

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Beyond Surrealism: Kitawaki Noboru and the Avant-Garde During Wartime Japan, 1931-1951

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6qh1z17j>

Author

Ritter, Gabriel Richard

Publication Date

2016

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Beyond Surrealism:

Kitawaki Noboru and the Avant-Garde During Wartime Japan, 1931-1951

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Art History

by

Gabriel Richard Ritter

2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Beyond Surrealism:

Kitawaki Noboru and Avant-Garde During Wartime Japan, 1931-1951

by

Gabriel Richard Ritter

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Steven D. Nelson, Co-Chair

Professor Bert Winther-Tamaki, Co-Chair

This dissertation traces the life and work of the artist Kitawaki Noboru (1901-1951), utilizing his story as a case study to explore issues related to surrealism in Japan, the pressures on avant-garde expression during wartime, and the general shift from authoritarianism toward a postwar artistic subjectivity and discovery of individual autonomy. While Kitawaki's work is often dense and idiosyncratic, bringing together obscure references from science, philosophy, and Chinese divination, his search for meaning in the underlying order and structure of the natural world was part of a more universal pursuit of knowledge and a fundamental understanding of the world in which he lived. Like some of his contemporaries, Kitawaki saw surrealism through the lens of Japanese nativism, often locating foreign surrealist concepts and terms within an indigenous Japanese-specific context. This impulse was not simply a means to make

sense of surrealism in Japan, but more specifically, a means of making sense of surrealism within the unique context of wartime Japan and its immediate aftermath.

Kitawaki was first and foremost a realist who believed that surrealism could provide the means and methods for unlocking hidden meaning in the world as it exists—not its imagined alternative. He viewed the world through the lenses of natural science, color theory, morphology, and physics—all of which have concrete, measurable results based in reality—but when trying to synthesize this worldview into an all-encompassing theory that could explain the meaning, order, and interconnectedness of such phenomena, he turned to irrational practices such as numerology and Chinese divination to fill in the gaps. Kitawaki's surrealism, or transcendence of reality, then, is most compelling when the artist attempts to articulate the structure and order of a world that is so inherently complex and multi-faceted so as to render such attempts fundamentally impossible. It is this intellectual paradox, and its surrealistic pursuit that defines Kitawaki and his work.

This study attempts to articulate Kitawaki's unique position within the history of Japanese art, providing needed context to the life and work of an artist who was synonymous with surrealism in Japan, but ultimately transcended this categorization.

The dissertation of Gabriel Richard Ritter is approved.

George Thomas Baker

William Marotti

Steven D. Nelson, Committee Co-Chair

Bert Winther-Tamaki, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
Kitawaki and The Proletarian Art Movement (1930-1937)	17
CHAPTER TWO	
Experiments in Surrealism (1937-39)	34
CHAPTER THREE	
In Search of the Universal: Diagrammatic Painting and the Pressures of War (1939-1945)	68
CHAPTER FOUR	
Aftermath: Confronting Reality/Confronting the Self	124
CONCLUSION	155
BIBLIOGRAPHY	193

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures follow page 159:

Fig. 1-1 Okamoto Tōki, *Workers on Strike Raid Factory* 争議団の工場襲撃 (1929)

Fig. 1-2 Tsuda Seifu, *The Bourgeois Diet and the People's* ブルジョワ議会と民衆生活 (1931)

Fig. 1-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Mart* マート (1932)

Fig. 1-4 Kitawaki Noboru, *Sand Pile* 砂置場 (1933)

Fig. 1-5 Fig. 1-5 Tsuda Seifu, *Victim* 犠牲者 (1933)

Fig. 1-6 Kitawaki Noboru, *Work* 作品 (1937)

Fig. 1-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Symbol* 章表 (1937)

Fig. 1-8 Migishi Kōtarō, *Flying Butterfly* 飛ぶ蝶 (1934)

Fig. 1-9 Migishi Kōtarō *Venus and Moths* ヴィーナスと蝶 (1934)

Fig. 1-10 Kitawaki Noboru *Three Nudes, Bright and Dark* 明暗三裸婦 (1936)

Fig. 2-1 Kitawaki Noboru, *Spikenards* 独活 (1937)

Fig. 2-2 Kitawaki Noboru, *Airport* 空港 (1937)

Fig. 2-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Perishing in the Sky* 空の訣別 (1937)

Fig. 2-4 Kitawaki Noboru, *For A Three Dimensional Rising of the Moon* 三次元への月の出 (1937)

Fig. 2-5 Kitawaki Noboru, *The Quietest Time* 最も静かな時 (1937)

Fig. 2-6 Kitawaki Noboru, *For Sleepless Nights* 眠られぬ夜のために (1937)

Fig. 2-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Fantasy on Saturn* 土星への幻想 (1938)

Fig. 2-8 Kitawaki Noboru, Design Specifications for the Group Work “The Tale of Urashima” 集団制作「浦島物語」設計書 (1937)

Fig. 2-9 Kitawaki Noboru, *To the Sea (Curiosity)* from *Urashima Monogatari* 浦島物語—海上へ(好奇)(1937)

Fig. 2-10 Yamamoto Hōsui, *Urashima's Return Home* 浦島図 (1893-95)

Fig. 2-11 Kitawaki Noboru, *Garden* 庭園 (1938)

Fig. 2-12 Salvador Dalí, *Paranoiac Visage*, 1935

Fig. 2-13 Salvador Dalí, *Apparition of Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach*, 1938

Fig. 2-14 Kitawaki Noboru, *The Mandala of Birds and Beasts* 鳥獣曼荼羅 (1938)

Fig. 2-15 Utagawa Yoshifuji, *The Mysterious Cat from the 53 Stages* 五十三次之内 猫之怪 (1848-49)

Fig. 2-16 Kitawaki Noboru, *Image of Rebirth* 変生像 (1938)

Fig. 2-17 Kitawaki Noboru, *Village* 聚落 (1938)

Fig. 2-18 Kitawaki Noboru, *Shadow* 影 (1938)

Fig. 2-19 Kitawaki Noboru, *For Morphology* 形態学の為に (1939)

Fig. 2-20 Illustration, *The Complete Works of Goethe*, Kaizosha, Tokyo (1937) [Vol. 26, p. 13]

Fig. 2-21 Max Ernst, *At the First Clear Word*, 1923

Fig. 3-1 Komaki Gentarō, *Fetishistic Landscape* (1939)

Fig. 3-2 Komaki Gentarō, *These Three Things (3 works, 1 group)* (1939)

Fig. 3-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Correlative Order L.C.M.* 相關的秩序 (1939)

Fig. 3-4 Kitawaki Noboru, sketch for *Correlative Order L.C.M.* 相關的秩序 (1939)

Fig. 3-5 Illustration for “Symmetry and Asymmetry,” *Bijutsu Bunka* 1 (Aug 1939), p. 8

Fig. 3-6 *I Ching* diagram showing relationship between The Yellow River Map/Eight Trigrams and Lo Shu Square/Nine Halls Diagram

Fig. 3-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Synthesis and Analysis* 綜合と分析 (1940)

Fig. 3-8 Kitawaki Noboru, *Structure of Order/Disorder* 秩序混乱構造 (1940)

Fig. 3-9 Francis Picabia, *Dada Movement* (1919)

Fig. 3-10 Yves Tanguy, *Mama, Papa is Wounded!* (1927)

Fig. 3-11 Kitawaki Noboru, *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ (A+B)² 意味構造 (1940)

Fig. 3-12 Kitawaki Noboru, *Structure of Phenomenon of Fashion* 流行現象構造 (1940)

Fig. 3-13 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Cultural Morphology* 文化類型学図式 (1940)

Fig. 3-14 Kitawaki Noboru, *Thought, Deed, Knowledge* 想・行・識 (1940)

Fig. 3-15 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)(1941)

Fig. 3-16 “Ordering Sequence of King Wen Wang’s Hexagrams” 文王八卦次序, Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)(1941), detail

Fig. 3-17 “Directional Positions of King Wen Wang’s Hexagrams” 文王八卦方位, Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)(1941), detail

Fig. 3-18 “Directional Positions of Fuxi’s Eight Hexagrams” 伏羲八卦方位, Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)(1941), detail

Fig. 3-19 Diagram of Sequence of Earlier Heaven (Fuxi)

Fig. 3-20 Diagram of Sequence of Later Heaven (King Wen)

Fig. 3-21 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Heaven and Earth)* 周易解理図(乾坤)(1941)

Fig. 3-22 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Harmony and Stagnation)* 周易解理図(泰否)(1941)

Fig. 3-23 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Obedience and Pleasure)* 周易解理図(巽兌)(1941)

