

Abstracts

Pierre Bonnard's Bathers: A Tentative Assumption from a Point of View of Japonisme

HIRAISHI, Masako

In this essay, I will examine a hypothesis on the Japonisme of Pierre Bonnard's Bathers. Bonnard was a founding member of the French avant-garde artist group "Les Nabis" and was so influenced by Japanese art that he was nicknamed "le Nabi très Japonard." His paintings and graphic works in the 1890s were characterized by flat, two-dimensional space construction and decorative expressive contour that he incorporated from Ukiyo-e woodblock prints. According to the commonly accepted theory, Bonnard gradually abandoned these methods of composition and moved on to a more mature style after the 1910s.

However, in one of the most important subjects of his late career, i.e. Bathers, we can point out characteristics that are seen as having originated in Japan, such as the use of a bird's eye view and abrupt trimming. We can assume that Bonnard deepened the Japonisme in his works through further research of Japanese art. It is also highly probable that he was inspired by bathers in the works of his impressionist predecessor, Edgar Degas.

(Curator, the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art)

Tetsugoro Yorozu's Clouds and Self-portraits: Interpreted through Zen

SAWADA, Keizo

One big mystery of the early creations of Tetsugoro Yorozu (1885-1927) are the clouds. They appear in *Nude Beauty* (1912), which marked his starting point as a painter, and then again over the head on several of the self-portraits he created during that same year and the next. This paper attempts to explore a new interpretation of the clouds he painted, and of his self-portraits, which can never be separated from those clouds. This is done by focusing on his experience with Zen, with which he was involved during his junior high school days and after graduation.

Yorozu never spoke about his own experiences with Zen. However, the influence of Zen and Buddhist ideologies can be recognized throughout the writings he left behind. In particular, the dualism of the subject and object is a fundamental issue in Zen and Buddhism, and his writings highlight that it was also a core issue for Yorozu. What resulted was a concentration of self-portraits which he painted concentrated around the periods when his internal sense of the subject-object issue grew stronger. The clouds are thus a symbol of Yorozu himself, in his ongoing fight around the dualism of the subject and object as a painter.

(Curator, the Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum)

Takeuchi Rofu in the Tokyo Era

NAGASHIMA, Keiya

In this thesis, I examined the Tokyo era works of Takeuchi Rofu (1874-1939), a Japanese-style painter born in Nagaoka City, Niigata Prefecture. Rofu moved to Tokyo in 1897 (Meiji 30), when he was 23 years old, and moved back to his home town after about 10 years. He never had his work displayed at art exhibitions, and instead produced commission work exclusively in his hometown until his death on July 14, 1939 (Showa 14), at the age of 65.

First, I summarized his movements around the Tokyo era, exhibition history, and change of his signature. The summary of his Tokyo activities, is as follows: (1) He had his works exhibited widely in many art exhibitions, corresponding to the position of his master, Kawabata Gyokusho, within the art world. (2) He participated in the "Nihon Bijutsuin" research group many times, and studied thoroughly with the group's main painters. (3) He was involved in both "Nihon Bijutsuin" and "Musei Kai" and challenged the new expression of Japanese-style painting from 1897 to 1906 (Meiji Period 30's.)

Next, I looked at his paintings in the Tokyo era by subject (landscapes, flowers and birds, figures). Here, I primarily examined existing works and works whose composition expresses itself from the illustration. The result was that in just over 10 years, there were found to be a larger variety of themes and styles than one could have imagined. He was trying to take in the style of not only the master Gyokusho, but of his surrounding painters as well. For a period of time he had an inclination towards naturalism, and I also learned that he made active attempts to approach Western realism in some of his works.

(Curator, the Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum)

Niou Mizushima's Illustrations for the Osaka Asahi Shimbun in the Early Taisho Period

KIRIHARA, Hiroshi

This paper introduces the illustrations of Niou Mizushima (1884-1958) which were published in the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* from 1913 to April 1917. It also covers some of his illustrations which were presented in other newspaper and magazines during the same period. The paper focuses on two main points;

First, this paper argues that one of Niou's similar illustration predating his own iconic illustrations of a mermaid that was attached to the short story by Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, which was titled *Ningyo no Nageki, Majutsushi (The Mermaid's Lament, The Magician)* and published by Shun'yodo in 1919, was actually previously published in the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*. Second, it points out that one of Niou's previous illustrations from the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* had the same title as the one which he showcased in the group exhibitions.

At this time, Niou's original Japanese-style paintings no longer exist, so hopefully introducing some of his interesting illustrations can express his abilities as an artist. Finally, this paper suggests that such illustrations could possibly become an indirect means to introduce his Japanese-style paintings as well.

(Chief Curator, the Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum)

Report on the Research at the Shigeko Kubota Video Art Foundation

HAMADA, Mayumi

The Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art is preparing a solo exhibition of Shigeko Kubota (1937-2015) which will tour at the National Museum of Art, Osaka, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. We received a research grant from the Pola Art Foundation in 2018 for the purpose of investigating her works, and surveyed works and documents primarily focused at the Shigeko Kubota Video Art Foundation in New York.

The Foundation's archive has more than 5000 materials and it was not possible to investigate all of them, but there were many discoveries made from observing her original works as well as unpublished documents. In this paper, I report on some of the points that appeared during our research on her most famous works, such as *Meta-Marcel: Window (Snow)* (1976-77), *Duchampiana: Bicycle Wheel* (1983), *River* (1979-81), *Niagara Falls I* (1985) and *Three Mountains* (1976-79). This is a report of the first-stage research we conducted, in order to clarify topics for future research.

(Curator, the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art)

Building the Taiko Collection

MATSUMOTO, Nahoko

The Taiko Collection was put together by companies that existed in Nagaoka from the 1950s to the 1970s. By 1979, three organizations (Taiko Sogo Bank, Nagaoka Cultural Center and the Museum of Contemporary art, Nagaoka) had collective possession of over 700 works of art under complicated ownership conditions. Now, 95 of the collection's works have become the core of our museum's collection, and the rest have been scattered all around the country. The chronology of how the collection was put together was investigated for the "Taiko Collection Revisited: An Anticipating Gaze" exhibition, held in 1993 to commemorate the opening of the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art. However, even now many points remain unclear. This report focuses on clarifying some of those points, particularly of the works collected in the 1970s, while reexamining the collection's overall significance.

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A supplement to "Sado Mokko: The Life and Works of Nakamura Bokushi"

MATSUYA, Kuninori

I made reference to "Sado Mokko: The Life and Works of Nakamura Bokushi" in issue #15 of the of the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art Research Bulletin (published 2016).

However, I later discovered new documents related to Bokushi during an investigation of the "All About Eguchi Sogen" exhibition held in 2018.

This report is intended to summarize my findings, supplement the previous paper, and to provide details and clarification for "The Life and Works of Nakamura Bokushi."

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