Melancholy Sites:
The Affective Politics of Marginality in Post-Anpo Japan (1960-1970)

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Art, Art History and Visual Studies in the Graduate School
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ABSTRACT


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Abstract

This dissertation examines the intersection of experimental art, literature, performance, photography, and architecture, as Japanese artists and intellectuals grappled with political disillusionment after the end of the protests against the ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty of 1960. I focus on the work of the sculptors Miki Tomio and Kudō Tetsumi; photographs of late 1960s protests by Tōmatsu Shōmei and the self-portraits of the novelist Mishima Yukio; the collaboration between photographer Hosoe Eikoh and butoh dance founder Hijikata Tatsumi in the photo album Kamaitachi (The Sickle-Weasel, 1969); and depictions of the urban periphery in Hosoe’s unfinished Private Landscape series (1970-), as well as the visionary urban planning of the architect Tange Kenzō in his project “Tokyo Megalopolis” (1960). All shared an interest in portraying peripheral spaces, the detritus of the everyday, and the sexually perverse, cultivating a rhetoric of marginality that allowed them to explore their ambivalent feelings towards post-Anpo Japan.
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Introduction

Hundreds of thousands of people snake-danced in front of the National Diet building in Tokyo to protest the automatic ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (known in Japanese as Anpo) in June of 1960. The political crisis that followed the Anpo protests, which led to the collapse of the Kishi Nobusuke cabinet and brought the new Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato to power, resulted in Ikeda’s strategic decision to redirect the public debate away from radicalization and towards economic growth and the promise of affluence. In doing so, the government effectively curtailed the reassessment of the contradictions of its Allied Occupation-imposed democracy and the institutional continuities of prewar authoritarianism.

Current critical writing tends to celebrate the Anpo crisis as an event that radicalized and enabled artists to produce the subversive work of the Japanese Underground in the late 1960s. I argue, however, that for these artists, the post-Anpo moment represented the collapse of postwar democracy, leading to intense soul-searching regarding the limits of collective political action and the social role of the individual through artistic experimentation.

My dissertation examines the intersection of experimental art, literature, performance, photography, and architecture as artists and intellectuals grappled with post-Anpo disillusionment. I consider in particular their perceptions of the impotence of
the political and aesthetic avant-garde—often seen by critics as embodying a complete loss of masculinity. I focus on the work of renowned photographers Hosoe Eikoh and Tōmatsu Shōmei; the writings of the novelist Mishima Yukio; the ground-breaking performances of butoh dance co-founder Hijikata Tatsumi; the haunting sculptural objects of Kudō Tetsumi and Miki Tomio; and the paper architecture of Tange Kenzō and the Metabolist movement.

Marginality is a discursive space articulated by the artists and critics that I examine and emerges from the constant reference to sexual and geographic peripheries, madness, the abject, and the detritus of the everyday. It was a trope that served to articulate a politics of loss. Such politics should not be understood as a conscious or liberatory politics in a classical sense. Their program does not aim towards the liberation of an oppressed class of people through representation, nor does it seek to articulate a politics from the margins. Rather, it serves as a screen operating through an affective register, that allows for an exploration of anxiety and ambivalence in the face of change. I must underline here that the artists and intellectuals I discuss have varying positions in the traditional political spectrum, from the far left to the far right—on the surface there is no ideological coherence to their interventions. What they share in common, however, is a method: their political claims operate through a language of affects. In the work, I stress these affective investments, identified in the rhetorics deployed, the theories they
are informed by, and the way that they establish a relationship to both object and spectator.

Marginality is an eminently male and bourgeois discourse—it is, after all, a masquerade of abjection that colonizes and re-inscribes the periphery in order to theorize the center. These are spaces without women, dominated by men whose privilege is proven by the important place they held in cultural discourse. However, these artists’ use of marginality calls attention to the heterogeneity of practices and identifications that find their space within masculinity. All of the artists I examine engage in some way the perceived crisis of masculinity, even if they do not actively seek to redefine it. Their projects at times engage the sexual periphery, but it is not in order to recuperate it. Rather, the perverse appears as a screen, a means of addressing the crisis of politics. Their attention to peripheral spaces and sexualities once again proves the central place of sexuality and gender in thinking politics. Above all, marginality must be understood in the context of a perceived endgame, where the sole field of possible action becomes the individual. Ultimately, the importance of observing marginality in the context of the “Underground” resides in its usefulness to argue for an affective counter-history. Such a counter-history undermines teleological narratives of inexorable modernization and progress, by focusing on an undercurrent—a recurring pessimism and anxiety that cuts through the last sixty years of Japanese history.
Despite the fact that all of these artists participated in the same cultural milieu—usually referred to retrospectively as “the Underground”—the configuration I examine is uncommon. In this section it will become clear that the scholarship on each of these figures has been kept separate, and therefore the works have not been thought of as partaking in a cohesive debate around common concerns. There are two main interpretive frameworks that I am working against. One is the reflective approach to the artwork. The work is seen as reflecting its sociohistorical context in an unmediated way. The second framework is modernist teleologies of the art object. These posit either clear-cut narratives of formal progress, or force on them an avant-gardist approach where the art object is seen as necessarily opposing hegemony. These frameworks disregard the function of the object, as artists and intellectuals use it as a strategy to intervene in life. In this study I seek to highlight this performative dimension of the artwork.

This period’s work was highlighted in the seminal survey exhibits held with the sponsorship of the Japan Foundation at the Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf (Dada in Japan: The Japanese Avant-garde 1920-1970, 1983), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Japan of the Avant-gardes, 1910-1970, 1986), and the Guggenheim Museum (Japanese Art After 1945:}
These exhibitions fulfilled the key role of introducing experimental art from the period to European and American publics. Postwar Japanese photography, on the other hand, played an important role in a 2003 exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (*History of Japanese Photography*). The only shortcoming of these exhibits was that, due to an interpretive model heavily invested in histories of media, little attention was paid to the confluence of experimental art and photography.

Traditional narratives of postwar art have characterized the 1960s in Japan as the decade of the re-birth of the avant-garde. This phenomenon is set in relation to the political radicalization of the student movement, and the background of intense economic and social transformation. Such narrative emerges from contemporary criticism, where the phenomenon is depicted as being culturally specific. The idea of its cultural specificity remained throughout later attempts to create surveys of postwar Japanese art. A case in point is Alexandra Munroe and her treatment of “obsessional art.” This category enabled Munroe to carry out the monumental work of considering as

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3 A textbook example can be found in critic Tōno Yoshiaki’s contribution on Neo-dada in the catalogue to the Pompidou’s *Japon des avant gardes*. Shirakawa Yoshio’s claim for an inherent “circularity” (*enkan-sei*) of the Japanese avantgarde’s development, where formal and political “waves (*uneri*)” of progress overlap but never truly meet in what could conform with a classic (leftist) articulation of the avant-garde, which becomes the artists’ task. Shirakawa Yoshio, *Nihon no dada*. 
a totality the work of the Yomiuri Indépendent exhibit generation of artists, and thus
give cogency and coherency in the presentation of their works. Munroe raises the
question of obsession as a key aspect to this generation’s work—which she connects to
the context where it was produced. For her, the artists responded to the zeitgeist, what
she terms the “Anpo spirit,” by assuming obsessive tendencies. However the broad
brushwork used inevitably flattened out the particularities and contingencies of each of
the artists examined. For example, despite the claims to the national specificity of
Japanese avant-gardism, Kusama Yayoi—who lived in New York from 1957 to 1968—
was also considered in this rubric without a further problematization of her position as a
diasporic female artist. While Munroe’s intervention was extremely valuable in its
contextualization of the experimental work of the period, a detailed examination of the
works and artists featured raises important questions regarding the parameters of their
intervention, and the way that they negotiated their relationship to society.

4They later came to be known as the Anti-Art trend (han-geijutsu). Han-geijutsu was a term introduced in
critical discourse by critic Tōno Yoshiaki in 1960 to describe a sculpture by Kudō Tetsumi, Proliferating Chain
Reaction (1960). The term quickly caught on and served to describe works made since the late 1950s that
directly defied conventions in painting and sculpture. On the befuddled origins of “Anti-art,” see Reiko
Tomii, “Geijutsu on their minds: Memorable words on Anti-art,” in Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations
in the Public Sphere in Japan (1950-1970), ed. Charles Merewether and Rika Iezumi Hiro (Los Angeles: Getty
Research Institute Publications, 2007).
5I believe that Kusama’s art and self-presentation speak altogether of a different type of marginality, a
politics highlighted precisely in her decision to leave Japan in this period. Midori Yoshimoto argues that
Kusama’s decision to emigrate should be read, along with that of other female Japanese artists, as a means
of escaping Postwar Japanese society’s stifling patriarchal conservatism. Midori Yoshimoto, Into Performance:
The claim for the cultural specificity of the Japanese avant-garde has regained currency through the critical writings of Sawaragi Noi, who theorizes experimental art in terms of its inscription within the state. Sawaragi asks why, despite their initial opposition, all avant-garde groups ended up participating in the great national festival of Expo ’70. For him, Japanese experimental art is limited to a nationalist continuum, that moves from war art (sensō bijutsu) to Expo art (banpaku bijutsu). While Sawaragi starts out from the premise that avant-garde art should be oppositional, his thesis paradoxically reinscribes these groups within the national. This impossibility of escaping the national becomes then Japanese art’s cultural specificity. Despite its shortcomings, Sawaragi’s critical program opens up the possibility of creating alternative group formations, which allow for a reconsideration of experimental art in relation to other visual material, from graphic design and manga comic strips to the paper architecture of the Metabolist.s. I value in his work the idea of viewing these actors transversally and across media, as they act within politics. I also consider the importance of spatiality in thinking through Japan in the 1960s.

Recent research on Japanese postwar experimental art has been enriched by the discussion of the work of Neo-Dada provocateur Akasegawa Genpei, a contemporary of Miki Tomio and Kudō Tetsumi. This research has highlighted the way in which experimental artists sought to intervene in everyday life. The historian William Marotti

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has examined for example, Akasegawa’s notion of a critique of the everyday. Marotti discusses Akasegawa’s infamous “One-Thousand Yen Note Incident” where the artist reproduced one thousand yen notes as a politically subversive act. This was a strategy that re-politicized the everyday, which explains the State’s seemingly disproportionate response in indicting Akasegawa on counterfeiting charges. Despite Marotti’s reliance on a hegemony-subversion model that recycles the idea of an oppositional avant-garde, he manages to inscribe avant-garde practice as a strategy for political participation.7 Likewise, Reiko Tomii has discussed this incident’s relevance as part of a broader social and aesthetic critique, as this “piece” provoked a lively conversation on the nature and function of art that spilled over into the general media.8

While recent research such as Marotti and Tomii’s exemplify the reconsideration of the nature of the avant-garde and the parameters of its social intervention, such approach has been missing in photographic history. The history of Postwar Japanese photography has basically retained a structure similar to the one already proposed in the first Japanese surveys of the early 1970s.9 The monolithic linear narrative of postwar

7 William Marotti, “Political Aesthetics: Activism, Everyday Life, and Art’s Object in 1960s’ Japan,” Inter-Asia Cultural Studies vol. 7 no. 4 (December 2006): 606-618. Marotti is clearly aligned with a Gramscian political aesthetics. See also his detailed discussion of the One-thousand Yen Note incident. The charges brought against Akasegawa were based on an obscure nineteenth-century law that sought to control imitation of currency. William Marotti, “Simulacra and subversion in the everyday: Akasegawa Genpei’s 1000-yen copy, critical art, and the State,” Postcolonial Studies vol. 4 no. 2 (Jul 2001): 211-239.
8 Tomii also explores in greater detail the implications of Akasegawa’s legal defense, which stressed the piece’s status as art. Reiko Tomii, “State v. (Anti-) Art: Model 1,000-Yen Note Incident by Akasegawa Genpei and Company,” positions vol. 10 no. 1: 141-173.
Japanese photography posits a succession of generational waves that distinctly embraced opposed modes of representation.\textsuperscript{10}

This teleological narrative, indebted to high modernist photographic criticism, clearly maps out the trajectory of postwar photography from the objective mode associated with photojournalism to the (purportedly “autonomous”) subjective eye of art photography.\textsuperscript{11} The first generation of Postwar photographers—namely Domon Ken, Kimura Ihei and Natori Yōnosuke, who had been active before and during the war—were still inclined to view photography as a realistic or objective means of representation. The second generation, which came into action in the 1950s, was understood as absorbing German critic Otto Steinert’s notion of subjective photography, which restored the importance of the photographer’s subjective vision as part of the nature of the medium. In Japan, subjective photography came to encompass everything outside photojournalism, from Edward Weston’s high modernist prints to Laszlo Móhóly-Nagy’s photograms and surrealist photography, supposedly influencing the work of Kitadai Shōzō and his group Experimental Workshop. Up to this point it is important to note that these developments in Japanese photography are posited as a reaction to advances in Euroamerican photography, perpetuating the mythical


\textsuperscript{11} For a critique of the modernist appraisal of photography and the notion of the photographer’s privileged subjectivity as the definition of art photography’s ontology, see the introduction to Abigail Solomon-Godeau’s study on photography’s institutional histories. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, \textit{Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).
belatedness of the periphery and its derivative aesthetics. The third generation, also called the eizō or “Image” generation, has been regarded as a transitional moment in Postwar photography. This generation sought a compromise between photojournalism’s claims to objectivity and the subjectivity of the art photography tradition.

In this context, it is important to note the role that Tōmatsu Shōmei plays within these narratives. Tōmatsu, the subject of an important monographic retrospective held at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2004), is placed between photojournalism and the rise of art photography in the late 1960s. He is credited as one of the creators of bure (“shaky”) photography that is seen as completely rejecting the objective mode of photojournalism in favor of a form of super-subjective expression. Tōmatsu is the ideal narrative thread from photorealism to a consolidated artistic photography, as his early objective work had been praised by Domon Ken, he had a very public fall-out with Natori Yōnosuke (at that time, the doyen of photojournalism), and eventually assisted in the foundation of the bure-prone PROVOKE group, that first housed Moriyama Daidō, a photographer usually considered to be at the pinnacle of this movement.12

An alternative narrative could be constructed through photographer Hosoe Eikoh, whose important work nevertheless presented a hurdle to the clear-cut modernist photographic narrative introduced above. Hosoe’s trajectory is extremely interesting: he

connected the prewar vanguard movements (*zen’ei*) to the 1960s “Underground.”

Through his acquaintance with artist Ei-Kyō, Hosoe had strong connections with the pre-war surrealist movement. Ei-Kyō who led in the immediate Postwar period the Kamakura-based Democrat Arts Group (*Demokurāto Bijutsu Kyōkai*) to which Hosoe was affiliated, created photograms and non-objective painting, embodying the type of exchange across media that influential surrealist critic Takiguchi Shūzō had envisioned. Hosoe also was at the center of the social networks that encompassed the cultural milieu.

Recent scholarship and exhibitions on Hijikata Tatsumi and *butoh* dance have likewise reconsidered the interlinking social networks that characterized cultural production in the 1960s. The transgressive collaborations across media of the “Underground” depended on such networks. A groundbreaking exhibit, held at the Kawasaki City Okamoto Tarō Museum in 2003 and its resulting catalog drive home the importance of stage practices as a cultural node, where experimental artists affiliated with various groups participated actively in the design of stage props.

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The work of dance historian and critic Kuniyoshi Kazuko has been crucial in demystifying Hijikata’s work and figure. Kuniyoshi has paid attention to Hijikata’s rhetorical practices, which had previously been taken at face value, and highlighted their underlying political importance. For example, she has written on the centrality of the image of sexual perversion (homosexuality and autoeroticism) in Hijikata’s early work. The dancer took these themes from the writings of Jean Genet, as well as those of Mishima Yukio.\(^ \text{16} \) Kuniyoshi has also stressed the connections between Hijikata’s early performance work and the development of a “stylistically mature” butoh, which Hijikata called his “Tōhoku Kabuki.”\(^ \text{17} \) In a 2004 essay, Kuniyoshi shows that whereas early criticism saw in Hijikata’s later work a form of recuperative neo-nativism, this claim fails to take into account the autofictionalization of Hijikata, and the contrived nature of his “return to Tōhoku.” For Kuniyoshi, Hijikata’s engagement with the geographic periphery stands in relation to a sense of alienation similarly present in the title to his performance Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese—Revolt of the Flesh of 1968, in which he purportedly abandoned the overtly sexual subject-matter and vaudevillesque form of his early performances. Kuniyoshi views the mysterious juxtaposition of Hijikata and the


\(^{17}\) Kazuko Kuniyoshi, “Repenser la danse des ténèbres—retour sur les années soixante,” in Butō(s), ed. Odette Aslan (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2002). The term “Tōhoku Kabuki” refers to both the Northeastern region where Hijikata was born and a spectacular form of Japanese theater that originated as an itinerant show around the 16th Century, and saw its heyday during the Genroku period of the Shogunate (late 17th and early 18th Centuries).
Japanese as oppositional, an argument that renders Hijikata’s performance both personal and political. For Kuniyoshi, these politics are present in both the choreographic structure and his evolving thought on the body: Hijikata’s “return to Tōhoku” then also points to a reconsideration of the body and community.

This reevaluation of performance has been less successful in the case of the writer Mishima Yukio. While his literature has reached canonical status, critics and historians have been unable to deal with the implications of his performative strategies and their relationship to his work. His spectacular death by ritual disembowelment (seppuku) during an attempted rebellion at the Self-Defense Force’s Ichigaya Garrison in November 1970, was the climax of Mishima’s myth, which the author successfully cultivated since the 1960s, and that has haunted his literature’s interpretation. By focusing exclusively on the aesthetics of the literary text, critics tend to disregard the significance of the carefully choreographed elements of his public persona. Keith Vincent has shown how the question of perverse sexuality, which Mishima exploited in his blurring of the boundary between the text and the author, was a means for the novelist to provoke the eminently left-wing belles-lettres establishment, for whom his brand of ultra right-wing politics were a sign of a pathological psychosexual

20 The classic articulation of the Mishima myth and its psychosexual drama can be seen in Henry Scott-Stokes, The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974).
immaturity. Chigusa Kimura-Stevens has made a case for reconsidering Mishima’s work in light of an ethics of terror that led him to the failed coup attempt. Kimura-Stevens shows how from the point of view of action, Mishima’s work was part of a coherent aesthetic and political program—highlighting the role of performance as an intervention in society.

In conclusion, the recent literature on postwar experimental art has moved away from a teleological interpretation of cultural production towards a greater understanding of the particular social and political functions of the artwork within its historical context. It has stressed the collaborative nature of cultural production in the decade of the 1960s and called attention to the use of self-presentational practices. My work stresses the importance of artistic practice as a strategy for intervention in the everyday. Through the performative, I seek to position cultural production as a strategy for opening up new political spaces.

Theory and Method

While the literature on postwar Japanese art has recently moved towards resituating its object in terms of the political and social role they play, a key aspect has

been insufficiently taken into consideration: how these objects function, and what this entails for a broader theorization of the cultural object. On the one hand, there remains a sense of immediacy that occludes the problematic nature of realism’s claim to reality. Related to this problem is the status of performance in critical writings, which have consistently approached self-presentation strategies by seeking to evaluate the sincerity or “realness” of performance. Ultimately, these problems emerge from an insufficient theorization of the relationship of object to performance—a problem that ultimately remits us to the link between art and life. It is no coincidence that much of the critical writing of the period had, in some way or another, attempted to address precisely the question of how art relates to life.

The misapprehension of self-presentational or performative strategies can be best seen at work in the critical reception of Mishima Yukio’s work and public persona. Literary criticism has been notorious in its inability to approach Mishima’s auto-fictionalization. The question of auto-fictionalization is invariably turned into one of sincerity. Is Mishima being truthful? Is he lying? One strategy to deal with the question of sincerity is to call out the object’s disconnection from reality. For example, in her analysis of the Patriotism cycle, the literary critic Chigusa Kimura-Stevens calls attention to the many contradictions and historical inaccuracies found in these novels. It is clear that despite the semblance of “realistic” description—the novelist even includes a bibliographic notice on the works consulted to recreate the incidents on which the
novels are based—the novels are engaged in a type of idealization that is functional to Mishima’s reactionary politics. The critic asserts that Mishima was falsifying historical fact for proselytizing purposes. However, in her reading she ultimately fails to account for the actual connections of the texts to reality, which is given by their function within Mishima’s broader theorization of action.

A different tack on this issue can be seen in Gavin Walker’s recent analysis of Mishima’s essay Sun and Steel (Taiyō to tetsu, 1967). Walker identifies the problematic mechanism of auto-fictionalization that the author sets in place in the essay, and characterizes it as a “double scission” provoked by the blurring of fiction and reality that serves to call into question the possibility of criticism as a meta-language. “…We are compelled to acknowledge the doubled effect that Mishima’s machine sets up: it both acknowledges the falsity of its own motor-force and at the same time revalorizes its existence by co-opting certain critiques into service on its behalf.”23 This mechanism is further strengthened by the mythos surrounding Mishima’s coup attempt of 1970, which effectively reinforces the desire for autobiography as the only possible approach to his œuvre. “This future or deferred theatricality, what could be called a kind of ‘necroperformativity,’ functions by valorizing the dead Mishima-figure as the

authoritative interpreter of his own textual field—the work is performed from beyond the grave.”

Walker’s deployment of the term “theatricality” as part of his critical apparatus brings the art historian inevitably back to Michael Fried’s 1967 essay “Art and Objecthood.” The accusations of emptiness and non-referentiality that Walker employs to characterize Mishima’s “double scission” resonate with Fried’s polemic. Fried’s angst-filled diatribe, directed towards minimalist art’s “literalism,” excoriated what he perceived to be its theatricality—the underlying desire to stage the art object’s “objecthood,” distancing spectator and art by calling attention to their relationship. Theatricality threatens art by annihilating the overpowering capacity of art to absorb the viewer—an element Fried saw as crucial to its autonomy. As a response, the critic called for the policing of boundaries among media. Crucially for my argument, Fried argued vehemently against the body and the senses—what stands in between art and spectator. Art was to be experienced mentally; questions of pleasure and excess should be avoided altogether. Walker’s use of the term “theatricality” in this context foregrounds a deeply

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25 In the essay, Fried states three basic precepts concerning art and theatricality: “1. The success, even the survival, of the arts has come increasingly to depend on their ability to defeat theater. 2. Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theater. 3. The concepts of quality and value—and to the extent that these are central to art, the concept of art itself—are meaningful, or wholly meaningful, only within the individual arts. What lies between the arts is theater.” Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” Artforum vol. 5 no. 10 (June 1967).
26 In his later, retrospective problematization of theatricality in the context of eighteenth-century French painting, Fried singled out portraiture as an inherently theatrical genre. Michael Fried, Absorption and Theatricality: Painter and Beholder in the Age of Diderot (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
iconophobic stance that fails to account for the function of the image in terms of the logic of self-presentation, and the pleasures that such images entail.

Mishima’s “double scission” is in fact extremely effective, as it reflects the desires of the critics that engage his work. In exposing Mishima’s (perceived) untruthfulness, the critics have consistently sought to foil the actual fulfillment of the author’s neo-fascist program. Falsity, invoked as either historical inaccuracy or identified as theatricality, serves to contain Mishima’s excess and neutralize his intervention, rendering him safe to the critic’s liberal bourgeois convictions. There should be no doubt concerning the reasons why this critical operation has traditionally been carried out in an overtly homophobic language, where denunciations of campiness or sexual ambiguity double as warnings to the dangers of Mishima’s political (qua sexual) perversions. Evidently, this containment works only as wishful thinking. Indeed, it cannot undo the historical fact that Mishima was a Neo-fascist who took to arms in order to overthrow Japan’s postwar democratic order. The value of his self-presentation resides precisely in that it exposes the deep and inescapable connection of art to politics.

The recognition of an anti-mimetic impulse in these works shows the urgent need for an alternative approach to the objects. In order to do so, I focus on the figure of performance. Kristine Stiles discusses performance in terms of its presentational

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27 Keith Vincent has written on the conflation of sexual and political perversion, in what he refers to as “homofascism.” See Keith Vincent, “Mishima Yukio to Ōe Kenzaburō ni okeru homofashizumu to sono fuman.”
qualities: performance not only represents, but also does by its very being. Stiles identifies the essence of performance in the intersubjective link of performer and spectator, and of performance and object: what she calls commissure. Performance highlights how the object is a strategy—a means of participating in life. In this sense, from the vantage point of performance, the cultural object is embodied theory. The work of interpretation is to bring this theory back to “life”—that is, to think its historical contingency.

Further, performance’s intersubjective links call attention to the affective rhetorics that these works deploy in terms of their political valence within the context of Japan’s recent trajectory. My work is informed by reappraisals of Japan’s postwar experience. This reappraisal has called into question narratives of economic progress, in light of a slowing economy, the environmental consequences of such growth, and a creeping sense of alienation. Carol Gluck assesses the postwar narratives of progress, examining two strands. The progressive Marxist intellectual tradition highlighted the immediate postwar as the moment of real modernization, curtailed by American intervention, and hence it criticized what came thereafter as a deviation from the path towards real progress (be it revolutionary, or social-democratic). The conservative consensus, on the other hand, thrived on the mantra of economic growth, which

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“defined high-growth economics to include not only a world-class GNP, but also the myth of an entirely middle-class society and the triumph of a Japanese-style modern.”

My focus on marginality seeks to lay the groundwork for a counter-history of the postwar period that challenges such teleologies of progress by focusing on affective responses whose interventions disrupt the temporality delineated by mainstream discourse.

Overview

The dissertation is comprised of five chapters, which correspond to three thematic sections. The first section deals with the status of impotence and the figure of castration as a cultural discourse. Chapter 1, “A Philosophy of Impotence,” examines the relationship between political and aesthetic impotence in experimental art and critical discourse in the 1960s. In it I compare the work of artists Miki Tomio and Kudô Tetsumi, singled out by contemporary critics as exemplars of the nihilistic tendencies in new experimental art. In his provocative series Philosophy of Impotence (1961-1963), Kudô created environments and happenings that explored the nature of potency. In the happening version of the work, performed in Paris, the artist cradled a large sculpted

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penis and was surrounded by small phallic objects dangling from nets cast on the ceiling and wall. Referencing ideas from cybernetics, Kudō approached failure as an inextricable aspect of social development that simultaneously served as a reminder of the very possibility of change. Similarly, Miki Tomio’s obsessively produced aluminum sculptures of left ears were part of a deliberately obtuse critique of free choice, the basic premise of liberal democracy and the concept at the base of the Sartrean ethics of engagement. Using fragmentation and monumentality as shared visual strategies, both artists transformed the rhetoric of impotence for different aims, addressing core issues in post-Anpo art and politics.

In the second section of the dissertation, I explore the status of political action in post-Anpo discourse. In the aftermath of the protests, both traditional accounts of revolutionary action, and the capacity of democratic structures to reflect the desires of its citizens were called into question. Chapter 2, “…On the Eve,” examines the “shaky” or bure photographs of student protests taken by Tōmatsu Shōmei at the end of the 1960s, setting them in dialogue with critical writings that sought to newly theorize the origins and significance of political action. Tōmatsu’s spectralization of the protestors in his photographs resonates with ghostly accounts of the process of revolutionary inspiration. I contrast this type of theorization with the novelist (and future terrorist) Mishima Yukio’s political writings and his self-presentation strategy. In Chapter 3, “The Underground as the Beyond,” I examine Mishima’s revival of neo-fascist tropes of
martyrdom, which gesture towards a ghostly understanding of politics. For the author, political action emerges as a type of haunting channeled by the individual — a formulation that has much in common with the avant-gardist stance of the New Left. Despite standing at opposite poles in terms of ideology and political affinity, both Mishima and Tōmatsu resorted to the language of ghostliness to account for the process of inspiration at the origins of political action. Both identify the moment “on the eve” as the instant that condenses the meaning of acting. This metaphysical account is visualized in Tomatsu’s photography in landscape, as he articulates the underground: a site that Mishima portrays as immanent to the city, transgressive in its excess, and potentially threatening to the State. Remarkably, their focus on action eventually leads them to the ghostly landscape as a site of ambiguous potential.

In the third section, I draw attention to ambivalent, but highly politicized renderings of the periphery. In the photo album Kamaitachi (The Sickle-Weasel, 1969), the photographer Hosoe Eikoh and butoh dancer Hijikata Tatsumi turn to Japan’s rural Northeast in order to document a fictive landscape: a space of the past that never really existed. Kamaitachi interrogates the meaning of national community by drawing attention to the nation’s margins. Hosoe subverts the archive of postwar rural photography, disrupting the identity claims of agrarianism. Indeed, the sense of nostalgia it creates does not return to fixed referents. Calling attention to landscape as fiction, Kamaitachi’s landscape is a screen on which ambivalent feelings towards
national community are projected. Finally, I compare world-renowned architect Tange Kenzō’s futuristic vision of Tokyo as a capitalist utopia (“Tokyo Megalopolis,” 1960) and a still ongoing project by Hosoe Eikoh, his Private Landscape series (1970-). Tange’s project elided the periphery, colonizing its space for the future city, but in effect it becomes haunted by an unspoken past. Hosoe’s project, in turn, actively sought to haunt the peripheral landscape through the inclusion of a vanishing figure, the cross-dressed performer Yotsuya Simone. The two projects by Hosoe that I examine in this section deploy similar affective rhetorics. In the Private Landscape series, the non-referential nostalgia that was produced in Kamaitachi, is transformed into a full-blown exploration of melancholy, by the introduction of the vanishing figure of Yotsuya Simone. Importantly, Hosoe’s transformation of the urban wasteland into a screen, presents the melancholy site as a possible strategy for the future.

This study of experimental art in the 1960s seeks to highlight the productive responses to a perceived crisis of politics and aesthetics in the aftermath of the Anpo protests. I focus on the affective language used by artists and intellectuals in the rhetoric of marginality in order to produce a space of political speculation. My aim in this study is to call attention to an underlying current of ambivalence that called into question the progressive narratives of the state and the traditional left. This individual politics of affect questions the traditional accounts of the postwar period: the grand narrative of economic success, or that of lost chances. The rhetoric of marginality and its ever-present
hauntings disrupt the linear time of modern progress with its circularity. This makes marginality the starting point for another history of the postwar period—a history that moves from melancholy to precariousness.
Section 1
Chapter 1: A Philosophy of Impotence

In his book *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings* (1966), U.S. assemblage artist and happenings founder Allan Kaprow described a multi-sensorial spectacle organized by the radical French artist Jean-Jacques Lebel and the art critic Alain Jouffroy, which had taken place in Paris in February 1963:

Entrance of parade to jazz music. A large metal sculpture is beaten and broken. Two naked girls start large collage paintings on wall. Lebel makes collage (with political headlines) on their bodies. They dance as they paint and glue, then they pass into international blood bath…

Simultaneously, color slides of bodies and paintings are projected by Ferró onto the body of a woman’s black silk underwear. Ferró afterwards paints a picture with electric drill, phallus sticking out from pant, dipped into girl. Kudo as sex priest makes silent sermon with immense papier-mâché phallus, then screams in Japanese, caresses public with the phallus, goes into mystic orgasm and then collapses.¹

The Japanese artist Kudō Tetsumi, a participant in Lebel and Jouffroy’s happening, gave the title *Philosophy of Impotence* to a succession of works he created between 1961 and 1963 that culminated in this event (*Figure 1*). The original title used for the works was *Philosophy of Impotence, or Distribution Map of Impotence and the Appearance of Protective Domes at the Points of Saturation* (*Inpo tetsugaku – inpo bunbuzu to sono hôwa*

bubun ni okeru hogo dōmu no hassei). The event resignified Kudō’s work as part of the radical libertine thought of Lebel, where happenings functioned as a means to achieve a Reichian release of libidinal energies.

Lebel’s event, titled *Pour conjurer l’ésprit de la catastrophe* (To Conjure the Spirit of Catastrophe), sought to deploy the happening as a response to the rise of the affluent society of the postwar period, and what the artist saw as its concomitant environmental, political, social and economic “CATASTROPHE”:

...The blackmailing, the war of nerves, of sex, of eye and stomach, the coercion by the Nuclear Santa Claus... Moral misery and its cultural exploitation, physical misery and its political exploitation, the Museum of Modern Art kneeling in front of Wall Street... Enough of all that. We must hold a collective exorcism.

As part of this therapeutic dimension of happenings, Kudō’s piece moved beyond simply stating a symptomatology of impotence. Instead, the artist’s exploration

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2 A first version of this work, an environment, was shown as part of an individual exhibit at the Bungei Shunjū Gallery in Tokyo in 1961. In March 1962, Kudō presented a new version of this work at the 14th Yomiuri Indépendant exhibit, at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art. A third version of this work, a happening in which Kudō used as a backdrop parts of the Yomiuri Indépendant environment, was performed as part of the happenings festival described above by Kaprow, Jean-Jacques Lebel’s *Pour conjurer l’ésprit de la catastrophe*, held at the Boulogne Studios in Paris in February 1963.


of impotence interrogated a pervasive concept in art and politics, and proposed a means to address it.

The aim of this chapter is to reconstruct the question of impotence as a political and aesthetic category within Japanese cultural discourse in the 1960s, and to consider its resonances abroad. I focus on the status of impotence in the work of two artists, Kudō Tetsumi and Miki Tomio, who rendered it visible in order to explore its nature and paradoxical possibilities. While neither associated expressly with the main art groups of the time, Kudō and Miki were held up as exemplars of the nihilistic tendencies of the so-called Anti-Art trend in Japanese postwar art. Critics saw reflected in their work expressions of impotence, both as aesthetic and social commentary. In fact, both of them opened up the term to reconsideration, using impotence to embed their work within the rich history of avant-gardism, and pose a self-conscious and ironic meta-commentary on portrayals of the contemporary moment as an aesthetic and political endgame.

Impotence was a highly masculinist rhetoric that served a double purpose. First, topically, it was invoked to signify Japan’s state of semi-colonial subjugation to the United States under the Anpo system. On a deeper level, it signaled a crisis of representation: the perceived incapacity of the masses to effect institutional change through collective action. Impotence as a trope was also present in art critical discourse. Here impotence signified the incapacity of art to fully participate in life, this is, its surrounding contexts—either the incapacity of Japanese artists to constitute an
appropriately revolutionary avant-garde; or, more generally, the impossibility of fulfilling an avant-gardist teleology that sought the dematerialization of art object into concept.

In the postwar Japanese context, impotence was a pervasive trope with deep political resonances. Here I focus on a ten-year period following the anticlimactic resolution of the protests against the ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (or Anpo). The protests mobilized hundreds of thousands of people and radicalized Japanese society. The ultimate failure of this mass mobilization to stop the ratification of the Treaty represented the shattering of the promise of democracy. The previously sympathetic media that had editorialized against Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke’s decision to move forward with the treaty at all costs suddenly shifted gears, and called for prompt reconciliation. The left-wing political parties that had so forcefully argued against the treaty and encouraged people to march on the streets appeared to backtrack, withdrawing support to the labor and student organizations that were key in sustaining the Anpo struggle. The party base, and particularly the young who had prepared to fight to the bitter end, were left orphaned.

The political crisis that resulted from the Anpo protests led the government to redirect strategically the public debate away from radicalization and towards economic growth and the promise of affluence. In doing so, the government effectively curtailed the reassessment of the contradictions of Japan’s Allied Occupation-imposed democracy
and the institutional continuities of prewar authoritarianism into the present. The
denouement of the Anpo protests gave way to the subsequent forcible quelling of
numerous outstanding causes célèbres in the labor struggle, including the Miike coalmine
conflict. This last conflict became a bitter defeat for organized labor, and was held by
many left-wing sympathizers as further proof of the collusion of the political left with
the governing conservatives in the postwar political system.

Breaking ranks with the powerful Japanese Communist Party, prominent
intellectuals had directed pointed criticisms to the party hierarchy in the aftermath of the
Anpo protests, and were promptly expelled from it. One of such voices was that of the
critic Haryu Ichirō. Writing two years after the end of the Anpo protests, Haryu
recounted the final days of the Miike conflict and explained its larger significance for
Japan’s post-Anpo trajectory. In the essay, the critic presented the miner’s conflict as a
valuable instance where a bottom-up, cross-class political avant-garde had revived the
ethos of the Paris Commune, a spirit that he thought had informed the Anpo struggle
and had been betrayed by the political parties. The bonds of solidarity among students
and laborers that had been generated in the Miike conflict demonstrated the validity and
currency of this form of struggle, in spite of the lack of support from the political
mainstream. But Haryu’s essay was haunted by post-Anpo feelings of depoliticization
and disaffection: rather than empowerment, post-Anpo Japan was all about impotence.
The imagery deployed clearly signaled this moment, when Haryu quoted an unarmed
old woman, threatening a member of the riot police: “If you come here I’ll bite your dick off!”
At that point, the threat of castration served as the sole weapon for the
disenfranchised. In a 1968 essay, Haryu described the Anpo Treaty as the “Impo Treaty,”
evoking the ways in which the treaty not only geopolitically emasculated Japan: it had
depoliticized the masses. Haryu saw such depoliticization as a pervasive characteristic
that explained the decadence (suitai) of Japanese artists and their permanent inability to
form a true avant-garde.

Kudō and Miki’s work approached these discourses in different ways and
adopted different stances. Kudō’s work seems at times more topical; he directly
addresses impotence and failure as an intrinsic aspect of human and social processes.
Eventually, he posited “impotence” as a state of “dormancy.” In other words, Kudō saw
in impotence, not a signifier of the incapacity to act, but proof of the very possibility that
change may (or not) take place. Miki embraced impotence, by refusing to account for the
meaning of his subject-matter choice. To those who asked why he chose to make ears, he
replied that he did not choose ears—that ears had chosen him. In doing this, he
performatively renounced authorial potency as a means to stake a critique of choice: the
endless choice promised by the society of mass consumption, as well as the doctrine of
engagement that appeared to him as a simplistic ethics of the choosing.

In order to examine the status of impotence in the works of Miki and Kudō, I will explore the trajectory of both artists as well as the critical debates that framed their works. I will begin by examining Kudō Tetsumi’s early work and artist writings. His interest in physical and chemical processes echoes concerns in cybernetics, which helps to elucidate his investment in visualizations of failure in *Philosophy of Impotence*. I then turn to an analysis of Miki Tomio’s work. Miki famously dedicated over ten years of his life to exploring the shape of the ear in sculpture. Some critics saw in his use of industrial materials and methods of production a direct commentary and critique of modern industrial society, but Miki in fact refused interpretation. Performatively retreating from his role as an author, Miki refused to explain what his EAR works were meant to do. This amounted to a distanciation of authorial agency within the artwork. Through the works, he lampooned the worship of choice in postwar liberal society, as well as the doctrine of engagement pursued by leftist art criticism.

Kudō and Miki’s use of refuse and approach to everyday subjects in their art caught the eye of art critics, who saw their work as representative of the Anti-Art ethos of postwar Japanese art. I will focus in particular on the 1964 polemic between the critics Tōno Yoshiaki and Miyakawa Atsushi, who heatedly debated the nature of Anti-Art and its relevance to contemporary society. Tono and Miyakawa’s approach to Anti-Art was clearly informed by the discourse of impotence, which in this case doubled as an aesthetic category. On the one hand Tōno characterized Anti-art as a form of hysterical
opposition to the system; meanwhile, Miyakawa queried what he perceived to be the artists’ desire for the erasure between Art and the everyday, and the eventual vanishing of art, while he pointed to the impossibility of such aim. I will contrast this debate with the reception of Kudō’s work by Alain Jouffroy, the French critic and collaborator of Lebel. Jouffroy saw in Kudō the limits of the approach of the Objectors: those artists who had refused painting and turned to the objet as a means of directing a social and aesthetic critique. The critic thought that their dependence on the object was an impediment towards the actual dematerialization of art into concept, what he considered to be the aim of true avant-garde art. In this case, the rhetoric of impotence translates into the European debate on the social function of the avant-garde.

I will close the chapter with a discussion of two large-scale works: Kudō Tetsumi’s *Monument to Metamorphosis* (completed in 1970) and an untitled sculpture created by Miki Tomio for the national festival of Expo ’70. This discussion returns to the similarity in Kudō and Miki’s work. Interestingly, both artists resorted to a similar formal strategy: fragmentation. The fragment’s ambiguity lies in its capacity to evoke metonymically the whole to which it belongs. However the fragment is also self-sufficient and self-contained. This represents a haunting: the ghostliness of the fragment derives from the ambiguity of a whole that is (not) there. The last works I examine take this latter meaning to the extreme, by monumentalizing the fragment and setting it as a haunting token in landscape.
Of circuits and failure: the iconography of impotence

From the very outset of his career, Kudō Tetsumi demonstrated an interest in the use of art to visualize the circulation of energy, as a material and spiritual phenomenon. Kudō’s work referred to scientific terminology and was theorized by the artist as a literal representation of physical and chemical processes. The artist thought of his work as part of a system that connected him to the audience. His series Philosophy of Impotence (1960-1962) reprises this theme, which he derived from cybernetics, using material process as a metaphor for social process, and incorporating visualizations of failure as a topical reflection on current social conditions.

Kudō’s career as a painter started in the late 1950s. His early paintings evince an interest in gestural aesthetics, in their use of heavy impasto, drip painting and impressions of hands and feet on the canvas surface. Some of these works were vigorously performed in gallery settings. Two photographs from 1958 documenting

7 Kudō Tetsumi was born in Osaka in 1935. His grandfather was a village headman in Aomori Prefecture, in the Northeast of Japan. Kudō’s father, a trained painter and arts educator, was sent to Aomori to teach in a local teacher’s college, where he died prematurely in 1945. Kudō’s mother was also a painter and arts educator, and later taught in Okayama and Yokohama prefectures. Kudō followed her, and in his new schools, he became involved in art club activities. In 1954, Kudō enrolled in the Western-style painting department of the National University of Fine Arts, in Tokyo, where he met fellow student, Kurihara Hiroko, whom he would marry later in the decade. It is at this point that his exhibition career began. His prolific career would extend until 1990, when he died of cancer-related complications at the age of 55.

such events signal the art historical precedents that provide both a base and impulse for Kudō’s work. In the first photograph, Kudō appears wrapped in a *furoshiki* cloth, dramatically staging a martial arts kick onto one of his paintings. The second photograph shows a shirtless Kudō punching through a canvas.