Fig. 4-1 Kitawaki Noboru, *Vermilion and Purple* 朱と紫 (1945)

Fig. 4-2 Kitawaki Noboru, *Fantasy of Autumn* 秋の幻想 (1945)

Fig. 4-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Morphology of Daffodils* 水仙の形態学 (1946)

Fig. 4-4 Kitawaki Noboru, *Explanatory Diagram of Sesshu's Paranoia* 雪舟パラノイア図説 (1947)

Fig. 4-5 Kitawaki Noboru, *Image of Probability* 蓋然の像 (1947) [later retitled *Self-portrait* 自我像]

Fig. 4-6 Aimitsu, *Self-Portrait* 自画像 (1944)

Fig. 4-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Self-Portrait* 自画像 (1951)

Fig. 4-8 Fukuzawa Ichirō, *War Defeat Group* 敗戦群像 (1948)

Fig. 4-9 Furusawa Iwami, *Demonic Music* 憑曲 (1948)

Fig. 4-10 Kitawaki Noboru, *Rose and Daughter* バラとむすめ (1948)

Fig. 4-11 Kitawaki Noboru, *Parabola* 拋物線 (1949)

Fig. 4-12 Mukai Junkichi, *Tramp* 漂人 (1946)

Fig. 4-13 Kitawaki Noboru, X-Ray image of *Crematorium* 火葬場 (1934)

Fig. 4-14 Kitawaki Noboru, *Quo Vadis* クオ・ヴァデイス (1949)

Fig. 4-15 Kitawaki Noboru, *Drawing* 素描 (1951)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the influential role the late Professor Donald McCallum played in the genesis of this dissertation and my overall development as an art historian. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate years of study at UCLA, Professor McCallum inspired and supported my interest in Japanese art and was the first to suggest Kitawaki Noboru and Japanese surrealism as a suitable topic for the doctoral dissertation. Following Professor McCallum's passing in 2013, Professor Steven Nelson was instrumental in helping reformulate my doctoral committee, and generously assumed the role of co-Chair together with Professor Bert Winther-Tamaki of U.C. Irvine. Both Professor Nelson and Professor Winther-Tamaki have acted as cheerleaders throughout the dissertation writing process, giving me much needed encouragement and advice. I am especially grateful to Professor Winther-Tamaki for his careful reading of my many drafts and offering me detailed, timely, and insightful comments. I would also like to thank Professor William Marotti for reigniting my passion for Japanese history through his thoughtful lectures and graduate seminars, and for generously serving as my minor advisor and outside reader for the dissertation. I am also grateful to Professor George Baker for his insightful courses on Dada and Surrealism and for providing his expertise on these subjects as a reader of my dissertation.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to several other members of the UCLA art history faculty. Professor Miwon Kwon sparked my interest in postwar and contemporary art history as an undergraduate student, and has supported my academic career in a myriad of ways, including her role as advisor and reader of my Master's thesis. Working with

Professor Saloni Mathur broadened my thinking about Japan to include its historical relationship with South Asia, and her theory seminars added significantly to my understanding of transnational issues facing Asian more broadly. Professors Hui-shu Lee and Burglind Jungmann provided me with important insights into modern Chinese and Korean art history, respectively, that dovetailed with my dissertation research in innumerable ways. I would also like to thank Professor Chari Pradel who was incredibly supportive of my early interest in *nihonga*, and Professor Seiji Lippit in UCLA's Asian Languages & Cultures Department who guided me through Japan's rich literary and filmic traditions.

During my fieldwork in Japan, Mika Kuraya, the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) was not only a close friend, but allowed me generous access to the facilities of her wonderful institute which I was honored to call home for nine months. Her colleagues, Curator Ōtani Shōgo, and Deputy Director Matsumoto Tohru deserve special mention for graciously offering to share their expertise and research materials on Kitawaki Noboru and arranging numerous collection visits throughout Japan on my behalf. In addition, I would like to thank Assistant Curator Masuda Tomohiro, Curator Suzuki Katsuo, and Curator Hosaka Kenjiro for helping me to feel so welcome in their place of work. I am also indebted to Yamada Satoshi, Curator at the Nagoya City Art Museum, and Ozaki Masato, Chief Curator of the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, for generously allowing me to view works by Kitawaki and his peers held in their permanent collections. It was also an honor to meet Kitawaki Michio, the only living relative of the artist whom this dissertation takes as its subject, and to tour his family home, Kōseiin, and the Kitawaki ancestral burial grounds in Kyoto.

During my time in Japan, I benefitted greatly from the friendship of talented artists, translators, and researchers. This dissertation would not be possible without the skilled translations of Yamagata Mirei who helped me make sense of Kitawaki Noboru's complex writings and in turn, expose his ideas to a broader English-reading academic audience. I am also deeply indebted to my friends Okumura Yuki and Tanaka Koki, both of whom provided various translation assistance throughout my research and writing of the dissertation. While in Japan, I was fortunate to be surrounded by friends and fellow researchers such as Professor Ming Tiampo, Mika Yoshitake, Ryan Holmberg, and Nakajima Izumi providing an important network of like-minded individuals to exchange ideas with. I must also thank the generous support of the Japan Foundation, who provided me with a Japan Foundation Doctoral Fellowship that facilitated my fieldwork in Japan. In particular, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Horie Teruyo, Program Officer, in the Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange Department at the Japan Foundation, Tokyo for her friendship and help navigating life in Tokyo as a foreign researcher. I am also grateful to Suzuki Mitsuru, Chief Officer, in the Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange Department of the Japan Foundation, Tokyo, and Tomomi Tanikawa, Associate Program Officer in the Japan Foundation's New York office for their assistance during my time in Japan.

Over the past nine years, I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of amazing graduate student colleagues in art history, Japanese history, as well as Japanese language & culture. At UCLA, Chingshin Wu, Minku Kim, Jenny Lee, Natilee Harren, Andrea Gyorody, Mika Yoshitake, Franz Prichard, Lita Martinez, Sarah Walsh, and Emi Folk were important friends and classmates who challenged me intellectually and made me

laugh. At UC Irvine, I had the pleasure of meeting Noritaka Minami, Bryan Hartzheim, and Paul Ricketts, all of whom I am proud to call friends and colleagues and feel lucky to have shared class time with.

Professionally, I am deeply thankful and indebted to the generous support of my previous colleagues at the Dallas Museum of Art, namely former Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs Olivier Meslay, and former Hoffman Family Senior Curator Jeffrey Grove. Olivier allowed me the time and space to pursue the dissertation while working at the DMA, and made its successful completion his personal mission, for which I am forever in his debt. I am also thankful for the continued support of my colleague and mentor Ann Goldstein, former Senior Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), who instilled in me the importance of academic rigor in curatorial practice.

Lastly and most importantly, I must thank my loving family who has supported me unconditionally throughout this long and arduous process. My father and mother, Eric and Nancy Ritter have been my biggest cheerleaders, providing much needed financial and emotional support to see the dissertation through to the end. I am especially thankful to my father for reading over the endless drafts of the dissertation and for his thoughtful edits and comments. My brother Zachary, who received his PhD in Education several years ago, has been a source of inspiration for me and has always encouraged me to complete the dissertation, for which I am grateful. And to my beautiful and incredibly intelligent wife, Jennifer, I thank you for your love, friendship, patience and support all throughout graduate school and the seemingly endless dissertation writing process. Without you and our amazing son Emil, none of this would have been possible.

VITA

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
M.A., Art History, June 2009

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
B.A., Art History and Japanese, *Summa Cum Laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, June 2002

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART
Curator, Head of Contemporary Art (May 2016 – present)

DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART
The Nancy and Tim Hanley Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art (May 2012 – April 2016)

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, TOKYO
Visiting Researcher (September 2011 – May 2012)

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES
Curatorial Assistant (July 2004 – September 2007)

AWARDS AND HONORS

Tate Research Center: Asia-Pacific Travel Grant, 2015

Edward A. Dickson Fellowship, Art History Department, UCLA, 2014

Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, U.S. Department of Education, 2008-2011; 2013

Japan Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, The Japan Foundation, 2011-2012

Sasakawa Language Fellowship, Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies, UCLA,
Summer 2009; 2011

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship for the Study of East Asia, U.S.
Department of Education, 2008-09

Quality of Graduate Education Award, Art History Department, UCLA, Summer
2008

PUBLICATIONS

Concentrations HK: Margaret Lee. Hong Kong: Duddell's, 2016 (Exhibition brochure)

Concentrations 59: Mirror Stage—Visualizing the Self After the Internet. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2015 (Exhibition brochure)

Concentrations 58: Chosil Kil. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2015 (Exhibition brochure)

"Between Action and the Unknown." In *Between Action and the Unknown: The Art of Kazuo Shiraga and Sadamasa Motonaga*. Edited by Gabriel Ritter. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2015.

