wilkoń
Krzysztof Wodiczko
Jakub Woynarowski
Aleksander Woźniak
Joanna Zakrzewska

JIKIHITSU.
THE SIGNATURE OF THE ARTIST

Science committee

Professor Akiko Kasuya (Kyoto City University of Arts)
Professor Joanna Stasiak (Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University)
Professor Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi (The University of Warsaw, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
Professor Jerzy Malinowski (Head of the Committee, Polish Institute of World Art Studies, The Nicolaus Copernicus University)
Professor Jerzy Uścinowicz (Białystok University of Technology, Association of Polish Architects, Polish Institute of Worlfd Art Studies)
Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Ph.D. (Collegium of Art Education, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Polish Institute of World Art Studies)
Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska, Ph.D. (Polish Institute of World Art Studies)

Honorary patronage

Embassy of Japan in Poland
The Maria Grzegorzewska University
Polish Institute of World Art Studies
Year 2019 POLAND-JAPAN
Association of Polish Architects

Organiser

Collegium of Art Education,
The Maria Grzegorzewska University

Project authors: Joanna Stasiak,
Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk

Co-organisers

Polish Institute of World Art Studies
Association of Polish Architects

Partner

Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Project financed by

Ministry of Science and Higher Education
The Maria Grzegorzewska University

Coordinator: Magdalena Durda-Dmitruk, Ph.D
magdad15@wp.pl

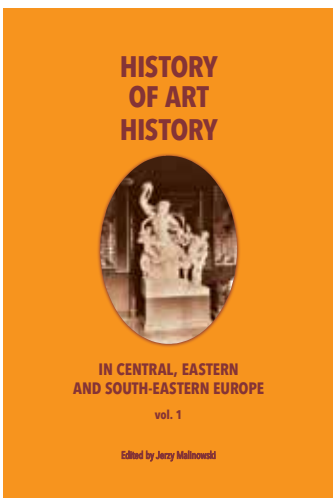
Assistant Coordinator: Hanna Kaszewska
kaszewskah@gmail.com
+48 603 710 364

jikihitsu@wp.pl
www.jikihitsu.pl
facebook.pl/jikihitsu

Co-operation

Media patrons

World Art Studies
Conferences and Studies of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies

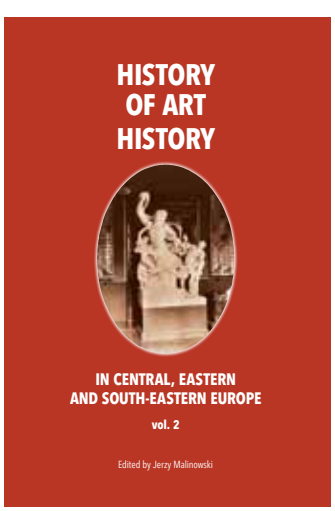


History of Art History in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe vol. 1

Jerzy Malinowski (ed.)

World Art Studies # VII
ISBN: 978-83-924110-8-6
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 300
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 35 zł

Two volumes of studies were prepared in connection with the Jubilee International Conference celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the First Lecture on the History of Art at Vilna / Wilno / Vilnius University on September 14–16, 2010 in Toruń. On September 15, 1810, professor of "etching and the literature of fine arts" Joseph (Józef) Saunders (London 1773 – Krzemieniec, Volhynia 1854) delivered the lecture at the Faculty of Literature and Art, entitled Discours sur l'influence ou l'utilité des arts imitatifs (On the Influence and Use of Mimetic Arts), published in Polish under the title O wpływie i użytku sztuk naśladowniczych in "Pamiętnik Magnety-czny Wileński" ("Vilna Magnetic Diary") in 1816.



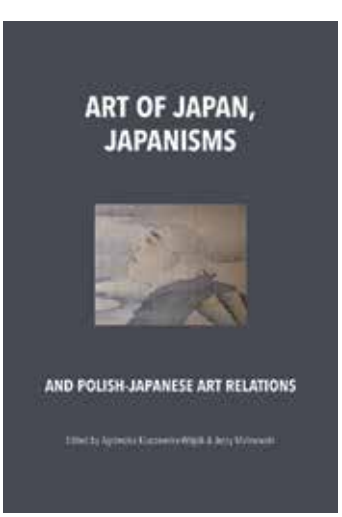
History of Art History in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe vol. 2

Jerzy Malinowski (ed.)