The destruction of the canvas resonates with concurrent developments in painting around the globe from Latin America to Asia. In the late 1950s, the Argentine-Italian painter Lucio Fontana slashed his monochrome canvases in order to disrupt the until then seamless picture plane. Earlier he had punctured them, as well as his ceramic works. In Argentina in 1961, a group of artists led by painter Kenneth Kemble formed a group called “*Arte Destructivo.*” This type of forceful engagement emerged as part of a continuum of actions in postwar art. The notion of action as a means of foregrounding the body in the post-Holocaust, post-atomic bomb era was first articulated in the term “action painting” by Harold Rosenberg in 1952 to describe the work of the New York-based artist Jackson Pollock.

Kudō’s adversarial engagement with the canvas also found precedents in the activities pursued in Japan by the Osaka-based Gutai group. In one Gutai event in 1956,
the painter Murakami Saburō jumped through six paper screens as part of a group exhibit in the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Osaka. Murakami’s event drew attention to the materiality of the art object, but also, simultaneously introduced an element of theatrical self-presentation that highlighted art making as a performative process. The Gutai group, led by Yoshihara Jirō, had been active since the mid-1950s, and saw themselves as peers participating in a conversation with action painters around the world, such as the American Jackson Pollock, the French painter Georges Mathieu, and the critic Michel Tapié.\(^\text{10}\)

The visit to Japan by Mathieu in 1956-1957 formally introduced the Japanese audience to this performative element in action painting. During his visit, he carried out a public demonstration of his highly theatrical presentations of historical battles visualized in action painting in a show-window of the Mitsukoshi Department Store in the commercial district of Nihonbashi in Tokyo. Witnessing the proceedings was a future colleague of Kudō’s, Shinohara Ushio, who, a decade later, would record his excitement at something he retrospectively recognized as the foundational moment of his career: “‘This is it!’ This must be what a contemporary artist \textit{looks} like.”\(^\text{11}\) As the case

\(^{10}\) Ming Tiampo, “‘Create What Has Never Been Done Before!’ Historicising Gutai Discourses of Originality,” \textit{Third Text} vol. 21 no. 6 (November 2007).

\(^{11}\) My emphasis. Shinohara Ushio, \textit{Zen’ei no michi} (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan, 1968). Shinohara’s claim is obviously problematic, as even before Mathieu’s visit he would have been aware of Gutai’s foregrounding of artistic process through performative strategies. Kudō, who spent time in the Kansai region where Gutai was active, would most probably have been aware of their experiments, however I have not yet found material relating to this question.
of the Gutai group demonstrates, action painting was already a reality in Japan. However, for the young Japanese artists, Mathieu’s theatrical staging of the production of the painting illuminated the way that action art exceeded the canvas, and itself constituted a form of presentational practice.¹²

In the late 1950s, Kudō became a member of the short-lived group Ei (Sharp), in which he collaborated with Shinohara Ushio, who later became a core member of the influential group Neo-Dada Organizers. With his famous Mohawk, the rockabilly artist was photographed by William Klein while he engaged in his well-known boxing-paintings. Shinohara would dip his boxing gloves into two cans of paint and proceeded to punch a large surface covered with paper. Kudō’s similarly pugilistic experiment showed that the young artist was also interested in exploring action and painting. Moreover, his use of performative strategies as an integral aspect of the creations of his work would continue through the next decades. Due to the ephemerality of methods and means in the production of his art, even at this early stage, photography as a form of documentation played an important role for Kudō. Throughout his career, the artist would continue to incorporate photography into the labor of creating the works and fashioning his own persona. His wife Kudō Hiroko, who took many of these

¹² Gennifer Weisenfeld has demonstrated that performative strategies were widely used in the historical avant-garde group MAVO. Gennifer Weisenfeld, Mavo: Japanese artists and the avant-garde, 1905-1931 (Berkeley: University of California Press. 2002).
photographs since the 1960s, became an active, if unacknowledged, participant in the creation of Kudō and his work.\textsuperscript{13}

The gestural paintings of the late 1950s show how Kudō Tetsumi set out to explore the idea of energy, understood as a physical phenomenon. The titles for much of these earlier works refer to physical and chemical processes, and point toward a concern with the complicated relationship between energy, force, and matter – also a subject of interest to Georges Mathieu.\textsuperscript{14} In his painting \textit{Proliferating Chain Reaction I}, (\textit{Zōshokusei rensa han’ō I}, 1959), Kudō used a Pollock-style drip-painting method to draw an intricate, web-like pattern on the canvas in blue, black, yellow, and white (Figure 2). \textit{The Flowing Movement and its Condensation of Mind} (1956-1957), shows a furious burst of hand and footprints in red, black, and blue. Kudō described his activity in the following terms: “A more fitting way to describe my work, rather than as painting, would be as a sort of ECG… in my work, the canvas is the graph paper, recording spiritual responses to a

\textsuperscript{13} To his credit Doryun Chong, who curated the first major retrospective on Kudō’s work in North America at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, made a point of including Kudō Hiroko in the show, asking her to provide notes to the extensive photographic documentation that accompanied the catalogue. Hiroko Kudo, “Chronology of Selected Works.”

\textsuperscript{14} “While in Japan in 1957, Mathieu met with Dr. Hideki Yukawa, the 1949 winner of the Nobel Prize in physics. They discussed Yukawa’s work and Mathieu’s intensive search within physics, biology, psychology, and philosophy for a theoretical rationale for non-figurative art. In his essay “Anagogy of Non-Figuration,” 1949, Mathieu employed the term “anagogy” to refer to the spiritual or mystical sense of a text located outside the text itself. In the context of abstract painting, anagogy described the immaterial meaning of pictorial form beyond its imagistic referent and status as an object. For the development of such theories and Mathieu’s term “lyrical abstraction,” the artist drew especially on Romanian philosopher Stéphane Lupasco’s \textit{Logic and Contradiction}, 1947. Lupasco’s theory of “becoming” and methodology of fractal energy also informed Mathieu’s characteristic swaths of bold color, calligraphic strokes, and dynamic discharge of energy. In 1959, Mathieu published \textit{From Aristotle to Lyrical Abstraction}, and in 1960, \textit{Towards a New Convergence of Art, Thought, and Science.”} Kristine Stiles and Kathy O’Dell, \textit{World Art Since 1945} (manuscript in progress).
variety of stimuli." Kudō used action painting strategies, such as drip painting, splattering, and engaging the painting surface with his body as a means of registering motion as the expression of his internal energy.

Roughly during this same period, Kudō started experimenting with three-dimensional objects. These objects can be seen as an extension of his canvases, and indeed share their titles. His *Confluent Reaction in Plane Circulation Substance* (*Heimen junkantai ni okeru yūgō han’ō*), made between 1958 and 1959, is one such work. Using a found circular metallic frame and wires, plastic tubing and gloves, he constructed an almost biomorphic, web-like surface, which he then painted with primary colors. The coating homogenizes the diverse materials, creating a sense of continuous movement, almost as if the swirls seen in his flat work had sprung out from the canvas. Other such sculptural *objets* include *Proliferating Chain Reaction in X-Style Basic Substance* (*X-gata kihontai zōshokusei rensa han’ō*), 1960. For this work, Kudō used a ready-made, X-shaped iron frame, to which he attached scrubs and industrial cotton refuse (*Figure 3*). These materials were lumped and held together with pink plastic tubing. The off-white cotton looks like a foamy substance aggregating organically on the black scrub-covered frame itself, evoking an uncontrollable chain reaction whose force transforms matter. It is almost as if these objects had a life force of their own.

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15 Kudō Tetsumi, “Artist and his words (1959)” in *Tetsumi Kudo*: 82
The evocative, haptic nature of these objects, which recall the life force of organic matter through accumulation, illustrates the artist’s understanding of the function of the art object. In an essay published in 1961, Kudō referred to his work in the following terms:

When we consider the energy of an atom, if the atom is exploded as an atomic bomb, the energy is dispersed and not converted into any tangible form. We therefore build an atomic reactor and accelerate particles in that reactor to generate massive energy. That energy is converted into electricity and other practical things. Think of my work as doing the same.\textsuperscript{16} Kudō had come to see his work as much more than a record of the physical expression of energy. The artist’s invocation of the atomic reactor as a possible template through which to rethink the role of the artwork is a metaphor that is consonant with his previous experiments in action painting, exploring the performative dimension of the artwork. In other words, the artwork not only represents, but also does by its very being. The object operates as a reactor, concentrating and converting the metaphysical spiritual “energy” of the spectator into something “useful to society.” The work and the artist are part of a larger system that also connects the spectators.

Kudō invoked the object/reactor as a tool for concentrating, as opposed to dispersing, energy. Following Susan Napier, it could be argued that Kudō’s metaphoric use of technology is informed by the paranoid narrative of “technology gone awry” present in so much of postwar Japanese visual culture (as in the case of the 1953 film, \textit{Tetsumi Kudo: 84}).

\textsuperscript{16} Kudō Tetsumi, “Stimulus \rightarrow Reaction \rightarrow Objectification (1961)” in \textit{Tetsumi Kudo: 84}
and international sensation, *Godzilla*), but it is also true that Kudō did not immediately pass a value judgment on the technology itself.\textsuperscript{17} For Kudō, technology does not represent a dichotomy between peace and destruction, nature versus culture, innocence and pollution. Kudō’s deployment of the figure of technology in his work is not meant to merely reflect on technology itself, or technological systems as a representation of other types of systems. Rather, he saw technology as a constitutive aspect of a general system that included not only human beings, but also machines and the environment.\textsuperscript{18}

In 1961, Kudō held a solo exhibit in the Bungei Shunjū gallery in the Ginza district of Tokyo. The exhibit featured as its only work the first version of *Philosophy of Impotence, or Distribution Map of Impotence and the Appearance of Protective Domes at the Points of Saturation*. In its first iteration, *Philosophy of Impotence* was an environment, composed mostly of ephemeral elements, some of which have since become independent works (*Figure 4*). Though its individual objects differ formally from the

\textsuperscript{17} In her analysis of technophobic paranoia in postwar Japanese visual culture, Napier points out that science fiction offered an apt site from which to direct a negative critique of the costs of Japan’s economic boom. “The very vocabulary of the genre – that of technological, social, and cultural advancement – reflects the cultural instrumentalities that characterize modern capitalism.” Susan Napier, “Panic Sites: The Japanese Imagination of Disaster, from Godzilla to Akira,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* vol. 19 no. 2 (Summer 1993): 329.

\textsuperscript{18} In this sense, Kudō was firmly grounded in cybernetic theory, which informs his later notion of a “new ecology.” Cybernetics quickly became interested in extending its study to complex social and environmental interactions. Norbert Wiener, one of the pioneers in the field, defined cybernetics as the entire field of communication and control theory. Even at the early stages in the development of cybernetics, Wiener sought to include specialists in psychology, sociology and anthropology, as he progressively understood that the applicability of this theory to physiological phenomena had important consequences for the understanding of social structures. “He who studies the nervous system cannot forget the mind, and he who studies the mind cannot forget the nervous system... As to sociology and anthropology, it is manifest that the importance of information and communication as mechanisms of organization proceeds beyond the individual into the community.” Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, Or Control And Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1961): 18.
preceding work, Kudō applied in them some of the strategies that he had explored in his previous three-dimensional objects. For example the objects feature the appropriation of industrial refuse and everyday materials, defamiliarized either in the context of the work, or by direct intervention of the artist. Their mass produced-like quality and staggering amount helped Kudō to play up the motif of circuits and biomorphic aggregated shapes, a sustained interest in his work.

A combination of elements, now in the Aomori Prefectural Museum, shows four black condom-like cylinders with tapering tips, which are lined on a white fabric in front of a panel hanging on the wall. On the fabric’s surface, as well as that of each of the cylinders, are inserted metallic buttons resembling transistors, fashioned out of nails surrounded by black putty. Some of the cylinders seem to be imploding, becoming bulbous on the top and oozing a translucent white substance. On the large black panel’s lower section, horizontal lines of metallic buttons swirl around two vertical rows of plastic domes located at the center of the panel. The domes covered a pink spot, each containing a single phallic object inside. Photographs of the exhibit show a series of such panels hanging at the same height throughout the room. Another spherical object

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19 The French term objet had been incorporated to the Japanese artistic vocabulary already in the prewar period. This word was incorporated from the vocabulary of surrealism, where it was used to denote previously non-artistic objects that had been deemed to merit special attention from surrealists. In Takiguchi Shūzō’s words: “An objet is a thing that evidently stands in opposition to the sujet (subject-matter), and that according to its context can be either an object (kyūkutai), a physical thing (buttai), or, within everyday concepts, simply a thing (mono).” Takiguchi Shūzō, “Buttai no Ichi,” Takiguchi Shūzō: Buruton to no kōryū, ed. (Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, 2000).
depicted in the photographs recalls some of the weblike *objets* the artist had made.

Hiroko Kudō has reminisced that the full installation included a large speaker on the wall, tuned to a radio broadcast announcing stock prices. From the speaker fell pieces of *koppe pan*, a type of elongated sweet bread.20

In this first version of *Philosophy of Impotence*, Kudō mobilized images of mechanization and cybernetics similar to the ones he had explored previously.

However, the environment format presents a complex system: forming a parallel, closed system of their own, the biomorphic elements accruing onto the circuits simultaneously encroach on and interrupt the transfer of electricity. Overheated, the objects implode and start to melt, creating a comical visualization of failure.21 The basic functions of society, transformed into a dematerialized network of communication (as signified by

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20 Two other objects in the Aomori Museum are of interest. Ostensibly part of this installation, *From Black Mecha to White Mecha, And Then... (Kuro meka kara shiro meka he, sorekara, 1961)*, shows a similar type of circuit-like motif; however, this time what seems like a mass of pink and black noodles has been collated in a circular pattern surrounding some of the transistors. The mass seems frozen, caught in the act of climbing towards the top of the panel. In *Aggregation-Proliferation (Shūgō-zōshoku, 1960)*, a number of small plastic bubbles have been caught in a similarly life-like mass. Kudō Hiroko, “Chronology of Selected Works.”

21 Kudō’s use of circuit imagery and the obsession with failure recalls findings in the nascent field of cybernetics. In 1948, the mathematician John von Neumann presented an important paper titled “The General and Logical Theory of Automata.” In this paper, Neumann discussed similarities and differences between natural and artificial automata, with the aim to draw the theoretical principles that could guide further development and improved models for computing machines. One of the crucial differences detected in biological and artificial automata was that of how each dealt with malfunctions. Biological organisms can ignore a malfunction until they overcome it, while in the case of electronic automata, an error could potentially threaten the machine as a whole. Von Neumann indicated that like living organisms, future artificial automata would need to be able to identify and correct their own errors to avoid failure. John von Neumann, “The General and Logical Theory of Automata (1948),” in *The Neumann Compendium*, ed. F. Bródy and T. Vámos (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 1995): 526-566.
the broadcast of market indicators) were presented as part of a circuit system. There remains the question of whether the accretions that threaten the circuits are exogenous or endemic to the system. If the fluctuation of stock prices as the expression of an ever more abstract economy are taken into account, the accretions should be seen as endemic: a visualization of the excess of desire that moves capitalism in the society of mass consumption.

Kudō’s visualization of failure became increasingly topical in the next work in the series. The second version of Philosophy of Impotence, also a multipart environment, occupied an entire gallery in the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (Figure 5). For this version, Kudō cast nets from the gallery’s walls and ceiling. From the nets dangled one-eyed phallic elements made out of black insulating tape with light bulbs at one end. On the walls, the phallic objects were interspersed with oblong loaves of bread. Two bundles of small phalli were cast from the ceiling. On them accrued plastic bubbles (the

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22 A precedent for Kudō’s interest in cybernetics might be found in objects and paintings produced by the Gutai artist Tanaka Atsuko since the mid-1950s. In her celebrated “Electric Dress” (1956), Tanaka produced a costume fashioned out of light bulbs and cables, which she “wore” as part of a Gutai exhibit in the Ohara Hall in Tokyo, in 1956. Her later works invariably featured colored circles connected and surrounded by lines. These compositions resembled increasingly chaotic schemes depicting circuits, where the lines stood in for cables and the circles, for light bulbs. Tanaka’s work evokes intricate paths of energy flow, yet her interest seems to be more on the circuit itself as an embodied form, rather than in a visualization of circuits as a social system and the role that failure might play in them. François Levaillant, “Au Japon dans les années 50: les costumes électriques de Tanaka Atsuko,” in Tanaka Atsuko: Michi no bi no tankyu, ed. Ashiya City Museum et al. (s. l.: Tanaka Atsuko-ten Jikkō-iinkai, 2001): 34-42.
23 The psychologist Wilhelm Reich, who proposed in the theory of the Orgone that the Freudian libido was an actual physical substance, might be named as a possible influence in Kudō’s creation of a biomorphic mass to accomplish that role. Reich’s notoriety reached Japan, and certainly made a mark in the thought of Kudō’s peers in Europe and the US, among them the radical artists Jean-Jacques Lebel, Kate Millet and Carolee Schneemann. Laurel Fredrickson, Jean-Jacques Lebel and Kate Millet: Sexual Outlaws in the Intermedia Borderlands of Art and Politics.
“protective domes”), some containing a large phallus. Tied to the end of the thicker bundle, one large, resin-covered papier-mâché phallus stood up from the base. Under this phallus was a stream of udon noodles (later replaced with string), on which rested magazine cutouts. The cutouts included photographs of artworks by American artists Jasper Johns (Target, 1955) and Robert Rauschenberg (a happening); a geodesic dome by Buckminster Fuller; advertisements for prepared foods (soup); body-builders training; a couple dancing the twist; and photographs of student protestors in school uniforms (gakuran), during the Anpo protests of 1960.24

This is a second statement in Kudō’s philosophy of impotence. In this environment, impotence is even more explicitly tied to social conditions, in particular through its reference to consumption and protest, two major features in the contemporary affluent society. This connection is made through the photographic trail Kudō placed at the base of the papier-mâché phallus (Figure 6): Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg were the golden boys of Pop Art, the Euroamerican examples consistently brought up by Japanese art critics to measure the worth of the Japanese avant-garde, and the actual figures that were setting up the international standard for emerging art on a global scale. Buckminster Fuller’s domes spoke to the futuristic suburban spaces of the nuclear age, stranded in between the optimism of U.S. postwar affluence and the

24 Kudō Hiroko has likened this to the “ejaculation of social phenomena of the time.” Hiroko Kudo, “Chronology of Selected Works”: 214
impending threat of nuclear annihilation. The couple dancing the twist represented an emerging culture of leisure: an energetic dance that led, quite literally, nowhere. As for the Anpo protesters, in the writings of the liberal-left research group Science of Thought (Shisō no Kagaku), the protests represented an untapped energy, an inchoate force that vied for direction and liberation—yet despite these claims the mass protests that sought to impede the forcible ratification of the Anpo Treaty had not been able to do so. The body-builder, an image present in subsequent works, speaks to the notion of physical prowess, but also to the self-congratulatory exercise of building up for the sake of it.

The combination of the standing penis and the photographs placed on the stream of ejaculate at its base, immediately recalls the scene of masturbation. However, this reference was only made explicit in the happening version of Philosophy of Impotence, performed at the Boulogne Studios in Paris, in February 1963. It is difficult to ascertain the exact order of events in the happening. Footage taken from the event for the film I malamondo (1964) briefly shows Kudō tied up with ropes from which dangle small phalli, performing undulating movements and with strenuous facial expressions, as if he were hyperventilating. Allan Kaprow records him as saying things in Japanese. A woman in underwear supports Kudō from behind, as he holds up the phallus while interacting with Lebel’s TV man (Figure 1). Kudō crouches on a platform while holding the large

25 Unfortunately, the soundtrack, written by a young Ennio Morricone, drowned out all the scenes in this section, of what is an otherwise unwatchable “shockumentary.”
phallus in his hands. The happening closes with Kudō screaming loudly, and falling backwards “in a mystical orgasm” (Figure 7).26

There are evidently sexist and Orientalist connotations to Kudō’s performance. Kudō appeared clad in a light cotton kimono, underscoring his racial and cultural otherness; Kaprow described his demeanor as that of a mystical “sex priest.”27 Further, the sexual politics of the distribution of labor in the event as a whole, and particularly the promotion of a caste of male artist-priests leading the exorcism of society, appears condescending, if not a mere regurgitation of modernist tropes of the macho artist. This objectionable aspect should, however, be placed in the context of Lebel’s program for a liberation of the body and sexuality. A fair amount of self-deprecating irony seems to have been part of the proceedings as well. If anything, when considering Kudō’s piece, the effect of these elements is precisely to underline the masculinist nature of impotence as a trope. In fact, in the performance impotence is tied to expressions of hysteria – the classic sexological and psychoanalytic trope that pathologized women’s lack of penis and therefore of logos, and their transgressions against stifling bourgeois gender norms.28

27 Doryun Chong takes issue with Kaprow’s portrayal of Kudō as a “sex priest.” “Kaprow’s interpretation is almost contrary to the artist’s intention, for, as suggested above, Kudō was an embodiment not of virility or fertility, but impotence, and this performance… was less a pagan celebration than an exorcism.” I disagree with Chong’s interpretation, as Kudō was clearly not himself the embodiment of impotence. Rather the artist positioned himself as the “object” of impotence, and was commenting on impotence as a rhetorical device. As a happenings artist, Kudō’s role was akin to that of a medium (reikai) that facilitated the conjuring solicited by Lebel. Doryun Chong, “When The Body Changes Into New Forms: Tracing Tetsumi Kudo” Tetsumi Kudō: Garden of Metamorphosis. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center. 2008): 31.
Indeed, the sexualized movements, the hyperventilation, and the female figure holding Kudō from behind, as well as Kudō’s paroxysmal screams, are all reminiscent of Charcot’s schematic description of hysterical attacks (as recounted by Freud and Breuer):

“(1) the epileptoid phase, (2) the phase of large movements, (3) the phase of ‘attitudes passionnelles’ (the hallucinatory phase), and (4) the phase of terminal delirium.”

Classically, Kudō’s hysterical symptoms could only lead to a self-induced “mystical orgasm.”

The happening explains the coupling in the environment of masturbation and impotence. This aspect puts Philosophy of Impotence in conversation with a long tradition in modernist art and criticism. In order to illuminate this pairing, two art historical precedents need to be taken into account. The first one is Auguste Rodin and his formulation of the problem of the authorial phallus in his monument to the French novelist Balzac. The second one is Marcel Duchamp’s epic La Mariée mise à nu par ses soi-mêmes.

30 From November 1961 to January 1962, the National Museum of Western Art held an exhibit on French art that included one sculpture by Auguste Rodin that was not part of the Museum’s foundational Matsukata Collection: a small-scale version of Rodin’s monumental Balzac (completed in 1897), on loan from the Musée Rodin. The daily Asahi Shinbun ran a piece where the anonymous author explained the importance of the work in Rodin’s oeuvre. Disparaged at the time of its delivery as incomplete and unacceptable by the Balzac Society, the monument was now credited as being the first modern (meaning abstract) sculpture ever made. In fact, the news company was already planning to buy the work from the Musée Rodin and donate it to the NMWA at the end of the exhibit (mediating the bons offices of French Culture Minister André Malraux). “Furansu Bijutsu-ten kara: Baruzakku (Bubun)” Asahi Shinbun (Evening Edition: November 9, 1961). Regarding the controversial genesis of the monument and its commissioning, see Jacques De Caso, “Rodin and the Cult of Balzac” The Burlington Magazine, vol. 106, no. 735. (June 1964); Albert Elsen, “Rodin’s ‘Naked Balzac’” The Burlington Magazine vol. 109, no. 776 (November 1967).
célibataires, même (The Bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even), also known as The Large Glass (1915-1923), and its references to failed heterosexual intercourse. These two works referred to masturbation in order to claim competing yet supplementary narratives on the nature of potency.

The bronze shows a leaning, towering Balzac wrapped in a robe. His covered arms gather the draping cloth at the front of his body, suggesting the author’s famously short, stout body. Balzac proudly tilts his head back looking towards the horizon. The rendering is rough, and, like many other Rodin sculptures, the defining touch of the artist’s hand is clearly preserved in the modeling. Art historian Anne Wagner has argued that the myth of Rodin conflated the sculptor’s imagined sexual prowess with his creativity. Reading contemporary accounts of the sculptor’s image, Wagner asserted that Rodin’s creative energy or potency as an author was clearly associated with his masculine sexual potency, a perception the sculptor himself cultivated in his self-presentation and subject matter choice. While in the 1960s, Japanese critics (and later art historians such as Rosalind Krauss) focused on the draping of the figure and its implications for the development of abstract figuration in sculpture, Wagner called

31 The critic Takiguchi Shūzō, among others, had introduced the Japanese public to Marcel Duchamp already in the prewar period. Duchamp was a venerated figure among the Yomiuri Indépendant generation, some of who met him in New York during the 1960s, among them Arakawa Shūsaku and Shinohara Ushio.
32 A rather direct use of masturbation in Duchamp’s oeuvre can be found in Paysage Fautif (Wayward Landscape), 1946, the infamous semen-on-black velvet painting he presented to Brazilian sculptor Maria Martin as part of a de luxe version of his Boîte en valise (#12 in an edition of 20). Entry 517 in the catalogue raisonné. Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, vol. 2. (New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 1997).
attention to what the sculpture did as a rhetorical piece, and asked what is happening underneath the cloak. In fact, Rodin concealed this monument’s most important attribute – Balzac’s fat, swollen penis. Rodin’s *Balzac* is in fact all about the authorial phallus – both Rodin’s and Balzac’s. Importantly for my argument, the monument’s evocation of authorial potency could only be staged through masturbation.

The genitility of the *Balzac* is in its own way dependent on a scenario of masturbation: one of the studies for the final work even represents the act. It came about as Rodin explored the question of how to portray Balzac… The eventual decision was to equate genius with the phallus, and to subsume the particularities of history under a symbol meant to contain them… The same framework that shaped Rodin’s stature with his contemporaries is here applied to another creative genius. Its hallmark is virility: heroic talent demands a heroic penis, whether or not nature has previously obliged. (...) This symbol of male potency is what we need remember of Balzac, Rodin’s sculpture declares…

Masturbation here represents the capacity of the author to produce: the solipsism of the production of great literature and art amounts to the release of ejaculate in self-gratification. Here onanism is used as a cipher for the artistic potency (dynamis) that promises to complete an action perfect unto itself (entelekheia).

However, at around the time that masturbation became an appropriate embodiment for the Valéryan aesthetics of *l’art pour l’art*, it also became the object of policing. Associated by the sexologist Krafft-Ebing with the onset of impotence, the “plague of Onan” was decried by Social Lamarckians and nationalists in late nineteenth-

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and early twentieth-century France as the root of the perceived underpopulation problem of that country. Fae Brauer has argued that this background informs the work of Marcel Duchamp, suggesting that the hygienic layout of the *Large Glass* comments on the politicized re-purposing of sex in the build-up to World War I. Duchamp divided the glass into gender-segregated halves, the Domains of the Bride and the Bachelors, and depicted how the latter try to conquer, and eventually inseminate, the Bride. It is notable, however, that the Bachelors seem to be perpetually failing in their mission, even as the Bride sends excitement signals in their direction. A tantalizing clue to their inability to deliver is given by the “chocolate grinder” positioned at the center of the Bachelors’ Domain, intimating the onanistic tendencies of the Bachelors. From the perspective of the “chocolate grinder,” the solipsism of form renders the cultural object impotent to effect social change – leading to what Georges Bataille described as the “misery of literature.”

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34 Mark Driscoll, however, qualifies the effects of the repressive hypothesis in Japan, by stating that the status of masturbation in Japanese discourses of hygiene was much more contested. Driscoll notes that Imperial Army hygienist and novelist Mori Ōgai considered the proportion of chronic masturbators to be negligible, and hence not worthy of serious discussion. In doing so Driscoll writes that “…Different from the abjection of masturbation hegemonic in European sexology… Mori locates several of the causes of masturbation within Euro-American capitalism and Christian civilization, provincializing them and proffering a healthier East Asian approach as the universal standard.” Mark Driscoll, “Seeds and (Nest) Eggs of Empire: Sexology Manuals/Manual Sexology” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History* ed. Cathleen Uno and Barbara Maloney (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 2005).


This debate between an aesthetics of self-gratification and the concomitant threat of impotence was not unknown to Japanese modernists. In fact, the subversive potential of masturbation was noted already by prewar Japanese avant-gardists. In her study of the group Mavo, Gennifer Weisenfeld has shown how masturbation became a cipher for artistic creation at the margins of society.

Mavo artists also championed masturbation and onanism (*jitoku* and *onanii*) as asserting the right to self-satisfaction and resisting ideologies of normalcy. It was threatening because it might lead to a “rampant erotic imagination,” antisociality and infertility, among other things. Precisely because it carried such a stigma, masturbation became symbolic for artists and a metaphor for the process of art making itself.38

To these prewar Japanese artists, masturbation appeared as resistance to the ideology of reproduction. In its association to forms of deviance, the image also provided a claim to the avant-garde.

Kudō used masturbation in order to stake a claim for the marginality of post-Anpo avant-gardism. The margins provided a vantage point from where to reassess the role of failure within post-Anpo society, in a context where endless growth and success had become the official government message. Furthermore, Kudo’s reliance on masturbation evoked competing narratives that queried the idea of the impotence of

artistic and political action. The ambiguity of impotence, as the by-product of a self-referential creative activity, was the critical space Kudō sought in his work.\textsuperscript{39}

The series \textit{Philosophy of Impotence} capped Kudō’s prolonged exploration of notions of energy, potency and systems. In his early works, Kudō had explored a systems-theory approach to both the subject matter of the artwork, as well as the relationship it established with the spectator. His progressive interest in environments and happenings should also be understood in this light. Environments and happenings facilitated unique forms of interaction with the viewer that helped Kudō underline his reflection on the overlapping and inter-linking systems that constitute society, and the role that ‘failure’ has in them. In \textit{Philosophy of Impotence}, Kudō became increasingly concerned with overtly political issues. He not only approached the social conditions of post-Anpo Japan and the rise of the affluent society: he also touched on critical issues in avant-gardism, serving himself of the language of sexology to wield a critique of the idea of impotence as a simple state of lack. In later works, Kudō would continue his reflection on the nature of impotence, and try to expand on its possibilities.

\textsuperscript{39} In reference to Sigmund Freud’s later iterations of his theory of the fetish, Jacques Derrida pointed out that “the construction (\textit{Aufbau}) of the fetish relies at the same time on denial and affirmation (\textit{Behauptung}), the assertion or assumption of castration. This at-the-same-time, this with-one-stone [\textit{du même coup}, lit. in one cut] of two contraries, two opposed operations, prevents slicing through the undecidable.” In Derrida, the fetish contains the truth of castration in itself, because it is the instantiation of its haunting. In Kudō’s environment, the phallic fetishes hanging on the walls were themselves impotence. But like the Freudian fetish – which, as Derrida pointed out, marks the site of the “indecidability” of castration – the fetishized phallic in Kudō’s work straddle the line between the affirmation of castration and its denial. In his objects there is no resolution: neither a resounding affirmation nor a denial of impotence in the state of impotence. Rather, the “bisexuality” of the fetish opens up the possibility that impotence in itself holds the capacity to become something else. Jacques Derrida, \textit{Glas} (Paris: Gallimard, 1974).
Who's EAR?

Among the four artists Haryu Ichirō chose for the Japanese Pavilion’s exhibit at the 1968 Venice Biennale, the youngest was Miki Tomio. Fresh from exhibiting in the Paris Biennial of the previous year, Miki presented a series of his signature ear sculptures.\textsuperscript{40} Miki, who had started working on the ear in the early 1960s, quickly became associated with this motif. His first ear works appeared in the 1962 and 1963 versions of the Yomiuri Indépendant exhibits.\textsuperscript{41} In the 14\textsuperscript{th} Yomiuri Indépendant of 1962, Miki showed his first papier-mâché and collage version of the ear, titled \textit{Bara no mimi} (\textit{Rose’s Ear}). The objet lies flat, and depicts a left ear covered in painted roses (\textit{Figure 8}). The aluminum ears show up for the first time in the 15\textsuperscript{th} (and final) version of the Yomiuri Indépendant (\textit{Figure 9}). The aluminum \textit{EAR} (1963) is one of a series of five ears propped against the wall on a concrete block, which he submitted to the exhibit as part

\textsuperscript{40} Miki was born in December 1937 to a bourgeois family that lived in the Tokyo suburban area of Suginami. His father, an English literature professor at the Tokyo University of Science, initially resisted his son’s wish to drop out of school to become an artist, and forced him to enroll in a specialty course to become a barber. Upon graduating, Miki enrolled for a short period in a correspondence course at a local art academy, but given his short stay there it is unclear where he completed his training as an artist. At the end of the 1950s, Miki began exhibiting his work at small galleries, and became acquainted with emerging artists such as Sekine Nobuo and future Neo-Dada Organizers’ Shinohara Ushio and Yoshimura Masunobu, with whom he would become close friends. While Miki was on good terms with these artists, like Kudō Tetsumi, he decided not to join the Neo-Dada Organizers and continued working independently. “Nenpū” (Chronology) in \textit{Miki Tomio: Tokubetsutsu}, ed. Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan (Tokyo: Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, 1992).

\textsuperscript{41} Seo Noriaki “Kare wa mimi wo erabi, soshite tsukuritsuzuketa” in \textit{Miki Tomio Tokubetsutsu}: 15-19
of one work titled *Your Insurance* (*Anata no hoken*). The finish is rough, with the aluminum alloy stained with grime, but the material lends itself to an even more detailed rendering of the ear’s concentric curves. While *Your Insurance* retained the flattened-out, almost two-dimensional nature of his initial *Rose’s Ear*, with his turn to aluminum, Miki momentarily abandoned the use of color and subsequently solely concentrated on the form of his subject until the mid-1960s. Through this period, he produced models mostly of left ears in different dimensions. Almost all of these works carry the same capitalized “EAR” as a title, at times singled out by a number or a descriptive subtitle. In one of his more striking versions of the sculpture, the ear, now a large free-standing object, seems to have been taken out from the root, exposing even the inner acoustic channel. Later in the decade, Miki started experimenting with other materials and alloys. He notably started incorporating plastic, creating three large-scale fluorescent ears out of this material for the Tokyo Biennial of 1967, and finally using aluminum plated plastic for the works he presented in the Venice Biennale of 1968.

Despite his youth, already by the time of the Yomiuri Indépendant show of 1963, Miki was being hailed as one of Japan’s most promising artists. Critic Tōno Yoshiaki notes that the French artist Jean Tinguely, who visited that year’s Indépendant exhibit,

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42 Seo Noriaki estimates that throughout his career Miki would only make five or six right ears. Four of the five aluminum ears he presented in the 15th Indépendant exhibit were right ears. Seo Noriaki, “Kare wa mimi wo erabi…”

remarked on how he was haunted by the “solid” quality of the ears, even when he couldn’t remember the name of the sculptor. While Tōno did not offer a final opinion in the review, he was clearly interested in the newcomer’s work, seeing in Miki’s chosen subject matter a stringent critique of contemporary Japanese society: “The ear refuses communication, refuses sound; it is a metaphysical objet that condenses feelings of impotence and alienation…”

The type of work that Miki presented in the 1968 Japanese Pavilion was quite different from the smaller format aluminum ears that he first presented in the Yomiuri Indépendant in 1963. The sculptor prepared two large-scale works and a set of ten smaller blocks containing repeating rows of left ears. The smaller works were placed on a reflective metallic surface, while the large-scale works (roughly 2 meters high) presented two large and symmetrically placed ears, which were carved up into eight pieces each. The finish of the works diverged from the rough patina of the earlier pieces: the polished surfaces of the ear blocks were reflective and placed on mirror-like bases. The reflections multiplied the sculpted elements, calling attention to their seriality.

Introducing Miki to the Venice Biennale spectators, Haryu Ichirō, like Tōno Yoshiaki before him, remarked on the use of seriality in Miki’s new works, as well as the industrial resonances of the cheap materials he used to make the objects (Figures 10 and

The critic wrote about the artist in relation to a critique of mass production and more broadly in terms of a critique of modernity (kindai hihan):

Tomio Miki has worked for the past decade on the ear. The ear for him is no longer a part of the human body, nor a congealed obsession. He declares that it’s not him who has chosen the ear, but the ear that chose him. As we can understand from this statement, the ear is for Miki an obligation and a norm that was imposed by our era of mass production…

However, the exact implications of Miki’s work were not entirely evident. Miki consistently refused to answer the persistent question of why he chose to portray ears. This bewildering performance of refusal may seem to be relinquishing interpretation of the work to the critic. However, the terms of the debate were still controlled by the artist as his refusal to answer cleverly distanced the question of the meaning of the ear’s shape.

On the occasions that Miki spoke out publicly about his work, he would stress the nature of the object itself and its fragmentary quality. Before the Venice Biennale, Miki wrote the following comments regarding the works he would present, and in particular the nature of the carved up, large-scale ears:

The ear is not a part of the human being. At the same time that it is an objet complete unto itself, the ear divided into eight parts separates itself from the ear and becomes an independent thing. The carved up thirty-two sides separate

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themselves from the material form, and become part of a topological space (isō-teki kūkan).\textsuperscript{16}

Miki identified three elements present in the divided up ear: the ear fragments, the “topological space” in between these fragments, and the whole ear or gestalt. Topological space is defined as the space emerging in between the relative positions of a family of objects. Hence, this space is essential to the creation of the whole. In its most literal reading this statement may seem at first to point to a primary concern with the material process of enlargement involved in the production of his EAR works, maybe as a way to deflect the question of the ear’s meaning. But Miki was in fact gesturing towards the core problem in his oeuvre: an interrogation of the relative positions of artist/creator, work/object and context. Miki’s strategic fragmentation of the ear, which is posed as a question of materials and means, is in fact central to the question of the ear’s meaning.

This discussion of the ear as a fragment relates to Miki’s performed distanciation of authorship. Where did the idea that he had been chosen by the ear come from? It actually emerges as part of the artist’s own mythography. Miki most clearly expresses this in a response to a questionnaire from the magazine Bijutsu Techo. In the response, he starts out by arguing that his ears do not belong to a larger body. In other words, Miki

argued that the ear is whole unto itself. The ears are autonomous and reproducible. He made models of them, which could by anyone be used in the future to make more ears. In stating this, he was first of all trying to distance his work from a more literal problematization of art and the body. The more revealing moment, however, takes place in the paragraph that follows.

For me, these ears are not things springing from their comparative relationship to a self that chose them. I believe that they exist in [or “emerge from’] the self-denying point of view that the ears chose me (mimi ga watashi wo eranda toiu jiko hitei no tachiba kara sonzai suru mono da to kangaete imasu).47

Miki implies that the ear is not a fragment standing in relation to an autonomous whole, a choosing subject. On the contrary, the ear is an extraneous, autonomous element that exists because of the self-effacing action of the artist. The paragraph continues. “People (ningen) seem to be these strange beings that exist in between the human obsession (ningen-tekī kyōhaku kannen) of the inescapability of choice, and the inhuman hope that denies the reality that was chosen.”48

By saying that the ears exist in spite of him, Miki’s ears point to the Sartrean problem of being and essence. The meaning, or essence, of the object only emerges after

48 Ibid.
the object comes into being. On realizing this, the subject is faced with existential anguish before the lack of an immanent meaning in life. This negative aspect of Sartrean philosophy, however, is countered by the necessity of meaning for human existence. In Sartrean existentialism, this is resolved through an ethics of social commitment, or engagement. In his denial of authorial potency, however, Miki does not offer the comfort of an ethics of the choosing.

The connection with the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre is made explicitly in an earlier essay published in 1964 in the art magazine Mizue. In the essay he delves into the reasons behind his compulsive obsession to make objects. Miki first stated that his enlargement work was not parodic, unlike the way critics had sometimes discussed it, seeing resonances with the work of U.S. pop artist Claes Oldenburg.49 Miki claimed that while the New York artist relied on the straight-forward visual humor of enlargement, “he is more attached to things (mono ni shūjaku ga aru).” Miki recalled in the essay his excitement at the “stupidity” of his imagined enlarged ears—but also the anxiety they provoked.

I have memories of the terror I felt—like Roquentin, who turned towards a tree and threw up without any apparent cause—when I was riding the train and felt as if hundreds of ears were attacking me. However, this is not really an answer to why I make ears…50

49 The similarities with Oldenburg’s soft sculpture were briefly brought up by the artist Ikeda Tatsuo during a 1964 symposium where Miki had taken part, titled “Anti-Art: For or Against.”
Miki’s account of the hallucination he experienced in the train pokes fun at a potentially more psychological interpretation of the work: the idea of a pathological obsession. Instead, he invokes the figure of Roquentin, the protagonist of Jean-Paul Sartre’s 1938 novel *Nausea*, whose vomiting signals the onset of existential anguish, the first stage in the becoming of the existentialist subject’s full awareness of the lack of meaning in life.

The essay then continues by addressing a formalist approach to the question of the meaning of the ear, alluding to the way that his work had been approached by critics from the point of view of method.

The structure of the ear is made out of curved lines… But rather than the snail’s movement Dali speaks of, it is more like that of a rose…
But I find it just as difficult to understand [why I chose roses for *Rose’s Ear*], as to why I chose ears.
And choosing, rather than any other contemporary methodology, is the meaning I’m interested in, and that is what invites my desire to produce work.51

Miki recognized in his *EARs* more than just a study in form. For the artist, the subject matter represented a means of problematizing choice within post-Anpo Japanese society. It is neither a question of form nor content, in terms of the object itself. Miki was not interested exclusively in a problem of sculpture: this was an objet. In choosing a seemingly innocuous, but perfectly esoteric figure, Miki intended to make the object’s “meaning” a secondary matter – indeed he refused to address the rather obvious

51 Ibid.
question of meaning altogether. As Miki himself wrote in the essay, when he recounted his exhilaration at the image of a meters long ear, “Bakabakashii. Sō. (Stupid? You’re right.)”

Miki’s means to address the problem of choice was to relinquish authorship of the ears, assuming a passive position in front of the work through the performative statement “The ears chose me.” In making himself impotent in front of his work, Miki sought to highlight the status of choice in postwar Japanese society. Specifically gesturing towards the existentialist philosophy of Sartre, Miki’s work commented on notions of freedom and choice as a means of achieving subjective and political agency. Miki’s attempt at self-effacement, deflected the Sartrean doctrine of engagement, instead pointing to the impotent, meaningless tautology of being and the absurd demand of such doctrine to reassert political potency in the face of its failure.