"Chosil Kil: The Raconteuse." *Art Asia Pacific* 92 (March/April 2015): 112-119.

Concentrations 57: Slavs and Tatars. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2014 (Exhibition brochure)

Symposium Report: In Search of a New Narrative of Postwar Japanese Art. Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 2014.

Concentrations 56: Stephen Lapthisophon. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2013. (Exhibition brochure)

"A Genealogy of Nonsense." In *Roppongi Crossing 2013: OUT OF DOUBT*. Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2013.

"Koki Tanaka: Out of the Ordinary." *Art Asia Pacific* 84 (July/August 2013): 64-73.

"Review of Requiem for the Sun: The Art of Mono-ha." *Art Asia Pacific* 79 (July/August 2012): 120.

"Tokyo Nonsense in L.A." *Bijutsu Techo* 907 (May 2008): 42-43. Translated by Yuki Okumura.

"True Colors." In *Makoto Aida: Monument for Nothing*, 4-7. Tokyo: Graphic-sha Publishing Co., Ltd., 2007.

"From Endless to Everyday: The Video Work of Koki Tanaka." In *Koki Tanaka Works 1997-2007*, 6-13. Tokyo: Akio Nagasawa Publishing, 2007.

"Interview with Karl Haendel." In *MOCA Focus: Karl Haendel*, 64-85. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2006.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation focuses on the artist Kitawaki Noboru 北脇昇 (1901-51) and his involvement with surrealism in Japan during the Fifteen-Year War (1931-45) and the subsequent Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-52). The painter is best known for his otherworldly landscapes incorporating biological/zoological motifs as well as his use of abstract geometric diagrams to visualize complex natural phenomena. Kitawaki is unique within Japanese modern art for his incorporation of intellectual themes—morphology, physics, and mathematics—into the visual medium of painting. His work represents a synthesis of science and art that transcends the division between the real and the imaginary. Kitawaki's turn to surrealism in the late 1930s coincides with the rising tide of ultra-nationalism in Japan and with it, authoritarian state control of the arts. For like-minded artists of this period, surrealism offered an escape from the increasingly oppressive atmosphere of wartime Japan, as well as a method to critique reality and society. Surrealism in Japan can be viewed as both a refuge and an anti-establishment practice to explore artistic subjectivity while resisting the ideological pressures of the state.¹ Even in Kitawaki's highly personalized take on surrealism there are moments of complicity with nationalist rhetoric which call into question the role of art during wartime and the complex negotiations between individual artists and the collective goals of the nation. The following study examines Kitawaki's role as an innovator of Japanese surrealism and sheds light on his lesser-known legacy as an intellectualist whose work defied categorization.

¹ John Clark, "Surrealism in Japan," in *Surrealism: Revolution by Night* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1993), 204.

Surrealism first began in France in late 1919, and was formally declared a movement by the poet and theorist André Breton in his *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924. Initially established as a literary movement, Breton defined surrealism as: “Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express...the actual functioning of thought...in the absence of any control exercised by reason.”² With an emphasis on automatism, irrational thought, and the subconscious, surrealism privileged the freeing of creative impulses from the control of the conscious mind. While in France Breton relied heavily on Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis to dissolve the barriers between dreaming and waking states of consciousness, in Japan, Freud’s theories played a negligible role in the critical debates surrounding surrealism.³ This gap is indicative of the various social, political, and cultural differences between surrealism’s origins in France and its subsequent Japanese manifestation. In the case of Kitawaki, the term surrealism (*chōgenjitsushugi* 超現実主義) signaled a metaphysical relationship with the real world as opposed to that of dreams. At the root of his highly intellectual artistic practice, Kitawaki sought a phenomenological understanding of the world that questioned how we come to know things, and how we might begin to understand the self through the order of the world.⁴

In his essay “Surrealism in Japan” (1997), John Clark traces the development of surrealism in Japan from its literary inception and initial artistic expression in the 1920s

² André Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism (1924),” in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972), 26.

³ John Solt, *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue (1902-1978)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 46.

⁴ Mika Yoshitake, “Kitawaki Noboru’s Surrealist Project: A Historiography of the Modern.” (Unpublished essay, 2003), 23.

to its establishment as a “quasi-institutional avant-garde” in the 1930s and thereafter as a mode of wartime resistance in the 1940s.⁵ At its inception, Clark describes a two-fold crisis in Japanese history that set the conditions for the rise of Japanese surrealism in the arts. He identifies the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923 as a major disruption to leftist groups that had been gaining ground in Japan since the 1910s. The chaotic days following the earthquake saw the dissolution of the progressive journal *Shirakaba* 白樺 [White Birch], the indiscriminant killing of thousands of Korean immigrants by vigilante groups, and to a lesser extent, the murder of leftist figures by the police.⁶ In the wake of this disaster and the increasingly repressive domestic political situation which followed, the Japanese avant-garde was split into two factions: one turning to overtly political displays of proletarian solidarity, and the other turning inward to explore a more radical artistic subjectivity. Art historian Bert Winther-Tamaki has labeled the later group “internal émigrés” because of their seeming remoteness from the official art of the period.⁷

By the 1930s, with increased suppression of the proletarian art movement by authorities surrealism became a refuge for the avant-garde. However, surrealism was initially met with opposition from the left for its apolitical critique of reality. The art journal *Atelier* published a series of debates on the viability of surrealism as an avant-

⁵ Clark groups Kitawaki with these later developments citing the artist’s increasingly private/internal discourse of the 1940s as a form of resistance.

⁶ Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 78.

⁷ Bert Winther-Tamaki, “Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting during the Fifteen-Year War,” *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 52, No. 2 (Summer, 1997): 147.

garde art form in 1937, in which the movement was largely criticized as being “anti-historical and anti-intellectual.”⁸ Futurist painter Kanbara Tai dismissed surrealism as “a bourgeois strategy for avoiding reality,” while critic Ogawa Takei denounced the movement as “a kind of hysterical phenomenon that appeared in the field of art as the outcome of the pain and anguish of a transitory period of crisis.”⁹ Compared to the aggressive political approach of the proletarian art movement, scholars like Sagara Tokuzō denounced surrealism as “anti-revolutionary” and “anti-social” due to its reliance on fantasy. Although critics were reluctant to accept surrealism as revolutionary, the government nonetheless kept a close eye on Surrealist artists due to suspicions that the movement was linked to Communism. Police suspicion of the potentially subversive nature of surrealism came to a head in February 1941 when the Surrealist painter Fukuzawa Ichirō and poet/critic Takiguchi Shūzō were arrested for possible connections with international Communism. The two men were held by authorities for over eight months and publicly forced to recant their past beliefs and Surrealist practices as a condition of their release, a process known as *tenkō* 転向 or political “conversion.”¹⁰

While John Clark argues surrealism in Japan functioned as an “anti-establishment practice” of resistance, recent scholarship by Alicia Volk has proposed an alternative reading, emphasizing Japanese surrealism’s nativist tendencies. Volk points out that

⁸ Nakamura Giichi, *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zassetsu—K no baai* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), 80.

⁹ Clark, “Artistic Subjectivity in the Taishō and Early Shōwa Avant-Garde,” in *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 48.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of *tenkō*, see Tsurumi Shunsuke, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945*. London and New York: KPI, 1986.

“Surrealism in Europe had been an outgrowth of Dada, which had been informed by Buddhist metaphysics,” and subsequently “[i]n its Japanese manifestation Surrealism was practiced and theorized from the viewpoint of Buddhist philosophy, especially Zen.”¹¹ Fukuzawa Ichirō (1898-1992), a pioneer of surrealism in Japan who had studied painting in France during the late 1920s, advocated a similar nativist position claiming that a “Surrealist spirit” had long been indigenous to Japan manifesting itself in Zen-related art forms. Furthermore, the Surrealist poet and critic Takiguchi Shūzō (1903-1979) “believed that Surrealism ‘has permeated our daily lives since the time of our ancestors,’ and he identified Zen and its associated arts—ikebana, haikai poetry, and rock gardens, among others—as evidence of a Surrealist spirit in premodern Japanese aesthetic forms.”¹² Based on these beliefs, Volk argues convincingly that surrealism in Japan did not represent “a radical turn or denial of the dominant norms of Japanese culture but rather something of a reaffirmation or return.”¹³ This sentiment parallels an earlier study of the Japanese avant-garde by Nakamura Giichi who concluded, “surrealism was not merely an unrelated importation of a trend from Europe, but played an essential historical role that set as its goal a renewal of customs and old values.”¹⁴

Utilizing Kitawaki and his work as a lens through which to view this “return” to nativism during the late 1930s, this study explores Kitawaki’s unique interpretation of surrealism. While Fukuzawa and Takiguchi theorized on the indigenous roots of

¹¹ Alicia Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugorō and Japanese Modern Art* (Berkeley; Washington, D.C.: University of California Press, 2010), 215.