World Art Studies # VIII
ISBN: 978-83-924110-9-3
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 286
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 35 zł

Vol. 1:
The genesis of art history as a science
Research on religious art
The historiography of art
Art history in the Islamic Europe

Vol. 2:
The formation of art history centers
Art history and national ideologies
Art history and contemporary political and social ideologies



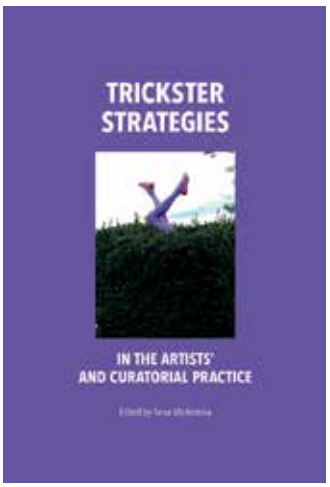
Art of Japan, Japanisms and Polish-Japanese Art Relations

Agnieszka Kluczewska-Wójcik, Jerzy Malinowski (ed.)

World Art Studies # IX
ISBN: 978-83-62737-16-1
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 363
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 39 zł

Art of Japan, Japanism and Polish-Japanese Art Relations consists of 48 studies prepared in conjunction with the international conference organized by the Polish Society of Oriental Art (now Polish Institute of World Art Studies) at the Museum of Japanese Art and Technology "Manggha" in Krakow in 2010.

These include analyses of the aesthetic concepts and interpretations of Japanese art history from the Middle Ages to the present. The art of Japan was known in Europe since the 16th century, however, the result of opening of the Empire to the world in 1854 was that the works of art imported to Europe, especially graphics and porcelain, had a decisive influence on the evolution of European art and artistic taste.



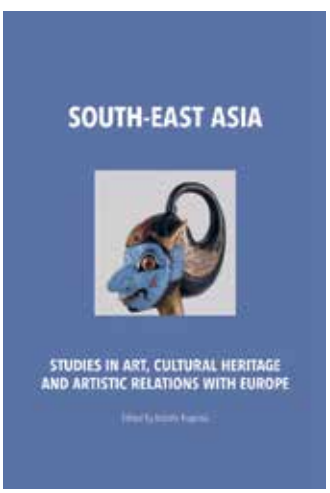
Trickster Strategies in the Artists' and Curatorial Practice

Anna Markowska (ed.)

World Art Studies # X
ISBN: 978-83-62737-26-0
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 302
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 35 zł

Trickster Strategies in the Artists' and Curatorial Practice consists of 34 studies prepared in collaboration between the Institute of Art History of the University of Wrocław and the Polish Institute of World Art Studies.

A rascal, swindler, jockey, hooligan, or simply a trickster has immense merits in the field of art. In our times, trickster strategies are eagerly used in revealing power relations in post-communist and post-colonial countries. The purpose of this book is not to reconstruct full trickster discourse, from archetypal cultural texts and characters such as Egyptian Seth or Greek Hermes to interpretations of such outstanding 20th century scholars as Claude Levi-Straus or Sigmund Freud.



South-East Asia Studies in Art, Cultural Heritage and Artistic Relations with Europe

Izabela Kopania (ed.)

World Art Studies # XI
ISBN: 978-83-62737-27-7
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 364
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 39 zł

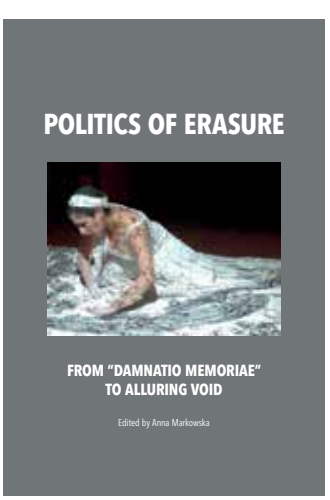
The preparation of this book began in 2011 and was connected with the 5th centenary of establishing contacts between Europe and South-East Asia. After Goa was conquered by the Portuguese in 1509, Admiral Alfonso de Albuquerque, the Deputy Governor of Portuguese India sent an expedition to Malakka (today Malaysia) in 1511. On the 24th of August they seized the city and built the Famosa fortress. In the same year, the diplomat Duarte Fernandes reached Ayutthaya, with a mission for King Ramathibodi II, and established relations with the Kingdom of Siam. Irrespective of the political evaluation of the Portuguese mission, it must be said that the establishment of direct contacts between Europe and South-East Asia is one of the most important events in the political, economic and cultural history of the world.