**The Aesthetics of Impotence**

Kudō’s *Proliferating Chain Reaction in X-Style Basic Substance* (1960) was part of a series of six works presented in the 12th Yomiuri Indépendant show in 1960 (*Figure 3*). The critic Tōno Yoshiaki wrote in a review that the work was “anti-art made of junk (*garakuta no hangeijutsu,*” representative of a new trend in the art scene. The off-the-cuff
remark would spur a protracted argument on the nature of the artworks being recently produced by the young artists participating in the Yomiuri Indépendant exhibits.52

Tōno, who had recently visited the United States and Europe, was well aware of the resonance of the expression “junk art,” having come into contact with the work of assemblage artists, such as Allan Kaprow, and the work of the Nouveaux Réalistes, such as Arman and Jean Tinguely, in France. However, after the 14th Yomiuri Indépendant, an exhibit prominently featuring naked performers, rotting food and noise-making machines, many in the art establishment were skeptical of this trend, which had started to take over the exhibit since the late 1950s. The critic and poet Takiguchi Shūzō, a survivor of the prewar avant-garde and one of the organizers of the event, found himself questioning whether the extreme actions of this younger generation were simply a passing fad or a legitimate, if nihilistic, commentary on contemporary society.

In the review, Tōno opposed this new art trend to the capitalized Art of the establishment: the lyrical abstraction (or informel), which he satirized. He then hypothesized that just as these artists had grown up during the war making toys out of rubble, they had acquired the ability to integrate all surrounding materials into their art. Expanding on this hypothesis in a later article for the magazine Mizue, he stated, “[The

52 The Yomiuri Indépendant was a non-juried exhibit modeled after the French salons des indépendants of nineteenth-century France where the impressionists first were able to reach a broader audience. The Yomiuri Indépendant created by the critic Takiguchi Shūzō in the late 1950s as a response to the factionalism of the art establishment and its stifling juried exhibits, was sponsored by the daily the Yomiuri Shinbun. Tōno Yoshiaki, “Garakuta no hangeijutsu,” Yomiuri Shinbun (Yūkan), March 2, 1960.
urge to] use elements strange to the notion of painting and sculpture as some form of hysteric opposition, or just a rush to catch the next thing, must certainly have been there, but in some of these artists (like Kudō, Shinohara [Ushio], or Arakawa Shūsaku) this appeared like a fairly natural and unforced trend.” Tōno’s hypothesis relied on an almost reflective or indexical logic: the materials used and their aspect allowed the works to connect seamlessly with the “real” world. Importantly, Tōno’s argument relied on a feminization of the artists in its coding of the artists’ “opposition” to the current state of art and society at large as “hysterical.” Critics like Haryū Ichirō also portrayed this art as a tantrum-like fit, doubting the theoretical acumen of the artists involved, and positing their work as a transitional category: the pseudo-avant-garde (giji zen’ei), part of a history of an avant-garde always already in decline. In fact, some artists rejected the moniker altogether: they saw themselves as still engaging in art.

The polemic remained latent until it resurfaced in 1964 during a symposium Tōno organized, titled “Anti-Art: For or Against?” that accompanied his curated exhibit “Young Seven” at the Minami Gallery. Reporting on the symposium for the magazine *Bijutsu Techō (Art Notebook)*, Miyakawa Atsushi argued with Tōno over the definition

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54 Haryu Ichirō “‘Han’ to ‘Jiritsu’ to no aida” *Nihon Dokusho Shimbun*. Feb. 17, 1964.
55 Like most artists, Kudō Tetsumi was not pleased with the moniker, which he considered to be “inaccurate.” Quoted in Reiko Tomii, “Geijutsu in their minds: Memorable Words on Anti-Art,” in *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan*, Charles Merewether and Rika Iezumi Hiro, ed. (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2007.): 38.
and function of new art. He accused the critical establishment itself of hysterically reacting against “Anti-Art.”

Stylistically defining “Anti-Art” as a “descent into the everyday,” Miyakawa’s hypothesis moved away from Tōno’s indexical formula. While the connection to everyday life, through material and images, was indeed important, Miyakawa asserted that these were expressions of art’s internal dialectic of gesture (jesuto=geste) and matter (machie=matière). The critic saw this dialectic as anticipating the end of modernity. In Miyakawa’s view, the importance of Anti-Art derived from its promised, but forever unrealized annihilation of the border between Art and Non-Art:

The descent to the everyday nullifies the last border between Art and Non-Art. Art can be anything, and anything can be Art. However, it at once points to a crucial exchange between Art and Non-Art and an ever-widening gulf between the two. That is because although Art can be anything and anything can be Art, not everything is Art...

Anti-art is not Non-art. Since the standard that made Art Art is no longer viable, this statement cannot be a futile retrogression to the question “What is Art?” but must bring forth an impossible question – to borrow Miki Tomio’s expression, a rather “crazy” question: “How can Art still exist, if it no longer exists?”

Miyakawa’s convincing, if convoluted, reasoning was a significant attempt at developing a theory of the contemporary through a body of work that was initially

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56 In her discussion of the genealogy of the concept of contemporaneity (gendai) in art criticism, Reiko Tomii pointed out that the emergence of “Anti-art” as a key-word in Japanese critical discourse was an important step in the development of a negative definition of the contemporary moment, through the denial of modernity (kindai). Tomii distinguishes this discourse from that of the prewar (and nationalistic) “overcoming of modernity” (kindai no chōkoku.) Reiko Tomii, “Historicizing ‘Contemporary Art’: Some Discursive Practices in Gendai Bijutsu in Japan,” positions vol. 12 no. 3 (Winter 2004): 611-641.

criticized as merely reactive. Yet despite his attempts at defining the contemporary moment propositionally, Miyakawa reinscribed the current situation of art within the logic of impotence. Anti-Art was a failing art; Miyakawa understood the contemporary as a permanent state of impossibility.

In a later iteration of his theory, he pushed this reasoning to its limits by querying the very capacity of Anti-Art to push for art’s dissolution. In 1966, Miyakawa published an essay titled “The Aesthetics of Impossibility” where he asked:

Therefore does art no longer exist? If that were the case it would be easy. Nevertheless the condition of today’s art after “Anti-Art” is such that art has not disappeared… Art exists not as a possibility that it exists, but as an impossibility that it does not exist.

Miyakawa Atsushi pointed to a double failure: that of the artists to fulfill the promise of the avant-garde and the critical establishment’s inability to posit a definition of what would come after the crisis. The claim that there was a systematic failure of which “Anti-Art” and its “hysteria” were symptoms, resonated with Kudō Tetsumi’s Philosophy of Impotence, and its references to a crisis in art and politics.

Miyakawa’s assessment of Anti-Art in “Descent into the Everyday” (1964) relied on a revision of the link between art object and the “everyday.” In his theory, the use of

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58 In Tomii’s discussion of Miyakawa’s criticism there is an uncomfortable resonance with Lucy Lippard’s formulation of “conceptualism” (itself, a hotly contested term). Lippard claimed in the early 1970s that post-minimal concept art had abandoned materiality altogether. Yet many artists pointed out that concept art necessarily relied on materials in order to develop its critique of pre-established art.

everyday objects foregrounded a dialectic of matter and gesture that anticipated the end of modernity. This stance prefigured the assessment of Kudo’s work by the French critic Alain Jouffroy, a collaborator of Jean-Jacques Lebel.

After moving to France in 1962, Kudō Tetsumi began working on objects that directed a relentless attack on the signifiers of postwar society’s bourgeois aspirations. Using as basic material the refuse of middle-class life, Kudō devised an elaborate imaginary that lampooned the banality of everyday rituals and criticized the aspirations of postwar society.\(^6\) Through his humorous and disturbing plundering of refuse, the artist underlined the false sense of nostalgia that oftentimes lingered among the critics of contemporary life.

Kudō returned to the critique of liberal humanism that he had begun exploring in Japan. In *Bottled Humanism* (1962), the artist squeezed a plastic baby doll into a jar. Deformed by the vessel, the object simultaneously recalls a jar containing a dead monstrosity suspended in formaldehyde and a plain pickle jar; its colorful label announces its producer as “Kudo Cybernetic Art Co.,” advertising its novelty and availability for consumption. In the *Relationship of Marmots* (*Marumotto no kankei*, 1962), an open case contains several unlabeled doll-in-a-jar composites, arranged around a

\(^6\) For Kudō, this consumption-based language of “middle-classness” would not have been a mystery. In the case of Japan, the so-called “three regalia” of the postwar home—washing machine, refrigerator, and television set—were not only the embodiment of aspirational class-mobility. The “regalia” formed a state-sanctioned semiotics of affluence. The amount of households that held these consumer goods were quoted yearly in the economic surveys of the postwar, becoming the material indicators of gross national happiness.
dome that contains two of the plastic figures, placed symmetrically. The dolls’ heads are open, revealing a transistor inside each of them. The objects are wired up as if they were part of an electrical circuit. The plastic “marmots” are members of society, prepackaged and squeezed into definite molds, operating as disembodied agents of capital. As microcosms of postwar society, the works interpellated the viewer, forcing her to acknowledge the gap between the desire for humanistic values and the actual social costs of postwar affluence.

In the series *Your Portrait*, this interpellation is carried out in several different formats, from assemblage-like tableaus to free-standing three-dimensional objects, These works were meant to be held up as mirrors of the viewer’s life. The cages included wax models of everyday objects and body parts finished with a “synthetic skin” effect: a disconcerting accumulation of relics from an imagined nuclear apocalypse. Kudō’s use of unexpected juxtapositions in order to achieve disturbing effects recalls the subversive visual strategies of the surrealists. For example, in the object *Your Portrait* (1962-1965) seven blue and yellow canaries share a birdcage. The first five of them line up from left to right on an inclined bar while the sixth figure seems to be melting. A seventh bird, on the upper right-hand corner, is frozen as it flaps its wings in surprise at discovering that its colleagues are in fact impostors—winged penile shapes engaged in pleasant conversation. In the object, the diagonal bar is introduced as a clever diegetic mechanism that first leads the viewer’s gaze to the upper right corner. The surprised bird pushes the
viewer to a second closer examination of the previously unremarkable hybrid figures
that populate the cage, thus completing a didactic cycle of Brechtian distanciation and
critical examination.

The series *Your Portrait* was a means of personalizing the problem of impotence
in relation to the aspirational bourgeois subject. Some European critics were confounded
by the rich imaginary deployed in his works, reducing Kudō’s position to a negative
critique of the postwar condition, or essentializing the perceived “cruelty” of his work as
an unmediated response to the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, thus dissociating it from
the larger implications, theoretical and political, of a philosophy of impotence.

Alain Jouffroy published an important essay in the Belgian art journal *Quadrum*
in 1965, titled “*Les Objecteurs*” (The Objectors). The essay examined the work of
important figures in the French art scene, such as Arman and Daniel Spoerri, putting
them in relation to other younger figures of the so-called Narrative Figuration: Jean-
Pierre Raynaud, Daniel Pommereulle, as well as Kudō Tetsumi. Much like the Japanese
“Anti-Art” crowd, these artists had abandoned the traditional two-dimensional format
of the canvas in favor of three-dimensional object-making. The essay appeared nearly
five years after the critic Pierre Réstany’s “New Realist Manifesto,” and was a polemic
directed towards the latter’s understanding of the status of the art object in the work of recent artists and their deployment of everyday materials.61

In the essay, Jouffroy identified the problem being tackled by his artists as the problem of art itself. He asked, “Does Art exist today?” Answering this question required a radical redefinition of the art object’s function. Citing the precedent of Marcel Duchamp’s **objets**, Jouffroy foregrounded the conceptual nature of artistic experimentation, writing, “To forget thought (**la pensée**) is to forget the basis of art itself.”62 Jouffroy acknowledged the diversity of practices and subjects that these artists were exploring, underlining the limits of a definition based on formalist criteria: “No type of ‘realism’ could serve as a unifying characteristic.”63 Jouffroy disrupted with this argument the seamless continuity between art object and reality that Réstany had imposed on the Nouveaux Réalistes. If anything, these artists shared only a common stance in the impulse that drew them to art-making: that of being the “Objectors of vision.” The critic’s argument for the primacy of concept in art highlighted its political

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61 The arrival of Narrative Figuration at the end of the 1950s was cause of major anxiety, as it drastically redrew the contours of the critical debates on abstraction versus realism, and their political significance. Pierre Réstany’s intervention must be seen within a context where a politics of style was always inevitably associated to Cold War politics. With the New Realism, Réstany sought bypass the longstanding confrontation between proponents of abstraction versus those of realism. In the 1960 manifesto “The Nouveaux Réalistes Declaration of Intention,” Réstany had advocated for a practice that abandoned traditional painting in favor of object-making as expression of “[t]he thrilling adventure of the real perceived in itself and not through the prism of conceptual or imaginative transcription… All these adventures… abolish the abusive distance created between general objective contingency and individual expressive urgency.” Pierre Réstany, “The Nouveaux Réalistes Declaration of Intention (1960)” in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996): 306.


nature. For Jouffroy, these Objectors not only created objects: through them, they also objected to the State’s suppression of individual liberty.

In his appraisal of Kudō Tetsumi’s work, Jouffroy pointed to the nature of the artist’s thought experiments:

Kudo seeks to demonstrate something, — “the impotence of philosophy” (rather than “the philosophy of impotence”), but at each time, to violate and deepen the image that everybody builds of themselves…

Tetsumi Kudo short-circuits symbols to such an extent that he manages to overcome their individual sense: it no longer is birth, or suicide, or purity, or crime what he proposes as a remedy, but a mental concentration such that would illuminate these extremes. (…)

Kudo’s cruelty must find its ultimate sense in deliverance: the boxes must be opened to be seen, closed to be understood…

[Kudo’s] is the religion of the Personal Automaton… “of the reversed domain of souls” where objects seem to be endowed with intelligence...

Jouffroy immediately sets the series of portrait-objects in relation to Kudō’s previous work, remarking on the modus operandi introduced, which he describes as a reduction to the absurd (“the short-circuit of symbols”) carried out by extreme juxtapositions that destabilize pre-established meaning. He signals to the “cruelty” of this method, but instead of reducing it to cultural difference, or positing these objects as a direct reaction to the material circumstances surrounding the artist, he sees a redemptive aspect in the fact that the objects are self-contained, and hence, didactic. The key to understanding Jouffroy’s cryptic comments is his deliberate mis-translation of the

64 Alain Jouffroy, “Les objecteurs”: 22.
title of Kudō’s Philosophy of Impotence. In rendering the title as the “impotence of philosophy,” the critic displaced the locus of the artist’s exploration from impotence unto itself to thought (la pensée) and its difficulty in accounting for reality.

Jouffroy’s sleight of hand allowed him to advance a final point regarding the political valence of the works. He recognized the difficulty that Kudō’s work represented for the traditional framework of avant-gardism. Kudō’s work is not entirely revolutionary, and hence it can – and must – be surpassed:65

Maybe all of the artists that I discuss here are in some way or the other prisoners of a situation. But at times I wonder whether their work, instead of providing deliverance, is not chaining them, if they are not forced to love their shackles, to dream of them in order to withstand them.66

Closing the section on Kudō, Jouffroy asks whether the objectors, and their obsessive relationship to objects, have rendered themselves in a state of impotence that leads them to “love their shackles in order to withstand them.” On the one hand this seems to be an indictment of Kudō’s impotence, a “religion of the Personal Automaton,” that operates from a radical individualism that denies the value of collective action. Kudō’s obsession with everyday objects is fetishistic. In this sense, Jouffroy’s choice of the figure of the captive provides a resonating philosophical trope: Plato’s “Allegory of

65 This surpassing is facilitated by the teleological structure of the essay itself – the series of artists introduced not only exemplify different approaches to the “objector of vision” but also lay out the way to a progressively “dematerialized” and hence uncooptable art, best embodied by Pommereulle, the last artist he examined.
the Cave.” Even after being set free, the captives that had been held in the cave are unable to stare at the glaring truth, preferring to continue looking at a world of shadows, which they hold to be true (the world of the senses, as opposed to the Platonic world of ideas). Ultimately, however, Jouffroy gives Kudō the benefit of the doubt, intuiting the possibilities behind this obsession with such “shackles”: citing the poet Ezra Pound’s Canto LXXX, the critic states that “the guard’s opinion is lower than that of the prisoners.” Jouffroy opens up the possibility that as “prisoners of a situation,” the artists’ obsession with the fetishized object may in fact provide a space for speculation on impotence that redeems what an orthodox ‘avant-gardism’ would probably denounce as quietism.

Fragments, Impotence and Landscape.

Among the strategies used in the works introduced in this chapter, the most salient one is fragmentation, as seen both in the severed penises of Kudō Tetsumi in Philosophy of Impotence and in the detached and at times broken ears by Miki Tomio. The artists knowingly exploit fragmentation’s ambiguity. Formally, even as detached elements these fragments stand in relation to a whole – as part of the environment or a prop in the happening, in the case of Kudo’s work; or, as in Miki’s ear sculptures,

metonymically evoking a larger whole to which they may or not belong. At the same time the fragment is isolated: the space of fragmentation is absurd – its language is ironic. One of the requirements that the early Romantic poet and theorist Friedrich Schlegel laid on the fragment was self-containment. “Just like a work of art, the fragment must be totally detached from the surrounding world and closed unto itself, like a porcupine.”68 In positing a world of radical self-referentiality, Schlegel turned the fragment into the privileged tool of irony. Such irony provided distance from the object, and a critical space for self-reflection. In the case of Kudo and Miki, fragmentation provided a critical space of ambiguity that allowed them to simultaneously reject and reclaim the context to which they belonged.

In the summer of 1969, Kudō and his wife returned to Japan for the first time in eight years, staying there until February of 1970. During this extended sojourn in Japan, Kudō showcased exhibits and obtained a commission for a site-specific work, his Monument to Metamorphosis (Dappi no kinenhi). The documentary Monument to Metamorphosis: Report on Kudō Tetsumi (1970) was produced as a cinematic record of this work. The film by Yoshioka Yasuhiro opens with a shot of Kudō walking around the Shinjuku train station, pushing an objet made out of a pram, titled Homage to the young generation- the open cocoon (Hommage à la jeune génération – le cocon ouvert, 1968).

Following this scene is a series of shots taken from the many events he participated in during his stay, including a one-day exhibit in a gallery in the Ginza district, where he showed off some of the work he had produced in France. In a voice-over, Kudō described the reasons that had brought him back:

I was deeply shocked by the May 1968 revolution. Since then, I have wandered from Paris to Venice, then Amsterdam, Düsseldorf and Kassel. While on the road, I reflected on various things. Then, I thought, I want to go back to Japan and think again on these things in the streets of Tokyo. I felt like sharing and discussing my thoughts with the students... the young generation of Japan.69

Kudō was introduced to a wealthy industrialist, Takahashi Yoshihiro, who suggested that he carve a relief on a cliff, which had been part of an Edo-period quarry on Mount Nokogiri, a portion of which now lay within his property on the border between Chiba and Ibaraki Prefectures. On seeing the site, Kudō suggested a giant penis as the relief’s motif. Kudō started working on Monument to Metamorphosis in November, and completed the work in January 1970 (Figure 12).

The relief, carved on the live rock, measures a staggering 25 meters in height by 9 meters in width, and carries the English inscription “For 1970. Tetsumi Kudo.” In the film, Kudō declared that the chosen figure was not merely a penis: it also was a chrysalis in the moment of shedding its skin:70

70 The correct translation for dappi is not metamorphosis, but ecdysis, the process in which insects and other animals cast away their old skin, a stage within metamorphosis (hentai).
[The insect] evolves from a larva to a chrysalis and then, after a long period of being in a frozen state, it comes out of the cocoon, for the first time, to become a butterfly. It’s not quite a flying being, nor is it in the state of remaining on the ground as a larva. I wanted to think about the chrysalis as a being that perfectly symbolizes such a transitional period...

...My hope was to plant chrysalises on the wall of the establishment. For instance, it could be chrysalises here and there to suggest that we would start proliferating and spreading like germs... I’ve spoken about the chrysalis, but in actuality, the chrysalis and the penis have together become a double image.71

The figure carved on the rock is the severed penis of Kudō’s iconography of impotence. However, as a chrysalis, the figure represents a reframed notion of potency. This is, not as the possibility of change in itself, but rather, the ambiguity represented by impotence itself as latency.

Kudō’s penis/chrysalis is a perfect example of the ambiguity of meaning in fragmentation. The symbol is invoked both as impotence and the capacity to change; it appears as a figure of radical self-referentiality, while it simultaneously anticipates a whole in which it intervenes. How can the penis/chrysalis overcome its inherent contradiction? The philosopher Giorgio Agamben has argued that impotence appears as a defining element in being. Failure to effect change in society does not entail...

71 Doryun Chong has interpreted this statement to be proof of Kudō’s penis-chrysalis as embodying his underlying belief in a humanistic transformation, opposite to impotence. Quoted in Doryun Chong, “When the Body Turns into New Forms”: 36.
irresolution, but rather is the very fact that action can (and possibly will) be carried out.

Indeed, Kudō projected the giant penis/chrysalis as a fragment that anticipates the possibility that social transformation may—or may not—occur. When discussing the work, Kudō portrayed the student movement as the manifestation of a syphilitic infection. While the infection is dormant (as is the chrysalis), the sickness does not manifest itself visibly, except in periodic bouts. The violent student protests were a visible manifestation of the “sickness.” And in spite of its invisibility, just as the sickness eventually corrodes and destroys the human body, so would this anti-establishment streak within the Japanese affluent society lead to its demise and transformation.

As a monument, the fragment appeals to the whole where it intervenes. The art historian Alois Riegl observed that, “A monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events... alive in the minds of future generations... The erection and care of such ‘intentional’ monuments... have not ceased.” The literal “erection” of Kudō’s severed

\[\text{\textsuperscript{22}}\text{The philosopher Giorgio Agamben returns to the Aristotelian dyad of act and potency through the figure of impotence. “Of the two modes in which, according to Aristotle, every potentiality is articulated, the decisive one is that which the philosopher calls ‘the potentiality to not-be’ (dynamis me einaí) or also impotence (adynamia). For it is true that whatever being always has a potential character, it is equally certain that it is not capable of only this or that specific act, nor is it therefore simply incapable, lacking in power, nor even less is it indifferently capable of everything, all-powerful: The being that is properly whatever is able to not-be; it is capable of its own impotence.” Giorgio Agamben, The Coming Community. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1993): 35.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}}\text{Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin” Opposions, No. 25 (Fall 1982): 23.}\]
penis/chrysalis marks a crossroads for Japanese history while destabilizing official memory by providing simultaneously a counterpoint to the official narrative of inexorable progress. In 1968, Japan’s GNP surpassed that of West Germany, becoming the second largest free-market economy in the world. To commemorate Japan’s decade of meteoric economic growth, the state organized Expo ’70, a universal exposition to be held in the city of Osaka. This was the second time in the decade that the state created such an event of national mobilization, the first one having been the 34th Olympic Games, held in Tokyo in 1964. The futuristic show included both national and corporate pavilions that celebrated the theme of “Progress and Harmony for Humanity.” However, the dreams of communal prosperity that the conservative government sought to sell as the cohesive agent of the society of mass consumption, already showed signs of unraveling. The environmental costs of development were turning the political tide in local governments, including Tokyo. Economic growth was starting to stagnate. Moreover, the crisis of university autonomy, exacerbated by the rise of a violent student movement galvanized by the Japanese assistance to the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, threatened the integrity of the postwar political system.

For Expo ’70, which hosted over 64 million visitors, the organizers mobilized the most prominent members of the art scene, hiring some of Japan’s best-known architects—including Tange Kenzō, the Metabolists Kawazoe Noboru and Kurokawa Kishō, as well as Isozaki Arata—to develop the planning for the site. The festival
polarized the art world. On the one hand, there were those who saw Expo ’70 as the triumph of state-directed capital and criticized participation by artists as a betrayal of avant-gardist principles, fearing the absorption of experimentalism within hegemonic culture. On the other hand, Expo ’70 was the largest imaginable venue for showcasing experimental art and architecture, and in particular, increasingly ambitious collaborative projects in art and technology. Funded by the organizing committee, the artist Yoshimura Masunobu’s company Kantsū (“Penetration”) commissioned a series of Japanese artists to provide large public monuments for pavilions and open spaces. One of the artists he approached was Miki Tomio, who created a 10 meter high EAR in concrete, which was placed in Friday’s Plaza (Figure 13). Here, at last, was the embodiment of the original ear he envisioned – the meters-long figure that prompted his comment on the solipsism of form: “Stupid? Right. (Bakabakashii. Sō.)”

Seen from the political divide between the exhibitors and the anti-Expo (Hanpaku) artists, Miki and Kudō seem to stand on opposite ends, particularly in view of the petty, yet life-or-death politics of participation in Expo ’70. Penis/chrysalis and ear, however, have much more in common beyond these apparent political differences. Both of these works were absurd monuments that intervened public space. Both served as commentary on post-Anpo Japanese society: one offering a critique on the illusory nature of the promise of unlimited choice in the consumption driven economy.
celebrated in the space it intervened, and the other, an ambiguous reminder of 
impotence as a sign of impending change.

The two works share a similar formal grammar that plumbs the depths of a 
philosophy of impotence in their monumentalization of the fragment. Susan Stewart 
argues that while miniatures signify interiority, the gigantic is all about exteriority. “We 
find the miniature at the origin of private, individual history, but we find the gigantic at 
the origin of public and natural history.”74 The monumental inscribes itself in collective 
memory by altering landscape. The fragment unto itself is miniature, allowing the 
synechdochal or metaphoric logic of condensation. At the same time, the experience of 
the gigantic is also fragmentary. Just as the experience of nature and the sublime is 
partial, the gigantic thrives on fragmentation: before a large statue, there is only so much 
that can be perceived. Crucially, the impossibility gestured to by the experience of the 
gigantic threatens the viewer with the characteristic distanciation of the ironic, for 
“[i]rony ... multiplies the perspectives in such a way that they... contradict... and render 
ambiguous the mimetic object...”75

Ambiguity is key to understanding the politics of a philosophy of impotence. The 
works present a seemingly mimetic object that foregrounds its own implausibility, and a 
self-sufficient fragment that evokes as a haunting the whole to which it belongs. In Miki

74 Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection, Durham: 
75 Finlay refers to “perspective” in terms of narrative diagesis. Marike Finlay, The Romantic Irony of Semiotics: 
and Kudō, impotence is transformed into a critical tool that destabilizes the discourse from which the concept originally emerges. Using impotence as a site of marginality, the artists sought to counter the official discourse of progress, but in resorting to it, they also directed an oblique critique of discourses of avant-gardism. In doing so, they underline the way that impotence contains in itself the possibility of another history—one that was always there, if previously unseen—and provide an affective, melancholic counterpoint to disaffection in the unraveling of progress.
Section 2
Chapter 2: …On the Eve: The Origins of Action and the Ghostliness of Photography

A blurry male figure floats in a grey background. He faces towards the right; his right arm is extended. The contours of the figure are sharp. The creases on his white shirt, pants and socks, and his shiny leather shoes appear notably clear. There is, however, no detail that would allow for individuation. His head is a dark spot that blurs out in a diagonal running against the movement suggested by the grainy texture of the flattened background. This figure is moving backwards, towards the left, caught in the moment of turning around, perhaps in order to escape. But is he, in fact, escaping? If so, from what? These questions are left unanswered, for the counterpart to this dancer-like, isolated figure has been left out of the frame. On the lower left corner a small inscription gives a place and a date: Shinjuku, October 21.

This image was included in a short photo-essay by the photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei titled “Momentous 1970 On the Eve: Anti-war Laborers,” (1970-nen zen’ya: Hansen-ha rōdōsha), which appeared in the December 1969 issue of the photography magazine Kamera Mainichi (Figure 1). The photographs show the elements characteristic of the are-bure or “shaky” style that Tōmatsu championed in his late 1960s production. These photographs are characterized by their high-contrast, grainy, and shaky quality; their reflection of the photographer’s refusal of objective distance; and their expression
of a pervasive sense of ambivalence towards their object. Their evocative power, created by these elements, reminds the viewer of photography’s ghostliness—its capacity to capture ghosts, conjure hauntings, and mediate between the visible and the invisible.

Photography’s ghostliness is a quality that is related to its function as a medium. A photograph is a print obtained through a photochemical process that conveys the presence of an absent object. Photography’s relationship to the original object captured in the photographic event is in this sense inherently ambiguous: it is as true a statement to say that photography portrays an event that “has been,” as it is true that whatever was portrayed in the photograph is no longer. The photographic image is the ghost of the object. The crisp rhetoric of photographic realism is geared to conveying the certainty that this ghost is in fact the real. On the other hand, a style that enhances photography’s ghostliness calls attention to how objects appear as images through the medium. Historically, such experiments have sought to investigate expanded notions of the real. Avant-gardist appropriations of photography relied on paranormal theories of the medium: this fact provides a starting point for a genealogy that emerges from the darkroom.

1 It is not clear where the expression are-bure shashin or “shaky photography” came from, or how it came to designate this type of photography, which was cultivated by young photographers in the late 1960s. An alternative term used to describe “shaky” photographs was konpora shashin (contemporary photography). The photographer Ōtsuji Kiyôji offered the following stylistic leads: horizontal compositions, the rejection of established photographic technique, everyday subject matter, understatement, prominent use of wide-angle and normal lens, and a “cool” distance from the photographed object. Ōtsuji Kiyôji, “Shinpojimu Gendai no shashin,” Kamera Mainichi (June 1969).

2 These formulations roughly characterize Roland Barthes’ discussion of the “there-has-been” in Camera Lucida, and Siegfried Kracauer’s theory of death inherent in the photograph.
Tōmatsu took photographs of student protestors throughout 1969, publishing them in three discrete formats. The first of these photographs appeared in the magazine *Kikan Shashin Eizō* (The Photo Image) in September 1969. Tōmatsu then published simultaneously his *Kamera Mainichi* photo-essay, and *Ō! Shinjuku*, a monograph on the Shinjuku district in Tokyo that he issued through Shaken, a small publishing venture he had recently created. Throughout these series, the figure of the protestor in Tōmatsu’s photographs undergoes a progressive spectralization. The protestors appear as unidentified shadows that move aimlessly through urban space: the first photographs appear still grounded in the language of the photojournalistic “real,” but then are blurred and transported into the city landscape in a bewildering use of montage. Tōmatsu’s apparent “muddling” of reality in his photographs of protestors represented a volatilization of the image, whose function was precisely to expand the concept of reality beyond the visually apparent and account for invisible processes at work in society. I argue that this spectralization of the figure of the protestor is consonant with paranormal theories of political action that regained currency among left-wing critics in the late 1960s. In this chapter, I will discuss Tōmatsu’s development of *bure* in the context of debates concerning the status of political action in the post-Anpo moment.

A central question in the debates on direct action concerned the status of “force (*gebaruto*)” in protest—or, in the view of its detractors, “violence (*bōryoku*).” The threat of political violence materialized with the emergence of the factionalized New Left sects in
the latter half of the decade. These groups saw in direct action a means to an end, and had a utilitarian view of force. However the media and commentators tended to remark on the seeming unpredictability, irrationality, and non-representational nature of their acts. For mainstream leftists who had staked their postwar political positions on pacifism, the aggressive use of direct action evoked the ghost of revolutionary violence. But force as violence also conjured the promise of a revolutionary future. Tōmatsu’s photographs capture the ambivalence and ambiguity of this promise, recording through their ghostliness the photographer’s own incapacity to attain a unified line of vision with the protestors.

Tōmatsu’s used the figure of the protestor in order to spectralize the landscape of the city in the album Ō! Shinjuku (1969). The photographer used the image of the ghostly violence of the students as an essential element in the haunted landscape of the city, which he portrays as phantasmagoria. The spectralized protestors are juxtaposed here with scenes of sex and consumption. The city appears as a haunted space, a city of desire and ambiguity.

The ambivalence of the image

Tōmatsu’s early career at the Iwanami Photography Library, particularly under the mentorship of Neue Sachlichkeit photographer Natori Yōnosuke, made him fully
conversant in the language of photojournalism. He would soon depart from these conventions, however, for instance with his 1957 photo-essay “Rural Politician (Chihō Seijika).” Tōmatsu’s whimsical approach to his subject matter—the comings and goings in the countryside of a mid-level bureaucrat of rather eccentric appearance—stood out among the gravity of the postwar socially concerned photojournalism, earning him widespread praise (Figure 2).

In the late 1950s, the photography critic Fukushima Tatsuo invited Tōmatsu to participate in a series of exhibits at the Konishiroku Gallery in the Ginza district, titled Eyes of 10 (10-nin no me). Tōmatsu took part in all of the exhibits, held yearly between 1957 and 1959. Fukushima, a protégé of the pre-war surrealist Ei-Kyū, had decided to champion a more personal or subjective vision in photography. The exhibit featured many of the up-and-coming members of the new generation of photographers. Tōmatsu

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3 Tōmatsu started taking photographs while studying economics in college, during the U.S.-led Occupation of Japan. An active member of the photography club at Aichi University, his work was featured in student exhibits and newspapers. Upon his graduation in 1954, Tōmatsu left for Tokyo to join the Iwanami Photography Library as staff photographer. This publication was directed at the time by its founder, the pre-eminent photographer Natori Yōnosuke who had trained in Germany in the 1930s and had brought back and applied the principles of the Neue Sachlichkeit to prewar and wartime Japanese design. The Iwanami Photography Library was created as an image-based counterpart to the massively distributed pocket monographs of the Iwanami Library, which had sought to democratize specialized knowledge. This apprenticeship meant that Tōmatsu would become fully conversant in the language of photojournalism.


5 While some of the reactions were negative – the critic and novelist Abe Kōbō wrote in a stringent essay that Tōmatsu’s photography was mere “caricature” – the photo-essay was awarded the Japan Photography Association’s Newcomer Prize. Tōmatsu, whose parents divorced after he was born and never met his father, has retrospectively referred to the politician as an expression of his father-image. Nakahara Atsuyuki, “Tōmatsu Shōmei—sono 50-nen no kiseki” Nihon retto karonikuru, ed. Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1995).
joined some of the participants in the exhibits in the short-lived advertising agency VIVO: Hosoe Eikoh, Kawada Kikuji, Narahara Ikkō, Tannō Akira, and Satō Akira.⁶

A key aspect of Tōmatsu’s photographs was his use of unexpected camera angles, cropping, and darkroom manipulation. Eminent photojournalists like Domon Ken had explicitly disavowed these techniques, even while they themselves resorted to similar manipulation in their quest to better represent the real. Natori explicitly criticized Tōmatsu’s approach in a 1960 essay in the photography journal Asahi Camera. Tōmatsu’s, he charged, were “no more than an impression. There is no effort to make [his photographs] readable to others.”⁷ The following issue of the magazine saw Tōmatsu’s sharp response: “If there is such a thing as a ‘new photography’ it is paradoxically, that very photojournalism that Mr. Natori rejects.”⁸ Tōmatsu’s response staked a new photographic practice precisely on the ambiguity that Natori rejected.

The literature on postwar Japanese photography has tended to overstate the importance of this so-called Tōmatsu-Natori Polemic (Tōmatsu-Natori Ronsō). The incident makes possible a narrative about the consolidation of an autonomous practice of art photography distinct from both painting-informed pictorialism, and a

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⁸ Ibid.
functionalist and so-called objective photojournalism. Ultimately, however, Tōmatsu’s response to Natori restated the problem of the real in photography. While taking distance from photojournalism, his answer implied that what he was doing was a form of documentation, and that his subject was indeed the real.

The historian of photography John Tagg, has argued against the pervasive naturalization of the photographic real in documentary, stating that “Photographs are never ‘evidence’ of history; they are themselves the historical.” Photojournalism’s claim to an objective real and its rejection of subjective vision are part of a discursive practice that functions within the particular historical context of Japan’s immediate postwar period and the rise of left “socially concerned” aesthetics. In contrast, in the prewar period, photojournalism, modernism, and pictorialism were not seen as mutually exclusive endeavors, and were deployed sometimes in tandem to achieve similar aims.

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9 As convenient as the idea of a polemic may be in terms of creating a particular trajectory for Tōmatsu (and postwar Japanese photography more broadly), this was in reality a critical debate in which Tōmatsu’s voice was clearly not the most important.


11 Julia Adeney Thomas has examined Domon Ken’s ambivalent relationship to composition. For him, the aim of photorealism was to produce iconic images that could best represent power relations in society. However, he acknowledged that in order to achieve this type of images a degree of manipulation was unavoidable. Julia Adeney Thomas, “Power Made Visible: Photography and Postwar Japan’s Elusive Reality,” *Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 67 no. 2 (May 2008).

12 In her study of the innovative visual language developed in the propaganda magazine *NIPPON*, Gennifer Weisenfeld has shown how Natori Yōnosuke, Kimura Ihei and Domon Ken worked together during the prewar years, bringing together dislocating modernist design and layouts and documentary realism in order to create a cinematic vision of Japan as a museum. Incidentally, the magazine became the veritable matrix of postwar “realist” photography. While pictorialism was not a strategy deployed in *NIPPON* in particular, it had a notable presence in similar venues (magazines and international exhibits). The pictorialist photographer Fuchikami Hakuyō, a founding editor of the magazine *Manshū Gurafu* (Manchuria
While it is possible to recognize a more subjective form of expression in the VIVO generation’s use of alternative narrative construction and their reliance on darkroom manipulation, the total breadth of their work is notorious for its diversity, encompassing anything from crisp photojournalistic fare to highly baroque visions staged through photomontage. In view of his prolific output, it is particularly difficult to make generalizations regarding Tōmatsu’s work. Moreover, Tōmatsu continuously recycled, and thus re-contextualized and re-signified photographs in different publications to different ends.

This is the case of the photographer’s Nagasaki series, which began with his involvement in *Hiroshima-Nagasaki Document 1961* (1961). Coauthored by Tōmatsu and Domon Ken, this book was commissioned by the Gensuikyō, an anti-nuclear group with strong ties to the Japanese Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Domon had


13 In an interview with the author in the summer of 2009, the photographer Hosoe Eikoh—a colleague of Tōmatsu at VIVO—pointed out that along their innovative “art” photographs, VIVO photographers were doing commercial work and commissions that did not necessarily obey to original artistic projects of their own.

14 The Gensuikyō (abbreviation for the *Gensui Bakudan Kinshi Kyōkai*, Association for the Prohibition of Nuclear Bombs) originated as part of a grassroots movement against nuclear testing. The organization was formed in the wake of the Lucky Dragon incident of 1953. In March 1953, a Japanese fishing boat, the *Lucky Dragon No. 5*, was showered with radioactive cinders resulting from the secret Castle Bravo experiment, carried out by the U.S. military in the Bikini Atoll. The crew was exposed to high levels of radioactivity, and some of its members died within weeks of the incident; scores of Marshall islanders were affected. The incident sparked international outcry, and resulted in an eventual Moratorium on Atmospheric Testing for nuclear weapons.
already published on this subject, but the book was Tōmatsu’s first encounter with both the city of Nagasaki and the problem of the atomic bomb. The project would lead him to a sustained engagement with the city. He would eventually publish a monograph titled *Nagasaki 11:02* in 1966, which included photographs taken during his first trip that he had originally left out of his contribution for the Gensuikyō project.15

*Hiroshima-Nagasaki Document 1961* was produced for a foreign audience. Domon, the better-known photographer of the two, was assigned to cover Hiroshima, while Tōmatsu was put in charge of what by then had become the ancillary tragedy of Nagasaki. What is truly remarkable about the album is the way two seemingly opposite registers—one more narrative and the other more poetic—coexist not only within the same documentary project, as Domon and Tōmatsu’s separate contributions, but also within each of the photographer’s essays.

Indeed, the juxtaposition of Domon and Tōmatsu in the project exceeds the dialectical progress narrative insisted upon by late modernist critics of photography. In the case of Tōmatsu’s contribution, a constant shifting from one register to another as part of the same visuality troubles their notion of photography as a single-mindedly subjective-or-objective endeavor. This shift in registers is facilitated by the ambivalence of the photographic image. In fact, Tōmatsu’s exploitation of the ambivalence of the

image can be traced as one of the defining characteristics of his oeuvre: he engaged reality using a bewildering array of visual strategies, in order to join straightforward documentation and a more poetic register. In this regard, Tōmatsu’s photography does challenge some of the tenets of what Domon deemed to be an appropriate form of photographic realism—one that eschewed darkroom manipulations, even while it engaged in extensive manipulation of the photograph’s composition and staging.

Tōmatsu’s portrait of Kataoka Tsuyō, a woman who survived the bombing only to dive into the harsh postwar reality of poverty and discrimination, is an excellent example of this carefully thought-out method (Figure 3). The photograph crops out her hair and body and centers on her face, scarred by keloids and disfigured by the atomic heat. The strong sunlight and the corners of the frame confirm that this is a street scene. In the center of the image, a hesitant Kataoka turns her head, looking over her shoulder back at the viewer. The photographer achieves in this straight snapshot a remarkable naturalistic effect, mimicking with the apparatus the furtive glance of a passerby and how the woman’s reticent gaze momentarily stops it. The photograph is accompanied by a short text authored by Kataoka herself:

“Hey, look, look at that lady,” I can hear the whispers of the schoolchildren on the bus.

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16 I argue that it is this aspect that has permitted the historiography to posit Tōmatsu as both “the main strand” of the progress narrative delineated above, while also relegating him to the transitional role of an “enabler” of a more cogent, cohesive and appropriately avant-gardist photographic practice in the late 1960s, a narrative whose climax is the publication of the short-lived magazine PROVOKE and the arrival of Moriyama Daidō to the photography scene of the 1970s.
“Look at that lady’s face.” Invariably, it is children who shatter my reverie. I wonder how my keloids appear to these children who know nothing of war. I mentioned this to a gentleman whose face was similarly disfigured by keloids from the bomb. He told me, “When that happens, I tell them to look. Get a good look. A good, long look.” Words only a man could speak. “Don’t I have a good face, a handsome face? Come on, take a good look.”

The incorporation of text in the presentation of the photograph obeys photojournalistic orthodoxy: the text illuminates the image’s content. However, in this case, the subject speaks directly to the viewer, creating the sense of an unmediated connection. The fiction of immediacy frames the gaze dynamics that Tōmatsu so astutely exploits in the photograph’s composition.

In other words, the photograph stages intersubjectivity. The text implies that the subject of the photograph itself is not Kataoka’s face, but the widespread discrimination that the hibakusha experienced. In order to express this visually, Tōmatsu chose to invite the viewer’s predatory gaze, the morbid stare of the voyeur. Tōmatsu manages to elicit and frame the viewer’s fetishistic fascination with texture and disfiguration. The disturbing effect of this photograph emerges precisely from the doubled nature of the pictured face as object and, in Kataoka’s returned gaze, the recognition of this mask’s underlying humanity—a formal trick reinforced by the inclusion of her testimony. In

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this photograph the process of documentation takes place in the performative deployment of gaze dynamics.