¹² *Ibid*, 217.

¹³ *Ibid*, 216.

¹⁴ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 84.

surrealism in Japan, Kitawaki appears to be one of the few artists who actively pursued an in-depth exploration of these ideas through painting. Collaborative paintings such as *The Tale of Urashima* 浦島物語 (1937) employed a unique mix of European and Japanese techniques to arrive at a highly original, cross-cultural synthesis of ideas and creative methods. This collaborative painting project involved fourteen artists with each assigned a specific scene from the legend of Urashima Tarō, along with a particular mood and color scheme they were to utilize in their painting. The work combined elements of the French surrealist parlor game known as *cadavre exquis* (the exquisite corpse) with Japanese *haikai* 徘徊 (linked verse) poetry resulting in a group painting process akin to automatic writing. By reading European surrealism through the lens of traditional Japanese practices, Kitawaki along with other Japanese surrealists engaged in a complex negotiation between international surrealism and its local interpretation. While this nativist impulse rearticulated the terms of surrealism to coincide with ongoing debates in Japanese art discourse it also brought the movement in line with growing nationalist sentiments of the time.

Chapter One recounts Kitawaki's biographical background and examines his involvement with the proletarian art movement in Japan early in his artistic development. Born in Nagoya in 1901, Kitawaki permanently relocated with his uncle's family in Kyoto from a young age and lived in Kyoto for the remainder of his life. While actively exhibiting in Tokyo throughout his career, Kitawaki's choice to situate himself and his creative activities in Kyoto established a peripheral relationship to Tokyo—the center of modern art production in Japan. In 1919, Kitawaki began his study of Western-style painting (*yōga* 洋画) at the private teaching studio of Kanokogi Takeshiro, an established

painter working in the academic realist style. There are no extant works from the earliest period in Kitawaki's career, and his initial study of painting was cut short by mandatory conscription in the armed forces at age 20. Kitawaki's subsequent return to painting in 1930 coincides with the peak of the proletarian art movement in Japan. Following the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake in Tokyo, artists such as Murayama Tomoyoshi and the MAVO Group "saw themselves as part of a worldwide movement to invest the arts with an explicit social purpose."¹⁵ Increasingly influenced by socialist realism, proletarian artists expressed their solidarity with factory workers and sought to utilize the visual arts to promote social revolution. Under the tutelage of the proletarian painter and activist Tsuda Seifu, Kitawaki studied the basics of Western-style painting including landscapes and figure painting based on live models. While Tsuda depicted politically charged images of the Diet building and the torture of political prisoners by the *Tokkō* 特攻 (Special Higher Police), Kitawaki's paintings from this period have a more oblique relationship to the proletarian art movement as they depict empty back alleys and industrial landscapes.

Chapter Two begins with a brief introduction to surrealism in Japan, with particular emphasis on the visual arts, and then explores Kitawaki's personal understanding of surrealism focusing on his writings, paintings and works on paper created between 1936-1939. While surrealism in Japan began initially as a literary movement, on the visual arts front, artists Koga Harue, Abe Kongo, and Tōgō Seiji were

¹⁵ Weisenfeld, "Imaging Calamity: Artists in the Capital After the Great Kantō Earthquake," in *Modern Boy Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art 1910-1935* (Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of NSW, 1998), 128.

the first to publically exhibit paintings in a surrealist vein at the 16th Nikakai 二科会 exhibition of 1929. Based on recent research into the introduction of surrealism in Japan, there is strong evidence of an internal development of surrealist thought beginning as early as 1927.¹⁶ The internal debates between proletarian artists/writers and those advocating surrealism in Japan gave rise to a newly defined surrealism, closely tied to the experience of reality rather than chance, dreams, Freudian psychoanalysis, and automatism as understood by André Breton. The first mention of surrealism in Kitawaki's writing appears in the 1936 essay "Children's Paintings and Surrealists." Inspired by his encounter with an exhibition of children's art, Kitawaki inquires, "Unlike the unwaking dreams of children, is it not adults—living squarely in reality—that are the true surrealists precisely because they can overcome the norms of reality and dream?"¹⁷ Here, Kitawaki appears to acknowledge the connection between Bretonian surrealism and its interest in Freud's analysis of dreams and early childhood, but turns this relationship on its head by insisting that in fact it is adults, and their relationship to reality where true surrealism can develop. For Kitawaki, surrealism was directly linked to reality. It was this intellectual probing of established surrealist terms and conditions that would come to define Kitawaki's artistic practice going forward.

Kitawaki's earliest surrealist experiments utilize the Japanese compositional technique of *mitate* 見立て to conjure eerily disorienting scenes through the unlikely

¹⁶ See Chinghsin Wu, "Another Surrealism: The Reception of Surrealism in Japan and Koga's Own Theory of Surrealism," in *Japanese Encounters the Avant-Garde: The Art and Thought of Koga Harue* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2010).

¹⁷ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 73.

juxtaposition of everyday objects.¹⁸ The resulting images achieve an effect similar to Freud's notion of the uncanny. As previously mentioned, Kitawaki also organized several collaborative works during this period in which collectivity was equated with automatism. The collaborative group work *The Tale of Urashima* 浦島物語 (1937) compared the surrealist technique of *cadavre exquis* (exquisite corpse) with the Japanese tradition of *haikai* 俳句 linked-verse poetry—the main difference being that while the outcome of the *cadavre exquis* is completely spontaneous and left to chance, *haikai* 俳句 poetry is calculated and rational in its collective production. According to Věra Linhartová, Kitawaki saw the idea of objective chance as the abdication of the intellect to a seemingly impenetrable world. The artist viewed this failure as indicative of an era that had given up on finding the common ground between art and science—a conceptual space in which Kitawaki sought to illustrate a coherent understanding of the universe.¹⁹ While his colleagues Takiguchi Shūzō and Fukuzawa Ichirō argued for the presence of indigenous roots for surrealism in Zen Buddhism and traditional Japanese culture, I believe Kitawaki's exploration of native Japanese terms and techniques as possible equivalents or alternative methods should be viewed as a critical inquiry into surrealism and our fundamental understanding of the world. Uniquely, Kitawaki merged his understanding of surrealism with the scientific method of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in an attempt to visualize the hidden systems of order and meaning found in the natural world. These

¹⁸ *Mitate* refers to the Edo-period genre of “parody prints” in which two remote realities are juxtaposed within a single image.

¹⁹ Věra Linhartová, *Dada Et Surréalisme Au Japon* (Paris: Publications Orientalistes de France, 1987), 252.

systems would become increasingly abstract for Kitawaki, and would eventually give rise to his “diagrammatic” paintings of the early 1940s.

Chapter Three examines Kitawaki’s stylistic shift to schematic/diagrammatic paintings during the height of the Pacific War. This period in Kitawaki’s career represents the most advanced stage of the artist’s original synthesis of art and science and his clearest articulation, in both painting and writing, of a transcendent worldview beyond surrealism. Drawing from such diverse sources as geometry, color theory, and the *I Ching*, Kitawaki began visualizing complex metaphysical schema to illustrate the dialectic relationship between such abstract concepts as synthesis/analysis, order/chaos, and the structure of meaning itself. For Kitawaki, surrealism ceased being simply a means of creative expression and gradually evolved into a critical method for unlocking a deeper understanding of the natural and physical world. As such, Kitawaki’s work became increasingly abstract, adopting a new austere visual vocabulary of lines and color set against a monotone field. While this move toward abstraction no doubt coincides with Kitawaki’s exploration of metaphysics, it also corresponds with the Japanese state’s increasingly authoritarian control over artistic expression during wartime. By 1940, the Thought Police were instructed to widen the definition of “thought criminal” to include anyone influenced by the West, resulting in the arrests of hundreds of artists, writers, and other intellectuals.²⁰ In January 1941, a roundtable discussion on the topic of “The National Defense State and the Fine Arts” published in the art journal *Mizue* concluded that “in this time of war in which Japan would either live or die, art that did not serve the

²⁰ Solt, *Shredding the Tapestry*, 141.

state could not be permitted to flourish.”²¹ As mentioned above, that same year Fukuzawa Ichirō and Takiguchi Shūzō, both members of the Art Culture Association (*Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai* 美術文化協会)—of which Kitawaki was also a member—were arrested for their supposed ties to the international communist movement.

