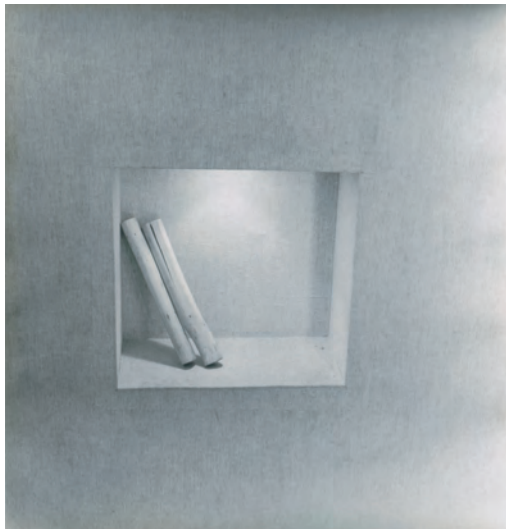
**ARTCOURT Gallery**

Yagi Art Management, Inc.

OAP ARTCOURT 1F 1-8-5 Tenmabashi Kita-ku Osaka 5300042 JAPAN

Saburo Murakami: Focus on the 70s



As a core member of the Gutai Art Association (hereafter, Gutai) in the mid-'50s, Saburo Murakami (1925–1996) was dedicated to avant-garde attitudes such as critically deviating from various forms of expression of the past, expanding the creative framework, and producing new modes of art. At the same time, while continually pursuing a unique perspective in regard to the link between the self and the outside world, the act of creating art, and the relationship between the work and others, Murakami developed his own type of expression.

Murakami's highly diverse body of work ranges from the well-known "paper-breakthrough" (*kami-yaburi*) performances and "ball-throwing paintings" (*tokyu-kaiga*), and the many paintings he created during the late '50s and '60s, to the series that emerged in the '70s following Gutai's breakup which recalls conceptual art and makes use of a minimal technique. His work exudes an enigmatic air that seems impossible to grasp with a single interpretation while conveying a penetrating impression that seems to be lined with a consistent philosophy and fixed methodology. By appearing to contain a single underlying thesis in the overall display or creating the sense that the exhibition in itself was intended as a single work, Murakami's series of solo shows in the '70s in particular indicate that the artist's specific concerns were embodied in an increasingly lucid form.

Focusing on the seven solo shows* that Murakami held between 1971 and 1977, this exhibition looks back at a period in the artist's career that has received relatively little attention in comparison to his work of the Gutai era. We have adopted a multifaceted approach in order to examine the content of each exhibition and trace Murakami's production activities at the time through his own handwritten memos and notes, photographs, and the works and objects which were created according to certain rules established before or during each event. Moreover, by presenting some ten newly restored paintings created between the early '50s and the late '70s, documentary footage of a "paper breakthroughs" dating to the early Gutai era, reedited versions of performances and an interview from the late '80s and early '90s as well as the aforementioned works and materials from the '70s, we hope to provide viewers with an opportunity to reconsider and reexamine the life and ideas Murakami pursued throughout his approximately 50-year career, problems related to the creation of art, and the methodologies that underlie the creative expressions that he developed and transformed in a variety of ways.

*Please refer to the exhibitions history marked with stars in the biography of page 3.

Above: Murakami placed wooden clappers in the middle of the gallery staircase in a solo show that is commonly referred to as the "wooden-clapper" exhibition.

Below: A list of works made by the artist for the same exhibition.

- ① 29,200の黒い丸
- ② 10,378の赤い丸
- ③ の作品 — 2
- ④ 朱の棒と鉛色の面 — 2
- ⑤ 南極から青と黒の臭 — 2
- ⑥ アメリカからの手紙
- ⑦ 神戸からの手紙
- ⑧ 朱の絵具
- ⑨ 黄の絵具
- ⑩ 外からと中から — 2

拍子木 — 白 white
拍子木 — 茶(褐色) brown

Dates: November 12 - December 17, 2011 *Closed on Mon., Sun. and National holidays.