While the pictures chosen for this collaboration centered on portraits of hibakusha victims, Tōmatsu also took photographs of an array of objects that he positioned as witnesses to the destruction of the bomb. Even after his collaboration with Domon had ended, Tōmatsu would continue taking pictures of A-bomb victims and objects held in the Nagasaki memorial, including the haunting cover image for his 1966 album, Nagasaki 11:02, a watch stopped at the time of the bombing.

Tōmatsu’s interest in presenting his subjects as simultaneously animate and inanimate objets can also be found in his famous photograph of a molten bottle, taken in 1961 (Figure 4). Shot in high contrast against an irregularly streaked backdrop, the elongated and quasi-anamorphic object hovers down from the central section of the photograph. The softness of its surface and its shape confound the viewer. The figure is tapered at the top, then widens into a sinuous form, and ends in a confused stump in the lower section of the frame. The bottle, which has been deliberately cropped at the neck, appears like a skinned carcass hanging upside down in an abattoir; or a detumescent, perhaps castrated penis. Without the caption, it would be almost impossible to decipher
this nightmarish remainder, suspended against a shining backdrop, infused with an
*animus* of its own.\(^8\)

While Kataoka’s portrait and the photograph of the bottle seemingly represent
disparate visual modes—one more “objective” and the other more “subjective” or
poetic—both function as documentary images in a similar way, exploiting an unsettling
fixation with a fetishized object. This fixation is cleverly utilized as part of the
photograph’s documentary mission. While these photographs document exterior reality,
they also disclose an interior response in terms of the viewer’s reaction before the
photographed object. The photographer elicits this reaction, of shock and curiosity by
exploiting the ambiguous nature of the photographic image. In so doing, these
photographs exhibit the inherent deathly ghostliness of the photographic apparatus.

**The ghostliness of photography explained**

Tōmatsu’s interest in object-fetishes and anamorphism resonates with concerns
in surrealist photography. The photographer was well aware of surrealist strategies of

\(^8\) The photograph seems to be a collage, possibly combining a negative print and a positive print. The
molten bottle (in positive) appears against a background based on a blown-up detail of the glass as a
negative print. It is probably a depiction of the lower section of the bottle. The effect is almost anamorphic –
although given the disconcerting effect of the assembled print and the natural distortion present in the
object itself, it is difficult to ascertain whether this distortion was heightened with the help of a wide-angle
lens.
visual subversion. Such strategies were invaluable to the surrealists in their quest to denaturalize the everyday. Tōmatsu’s portrait of Kataoka and the image of the molten bottle open up interrelated questions regarding the status of the object of photography as fetish, and the relationship of photography to surrealism. These two questions are brought together by the spectral nature of the photographic fetish: the vexed relationship to materiality that haunts photography. These photographs expand the gaze outside the photographic frame to an inquiry into what is real, if there is a real at all.

Surrealists were keenly aware of the ambivalent reception of the photograph and used it as the centerpiece of their strategies of visual subversion. Art historian Rosalind Krauss has written about surrealist photography as a paradox. Given André Breton’s disregard for realism, “It would seem that there cannot be surrealism and photography, but only surrealism or photography.” Krauss saw in the surrealist penchant for darkroom manipulation and other defamiliarizing strategies an impulse that ran contrary to the indexical relationship of photography to the real. For her, the surrealist

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19 Indeed, one of his earliest known works, a photograph titled The Birth of Irony (Hiniku no tanjō, 1950) was modeled after a painting by Salvador Dali, a copy of which the photographer had seen in a coffee shop that he frequented as an adolescent. The photograph presents an arm erupting from underneath a spread of newspapers, holding an egg between the index and the thumb. The carefully crafted photograph won an award at a student competition; and yet the response from his teachers seems to have been negative. Apparently, one of Tōmatsu’s professors derided him, saying that his photograph was Dada and hence, nihilistic, a common view among the defenders of the socially concerned humanism of the time. Nakahara Atsuyuki, “Tōmatsu Shōmei – Sono 50-nen no kiseki.” Concerning the central role of French surrealism in postwar cultural discourse in Japan, see Miryam Sas, Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).
recourse to the photograph formed part of an exploration of “the paradox of reality constituted as a sign…” 20

In her theoretical analysis, Krauss sought to retain the analogue, involuntary aspect of photography as a trace of the real, arguing that the surrealists used photography in a way akin to their use of psychic automatism to access the unconscious. In locating the role of photography in surrealism as that of the conscious generation of signs, she also indirectly positioned automatism as a conscious sign operation: a purposeful retrieval of information. Hence, Krauss re-stated surrealism’s object as the not-real.

This account is problematic because Krauss’s characterization disregards the surrealists’ own theorization of surrealism’s relationship to the real. 21 André Breton wrote in the first surrealist manifesto that surrealism was a form of psychic automatism that sought to express the functioning of the mind (pensée). “Surrealism relies on the

21 A persistent pattern of accommodation takes place throughout the essay. Commenting on Breton’s preference for automatic trace to fixed dream imagery (as stated in Surrealism and Painting), Krauss writes that Breton wanted surrealism to dissolve the opposition of perception and representation. “In preferring the products of a cursive automatism to those of dream imagery, Breton appears to be reversing the classical preference of vision to writing. For in Breton’s definition, it is the pictorial image that is suspect… Yet this reversal only appears to overthrow the traditional Platonic dislike of representation…” (Emphasized in the original). And again, in the following page, in Breton’s view “Automatism may be writing, but it is not representation. It is immediate to experience, untainted by the distance and exteriority of signs. But this commitment to automatism and writing as a modality of presence, and a consequent dislike of representation as a cheat, is not consistent in Breton. As we will see, Breton expressed a great enthusiasm for signs… since representation is the very of his definition of Convulsive Beauty…” Emphasized in the original. Krauss, Rosalind. “Photography in the Service of Photography”: 23 - 24.
belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association neglected until now, in the omnipotence of dreams, and the disinterested games of the mind.”

As such, surrealism is not posed as a not-reality. Instead, its aim is to uncover the super-real within the real and thereby expand the understanding of reality itself to what is invisible to the eye without mediation. Surrealism is a study of conditions of reality including the anomalous, accessed through a mediated connection with the unconscious. In Breton’s formulation, the surreal is immanent in the real, and thus the role of the surrealist is that of medium. The surrealist objet is the physical and psychic object that will both embody and convey this newly found reality.

In order to grasp the implications of the role of photography in surrealism, it is necessary to attend to a history of photography as seen from the darkroom. The surrealists’ insistence on photography’s role as mediator between the visible and invisible is steeped in photographic tradition. The host of darkroom and composition techniques that the surrealists utilized – including axial rotation, solarization and brûlages, photomontages, negative-printing and double exposure – were all developed in

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the first century of photography’s existence and had particular uses outside experimental artistic expression.

The capacity of photography to absorb even the minutest details of its object was observed by spiritualists, who saw in it the perfect medium to connect with the spirits of the departed. The practice of spirit photography caught on in the second part of the nineteenth century. A trade developed in the 1860s, in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, and quickly was transmitted to Europe. Photography also became part of the technology for paranormal investigation. Students of the relationship between mind and matter, such as phenomena as varied as materializations, auras, effluvia and telepathy, produced photographs that served as visual evidence to buttress their claims in the paranormal, believing that the camera could capture and retain information invisible to the human eye, and as with Kirlian photography that claim proved to be true.23

In calling attention to this history, I am proposing a different practice of viewing. From this perspective, it is conceivable to think of a critical history of photography staked at the intersection of the visible and the invisible. Such a history reconsiders the

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23The twentieth-century avant-gardists were well aware of this material. The Italian futurists, László Mohóly-Nagy, and André Breton referred on separate occasions to it. Breton mentions spirit photography in his essay “Le message automatique” (1933). Clement Chéroux and Andreas Fischer, ed. The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
overlaps of photography and the paranormal, as well as the impact of this genealogy on surrealism and its effects on postwar Japanese photography. 24

The question of realism’s “real” is undoubtedly critical to aesthetic and political debates in postwar Japan, but addressing the ghostly lineage of photography turns the question of realism on its head. The questions that this expanded realism asks are not limited to whether what appears in the picture is something that once existed in front of the camera—whether the photograph is true or not. The ghostly capacity of photography asks viewers to consider why such things materialized in the first place, and how they were rendered visible in photographic print. In other words, it becomes imperative to account for the context where these images emerge, and their significance beyond the photographic event itself. In the case of Tōmatsu’s photographs of protest, this mode of representation made it possible to tackle a problem beyond the visually evident. It enabled him to address the question of what made the students move.

24 In her “translation” of Breton’s automatic writing as a semiological system, Krauss not only reduced Breton’s theory of surrealism, but also the very theoretical framework that she seems to argue for, the concept of indexical signs in C.S. Pierce. The essay simplifies the status of photography in Pierce’s complex taxonomy of the index, and the relationship of photography to reality. On the other hand, Krauss’s essay is useful because of its framing of surrealist interest in photography as a form of automatic trace.

In a recent reassessment of photographic indexicality in relation to cinematic realism, the film historian Tom Gunning discussed the inadequacy of the current reception of C.S. Pierce’s concept. Instead, Gunning turns to the film critic André Bazin’s formulation of photography’s ontology as being coextensive with its object, the thing itself – this is the basis for the ubiquitous analogy that portrays photography as the “shroud of Turin.” Gunning distinguishes this formulation from Piercean semiotics noting that, “[Bazin’s] ‘magical’ understanding of photographic ontology is clearly very different from a logic of signs. In Peirce’s semiotics, the indexical relation falls entirely into the rational realm.” Tom Gunning, “Moving away from the index: Cinema and the impression of reality,” differences vol. 18 no. 1 (2007). See also André Bazin, “Ontologie de l’image photographique,” in Qu’est-ce que le cinéma? (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958): 13.
Sanpa radicalism and the right to violence

A series of events during the fall of 1967 signaled the reactivation of the Japanese student movement, which now focused its attention on the upcoming tenth anniversary of the Anpo Treaty’s ratification. Enabled by their common opposition to the Vietnam War, an alliance between competing factions emerged within the fractured Zengakuren (the All-Japan Federation of Student Self-Government Associations). Unlike the mainstream Zengakuren, which had coordinated protests in 1960 and stalled in the post-Anpo moment, the radical Three-Faction Alliance (Zengakuren Sanpa) did not have a clear political affiliation and was committed to the use of direct action as part of their strategy for revolutionary struggle.\(^{25}\)

In August 1967 a tank-wagon carrying jet fuel for the US forces exploded in Shinjuku Station, one of the largest train stations in Tokyo. The incident revealed the level of exposure to military-related hazards faced by the Japanese public, and underlined the realities of Japan’s re-oriented state of semi-occupation under the Anpo Treaty. It made visible, moreover, the costs of the Japanese Government’s collusion in the Vietnam conflict. Soon after this incident, student radicals took their fight to the streets. They started targeting train lines and stations in coordinated attacks on symbolic

\(^{25}\) At the end of the 1950s, concurrent with both the triumph of Maoism in China and the emergence of the critique of Stalinism, the Japanese Communist Party renounced armed struggle. This moment marks the beginning of the progressive chill towards the Zengakuren, which was at the time controlled by an armed Communist faction called BUND (also known as the Kyōsanshugisha Dōmei).
sites, including the environs of U.S. bases, seeking a disruption of the circulation of
capital and power.\textsuperscript{26}

A few months later, in October 1967, the students attempted to prevent Prime
Minister Satô Eisaku’s departure from Haneda Airport in Tokyo on a visit to the U.S.-
backed military government in Saigon, Southern Vietnam. In the end, Satô did manage
to leave the airport, but in the mêlée that ensued Nakamura Hiroaki, a student at Tokyo
University, was killed in unclear circumstances.\textsuperscript{27} Japan had seen violence in major labor
conflicts already in the immediate postwar period and during the Anpo protests of
1960— as well as during the subsequent quelling of labor hotspots, such as the case of the
Miike coalmine conflict. This time, however, the issue of direct action and political
violence emerged as a central concern in public discourse.

The clashes between the student radicals and the police during the Haneda
incident marked a shift in the portrayal of protest. The heavy-handed tactics used
against unarmed protestors by the riot police during the Anpo protests in 1960, and
particularly the much-reviled death of a female student in the build-up to the protests’
climax, had created a mostly sympathetic public perception of protestors. Generally

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{26} The significance of the train lines as part of the longue durée of Japanese modernity was not lost on the
students. The students were being taught by scholars such as the historian Irokawa Daikichi, who in his
classic study Meiji Seishin-shi (Meiji History, 1964) stressed the importance of the Imperial railroads as part
of a network of ideological diffusion. Carol Gluck reprises the theme of the locomotive in her book Japan’s
Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period, whose cover features a nishiki-e print of one such train.

\textsuperscript{27} The police initially alleged that Nakamura had been run over by a police car hijacked by a fellow
protestor. However, a group of Socialist Party parliamentarians who saw the body in the morgue affirmed
that the police report’s findings did not agree with the wounds sustained by the student.
\end{footnotesize}
speaking, student activists had been seen as the target of repressive violence by the State.\textsuperscript{28} However, on this occasion, the press and television coverage of the incident featured extensively the image of helmeted students with towel-covered faces, who fought back the police with long wooden staves. The media was extremely negative regarding what was now portrayed as student violence.\textsuperscript{29}

In an article published in the left-wing journal \textit{Zenshin} (Forward), Honda Nobuyoshi pointedly criticized the media’s spectacularization of the clashes and their portrayals of Zengakuren radicals as thugs. The leader of one of the student factions—the Marxist Nuclear Faction, known in Japanese as the \textit{Chūkaku-ha}—Honda claimed self-defense against state violence and argued for a utilitarian view of force.

The organs of the bourgeois press and their official critics . . . obscured [our] focus—“oppose the Vietnam war, obstruct the visit”—with the so-called problem of violence, castigating the Zengakuren struggle as a “violent demonstration” and “armed demonstration,” while simultaneously maneuvering to conceal and defend the fundamental problem of state violence... On October 8, Zengakuren had its right to demonstrate stripped from it: wasn’t it police headquarters and the public safety commission whose suppression through outrageous violence ensured that Zengakuren would be unable to exercise its right even to a one-meter-long march without forcibly breaking through the riot police’s obstructing line? And isn’t it police headquarters and the public safety commission that for seven years since Anpo have mobilized the well-armed riot police against Zengakuren’s unarmed demonstrations, inflicting bloody oppression by blows, kicks, and arrests, causing near-fatal injuries for dozens? For one, the right to be armed and to strike, kick, and arrest; for the other, in order to declare an anti-war

\textsuperscript{28} Kanba Michiko, a female student at Tokyo University, was killed during the repression of one of the protests taking place on the eve of the Treaty’s ratification, June 19, 1960.

\textsuperscript{29} Apparently, the decision to carry staves on this occasion was a last minute one. Sanpa radicals started using staves and helmets in the wake of a 1964 incident in which rival factions invaded a meeting of the \textit{Chūkaku sect}, killing one of its leaders during the ensuing scuffle.
intent, the right to be struck, kicked, and arrested—only this is permitted. If this isn’t state violence, what is? But on October 8, police headquarters and the public safety commission usurped the right even to be hit, kicked, and arrested.30

The students’ decision to invoke a legitimate right to gebaruto—a phonetization of the German gewalt, alternatively rendered in English as force or violence—was conveyed by the use of staves, known to insiders as geba-bō, symbols that delineated a new parameter of political participation. The students viewed it as their right to respond to the State’s repressive forces with force, evoking Karl Marx’s observation in the first volume of Capital that “Between equal rights force decides.”31

A re-evaluation of the student’s use of force related to an incident in the following year: the protests that greeted the arrival of the Seventh Fleet’s nuclear-powered service ship USS Enterprise to Sasebo, a port in the vicinity of Tokyo.32 Not only Zengakuren protestors, but also non-violent members of the Peace for Vietnam Now!


31 In his discussion of the struggle for the definition of the workday in the first volume of Capital, Marx observed that the two parties to labor conflicts arising in capitalist production systems—the workers and the capitalists—hold equally legitimate arguments within the logic of capital: the workers seek to be remunerated according to how they value their labor, whereas the capitalist wants to keep these costs low. This presents an irreconcilable conflict that can only be resolved through force. It is important to note the distinction that is made by the students between force and violence, gebaruto and bōryoku, as it becomes a point of contention in the public sphere. Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 1 (London: Penguin Classics, 1990): 344.

32 The controversy over the visit of the USS Enterprise had added importance. The high degree of scrutiny during parliamentary debates in the National Diet led Prime Minister Satō to state unequivocally the government’s official position on nuclear weapons, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles: no production, no possession, no introduction (mochikomi) of nuclear weapons. Of course, as it has recently emerged, this was not necessarily an accurate description of reality. William Marotti, “Japan 1968: The Performance of Violence and the Theater of Protest,” American Historical Review (February 2009): 97-135.
Citizens Federation (*Betonamu ni heiwa wo! Shimin rengō*, known as *Beheiren*) took part in the massive demonstrations, which were violently repressed by the Japanese police forces. The historian William Marotti has argued that the heavy-handed police response to the Sasebo incident—made viable by the shifting public mood effected by Sanpa tactics in earlier incidents—backfired, creating bonds of solidarity that radicalized otherwise non-political (*nonpori*) actors across generation and occupation, and politicized the demure everyday spaces of a progressively corporatized Japan. However, these spaces of protest were extremely unstable and ephemeral.

Late 1960s student radicalism was characterized by a refusal to operate according to reifying established political protocols, namely, channeling participation through representative politics, be it the established left-wing political parties or parliamentary politics. Force, as violence, was perceived to be threatening to the postwar order, precisely because it defied the notion of democratic representation. This refusal troubles the desire for conscious political choice reflected in Marotti’s reproduction of the New Left’s discourse of solidarity. Moreover, the fact that *gewalt* was consistently “misinterpreted” raises questions that cannot be simply brushed off as a form of misrecognition. So is the fact that when read as plain violence, *gewalt* distanced even ardently anti-imperialist sympathizers such as Tōmatsu. Despite the exasperation of New Left activists, the foregrounding of action by the press rendered *gewalt* an autonomous phenomenon, a specter of irrationality. This specter, in turn, eventually
came to inform the discursive practices and actions of the very people that originated this theorization in the first place: the student radicals.³³

The student radicals also became active participants in the debate on university autonomy (daigaku jichi). The Zengakuren was in its origins an association of student-governments, which were under the control of delegates affiliated to the Japanese Communist Party and the Socialist Party of Japan. The Three-Faction Alliance represented the first break with pre-existing party structures, and organized under the so-called New Left sects (shinsayoku shotō). The uncovering of administrative misconduct in a series of financial scandals at Nihon University and Tokyo University in early 1968 galvanized a separate non-factional organization called the Zenkyōtō (short for Zengaku kyōtō kaigi, or All-Students Joint Struggle Committee), which led the occupation of schools and universities throughout the country.³⁴

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³³ A large part of the anxiety surrounding Zengakuren violence among critics derived from the perceived “spontaneity,” irrationality and meaninglessness of their acts, despite their evident symbolic content. The semiotician Roland Barthes picked up on this apparent contradiction during his visit to Japan in 1969. In “The writing of violence (L’écriture de la violence),” Barthes translated this critical anxiety into his own anxiety over the instability of signification. “The violence of the Zengakuren doesn’t anticipate its own regulation; it is born at the same time that it is regulated; it is immediately sign, it expresses nothing (not hate, rage or any moral idea)... Nevertheless, such violence’s efficaciousness is not its only measure; a merely pragmatic action puts symbols in parenthesis but doesn’t avenge them... The combat of the Zengakuren, as operation-focused as it is, remains a giant stage of signs...” Roland Barthes, “L’Empire des signes,” in Œuvres complètes, vol. 3 (Paris : Éd. du Seuil, 2002): 430-433.

³⁴ Despite the frequent conflation of the two, the Zengakuren and the Zenkyōtō were separate organizations, which had some overlap, but differed in terms of components and organizational structure. Unlike the earlier organization, the Zenkyōtō was much more concerned with campus politics, rejecting the existent student assemblies (jichikai) upon which the Zengakuren had formed its base, forming instead parallel governing structures. Besides the eight New Left party sects, the Zenkyōtō also comprised students without political affiliation, the so-called non-sect radicals (non-sekuto rajikaru). A thorough historical study of the Japanese New Left in the late 1960s is still lacking. Sociologist Patricia Steinhoff’s tracks the rise of the
The students’ off-campus political struggle directly impacted the debate on the status of university autonomy, and called attention to the historically difficult relationship between higher education and the State. This connection can be seen most clearly in the conflict that arose between students, campus authorities, and the State in the aftermath of the clashes that took place in Shinjuku Station on October 21, 1968, the International Day Against War (Kokusai hansen dē). After separate actions in the vicinity of the National Diet, and disruption of the train service near Shinjuku, several thousand members of the core factions of the Zengakuren joined in the station and clashed with the police. The infamous incident saw the first application of an ad-hoc anti-riot law (sōjō-zai) against the students. Hundreds of student activists were rounded up by the police, not only at the site of the protest, but also on campus. With the escalation of student actions, university administrators were compelled by the government to reign in the radicalized groups, creating in some cases a massive showdown of force between students and the police.


36 The implications of this conflict were made manifest in the eve of one such confrontation, at Japan’s flagship Tokyo University. The crisis of autonomy peaked during the occupation of the Yasuda Auditorium in the prestigious Tokyo University, the oldest and most important school in the prewar Imperial University system. The occupation, which started late in 1968 and extended over the New Year’s celebrations, became
Tōmatsu and his students

The Shinjuku Riots of October 1968 and the emergence of the Zenkyōtō movement throughout Japanese universities provide a context for the photographs of the student protestors taken by Tōmatsu Shōmei. The photographer first approached the students as a new subject in 1969. Though he had already covered protests in the past, this time he was coming to the subject from a distinct perspective. The photographer openly sympathized with the students’ left-wing politics, but he felt estranged by their methods and organizational culture. Moreover, for him, these protestors were not simply students, but his own students, for he was at the time working as a lecturer in the photography department of the Tama Arts School (Tama Geijutsu Gakuen, or Tamagei for short), a private vocational school affiliated with the prestigious Tama Fine Arts University. In the fall of 1969, Tōmatsu published a photo-essay titled “Campus in Ruins (Gakuen no kohai)” on the occupation of the Tama Arts School in the magazine Kikan Shashin Eizō (The Photo Image). His interest in the school’s occupation paradoxically

the most recognizable face of the escalating student conflict, and led to the infamous decision by the Ministry of Education to suspend entrance examinations for 1969. Debates raged in the press regarding the possible solutions to the situation at Tokyo University and whether given Japan’s prewar history it would be admissible to have State agents violently quell an on-campus conflict. Eventually, the administration acquiesced to the introduction of eight thousand riot police officers into Hongō campus. The occupation was forcibly ended following a spectacular battle between student radicals and the police.
earned Tōmatsu both his summary dismissal from the school, and reviling by the students.

The photographer was focusing on a relatively minor incident, when compared to the protests that gripped large public and national universities. In an article that accompanies his photo-essay, Tōmatsu explained the reasons behind this decision. The narrative elucidates the roots of the conflict and his own role within it, but also opens up questions that frame his engagement of the subject.

Tōmatsu refers to five points in the agenda for which the students were insisting: the formation of a school-wide faculty council; voting rights for students during the election of school director; student participation in the drafting of curriculum; transparency in school finances; and a statement from the administration refusing cooperation with police raids. While most of these points were similar to the demands of students in other universities, the first and fifth points were a response to the vocational school’s internal politics. The photographer explains that since the school did not have a faculty council, the students effectively could not intervene in the organization. Meanwhile, the fifth point related to a situation that is said to have sparked the occupation of the school: in November 1968, a police car and two officers in uniform were admitted into the school grounds, ostensibly to collect information on a former student. The Shinjuku Riots of 1968 had taken place only a couple of weeks earlier, and the students suspected that the administration was hunting down those who had taken
part in it. The failure of the administration to respond to the demands of the students precipitated the conflict.

After describing at length the progressive deterioration and breakdown of trust between the school administration and the students in the run up to the occupation, Tōmatsu discusses his own role in the story. The photographer had mentioned privately to a colleague his interest in quitting his job in the weeks prior to the events. However, after the incident began to unfold, the administration cut him off without notice and accused him of being the mastermind behind the students’ revolt.

The photographer’s interest in the occupation of the school went beyond the simple documentation of the events themselves. Tōmatsu wanted to investigate what was really motivating the students to action. He noted that as the struggle progressed, the students left the campus and joined in the larger street demonstrations organized by the Zenkyōtō, and fought under the banner of increasingly abstract notions. The photographer realized that the student protests exceeded the desire for a mere renewal of the university. As students became radicalized, they became aware of how their struggle illustrated the working of the State and capitalism. “There is no end to their struggle, that continues to interrogate the ambivalence (anbibarentsu = Ambivalenz) of act
(kōi) and thought (shisō) and exposes the deceitful nature of a language that does not follow action (kōdō). Therefore, in this eternal struggle, there is no triumph or defeat.”\textsuperscript{37}

If there is no end to their struggle, what makes the protestors act? The stakes of an investigation into this “ambivalence of act and thought” are highlighted when brought back to the prosaic space of the classroom:

So if you ask me why I decided to photograph the student struggle in Tamagei, and not Tōdai nor Nichidai, it was for no other reason than to answer a simple question—why would the excellent photography students who I had met in my classroom just before the school’s occupation build and shut themselves behind barricades, deciding to fight on even if that meant throwing away their cameras?\textsuperscript{38}

Tōmatsu posits his intervention essentially as a means of approaching the problem of what makes the students act. However, he found himself in a compromised position, both with regards to the authorities and the students with whom he sought to sympathize. The students were suspicious of Tōmatsu’s interest in photographing the occupation, seeing him as somebody who “ran away and refused to dirty his own hands despite spending his days filling his mouth with progressive words.”\textsuperscript{39} In this sense, his exploration of student protests, and his investigation of the ambivalence of thought and action, ends up being also an investigation of the position of the photographer himself, and his own ambivalence with regards towards the political action pursued by his

\textsuperscript{37} Tōmatsu Shōmei, “Gakuen tōkyoku kara kuromaku to yobare, gakusei kara wa hanzaisha to yobarete iru boku towa ittai nanimono ka,” Kikan Shashin Eizō vol. 2. (September 1969): 57-58
\textsuperscript{38} Tōmatsu Shōmei, “Gakuen tōkyoku kara kuromaku to yobare...”: 58.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
students. The question he directed to the protestors was simultaneously doubled onto his own practice: “What is it that makes them act?”

**Campus in Ruins**

Tōmatsu’s thirty-one-page long photo-essay consists of a series of black and white photographs and montages with alternating captions. It follows the events for three weeks, starting on June 1, 1969, as the occupation reached one hundred thirty days, moving from the barricades at the school to Zenkyōtō rallies in Shinjuku and Hibiya, and back. The photo-essay proceeds in a matter-of-fact manner, with images interspersed with explanatory captions. The format shifts between two-page spreads and single full-page photographs, to montages in which pages are subdivided into symmetrical or asymmetrical compositions. The division of the pages serves to enhance the sense of movement created through the constant variation of camera angle. The matte quality of the journal’s pages and the high-contrast effect achieved in the grainy black and white photographs flatten out and merge the images, creating a sense of continuity in spite of Tōmatsu’s disconcertingly jarring juxtapositions. It soon becomes evident that the descriptions do not strictly match the photographs. The caption’s larger-picture statements provide a context for the images and yet the photographs tend to be
either too cropped out or too fixated with details to provide a sense of outside
objectivity, this is, a vantage point from which to assess the truth in pictures.

The series opens by presenting the barricades and large *kanban* billboards at the
entrance of the school, announcing in large lettering that the premises are being
“administered by students (Gakusei kanri)” (*Figure 5*). The castle-like barricades are a
provisional architecture of defense, whose power relies in the appropriation of
signifying elements. Its building blocks are student desks, covered with banners and
writing, an effective *détournement* of the symbolism on which the school founded its
authority. The second half of the page shows the gloomy corner of a building shot from
above, a road crossing between the debris on which are painted three characters:

“Setsubō-rō (Road of Despair).” But it is not entirely clear whose despair this is. Is it, as
Tōmatsu suggests in the essay, that of the students before authority? Is it one shared by
two parties unable to communicate? Is it that of the outside viewer? Or is it the
photographer’s?

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40 I deploy here the term *détournement* self-consciously, given its privileged place as an appropriative cultural
practice that defined the May ’68 movement in France, and which attests to the pervasive influence of the
Situationist International in its gestation. The Situationists were involved in the creation and distribution of
a pamphlet at Strasbourg University, titled “On the Poverty of Student Life” (1966-1967) credited with
sparking the French student revolts. In Situationist practice, the term *détournement* was defined as “The
integration of present or past artistic production into a superior construction of a milieu. In this sense there
can be no situationist painting or music, but only a situationist use of these means. In a more primitive sense,
détournement within the old cultural spheres is a method of propaganda, a method which testifies to the
wearing out and loss of importance of those spheres. Situationist International, “Definitions,” in *Theories and
Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley, CA: University of California
The undressed lower half of a mannequin occupies the bottom right corner of a two-page spread (Figure 6). Shot in high contrast, the stark and sparse photograph of what he identifies as a renamed “Anti-Imperialist Courtyard (Hantei hiroba)” features assorted junk and a discarded sign, whose faded lettering still shows the unmistakable slanted exclamation mark (the forty-five degree “!”) characteristic of student rhetoric. The caption reads: “I pick up some of the student’s flyers [rakugaki, also meaning graffiti]. … ‘We will fight!’ ‘It is not a crime, but a right to make a revolution [Zōhan yūri = Zào fānyǒulǐ],’ ‘Long live Chairman Mao,’ ‘It’s all lies [subete wa nisemono da], quit photography, throw away your cameras.’” Tōmatsu appears taken with the anti-mimetic moment reflected in the student’s call that resonates with the lingering question he presented in the essay: what is it that makes the students act? Unlike them, however, Tōmatsu does not discard his camera.

He knows that it is in the written word that the administration and the students confront each other. A photograph shows a male student making his way into a barricade, across two large billboards, covered in endless rows of text. One of the billboards reproduces a secret memorandum issued by the school authorities, condoning the use of police force on campus. The other one exhorts the students to continue their anti-imperialist fight. The scribbling on the walls, on the large-scale kanban, on the

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helmets, is a veil that simultaneously creates bonds of affiliation and distances the students from the outside observer (Figure 7).

Tōmatsu has an almost archaeological interest in what lays on the ground: wasted wrappings, flyers, toothbrushes, and contorted cables. He seems more reticent when it comes to his students (Figure 8). They slumber in their improvised barracks and move aimlessly through the spaces of the school, snake dancing, agitating, or awkwardly auditing a special lecture in their fighting gear (Figure 9). Only rarely does he show their faces. When he does, the faces appear non-descript. They are part of a mass, and their individuality is lost (Figure 10).

It is useful to note how different this portrayal of protest was to the type of documents created by the Japanese Communist Party to commemorate the 1960 Anpo Struggle (Figures 11 and 12). Such is the case of Nihon jinmin no shōri eno zenshin (The Japanese People Move Forward Towards Victory, 1960), a pamphlet produced by the photographers of the official Communist Party newspaper Akahata (Red Flag). Tōmatsu’s finder points downward, towards the ground, or moves uneasily through the space of protest marked by the frustrating desire to attain a unified line of vision with the students. In contrast, Akahata’s photographers with their masterly deployment of the conventions of photojournalism lay out an orderly panorama of protest. The carefully

42 The caption of this humorous small photograph explains that the students (wearing their helmets) were attending a special seminar, offered by the joint faculty of Tamagei and the Tama Fine Arts University (that day’s course was taught by the leftist art critic Haryu Ichirō).
elevated camera provides a bird’s eye view of purposefully moving masses: tidy rows of workers, farmers, housewives, scientists, and writers, whose visual segregation enhances the sense that all of Japanese society is being represented (Figure 13). In these photographs, the protestors do not lay claim to violence. It is something wielded against them, and thus only shown in combat scenes that illustrate the repressive nature of the State (Figure 14). This was precisely the principle of representation that the student radicals were working against, in claiming a right to gebaruto. Tōmatsu’s photographs capture the ambivalence of this gesture, as well as his own position and the meandering aimlessness of movement in a way that orthodox leftism would not accept.

At the time Tōmatsu began working on the image of the protestor, critics and intellectuals were re-evaluating the possibilities of avant-gardism as a theoretical framework for political and aesthetic action. The failure of the mass mobilization against the Anpo Treaty called into question the teleological grammar of Left-wing struggle. The post-Anpo implosion of the postwar promise of democracy made necessary a renewed theory of action—one that moved away from theories of representation and focused on the problem of practice and participation in the revolutionary struggle. Tōmatsu’s spectralization of the protestors in his photographs resonates with contemporary theories that stressed the presence of violence in protest as a marker of the legitimate desire for an embodied practice of politics. Such theories underlined violence as a visible
expression of the workings of history. Tōmatsu’s ghost-like image of an isolated stone-throwing protestors calls attention to a form of violence that exceeded traditional views of the legitimate use of force, and queries its metaphysical implications. The spectralization of the protestors in his photographs was a means for Tōmatsu to address the problem of the origins of action. Such portrayal sets Tōmatsu in conversation with theories of the meaning of direct action in a context where a traditional revolutionary theory of representation – political and aesthetic – was seen as no longer viable. Ultimately, however, Tōmatsu does not achieve a unified line of vision with his objects—but it is precisely his choice to portray this ambivalence towards the student protestors, through the exploitation of the ghostliness of photography.

**Shinjuku as the city underground**

In the transposition of the phantom protestors into the city, the photographs also could be said to haunt landscape itself. Tōmatsu’s concern with this spectralized urban landscape can be seen for example in a 1969 color photograph published in *Kamera Mainichi* (Figure 14). The photograph, an image of a volatilized city, is a single print that

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43 One such critic—closely affiliated with the New Left movement—was the film and jazz critic Matsuda Masao. Matsuda, a former Communist Party member, was a committed Trotskyist, and introduced in his analysis the work of revolutionary theorists such as Frantz Fanon, who stressed the importance of violence as an inescapable aspect of decolonial struggles. Crucially, Matsuda translated the import of these liberation struggles for Japan’s post-Anpo context. Matsuda Masao, *Bara to mumeisha* (Tokyo: Yoshika Shoten, 1969).
was published in the context of the one hundred first anniversary of the foundation of Tokyo. The photographer presents an intricate montage: a sepia-colored inlay of a large meeting of helmeted student protestors, set inside a haunting, colored background of neon billboards promoting Japanese corporate brands – the brands that spearheaded Japan’s postwar growth, and whose manufacturers also colluded in the new war economy. This juxtaposition of consumption and protest, presented here as constitutive of a haunted urban landscape, is seen also in Tōmatsu’s monograph on the Shinjuku district *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969) that portrays the cityscape as phantasmagoria. The city portrayed is ghostly, it is sheer ambiguity: both in terms of the specter of commodity fetishism and the ghoulish violence of the protestors.44

The photo-album *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969) by Tōmatsu Shōmei is a fast-paced, quasi-cinematic exploration of Tokyo’s cityscape (*Figure 15*). The album creates a flickering landscape of the city through its seemingly random juxtaposition of images. Wide-angle views of the packed train station and main crossings lead to close shots of the pavement of the district’s seedy backstreets; Shinjuku’s inside and outside spaces seamlessly merge into a continuous and mysterious atmosphere.

44 As Walter Benjamin notes, “Ambiguity is the manifest imaging of dialectic, the law of dialectics at a standstill. This standstill is utopia and the dialectical image, therefore, dream image. Such an image is afforded by the commodity per se: as fetish.” Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century (Exposé of 1935)” in *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999): 11.
The album presents Shinjuku as a city of sex, libidinous grey-suited businessmen, and illicit substances. It is the city of prostitution, “of drinks and dancing for 200 yen.” It is a giant supermarket: the city of happenings, the city of the underground (angura no machi). “Shinjuku is the city of the young,” Tōmatsu writes in the back cover, while clearly feeling estranged from it. 45

A major focus in the album is the interplay between what is visible and what is hidden from immediate view. In Dramaturgy of the City (Toshi no doramaturugī), the anthropologist Yoshimi Shunya narrates the development of Shinjuku as Tokyo’s foremost postwar sakariba, the busy amusement quarters of Tokyo, in terms of its staging of commerce. Shinjuku Station became an increasingly important commuter hub in the postwar period. Traditionally, the district was one of four entryways to the city. In the prewar period, with the inception of private railways, Shinjuku became the terminal station for the Keiō and Odakyū lines that linked the mostly agricultural and industrial Western part of Tokyo to the city core, the Yamanote loop. Subsequently, these companies helped develop garden city schemes along their lines, creating suburbs and increasing the commuter population that passed through Shinjuku in order to access the city proper. In the early part of the 1900s, these railway companies also helped establish a series of upscale department stores in the vicinity of the train station: Isetan, Mitsukoshi and the railway affiliated stores, Keio and Odakyū. Moreover, the station

was in the vicinity of important universities, including Waseda, Nihon and Hōsei Universities, and easily accessible from Tokyo University’s Hongō and Komaba campuses.

In the immediate postwar period, the blighted areas surrounding the train station, especially towards its East Exit, became notorious black markets, led by powerful Yakuza clans. These markets reorganized autonomously, organically changing the urban landscape. In the early 1960s, the Kabukichō area was redeveloped as an entertainment area housing cinemas, ballrooms and stage theaters. The sex industry had an important and defining presence in Shinjuku. Upon the abolition of the Yoshiwara district close to Asakusa, and the official phasing out of prostitution, many sex-workers were moved to facilities in Shinjuku’s Go-chōme and Ni-chōme areas. In the latter part of the 1960s, these moved to Kabukichō consolidating its fame as an unofficial red-light district. The cramped Go-chōme’s Golden Strip (Gōruden-gai), with its myriad six-stool bars occupying battered-down teahouses, became the hangout of choice for the brooding postwar intelligentsia; Ni-chōme, on the other hand, slowly gained prominence as the epicenter of Tokyo’s gay nightlife.

Shinjuku’s independently run theaters served as venues for underground artists and denizens of the liminal city. The Shinjuku Art Village in Kabukichō screened experimental films, and was used for performances by the dancer Hijikata Tatsumi and his cohort. Others were more informal: Kara Jūrō’s Theater of Situations set up its Red
Tent (Aka-tento) outdoors, in the environs of the train station, first in the grounds of Hanazono Shrine off Shinjuku Station’s East Exit, and then to the Shinjuku Park area, across the station’s West Exit. The Pitt Inn in Ni-chōme was a major promoter of native free jazz artists such as Yamashita Yōsuke. The avant-gardist credentials of Shinjuku were buttressed by the many jazz cafés (jazu kissa) where discerning audiophiles gathered in reverential silence to listen to rare albums by Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, and the recently deceased John Coltrane.46

Japan’s economic growth and the culture of transience that it created transformed Shinjuku, a district in constant reconfiguration throughout the decade. Shinjuku was, like older sakariba in Tokyo, a place defined by permanent display and availability. By the end of the 1960s, the novelty of the area was being trumpeted by the mass media, and magazines such as Asahi Shūkan and Chūō Kōron regularly featured reportages on its new trends and developments.

In contrast, Tōmatsu’s album functioned in an altogether different register. While focusing on some of the more characteristic visual markers of the city, Oh! Shinjuku exceeds the purview of documentary in its attempt to account for the district’s essence, focusing instead on intangible qualities, such as its transience. The landscape it seeks to

46 The 1960s artistic avant-garde had a presence in Shinjuku since early on. Artist Yoshimura Masunobu’s house and atelier, in Ni-Chōme, served as an informal headquarters to the Neodada Organizers. Isozaki Arata, a future star architect, was also a frequent visitor to Yoshimura’s infamous “White House.”
construct is made out of invisibility, because *Oh! Shinjuku*'s now-ness is saddled with the certainty of death.

*Oh! Shinjuku*'s cover shows a woman’s face from underneath, opening up her thickly made up lips and eyes, as if she were gasping for air. Over this image are printed the characters for the title of the book. The first photographs show cropped views of naked women’s bodies: burlesque dancers, with their sequins and pasties, gritty photographs of their pale bodies eerily shining in the dark and cramped rooms they inhabit (*Figure 17*). A four-panel composition on a two-page spread shows female bodies on which the photographer projects images of the cityscape (*Figure 18*). Their bodies are coterminous with the city, supporting and giving form to it.

Shinjuku is the anonymity of the masses. A four-panel spread plays with the push and pull of waves of people at a mammoth crossing (*Figure 19*). The photographer centers in on particular faces: a serious housewife on an outing, dressed in a kimono; a black man taking a drag at a cigarette (*Figure 20*). These crowded spaces lead to empty narrow backstreets. A muddy road shines under a street lamppost, a chain-link fence stands in the way of two abandoned lots, cars drowned under the torrential rain, the cruel skyline soars beyond the window of a cab (*Figure 21*). These scenes are pure texture: the camera angle changes fast, it collapses perspective, and materializes ghostly doublings (*Figure 22*).
Shinjuku is also the city of the student protestors – where they converge to defy authority (Figure 23). The students show their backs covered in writing to the viewers. They run into the train tracks with their geba-bō staves and helmets. A two-page fold, quartered, repeats half of the face of a protestors screaming on opposite corners, while the other half of the composition shows police officers at the train station (Figure 24).

Flipping through the pages of the album, a familiar photograph appears: a blurry male figure, moving backwards, towards the left, caught in the moment of turning around, perhaps in order to escape (Figure 25). This is the photograph that opens Tōmatsu’s reportage on the Anti-war Laborers, which I discussed in the previous chapter. To its right, there is a companion photograph. A group of police officers dressed in riot gear holds their shields up in preparation for combat, facing towards the left. Are they part of the same scene? It is unclear. A sea of black sutures the two images. The following two-page spread captures a burst of light, and the silhouetted contours of helmets and staves clashing (Figure 26).

Tōmatsu includes the image of the protestors because it assists his portrayal of Shinjuku. First of all, there can be no Shinjuku without them: the protestors are both “the young” and “the unruly,” the guarantors of Shinjuku’s freedom and its undoing at the hands of the State. But violence here does not have a name, it does not represent or function within the narrative telos of struggle: it operates as both a highly embodied performance, and a disembodied ritual. In the album gewalt is resignified as an element
of landscape. The student’s violence, and the repressive violence of the State give form to the city. Their clashes are an expression of the climax of sheer desire that coalesces in Shinjuku. For “Shinjuku is the obese ghost of desire that swallows up everything on its way.”