Korea. Art and Artistic Relations with Europe

Agnieszka Kluczewska-Wójcik (ed.)

World Art Studies # XII
ISBN: 978-83-62737-42-0
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 162
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 35 zł

Korea. Art and Artistic Relations with Europe contains selected papers presented at the international conference organized by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies in Warsaw in 2012. Those include analyses of the aesthetic concepts and interpretations of Korean art and cultural traditions. The volume consists of 18 studies divided into four sections: I. Heritage, Continuity, Change, II. Korea's Eternal Spirit, III. Korean Art in European Museums, IV. New Korean Art.



Politics of erasure. From "damnatio memoriae" to alluring void

Anna Markowska (ed.)

World Art Studies # XIII
ISBN: 978-83-62737-66-6
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 359
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 39 zł

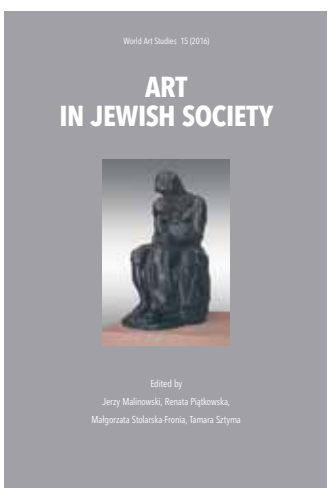
The book Politics of Erasure. From "Damnatio Memoriae" to Alluring Void on the one hand deals with the strategies of widely understood erasure in visual arts (i.e. exclusion, annulment and depreciation) in terms of particular works of art, museum narrations or urban spaces; on the other hand, it attempts to look at the ways of writing history because here the required and necessary virtue of synthesis sometimes transforms into an injurious scheme. Thus, oscillation between the general consciousness of the method and its precise use within case studies becomes not only a presentation of significant works of the Polish art of the 20th century showed in the general European context, but also a reflection on the craft of the historian, its limitations and possibilities.

Sustainable art. Facing the need for regeneration, responsibility and relations

Anna Markowska (ed.)

World Art Studies # XIV
ISBN: 978-83-62737-89-5
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 315
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 69 zł

The words sustainability and sustainable development used in political, economic and ecological debates actually reflect historical necessities to consider our planet in terms of global responsibility and not – which has been the case so far – unlimited exploration. Thus, the notion of sustainable art is characterized by social activism.
When analyzing what is covered by the blanket term sustainable art, one must first of all note that rather than including aesthetic guidelines, it will span across various concepts (such as ecological concern, recycling, energy exchange, affective approach to history or political reforms after periods of colonist oppression). Various ideas in turn create new artistic practices.



Art in Jewish society

Jerzy Malinowski, Renata Piątkowska, Małgorzata Stolarska-Fronia, Tamara Sztyma (ed.)

World Art Studies # XV
ISBN: 978-83-62737-91-8
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 329
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 69 zł

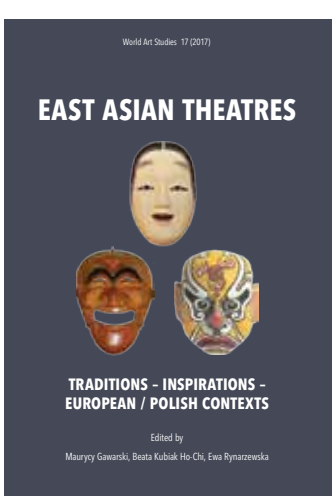
The book Art in Jewish society contains a wide spectrum of interpretations of Jewish art in the social and cultural context. The authors of these studies presented the profiles of artists and people of art as well as artistic trends against the social and cultural background prevalent in the Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe from the period of emancipation until the mid-twentieth century. These studies of diversified methods, methodologies and research perspectives included texts devoted to the relationships of the output of Jewish artists with Zionist ideology, Christian threads in Jewish art, the reactions of Jewish artists to political events, such as the pogroms, World War I, or the persecution they experienced after Hitler's rise to power. The last part of the volume is devoted to Jewish museums and collections.

Arte de la América Latina y relaciones artísticas entre Polonia y Latinoamérica

Ewa Kubiak, Olga Isabel Acosta Luna (ed.)