It is within this wartime context that Kitawaki’s turned his attention to the ancient Chinese philosophy of the *I Ching* for meaning and guidance in a time of great turmoil. The artist began to create densely coded schematic paintings that visualized his all-encompassing worldview that sought to unify both science and philosophy. The dense and cryptic iconography of these paintings was filtered through ancient Chinese divination and Goethe’s pseudo-science making it difficult to unravel their meaning. This may have been intentional on the artist’s part as a way to avoid censorship by the authorities, but may also represent Kitawaki’s adaptation of his artistic style and thinking to meet the increasingly totalitarian demands on art by the Japanese wartime state. These “functional” works appear to have served a practical role in their ability to illustrate complex ideas in a visually succinct manner. At a moment in Japanese history when art had to serve the needs of the nation, Kitawaki developed a form of artistic expression that he felt was uniquely suited to communicating directly with the world at large.

Chapter Four will address Kitawaki’s work during the immediate postsurrender period from 1945 until his death in 1951 from tuberculosis. For Kitawaki, Japan’s military defeat represented both a welcome return of artistic freedom, as well as an urgent re-examination of national and self-identity. However, the artist’s postwar work

²¹ Mark H. Sandler, “The Living Artist: Matsumoto Shunsuke’s Reply to the State,” *Art Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996): 77.

noticeably lacks the focus and intellectual rigor of his previous output. Kitawaki's postsurrender paintings seem to shift back and forth between the artist's continued exploration of surrealism, and the need to address the harsh conditions of life in occupied Japan. This internal conflict can be viewed as an attempt to come to terms with Japan's new postwar reality and reestablish artistic subjectivity in the wake of defeat.

For many Japanese artists, the search for postwar subjectivity was articulated through a renewed focus on the body. In literature, postwar authors such as Sakaguchi Ango and Tamura Taijirō cultivated a "literature of the body" which radically relocated power from the authoritarian national body (*kokutai* 国体) to the physical body of the individual (*nikutai* 肉体). For Kitawaki, this renewed interest in the body is most evident in the painting *Quo Vadis* クオ・ヴァデイス (1949), which depicts a repatriated soldier at a crossroads. Here the individual is powerfully depicted as the new measure of the nation taking its first steps toward an as yet uncertain future. It is also during the immediate postwar that Kitawaki produces two self-portraits before his death (1947; 1951)—the only two of his entire oeuvre. These works not only represent so-called "painting of the flesh," but also demonstrate Kitawaki's engagement with contemporaneous debates surrounding realism in postwar painting.²² While art of the Occupation period is often characterized as an "art of despair" indicative of postwar exhaustion (*kyodatsu* 虚脱) or a sense of loss resulting from the war, Kitawaki's intense

²² For a discussion of the postwar "debate on realism," see Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan: Reconstructing Subjectivity through Deformation of the Body," *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 2 (1997).

questioning of self-identity and return to figuration are an extension of the artist's intellectual quest to understand the nature of being.

Kitawaki is widely understood by both Japanese and Western art historians as being an intellectual painter who came into his own as a surrealist in the late 1930s, who ultimately transcended that characterization with his diagrammatic paintings of the 1940s.²³ While the art historian Ōtani Shōgo admits that Kitawaki's investigation of order and structure in his diagrammatic paintings no longer represented surrealism, Yamada Satoshi takes his evaluation a step further, singling out Kitawaki as the “sole [Japanese] painter to completely transcend surrealism” with his later diagrammatic works evolving into what Yamada calls “conceptual art” *gainen geijutsu* 概念芸術.²⁴ Kitawaki is generally viewed by art history as an introvert autodidact, whose intellectual curiosity drove his artistic practice. This positioning of Kitawaki as an intellectualist first and surrealist second, may help explain his relative obscurity in art history compared to other surrealist painters such as Koga Harue and Fukuzawa Ichirō. Both Koga and Fukuzawa were early proponents of surrealism—Koga exhibiting works at the 16th Nikakai in 1929, and Fukuzawa contributing a number of canvases to the 1st Independent Art Association exhibition of 1931 following his return from Paris. Both men openly identifying themselves as surrealists, and wrote extensively on their personal definitions of surrealism. By comparison, Kitawaki did not embrace a surrealist approach until 1937,

²³ This view is shared by Matsumoto Tohru, Nakamura Giichi, Ōtani Shōgo, Yamada Satoshi and Věra Linhartová.

²⁴ Yamada Satoshi, ed., *Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945* (Nagoya: Nihon no Shūrearisumuten Jikkō Inkai, 1990), 150.

and nowhere in his ample writings did he ever explicitly proclaim himself a surrealist, despite his in-depth knowledge of and experimentation with surrealist techniques.

Additionally, while Kitawaki is often associated with avant-garde groups based out of Tokyo (Independent Art Association, Art Culture Association, etc.) it is important to note that the artist lived his entire adult life in Kyoto. Western scholars such as Věra Linhartová and Majella Munro correctly identify Kitawaki as a leader of the Kyoto prewar avant-garde, and acknowledge the ancient city's geographic and temporal distance from the modern capital and its art scene. In many ways, Kitawaki's life in Kyoto kept him removed from the spotlight of Tokyo, but also afforded him the space to research and develop his own unique artistic approaches, and promote his ideas through writings in local publications. Prior to his involvement with the Art Culture Association, the majority of Kitawaki's writings were published in group newsletters or small local newspapers that were not widely circulated. As a result, the bulk of the artist's ideas would have remained localized within the discourse of the Kyoto art scene of the time. His relative obscurity in today's scholarship is compounded by the fact that many of these articles are only accessible through the artist's personal scrapbooks that are held by his family or in the form of photocopies that are archived only at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

While Kitawaki has been included in recent academic publications by Murno (2012) and Ōtani (2016) on the topic of Japanese Surrealism, the most in-depth resource to date on the artist's life and work remains Nakamura Giichi's biography, *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zasetsu—K no baai* 日本の前衛絵画：その反抗と挫折—Kの場合 (1968). In his study, Nakamura utilizes Kitawaki as a case study to examine the

failure of the Japanese avant-garde during wartime. Through Kitawaki, Nakamura points to Japanese surrealist painting coming into its own and the subsequent frustration the avant-garde movement endured during wartime. Nakamura characterizes the prior proletarian art movement as a challenge to state authority and power in prewar Japan, but sees the avant-garde movement of Japanese surrealism as “diluted” when compared to its European counterpart. According to Nakamura, Japan did not experience the anxiety and unease of WWI that fueled Dada in Europe, and provided the necessary historical basis for surrealism’s development there. As such, Nakamura argues that the humanistic spirit of Dada and Surrealism were misunderstood in Japan, and ultimately crushed by wartime regulations and coercion. In a bold statement, Nakamura sums up his position unequivocally: “there was no surrealism in Japan, only the wish for artistic freedom during the ill-fated 1930s.”²⁵ This dissertation relies heavily on Nakamura’s retelling of Kitawaki’s life story for biographical details, but is augmented with numerous translations of Kitawaki’s own writings and in-depth visual analysis of his paintings.

Any substantive study of Kitawaki’s oeuvre requires a close reading of the artist’s own writings, a small portion of which are reproduced in contemporary publications on Japanese Surrealism, such as Yamada’s *Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945* (1990) and the fifteen volume collection of primary source documents, *Korekushon, nihon shūrurearisumu* コレクション・日本シュールレアリスム (2000) edited by Wada Hirofumi. For this dissertation, curators at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo made available photocopies of Kitawaki’s scrapbooks, the originals of which are held by the Kitawaki family. These scrapbooks contain hundreds of pages of newspaper and

²⁵ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 24.

magazine/journal clippings which Kitawaki cut and arranged himself during his lifetime for posterity. Publications referenced in these scrapbooks include: *Fusain*, *TOILE*, *Nippon Shinbun*, *Mizue*, *Atorie*, *Bijutsu Bunka*, *Bijutsu Sekai*, *Kyoto Hibi Shimbun*, *Yūkan Shimbun*, and *Miyako Shimbun* among others. While the dates and publication titles are not known for all of these clippings, the 1997 MOMAT catalog provides a robust bibliography attributing these details whenever possible. Other archival sources include complete photocopies of Kitawaki's seven handwritten notebooks, which cover diverse topics such as Goethe's color theory, human anatomy, European philosophy, and the *I-Ching*, among other topics, as well as cover-to-cover photocopies of all issues of the *Bijutsu Bunka* journal. In addition, MOMAT curators Matsumoto Tohru and Ōtani Shōgo generously provided their research files for the 1997 exhibition, *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective*, which contained a wide-range of primary source materials including, photocopies of Kitawaki's family tree, a Kitawaki personal chronology, photo albums, postcard correspondence, and numerous newspaper articles as well as original photographs. Whenever possible, visual analysis was based on firsthand observation of Kitawaki's original paintings held in the permanent collections of The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art; Nagoya City Art Museum.