Tōmatsu’s portrayal of the city as ghost establishes a paradox: Shinjuku is in this sense “Beyond,” but at the same time it is the most actual of all cities:

Shinjuku shocks the present as its most contemporary city (*motto no kontemporāri na machi toshite gendai wo tsukisasatte iru*). Shinjuku charms us with its confusion of stage and non-stage spaces (*enshutsu kūkan to hi-enshutsu kūkan*).

Shinjuku charms the viewer as embodiment of the present. Its culture of display sets off the interplay between the visible and the invisible. But is this not an inherent contradiction? How can the city both be actual and material, and yet simultaneously be the ghostly beyond? How can the beyond be the present? Can this most actual of all cities be ultimately implausible?

Tōmatsu addresses this paradox through his depiction of Shinjuku’s landscape as phantasmagoria. As a reminder of the ghostly ambiguity of commodity fetishism, the city appears as pure materiality, but it also is disembodiment. Through the album’s pages, he reconstructs the ghost of the city through moving pictures, salvaged *objets* that the photographer sutures in the darkroom. This aspect puts the album in conversation

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48 Ibid.
with Hosoe Eikoh and Mishima Yukio’s photocollaboration *Barakei* (1963). Like Hosoe’s album *Oh! Shinjuku*, also sought to provide testimony of a city.

But why does Tōmatsu explicitly link the production of landscape to phantasmagoria? In order to consider this point, it is useful to return to Mishima’s description of the world that Hosoe portrays in *Barakei*.

This was, so to speak, the opposite of the world we live in. Contrary to the world we live in, where we honor appearances, worry about the rules of public morals and public hygiene, and thus cram the dirty and ugly sewers in the underground (chika), the world that this gentleman took me to was naked, comical, somber, cruel, excessively decorated, a city so bizarre it drowned one’s eyes, and yet at the same time in its underground passages a cool and clear river endlessly flowed.

*Yes, indeed. I was taken to a strange city.* A place unlike any, in any other country, dreadfully quiet, a city where even in daytime Death and Eros jest in the public square...⁴⁹

Hosoe and Mishima’s language conjures the phantom of the city to express underground conditions and reality. *Barakei* is testimony of a world where the underground merges onto the surface, where desire prowls the streets unfettered – where Eros and Thanatos play out in the open. The chaotic world portrayed in *Barakei* is like Tōmatsu’s Shinjuku. With its attention to the sex industry and its clients, and the ritual-like violence of the student protesters, *Oh! Shinjuku* lays out in the open the raw desire and violence that civilized society would normally hide in the city’s

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underground. The underground connects the present and the beyond. Crucially, Mishima explains that the underground is ubiquitous and immanent: it lies underneath the city and pervades its spaces. The city is haunted by the possibility of its apparition, this is its resurfacing into the open in an outpouring of carnivalesque excess. The attraction of phantasmagoria depends on the promise of this pleasure.

Tōmatsu writes of the freedom granted to those who come to Shinjuku. Yet this freedom is not guaranteed:

This city, Shinjuku, has an atmosphere (fun’iki) that makes us feel "free" somehow, even if it is only a fantasy (gensō), and that is what makes it dear to so many people. However, as this winter of 1969 comes to an end, a chilling wind has started blowing in Shinjuku’s streets. A violent wind that blows backwards from 1970 is shredding that freedom to pieces. It is the heavy shadow of State authority… Oh! Shinjuku.50

The year 1970 marked the tenth anniversary of the Anpo Struggle, the symbolic target that animated the student movement, and bequeathed them the certainty of a fight for justice. This was also the year of Expo ‘70, an event that celebrated the consolidation and triumph of Japan’s postwar capitalistic growth. Many remarked that this successful national festival was nothing but a means of distracting the public from the pressing questions of the postwar period. Meanwhile, in Shinjuku, police repression and commercial interests slowly wrested the city away from its more unseemly elements. Soon thereafter, the student movement would start to devolve, falling into

50 Tōmatsu Shōmei, Ō! Shinjuku: back cover.
internal conflict and unleashing violence among its members. Tōmatsu’s essay anticipates the end to the Shinjuku that he photographs. But at the same time, the promise of its future death, that quality of being “on the eve” (zen’ya), is what gives form to his vision of the ghostly city.
Chapter 3: The Underground as the Beyond

One of the last portraits of the novelist Mishima Yukio shows him together with four young members of the paramilitary organization he had founded three years earlier, the Shield Society (Tate no kai). The photograph, taken in October 19, 1970, is a classic group portrait (Figure 1). The black and white image presents four young men standing behind the author, who sits on an empire leather canapé; all the men appear clad in double-breasted uniforms. The checkered tile floor is reminiscent of a ballroom. On the lower-right corner, the studio’s signature is visible (“Tōjo Studio,” in Roman and Japanese characters). A kind of pictorialist haze hovers about the photograph. This is an accomplished formal studio group portrait, with a precise use of composition, lighting, and props. But despite its skillful construction, the image’s incongruity haunts the viewer. The photograph appears deliberately antiquated, and overly staged. Is it the youth of Mishima’s followers, or their distinctively non-athletic type, when compared to the bodybuilding novelist that seems so incongruous? Is it the group’s clothing?

Almost fifty years earlier, the German critic Siegfried Kracauer pointed out how photographs defamiliarize the viewer with that which is seen: the way that in revisiting pictures of the past, items of clothing that once seemed to seamlessly merge with the sitter’s body become extraneous elements, bequeathing the image a sense of
obsolescence and comedy.¹ This phenomenon troubles portraiture, with its requirement of verisimilitude, the romantic notion that the surface reveals the inner qualities of the sitter: for a portrait to cohere, there must be an element of sincerity, truth, reflected in the image. But the question that this photograph elicits is quite the opposite: how could this be true? How could such anachronism be taken seriously?

The stakes of this question are high, as attested by Mishima Yukio’s abduction of General Mashita Kanetoshi in November 10, 1970: a failed coup that the writer organized with his paramilitary organization, the Shield Society. This incident ended with the novelist’s spectacular suicide by ritual disembowelment—an unthinkable action that looms large in Japan’s postwar history, and points to the problematic and haunting continuities of the prewar period into the present. What could have led Mishima to such a radical act of self-annihilation?

In this chapter, I examine Mishima’s self-presentation as a means of approaching his theories of artistic and political production, and the ways in which these intersect with questions in photography and performance. I am particularly interested in how Mishima’s self-presentation foregrounds his spectral politics: Mishima’s is a form of mediumistic practice, a politics that is conjured and emerges in relation to notions of the Absolute and the Beyond. These are romantic ideas that he identifies with Japan’s prewar political and cultural order.

¹ Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography,” *Critical Inquiry* vol. 19, no. 3 (Spring 1993).
Mishima’s notion of an outside entity as universal organizing principle is informed by the philosophy of the early German romantics of the Jenna circle—Schelling, Schiller, Novalis and the Schlegel brothers—whose work filtered Kantian idealism through an unorthodox mystical and aestheticist lens, and whose take on the ideal Absolute anticipated Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Mishima’s aesthetics resonate strongly with Schelling’s conception of art as a philosophical organ. For the German philosopher, art resolved the tension between nature and spirit, in the conscious, yet unconscious activity of the artist.\(^2\) The tension between flesh and words (spirit) that Mishima alludes to in essays such as *Sun and Steel* (1967) presents another interesting iteration of a quintessentially romantic problem.\(^3\) At the same time, his view of the Absolute is inextricable from the political theology developed by imperial ideologues, expounded in the first *Imperial Rescript on Education* (Kyōiku chokugo, 1889) and later crystallized in the *Cardinal Virtues of the National Polity* (Kokutai no hongi, 1941). These texts developed a totalizing, authoritarian view of the Imperial system.


\(^3\) In classical philosophy, spirit (gr. *pneuma* = lat. *spiritus*) was understood to be a material substance. This view was prevalent until the eighteenth century and the ascendance of German Idealism. Schelling, the early romantic philosopher, had a keen interest in phenomena such as magnetism, which he seems to have understood as physical expression of the spirit. Magnetism, incidentally, is one of the objects of study in photographs of *effluvia*. 
where the Emperor appeared as an absolute father figure to whom his subjects had a
direct filial relationship as the members of a family-state (kazoku-kokka).

I contend that Mishima’s interest in photography and portraiture was intimately
related to his aesthetic and political thought. For the author, photography as a medium
for self-presentation provided both the means for theorizing and practicing politics.
Mishima’s interest and reliance on photography is indicative of his theorization of it as a
channeling medium. In this way, Mishima’s performative appropriation of the prewar
through his consciously anachronistic self-presentation acquires a renewed significance
when considered through the ghostliness of photography. As spirit photography, his
self-fashioning appears as a practice of mediumship that seeks to channel through his
body forces beyond that intervene in a historically specific moment. He utilizes
photography—a medium that can capture “past presences”—in order to channel a
prewar sensibility.

Mishima placed inspiration and mediumship at the center of his theory of the
origins of action. His self-presentation, his use of portraiture and literary auto-
fictionalization were simultaneously functional to theorizing action as well as being the
means for him to act. The author’s self-presentation practice was an essential step in his

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4 The literary critic Chigusa Kimura-Steven points out that Mishima was educated in elite institutions
throughout the prewar period, attending both the Peers School (Gakushūin) as well as Tokyo Imperial
University’s Law Faculty, and had actual contact with the imperial household. Mishima was thoroughly
exposed to prewar Imperial ideology in its purest form, as he himself underlined in an interview in the
Asahi Shimbun shortly before his suicide. Chigusa Kimura-Steven, Mishima Yukio to teroru no rinri (Tokyo:
transformation into a martyr, achieved in his actualization of martyrdom in the
November 1970 incident. The incident, in turn, allowed him to convert this intervention
into a haunting, in permanent return from the beyond.

In order to argue for a continuity of thought and method in the novelist’s
trajectory, I will first examine Hosoe Eikoh and Mishima’s photo-collaboration Barakei
(Punishment by Roses, 1963). In Barakei, Hosoe focuses on Mishima’s nude body, which
he recombines through extensive darkroom manipulation, high-contrast photography
and montages incorporating canonical images from European painting that indirectly
allude to themes in Mishima’s literature. Notably, Hosoe’s reference to the image of
Saint Sebastian in Mishima’s work, suggests a collapsing of the image of the martyred
saint onto the writer’s body.

Hosoe portrays in Barakei a descent into a world unseen, which Mishima
describes as “the underground.” The album operates as a visualization of a ghostly
world invisible to the naked eye. The otherworldly “underground” depicted in Barakei is
the ideal world where the scene of martyrdom, the encounter with the Absolute,
becomes possible. I will discuss the scene of martyrdom in relation to Mishima’s
political program, examining this concept in two works that are part of his Patriotism
cycle: the film Patriotism (Yūkoku, 1966), based on his 1960 novel of the same name,
where martyrdom is explicitly tied to ideology, and the novella Voices of Heroic Spirits
(1967).
The novelist’s intervention is specific to Japan’s political moment. Mishima saw postwar Japan as a castrated society — but its impotence did not arise from the Anpo Treaty itself, which he deemed to be an unavoidable necessary evil when compared to the real threat posed by Communist China. Rather, his concern resided in the state’s inability to provide meaning to its citizens’ lives. Postwar Japan had become an affluent enclave in the East, with a figurehead monarch that lacked any authority and could not satisfy its countrymen’s spiritual needs. This situation put the country in danger of losing its essential cultural specificity – its unique relationship to the Absolute. Interestingly, Mishima saw in the student movement a kindred spirit: the rebellious youth understood the need for death in order to recover political subjecthood. Mishima’s project was, in this sense, a project to recuperate the phallus.

Barakei

Mishima Yukio wrote a small text for a pamphlet accompanying a dance recital organized in 1960 by the young dancer, Hijikata Tatsumi. Mishima had met Hijikata in 1959 during the production of his first choreography, a work based on the novelist’s

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5 The first Hijikata Tatsumi DANCE EXPERIENCE no kai was organized in July 1960. A second performance was produced in September 1961. Mishima wrote texts for both pamphlets. As part of the first performance, there was a screening of Tōmatsu Shōmei’s short 16 mm experimental film “Hikōki (Airplane).” See Morishita Takashi, “Nempū” in Hijikata Tatsumi no butō — nikutai no shururearizumu, shintai no ontoroji, ed. Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Āto Sentā (Kawasaki: Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, 2003).
Kinjiki (Forbidden Colors, 1951), a pulp succès de scandale, famous for its portrayal of the homosexual demimonde of Tokyo during the Occupation. The pamphlet for the recital contained Hosoe Eikoh’s photographs of the male dancers in Hijikata’s group (Figure 1). In the pamphlet, Hosoe included a series of gritty photographs that portrayed groups of three to six semi-nude dancers with faces covered up by dark stockings (Figure 3); some of them were full body shots, others created abstract compositions with the dancers’ limbs (Figure 4). Mishima invited Hosoe to take portraits of his to be used for the cover and plates of his first collection of critical writings, The Attack of Beauty (Bi no kōgeki, 1961). The photo-shoot extended well beyond the purview of the original project. Hosoe added additional photographs taken at his studio to the original photographs taken in Mishima’s neo-baroque palazzo in Meguro Ward, The resulting voluminous album, designed by Sugiura Kōhei, was published in 1963 as Barakei.

The problematic nature of collaboration vexes the boundaries of authorship. Hosoe has written retrospectively that Mishima had requested a position of absolute passivity as a model (hishtai) for this project. Yet inevitably, besides his introductory

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6 Mishima may have first seen Hosoe’s pictures either in the pamphlet for the Dance Experience performance, or during the individual exhibition that the photographer held that year at the Konishiroku Gallery in Ginza.

7 Hosoe claims that he was not acquainted with the author before this project, and thus was extremely surprised when he received a phone call from the publisher Kodansha conveying Mishima’s request. In view of the novelist’s documented participation in the publication of the pamphlet to Hijikata’s Dance Experience performances, it is possible that Mishima and Hosoe had met previously, possibly through Hijikata.

8 The original English title for the project was “Ordeal by Roses,” but the exact translation for Barakei is “Punishment by Roses.” In later English-language editions, Hosoe retained the romanized Japanese title.
text to the album, the novelist’s textual production as a whole serves as a framing para-
text to these images, which were in fact produced in conjunction with the photographer:
Mishima actively collaborated with the photographer in picking the visual cues that the
photographer included in his baroque compositions. Hosoe is adamant that this was not
a representation of Mishima’s novel-world: this was a “subjective documentary of the
novelist Mishima Yukio,” which picked on the likes and dislikes of the photographer’s
subject.9 Indeed, direct literary allusions are few in the series: Barakei functions as a
different type of record altogether. Hosoe and Mishima’s deliberate transgression of
authorial propriety is another way in which the project plays with co-extensive
categories of literary auto-fictionalization and self-presentation that the writer so
fruitfully exploited throughout his career.

The album brought together Hosoe’s interest in the erotic contours and curves of
the human body, with Mishima’s aesthetic and political program. It consists of a series
of photographs of the writer, in semi-nude and nude.10 The album is divided in five
sections: “Prelude,” “A Citizen’s Everyday Life,” “The Laughing Clock, Or The Careless
Witness,” “Various Holy Sins (Samazamana Tokusei)” “Punishment by Roses (Barakei).”
For each section, Mishima chose epigraphs from a variety of Hindu texts, including the

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10 Some photographs include Hijikata Tatsumi and the model Ishida Masako.
The Code of Manu (Manu Hōten = Manusmṛti) and the Upanishads, that set the work in relation to notions of sacred law, impurity, and expiation.\(^{11}\)

The first photograph in the album shows Mishima, wearing a loincloth with a rose closing his detached collar, welcoming the viewer into his house (Figure 5). The use of his residence as a backdrop creates spectacular architectural resonances with the contours and crevices of novelist’s own muscular body — he had taken up body-building in 1955 — by flattening out and recombining forms through the use of stark, high-contrast black and white photography, montage, and double exposure. In Hosoe’s photographs volatilize Mishima’s body into an uncanny world of shadowy repetitions, a truly haunting phantasmagoria (Figure 6). The uncomfortable combination of self-referentiality and allegorical imagery intensifies the ludic or “perverse” atmosphere sought by Mishima and Hosoe (Figure 7). In the novelist’s words, the first chapter “recounts the madness in the daily life of a proper, good, average citizen. But who can laugh at his folly? As Mauriac once said, ‘When left alone, everyone is a madman.’” \(^{12}\)

Another portrait presents Mishima laughing in leather biker gear and white dancer tights, standing on a chair, holding an egg between his right hand’s fingers, and a

\(^{11}\) The Code of Manu is an important Hindu text dealing with dharma, which codifies the orderly way of life according to Vedic principles. Mishima’s interest in Hindu classics is related to his political and aesthetic thought. These texts were of the highest importance to the Jenna circle: the Schlegel brothers had trained as philologists and studied Sanskrit; the ideas developed in Hindu texts, in particular those concerning the origins of Brahman, were an important reference point in their articulation of the notion of the Absolute Ideal. The place of the notion of law in Mishima’s work is paramount refers again to these texts in his final cycle of novels, The Sea of Fertility, which explores the idea of universal law and reincarnation.

clock under his left arm. In this picture, Mishima is the joker, the fool (Figure 8). The clock under his arm marks the magical time where the initiatory voyage to the underground begins. The writer, holding a hammer, is seen lying at the center of a mosaic representing a zodiac wheel, tied up with a hose. A cacophony of montages follows in which Mishima’s figure is absorbed into a series of baroque compositions (Figure 9).

The photographer includes various direct references to European painting either through the use of montage or by the use of props: details from Giorgione’s Sleeping Venus (c. 1510) and Sandro Botticelli’s Birth of Venus (c. 1480), among others, are superimposed on photographs of Mishima’s body (Figures 10, 11). Two photographs included in the montage program explicitly reference Mishima’s literary world by including the character of Saint Sebastian, who figures prominently in his pseudo-autobiographical novel Confessions of a Mask (1949). One of these photographs is a montage, organized as a vertical, décalcomanie-like composition — a symmetrical stain that almost completely conceals the writer (Figure 12). Mishima hides at its base, holding his knees with his arms, wallpapered over by the ornate body of a tabletop clock that merges with Guido Reni’s St Sebastian (1615-1616). Another photograph portrays Mishima against a painted trompe l’œil backdrop, his hands tied behind his back, looking towards the left side of the composition, and away from the camera (Figure 13). The legs of a child dangle out of focus entering the frame from the upper left corner. The
photograph is a snapshot, taken at an angle, creating the impression of intrusion, as if the viewer were visiting a set — the behind the scenes of a passion play.

One of the most poignant photographs in the series is a moody portrait of the novelist, taken from a slight angle above, staring defiantly back at the viewer. The photograph (a two-page spread) is a close-up of Mishima’s sweat-covered face; his mouth is stuffed with a rose (Figure 14). The background is completely dark, highlighting his facial features. His thick eyebrows, his bloodshot eyes, even the pores of his skin seem to jump out at the viewer. This large-scale portrait is haunted by an irrepressible sense of tension, produced by the forceful stance of the model. The gaze dynamics exploited in the composition force the viewer into a voyeuristic and yet uncomfortably reciprocal and intimate exchange with the model. This sense is heightened by the invisible binds that hold down Mishima’s body, which the viewer can only imagine because of the constrains of the photographic frame. Likewise, the viewer will never know exactly what a punishment by roses is: the scene of martyrdom takes place outside the finder’s purview. The album closes with a series of snapshots of Mishima lying on a carved stone bench with roses placed on his body, looking as if he were dead, or asleep. Here the tension of the previous scenes disappears, an ecstatic coda that underlines a pleasure possible only beyond death.
In the prologue, Mishima explains the nature of the world portrayed in the album, and stresses that it was only through Hosoe’s camera that such a world could be conjured:

One day, Hosoe Eikoh came over and took my flesh to a strange world. Until this moment, I had seen the magical works produced by the camera. However, rather than magical, the quality of Hosoe’s work was such as that of a machine that produces sorcery. This was an extremely uncivilized use for such a civilized precision instrument. The world I was taken to by the sorcery of his lens was abnormal, twisted, ridiculous, grotesque, savage, pansexual; however in this world one could also hear the murmuring of a clear, cool stream, the undercurrent from within the unseen inside of a gutter.\footnote{Mishima Yukio, “Hosoe Eikoh Josetsu”: 237.}

Mishima identifies photography as a machine capable of magic. But in Hosoe’s work, Mishima saw more than the workings of an apparatus that condenses time and place. In Hosoe’s hands, the camera serves as a mediator between this world and the Beyond.

In Mishima’s theory of photography, the camera’s magic derives from its capacity to capture and relay the object’s presence. But before a photograph can become artwork, and connect with the beyond, the photographer must choose between two approaches to processing the object’s presence: the choice given is between photography as documentary (kirokusei) or testimony (shogensei). Barakei is testimony of the invisible.

When photography chooses documentary, the absolute credibility (shinpyosei) of the object portrayed becomes its form, and its distilled meaning becomes [the photograph’s] subject. Counter to this, when photography chooses testimony, the
meaning of the object relayed by the camera is filtered, part of it is lost, another part of it is warped, and is adapted into the form of the work. And as far as the subject of the work is concerned, the photographer declares from a merely subjective perspective,

— This is real.
— This is a photograph. Therefore, as you can see, I am not lying.
He can only testify in such manner.14

Mishima asks where the truth in pictures, the sincerity of portraiture, resides. The novelist reveals that beyond photography’s claim to the real, there is the helplessness of the photographer reduced to testimony, the repetition of the reality he once saw and now conveys to the viewer.

Such impotent helplessness of subjective testimony is at the same time the strength and specificity of the medium. Mishima refers to this as photography’s lyricism:

Here resides the pathetic lyricism that hides underneath the fraudulent spirit photographs (inchikina shinrei-jutsu shashin), or pornographic photographs whose faces have been swapped — their form is expanded to the extreme. The bizarre, uncanny (gimi no warui) lyricism of photography that says,

— This is a real ghost.
— This is a photograph. Therefore, as you can see, I am not lying.

This pathos suggests (anji) that [photography] can only be born from the repetition of this scream, this refrain. And isn’t this screamed testimony Hosoe’s own confession? Doesn’t the confession of the photographer only become possible through this constant repetition of testimony?15

Photography’s lyricism lies in its testimonial quality. Mishima’s notion of testimony interrupts and interrogates the link between photography and reality.

15 Ibid.
Testimony calls attention to the function of photography as phantasmagoria, the spectacular visualization of ghostly existence, proof of the visible world’s ambivalence and its links to the invisible. Indeed, it was only photography as the reflection of a world of shadows that could ever aspire to contain the world of Barakei. This is because the scene that this project sought to capture was the encounter with the Absolute, which in Mishima’s worldview can only be fulfilled in death. Photography provided the means of embodying the Beyond, allowing Mishima to become a martyr.

The portrayal of Sebastian’s martyrdom first appeared in Mishima’s novel Confessions of a Mask (Kamen no kokuhaku, 1949), in which the nameless first-person narrator famously recalls his teenage enthrallment with—and ejaculation over—a reproduction of Guido Reni’s St. Sebastian (1615-1616):

The black and slightly oblique trunk of the tree of execution was seen against a Titian-like background of gloomy forest and evening sky, somber and distant. A remarkably handsome youth was bound naked to the tree...

His white and matchless nudity gleams against a background of dusk. His muscular arms... are raised at a graceful angle, and his bound wrists are crossed directly over his head. His face is turned slightly upward and his eyes are open wide, gazing with profound tranquility upon the glory of heaven...
The arrows have eaten into the tense, fragrant, youthful flesh and are about to consume his body from within with flames of supreme agony and ecstasy.16

The narrator’s fascination with Sebastian’s body resides in the combination of physical beauty with the “flames of supreme agony and ecstasy” expressed in his gaze. Such ecstasy can only arise in martyrdom: the fulfillment through death of the Saint’s divine mission. As the narrator asks, “Was not such beauty as his a thing destined for death (korosareru bi dewa nakattarōka)?”

The narrator refers to the fin-de-siècle German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, as a theory for his fetishization of Sebastian’s pain-induced ecstasy, which he claims was a common one among “sadistic inverts.” Mishima introduces this reference partly in order to establish Confessions of a Mask’s narrative of perversion. But, whereas the fantastic projection described by the narrator initially placed Sebastian as object, something upon which pain is to be inflicted, the preceding section has already provided an alternative account for the actual site of pleasure in the scene of martyrdom: the suffering subject. The martyr is a subject of pleasure—one whose ecstasy derives from the deadly encounter with the Absolute.17 In Confessions of a Mask, the narrator ultimately displaces such desire for death onto himself—his dilemma is precisely the desire for this fantasy and his seeming inability to fulfill it. Barakei helps Mishima embody this displacement. In the album, the protagonist of the series actively submits himself to punishment by

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17 Gilles Deleuze problematized the figure of the masochist in his analysis of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s novel Venus in Furs (1870). Deleuze calls attention to the opening scenes of the novel, underlining the contractual nature of masochism. Even while the protagonist Severin (the masochist) submits to the will of his dominating other (the Venus in Furs), he needs to first consent to the terms of the relationship. Gilles Deleuze, Présentation de Sacher-Masoch, le froid et le cruel (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967).
roses, just like Sebastian submits to Diocletian’s judgment, and through him, to the designs of God. The protagonist martyred himself to pleasure, to beauty and the Absolute.

Mishima’s self-presentation throughout the decade can be seen as a continuation of this experiment in embodiment—a performance whose political overtones became increasingly clear. The novelist deliberately referred to the myth of Sebastian, which played a progressively important role in his self-fashioning. In 1966, Mishima published a Japanese translation of the play Le Martyre de St. Sébastien, by the Italian proto-fascist author Gabriele D’Annunzio. In November 1968, the journal Rose and Blood (Chi to bara), published portraits of the writer taken by the photographer Shinoyama Kishin, part of a series called “Masculine Deaths (Otoko no shi).” The first photograph portrays a seminude Mishima, with his arms crossed over his head, contorting his body as it is pierced by arrows while he stares pleadingly towards the heavens, in a fairly exact approximation of the Reni tableau (Figure 15). Even as he underlined the importance of

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18 Inspired by the martyrdom scene of D’Annunzio’s play, Mishima also wrote a new version of a nineteenth century Kabuki play, Chinsetsu Yumi Harizuki, first performed in November 1969.
19 The novelist also contributed an essay (appropriately titled—in English—“All Japanese are Perverse”) to this first issue of Rose and Blood, a short-lived literary journal of Bataillean leanings led by the critic and writer Shibusawa Tatsuhiko. Shibusawa was a close collaborator of the dancer Hijikata Tatsumi. He was also the Japanese translator of the Complete Works of the Marquis de Sade, whose censorship derived into a drawn out obscenity law trial that became a cause célèbre for the postwar literary establishment. Mishima, who originally studied to become a lawyer, represented Shibusawa in this trial.
20 Mishima’s view of the saint derives from the romantic conflation of Sebastian with classical figures, such as Adonis and Apollo, and has much to do with D’Annunzio’s version of the story. In terms of iconography, the preference for portraying the saint as a young ephbe dates only to the Italian Quattrocento, as part of
the myth of Sebastian, through its literalization, Mishima continued to hold *Barakei* in high esteem. Mishima authorized Hosoe to prepare a new edition of *Barakei*, whose release—originally scheduled for early 1971—was delayed in the aftermath of the novelist’s suicide.²¹

Sebastian undergoes a transformation in Mishima’s imaginary. While still tying the image of the young saint to the narrative of perversion, which he had so forcefully constructed in *Confessions of a Mask*, Mishima was now positing an increasingly politicized take on Sebastian’s martyrdom: the ideal example of the encounter of the individual and the Absolute in death. The image of the ecstasy of the Saint—who in D’Annunzio’s play pleads “Encore…! Encore…!” as arrows tear his flesh—is in Mishima a reference to the undeniable totality of death, but also the agency found through pleasure in the encounter with the Absolute.

**The medium is the martyr**

²¹ The layout to this lavish second edition of *Barakei* was prepared by the designer Yokoo Tadanori, who also contributed a silkscreen image used on the packaging that served as protective cover for the album. The protective box unfolds to reveal a book bound in black velvet. On each of the box’s flaps is a different panel of Yokoo’s distinctive *nishiki-e* style silkscreen, depicting a nude and hirsute Mishima spread out horizontally, against a solid black background. The novelist appears with his arms crossed over his head, covered by roses. On the top and bottom panels, Yokoo included faces of multiple Hindu deities lined up, sharing one set of feet.
In the aftermath of the Anpo protests—which were preceded by the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and left-wing decolonization struggles throughout Africa and Asia—Mishima became increasingly concerned with the possibility that the intense radicalization of Japan could catalyze a Communist revolution. These concerns were somewhat assuaged as the Japanese government reasserted its authority through the early part of the decade. However, as the Japanese student movement regained momentum and China entered the Cultural Revolution, Mishima became once again anxious for the future. These events, in conjunction with what he sensed was a depoliticized, consumerist ethos pervading Japanese society, threatened Japan’s polity and its culture. Mishima’s increasingly overt political interventions date to this moment. In his political interventions, the writer progressively referred to the image of the martyr, whose self-sacrifice appeared as the sole possible instantiation of the encounter with the Beyond.

Mishima published a short novel titled *Yūkoku* (Patriotism) in the fall of 1960. The novel was inspired by the failed putsch organized by a group of young officers who sought to devolve power to the Emperor. Mishima published two more works in what came to be known as the *Patriotism* trilogy: a play *Tōka no kiku* (Chrysanthemum of the Tenth, 1962) and a novella titled *Eirei no koe* (Voices of Heroic Spirits, 1967). In addition to this, in 1965, Mishima produced *Yūkoku* (*Patriotism*, released 1966), a 28-minute long
silent film based on his earlier novel. In this section, I will look at the film version of Yūkoku and set it in relation to theories of mediumship present in the final work in the trilogy. Through this, I will argue that Mishima consciously exploited visual media in order to achieve a literal embodiment of the trope of the martyr. This in turn resonates with contemporary theories of the medium and the origins of political action.

The film Yūkoku actualizes the scene of Sebastian’s martyrdom in a spectacular depiction of ritual suicide. The story is set in the aftermath of the February 26 incident of 1936. Lieutenant Takeyama Shinji (played by Mishima Yukio himself) and his wife Reiko (Tsuruoka Yoshiko) commit suicide after receiving news of a suppressed revolt by his friends, mid-level officers at the Imperial Army. His close friends had not communicated to him their decision to act, because Takeyama had married only six months ago. The mise-en-scène uses a sparse set, similar to an open Noh stage, with a long exit doubling as the entrance to the house and Reiko’s boudoir, and the main stage, which is used as the chanoma tearoom where most of the action takes place. The highly stylized movement is reminiscent of Noh theatre. The silent, black and white film includes hand-

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22 Mishima funded the production of the film out of pocket, and is credited as director, scriptwriter, and plays the lead role. The film was made in secret, screened in limited release in Japan, and presented at a number of international art film festivals. After Mishima’s suicide, his widow, Hiraoka Yōko requisitioned all 43 prints, which she had destroyed, except for the negatives. The estate re-issued the film as a DVD through the publisher Shinchōsha in 2006 as part of the novelist’s complete works. Fujii Hiroaki, “Eiga Yūkoku no ayunda michi,” in Ketteiban Mishima Yukio Ōnetsu: Bekkan – Eiga Yūkoku (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2006).
written intertitles, and uses as its soundtrack the prelude from Richard Wagner’s opera

_Tristan und Isolde._

The film opens with a handwritten intertitle that summarizes the events: Reiko is waiting quietly for the return of her husband who has been away for two days. On the day of his departure, they had heard the news of the officers’ arrest on the radio. Without saying anything, Takeyama had left her in the house. As the wife of a soldier, Reiko already understood what Takeyama’s departure implied. She cleans up their modest house, and separates a few of her belongings to be given out as mementos to her childhood friends. She ponders her love for her husband. Takeyama arrives, and asks his wife to lock the door. This gesture makes clear to Reiko the officer’s resolve. He takes his boots off and ascends to the _chanoma._ The officer explains that the only way out is for him to commit _seppuku._ He asks her to help him. Reiko asks him in turn to let her go with him. He is touched by her willingness to kill herself as well. They have sex.

They then proceed to get ready. Bowing one last time in front of the photographs of the Emperor and Empress (go-shakei) contained in the _kamidana_ shelves, they ascend the stairs into the second floor’s _chanoma._ Takeyama opens up his shirt, wraps his sword about the hilt with paper, and inserts the tip in his lower abdomen. The process is difficult: Takeyama’s sword gets tangled in his intestines, which eventually pour out of his abdomen. Reiko watches impassibly as the officer screams when he pulls out his sword. He points it to his neck and misses several times. She finally helps him guide the
blade, and the officer falls on it. The wife stands up and calmly heads towards her room, her kimono drenched in Takeyama’s blood. She dons heavy make-up and unlocks the entrance door so they can be promptly found. Reiko, the ever-dutiful wife, is disturbed at the possibility of putrefaction dirtying their noble deaths. (In the novella, Mishima morbidly explains that this is make-up for those who will find their corpses.) The woman joins her husband in the chanoma, takes her bridal knife, and stabs herself in the throat, falling on top of her husband. The scene changes, and the camera pans out on Reiko huddling on Takeyama, seemingly asleep on a raked sand garden.

Plot development is secondary to a story that is mainly concerned with psychological description. This represents an obvious difficulty to capture in film, a medium that relies on visual cues and dialogue to convey plot points, character, and atmosphere. In order to achieve this effect, the film uses a non-naturalistic mise-en-scène that allows for the development of a deeper psychological aura. For whole sequences, the officer and his wife sit motionlessly, facing each other. The sex scene, which takes an important part of the film, presents the couple holding contorted, Rodinesque poses against the light. The grandiose style of the film, together with the use of Wagner’s soundtrack, serves to monumentalize the story into an allegory about duty and the felicitous encounter of the Absolute in death.

The seeming equanimity reflected in the film’s depiction of the couple’s conjugal bliss gives way to a deeper, second reading: the film’s sex scene serves to depict the
hallowed encounter of subject and Emperor. Included in the mise-en-scène is a kakejiku scroll that hangs in the decorative tokonoma alcove, overseeing this encounter. On it appear in elegant calligraphic brushstrokes the two characters for “seijō,” a word that means both sincerity or true intentions and devotion. The meaning of devotion here is to give oneself to the other—literally to offer one’s body (kenshin).

This may seem counterintuitive, especially considering the filial relationship between Emperor and subject delineated in the prewar Constitution, where subjects are described as the Emperor’s blood-children (sekishi). However, this discourse is also well rooted in prewar imperial ideology. In the late nineteenth century, the image of the emperor became progressively conflated with the sun-goddess Amaterasu, the ancestor and tutelary figure of the Imperial Household. This feminization of the image of the Emperor enabled wartime imperial political theology to represent the politico-religious order through heterosexual monogamy. Not only the patriarch was a figure of imperial authority: the mother also played a role, as representative of the endless “mercy” of the Emperor. This dual quality of the Emperor allowed ideologues to re-inscribe within the home the basic tenets of the imperial system.²³ Love plays an important role in "Patriotism. But that love can only be fulfilled in death: the encounter with the Absolute.

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²³ Chiba Kei has traced this process in his analysis of the critical discourse on Kano Hōgai’s painting Hibo Kannon, as well as Amaterasu’s representation in Miyazaki Prefecture’s Tower of the Eight Corners of the World. Chiba Kei, “‘Hakkō no motohashira’ no zuzō puroguramu,” Bijutsushi vol. 166 (March 2009).
The use of love in the novel presents an embodied metaphor that points to the ghostly transactions between the Absolute and the individual.

In the last work of the *Patriotism* cycle, *Voices of Heroic Spirits* (*Eirei no koe*, 1966), Mishima expounded further on the problem of embodiment and the origins of action, similarly examining love, and this time, betrayal, as key terms to examine the postwar condition. At the beginning of the novel, the first-person narrator (*watakushi*) recounts his participation in a séance (*kamugakari no kai*). Organized like a Noh play *shura-mono*, the novella is divided into five parts and is centered on the revealing of the identity of the angry spirits (*aramitama*) that visit the séance:

...[The medium] enters the realm of the departed (*reikyō*) without even himself noticing it, and through his mental concentration becomes able to feel spirits (*reikan wo eru*). This situation is imperceptible to others, so we can think of it as being similar to what people call artistic inspiration (*geijutsuka no insupirēshon*).24

Led by Professor Kimura’s entrancing flute, his assistant Kawasaki, a young man who had lost his sight at age eighteen, channels the voices of a series of unidentified spirits. To the surprise of the attendants, Kawasaki’s visage pales and beads of sweat form on his forehead, his feeble voice breaking into a choir of deep, masculine voices. The medium proceeds to chant in classical Japanese an excoriating attack on postwar society.

The spirits Kawasaki channels rail against a peace that subjects Japan to colonialism, and a postwar humanism whose false virtuosity hides the greed behind a consumption-driven society that pollutes and violates the sanctity of the land. The choir concludes with the famous rhetorical question, “Why did His Majesty become human (Kakaru hini/nadote sumerogi wa, hito to naritamaishi).”

Through this question, Mishima explicitly links the conditions of Japan’s postwar decay to the humanization of a formerly divine Emperor (sumerogi)—a reference to Hirohito’s radio address in the spring of 1946, where he renounced the divinity of his position. The spirits in Voices are clearly angry, but the séance members are not sure about the reasons why, nor who these spirits are—ancient or new ghosts. Professor Kimura conjures them once again, and asks them to tell him their story.

The spirits speak of the unconditional love (koi) that led them to take action to defend the Emperor. “‘There is no such thing as unrequited love towards the Emperor.’ So we believed in our dreams...” The spirits communicate two visions of the magnanimous ruler. In the first, the Emperor appears on his white horse early on a winter morning, and accepts the officers’ request of a government by his own hand. In the second, the Emperor rejects it, but acknowledges their bravery, and allows them an honorable death by permitting their ritual suicide by disembowelment, or seppuku. For

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26 Mishima Yukio, “Eirei no koe”: 481.
the spirits, there were only two imaginable courses of action, and yet the Emperor not
siding with them reduces what was an act of love into a mere rebellion.

As the séance begins to wrap up, Professor Kimura swoons and faints, waking
up almost immediately. He claims that he has had a vision of spirits hovering over the
sea, wearing aviator clothes stained with blood. Professor Kimura proceeds to conjure
this second group of spirits that the participants promptly identify as the ghosts of
kamikaze pilots. The spirits speak of their loyal dedication when at the end of the war
they were asked to give their lives by manning Zero airplanes on suicide missions in the
Pacific. In such desperate times the pilots became the mythical “wind of the gods
(kamikaze)” that would save the archipelago. The spirits claim that in modern times it
was only twice that this wind had come: during the officer’s February 26 uprising, and
at the end of the War. And yet, after their deaths, as Japan approached defeat, the wind
of the gods would not blow again, and the Emperor, to whom these actions had been
dedicated, would renounce his divinity.

Mishima is interested in the Emperor’s two acts of betrayal. The betrayal is not
the fact that the Emperor acceded to declaring himself human per se. It is that his actions
failed his position. “…In the history of the reign of Shōwa, only twice did His Majesty
have to be a god… Twice he failed. On the two occasions in which he most needed to
have been a god, he became human.” 27 The novella closes with a long harangue, which the spirits communicate through Kawasaki’s possessed body. After the spirits leave, Kawasaki collapses; his contorted gray face looks changed. The medium dies, but in death, he has been transformed.

For Mishima, the call to action derives from an outside, absolute entity, which is channeled by the individual in an act of mediumship. The novella portrays various such acts of mediumship, fulfilled and unfulfilled. For the spirits, the Emperor’s failure was the inability to both channel the ancestral spirits and understand the gravity of the actions his subjects were undertaking. The actions carried out by the soldiers in life sought a clearing of these channels as a renewal of the kokutai (national polity). Whether the action is successful or not is beside the point. Mishima’s theory of action posits the act of mediumship—the channeling of the Absolute—and not its results, as the most important aspect of politics.

*Voices of Heroic Spirits* was to that point Mishima’s most explicitly political work, and one of the rare instances in the latter half of the 1960s of a critique of the sitting emperor.28 It is, by all accounts, a bizarre text that seems to have been exclusively written

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28 Throughout the early postwar period, artists and intellectuals leveled excoriating attacks towards Hirohito in the general press, in particular relating to the problem of wartime responsibility. The mood in the wake of the Anpo Treaty, however, changed dramatically together with the sharp rise in right-wing terrorist attacks. The publication in the January 1961 issue of *Chūō Kōron* (The Central Review) of Fukasawa Shichirō’s satire *Fūryū Mutan* incensed the extreme right. The private residence of its publisher, Nakajima Hōji, was attacked by a seventeen year-old right-wing terrorist. In the attack, his wife was seriously wounded and their housekeeper was stabbed to death. In the aftermath of the incident, the publishing house proceeded to
as a vessel for such critique, and became the first of a series of public interventions by Mishima where he indicted the image of the emperor as part of a general critique of Japan’s postwar condition. The text also played an important role in the novelist’s self-fashioning. Mishima published the novel the same year that his paramilitary group, the Shield Society, became active, under the auspices of the Ground Self-Defense Forces. With their garish outfits, oversized caps and visors inspired by prewar Japanese Army officer uniforms, Mishima’s Shield Society deliberately cultivated a seemingly harmless—if antagonistic—1930s nostalgia. It is as if Mishima himself was attempting an act of mediumship, seeking to embody the ghost of the young officers and voice their belief in the need for violent yonaoshi, the improvement of the world through the return of the Emperor.