Tuesday-Friday: 11:00 - 19:00 / Saturday: 11:00 -17:00

Location: ARTCOURT Gallery [1F OAP ARTCOURT, 1-8-5 Tenmabashi, Kita-ku, Osaka, Japan 5300042]

>> Talk*: Friday, November 25, 18:00~19:00, Admission free / Reception: 19:00~

***Speakers;**

Norio Imai [Artist] x Yukio Fujimoto [Artist] x Tsukasa Ikegami [Curator, Otani Memorial Art Museum, Nishinomiya City]

To coincide with this exhibition, FLIP BOOKS (Publishing group) is publishing a DVD/booklet set which contains footage of Saburo Murakami's post-1986 performances, including his "paper breakthroughs," given at various sites in Japan and abroad, and a video interview that was conducted with the artist in 1995. A piece of brown kraft paper covered with gold paint from Murakami's 1993 "paper-breakthrough" performance *Entrance, Sound* (Xebec Foyer, Kobe) has also been used for the cover of the booklet.

>> Ed. 3 / Price undecided

>> Filmed by Makiko Murakami and others / Edited by Yukio Fujimoto / Issued by FLIP BOOKS



Reference image:
Entrance, "GUTAI I" 1992, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History

For further information, please contact;

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Among Saburo Murakami's artistic concerns were the inevitable acceptance of chance that is born out of the relationship between one's self and one's subject, and the act of establishing this in the form of a work; the reuniting of time and space, which have been separated by thought, in a site through the use of a physical act; and the simple recognition and thorough enjoyment of the phenomena one sees before their eyes (i.e., the "here and now") rather than searching for an underlying conceptual reason or meaning by creating situations that are void of substance (empty states).

These concerns can be found in each of Murakami's expressions and words, including his "paper breakthroughs," which produced a magnetic field through the combination of violent movement and sharp sound that emerged when the artist's entire body crashed through several layers of brown kraft paper; and the countless "boxes" he presented as a mere presence rather than a container used to hold something.

In the '70s, following the breakup of the Gutai Art Association, Murakami organized a series of solo exhibitions as an independent artist. In these events, he might collect and dismantle a number of wooden boxes after he had placed them in various spots around the city,¹ listen raptly to the sounds visitors made with wooden clappers,² remain in the venue without uttering a word throughout the exhibition,³ or repeatedly pour water back and forth from one bowl to another.⁴ In other words, by vividly destroying traditional concepts regarding the "works" and the "exhibition," Murakami created a witty and stimulating "negotiation site" filled with realizations that led a simple act to be transformed from a casual everyday event into a thing of wonder and infinite creativity.

In this series of solo shows, in which a single thesis seems to pervade all of the displays or the exhibition itself is a single work, Murakami's awareness of "time" and "space," "certainty" and "chance," and "here and now" assumes an increasingly refined form. While on the one hand, Murakami's intention to share a phenomenon or experience with the viewer (other people) grew increasingly precise, the exhibitions also seemed to be interspersed with a deepening gaze that reflected his understanding of things, and a kind of sign that raised further questions regarding perception.

Here, we reflect and reexamine the content of each exhibition by newly arranging, categorizing, and discovering links via the notes in which Murakami recorded thoughts related to the creation of each space and scraps of paper containing flashes of inspiration, accumulations and traces of dialogues and actions that grew out of these activities, objects produced as works during the same period, and countless photographs documenting the situation surrounding each event. And by referring to some 20 materials and works, including charts detailing the placement and collection of the boxes used in Murakami's solo exhibition, *Box*, and memos from the handwritten conversations the artist engaged in with visitors during the so-called "silence" exhibition, it is possible to trace the trajectory of the artist's actions and thoughts. We have also attempted to reproduce the largely unknown "wooden-clappers" and the *Dislike for the Principle of Identity*⁵ exhibitions in their entirety. Moreover, by assembling films of the "paper breakthroughs" of the '50s and '60s that preceded these exhibitions, paintings from every phase of the artist's career, and documentary footage of several of his performances from the late '80s and early '90s, we have set out to introduce a series of streams that informed Saburo Murakami's artistic development over his approximately 50-year career.

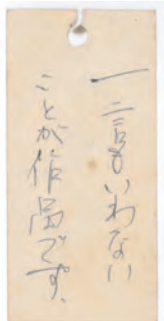
- *1. 1971 Solo exhibition titled *Box (Hako)* (Mori's Form, Osaka)
 - *2. 1973 Solo exhibition commonly known as "Wooden Clappers" (Hyoshigi) (Gallery Shunjukan, Osaka)
 - *3. 1973 Solo exhibition commonly known as "Silence" (*Mugon*) (Mugensha, Osaka)
 - *4. 1974 Solo exhibition "Water" (*Mizu*) (Shinanobashi Gallery Apron, Osaka)
 - *5. 1977 Solo exhibition titled *Dislike for the Principle of Identity* (*Jidoritsu no fukai*) (Galerie Kitano Circus, Kobe)
- *Murakami's own English translation of this exhibition title was *Displeasure by the Principle of Identity*.