CHAPTER 1: Kitawaki and The Proletarian Art Movement (1930-1937)

Kitawaki Noboru was born in Nagoya on June 4, 1901. At the young age of eight, Kitawaki's father Shōtarō left for Korea by himself, and as a result, Kitawaki relocated to Nakagyō-ku, Kyoto in 1910 to live with his aunt and uncle, Hirose Utako and Hirose Mitsumasa. The Hiroses did not have any children of their own, and his aunt was noted to have doted over Kitawaki growing up providing any art supplies that the child may have needed. The couple, related to Kitawaki on his father's side, lived on a large property—today known as Kōseiin (廣誠院)—that was once a holiday villa for the Satsuma clan, and the home where Kitawaki would live out his adult life. Kitawaki first attended Dōshisha Middle School in 1915, but dropped out after only two years, and in 1919 joined the private painting studio of painter Kanokogi Takeshiro in the Shimogamo area of Kyoto.

Kanokogi, like many aspiring *yōga* (Western-style oil painting) painters of his generation, traveled to Paris for his training. There he studied under Jean-Paul Laurens at the Academie Julian, and upon his return to Japan, was heavily influenced by the pioneering Japanese oil painter, Asai Chu. Kanokogi was quite established as a painter, serving as a jury member of the imperial Bunten exhibitions, and it is likely that Kitawaki's uncle used his pull as an industrialist linked with the powerful Sumitomo conglomerate to introduce his young nephew to Kanokogi and his private atelier.¹ Kitawaki studied under Kanokogi for two years, where he learned the basics of modeling

¹ Nakamura Giichi, *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zasetsu—K no baai* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), 28. Nakamura explains how the Sumitomo family was a patron of Kanokogi's career having supported him since studying abroad in Paris. The author alludes to this connection being instrumental in Kitawaki being allowed to join Kanokogi's atelier.

by sketching from plaster casts. While none of Kitawaki's student work from this period remains extant, we can assume that it would have closely followed Kanokogi's strict academism.

In 1921, Kitawaki was conscripted into the army and not only left his studies at Kanokogi's studio, but took what appears to be a nine-year hiatus from painting altogether. While most accounts describe an otherwise unexplained break or interruption in Kitawaki's painting during this time, author Majella Munro mentions that Kitawaki spent this time serving in the Imperial Guard, until being discharged in 1930.² During this blank spot in his career, Kitawaki was married and created several illustrations that were published in the *Dōshisha Shinbun*. But it was not until 1930, at age 29, that Kitawaki returned to painting in earnest when he joined the teaching atelier of Tsuda Seifu—a social realist painter active during the height of Japan's short-lived proletarian art movement.

With regard to the visual arts, the proletarian art movement in Japan lasted roughly from 1928 to 1934. Marxism was introduced to Japan at the turn of the century, and by the 1920s had gained prominence in academia amongst intellectuals and student groups. While not necessarily official party members, many of the intelligentsia offered their support to the Japan Communist Part (JCP) and were monitored by the Special Higher Police (*tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*) as a result. The 1920s were a time of social and economic crisis in Japan, made all the more difficult by the global economic depression

² Majella Munro, *Communicating Vessels: The Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923-70* (Great Britain: Enzo Arts and Publishing, 2012), 137. All biographies, and Kitawaki family records do not provide any details about this gap in Kitawaki's painting practice. It is unclear whether Munro's additional details regarding Kitawaki's military service can be substantiated.

and natural disasters which reduced agricultural production at home. Inspired by the Marxist revolution in Russia, artists in Japan experimented with proletarian art forms—namely Soviet socialist realism—in the hopes of effecting social change and revolution. The proletarian art movement was part of a larger proletarian labor movement at the time and utilized social content, group figure composition, and large picture formats in the hopes of communicating with a large audience that often consisted of agricultural and industrial workers.³

In April 1929, following a series of mergers between various proletarian art factions, the Japan Proletarian Artists League (*Nihon Proletaria Bijutsu Dōmei*) was formed. This umbrella arts organization associated with the JCP hosted five annual exhibitions before its dissolution in 1934 following a series of mass arrests in March of 1933. These public showcases made the proletarian art movement visible to a larger audience and included the work of proletarian artists such as Okamoto Tōki and Ōtsuki Genji among many others. Proletarian artists often portrayed ordinary people as revolutionary heroes and “strove to use art as a means of uniting workers by depicting them in their daily struggles at work and on strike. They believed that art had to be clear and understandable to ordinary people in order to achieve its utmost effect in what Japanese proletarian activists called *senden to sendō* 宣伝と扇動 (propaganda and agitation).”⁴ Some critics, such as the Marxist writer Takenaka Kyushichi, even went as

³ Mayu Tsuruya, “Socialist Realisms in the War Art of Imperial Japan,” in *Art and War in Japan and its Empire: 1931-1960*, ed. by Asato Ikeda, Aya Louisa McDonald, Ming Tiampo. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 60.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

far as to conclude that the “proletarian art movement is not an art movement, but a social movement that uses art as a means. Therefore in this case art is in the fate of denying itself. For proletarian art to be artistic, is already bourgeois. Proletarian art only has the means of public agitation.”⁵ Okamoto’s large-scale painting *Workers on Strike Raid Factory* (*Sōgidan no kōjō shūgeki* 争議団の工場襲撃, 1929) [Fig. 1-1] is a quintessential example, with the painting’s vantage point set low amongst the crowd of factory workers in an attempt to associate the viewer more directly with the demonstration. Realism was key to an authentic depiction of the proletarian struggle, with artists, writers, and critics widely debating this term and its various methods.⁶

While Kitawaki’s instructor, Tsuda, identified with the proletarian struggle, he was not officially associated with the proletarian art movement, and along with artists such as Kaneko Kichiya and Hashimoto Yaoji were known more generally as *shakaiha gaka* 社会派画家 (social school painters) or *dōhansha gaka* 同伴者画家 (companion/partner painters). Tsuda was an active member of the Nikakai 二科会 (the private counterpart to the official art salon) and his work, along with other “social school” painters exhibited concern with social injustice, economic disparity, and portraying the difficulties of the working class without being directly involved in a faction of the proletarian art movement. In fact, Tsuda berated proletarian artists for their lack of

⁵ Takenaka Kyushichi, “Research on Surrealism—Mainly on its Relationship with Proletarian Art,” *Atorie* 7, no. 1 (January 1930).

⁶ For more on realism in the proletarian context please see Okamoto Tōki, *Nihon puroretaria bijutsushi* (Tokyo: Zōkeisha, 1967); Okamoto Tōki, *Puroretaria bijutsu to wa nani ka* (Tokyo: Atoriesha, 1930); Omuka Toshiharu and Kita Takaomi, *Puroretaria bijutsu undō* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2011); Tsuruya, “Socialist Realisms,” 59-77.

technical expertise, and “observed that their work lacked the expressive power of painting regardless of how compelling the content might be.”⁷ Despite his disapproval of proletarian art’s rigid visual style, Tsuda was committed to the proletarian cause, and maintained close ties with the controversial Marxist writer/economist Kawakami Hajime in his private life—submitting Kawakami’s portrait to the 13th Nikakai, campaigning with him in 1930, and later harboring him as a fugitive from government arrest.⁸

Tsuda’s work consistently showed a strong social concern, evidenced by the satirical work *The Bourgeois Diet and the People’s Life* (*Borujyowa gikai to minshū seikatsu* ブルジョワ議会と民衆生活, 1931) [Fig. 1-2] that was presented at the 18th Nikakai exhibition. The painting portrays the Diet building, white and resplendent, atop a hill watching over a shantytown at its base. The uppermost portion of the painting has a translated quote from Karl Marx’s 1847 lecture *Wage-Labor and Capital* that fans out like rays of sunlight emanating from above, which states:

A house may be large or small; as long as the neighboring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks into a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighboring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls.⁹

⁷ Tsuda in Tsuruya, “Socialist Realisms,” 63.

⁸ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 38.

⁹ Karl Marx, *Wage-Labour and Capital & Value, Price, and Profit* (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 33.

Here, Tsuda uses Marx to highlight the inequality between the Japanese masses and those in power, explicitly comparing the National Diet building to a palace and labeling its occupants as “bourgeois.” Not surprisingly, the work’s original title was censored by the authorities and retitled simply *New Parliament* (*Shin Gikai* 新議会).