The image of the emperor that Mishima invoked in the Patriotism cycle was, however, not that of the present, sitting emperor. Rather, Mishima refers to the emperor as embodiment of the Absolute, what he calls the “Emperor as a cultural concept (bunka gainen toshiten no tennō).” In his essay “The Defense of Culture” (Bunka Bōeiron, 1967), Mishima explains Japan’s cultural specificity in terms of the imperial system, where the Emperor gives cohesion to the nation. The Emperor is a guarantor of beauty, but this

aesthetic function also serves an important political purpose: he is the keeper of the refined courtly traditions of Kyoto, or *miyabi*, upon which national culture has been built. The Emperor as a cultural concept embodies the duality of Japan, as “chrysanthemum and sword.” The postwar political system, which has rendered the Emperor into a mere symbol, and the threat of a Marxist revolution, endangered this figure, and could potentially render Japan into a castrated society, a rich enclave in the Far East without any sense of purpose. Japan must recuperate the Emperor, whose political import is predicated on this aesthetic function.29

In a scathing essay titled “Turn Tōdai Into a Zoo” (1967), Mishima makes an explicit link between the student crisis, and what he perceives as Japan’s state of political castration. For him, the postwar malaise made evident by the student movement is occasioned by the lack of a source of confrontation that can bring Japanese people closer to death, and thus find a space for the fulfillment of their humanity:

> It’s just as Freud came to see as he was in his deathbed — people have this thing called a death drive... These young people believe that glory means dying in the revolution’s barricades for the future... Japan doesn’t give these young people anything that could satisfy their death drive. And it isn’t just the young. It doesn’t give that to its citizens either. Humans won’t die for a red roof in a piece of green turf, for “my home”! People won’t die for things that can be seen. People are more spiritual than that.30

Mishima claimed he understood what led the students to action. It was the universal human impulse towards self-destruction—an impulse that the now democratic Japan failed to satiate. He saw in the revolutionary politics of the students something akin to his own view of martyrdom as a mode of political participation: action is always in relation to the Beyond; humanity is fulfilled on the eve of death. Of course, his view completely disregarded the functionalist approach to gewalt espoused by the students.31

Ultimately, Mishima and the students diverged not only in their ideology, but also in terms of the temporality of action each of their programs proposed. Advocating rupture from the status quo, the students articulated their theory of action in terms of the futurity of revolutionary politics. Counter to this, Mishima’s theory of action is retrograde—this is, the motion he identifies is backwards, towards an idealized, fictive past that must be recuperated.

31 Mishima was invited to debate the Zenkyōtō in May of 1969. Late in the debate, Mishima famously exclaimed, “If only you would say the word ‘Emperor,’ I would be glad to give you a hand! (Tennō toiu hitogoto wo ittekureréba, yorokonde te wo tsunaide ageru noni.)” Mishima Yukio and Tōdai Zenkyōtō, Bi to kyōdōtai to Tōdai Tōsō (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunkō, 2006): 111.
Section 3
Chapter 4: A Tōhoku To Return To

A haggard, kimono-clad figure materializes from behind the rice plants: backlit by the sun, the arms curve, elbows turned outwards, bending slightly like the tillers under the weight of the heavy grain (Figure 1). Long hair covers his face, and a single eye stares back at the viewer. The one-eyed creature merges with the plants: an apparition that in taking possession of the fields becomes an element of the landscape. The figure is a *kamaitachi* (sickle weasel), one of the invisible beings that haunt Japan’s countryside. Kamaitachi appear and vanish like a whirlwind: the only visible traces left by their visit are the bloody wounds that appear on the skin of those having been touched by them.

This photograph appeared in Hosoe Eikoh’s photo-album *Kamaitachi* (The Sickle Weasel, 1969). The album documents the landscape of Northeastern Japan, the region known in Japanese as Tōhoku. The album format ensures the requisite visual contiguity that creates the sense of unity of place and time that produces landscape. Yet its components are dissimilar and varied, having been obtained in a prolonged photo shoot that extended from 1965 to 1968. For Hosoe, this project capped off his decade-long collaboration with the butoh dancer Hijikata Tatsumi, who is the strange protagonist of the album. The project earned him widespread recognition, and cemented his reputation
as an avant-garde photographer; the unusual nature of the album, which used a performer in order to stage landscape, set him apart from his contemporaries. For Hijikata, the album became a milestone that inaugurated what some have retrospectively, and problematically, described as a “return to Tōhoku (Tōhoku kaiki)” — a return to the nativist aesthetics that ostensibly became visible in his subsequent works of the 1970s.¹

Yet, despite the central place of Kamaitachi in the career trajectories of both Hosoe Eikoh and Hijikata Tatsumi, the album has not been sufficiently discussed in either the larger narratives of postwar Japanese photography or in the history of butoh dance. In the case of Hijikata, in particular, the photo album is considered only in terms of a biographical narrative of the dancer’s stylistic maturation.² Likewise, Hosoe’s observation that this was Tōhoku “as [he] remembered it,” also tends to be used to support a strictly biographical interpretation of the work. Such accounts reify Kamaitachi’s portrayal of Japan’s northeast as coextensive with reality, even as critics and

¹ The critic most closely associated with this formulation is Gōda Nario. Hijikata himself recycled this idea, both through his public presentation, discursive practice, and creative work until his death 1986. The historian William Marotti has discussed this type of discourse in terms of its cultural essentialism. Dance historian Kuniyoshi Kazuko, on the other hand, revisited the idea of a “Tōhoku kaiki” from the point of view of biography to advance a thesis regarding Hijikata’s relationship to community. Nario Goda, “On Ankoku Buto,” in Susan Klein, Ankoku Buto: The Premodern and Postmodern Influences in the Dance of Utter Darkness. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988; William Marotti, “Butō no mondaisei to honshitsushugi no wana” (The problematics of Butoh and the essentialist trap), Shiataa Aatsu vol. 8 (May 1997): 88-96; Kuniyoshi Kazuko. “‘Hijikata Tatsumi to Nihonjin’ kara Tōhoku Kabuki made—Hijikata Tatsumi no uchinaru gaibu nitsuite,” Butai HYORON vol 1. (May 2004).
scholars acknowledge that the landscape it portrays is in fact a fiction. Scholars and critics have not engaged the full meaning of the landscape the album seeks to portray.

In this chapter, I focus on the status of landscape as fiction in Kamaitachi—a problem that in turn has important ramifications for the viewing practice that the album elicited in its critical reception. I approach landscape as a rhetorical mode—a genre whose relationship to “reality” must be deconstructed. In Kamaitachi, landscape is a fiction. Consequently, Kamaitachi must be reinterpreted in terms of the fiction of landscape and the nativist claims made in or through its photographs. Kamaitachi’s constitution of the peripheral landscape provides a screen on which profoundly ambivalent feelings towards Japan’s postwar trajectory are projected: in particular, anxieties regarding questions of national belonging, and the relationship of the individual and community.

In the album, Hosoe Eikoh refers to a corpus of rural and ethnographic photography in order to constitute Tōhoku as landscape. Some of the tropes he uses—

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3The dance historian Kuniyoshi Kazuko has discussed Hijikata’s biography and his construction of Tōhoku, positing his migration to Tokyo as an experience of exile — an interpretation that recenters community as a key aspect to the dancer’s work. Kuniyoshi’s discussion of Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese — Revolt of the Flesh, hinges on the exact meaning of the conjunction “and (to).” For her, the conjunction embodies an adversarial relationship, where Hijikata denounces postwar Japan, while longing to be reintegrated to it, a reading she extends to Hijikata’s later Tōhoku Kabuki project. For the cultural historian William Marotti, on the other hand, the particle is meant to be read as an “or”: in the light of his early work, Hijikata’s critique left little room for accommodation. The historian sees Revolt of the Flesh as a watershed moment: in later works, Hijikata seems to progressively incorporate essentialist elements into his performance and self-presentation, as part of his exploitation of early Shōwa nostalgia, falling squarely on the type of neo-nativist discourse that reified butō and deactivated its original critique of Japan’s postwar consumer society. Kazuko Kuniyoshi, “Le kabuki de Tôhoku et l’empereur”; William Marotti, “Butô no mondaisei to honshitsu shugi no wana.”
including the depiction of rice cultivation—are reminiscent of agrarian themes, seen previously in the works of photographers such as Kimura Ihei, who sought in Japan’s periphery the true essence of Japanese culture. However, Hosoe subverts the conventions of rural documentary, through the depiction of Hijikata as the immanent other. As a borderline ethnographic landscape, Tōhoku appears as a mystical place—magic and mad. This disruption of identity through its defamiliarization empties Tōhoku of the signifiers that equate it with the homeland. The “return to Tōhoku” is reduced to being simply the gesture of return.

Due to the heavy burden placed on these photographs in terms of the nativist claims made about Hijikata’s body in critical writings, it is important to interrogate the dancer’s trajectory prior to the album. In order to examine the meaning of Kamaitachi, it is necessary to demystify and resituate this “return to Tōhoku” as a continuation of Hijikata’s previous dance trajectory, rather than positing it as a distinct break. The dancer’s work was in conversation with the 1960s avant-garde art scene. As in the work of the Anti-Art crowd, the dancer sought to render the body into an objet, purposely re-eroticizing the body (or flesh, nikutai), and depriving it of the humanistic or liberal ideals with which modern dance had suffused it. His interest in “imitation” as a method in art, and his problematic conflation of criminality and male homosexuality, were strategies meant to provide a critique of what he called the “society of productivity (seisansei shakai)—the capital-driven economic and social order of postwar Japan—by calling
attention to the non-reproductive body’s aimless pleasures. Hijikata formulated *ankoku butō* as a dance at the margins of society. This concern with the periphery is extended to Tōhoku, whose landscape becomes the staged national periphery.

In its recreation of the periphery Hijikata’s earlier work had introduced an element of nostalgia. In the work that immediately precedes his “return to Tōhoku”, the dancer subverts the markers of nationalism and turns them into markers of ambivalence. This is achieved through nostalgia—which in turn is key to understanding the function of fiction in *Kamaitachi*. The album produces a landscape that does not return to the *heimat*. It stages nostalgia unto itself and in doing so, defamiliarizes belonging.

*Kamaitachi*

*Kamaitachi* was first exhibited in March 1968, under the title *Totetsu mo naku higekitekina kigeki* (“An exceedingly tragic comedy”). The photo-album was published in 1969 as a lavish cloth-bound volume, with a layout by the outstanding graphic designer Tanaka Ikkō (*Figure 2*). The large black and white cover reproduced an abstracted version of one of the final photographs in the series, a crouching figure meandering through a rice field. Unfolding large cobalt-blue pages reveals the black and

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4 Yokoo Tadanori designed the poster for the exhibit, which also contained information on the planned publication of the book *Kamaitachi no sho* (The Book of the Sickle Weasel) and a performance, in June by the dancer, *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese* (*Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin*).
white photographs contained only on the right side of the open book. There is no text, besides an introduction by the critic Takiguchi Shūzō, and a poem by Miyoshi Toyoichirō that is placed in the middle of the book.

*Kamaitachi* recreates Tōhoku in an episodic, non-linear manner, through black and white snapshots, portraits, and wide-angle panoramas that insert Hijikata’s performance into a landscape. However, the album’s recreation of Tōhoku is not based on an exact, realistic depiction of the region. Indeed, some of the pictures were not even taken in Tōhoku proper. Rather, Hosoe seeks to depict the periphery, Tōhoku, as “he remembered it.”

The photographs that open the series were taken in Tokyo, and show Hijikata meandering through backstreets and temples in the Sugamo area. Depicted in the images is an older Tokyo, of commoner townsman (*chōnin*) heritage: built on the lowlands at the limits of the Yamanote area. The district appears populated by old funerary monoliths and *jizō* statuettes, elderly women in white kitchen aprons and ancient fortune-tellers. Hijikata blends into the crowd—dressed up in a woman’s light kimono (but wearing it as a man), he charges like a bull in the streets (*Figure 3*). He slouches on a chair, on a veranda, his limp right hand holding an *uchiwa* flat fan; his face droops in a moment of exhaustion; a straw hat rests on the floor (*Figure 4*).

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5 The album’s photographs meander through a variety of locales. *Kamaitachi* was mainly shot in Tashiro Village in Akita Prefecture, in Japan’s northeast. However, there are a number of photographs taken in Tokyo and other locations as well.

In their collaboration, Hosoe and Hijikata propose the photograph as a staging device. The performer and the photographer enhance each other’s work. The non-naturalistic element of the photographs is accentuated by Hijikata’s highly expressive performance, his transformation into Kamaitachi’s devilish protagonist. Hosoe, on the other hand, provides the perfect timing and mise-en-scène for the character to develop: the album’s layout creates a sense of rhythm, where particular scenes act as punctuation marks for the narrative. A snapshot shows the long-haired dancer in long underwear leading a frightened, beautiful young woman in a camisole into the 650 Dance Experience Society’s studio (Figure 5). Immediately next to it, is a photograph showing a scene lit by a single spotlight: Hijikata sits on the floor, with his back towards the viewer, left arm serving as lever and right arm and head covering the woman’s crotch. The bare-chested woman lifts her right arm and covers her eyes, her face painted white, as her mouth opens into a sign of erotic pleasure, if not climax. The remarkable sense of staging present in the photographs is also seen in the snapshot of Hijikata running across a courtyard, in front of an apartment building, possibly a prewar public housing complex (Figure 6). The photograph captures his face, painted-white, facing upwards, holding a scream. Behind his back, the dancer holds a kyokujitsuki flag, the expansionist

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7 In the prologue to the album, Takiguchi Shūzō comments on Hosoe’s transformation of the camera obscura into a theater.
8 Hijikata’s hair length provides an interesting way of tracking the moment in which the photographs were taken. The dancer started growing out his hair in the mid 1960s. Thus, the photographs at Asbestos Studio were taken at a later date than the first pictures in the Akita sequence, proving that the criterion used for selection of images for the sequences was not chronological.
prewar emblem of the Imperial Army, in which the Sun-goddess Amaterasu’s red sunrays spread across a field of white.

Unlike the crammed spaces of Tokyo’s shitamachi backstreets that Hosoe depicts in the early section of the book, the images of Akita’s landscape strike the viewer for their expansiveness (Figure 7). The section starts with the renowned photograph of Hijikata, crouched on top of a fence, his head tilted slightly backwards. The dancer appears at a three-fourths angle, and his gaze, trailing off the lower right corner of the frame, interrupts the strong upward diagonals created by the wooden grid. The photograph is sheer contrast; the border appears “burnt,” the sky is dark and foreboding.

One of the means by which Hosoe accomplishes this sensation of expansiveness, is the isolation of the figure through his use of limited lighting and shadows. An extremely striking example of this is a pair of portraits, placed side by side on a spread (Figure 8). On the left, Hijikata is captured frontally. He holds a large wooden box. He tiptoes towards the viewer, his body folded on top of the lid. On the right, Hijikata appears in profile, sitting on his knees on a tatami floor. He looks downwards, and covers his mouth while laughing uncontrollably. The photograph on the right shows the dancer hiding in the large, heavy shelving of a country home. Packed into the second shelf, next to a wooden box and a kettle, he pulls at his face with both hands (Figure 9). In these two photographs, Hijikata is isolated from his surroundings. The darkness that
frames the scene is coterminous with the borders of the page, creating a cavernous, nocturnal effect.

Hosoe uses darkness to enable Hijikata’s transformations, creating a sense of cinematic continuity. Sometimes this is restricted to a single image. A montage of three photographs presents Hijikata in different poses (Figure 10). On the left, he covers his face with both hands; he stares straight at the viewer, at the center; on the right, a smaller figure, he covers his face with one hand. The darkness here not only sutures the different images that compose the montage: it also allows for the illusion of movement—an illusion that expands into the flow of the book. Darkness enhances the sense of connection and contiguity present in certain images, such as the famous photograph that presents the dancer and a middle-aged woman flanking a small, older woman in a kimono (Figure 11). The image, shot at an angle, evokes the action of inhaling and exhaling. The effect of lighting is such that it creates the sense of an actual physical connection, an injection of pneuma, transmitted from body to body.

*Kamaitachi* draws themes from ethnographic and documentary photography. This can be seen, for example, in its appropriation of the image of festivals and the popular religiosity of the Northeast, and its connection to village community life. A sequence of photographs shows Hijikata being carried around on an improvised mikoshi, a portable shrine (Figure 12). Held by villagers, the dancer sits on top, wearing his light kimono, straw hat cocked over one eye. Hijikata’s devil seems to have a strong affinity
for the women that live in the periphery: the older bridesmaid; the elderly lady who tells stories; a young girl with whom the kamaitachi cavorts (Figure 13).

In Kamaitachi, Hijikata navigates interior and exterior spaces, suturing seamlessly a cinematic landscape. This is most evident in the final scenes of the album. The snapshots present the dancer alternatively in panoramic views of the rice fields, and then in the interior of houses. He runs and jumps, with his kimono open, across a recently harvested paddy (Figure 14). Another one shows mirror images of him, seen from behind, sitting with his kimono lifted, defecating among the rice plants before they are tilled (Figure 15); or running through the rice-field, with a crying baby in his arms (Figure 16). From in between the tillers, the kamaitachi emerges as a haggard figure, with his long hair covering his face (Figure 17). Juxtaposed to these photographs, however, are other images of the dancer hiding in the darkness of the old minka houses, lurking within the deep oshiire closets and shady corners of everyday rural life. Kamaitachi closes with another such juxtaposition — the first print shows an outdoor scene, almost a negative print, of a backlit figure wearing a kappogi jacket over a kimono, crouching and roaming through the rice fields (Figure 18). The final scene, in the middle of the nocturnal dark, shows him tucked inside a shed.

The album defies conventional, romantic notions of landscape as the faithful depiction of geography and its underlying truth. Landscape in Kamaitachi is constructed visually through a variety of strategies, including the physical contiguity of the
photographs—and is enhanced through the tactile experience of unfolding large format pages. Hijikata’s participation as the protagonist provides the character and atmosphere that builds the album’s loose sense of narration out of episodic fragments. Hosoe develops landscape as an anti-mimetic depiction of Tōhoku; piecing this image together out of a variety of locales, defying not only the location of the truth in landscape, but the documentary convention of unity of place and time on which this claim is based. In this sense, while Kamaitachi builds on the motifs of idyllic agrarian life present in previous portrayals of Tōhoku, it appropriates the image in order to create something else: the periphery.

**Tōhoku as the periphery**

What is the status of Tōhoku in Kamaitachi? The album relies on agrarian tropes in order to re-create the periphery, while the anti-mimetic impulse present in the work points to a different type of “use” of these tropes. Tōhoku appears as a site of ambiguity, a deceptively transparent landscape that in fact serves to contain and convey contradictory feelings towards Japan’s past.

In its fictional reconstruction of the Northeastern landscape, Kamaitachi taps into a large corpus of photographic depictions of rural life. Perhaps the paradigmatic example of rural photography in the postwar period is photojournalist Kimura Ihei’s
portrayal of Akita Prefecture’s countryside (*Figure 19*). Kimura’s foray into the Northeast fixated on the classical tropes of rural village life, presenting Akita as an idealized *locus amoenus*. In order to do so, Kimura recycled the pictorialist imagination of the bucolic landscape of the frontier, this time using Cartier-Bresson’s rhetoric of the “decisive moment” to frame its essence. In *Akita*, Kimura was particularly interested in the cultivation of rice, known in Japanese as *inasaku*, a central figure in agrarianist discourse. Agrarianism, which elevated rural life as essential to Japanese identity, played an important role in prewar imperial ideology.

It is important to note that agrarianism is in itself a contradictory discourse that was invoked to justify disparate political positions throughout the prewar period. *However, agrarian theories of social relations, and in particular the invocation of “the village” as a social type, became a cornerstone of the prewar political theology. After the war, agrarianism re-emerged as part of the debate on national identity, this time as a discourse of the left. The notion of the autonomous development, continuity and homogeneity of the Japanese people since prehistoric times informed a discourse of*

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9 Meiji ideology posited life in the countryside as a romantic counterpart to life in the city. The crammed spaces of urban life were seen as unsanitary, leading to physical, social and cultural degeneracy. Therefore, the mass migration of rural population into the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced great anxiety in the Government élite. Part of this anxiety derived from the belief that rural communities had managed to preserve true Japanese-ness, marked by strong community affiliations that were being eroded by Japan’s modernization process. This idealization of rural community gets transposed in turn onto theorizations of the national polity— theories that gain prominence during the *rise of fascism*. Among the invented traditions of the modern imperial household, was an actual ritual for the cultivation of rice: the time of the king was superposed to seasonality. Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
“ethnic independence (minzoku no dokuritsu),” opposed to U.S. imperialism. Reliant on a developmental view of history (hattem-ron), agrarianism stressed the importance of the arrival of inasaku in the 7th Century with continental settlers, the Yayoi people, who slowly took over the central part of the archipelago, and assimilated the already established Jōmon culture. Rice cultivation was used as a cipher for the stability and unity of the nation since time immemorial, operating much in the same way that it had during the rise of fascism in justifying the cult of the “Yamato race.”

Another staple image of rural Japan focuses on the dark interiors of minka houses, prominently displayed in Kamaitachi. Such images—which in Kimura’s work tend to feature the exposed bodies of women as signifiers of domesticity and regionalism—should also be interpreted in relation to the currency that agrarianism had in discussions of architecture. Agrarianism had an impact in architectural discussions of modernity and tradition: for example, architect Tange Kenzō’s work was informed by

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11 There is a perverse irony to the postwar discourse of Japan’s “unique” rice-cultivating culture. In the prewar period, inasaku would be occasionally invoked to promote Japan’s pan-Asian vocation. Rice was seen as proof of common cultural heritage with Asia—a heritage that warranted Japanese tutelage of the continent in the face of Euroamerican imperialism. In the postwar period, however, inasaku was invoked as proof of the cultural homogeneity of the Japanese people and the timelessness of the Japanese polity. The discourse was actively deployed to justify the codification of Japanese racial exceptionalism in the law, informing a highly restrictive notion of citizenship that to this day disenfranchises the hundreds of thousands of so-called ethnic Koreans and Chinese, descendants of formerly colonial subjects who currently reside in Japan.
12 Regarding the use of the exposed body of women in representations of the provinces in modern Japanese painting, the so-called “women of the provinces (chihō no onna),” see Ikeda Shinobu, Nihon kaiga no joseizō—jendā bijutsushi no shiten kara (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998).
agrarianist theories of national character and identity. While Tange tended to privilege imperial sites as a reference for an appropriately Japanese modernism, critics on the left turned to the traditional rural minka house, as a possible typology for developing a truly Japanese modernist form, unconsciously replicating the claims of prewar agrarian discourse.

In its profound ambiguity, agrarianism itself provides the possibility of a second reading at its very sources. The so-called “tradition debate (dentō ronsō)” in architecture coincides with the resurgence of interest in the work of Yanagita Kunio, the folklorist who is credited with starting the field of Japanese ethnology in the early 20th Century. In his early career as an officer with the Agriculture Ministry, Yanagita travelled throughout rural Japan—in particular the Northeast—where he collected stories that he published with his ethnographic commentary. In accordance with Meiji ideology, Yanagita’s quest for an authentic Japan led him to the periphery, where he saw a modernity that had not yet fully taken control of the land. Yet his view of the periphery

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13 Tange sparked an important debate surrounding the question of the relationship of traditional forms to architectural modernism in the mid 1950s. His interest in the question of tradition led to the eventual publication of studies on the architecture of the Ise complex, the ancestral shrine of the imperial household, and the detached palace of Katsura Rikyū, near the former imperial capital of Kyoto. Tange picked on the artist and ethnographer Okamoto Tarō’s theory of Japanese culture (nihon bunkaron), which saw respectively in the Jōmon and Yayoi cultures, the Dyonisian and Apollinian elements present in contemporary Japanese society. While Tange championed the Jōmon element as the more authentic tradition on which he wanted to base his practice, he actually turned to imperial sites for inspiration, at a time that most committed leftist cultural figures were highly critical of the emperor system (tennōsei). Kenzo Tange, “Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture” in Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

14 Yanagita died in 1962, as major collections of his work started reappearing in the marketplace.
as a true-image of Japan is troubled by the vicissitudes of regional variation and the presence of an invisible other: the indigenous Ainu population, marked as past, and yet still present in the customs and place-names that he so methodically recorded and dissected.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Kamaitachi} exceeds the ideological function of the bucolic rural landscape, in its exploitation of Hijikata as a figure of liminality. This is achieved through explicit reference to the contiguity of rural photography with the exotic gaze of ethnographic documentary. For instance, the high-contrast, backlit image of a haggard Hijikata, prowling through the rice-fields, recalls an early photograph, from the days of the development of Japan’s northern frontiers.\textsuperscript{16} Among the photographs included in a dossier on the nineteenth-century photographer Tamoto Kenzō, one image strikingly resembles the backlit photograph of Hijikata: it is a blurry photograph of an Ainu fisherman gathering shellfish by the sea (Figure 20).

Indeed, Hijikata’s attire, appearance, and demeanor increasingly refer to the image of the Ainu, the otherness of their language, the phenotype, attire and customs operating as a reminder of a vanishing past that is altogether present. The dancer’s interest in the Meiji period, Tōhoku, and the Ainu people seems to have existed for a considerable time in his work. His reference to commoner or \textit{shominteki} elements in his


\textsuperscript{16} These rough records of Japan’s territorial consolidation, in the early Meiji period became the object of renewed attention in the late 1960s, as Japan approached the centennial of the Meiji Restoration.
1960s performances should be seen in relation to such interest, which functioned as part of his rhetoric of marginality. Hijikata refers to the image of late Meiji period in relation to the Northern Ainu people in a short essay titled “Silent Person” he published as program notes for a performance in 1958:

I like Meiji people. If you pay attention you realize that Professor Kindaichi is over 80. [When I met him] I thought, “Some people really are quiet.” Really quiet, that’s how it is... He showed me a lot of photos and picture books of the Ainu people. Whenever he talks about the Ainu, the Professor becomes passionate and weeps quietly from beginning to end. He weeps, because he likes them. I was touched. When I left his house and looked back from the slope, the Kindaichi residence was clouded by the rain.17

It is striking that already at this early point in time, Hijikata expresses an interest in “Meiji people”—people that lived through the consolidation and growth of the Modern Japanese state. The melancholy figure delineated is a scholar, whose silent demeanor serves as a basis for Hijikata’s dance. The figure is now a remnant from the past, a liminal figure: a ghost. In fact, the name Kindaichi resonates in light of Hijikata’s later work, because of its connection to Japan’s Northeast. One of Japan’s first ethno-linguists, Kindaichi Keisuke carried out essential research on the language of the Ainu people. Hijikata portrays Kindaichi as a quintessential Meiji scholar, but also, a figure that lives in the border between national community and the Other. The relationship

17 Hijikata’s performance was part of a modern dance show organized by Yoneyama Mamako, where he was in charge of creating a dance based on the concept of stillness (sei, which also denotes “silence”). Hijikata Tatsumi, “Shizukana hito,” Hijikata Tatsumi Zenshu, Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2005): 186.
delineated here is complex: Kindaichi is part of the colonial machinery that takes control of the Northeast; he is also one of the first to understand the Other.

In the album, the contiguity of ethnographic and rural photography troubles the identity claims of agrarianism. While agrarianism seeks to deploy the rural as a means to stabilize national identity, the rural as the ethnographic inevitably destabilizes it. In terms of photographic genres of rural photography and ethnographic photography, the underlying visuality is problematically exoticized, along with a concomitant denial of the coexisting colonial other. In Kamaitachi, the artists resorts to this rhetoric as part of a strategy that seeks to position the periphery as primitive, and as a possible source or place of origin, but one that simultaneously defamiliarizes national community.

The previously quoted paragraph once again shows Hijikata’s interest in landscape, closing with a haunting description of the house as it fades into the past. The nostalgic investment in a fictive landscape resonates with the concerns of the photographer and the dancer in Kamaitachi. In a 1969 interview—published in the same issue of Kikan Shashin Eizō that carried the dossier on Tamoto Kenzō’s photographs of Hokkaidō—Hosoe explicitly stated his interest in portraying Tōhoku in terms of affective ambiguity and ambivalence:

I love Hijikata Tatsumi; I like how he smells of the earth: I feel attracted to Tōhoku-like things. During the war I was evacuated to Tōhoku; it was dark and damp, and I hated it… Hijikata left for Tokyo after having been born and raised in Tōhoku for twenty years. He himself wasn’t in love with Tōhoku; on the contrary, he was rebelling against it.
In any case, it had been twenty-five years since I returned to Tokyo after the evacuation. My history since then, my life has been completely unrelated to Tōhoku. But I leave on a trip, almost by chance, and this world from twenty-five years ago is still there. There is no stranger country than this. And what includes this place is Japan, and therefore I cannot escape from it. Because I am Japanese...

In Kamaitachi, I included this hatred when I photographed Tōhoku (*nikushimi wo komete Tōhoku wo totta*). However within it there is also the image of an elderly mother, and I could never hate that.18

Hosoe’s words underline the ambiguous feelings that Tōhoku as landscape elicits, and their connection to lived experience. In Kamaitachi, Tōhoku appears as a landscape of ambivalence: bound to a historical trajectory marked by destruction and displacement, reconstruction and the erasure of the physical traces of memory. At the same time, Hosoe’s words suggest that at the base of this ambiguity lies the question of belonging. The photo album creates a fictive landscape (“Tōhoku”), in order to explore the relationship of center and periphery, and through it, national community and individual. The polyvalence of landscape as a genre allows the project to preserve the affective and political ambiguity that these concepts elicit in the author, expressed in the tension between intense disaffection (hatred, *nikushimi*) and nostalgic longing.

*Kamaitachi* produces this inner tension between identity and alterity in affective terms, introducing an immanent element that haunts and resignifies community. The ambiguity of Hosoe’s images and their connection to the image of the rural as

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premodern is troubling, when contemplated in relation to the status of agrarianism and the bucolic within Japan’s modern ideology. However, Kamaitachi’s visualization of the invisible Other and its introduction of Hijikata as a figure of liminality render such exploration of national community into a problem: “an exceedingly tragic comedy.” This problematization of national community resonates with Hijikata’s accompanying performance for the exhibition: *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese—Revolt of the Flesh* (1968).

Hijikata performed *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese—Revolt of the Flesh* in June of 1968 (*Figure 21*). In the performance, Hijikata created a mad one-man revue where he pulled together choreographic and performance elements he had used throughout the decade. In *Revolt of the Flesh*, Hijikata stages an absurdist approach to the question of belonging in community. Critically, the performance also provides hints at the theory of landscape at work in Kamaitachi.

Hijikata arrived at the auditorium in a procession led by two men carrying barber poles on their backs (a wink to *Rose-colored dance*, where barber poles were also present). Six men carry the dancer on a canopied *mikoshi* portable shrine (*Figure 22*). Another, smaller *mikoshi* is carried in—a crib holding a live piglet inside, over which a

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19 The subtitle “Revolt of the Flesh” seems to have been attributed after the performance was programmed. The subtitle might be explained by the fact that the performance took place shortly after the May events in France, which resonated with the reactivation of the Zengakuren movement in Japan. Unfortunately, the extant 16 mm film by Ouchida Kaoru only records part of the performance, and there is no certainty as to the original musical accompaniment.
bell-shaped canopy is suspended. As the shrines reach the stage, the bearded dancer stands up, stiffly rotating as he ceremoniously greets the audience. His long hair is taken in a bun, and he wears a long-sleeved woman’s kimono back to front.

On the stage, the dancer lets down his hair and undoes the obi belt of the kimono, revealing his emaciated body. Now the dancer wears only a thong to which a large, erect golden penis is attached (Figure 23). He raises his arms above his head, holding his elbows with the opposite hands, expanding his chest and hollowing his tense body and then letting it fall. He undulates his hips and curves his spine; he swings his arms and flexes his knees, and then recovers the previous tense pose, turning on his side, like a flamenco dancer. Hijikata falls on the floor, pushes himself up and gyrates on his head. He then rubs himself against the large metal plates that, together with a dead hen are suspended with ropes from the ceiling.

In the following scene Hijikata appears in a glossy Spanish dress, with a long train and wearing black rubber gloves to his elbows. He looks flirtatiously at the audience, while enticingly opening the long dress’s slit and exhibiting his hirsute legs. He detaches the train of the dress and uses it as a bullfighting cape, then shakes it wildly over his head from side to side. He then opens himself up in an arabesque en pointe, shakes down his body and squats. The dancer strips down to a simple skirt with a corset, his hair held in two pigtails. He struts onstage, turns halfway. His movements are
stiff: arms bent at the elbow, his fingers point up. He gives the audience a half-crazed stare.

Hijikata then transforms into a small girl. He wears the kimono backwards, shortened above the knee, exposing his white knee-length socks. He jumps and plays on stage, repeatedly squatting, violently shaking and shoving the metal plates. He then strips down to a loincloth. Christ-like, his arms and legs are tied to cables, and he is lifted and suspended over the audience. He is brought back down to the stage, and then climbs back onto the portable shrine, where he bows while holding a dead fish in his mouth. The audience claps, and bouquets are thrown at him.

The title of the piece is *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese*, yet the dancer performs alone. He is the “Hijikata Tatsumi” of the title, but then who are “the Japanese”? Set up as a revue piece, the action is kept mainly downstage, close to the proscenium. Throughout the performance Hijikata appeals to the audience. He gestures towards it: flirts and pleads with it, and confronts it. While the show itself centers on Hijikata (as a solo performer), the relationship announced in the title gets played out in his rapport with the audience: the Japanese. This is a relationship that is presented as seductive, confrontational, simultaneously comical and alienating.

Through *Revolt of the Flesh*, the dancer asks the viewers to regard his work and Hosoe’s portrayal of Tōhoku as part of a continuous project. This provides the key to understanding the significance of Tōhoku as a fictive site. Hijikata and Hosoe invoke
Tōhoku as a wayward landscape upon which concerns about community and individual are foregrounded through the destabilization of center and periphery, and the identities claimed through such positionalities. The use of nativist tropes in order to achieve this effect is indeed problematic, but that does not mean that the landscape portrayed folds into a discourse of origins. On the contrary: this landscape they return to is non-referential, fictive, and hence it betrays and destabilizes the expectation of landscape as a return to the homeland.

**Ankoku Butoh and the Critique of the Society of Consumption**

Up until his collaboration with Hosoe Eikoh in *Kamaitachi*, Hijikata proposed “imitation” as a method, and marginality invoked through the image of peripheral spaces and sexualities as a rhetoric that enabled a critique of Japan’s postwar society of consumption. The markers of nostalgia in his performances are particularly evoked in *Kamaitachi*’s depiction of the rural periphery. In Hijikata’s 1960s performances, the affect of nostalgia appears as a cipher for return, but—as was later the case of his collaboration with Hosoe—such return is fictive, and subverts the site where it supposedly returns to: the nation. Nostalgia is a metonymic trope: traditionally it operates through
association. But the way that it is invoked in Hijikata’s performances speaks to an anti-mimetic, non-referential use of nostalgia. Such nostalgia is related to the album, and its construction of landscape, in the way that Kamaitachi seeks to create a narrative of return, positing Tōhoku as a magical landscape, a space of madness that nevertheless does not “return” to an actual place. Instead, the album leads to the lingering affect of nostalgia itself as its ultimate objective.

The matrix for Hijikata’s butoh includes a wide variety of dance genres as well as Tokyo’s Postwar experimental arts scene. Hijikata befriended core members of the Yomiuri Indépendent generation, and witnessed the explosive proliferation in Japan of actions in art. The dancer was exposed to the happenings, actions, and events

20 “Nostalgia is a sadness without and object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience. Rather, it remains behind and before that experience. Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological, the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack. Hostile to history and its invisible origins, and an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality. This point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire… nostalgia is the desire for desire.” Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1984): 23.

21 Hijikata’s early dance education and basic knowledge of movement and choreography exposed him to a wide variety of dance genres, particularly a range of modern and expressionist dance styles, as well as jazz dance and the revue. Hijikata began dancing relatively late in life, initially taking modern dance lessons with Masumura Kyoko in Akita City when he was 18. Masumura was a student of Eguchi Takaya, one of the pioneers of modern dance in Japan. In the 1930s, Eguchi visited Germany in order to learn Neue Tanz, a form of expressionist modern dance developed by Mary Wigman, whose method emphasized values such as inner emotion, expressivity, rhythm, and space as essential elements of dance. Expressionist dance also highlighted the use of text and other non-dance materials as part of a rejection of pure balletic form. Mary Wigman, The Language of Dance (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1966).

22 Hijikata visited Tokyo for extended periods at the end of the 1940s, relocating permanently to the capital in 1952. As well as meeting dancers, such as Ohno Kazuo, who would later become his life-long collaborator and co-founder of butoh, Hijikata quickly developed contacts with artists and writers who introduced him to Tokyo’s burgeoning avant-garde milieu. By the mid-1950s, he had met young artists such as Kawara On,
organized by the Gutai Arts Association, the Experimental Workshop, the VAN Experimental Film Laboratory, the proto-Fluxus Group Ongaku, among many other groups that were redefining the parameters of artistic intervention. Hijikata took from these visual artists a committed engagement with the everyday: their attraction to the detritus of everyday life, translated in dance-language in terms of stylistic elements and subject matter. He also learned from such artists the structure (or lack thereof) of the event as a medium, and the importance of intermedia, the fusing of all verity of media into a hybrid presentation as a site for artistic experimentation. These concerns would finally cohere in the basic elements in the dance of utter darkness that he developed in the early 1960s. The final, crucial element in the development of Hijikata’s dance program was his interest in contemporary literature. The French author Jean Genet’s novels became an important point of reference for his work and public persona: Genet’s use of auto-fictionalization and interest in marginality, through the depiction of a pseudo-autobiographical convergence of criminality and homosexuality, appealed to the

Ikeda Tatsuo, and Shinohara Ushio (later a core member of the Neodada Organizers); the photographer Narahara Ikkō, a member of the VIVO group; and the critic Yoshida Yoshie. Inata Naomi, Hijikata Tatsumi: Zetsugo no shintai (Tokyo: Nihon Höšō Shuppankai, 2008).

Hijikata never explicitly discussed intermedia. The dancer was invited in 1969 to speak at a symposium organized on the subject by critics; however, he cancelled his participation after an unfortunate fire in which two of his disciples died. Motofuji Akiko, Hijikata Tatsumi to tomoni (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1990).
dancer. This convergence was functional to Hijikata’s critique of Japan’s society of productivity.

In order to be admitted into the All-Japan Dance Association in 1959, Hijikata prepared a fifteen-minute piece titled Kinjiki (Forbidden Colors) for the group’s annual Newcomers Concert. The title of the piece was taken from a novel written by Mishima Yukio, set in Tokyo’s homosexual demi-monde during the Occupation, and was loosely based on motifs taken from Jean Genet’s novel Our Lady of the Flowers (Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs 1944) and his autobiography The Thief’s Journal (Journal du voleur, 1949). Hijikata described the piece as “ankoku buyō,” a dance of darkness performed in a penumbral stage: only some spotlights were used to illuminate the foreground, while upstage, the background was backlit. Hijikata, wearing only dance trousers, with his head shaved and body painted with black pigment and olive oil, entered through the back holding a live white longhorn hen. Ohno Yoshito—Ohno Kazuo’s twenty-year-old son—stood seemingly panic-stricken near the proscenium, listening to Hijikata’s footsteps. Hijikata approached Ohno slowly, and gave him the hen, which the young dancer first held

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24 Hijikata’s early sense of identification with Genet is marked. Before taking up “Hijikata Tatsumi” in 1959, the dancer briefly used the stage name “Hijikata June (=Genet).” Many of his works from the early 1960s make explicit references to Genet’s novel world.

25 The dance historian Kuniyoshi Kazuko has remarked that this may be one of the earliest moments in which Hijikata referred to his performances as “ankoku buyō” or “dance of utter darkness.” Note that at this time, Hijikata still used the word “buyō” as opposed to the more archaic sounding “butō,” which he started using interchangeably around 1963, at the time of his performance of Anma (The Masseur). In the 1970s, he fully switches to the term butō. Kuniyoshi Kazuko, “Hijikata Tatsumi to ankoku butō—midasareta nikutai,” Hijikata Tatsumi no butō—nikutai no shururecarizuma, shintai no ontorojī, ed. Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Āto Sentā (Kawasaki: Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, 2003).
against his chest and then clasped between his thighs, under his crotch. The lights were dimmed further while Ohno fell to the ground and suffocated the hen with his body. Hijikata and Ohno were then seen wrestling on the floor, while a soundtrack of heavy breathing and groaning played in the background. Hijikata ran out in the darkness, while the recorded voice of a man screamed “Je t’aime.” The lights went back on, as Ohno calmly stood up and exited the stage.26

Considering the rigidly conservative organization to which the dancer was applying, the piece can only be understood as a deliberately planned provocation. First, in terms of its subject matter: Hijikata included a fairly explicit and violent depiction of homosexual sex, portrayed as an abusive liaison between an older man and a young boy, signified through the on-stage killing of a live animal.27 Second, the work broke down recognizable form and narrative, in favor of a happening-like structure that did not strictly follow the concrete music that accompanied the piece. Third, performance of the fifteen-minute piece took twice as long as the allotted time for. Hijikata was forced to

26 For this description, I follow the dance critic Inata Naomi’s reconstruction of the piece. Inata Naomi, Hijikata Tatsumi—Zetsugo no shintai.
27 The literature has tended to retain the expression nanshoku kankei, which translates roughly as a “sodomitic” or “pederastic” relationship. The question of translation in this case is vexed—“nanshoku” is an indigenous, pre-sexological term, denoting a hierarchical structure; its current connotations are on the one hand archaic, and also violent and discriminatory. The currently more commonly used term “dōsei” to denote same-sex relations was introduced with sexology as a translation for “homosexuality.” Hijikata appears as idealizing “pederastic” relations, and in a sense could be seen as engaging in a recuperative project of sorts. But the retention of the category in the critical literature has not reflected on the work that the term itself does, nor accounted for the reasons why it has retained it (beyond a perceived faithfulness to the original). For a more complete discussion of the terms nanshoku and dōsei see Gregory Pflugfelder, Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
quit the association, but the scandal and public rupture with the mainstream organization buttressed his reputation as an avant-garde dancer.28

Between 1959 and 1963, Hijikata periodically programmed events that brought together his work with other dancers and choreographers such as Ohno Kazuo, or were collaborations with artists in other disciplines as a tool for positioning his dance of utter darkness at the foremost of the avant-garde. The first recital, which took place within weeks of the dénouement of the Anpo struggle, in 1960, included the screening of an experimental film by the photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei; his 16-mm film “Hikōki (Airplane)” endlessly repeated jets taking off at a U.S. base. Although screened at a later date, Hijikata had also collaborated with Hosoe Eikoh in his experimental film “The Navel and the A-Bomb” (“Heso to genbaku,” 1960), which depicted a series of ritual-like militaristic drills, repeated by a group of naked children, led by the dancer at a beach. The film ended with a montage including raw footage of a mushroom cloud.29 The topical subject matter of these films demonstrates a concern with the major political issues raised by the anti-Anpo protests: in particular the problem of the military bases in

28 Kinjiki proved to be important in terms of the connections that the dancer made through this performance. Hijikata became acquainted with two literary figures who had a profound impact on the development of his career: the novelist Mishima Yukio and, through him, the critic and novelist Shibusawa Tatsuhiko. Mishima became a staunch supporter of Hijikata, visiting him in his studio in Meguro (the Asbestos Studio), and reviewing Kinjiki in the pages of the popular arts magazine Geijutsu Shinchō. Hijikata also met Hosoe (an acquaintance of Hijikata’s future wife, Motofuji Akiko) during the early performances of Kinjiki.
Japan, and the country’s position under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. In terms of their function within the economy of the Dance Experience recital, the pieces also provide a framework for the interpretation of Hijikata’s work. *Kinjiki* was as much about sexuality, as it was about the staging of an oppositional avant-garde that did not, however, return to the fold of an officially sanctioned politics.