Wooden boxes placed on the street in Osaka
From the solo exhibition: *Box* in '71
Photo by Hideo Natsutani



WORK
1963, 212 x 138 cm
VB paint, plaster, glue,
cotton cloth, wooden board



*'It is the work that I am
in perfect silence.
(without a single word)'*

Scraps of paper that the artist handed out to visitors to a 1973 solo exhibition: "Silence" (*Mugon*).



A performance in which Murakami erased visitors' names from the exhibition guest book immediately after they had been written.
From the solo exhibition: *Dislike for the Principle of Identity* in '77, Photo by Hideo Natsutani

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Biography

- 1925 June 27: Born in Kobe.
- 1943 April: Enrolls in a preparatory course at Kwansei Gakuin University.
Joins the Gengetsu-kai painting club.
June: Begins to study painting with Hiroshi Kanbara.
- 1948 October: Graduates from the philosophy department at Kwansei Gakuin University.
- 1949 September: Participates in the 13th Shinseisaku Art Society Prize Exhibition (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum).
October: Begins to study with Tsuguro Ito.
- 1951 May: Enrolls in a postgraduate course in aesthetics at Kwansei Gakuin University.
- 1952 June: Participates in the 5th Ashiya City Exhibition (Ashiya Buddhist Hall), an event he continues to take part in every year until the 47th installment in 1994.
Joins the Zero-kai (Group Zero), a group consisting of radical members of the Shinseisaku Art Society. The group also includes Akira Kanayama, Kazuo Shiraga, and Atsuko Tanaka.
- 1953 July: Participates in a two-person show with Kazuo Shiraga under the name "Murakami-Hiko"
(Hankyu Department Store gallery, Osaka). *Murakami's nickname at the time.
Meets Jiro Yoshihara for the first time at the exhibition venue.
- 1954 Participates in a Group Zero exhibition (Window display at Sogo Department Store, Osaka)
- 1955 Joins the Gutai Art Association. Continues to show his work at every Gutai exhibition until 1970.
July: Participates in the "Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun" (Ashiya Park).
Among the works is one in which Murakami "tears" a section of asphalt roofing.
October: Participates in the 1st Gutai Art Exhibition (Ohara Hall, Tokyo).
Among Murakami's works is a series of breakthrough performances that includes *Six Holes (Muttsu no ana)* and *Entrance (Iriguchi)*.
Around this time he begins teaching painting to kindergarteners in Itami, Nishinomiya, and Osaka – something he continues for the rest of his life.
- 1956 April: Participates in the 6th Exhibition of Kansai Sogo Bijutsu (Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts).
On the invitation of the museum's Western painting division, Murakami shows Work – *Please Sit Down (Suwatte kudasai)*, which consists only of a wooden box. The work is the subject of much controversy.
July: Participates in the Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition (Ashiya Park).
Among the works are Murakami's *Sky (Sora)* and *All Possible Landscapes (Arayuru fukei)*, both of which function to crop and frame the surrounding scenery.
October: Participates in the 2nd Gutai Art Exhibition (Ohara Hall, Tokyo).
Among the works is Murakami's paper-breakthrough *Passing Through*.
- 1957 April: Participates in the 3rd Gutai Art Exhibition (Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art).
Includes an over three-meter work by Murakami in which the paint gradually peels during the exhibition.
May: Participates in the Gutai Art Using the Stage exhibition (Sankei Hall, Osaka and Tokyo)
Includes Murakami's paper-breakthrough *Confrontation with a Screen*.
- 1958 Begins to focus on painting, a trend that continues into the '60s.
September: Participates in the 6th Gutai Art Exhibition.
The show travels to the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York and three other U.S. cities.
- 1960 April: Represents Japan at the International Center of Aesthetic Research, Turin.
- 1962 September: Participates in an exhibition commemorating the opening of the Gutai Pinacotheca Osaka.
Jiro Yoshihara creates a paper-breakthrough, *Entrance (Iriguchi)*, for the event.
- 1963 April: Holds a solo exhibition (Gutai Pinacotheca, Osaka).
July: Participates in the "Trends in Contemporary Art" exhibition (National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto).