Tsuda himself was a vocal advocate of social realism, commenting that “art must correctly reflect the times” and in order to do so, artists “should leave the studio and enter the streets in order to correctly grasp society.”¹⁰ In his teaching studio, Tsuda cultivated an open environment that respected individual freedom. He encouraged each pupil’s uniqueness and promoted artistic self-confidence and the expansion of the individual through theory and method rather than practical skills/technique. In 1929, he started the journal *Fusain* フューザン (meaning charcoal in French) as the main outlet for his atelier. The publication had an intellectual air to it, along the lines of other avant-garde publications such as *Subaru*, *Shirakaba*, and *Myōjyō* and had an impressive list of cultural figures as its contributors.¹¹

Kitawaki joined Tsuda’s atelier in 1930, and while his influence can be felt in the objective quality of Kitawaki’s urban landscapes of this period, these desolate scenes are markedly silent compared to Tsuda’s outspoken brand of social realism. Works such as *Back Alley* (*Uramachi* 裏町, 1931), *Mart* (*Māto* マート, 1932)[Fig. 1-3], and *Sand Pile* (*Sunaokiba* 砂置場, 1933) [Fig. 1-4] all depict empty scenes of urban daily life in the

¹⁰ Tsuda in Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 42.

¹¹ Contributors included Watsuji Tetsurō, Naruse Mukyoku, Nakai Sōtarō, Agasawara Shūjitsu, Tsuchida Kyōson, Okamoto Tōki, Tanikawa Tetsuzō, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Koga Harue, Yokokawa Ki’ichirō, Miki Kiyoshi, and Fukuda Shinsei, among others.

style of Maeta Kanji or Saeki Yuzō, noticeably devoid of people. As a member of the Nikakai, Tsuda's students were expected to submit works for consideration in the Nikakai's private juried exhibitions, and Kitawaki debuted with *Mart* presented at the 19th Nikakai. The painting depicts a dull grey building with a smokestack and the English word "MART" emblazoned on the façade. A signboard above the entrance reads "The People's Desire, The Ultimate Store," (*Taishū no yōbō, hyakka no kesshō* 大衆の要望百貨の結晶) yet there are neither people in sight nor anyone who desires goods. This painting is not as politically explicit as the work of Tsuda, but reveals Kitawaki's social and political awareness of the conflicts that ensued during the period in which Marxist ideals were in direct opposition to the nation's imperialist drive for war. Rather than taking a radical stance such as overtly criticizing the government or promoting Communism, Kitawaki chose to focus on the traces and spaces ordinary working people inhabited.

This dichotomy of ideology versus reality is addressed by Kitawaki in the article titled "Resonating" (*Hankyōsuru* 反響する) published in the March 1933 issue of *Fusain*, the official journal of the Tsuda atelier. In the article, Kitawaki explores the relationship between a motif and a theme with regards to realism in painting, and its importance to the artist's goal of expressing some larger truth in his work. The artist argues that for art to resonate meaningfully, realism cannot simply be mechanical, but must be both volitional and purposeful. According to the artist, "Theories and ideologies can have their universality only by looking squarely at reality and gaining from it."¹² Here, Kitawaki

¹² Kitawaki Noboru, "Resonating," *Fusain* 16 (March 1933).

emphasizes the importance of the motif (the particular) in articulating a larger theme (the universal), but later cautions that rote adherence to a motif will lead to mannerism, and it is only through the artist's volition that the particular can give rise to universal truth. The artist discusses the act of artistic creation in terms of the "distress of giving birth" and defines the role of artistic technique as the "midwife" in easing the birth of the universal from the particular.¹³ While Kitawaki's early writing is already quite abstract and heady, his paintings of this period seem to fall short of his lofty rhetoric. However, Kitawaki's interest in the particular (motif) as a means of depicting some larger truth (theme) may help explain his focus on overlooked urban spaces such as the alley and sand pile. Such urban spaces have a sociological bent to them. The scenes depict the harsh urban spaces in which the working class reside, work, and function as best they can. What at first glance appears to be either unrelated to, or at the very least, distanced from the social and political turmoil of the proletarian struggle, may in fact reflect Kitawaki's burgeoning artistic worldview—the discovery of universal truths through objective (and later pseudo-scientific/surrealist) observation of one's surroundings.

While Kitawaki was painting his vacant urban landscapes, the proletarian art movement was in its final throes following a series of mass arrests by authorities in 1933. The political climate in Japan changed dramatically after the 1931 Manchurian Incident¹⁴ and the arrests of communist sympathizers en masse by the domestic police force.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ On September 18, 1931, the Japanese Kwantung Army—acting without the consent of the Japanese government—secretly attacked the Southern Manchurian Railway, and publicly blamed the bombing on Chinese dissidents. This event, known as the Manchurian Incident, provided the pretense for the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, and sparked a series of military skirmishes which continued until the outbreak of all-out war between Japan and China in 1937.

Kitawaki's mentor, Tsuda, found himself in the crosshairs of this violent suppression when he was taken into police custody in July 1933 for having harbored his friend and now fugitive, Kawakami Hajime. Once caught, Kawakami was forced to produce a conversion statement (*tenkō seimei* 転向声明) in which he confessed his crimes and renounced his support of the communist party/Marxism. It was suspected that Tsuda had helped Kawakami escape authorities prior to his capture, but after being detained for half a month, Tsuda was eventually released. Kitawaki managed Tsuda's studio during his mentor's incarceration, however, upon his release, Tsuda closed his studio permanently and stepped down as a member of the Nikakai.

That same year, the proletarian author, Kobayashi Takiji was arrested and tortured to death while being interrogated at the hands of the Special Higher Police for refusing to commit *tenkō* 転向 (ideological conversion) and comply with the national polity (*kokutai* 国体). Kobayashi's death impacted Tsuda greatly, and his painting *Victim* 犠牲者 (1933) [Fig. 1-5] likely depicts the writer's murder. The painting graphically depicts a beaten, bloodied body suspended from the ceiling of a jail cell by ropes tied around the victim's wrists. The lifeless body is covered in tattered clothes and rope that wraps loosely around his dangling legs. Speaking of the painting's emotional intensity and the figure's pose Tsuda later recounted, "I began with the hope of creating something that would rival Christ on the cross and this is what I came up with."¹⁵ In the lower left is a bared cell window through which a faint image of the National Diet building is visible. This indictment of the Japanese government echoes Tsuda's earlier satirical work *The*

¹⁵ Tsuda Seifu, *Life of an Aged Painter* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1963). [Page unknown, quoted from MOMAT wall label]

Bourgeois Diet and the People's Life (1931), and reflects the violent suppression of the proletarian movement at the hands of the Japanese authorities. While Tsuda painted this work in 1933 shortly after news of Kobayashi's death, the painting was not shown publicly until after the end of WWII.

While Kitawaki's paintings during this period appear largely removed from the turmoil surrounding Tsuda's arrest and closure of the studio, a later etching from 1937, and the related painting *Symbol* 章表 from that same year share a significant resemblance to Tsuda's *Victim*. The etching titled *Work* 作品 (1937)[Fig. 1-6] portrays a surreal jail cell scene, with a plaster-cast sculpture of a torso (of the kind typically used as an academic teaching aid for sketching and modeling the human form) juxtaposed with a truncated tree trunk. Here, the missing head and limbs of the classical torso are clearly likened to the roughly cut stumps of the tree trunk that jut out at various angles. The sense of amputation by association in the composition is unnerving and heightens the claustrophobic quality of the scene. This contrasts with the lone cloud in the calm sky visible through the barred prison window in the upper left corner. While the tortured figure of Kobayashi has been replaced, the composition clearly is in direct reference to that of Tsuda's *Victim*. Kitawaki's etching appears to have been a study for the painting *Symbol* (1937)[Fig. 1-7] which features the same female torso and mutilated tree, but whose position have been swapped. It also should be mentioned that Kitawaki's *Symbol* has a vague similarity with Giorgio de Chirico's *The Uncertainty of the Poet* (1913), which may have provided the initial compositional structure for Kitawaki's work. In addition to de Chirico, *Symbol* shows very clear affinity with the work of Japanese surrealist painter and poet Migishi Kōtarō whose repeated use of female nudes and

butterflies/moths in works such as *Flying Butterfly* 飛ぶ蝶 (1934)[Fig. 1-8] and *Venus and Moths* ヴィーナスと蝶 (1934)[Fig. 1-9] likely had a more direct influence on Kitawaki.