At this time, Hijikata theorized his dance as a form of anti-systemic opposition. In his writings, the dancer used a highly sexualized rhetoric of abjection that conflated criminality, male homosexuality and the periphery. The essay “*Inner Material / Material*” (*Naka no sozai / Sozai*, 1960) is a prime example of the type of Genet-like auto-fictionalization and surrealist leanings that the dancer cultivated in these years. The essay explores the sources, method, and stakes of *ankoku butō*:

“You have to pull your stomach up high in order to turn your solar plexus into a terrorist.” That line is from a letter I sent to Ms. Elian Margaret, a woman with psychic powers who wrote a commentary last summer about my anal art (...) It is she who recommended that I write an essay on impotence and told me, too, in a letter written with invisible ink, that the anuses of Greek youth were utterly ruined. There is no way to remove ignorance and misery from my dances, but I do not want people to draw a lesson about hereditary diseases from them, as Ms. Margaret did. I have never been visited by genius and my appearance is far from that of a certified incompetent. Not a devotee of ghost aesthetics, I am a mere virgin. My semen should bring a good price.  

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30 Hosoe has recalled having taken part in the Anpo protests carrying an enlargement of Domon Ken’s photographs of *hibaku* victims as a placard. However, he was never overtly political and constantly denied that his work had any conscious political message. Kuwabara Kineo and Yoshimura Nobuya, “Hosoe Eikoh ni kiku,” *Kikan Shashin Eizō* vol. 1 no. 1 (May 1969).

The essay begins with a startling clarification to his correspondent. Hijikata contends that his dance is terrorism. Therefore, the “anal,” or passive, nihilistic, quality that some may see in his art is not in fact an expression of impotence, either as a “hereditary disease” or a permanent state of impossibility forced upon him by chance. Rather, it is a strategy that allows him to defy the status quo.

The essay continues under the sub-heading “Dance is homosexuality (Buyō wa nanshoku de aru).” Here, the dancer introduces the method with which he approaches the creation of dance:

For 10 years I had no experience of dance in a practice studio. There are open-air theatres all over Tokyo. I gave myself up to talking with shirts in dressing rooms and marveled at the many odors of sweat to be smelled from stripped-off fibers. From the reverse side of the shirts, I picked up a dance of the back. Strings, too, are strange creatures. My friendship with the male prostitutes at Ueno Kurumazaka is what strongly inclined me toward the art of imitation. A ragged head of hair, size 11 feet, rouge, death from cold in a public lavatory — with these tools at hand any choreographer, no matter how lazy, should be able to create a dance. I thought seriously about the art of impotence when a general image of life hit me with unbearable speed. Tired of the streets, I returned to my room, but you cannot eat the walls of a boardinghouse, and I even dreamed of a dance about hair that as a matter of course examines a skinny belly.32

Hijikata explains here his interest in imitation as a method, referring to his early years in Tokyo. The reference to shirts and fibers and strings, recalls works by the Anti-Art Generation, in particular those of the Kyūshū-ha artists and Takamatsu Jirō, whose works had been exhibited at the Yomiuri Indépendant shows in the late 1950s and early

1960s. The true stakes of imitation are explained through the figure of the famous cross-dressed prostitutes of Ueno. Imitation here appears as a form of subversion: the dancer fixates on the prostitutes’ particular fetishes and entrapments that seek to imitate the everyday rituals of bourgeois life. Yet at the same time, the excess that these objects embody offers a different and new semiological reading, and resignification, of them. For the dancer, the value of imitation lies in its capacity to recode, through its apparent incongruity, familiar objects and underline their marginality and proximity to death.

Hijikata uses the language of sexology, the pathologization and criminalization of peripheral sexualities, in order to articulate and theorize his dance. In so doing, he effectively reinscribes male homosexuality (nanshoku) as the periphery, even if he opens it up as a means of formulating a social, political and economic critique. It is important to note that this reference to perverse sexuality is never posed as an active identification as a homosexual—Hijikata deploys nanshoku as a masquerade. In “Towards the prison,” an essay he wrote for the culture journal Mita Bungaku in January 1961, the dancer provides an explanation of his positioning of homosexuality as the periphery in terms of a critique of reproduction:

All the power of civilized morality, hand in hand with the capitalist economic system and its political institutions, is utterly opposed to using the flesh (nikutai)

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33 Other artists are invoked explicitly in the essay, including Shinohara Ushio, Kuroda Fuguto and Ikeda Masuo. Imitation was a central concern for the Anti-Art crowd: Shinohara Ushio called some of his works “imitation art.” Critics like Tōno Yoshiaki and Miyakawa Atsushi pointed to this form of appropriation as a characteristic aspect of the generation’s work. Miyakawa referred to it in terms of art’s “descent into the everyday (nichijō eno kakō).”
simply for the purpose, means, or tool of pleasure. For the society of productivity (seisansei shakai), the aimless use of the flesh, what I call dance, is the most hated enemy: it must be taboo. I am able to say that my dance shares a common basis with crime, male homosexuality (nanshoku), festivals, and rituals because it is behavior that explicitly flaunts its aimlessness in the face of the society of productivity. In this sense, my dance, based on human self-activation (jikō katsudō), including male homosexuality, crime, and a naive battle with nature, can naturally be a protest against the “alienation of labor” in capitalist society. That is probably the reason too that I have expressly taken up with criminals.34

Hijikata counterposes nanshoku to the values of a production-oriented society (seisansei shakai). In its re-centering of pleasure over the production of offspring (and thus, labor), nanshoku defies the logic of reproducibility.35 Like nanshoku, dance relies on the body; but whereas dance has traditionally sought to provide norms of movement, which contain and restrict acceptable forms of bodily pleasure, the body in ankoku butō is resignified as nanshoku’s non-reproductive flesh (nikutai). No longer the tool for the purposeful reproduction of labor, the flesh is the locus of subversively aimless pleasures.

At this time, Tokyo was undergoing a major program of urban renewal in preparation for the 38th Olympic Games slated for 1964: slum clearance, the cleaning up of the city through the sudden appearance of thousands of plastic trash cans—parodied in the High Red Center’s tongue-in-cheek event Be Clean! (1963)—along with the

construction of a massive system of highways and interchanges planted, quite literally, on top of the city. This sudden renewal of Tokyo was capped by the mushrooming futuristic structures designed by the architect Tange Kenzō, whose monumental Olympic swimming pool, with its state-of-the-art helicoidal rooftop built in the vicinity of Yoyogi Park instantly resignified a site closely related to Japan’s recent history of aggressive militarism and semi-colonial subjugation. The timely completion of the Meishin Expressway, and the inauguration of the spectacular Shinkansen bullet train that connected the capital to Osaka more efficiently, enabled the consolidation of the Tōkaidō corridor as the industrialized economic engine of Japan.

Furthermore, for the Japanese Government, hosting the Olympics fulfilled a long held desire. Japan had been slated to host the Olympic Games of 1940, but this plan was scrapped due to the war in Europe, and Japan’s escalating conflict with China. Soon afterwards, Japan started hostilities with the Allied powers, which were followed by a disastrous defeat and subsequent foreign Occupation of the country. For the government of Ikeda Hayato, the Tokyo Olympics were the perfect opportunity to showcase a democratic and prosperous Japan that had risen back from the nuclear ashes, and had become a model member of the society of civilized nations. The event had international resonance; but its impact was expected to be the greatest inside the

36 In the prewar period, the stables and barracks of the Imperial Army were located in Yoyogi Park. During the Occupation, the area housed Allied officers and their families, in a housing complex sometimes referred to as Washington Heights.
country. The Games became a massive national festival, mobilizing the Japanese citizenry in celebration of a new era of prosperity—an altogether different type of mobilization from the one that Japan had seen in 1960, during the protests against the ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The Olympic Games were implicit proof that Ikeda was right to plead for an end to the season of politics, and the beginning of the season of economic growth.37 The State used the occasion to teach forgotten lessons about national belonging.38 This retrofitted postwar nationalism foregrounded the muscular body of the athlete as an ideal type: engaged, healthy, beautiful, youthful, competitive, and productive. The message was disseminated through a spectacular showcase of total design. The government commissioned the work of famous graphic designer Kamekura Yūsaku, whose modernist posters incorporated high-speed photographs that focused on the athletes’ tense muscles and well-toned bodies in motion.39 Compared to this vision of the body as a purposeful agent of capital, Hijikata’s dance appeared as its complete antithesis: a celebration of all things grotesque, abject, deviant and antisocial.

37 Although Ikeda took part in the opening ceremony, he was hospitalized for cancer treatment shortly thereafter, and announced his retirement days before the games closed.
38 This point was not lost on the Left. Critics claimed that the State was using the event to distract from the serious issues raised by the Anpo Treaty of 1960. The International Olympic Committee designated Tokyo as the host of the 34th Olympic Games in 1959.
39 It is important to note that Kamekura started his career as a designer in Nippon Kōbō, the publisher that produced Japan’s celebrated wartime propaganda magazine NIPPON.
While the Olympic Games were a national festival that mobilized Japanese citizens in a celebration of the productive body, the performance of *Rose-colored Dance: At The House of Mister Shibusawa* (*Bara-iro Dansu—Shibusawa-san no ie no hō e*, November 27 and 28, 1965) mobilized the nascent Underground for a celebration of the eroticism and self-containment of the flesh. Yokoo Tadanori’s pop woodblock-style silkscreen for the performance exemplifies the hectic nature of the event (*Figure 24*).

*Rose-colored Dance* was structured as a multi-part happening, albeit a highly choreographed one: an avant-garde sideshow. Upon entering the auditorium, the spectator encountered a group of six men, each covered with rising-sun flags sitting on a side stage, lit by a spotlight. In a clear Dadaist wink, the men get their hair clipped—half of their heads during the first evening, and the rest during the second show. Ten men stand on two rows, on scaffolding set at the back of the stage, with their backs towards the viewer, as if they were urinating (*Figure 25*). Two dog figures—used to advertise

40 The list of participants is a who’s who of the Japanese Underground: the visual artists drafted to collaborate on different aspects of the staging included High Red Center provocateurs Nakanishi Natsuyuki and Akasegawa Genpei; the print-maker Kano Mitsuo; the designer Yokoo Tadanori; the musicians Kosugi Takehisa and Tone Yasunao; Ohno Kazuo, who danced a touching, arabesque-filled pas-de-deux with Hijiakata; the butoh dancers Tamano Koichi, Ishii Michitaka and Kasai Akira. Shibusawa Tatsuhiko (to whom the piece was dedicated) and the critic Takiguchi Shūzō were hailed as the patron saints of the event. See Morishita Takashi, “Hijiakata Tatsumi nenpū” in *Hijiakata Tatsumi no butō—nikutai no shururearizumu, shintai no ontoroji* ed. Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, Keiō Gijuku Āto Sentā (Kawasaki: Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, 2003).

41 John Cage visited Japan under the auspices of USIS with the dancer Merce Cunningham, his partner in work and life, and the pianist David Tudor in 1962. During the visit, Cunningham held a workshop for Japanese dancers. Hijiakata was invited, as part of Tokyo’s happenings scene; however Cunningham and Cage seem to not have been too impressed with his method, as its highly choreographed aspects ran counter to Cage’s investment in the use of chance operations in his work. Inata Nahomi, *Hijiakata Tatsumi — Zeisago no shintai*. 
Victor Records—smeared with pink paint, keep them company, along two rolls of prints of nude High Red Center members’ behinds. Tamano Kōichi dances while sitting on a pedestal with his back towards the viewer: he curves his back and opens his arms rhythmically, while wearing a helmet; Nakanishi has painted a vagina on his back (Figure 26). Ishii Michitaka and Kasai Akira, their bodies painted white, dance slowly and roll on the ground while connected to each other by a plastic tube, almost like Siamese twins (Figure 27). Ohno Kazuo, heavily made up and wearing old-fashioned clothes, morphs into his ethereal cross-dressed character, which he developed based on Genet’s character la Divine (Figure 28), and dances a pas-de-deux with Hijikata; Hijikata practices fencing using as a target a figure representing the astrological correspondence of diverse parts of the body; he appears carrying a rickshaw; and so on.

The performance works like a sideshow: it deploys the freakish and the surprising as anchors that capture the spectators; at the same time inevitably reminding them of the low-brow misemono display culture of Japan’s popular quarters, the shitamachi. The use of the rising-sun flags, both in Yokoo’s poster and in the opening scenes, recalls both Japan’s aggressive colonialism, but also the use of the flag in festivals and celebrations—particularly in the prewar period, when the boundaries between the political and religious orders were consciously often blurred by official ideologues. In the popular realm, however this officially sanctioned ambiguity created unforeseeable tensions and misinterpretations. The state strove hard to police this type of popular
excess that oftentimes would unwittingly cross over to the realm of heresy and lèse-

majesté.\textsuperscript{42}

It is illustrative to contrast the nationalism of the Tokyo Olympic Games, which were planned as a grandiose national festival, to the ambiguous use of markers of nationalism in \textit{Rose-colored Dance}—the carnivalesque “nationalism” of the garden variety that is portrayed in the performance. The state mobilized high culture to manufacture its grand national narrative. Its aim was to support the political unaccountability of the post-Anpo moment, which had been achieved through the introduction of the myth of economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{43} Hijikata, on the other hand, takes these signifiers of nationalism to the margins, destabilizing their mission as bonding agents of the imagined community.

\textit{Rose-colored Dance} has strong nostalgic overtones, but its signifiers are elusive and difficult to pin down onto referents. The performance is full of evocations of the past that appeal to the bodily memories of the spectators through visual signifiers: the acrid smell of urine in public spaces; the penetrating, musty smell of old clothes, cheap perfume and make-up; the sticky and saccharine feel of the sugar sweets (satōgashi) sent together with the invitations—shaped as mouths, hands and penises.

\textsuperscript{42} Carol Gluck, \textit{Japan’s Modern Myths}.
\textsuperscript{43} Ikeda Hayato, who became Prime Minister after the collapse of the Kishi cabinet in the aftermath of the protests, had immediately promised to work on a plan to multiply the citizens’ income (kokumin shotoku baisō keikaku).
The performance raises an important question regarding the status of nostalgia as a trope in the rhetoric of marginality. Hijikata’s use of marginality is at the starting point of a discourse of return. But, as seen in the performance, both the return itself and the place to return to never existed. If nostalgia relies on metonymic association to operate, what happens when the referent is removed or exposed as fictive? All that remains is the affect of nostalgia itself.

It may be convenient here to look once again at one of the photographs that open Kamaitachi. Judging from the dancer’s hair and beard, it is evident that this is actually one of the last photographs taken in the series. The photograph captures Hijikata, painted white, screaming and running across the ruinous garden of a prewar apartment complex, while holding behind him like a cape a kyokujitsuki—the old Imperial Army flag whose sixteen rays represented Amaterasu the Sun-Goddess shining on the world. Like the ruinous landscape it portrays, the photograph condenses a national history, of modernization, colonialism, destruction, and the erasure of such memory in the postwar. However its melancholic return to the past queries the unity of place and time on which the national stakes its claim. In this photograph it is the underbelly of the city—Tokyo, the imperial capital—that is revisited by the photographer. The photographer captures the markers of its “Northeastern” quality: the immanent otherness at the very center of the empire. Hijikata and Hosoe’s exercise resignifies the
meaning of center and periphery, positing the peripheral landscape as a political haunting.
Chapter 5: Megalopolis and Wasteland: Peripheral Geographies of Tokyo (1961/1971)

...A ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak — so quiet, — so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City, and which the Shadow.


Nowadays it has been completely forgotten, but in the past Tokyo’s *shitamachi* was a water-city (*mizu-no-miyako*) as full of charm as that of an Italian Venice.


The center, the periphery and the detour

The critic Roland Barthes visited Japan in 1969 and offered a compelling description of Tokyo in *The Empire of Signs* (1970). To Barthes, Tokyo appeared as an aporia. In his rhapsodic passage on the empty city center, he wrote of the paradox contained by this "centre-ville/centre-vide":

[Tokyo] presents a beautiful paradox: it has a center, but this center is empty... One of the two most powerful cities in modernity is thus built around an opaque ring of walls [i.e., the Imperial Palace]... whose center is itself but an evaporated idea... forcing circulation to a perpetual detour.¹

By asking where and what the center is, Barthes astutely touched on a crucial aspect of Tokyo’s political cityscape. Is the center really there, or is it not? If the symbols of power are the ones that articulate the center, or conversely, if the center is what articulates power, what then happens with the inaccessible green hole of privilege in Tokyo’s urban plan, the Imperial Palace? Evidently, there is something in the center—after all, it is impenetrably protected, and its existence does force “circulation to a perpetual detour.” But Barthes called it “an evaporated idea,” because its undeniable physicality is doubled by its ghostliness. In the symbolic seat of power, Barthes identified a specter. Faced with a vanishing center, he invoked the detour, leading his readers to the periphery with its inadvertent resistances and pleasures. For, just as the center vanishes, it may readily reappear in the periphery. The two architectural projects I examine in this chapter serve as proof of that possibility, as they displace the question of the center in their recreations of the peripheral landscape.

In this chapter I will lay out two visions of the city in crisis. First, I will examine Tange Kenzō’s 1960 master plan for Tokyo—“Tokyo Megalopolis”—which articulated the sources of this crisis, and a plan to solve it. In the plan, Tange aimed to circumvent the disorder of the city by colonizing the wasteland into an officially sanctioned “order in liberty” that rearticulated the center into an axial node (Fig. 1). This vertebrate structure would anchor the diffuseness of a communication and knowledge network of capital. I will

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2 It is important to remember the theoretical stakes of Barthes’s intervention. In his introductory remarks, the critic makes clear that The Empire of Signs is not a book about Japan. Rather, it is an investigation of Japan as a closed system of signification. What he found in his visit, stimulated him: the signs resist and displace meaning, existing in excess of their forms and even the constraints of the semiotic system he attempted to delineate — a concern that Barthes would continue to explore in his later production. “The author has never, in any sense, photographed Japan. On the contrary: Japan has scintillated him with multiple flashes; or better yet, Japan has put him in condition to write (en situation d’écriture).” Roland Barthes, “L’Empire des Signes,” Oeuvres Complètes III: 352.
finish my analysis of this plan by discussing the eerie presence in Tange’s blue prints of the future, evidenced in the unanswered questions raised by the project’s relationship to the nation and city’s past. In the second part of the chapter, I will introduce the ambiguous portraits of Yotsuya Simone taken by photographer Hosoe Eikoh, which presented another crisis—the crisis of the vanishing (Fig. 2). Hosoe’s unfinished series _A Private Landscape_ called for an investigation of the peripheral landscape in order to elucidate the links between space, memory and pleasure as practice. The photographer sought to create an active haunting of the landscape by the viewer, by deploying the trope of the vanishing; the aim of this strategy was to recover the industrial wasteland as a site of possibility. Through the juxtaposition of these two projects I highlight a continuum in the production of landscape in the 1960s. Tange’s disavowal and Hosoe’s incorporation of the urban periphery take place through the production of landscape; both are manifestations of the ghost of the city. In fact, their contiguity is phantasmatic and physical, because the shared anxiety that is made visible in their descriptions of space is also contingent on their historic and material specificity.³

The crisis that permeates these visions of the city is the _threat of extinction_, a very material presence that haunted Japanese society in the 1960s. Tange and Hosoe’s projects

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³ Tange’s proposal for a city-on-the-sea (*kaijō toshi*) that could circumvent the periphery is founded on the historic practice of reclaiming land where there was none. This practice continued after the war in the disposal of rubble from the firebombed Tokyo into the Bay. The rubble created the industrial wasteland, the sinking territory that in turn Hosoe portrayed as the locus of his revenant. The reclaimed land of the periphery posed yet another problem, that connects it to the anxiety over vanishing landscapes. In the prewar period, Mukōjima, along the areas of Kōtō Ward that Hosoe portrayed in his _Private Landscape_, became home to a large number of factories whose weight began to progressively push this coastal area under the sea level. During the war, the area had been almost completely wiped out by the firebombing campaign led by the Allied Forces, and so its sinking had stopped. Yet as the pace of industrial recovery picked up, the phenomenon began once again. In 1964, when Typhoon Kitty landed on Tokyo, the area now known as the zero-meter district (*zero chitai*, because it is equal to or below the sea-level) was momentarily flooded by water. Kōtō-ku (ed.) _Kōtō-ku shi. [History of Kōtō Ward]_ (Tokyo: Kōtō-ku, 1997).
appeared at a time of social, economic and political upheaval; and directly related to these, increasing environmental disaster. One of the visible manifestations of this specter appeared in the form of a violent, poltergeist-like force. The protests surrounding the automatic ratification of the Anpo, the US-Japan Security treaty of 1960, and the fractious student movements of the latter part of the decade threatened the integrity of the liberal-bourgeois postwar order. The meaning of these protests was contested: they evoked the image of the Chinese Cultural Revolution for the right, the demise of the autonomous university for the center, and the resurrection of violent struggle on the left. Moreover, the protests were interventions in Tokyo’s cityscape that sparked a radical rethinking of urban space.

This reconceptualization of space finds its origins in protest, whose disruptive aim was—and is—the interruption of the circulation of capital and power. Protest is action; action is transient; and despite its ephemerality, protest radically reinscribes and thus reconfigures landscape. That the so-called failure of these protests has been described in terms of an inherent inability to keep hold of the center puts this overtly confrontational form of resistance in dialogue with the projects I have discussed. There is a ghostly presence in both: a haunting that is in the center.

In these projects, landscape is a strategy and not a given. Hosoe Eikoh’s “Private Landscape” series performs the work of resistance by invoking the vanishing body atop the changing urban space, the same unruliness that Tange’s vision for a capitalist utopia desperately attempted to put under control. And yet these apparently contradictory projects equally doubled the city as image, articulating directly or through its omission, the peripheral landscape as both a present crisis and the future city. Both projects resorted to
different rhetorics that nevertheless point to a similar affective state—a deep-set melancholy, whose returning and recurring ghosts transform the landscape, and hence the experience of the city. The work of resistance here shares much in common with the unfailing return of the repressed, and its underlying and disruptively circular temporality. In their shared futurity, these projects might only differ in a question of angle: Tange’s maps look down onto the Bay, while the Bay is Hosoe’s horizon. Their radical rearticulations of landscape make them speak of their anxiety by returning to the periphery, where the displaced center turns itself inside out, making visible the hauntings of the past and the vaporous presence of the possible city.

**Peripheral politics in the center**

Around 1960, postwar Tokyo was perceived to be a city in crisis. The source of that crisis was urban hyperdensification, the result of rural migration and Tokyo’s epic industrial growth. In the run up to the 34th Olympic Games slated for 1964, the Japanese media self-consciously debated the city’s disarray and how badly it reflected on the nation. While reading these debates, it is easy to imagine that Tokyo lacked any form of regulation and that its reconstruction was entirely haphazard. In truth there was an existing plan that was nevertheless roundly criticized by the new elite generation of architects and planners who came to dominate the debate on Tokyo’s urbanism. The existing plan was based on legislation drafted in the 1920s, and was supplemented with initiatives formulated in the aftermath of the war. However the master plan had not come under revision in the democratization drive of the immediate postwar period, leading to the perception that it
was disconnected from the changed social and economic conditions created by Tokyo’s explosive development.4

The observation that Tokyo was hoarding Japan’s capital and population was not off the mark. The U.S. injection of large amounts of capital during the Korean War had stimulated industrial growth to an unprecedented degree, even by international standards. Japan’s economic growth rate quickly became one of the fastest in the world, five times larger than its war-ravaged European counterparts, which were still benefiting from the Marshall plan. If in 1946, Japan’s GDP had dropped to a dismal half of its prewar peak, by the first oil crisis, in 1973, Japan’s industrial output was second only to that of the United States in the capitalist world. At the time this economic growth’s sustainability was not at all obvious: economic analyses were divided with regards to the actual performance of the economy and whether growth would continue or not.5

At the base of such growth lay the prewar foundations of state-directed capital, and plans for the concentration of development along the Tōkaidō route region, between Tokyo and Kyoto, foundations that would foster the unequal distribution of investment along regional lines, and the creation of a double-tiered economic system, both features that to this day haunt Japan’s macroeconomic structure. The almost immediately visible effects of economic development in more deprived areas already contested the unequivocal progress


5 Yoshikawa Hiro “Makuro Keizai” (Macroeconomics) in *Sengo Nihon Keizai wo Kenshō Suru* [Rethinking Postwar Japan’s Economy], ed. Tachibanaki Toshiaki (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppansa, 2004).
narratives purveyed by politicians. Thinking of capitalism in terms of progress was a political choice in and of itself.6

The debate on Tokyo’s transformation appeared in the mid-1950s as the changes in economic and social conditions became evident. Diverse figures, among them the eccentric painter Okamoto Tarō, directly intervened in Tokyo’s map and redefined the city in the name of its affluence, postwar humanism, and democracy. Architectural historian Fujimori Terunobu has indicated in his exhaustive monograph on Tange Kenzō that even though his proposal was a late addition to this debate, the architect was already privy to, and perhaps even inspired by, many of these ideas.7

The March 1961 issue of the prestigious architectural magazine Shinkenchiku carried a major article, “Tokyo Megalopolis (Tōkyō Keikaku 1960),” written by Tange Kenzō and his laboratory at Tokyo University.8 The team included future stars of the architectural world such as Kurokawa Kishō and Isozaki Arata.9 These young architects—who had recently grouped under the name Metabolism—provide an important context for this plan: their leader Kikutake Kiyonori had already rehearsed visionary residential typologies for a

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7 One of the first proposals to radically reconfigure postwar Tokyo was actually issued by a high-ranking official, the president of the Japanese Public Housing Corporation (Jūtaku Danchi Renmei), Kanō Hisaaki, who — perhaps flippantly — proposed to blow up Mount Nokogiri in Chiba Prefecture with an atomic bomb and throw its debris into Tokyo Bay in order to reclaim land for a new urban center. Tange was present at a forum organized by the magazine Sōgō where Kanō first brought up this idea. For a more detailed description of the genesis of the project, see the lavish monograph by Fujimori Terunobu, Tange Kenzō (Tokyo: Shinkenchikusha, 2002): 342-358.
8 A more exact English translation would be “Tokyo Project 1960.” I have instead retained the translated title from the magazine Shinkenchiku itself, that published concurrently an English edition at the time called The Japan Architect.
9 It is important to note Tange’s position as a faculty member in Japan’s most élite institution of higher education. Besides these “stars,” Tange trained a whole generation of urban planners and architects that would later dominate the higher echelons of the han-min han-kan semi-state building bureaucracy.
city-on-the-sea, as early as 1958. Tange’s article was an intervention into the debates on urban planning that raged in the media, as Tokyo was perceived to have reached saturation point in terms of infrastructure and transportation.

In the article, Tange’s team took note of the effects of economic change in urban space and proposed a four-phase, twenty-year plan to transform the city. The 1960 plan consists of two sections, the diagnosis he offers of the urban situation as well as a new master plan. Central to the diagnosis and prescription were two premises: first the assignment of causality to capital, coupled with a Darwinian belief in the “inevitability of progress.” Second, the article postulates that the modernization of the economy entailed a shift towards the tertiary sector (service and finance industries). These two premises would give shape to Tange’s capitalist utopia, his normative plan for the Megalopolis to which I refer in my title.

Tange’s analysis, exposed at length in the first half of his article, reproduced an economic discourse strongly informed by the Japanese Capitalism Debate (Nihon Shihonshugi Ronsō) of the 1930s. The basic tenets of this discourse held that its division into “traditional” agricultural and “modern” industrial sectors characterized Japan’s labor market. Whereas large industrial corporations offered incremental wages and lifetime employment, agriculture only offered low-wage, temporary work. There was a permanent

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10 Metabolism was the name of a group of architects, urban planners, industrial and graphic designers that came together in preparation for the International Design Conference held in Japan in 1960. Its core members were the architects Ōtaka Masato, Kikutake Kiyonori, Maki Fumihiko, Kurokawa Kishō, the critic Kawazoe Noboru, the industrial designer Ekuan Kenji and the graphic designer Awazu Kiyoshi. The group’s aim was to rethink a modern architectural program from a “Japanese” or “Oriental” perspective, focusing on an idea of social renewal through total design (hence the name “Metabolism,” used to translate the Japanese expression shinchin taisha). Ohtaka Masato and Kawazoe Noboru [ed.] Metaborizumu to Metaborisuto-tachi [Metabolism and Metabolists] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan, 2002). See also, Yatsuka Hajime and Yoshimatsu Hideki, Metaborizumu: 1960-nendai no kenchiku abangyarudo [Metabolism: The Architectural Avant-garde of the 1960s] (Tokyo: INAX, 1997).

11 The plan, which by virtue of its spectacular proposal would receive broad attention in the press, was first presented publicly in the state broadcaster NHK’s New Year’s special of 1961.
gap in value-added production when comparing large-scale and small- and medium-sized manufacturers. Crucially, the concentration of capital in large corporations was seen as self-perpetuating, which entailed that the whole economy was moving towards “modernization,” or the shift into manufacture and services, as production levels rose and capital continued to accumulate (Fig. 3). This assignment of causality to capital proves important as it helps to unravel Tange’s investment in a new city plan for Tokyo.

Recent economic historiography stresses that state-directed capital closely followed a Keynesian model. As economic historian Yoshikawa Hiro has stated, “in contrast to the prewar economy, the postwar high growth Japanese economy was driven by domestic demand.”12 Production of wealth took place thanks to the large numbers of workers that were taken by the busload into urban areas, to satisfy the demand for labor created by the reinvestment in the secondary sector of the large amounts of capital pumped into Japan’s rearming economy.13 The inflow of population, or raw labor, into urban areas was a pre-requisite for the creation of the urban mass-consumption society that would propel Japan’s economy in the following decades. This seems to confirm Tange’s observation regarding the growth of the tertiary sector. However, Tange’s discourse of inevitability obscures the close relationship that capital and the state enjoyed in these years, leaving sociohistorical process to the magic of an un-political economy, even if it was precisely in his economically deterministic analysis that his diagnosis of and solution to urban hyperdensification was evidenced to be political in nature.

12 Yoshikawa Hiro, “Makuro Keizai,”
13 A sociohistorical discussion of rural migration is found in John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II (New York : W.W. Norton & Co./New Press, 1999).
This aspect is critical for understanding Tange’s Tokyo as Megalopolis. In his plan, the image of the almighty architect-bureaucrat is invoked as a technical problem-solver, but not as a radical intervenor. This disavowal is made explicit more than once, as Tange repeatedly declared the role of the urban planner not to be that of the politician. In doing so, Tange echoed Le Corbusier’s slogan, “You do not revolutionize by revolutionizing, you revolutionize by problem-solving.” And yet Tange’s prescriptive urbanism shows how the architect-bureaucrat is indeed essentially political, as his solution to hyperdensity lies in an actual spatial reorganization of capital. While Tange rhetorically effaced himself by assuming the guise of academicism, he was in fact planning a revolution.

“Tokyo Megalopolis” describes the old city as on the verge of collapse on two accounts: transportation that was reaching saturation point and the suburbanization of residential zones along radial, centripetal lines, which in turn brought about prolonged commuting hours, and further burdened the transportation system. The introduction of the car implied that the scale of the city had also inevitably changed. What he called in the article the “medieval” layout of the centripetal city he deemed no longer appropriate to think the diffuseness of modern urban space.

In order to underline this, Tange deployed in the article the tools he knew best: the amassing and systematization of the information derived from the State’s eyes and ears. Tange’s team drew maps and diagrams that tell the story of a critical moment of infectious development. Tokyo’s rapidly climbing population growth is compared to other world megalopolises in a pyramidal graph; it is visualized in contrast to London’s in an

unequivocally cinematic series of maps where economic modernization is a virtual bubonic plague that renders completely black the fold that wraps the Bay (Fig. 4). Tange’s Tokyo is also compared to a heart, its arteries and veins dramatically colored in black and red, visually expressing an ailing national vascular system whose incapacity to deal with large volumes of capital and information would become the nation’s undoing (Fig. 5).

For Tange, the multiplicity of proposals to resolve these issues had not, however, addressed the underlying totality of the problem and lacked a sense of vision. He imagined a greater possibility: “We are proposing to change Tokyo’s obsolete city structure into a new system that will allow for its new life activity (seimei katsudō).” Tange saw the essence of future Tokyo not in terms of raw labor or capital, but in the capacity of the city to organize itself as an invisible network of communication that facilitated contact between depersonalized agents of capital. Tokyo residents were for him “organization men” held together by an invisible network. “Some say that the organization man is alienated (kodoku de aru). However, whenever he attempts to set himself free from this network, he becomes even more alienated. People gather because they want to be part of it... Mobility is the belt that holds this network together. The Megalopolis is such a mobile population group.”

Tange called for neither a discarding nor renewal of the city. The city needed to deeply transform itself to satisfy this emergent reality, and to facilitate the channels of communication and movement that would allow Japan’s brain to work. “There is only one

16 Tange refers here to the work of U.S. urban sociologist William H. Whyte and his analysis of the role of suburbia in the final chapters of his popular study The Organization Man (1956). On the one hand, suburbia shelters the Organization Man from the alienation he experiences in his work life. Paradoxically, such alienation is compounded by the spatial segregation of work and life spheres that suburbia enables in the first place. Whyte points in particular to the phenomenon of commuters as transient populations. William H. Whyte, The Organization Man (New York: Simon Schuster, 1956).
way to save Tokyo. This is creating a city structure that will enhance the essential functions necessary to Tokyo.”

The biomorphic metaphor that Tange invoked in this section was foundational to the budding Metabolist movement — his students, some of who participated in this project. At the same time, Tange established a distance from the Metabolist focus on modular amoebic “proliferation,” whose agglutinating characteristics presented immediate limits for a plausible and self-generating urbanistic program. The article uses the image of the development stages of a chick embryo, and the formation of its spinal chord, in order to explain what constituted a natural organizing structure (Fig. 6). Tokyo was an organism that needed to evolve from a closed amoebic, primitive, centripetal structure to an open, linear and vertebrate one (Fig. 7). Fujimori Terunobu credits Tange with having been able to resolve in this study the conundrum of high modernist urban planning, usefully highlighting the role of proliferation (zōshoku) and mobility (ryūdōsei) as key concepts for a renewed architectural program. To these terms, which he had learnt from his Metabolist disciples, Tange added the idea of stability (anteisei), by introducing a structuring axis that anchored his program in the Corbuserian doxa: “Man walks straight because he has an aim; he knows where he goes to. He has decided to go somewhere and walks straight ahead.”

In the plan, two highways run from the old city center to Kisarazu, in Chiba Prefecture, configuring a vertebrate axial structure that provides cohesion to the city. Stressing the car’s atomized and individual transportation as the basic unit of movement, Tange places a “multi-layered cycle-transportation system” (designed by Kurokawa Kishō)

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17 Tange, Kenzō, “Tōkyō Keikaku 1960”: 121.
18 “L’homme marche droit parce qu’il a un but; il sait où il va. Il a décidé d’aller quelque part et il y marche droit.” Le Corbusier, Urbanisme: 5.
at the center of his proposal: veritable belt conveyors that would link the old city center to the new, linear and horizontal city axis that projected itself upon *piloti* across Tokyo Bay (*Fig. 8 and 9*). All essential functions to the organization of Japan, including the central government and large corporate headquarters would be moved to these new locations in a sequence of zones — administrative, financial, commercial and recreational — concentrating Japan's brain through functional architecture and city planning (*Fig. 10*). Extending perpendicular to the axis would be a horizontal transportation network that would develop into residential zones. Its residential blocks were based on the pronounced *hito-ji gata* or "praying hands" structure, first developed during his "Community of 25,000" project designed in the course of a semester-long seminar at the MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1960 (*Fig. 11 and 12*). The city as a whole would be harmonized through the creation of basic construction systems based on single loops, which would in different levels negotiate scale and velocity: the large-scale highway hovering on top (120 km/h), the open spaces for local circulation and parking lots in the base (60 km/h), and the small-scale pedestrian level in between (40 km/h). The high-rise buildings would be raised on *piloti* and core shafts would carry wiring, water, sewage and elevators, while further supporting the structures.

For Tange, the only way to save the city was through its transformation, what he called the creation of value in urban space. By doing away with the center, Tange sought the establishment of a future growth-appropriate “order in liberty, and liberty in order.” Despite the rejection of a notion of center as a primary organizational model, the axially structured new Tokyo would ensure the circulation of knowledge as capital, facilitating the systematization and accumulation of capital and information flows (*Fig. 13*). Failure to
incorporate order in Tokyo’s chaos threatened its nature and hence, its possibilities of survival.

Le Corbusier once wrote, “The plan carries in itself the essence of sensation.”

Something lingers underneath the surface of Tange’s Tokyo as Megalopolis. The planner’s positivistic rhetoric — the neutral language of the enlightened architect-bureaucrat — is the haunted speech of the ghost denier. Close observation of the plans reveals strange details coexisting with the futuristic multi-layered cycle transportation systems and the conveniently located satellite launching pad. Tange’s megalopolis surpasses Tokyo, and is haunted by an elsewhere. The schematic drawing that explores how to streamline the current city in order to make the new axial development on the Bay relate to the pre-existing built environment reveals one further axial extension— to Mount Fuji. What on first sight could be interpreted as a quaint native adornment has to be understood in light of both Mount Fuji’s status as an extremely loaded nationalistic symbol, and Tange’s public début — his 1942 winning entry in a competition for a commemorative structure which he projected at the base of Mount Fuji, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere Memorial Hall. The coincidences do not stop there: the hito-ji gata form of the residential units bears a strong resemblance to the roofs of the Memorial Hall, which in turn were designed to evoke the architecture of the Ise Shrine — the ancestral shrine of the imperial family, and

20 The figure of the ghost denier in psychoanalysis underlines the need to pay attention to what is being elided in speech, and to identify the discursive creases where hauntings reside. “Not only did he disbelieve in ghosts; he was not even afraid of them.” Sigmund Freud, “Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,” in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume VIII, Jokes and their Relationship to the Unconscious, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953).
a center-piece in the debates over nativist modernism. While not branding his 1960 project as an iteration of an aggressive expansionist imperial project, such an improbable instance of parapraxis does raise questions regarding the status of the national in Tange, and particularly, the relationship between his “Tokyo Megalopolis” and the past.

Indeed, Le Corbusier’s presence seems to materialize in the plan in this very gesture with which Tange attempted to answer the riddles that led to the 1960 dissolution of CIAM (the Congrès Internationales d’Architecture Moderne). The conflict over the current needs of mobility and scale versus stability and national character that Tange sought to reconcile in his water-city were the expression of an inherent tension within CIAM’s program — a tension between the Corbusian vision for a highly segregated, monumentalized and ultimately amnesic core and the city’s actual material history. Tange’s semi-conscious elision of the periphery — relegated in the plan as industrial wasteland — uncannily replicated Le Corbusier’s (and CIAM’s) inability to deal with his own past. While in the plan Tange aspired to create in the Bay a blank slate for Tokyo as Megalopolis, the capitalist utopia of the future, its mysterious links to the pre-existing built environment speak of an unresolved relationship to the city and the nation’s past and memory, a ghost coming back to haunt the blueprints of the future.

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23 Tange was not a direct disciple of Le Corbusier. However, he initially worked under Maekawa Kunio, who had trained in the Swiss architect’s Parisian studio in the 1920s. Tange readily acknowledged the profound impact that Le Corbusier’s writings and architecture had had on him as a young man, and that eventually led him to pursue architectural studies in Japan. Tange’s fervent letter in defense of Le Corbusier concerning the generational standoff and denouement of CIAM must also be taken into account. Fujimori Terunobu suggestively calls Tange Le Corbusier’s Japanese grandchild. Gérard Monnier, Fondation Le Corbusier, Kanagawa Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan (et al.) *Le Corbusier et le Japon*, (Paris: Picard Éditions, 2007).
Peripheral politics in the margins

The first set of pictures from the series “Simone: A Private Landscape” by photographer Hosoe Eikoh was published in the Summer 1971 issue of the magazine *Kikan Shashin Eizō*, but the series itself is unfinished.25 The series started out as portraits of Yotsuya Simone, an onnagata actor from Kara Jūrō’s Theatre of Situations, who is seen modeling in the first set of pictures (*Fig. 14 and 15*).26 Yotsuya, however, carried out a vanishing act: the body of the thin, melancholy androgyne, with the outmoded hairdo, ragged kimono, and heavy make-up, gives way to a reconsideration of Tokyo’s peripheral landscape itself.

The first photographs, published in *Kikan Shashin Eizō*, situated the work in the urban clutter characteristic of the low-lying delta area of Tokyo, nowadays the Ōta and Kōtō Wards.27 The series starts out from the train station of Ishikawadai, and then jumps to the “Island Beyond,” Mukōjima, the area stretched between the Sumida and Arakawa rivers. The photographer takes the viewer on a tour of the Asakusa area, behind the Asakusa Kannon Temple and its seedy backstreets, beyond the river, to Hatonomachi, into the

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25 As confirmed by the photographer to the author in conversations in Tokyo in the summers of 2006 and 2008. Hosoe first approached Yotsuya Simone with the project after meeting him, while preparing bromide *cartes de visite* for Kara Jūrō’s actors.

26 Yotsuya Simone, né Kobayashi Kanemitsu, derived his fantasy name from the Yotsuya area where the actor lived at the time, and singer Nina Simone’s last name. Yotsuya first worked with Kara Jūrō during the Black Tent’s spectacle “John Silver,” in 1967, and up to 1971, time at which he decided to concentrate in his current métier, doll-making. Throughout this essay I have adopted a differentiated use of gendered pronouns when referring to Yotsuya Simone, the artist, and Yotsuya Simone as a character.

27 A system of twenty-three wards (*Ku*) was instituted in the 1946 overhaul of the local government system.
grounds of Mukōjima and its by then legendary “red-line” districts (fig. 16, 17 and 18).28

Tokyo’s shitamachi, downtown in the periphery, appears as the decaying frontier where the city finds its underbelly: the riverside, the waterfront, the wasteland (fig. 19).

