



Small Works 1950s-2020

Masatoshi Masanobu, Ryuji Tanaka, Tsuyoshi Maekawa, Norio Imai

ARTCOURT Gallery is pleased to present Small Works 1950s-2020, an exhibition of four artists formerly of the Gutai Art Association (“Gutai”, established in 1954 and dissolved in 1972) who continued their pursuits of ground-breaking means of expression long after.

In recent years, after the large-scale 2013 retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Gutai has received further worldwide acclaim and their works have become more often included into exhibitions capturing post-war art in an international context.

Since opening in 2003, our gallery has focused on members of Gutai as international artists with ties to the Kansai area, such as Saburo Murakami, and have conveyed the activities of Gutai artists from here in Osaka to the world while also closely connecting them to their regional context. This exhibition will be centered on a group of small works that condense the lone sensibility opened up through Gutai by four artists with differing styles of art-making.

This exhibition will be a collaboration between the works by the four artists, blending the old with the new. The show will be composed of works by Masatoshi Masanobu, carefully preserved by the estate over many years, including rare and precious canvas works from the 1950s and '60s, and a selection of drawings never before exhibited; a range of works that were in the care of the Ryuji Tanaka estate, with a focus on his small pieces that show traces of various experimentation from the '90s; and excellent works by Tsuyoshi Maekawa and Norio Imai from the 1970s as well as recent works.

Through the works of these artists who, in their practice, persisted in the “daring advance into the unknown world”* while upheld by an absolutely unbridled creative spirit, our hope is that this exhibition will be an opportunity to convey that supple energy.

*Yoshihara Jiro, “Gutai Art Manifesto”. Translated by Reiko Tomii. Originally published as “Gutai bijutsu sengen,” *Geijutsu Shincho*, no. 12 (December 1956): “Gutai places an utmost premium on daring advance into the unknown world.” <http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/gutai/data/manifesto.html>

[Exhibition]

Exhibition title : ***Small Works 1950s-2020***

Exhibiting Artists: **Masatoshi Masanobu, Ryuji Tanaka, Tsuyoshi Maekawa, Norio Imai**

Duration : **September 8 (Tue) - October 10 (Sat), 2020**

*Closed on Sundays, Mondays, and national holidays

*Hours may change depending on the spread of COVID-19

Venue : **ARTCOURT Gallery** OAP ARTCOURT 1F, 1-8-5 Tenmabashi, Kita-ku, Osaka, 530-0042

Hours : **11:00am - 5:00pm**

* Installation views and details about the artworks on view will be made available online at a later date. (www.artcourtgallery.com)

* The gallery is implementing thorough health and safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

* To protect the health and well-being of our visitors and staff, we will only allow a limited number of visitors at one time, and will ask for your contact information upon your visit.

* Please wear a protective mask, use hand sanitizer and keep a safe distance from other visitors when visiting the gallery.

* We also ask that you kindly refrain from visiting if you have symptoms such as fever or cough.

Organized by ARTCOURT Gallery (Yagi Art Management, Inc.) | Sponsored by Mitsubishi Estate Co., Ltd., Mitsubishi Materials Corporation, Mitsubishi Jisho Property Management Co., Ltd.

* Please contact Ami Fukuda or Michiko Kiyosawa at ARTCOURT Gallery for any inquiries including photographic materials.

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Masatoshi Masanobu 正延正俊



■ Work to be exhibited: *Work* | 1959 | Oil on canvas
46.7 x 34.5 cm

In the late 1950s to 1960s, Masanobu, who was a member of the Gutai Art Association from its founding (1954) until its dissolution (1972), worked on paintings that use accumulated brush touches and strokes on the surface, along with a varying density in lines that made them appear as if they are living and moving. In “Masanobu Masatoshi: A Gutai Painter” (2015), his retrospective exhibition held at the Otani Memorial Art Museum, Nishinomiya City and The Museum of Art, Kochi, the art historical value of Masanobu’s paintings was reexamined, and since then, his works have garnered attention and continue to be exhibited at museums and galleries both in Japan and abroad.

* To see representative works and a detailed CV,
please refer to their artist page linked below.
<https://www.artcourtgallery.com/eng/artists/masatoshi-masanobu/>

Ryuji Tanaka 田中竜児



■ Work to be exhibited: *Nature '90 Light (1)* | 1990 | Mineral pigment, gold paint, wood panel, other materials | 24.4 x 33.5 cm

After co-founding and participating as a member of the Pan-real Art Association (1949-1951), Tanaka joined Gutai from 1965 to '67. In addition to mineral pigments, he used materials such as sand and plaster through dripping and other techniques in his expression of “nature”, which was at times vigorous while in others taciturn. Tanaka explored “the potential of the contemporary in the traditional”^{*} with a desire to innovate the field of nihon-ga. A curator of the Tate Modern, which houses *Sei (9)* (ca. 1962) in their collection, spoke of that work, “[i]ts energetic composition and fantastical form is reminiscent of Tanaka’s early works inspired by surrealism”^{**}.

^{*}From a letter that was sent to those involved with publishing Ryuji Tanaka: My Selection. (Published in 1993)

^{**}From summary by Lena Fritsch: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/tanaka-sei-9-t14835>

* To see representative works and a detailed CV,
please refer to their artist page linked below.
<https://www.artcourtgallery.com/eng/artists/ryuji-tanaka/>

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Tsuyoshi Maekawa 前川強



▪ Work to be exhibited: *Untitled* | 1982 | Acrylic on sewn canvas, other materials | 24.5 x 33.2 cm

Being one of the representative artists of Gutai's second generation, Maekawa had garnered attention for his works in which paint flowed over the curves of protrusions in burlap, and after around 1978, he exhibited many works characterized by lines sewn freely across softer fabrics like hemp cloth and cotton. In recent years, beginning with a 2014 solo exhibition in New York, Maekawa has continued to exhibit work in museums and galleries in Europe, the US, and Asia, heightening his international acclaim. With a background of continuously and vigorously producing his works for a long period of time, Maekawa lives up to those expectations and makes one feel an energy for art-making that knows no bounds.

* To see representative works and a detailed CV,
please refer to their artist page linked below.
<https://www.artcourtgallery.com/eng/artists/tsuyoshi-maekawa/>

Norio Imai 今井祝雄



▪ Work to be exhibited: [from left] *Stone Frame - A*,
Black Lithograph II | 1970 | Lithograph, monoprint | 54 x 38 cm

Since joining Gutai in 1965 as their youngest member at 19 years old, up to today, Norio Imai has continued his diverse expressive practice while crossing and broadening mediums and techniques with the changing of times.

In 1970, during his transition period from his white artworks, known for being the representative works from his time as a Gutai member, to his immaterial photographic and video work, Imai was creating a series of monotype lithographs that clearly show the existence of the stone. This exhibition, in addition to the sequence of lithographs, will also show a wall of nine pieces from a series of new works *White Mandala*. Both show how the artist systematically completed the works in a sequential manner.

* To see representative works and a detailed CV,
please refer to their artist page linked below.
<https://www.artcourtgallery.com/eng/artists/imai/>