- 1966 February: Participates in the "Grüppe Gutai" exhibition (Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne).
- 1970 March: Participates in the "Moving Art and Light Square" event (Festival Square Expo, Osaka).
Presents a work in which a box falls over when it is hit by a spotlight (the effect is achieved by a man inside who throws his body against the box).
- 1971 April 1-15: Holds a solo exhibition titled *Box (Hako)* (Mori's Form, Osaka).★
Murakami's resignation from the Gutai Art Association is rejected.
- 1972 March 31: The Gutai Art Association is dissolved.
- 1973 May 21-June 2: Holds a solo exhibition commonly known as "Wooden Clappers" (*Hyoshigi*)(Gallery Shunjukan, Osaka).★
October 1- 6: Holds a solo exhibition commonly known as "Silence" (*Mugon*) (Mugensha, Osaka).★
- 1974 February 18-23: Holds a solo exhibition commonly known as "Water" (*Mizu*) (Shinanobashi Gallery Apron, Osaka).★
July 29-August 3: Holds a solo exhibition commonly known as "Lines" (*Suji*) (Shinanobashi Gallery Apron, Osaka).★
- 1975 March 20-30: Holds an exhibition titled *Kakikuke Solo Show (Kakikuke koten)* (Gallery Seiwa, Osaka).★
Joins the Artists' Union.
- 1976 May 17-22: Holds a solo exhibition commonly known as "Floor" (*Yuka*) (Shinanobashi Gallery, Osaka).
November: Participates in the "Eighteen Years of Gutai Art" exhibition (Osaka Prefectural Gallery).
- 1977 June 4-18: Holds a solo exhibition titled *Dislike for the Principle of Identity (Jidoritsu no fukai)* (Galerie Kitano Circus, Kobe).★
- 1979 January: Participates in the "Jiro Yoshihara and Contemporary Aspects of Gutai" exhibition
(Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art).
- 1981 September: Participates in "Trends of Contemporary Art I (Light and Dark Beams): Exhibition in the '50s"
(Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo).
- 1983 Participates in the "Sechs Japanische Künstler der Gutai-Gruppe" exhibition (Atelierhaus Hildebrandstraße, Düsseldorf).
- 1985 December: Participates in the "Reconstruction: Avant-Garde Art in Japan 1945-1965" exhibition
(Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; others in the U.K.).
- 1986 August: Participates in the "Gutai: Action and Painting" exhibition (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art).
December: Participates in the "Japanese Avant-Garde: 1910-1970" exhibition (Centre Pompidou, Paris).
- 1988 March: Participates in the "Taruho and San-chan" exhibition (Art Space, Nishinomiya).
The show is curated by Shozo Shimamoto and devoted to the writer Taruho Inagaki, a favorite of Murakami's. Yukio Fujimoto also participates in the show.
- 1990 December: Participates in the "Japanese Avant-Garde: The Group Gutai in the 50's" exhibition
(Galleria Nazionale d'Art Moderna, Rome).
- 1991 March: Participates in the "Gutai: Japanese Avant-Garde 1954-1965" exhibition (Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Germany).
- 1992 June: Participates in the "Gutai I" exhibition (Ashiya City Museum of Art & History).
July: Participates in the "Outdoor Exhibition Revisited" (Ashiya Park) in conjunction with "Gutai I."
January: Participates in the "Gutai II" exhibition (Ashiya City Museum of Art & History).
June: Participates in the 45th Venice Biennale: "Passage to the Orient."
Participates in the "Gutaï...suite?" exhibition (Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse).
- December: Participates in the "Music: Every Sound includes Music" exhibition (Xebec Foyer, Kobe).
- 1994 September: Participates in the "Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky" exhibition
(Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York; others).
November: Participates in the "Hors Limites" exhibition (Centre Pompidou, Paris). Murakami's work *Exit (Deguchi)* is subsequently acquired by the museum.
Participates in the "One-Day Museum: Feeling by Seeing" event (Kawanishi City Hall) with his final paper-breakthrough performance, *Exit (Deguchi)*.
- 1995 April: Participates in the "Japanese Culture: The Fifty Postwar Years" exhibition (Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art; Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art; Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art).
- 1996 January 11: Dies of a brain contusion at the age of 70.
April 6- May 12: A solo exhibition of Murakami's work is held (Ashiya City Museum of Art & History).