The viewer is offered the sublimely abject body of Yotsuya: negotiating the city’s limits in the borders of the Arakawa river, thrown on the grass, her kimono half-open, staring back in disbelief (fig. 20); a distraught Yotsuya, wandering in the back of the Asakusa Temple (fig 21); the intimate photograph of Yotsuya’s off-focus smiling face during a boat trip down the Sumida river. The series presented in the magazine closes with a brisk interlude — a device similarly introduced for pacing in Hosoe’s famous 1969 photo-collaboration with butoh dancer Hijikata Tatsumi, Kamaitachi. In a snapshot style, five photographs record a humorous ménage-à-trois, involving Yotsuya and two other actors.29

For both Hosoe and Yotsuya, this is a revisitation of sorts. The territory examined is inscribed in their biographies, albeit in completely different contexts. Hosoe’s childhood spanned the Asia-Pacific War, returning to the firebombed flatness of an almost entirely obliterated Asakusa. On the other hand, Yotsuya was born in the period post-

28 Tamanoi and Hatonomachi. The two areas developed sequentially, Tamanoi in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, and Hatonomachi in the immediate postwar period. Dower offers an overview of prostitution in this context, particularly in relation to the phenomenon of specialized quarters serving the Occupation forces: see Dower, Embracing Defeat. Prostitution was phased out starting 1948. As part of the “transition period,” the police drew “red-line” (akasen) districts where the trade was permitted, as opposed to the “blue-line” (aosen) areas. Nevertheless an informal trade persisted: in some early blue-line sakariba districts, such as the infamous Kabukichō in Shinjuku, the sex trade flourished, constituting a topos of choice for contemporary photographers including Tōmatsu Shōmei, Moriyama Daidō and Araki Nobuyoshi. Ishiuchi Miyako, on the other hand, concentrated on photographing the remains of the akasen districts, starting from the 1970s.

29 The initial publication of 30 photographs of this series as “Yotsuya Simon’s Prelude (Yotsuya Shimon no pureryūdo)” in Kikan Shashin Eizō contained at least 10 photographs not included in the 2002 catalogue of Hosoe’s photography. These include alternate takes to the Arakawa, Fukagawa and Hato-no-machi scenes included here, as well as (1) a close-up of Yotsuya’s mouth from which slowly falls a sliver of saliva as she is about to swallow up a daffodil, (2) the series of 5 photographs depicting a menage-à-trois between Yotsuya, another cross-dressed figure and a young man (unidentified members of Kara Jūrō’s Theater of Situations), that visually ties the sequence back to the flower scene introduced earlier in the series.
reconstruction, spending his early childhood in Nezu, Yukigaya, Fukagawa and finally Asakusa, the child of small-time merchants. This explains perhaps the choice of Ishikawadai Station in the shitamachi neighborhood of Yukigaya, where Yotsuya once lived, as a starting point for this excursion. The connections are tenuous, but the biographical here reinforces the affective investments in the idea of a vanishing landscape. This was a world once seen, if only from the window across the street—desired, but never reached and perpetually lost.

For sure, the snow (yuki) in “Yukigaya,” resonates with “O-yuki,” the geisha that falls in love with the writer-narrator (watakushi) in Nagai Kafū’s novella Bokutō Kidan, first serialized in the national daily the Asahi Shinbun in 1936. Bokutō Kidan stands in fact as an urtext to the “Private Landscape” series, not only in terms of providing a plausible story-line for the photographs, but also as an important link to a prewar (modernist) practice of naming the city. This is the rhetoric of the kōgengakusha, or “modernologists” — the Taishō period chroniclers who obsessed over the changing city, and whose practice was equally concerned with the fate of the vanishing as it was with the newly emergent. Indeed, Kafū

30 Yotsuya Simone, interview with the author, summer 2008.
32 Hosoe was in fact commissioned to do a portfolio on Nagai Kafū’s shitamachi for the June 1971 issue of the magazine Taiyō. These were mostly straight color snapshots of Mukōjima’s landscape. However, in his final takes he included a blurry figure sitting at the windowsill of a first floor apartment. The kimono-clad model in these pictures was Yotsuya Simone.
33 In her classic essay on Taishō “modernology,” Miriam Silverberg examined the work of the writers Kon Wajirō and Gonda Yasunosuke as ethnographies of Japanese modernization. Silverberg contended that their description of Tokyo’s development in the interwar period introduced a heuristic model that surpassed the traditional binary of modernization discourse that pitted Japan versus “the West.” Miriam Silverberg, “Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity” The Journal of Asian Studies, vol. 51, no. 1 (February 1992): 30-54.
cultivated, both in writing and his public persona, the prowling manner of a Baudelerian flâneur.34

In writing the sakariba, Tokyo’s polymorphously perverse entertainment districts, Kafū exploited the site of a libidinal economy of display based on the misemono, the stuff that makes up the modern visual world: curios, panoramas, wax figures (ikiningyō), photographs, magazines, film theaters (katsudō shashinkan), cafés, bars, opera, revue theater and kabuki; and, of course, a diversified sex trade.35 But in contrast to the visually evident Asakusa — a progressively sanitized quarter improved into an infelicitous copy of the upscale Ginza’s modern café culture — for the protagonist/Kafū, Mukōjima was a bubble in time, a site that had resisted the inexorable pace of Tokyo’s transformation. Kafū’s Mukōjima is interesting as long as there is a hint of invisibility, paradoxically modern and claimed through the visual. Of course, such a place was not always there: it needed to either be conjured or invented. For this reason, Bokutō can only take place in an intricate network of literary references.36

In the novel, the first-person narrator is a renowned writer who in his meanderings through shitamachi accidentally runs into the Tamanoi area of Mukōjima, where many geisha houses, low-life bars and “private prostitutes” had progressively moved to in the

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34 The literary critic Stephen Snyder has used this obsession with the city and its visuality as evidence of Kafū’s “covert modernism,” see Stephen Snyder, Fictions of Desire: narrative form in the novels of Nagai Kafū. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000).
35 Yoshimi Shunya has written that in the Asakusa of the early 1920s, the supposedly traditional nature of the sakariba and its collection of curiosities had come to encompass a diversity of intensely modern and eminently visual entertainment forms, pointing in particular to the rise of the moving image (katsudō shashin). Yoshimi Shunya, Toshi no doramaturugi [Dramaturgy of the City] (Tokyo: Seibundō, 1987).
36 As can be seen in Kafū’s choice for the novel’s title. Kafū self-consciously used the synthetic character “Boku” to designate the Sumida River, a character first created by the 17th Century scholar Hayashi Jussai, that serves to evoke a continuum between the mythology of the Edo literatus-pornographer and that of the modern bourgeois male intellectual. Nagai Kafū, “Bokutō Kidan — Sakugo no kotoba”, in Nagai Kafū Zenshū, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994).
wake of the slum-clearance movement and the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. The narrator cherishes the anonymity granted to him in this area, as well as the secretive O-yuki’s beauty, who he runs into and who invites him to her apartment on that first night out in Mukōjima. He begins to frequent the prostitute’s house, and soon realizes that O-yuki, who is unaware of his status as a public cultural figure, has fallen in love with him. At this point, he decides to end his visits to the prostitute. In the autumn, he finds out that O-yuki has been sent to a hospital, and has not come back...

O-yuki’s vanishing body is the novel’s condition of possibility, what allows the narration to take place. For Kafū’s narrative can only begin in the evocation of a now absent object, and through it, the otherness of the “Island Beyond”—available to him because of its femininity, poverty and atemporality. O-yuki is not just a narrative device; she is Mukōjima as the island beyond, the vanishing East of the Sumida River — Bokutō.

In this light, Bokutō Kidan appears as an exercise in toponymy, in the word’s strictest etymological sense: the function of the novel is to name the place, and thus the evocation of landscape undergirds and finally takes over the narrative. The frequently made observations regarding the novel’s unconventional format — its free-wheeling intertextuality, and the first-person narrative with its tantalizing autobiographical details — only begin to make sense when viewing their function in toto as a practice for naming and conjuring a vanishing city.

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37 Yoshimi states that “private prostitution” (shishō) was an entirely modern phenomenon altogether. These small-scale operations diverged from the previous teahouse culture, as prostitutes bargained directly with their clients, sometimes aggressively seeking patrons in the streets. See Yoshimi Shunya, Toshi no doramaturugi.
38 Stephen Snyder has examined how the novel’s classically framed demi-monde narrative serves as a foil for an experiment in speculative metafiction. This observation, however, does not account for the prostitute, who is in Snyder’s view a metaphor for the limits of the narratable. Snyder’s gesture paradoxically erases the significance of O-yuki’s gender and her ultimately vanishing body. Stephen Snyder, Fictions of Desire.
Kafū encompassed the visual in his practice of toponymy, resorting to photography as an aid. The private edition of Bokutō Kidan was published with photographs by the author, which served the purpose of illustrating the geography of the Asakusa area.\textsuperscript{40} A similar practice is present in his other writings. Notably, among the photographs that accompany the private edition of his essay “Omokage” (“Shadows,” 1938), one image anticipates Hosoe’s Arakawa scene. It presents the same marshy embankments, punctuated by electric transmission towers. Underneath the image, a verse reads, “Chased by lightning a river-bank runs.”\textsuperscript{41}

Were we to abide by Kafū’s “counter-modernist” mythology, this photograph would be a nostalgic throwback, as the electric lightning of modernity chases a fleeing, palimpsestic river. But, rather, is this not the very same lightning that illuminated O-yuki’s face on that first night in her house? Is this not the unexpected moment that engraves in the viewer’s retina the after-image that will be all that is left in a body’s absence?

Endless rooftops of those many dirty houses. Looking at the city-lights’ reflection on the heavy, oppressive night skies before the storm, O-yuki and I leaned on the windowsill in that pitch-dark room in the house’s second floor, holding our sweating hands together, speaking in riddles, when a sudden flash of lightning lit her profile. That scene stays vividly in my eyes, without ever waning...\textsuperscript{42}

In the final photographs from Kikan Shashin Eizō, Yotsuya almost disappears into the background: sitting on a wall, playing with fireworks in Kiba, on the border of Fukagawa (fig. 22); or standing by the Asahi beer brewery near the Azuma bridge (fig. 23). An omen, perhaps, for Yotsuya will permanently fade out. In subsequent photographs, there are just

\textsuperscript{40}The seventeenth delivery of Kafū’s novel in the Asahi Shinbun included an actual map of the area.
the factories, the waterfront wasteland, the no-man’s land between the city and the bay.43

The viewer revisits this landscape and can only but wonder, where has she gone? As with the photograph of the Tōbu bowling complex in Nishi-Arai (fig. 24), bland signs of progress become new markers of these sites’ abjection.

Yotsuya disappears, but the affect remains. The photographer brings the viewer back to the wasteland, now monumentalized in her absence (fig. 25 and 26). Hosoe radicalizes Kafū’s toponymy, by showing how a “Private Landscape” comes into being in the vertigo of the minute-after, when in the irrevocable absence of a desired body, it is the landscape itself that becomes the flesh.

By erasing Yotsuya’s body, Hosoe’s photographs literalize Kafū’s displacement, by actualizing his conflation of O-yuki and Bokutō into images. Yotsuya’s suspect sexual ambiguity has already crossed out a question of documentation and “realism.” This is clearly not intended as a anti-historical record of the city read only through the present. On the contrary, the photographs do not seek to hold onto the present; they corroborate death. Yotsuya is a ghost.

Ghosts are simultaneously comic and terrifying... [Photography] represents what is utterly past and yet this refuse was once the present... A shudder runs through the beholder/viewer of old photographs. For they do not make visible the knowledge of the original but rather the spatial configuration of a moment...44

For Siegfried Kracauer, snapshots eventually become the ghostly evidence that defamiliarize the perceived “reality” of images. Thus landscape is only a series of elements until articulated in a photograph. The person who was once in front of the camera, and

43 The remainder of the series has been published intermittently. See, for instance Kikan WORKSHOP, vol. 5 (June 1975), and vol. 6 (January 1976).
identified with her clothing, is reduced by the photograph to an outmoded, defamiliarized sum of the elements of prior self. Perversely, the accumulation of visible proof in the media that seeks to retain this historical visible “reality” for its subjects, in fact reinforces the viewer’s certainty of the visible’s transience:

The camera can also capture the figures of the beautiful girls and young gentlemen. That the world devours them is a sign of the fear of death. What the photographs by their sheer accumulation attempt to banish is the recollection of death, which is part and parcel of every memory-image.45

In their insistence on the absence of the body, Hosoe’s photographs function more as memory-images than normative photography, achieving the objective of a counter-documentary practice. That the photographs seemingly reinscribe death within the landscape of the periphery should give pause: are they simply restating Mukōjima as the barren land of the dead?

However, a rhetoric of absence is not necessarily one of loss. In the series, Hosoe creates a haunted landscape of the returning.46 By deploying the trope of the vanishing, the photographer also seeks out the gaze of the viewer, asking him to complete the photograph.

45 Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography”: 433.
46 This aspect of Hosoe’s construction of landscape strongly resonates with the theories of Maria Torok. In her revisitation of psychoanalysis, Torok suggested thinking melancholia, the sickness of mourning, as a productive state, through the figure of the returning ghost of the lost object. This is a return that disrupts the everyday, throwing the subject back into the past through the memory of pleasure — a return that accounts for improper (in this case, erotomanic) reactions to death. Torok narrates the case of a man who goes alone to a restaurant and places an order for two. Unable or unwilling to accept death, the man acts as if his partner was actually there, a partial recovery of the absent figure found in the repetition of a familiar episode. Crucially, Torok’s articulation allows for a recentering of the experience of loss on an active subject. Such articulation accounts for the return to the scene of loss — and the affective ambivalence of such a return — as part of a quest to create meaning. Maria Torok, “Mourning or Melancholia” in Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, The Shell and the Kernel I: Renewals of Psychoanalysis, translated by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
For the series to be completed, it is the viewer who must actively haunt the “Private Landscape.”

The “Private Landscape” is a mise-en-scène that invites the viewer to enact the wasteland as an indomitable site of pleasure and possibility. Hosoe forces a reconsideration of the wasteland as the setting of fortuitous encounters, of stories of love and rejection, distancing the viewer’s affective response from the once unremarkable periphery, colonized and depersonalized through the 1960s as the spatial refuse of industrial development. Yotsuya’s spectral presence is recreated in a rhetoric of pleasures past that as part of a program of re-enactment is also conjugated in the future. In the series, Hosoe creates resistance by projecting a fictitious past that produces in Tokyo’s wasteland a haunted landscape, in order to reclaim what threatens to become the site of absence.

**Invisible Cities**

Tokyo’s waterways are frequently discussed as if they were visually self-evident. Bound in concrete, covered up by highways, monitored, surveyed, soiled and cleaned, reclaimed and disavowed, the complex of rivers, streams and channels that characterizes the city’s alluvial-deltaic topography has been irreversibly transformed throughout a century of industrial growth.

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47 The question of how the work genders viewership is vexed. The photographs effectively interpellate the viewer as male, seeking his identification with the narrative through mechanisms such as the almost cinematic framing of POV shots, and the deployment of Yotsuya’s returned gaze. This should not be at all surprising, considering that the work uses a highly masculinist urtext as its base. On the other hand, Yotsuya’s gender ambiguity opens up the possibility of another politics through excess, presenting a “third meaning” that assists in the construction of landscape as a space of political speculation.
For many, Tokyo’s waterways are visible evidence of the city’s past. French urban geographer Augustin Berque, for instance, has written that they present the observer with enduring proof of the ravages that high economic growth policies wrought upon the city’s environment during the long 1960s. Berque writes also about how these symbolic sites catalyzed struggles, led by several generations of residents’ movements (jumin undō) that sought to put a stop to the environmental and social costs of redevelopment. In architectural historian Jinnai Hidenobu’s view, the concrete scars occlude, but cannot completely conceal the true, essential Edo-ness of Tokyo: a mindful eye can easily access the past in the remains of the water-city by superimposing the historical map onto the city’s current form. Tracing the concrete-bound topography assists in explaining the immanent order in the apparent chaos of Tokyo’s layout. Recovering the waterways also presents an opportunity for a new urban program that focuses on the harmonization of life-quality or environmental amenities and industrial and commercial infrastructure. On the other hand, Jinnai’s account of the city resonates with what historian Carol Gluck called an invented Edo. His Edō-Tōkyō collapses into a timeless cultural space, whose past and present coexists and project into the future.

The methods and ideological stances of the arguments introduced here may diverge, but the theoretical stakes in presenting the built environment as an historical index are nonetheless related. The authors discuss a relationship between the visible, built

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49 Jinnai had an important influence on the urban studies boom (toshi-ron būmu) of the 1980s, by introducing a plausible academic methodology and framework to the debate. The architectural historian stressed the possibilities for urban planning enabled by his notion of Edo-Tokyo — a concern that he would continue to examine in subsequent publications. Jinnai Hidenobu Tōkyō no kākan jinruigaku. [Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1985).
environment and the unseen — a concealed topography, a latent history — through the idea of landscape as a self-evident index. Jinnai's is an adversarial voice engaging a discourse of authenticity that aims towards the recuperation of the "truth" beneath such landscape. Alternatively, through the positivistic tradition of the social sciences, Berque seeks to position landscape as witness to the struggle of History.

In this chapter, I have taken a different approach to Tokyo's waterways, seeking to problematize more generally the question of landscape. In doing so I have built on Jinnai’s allusion to the elegiac tradition best exemplified by John Ruskin, who evoked in the opening passages of Stones of Venice (1857) the fleeting vision of a haunted city, whose reflection is indistinguishable from its actual body — a city whose undeniable materiality is simultaneously doubled by a ghostly presence. I offer here a tentative definition of landscape: a shadow of the city; the invisible made visible.

In the chapter I documented the city as both a megalopolis and a wasteland. In recovering the paradoxical centrality of the periphery to modernity, the study of landscape leads to questions regarding the nature of resistance and where such resistance might be possible at the end of the postwar democratic consensus. The objects I examined delineate a peripheral geography of the city’s only possible place: the haunted landscape where Tokyo meets the Bay. These sites lie at the two extremes of this period: the plan for a new civic and business axis to be built above Tokyo Bay proposed by Tange Kenzō in 1961 and actor Yotsuya Simone’s blurry face captured by photographer Hosoe Eikoh on a boat-trip down the Sumida river from 1971. Through the juxtaposition of these projects, I have sought to
explore a relationship of contiguity: landscape as a visualization of anxiety.\textsuperscript{51} Tokyo’s peripheral, filthy waterways mediate between these two poles as they recreate a possible city through its periphery.

Through this work, I demonstrated that Tokyo’s waterways are inscribed within active imaginaries of the city that are not mere reflections or representations.\textsuperscript{52} In their creation of landscape, images produce the city. Instead, I posit these images as embodied strategies for participation within the everyday: they transform by naming what surrounds them. The aim of this exercise in interpretation is to return these objects to the social, acknowledging their transformative capacity. The ultimate importance of these imaginaries of the city is that they constitute material for a counter-history, an affective history that moves from the melancholy of the postwar period to the precariousness of the “new” economy.\textsuperscript{53} Such affective history of postwar Japan can only begin to be conjured from the rivers and the waterfront, the contested wasteland that surrounds Tokyo Bay.

\textsuperscript{51} A strategy usually associated with the fin-de-siècle art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, comparisons have often been erroneously portrayed as illustrating formal poles in an autonomous dialectic of art. Joan Hart has explained the importance of the comparison model in terms of Wölfflin’s Neo-Kantian psychologism. Through his use of comparisons, Wölfflin sought to provide a method for understanding deeper psychological trends, rather than posit an evolutionary theory of art. Joan Hart, “Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics,” \textit{Art Journal} (1982): 292-300.

\textsuperscript{52} I use here the word \textit{active} as opposed to the Austinian \textit{performative}, in order to highlight the latter concept’s heavily representationalist afterlife. By contrast, in using the word active I mean to evoke the tradition of Actions in art, their \textit{presentational} ontology, and crucially, their defining intersubjective component, or \textit{commissure}, first identified by art historian Kristine Stiles. Kristine Stiles, “Performance” \textit{Critical Terms for Art History}, 2nd Edition. Edited by Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003): 75-97.

Conclusion
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Some Notes On The Modern Cult of Ruins

Expo ’70 is as an apt endpoint for this dissertation, which has explored marginality as a trope in the experimental culture of Japan in the 1960s. Expo ’70 exemplifies the uneasy coexistence of avant-gardism and state capital, and it highlights the profound ambivalence that many of the artists discussed here felt towards the national project. However, it also reveals the permanent haunting of Japan’s postwar period by its past. In Expo ’70 an undercurrent of pessimism seeped through the official veneer of technological optimism and disrupted its narrative of unrelenting progress. The exhibit reflected equivocal temporalities even while it was supposed to be all about the future. It was haunted by the past that was present in photographs of a bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki that were included in the Japanese Pavilion and that resisted cooption into the official narrative. In this sense, one telling image invoked by participants and critics at Expo ’70 is that of the ruin.

Shortly after the end of the 34th Olympic Games of 1964, the Japanese government submitted a proposal to the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) to host a universal exhibition in Osaka. As in the case of the Olympic Games, no Asian
country had ever hosted such an event in the history of international exhibitions, which is intertwined with modernity itself as well as the history of industrialization. The event was highly symbolic. Expo ’70 was a celebration of the mesmerizing economic growth that Japan had experienced throughout the long 1960s; its unequivocal message was that the country had finally made it to the top.

Held under the slogan of “Harmony and Progress for Humanity,” the official message of optimism for a world of endless, technology-driven prosperity was conveyed by a spectacular array of futuristic architectural structures, which housed exhibits that made use of the latest display techniques gleaned from experimental art. In fact, some noted avant-garde artists themselves, Japanese and foreign, directly produced some of the pavilions, or contributed to their programming. The myriad pavilions, representing nations all over the world, and the private corporations that were taking Japanese products across the globe, made the Japanese spectators feel the future in the present, and the world overseas at home. The investment paid off: the staggering amount of visitors to the exhibition testifies to its success.¹

The role of artists and architects was paramount in planning the exhibition. The organizers assigned the eccentric painter Okamoto Tarō as its theme producer, in charge of developing the main exhibit, and commissioned the architect Tange Kenzō, who

¹ Despite a fairly large amount of foreign visitors the largest amount of visitors to Expo ’70, was, by far, domestic. Nihon Bankoku Hakurankai Kyōkai (ed.) Nihon Bankoku Hakurankai kōshiki kiroku. (Suita: Nihon Bankoku Hakurankai Kyōkai, 1970).
worked closely with his former students, the Metabolist leader Kurokawa Kishō and Isozaki Arata, to design the tree-shaped plan of the exhibition site. The participation of experimental artists in the event, on the other hand, ended up polarizing the art world. Some artists, notably those further away from the Tokyo arts scene, assumed a confrontational stance towards participants. The radical performance collective Zero Jigen (Zero Dimension), for instance, immediately branded itself han-paku (anti-Expo), and actively agitated against the exhibition, repurposing their notorious naked rituals (gishiki) as protests against the dominating ideology expressed in the exhibit.²

A major rift emerged among the formerly amicable Anti-Art generation some of whom decided to take part in Expo ’70, and others who took the stance of not participating. The architect Isozaki Arata was closely connected with central figures in the experimental art scene, notably Yoshimura Masunobu, who he enlisted to provide art for the exhibition. Some participants found in Expo ’70 the opportunity to reach out to the masses, and collaborate with engineers in the production of increasingly ambitious environments. Others, who initially opposed it, eventually relented and took part in some way or another.³

Observers such as the critic Haryu Ichirō, noted that the organizers pushed an ideology of “super-power nationalism (daikoku nashonarizumu),” conveyed in the format

³ Such was the case of both Tōmatsu Shomei and Hijikata Tatsumi.
of Expo ’70 itself: a return to the old national pavilion model that had been abandoned in the previous Montreal Expo ’67, which had instead proposed thematic exhibitions. Moreover, to Haryu, it seemed evident that the project was tied to the suppression of dissent. The connection to a state project, which was devised to overlap with the tenth anniversary of the ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty: a shiny distracter that also served to reinforce the ideology of state-led development, monopoly capital, and furthered indoctrination in the belief in industrial and technological growth at any cost. The critic saw in Expo ’70 the blueprint for the structure of domination of the following decade.

To Haryu, Expo ’70 appeared as the very ruins of culture. Writing in the inaugural issue of KEN, a magazine published by the photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei, Haryu invoked a haunting vision of the still empty exhibition grounds.

…Why does this papier-mâché city that dreams about the future remind me so much of the always momentary, the ephemeral, and is so full of the impression of ruins (haikyō)? It is not just because … the architecture has been built in order for it to be dismantled. … It is because the rawness of the everyday has been completely stripped from it, and therefore all images of the future fade away…

His description of this disembodied “invisible city” resonates with a photograph by Tōmatsu of the Symbol Zone, the central, automatized plaza designed by Isozaki, which was covered by a roof designed by Tange Kenzō that was penetrated by Okamoto

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Tarō's *Tower of the Sun* (1970). This large, phallic sculpture, which was meant as a monument to humanity's creative energy, became for critics the symbol of Expo '70 and its worship of capital. The *bure* of this ghostly landscape replicates the hallucinogenic, muffled quality of a festival that relied on fantastic structures and disembodied images instead of objects to convey its narrative of progress.

Haryu was scathing in his assessment of the participation by artists and architects in the reproduction of state ideology. In a passage, he refers to the conflicting interests of this ever-failing avant-garde, who he compares to the groups of old tourists from rural areas that flocked to the exhibition site:

Most of the scholars, artists, designers and engineers that participate in the Expo, are in essence just like these rural tourist groups. One day, their master decided to set up a festival called “Expo ’70,” and these patient, industrious worker ants swarmed to the job, overcome by a sense of purpose.... The participants in Expo ’70 must gradually confront the rift between appearances and true intentions. They cling to the logic of appearances, while waiting for the day the festival will start, and yet the moment of a true feeling of liberation never arrives. While spectators come expecting to satisfy their individual desires, and are co-opted by superpower nationalism and economic prosperity, they, who are the temple virgins (*miko*) of this festival, end up merely satisfying their own individual desires under the public aims of the future city and the information revolution...5

To Haryu, the participating artists had given up on the social function of the avant-garde altogether. Their exploration of technological possibilities was meaningless,
as it failed to engage its transformative potential. They had lost their commitment to community, and were acting merely out of the selfish wish to fulfill their own desires.

While Haryu’s assessment of the architect Isozaki Arata was somewhat less stringent, his participation in the event—given his proximity to the artistic avant-garde—raised eyebrows. Indeed the architect was keenly aware that his participation in the event was questionable from a strict avant-gardist perspective. Writing shortly after the end of Expo ’70, Isozaki, who had collaborated with Tange and his disciples in the project, recounted a breakdown he suffered just as the exhibit was about to open. His body had given in to the sheer exhaustion; he dropped out and could not attend the opening.

Regarding Expo ’70, I can only say that it was exhausting… This was because I was so caught up in its depths that I had also become critically impotent (hihyō ga funō datta sei mo aru)…

Now I feel as if I had been drafted into a war: I am left with a feeling of tremendous exhaustion, and a bitter taste in my mouth that I cannot get rid of. It is clear that this comes from the fact that I was drafted in from the beginning, and while half-way through I had a sense of emotional loss (datsu raku), I couldn’t find a reason to justify my escape. In the end I superficially kept my relations just to fulfill my duty.\(^6\)

Isozaki turned to the rhetoric of impotence to articulate his relationship to the event, and by extension, the state. In this account, he is first absorbed into the technocratic structure of the Expo organizers; he becomes “critically impotent”; he

finally undergoes a literal hysteric reaction when his body shuts down in exhaustion
after experiencing an intense sense of loss (datsu\-ru\-ku).

The essay where Isozaki narrated this episode was the epilogue to his first
volume of collected writings, published in 1971. The essay provided an overview of his
evolving thought in relation to his trajectory as an architect throughout the 1960s.
Isozaki sets up the essay in relation to this feeling of datsu\-ru\-ku, introducing it first in
conjunction with a foundational event: the denouement of the Anpo struggle. For
Isozaki, this moment defined the decade, not in terms of radicalization, but rather, as an
anticlimax.

Isozaki tied the feeling of despondency and hopelessness that the Anpo struggle
generated to the figure of the ruin, and used it in the essay to revisit his architectural
program from the vantage point of the extreme negation of optimism and progress. The
ruinous landscape of a bombed Hiroshima served as the primal scene. For the architect,
the ruin, as a reminder of loss, contained the possibility of an aesthetics of negation that
radically undid modernity.

**Melancholy Sites**

The rhetoric of marginality emerges in relation to such sense of loss. Marginality
was a response to a perceived crisis of representation in politics and aesthetics. The
artists and intellectuals whose work I have examined in this study used marginality to transform this endgame and reposition it as a generative moment. It is a rhetoric that operated through an affective register and assisted in the constitution of a space of political speculation. I have identified three main themes in these artists’ figuration of marginality: impotence, ghostliness, and the periphery. Their exploration of these themes, I have argued led them eventually to landscape.

The figure of impotence was a highly masculinist trope deployed in both aesthetic and political discourse used to portray the endgame of politics and aesthetics in the aftermath of the Anpo protests. On the one hand, impotence was used to characterize Japan’s semi-colonial subjugation under the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty of 1960, and the inability of collective action to stop its ratification, and re-ratification. On the other, it signaled the impossibility of establishing a truly revolutionary avant-garde in the face of the hegemony of capital and the political stalemate.

In the work of Kudō Tetsumi and Miki Tomio, however, impotence is transformed into the critical site for the rearticulation of politics and aesthetics. In Kudō’s work, impotence appears as the very proof of the possibility of an unexpected and possibly violent social change. Miki, on the other hand, transformed impotence into a twofold critique of both the notion of free choice in the postwar, consumption-driven democracy and the humanist doctrine of engagement as a liberal ethics of the choosing.
Throughout the decade, intellectuals increasingly referred to the perceived depoliticization of Japanese society. Critics on the left, as well as the right, blamed Japan’s new affluence along with its corporatization for a pervasive disinterest in politics. Mishima Yukio referred to this discourse when he spoke of Japan as a castrated society. In Mishima’s assessment, the loss of the prewar order deprived its citizens of a figure of authority that allowed them to become “adult” political subjects. The novelist’s political program, in this regard, sought the recuperation of a lost phallus. This in turn led him to explore radical forms of political action – namely terrorism – as a valid form of intervention. This concern with direct action as a means of redressing castration appears as a common stance with the revaluation and legitimization of violence among certain groups in the New Left that anticipated the formation of the Japanese Red Army Faction (Nihon sekigun-ha).

The discourse of impotence is ghostly. Such ghostliness arises from the notion of castration. The figure of castration represents a haunting: something has been lost, but it recurs in its absence. Mishima’s recuperative political action—his remedy for castration— is a form of mediumship that seeks to conjure what has been lost. It is for this reason that his artistic production is intimately related to his political program. Artistic media, such as writing, photography, and film, were the means for him to imagine and conjure the lost object. Through art, he himself becomes what had been lost. In his self-presentation, Mishima sought to portray himself as the idealized martyr. He
relied on photography’s capacity to capture past presences in order to channel forces beyond.

Mishima’s—and other critics’—fetishization of student violence should also be understood in terms of this logic of the recuperation of agency. Student violence acted as a ghostly image—it was an open signifier that nevertheless eluded its full appropriation by critical discourse. For the students, violence was a tool in a larger struggle, but to critics it seemed ritual-like, aesthetic, and beyond the traditional political sphere. Tōmatsu Shōmei’s haunting photographs of protestors capture this ambivalence and elusiveness of student violence as a sign. The photographer exploited the ambiguity of the photographic image, formally enhancing its ghostliness through bure in order to portray this tension of meaning. Ultimately, Tōmatsu took the ghostliness of student violence as a sign and used it to portray the city. In his depiction of Shinjuku, violence is juxtaposed with consumption as part of the portrayal of the city as the underground. His photographs create a phantasmagoria whose function is to frame the invisible, immanent ghosts of the contemporary city.

The portrayal of the periphery is also a strategy to address the question of loss. Here there is an opposite tendency—one that creates a program for future action based on the recreation of nostalgia. Hosoe Eikoh’s collaboration with Hijikata Tatsumi in Kamaitachi, for example, creates a Tōhoku to return to—a fictional landscape of the Northeast. But in its creation of landscape as a fiction, such a return to Tōhoku is
emptied of the signifiers of landscape as homeland. All that is left is the gesture of return, and a pervasive feeling of nostalgia. This non-referential landscape in turn becomes a screen for ambivalent feelings towards the national community. The staging of landscape as a fiction is also present in Hosoe’s Private Landscape series. Here Hosoe creates the return to the urban periphery as a way to resignify the city through the vanishing figure of Yotsuya Simone. The periphery then appears as a site where there is an immanent disruption of temporality. This disruption occurs through recurring hauntings that are central to Japan’s postwar trajectory, as seen in Tange Kenzō’s work.

Landscape is an important point of contention. W.T.J. Mitchell has observed that the genre of landscape is open-ended, and contains a multiplicity of meanings. Importantly, it operates at an affective level.

If one wanted to continue to insist on power as the key to the significance of landscape, one would have to acknowledge that it is a relatively weak power compared to that of armies, police forces, governments, and corporations. Landscape exerts a subtle power over people, eliciting a broad range of emotions and meanings that may be difficult to specify. This indeterminacy of affect seems, in fact, to be a crucial feature of whatever force landscape can have. As the background within which a figure, form, or narrative act emerges, landscape exerts the passive force of setting, scene, and sight. It is generally the “overlooked,” not the “looked at,” and it can be quite difficult to specify what exactly it means to say that one is “looking at the landscape.”

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Such “indeterminacy of affect” that can be contained by landscape is what makes it useful within the rhetoric of marginality. Miki’s incongruously large EAR in the Expo ’70 grounds, and Kudo’s gigantic penis/chrysalis carved on the live rock on the side of a mountain; Mishima’s evocation of the underground as the Beyond; Tōmatsu’s ghostly portrayal of Shinjuku; Hijikata’s fictional Northeast and Hosoe’s visions of the periphery; the uncanny hauntings that recur in Tange’s visionary architecture: these are all ruinous landscapes, full of markers of loss, but also signs of the immanent capacity of change. The anxieties and pleasures they convey are the means through which they construct an alternative space for political speculation. Marginality provided a melancholy second-life to the avant-garde. From the scene of loss to the scene of radical negation, marginality’s ultimate usefulness resides in its capacity to convey the other history—a disruption of progressive narratives that calls attention to an underlying disaffection.
Figure 1: Kudō Tetsumi, scene from *Philosophy of Impotence*, Boulogne Studios, Paris, 1962.
Figure 2. Kudō Tetsumi. *Proliferating Chain Reaction I*, 1959.
Figure 3. Kudō Tetsumi. *Proliferating Chain Reaction in X-Style Basic Substance.* 1960.
Figure 5. Kudō Tetsumi *Philosophy of Impotence*. 1962.
Figure 6. Kudō Tetsumi. *Philosophy of Impotence.* 1962 (detail).
Figure 7. Kudō Tetsumi. *Philosophy of Impotence*. 1963. Photograph by Kudō Hiroko.
Figure 8. Miki Tomio. *Rose’s Ear*. 1962.
Figure 9. Miki Tomio. *Your Insurance*. 15th Yomiuri Indépendant Exhibit. 1963.
Figure 10. Catalogue for the Japanese Pavilion at the 34th Venice Biennale (1968), designed by Sugiura Köhei.
Figure 11. Entry on Miki Tomio in the Japanese Pavilion’s catalogue for the 34th Venice Biennale.
Figure 12. Kudō Tetsumi. Monument to Metamorphosis, 1970.
Figure 13. Miki Tomio. Untitled *EAR*, 1970. Expo '70, Osaka.
Figure 1. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From “Momentous 1970: On The Eve.” Camera Mainichi (December 1969).
Figure 2. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Rural Politician* (1956).

Figure 3. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Hiroshima-Nagasaki Document* (1961).
Figure 4. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From Nagasaki 11:02 (1966).
Figure 5. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Gakuen no kohai.” Kikan Shashin Eizō, vol. 2. (September 1969).
Figure 6. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Gakuen no kohai.” Kikan Shashin Eizō, vol. 2. (September 1969).
Figure 7. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Gakuen no kohai.” Kikan Shashin Eizō, vol. 2. (September 1969).

Figure 8. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Gakuen no kohai.” Kikan Shashin Eizō, vol. 2. (September 1969).
Figure 9. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Gakuen no kohai.” *Kikan Shashin Eizō*, vol. 2. (September 1969).
Figure 10. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Gakuen no kohai.” *Kikan Shashin Eizō*, vol. 2. (September 1969).

Figure 11 (*Left*). Tamura Shigeru (et al.) *Nihon Jinmin no shōri eno zenshin*. (Tokyo: Nihon kyōsantō chūō iiinkai shuppanbu, n.d. [1960?]). Cover.

Figure 12 (*Right*). Tamura Shigeru (et al.), *Nihon Jinmin...*
Figure 13. Tamura Shigeru (et al.), *Nihon Jinmin...*
Figure 14. Tamura Shigeru (et al.), *Nihon Jinmin*...
Figure 15. Tōmatsu Shōmei. “Hansen.” Camera Mainichi (October 1969).
Figure 16. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).

Figure 17. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).
Figure 18. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).

Figure 19. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).
Figure 20. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).

Figure 21. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).
Figure 22. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).

Figure 23. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).
Figure 24. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).

Figure 25. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).
Figure 26. Tōmatsu Shōmei. From *Oh! Shinjuku* (1969).
Images Chapter 3

Figure 1. Unknown photographer (Tōjo Studio). Mishima Yukio and four members of the Shield Society.
Figure 2. Hosoe Eikoh. From *Man and Woman* (1959).
Figure 3. Hosoe Eikoh. From *Man and Woman* (1959).

Figure 4. Hosoe Eikoh. From *Man and Woman* (1959).
Figure 5. Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei* #1 (1961).
Figure 6. Hosoe Eikoh. Barakei #2 (1962)

Figure 7 (Left). Hosoe Eikoh. Barakei #6 (1961).

Figure 8 (Right). Hosoe Eikoh. Barakei #8 (1961).
Figure 9. Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei* #16 (1961).

Figure 10. Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei* #17 (1961).
Figure 11. Hosoe Eikoh. Barakei #19 (1961).
Figure 12. Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei # 29* (1961).
Figure 13. Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei* #34 (1961).

Figure 14. Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei* #32 (1962).
Figure 14 (Right). Hosoe Eikoh. *Barakei* #38 (1961).
Figure 15. Shinoyama Kishin. “Martyrdom of St. Sebastian.” From the series *Masculine Deaths* (1968).
Images Chapter 4

Figure 1. Hosoe Eikoh. From Kamaitachi (1969).
Figure 3. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).

Figure 4. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).
Figure 5. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).
Figure 6. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).
Figure 7. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).
Figure 8. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).

Figure 9. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).
Figure 10. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).

Figure 11. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).
Figure 12. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).

Figure 13. Hosoe Eikoh, from Kamaitachi (1969).
Figure 14. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).
Figure 15. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).

Figure 16. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).
Figure 17. Hosoe Eikoh, from *Kamaitachi* (1969).

Figure 18. Hosoe Eikoh from *Kamaitachi* (1969).
Figure 19. Kimura Ihē. Ōmagari. (1957)

Figure 20. Attributed to Tamoto Kenzō. Close to Ōnuma (c. 1880?)
Figure 21. Yokoo Tadanori. Poster announcing performance of *Hijikata Tatsumi to Nihonjin* and the exhibit *Totetsu mo naku higekitekina kigeki*. 1968.
Figure 22. Hasegawa Roku. Hijikata’s grand entrance in *Revolt of the Flesh* (1968).
Figure 23. Nakatani Tadao. Hijikata dancing *Revolt of the Flesh* (1968).
Figure 24. Yokoo Tadanori. Poster for Bara-iro dansu. 1965.
Figure 25. Stage view in Barairo dansu (1965).

Figure 26. Tamano Kōichi in Barairo dansu. (Photo by Nakatani Tadao, 1965.)
Figure 27. Two unidentified dancers (Kasai Akira and Ishii Michitaka?) in *Barairo dansu* (1965).

Figure 28. Ohno Kazuo in *Barairo dansu* (1965).
Images Chapter 5

Figure 1: Tange Kenzō from "Tokyo Keikaku 1960," Japan Architect, March 1961.
Figure 2: Hosoe Eikoh "Sumidagawa," from the Private Landscape series, 1971.

Figure 3: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 4: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 5: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."

Figure 6: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 7: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 8: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."

Figure 9: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 10: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."

Figure 11: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 12: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 13: Tange Kenzō, from "Tokyo Megalopolis."
Figure 14: Hosoe Eikoh, "Hato-no-machi," *A Private Landscape*, 1971.
Figure 15: Hosoe Eikoh, "Hato-no-machi," *A Private Landscape*, 1971.

Figure 16: Hosoe Eikoh, "Asakusa," *A Private Landscape*, 1971.
Figure 18: Hosoe Eikoh, "Asakusa Yashiki-dōri," A Private Landscape, 1971.
Figure 19: Hosoe Eikoh, "Hato-no-machi," A Private Landscape, 1971.
Figure 20: Hosoe Eikoh "Arakawa," A Private Landscape, 1971.


Figure 24: Hosoe Eikoh, "Near the Kototoi Elementary School (Arakawa)," A Private Landscape, 1975.

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**Biography**

Ignacio Adriásola Muñoz was born in Santiago, Chile in 1981. He attended college at Chiba University in Japan, on a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education. He obtained his BA in History from Chiba University where he studied Japanese art with Shinobu Ikeda, and eventually obtained an MA in Cultural History in 2009. In 2005, Ignacio moved to North Carolina to start graduate work at Duke University. He obtained his MA in Art History after successfully completing his preliminary exams in the spring of 2008.

Ignacio obtained Summer Research Fellowships from Duke’s Asia Pacific Studies Institute the years 2006 and 2009; and Research Travel Awards from the Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies and Women's Studies in 2008. He was the Mary D. Biddle Curatorial Fellow at the Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University in 2006-2007. He participated in the Franklin Dissertation Working Groups at the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke in 2009-2010. He was a Dissertation Fellow at the Department of Women's Studies at Duke University in 2010-2011. He has been chosen to be the Anne van Biema Postdoctoral Fellow in Japanese Art at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery for 2011-2012.