World Art Studies # XVI
ISBN: 978-83-62737-81-9
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 294
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 79 zł

El arte de América Latina en sus diferentes formas no se somete fácilmente a clasificaciones. En cada periodo de su desarrollo encontramos los rasgos característicos de las corrientes globales de Europa y con frecuencia de Asia, pero el mayor valor de la actividad artística en América Latina parecen ser sus localidades en la escala de todo el continente, así como también los centros regionales, que en este momento se convierten en los centros que interactúan dentro de un área determinada. El libro se titula a modo muy general "Arte de América Latina", mientras que en su subtítulo aparece la referencia a uno de los problemas que nos atañe, las relaciones artísticas entre Polonia (y más ampliamente Europa) y un continente "lejano". Se las puede observar con mayor o menor intensidad desde la época colonial hasta nuestros días.



East Asian Theatres: Traditions – Inspirations – European / Polish Contexts

Maurycy Gawarski, Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi, Ewa Rynarzewska (eds.)

World Art Studies # XVII
ISBN: 978-83-65480-40-8
20,5 × 30 cm
Liczba stron: 342
Oprawa twarda
Cena: 79 zł

East Asian Theatres: Traditions – Inspirations – European / Polish Contexts conference was organized in 2015, by the Polish Institute of Art Studies at the MANGGHA Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Krakow.
This publication, in accordance with the title and programme of the conference, has been divided into three parts: Traditions, Inspirations and European / Polish Contexts. The first includes studies of selected stage genres, belonging to the East Asian theatre traditions, such as the Chinese xiqu theatre and shadow theatre, the Korean p'ansori theatre, the Japanese nō theatre, kabuki and bunraku. The second discusses contemporary forms of East Asian theatres, created under the influence of artistic concepts of Western theatre, which began at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Poland – Japan. Contemporary Art and Artistic Relations has been prepared in connection with the international conference *Jikihitsu. The Signature of the Artist. The Presence of Japanese Tradition in Contemporary Polish Art* organised by the Institute of Art Education of the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, the Polish Institute of World Art Studies and the Association of Polish Architects in Warsaw in 2019.

The volume is consists of 28 articles devoted to the contemporary interpermeation and mutual influence of Polish (European) and Japanese culture.

The publication features reflection on the nature of Polish(European)-Japanese relations today in an era of worldwide mobility, globalisation, transculturalism, new media, and new communication channels. It examines the phenomenon of the unwavering (since the second half of the nineteenth century) European and Polish fascination with the culture and art of the Land of the Cherry Blossom, the contemporary meaning of Japonism and *japonaiserie*, as well as the inspiration and influence of Far-Eastern art, philosophy and religion on the creative process of contemporary artists (in printmaking, sculpture, digital media, dance, etc.). Contemporary Polish-Japanese relations are examined through the prism of meetings, cyclical events, thematic presentations, exhibitions, festivals, artistic exchanges and residencies as well as the ongoing presence of Polish artists and their works in Japan or of Japanese artists and their productions in Poland in addition to traces of Japan in Polish museum collections. The context of works by selected Polish artists active in France in 'symbiosis' with Japanese art and culture is also an important topic of discussion.

There are also references to the eponymous *jikihitsu*, the artist's signature, which we treat quite broadly – not only as the mark confirming an artist's authorship of an artwork or a compositional element, but also as a kind of metaphor of one's creative path or attitude, the mark of an artistic individuality gradually taking shape in the encounter with a different culture and tradition.

Texts by several speakers from Japan, who talk about their fascination and points of convergence with contemporary Polish and/or European culture and art are also an important component of the publication.

The texts have been grouped under the following sections: I. Studies – papers by historians, art critics and theorists, shedding light on different issues at the cusp of European and Japanese culture from the latter half of the twentieth century to contemporary times, from the Japanese avant-garde to *kawaii* aesthetics; II. Institutions – statements by representatives of well-known cultural and art institutions dealing with the interpretation, archiving and popularisation of the legacy of Japanese art in Polish collections and building Polish(European)-Japanese relations in art (through the organisation of academic and artistic exchanges, residencies, workshops, festivals, concerts, exhibitions, lectures, etc.); III. Artists – this chapter comprising the testimony of artists/scholars from the perspective of their own experiences when visiting Japan (or, conversely, of Japanese artists in Poland) as holders of fellowships or artists-in-residence. There are also testimonies of artists from other parts of Europe (e.g. Austria and France) who are contributing in a significant way to the vibrancy of European(Polish)-Japanese contacts.

It is our hope that the publication will make an important contribution to the debate on contemporary Polish(European)-Japanese relations in the realm of art.

ISSN 2543-4624
ISBN 978-83-956228-9-2

79,00 zł

Polish Institute of World Art Studies
& Tako Publishing House