Returning to the link with Tsuda, it appears Kitawaki's work was originally titled *Order of Culture* (*Bunka kunshō* 文化勲章), referring to the Japanese order conferred by the Emperor to those who have contributed to Japan's art, literature or culture first founded in February 1937. It is unclear if the title was censored by the authorities or if Kitawaki chose to self-censor himself by changing the work's title prior to exhibiting it at the 2nd Kyoto City Art Exhibition, but what is clear is that Kitawaki intended the work to have a critical message and that the original title was deemed too contentious.¹⁶ In November 1937, the Kyoto University philosopher and aesthetician Nakai Masakatsu, was arrested for having violated the Peace Preservation Law. The Peace Preservation Law of 1925 made it illegal to "organize or knowingly participate in an association for the purpose of changing the national polity or repudiating the private property system" and was often cited as the justification for arresting social activists, JCP members, communist sympathizers, and protestors.¹⁷ Nakai founded the leftist popular culture tabloid *Doyōbi* in 1936, and this combined with his protests of the Japanese government's increasingly fascist and militarist leanings may have put him in the sights of the authorities. Nakai's writings on logic and aesthetics were influential on Kitawaki, and

¹⁶ Ōtani Shōgo, "Kitawaki Noboru no 'Zushiki' Kaiga nitsuite," *Bulletin of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo*, no. 7 (2002): 20. According to MOMAT Curator Ōtani Shōgo, close examination of the painted surface of *Symbol* shows that the original painting did in fact include the barred prison window in the upper right corner, but Kitawaki painted over this element prior to exhibiting the completed work.

¹⁷ Patricia G. Steinhoff, trans., *Tenkō*, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1991), 4.

while the painting *Symbol* was executed prior to Nakai's arrest, it nonetheless represents Kitawaki's clearest critique of the socio-political climate in 1930s Japan.

Unlike the original study which overtly depicts the confines of a jail cell, the completed painting symbolically alludes to imprisonment through the inclusion of a butterfly pinned to a red ribbon wrapped around one of the cut tree branches. The pinned butterfly motif is likely a direct reference to Migishi Kōtarō's 1934 painting *Flying Butterfly* in which six butterflies are depicted pinned to a white background, with one inexplicably fluttering off the canvas. The red ribbon may reference the communist/proletarian struggle, but by 1934 the proletarian art movement had officially been dissolved and the JCP effectively crippled. More likely, is the pinned butterfly's symbolic reference to the stifled situation of artists and intellectuals, like Tsuda and Nakai—Kitawaki's immediate milieu—under the increasingly oppressive rule of the wartime militarist Japanese imperial state. It is also possible to interpret the pinned butterfly as symbolic of a wounded heart due to its proximity to the chest of the plaster cast, and in turn, the red ribbon as a stream of blood.¹⁸ In addition, the rough-cut branches of the tree stump infer the violence perpetrated by the state and may represent a symbolic castration of the avant-garde that is further embodied by the truncated limbs of the classical sculptural torso. By not singling out a particular individual as the recipient of this trauma, the work *Symbol* and its originally censored title appear to comment more generally on the violence being wrought on culture in 1930s Japan by the authorities.

...

¹⁸ This interpretation is put forth by both Nakamura and Ōtani.

Two months following the closing of Tsuda Seifu's studio in August 1933, the Kyoto Institute of Independent Art (*Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyoto Kenkyūjo*) was established with Kitawaki serving as a founding committee member. The Kyoto Institute was primarily an educational space that brought together like-minded artists from the Kansai area for discussion, lectures, and night classes for sketching from plaster molds. Kitawaki assumed complete control of the Institute's finances, and in December of that year established the group's own publication titled *Toile*. In its first issue, the roster lists some 66 members in total, including Kitawaki and Imai Ken'ichi among other Kansai-based artists.¹⁹ The Kyoto Institute was associated with the avant-garde Independent Art Association (*Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyōkai*), a Kanto-based group of vanguard artists founded by Kojima Zentarō in 1930 that counted Migishi Kōtarō, Fukuzawa Ichirō, and other surrealist painters as early members.²⁰ Unlike the Kyoto Institute, which was primarily research-based, the Independent Art Association staged annual exhibitions in Tokyo, which became an important outlet for artists experimenting with surrealism. Many influential figures from the Independent Art Association would visit the Kyoto Institute once a month on a rotating basis to instruct classes or give lectures. It is around this time that Kitawaki turned to the Kyoto-based oil painter Suda Kunitaro for advice, and invited the more established artist to give lectures at the Kyoto Institute. In spring of 1934, Suda gave up his teaching position at Kyoto Imperial University and after joining the larger Independent Art Association, began making weekly visits to the Kyoto Institute to teach

¹⁹ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 53.

²⁰ For more on the Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyōkai see: Mikiko Hirayama, "Art without Borders to Art for the Nation: Japanist Painting by Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyōkai during the 1930s." *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (2010), 357-395.

drawing. Kitawaki's work from this time shows the clear influence of his senior, Suda, in works such as *Cemetery* 墓地 (1935) and a series of nude studies culminating in the work *Three Nudes, Bright and Dark* 明暗三裸婦 (1936)[Fig. 1-10] all of which show a more solid rendering of figures and forms, heavier use of the palette knife for texture, and dark atmospheric backgrounds. Additionally, the transfer of Kitawaki's loyalty from the embattled, proletarian Tsuda to the more conventional Suda may have reflected the artist's own shifting ideological position at this point in his career. Under the tutelage of Suda, the Kyoto Institute attracted more adventurous young artists, including the painter Komaki Gentarō who joined in June 1935 and would become life long friends with Kitawaki and help spark a deeper interest in surrealism.

In a series of articles Kitawaki wrote for *Toile* in 1935, the official publication for the Kyoto Institute, it becomes clear that despite his calm, cerebral demeanor, the artist was deeply passionate and keen to innovate Japanese oil painting in Kyoto even before his shift to surrealism. In the July article "What Bombs the Kyoto Oil Painting Circle" 京都洋画壇を爆撃するもの, Kitawaki questions what it will take to shake up the Kyoto art scene which he describes as "lazy" and "asleep."²¹ Using the hyperbole of "bombing the Kyoto art circle," Kitawaki emphatically states "our true intention is to physically sacrifice ourselves by bombing ourselves with the purpose of innovating the art circle."²² His dissatisfaction with the conservative Kyoto art scene, which was largely focused on *nihonga* (traditional Japanese style-painting), and eagerness to cultivate a vanguard for

²¹ Kitawaki, "What Bombs the Kyoto Oil Painting Circle," *TOILE* 5 (July 1935): 8.

²² Ibid.

oil painting in Kyoto would lead Kitawaki to form the New Japanese Oil Painting Association (*Shin Nihon Yōga Kyōkai*) in June 1935. This group had many overlapping members with the Kyoto Institute, with the main purpose of providing an alternative exhibition platform in western Japan in addition to the annual Kyoto City Art Exhibition (*Kyoto-shi Bijutsu Tenrankai*).

For many young Japanese artists of the prewar (and postwar) period, these various art associations were an integral part of one's artistic identity and provided the framework for exhibiting, publishing, and sharing new ideas and techniques. For Kitawaki, the group dynamic, its creative potential, and the interplay between the individual and the collective appears to have had special meaning for the artist as he penned an article on the topic for the September 1935 issues of *Toile*. Writing in celebration of the newly formed New Japanese Oil Painting Association, Kitawaki writes:

Leaving behind theoretical questions such as 'What is a group?' or 'What is the individual?', when you think about what makes a group a group, I think it is something like the following: First, an individual feels some kind of desire. In addition, that desire is not capable of being fulfilled by the individual alone. A group is first formed when each individual who painfully feels the lack of individual power compared to his desire joins with those with a common desire and those who feel the same lack of individual power, and strikes up a collaboration for fulfilling the lack.²³

He then goes on to conclude:

I believe that the charm of what makes a group into a group is that the individual's selfish actions are closed up, and a group's seriousness is achieved when under mutual understanding the individual is led to a 'yes' at times, and 'no' at times. The individual constantly gives himself over to the entire progress, and heightens the content of the desire of the group itself.

²³ Kitawaki, "The Group and Its Individual," *TOILE* 6 (September 1935): 18-19.

Therefore we as members of the New Japanese Oil Painting Association must each reflect on ourselves. Are our desires burning enough? Are we not getting used to our own feat of strength? Are there no omissions in the conduct of our oath? These three reflections are our compass to the shore. In exchange for the glamour of the departure of the ship, a voyage on the sea is often dark and difficult.²⁴

These final comments are particularly prescient since Kitawaki, together with members of the New Japanese Oil Painting Association, would later experiment with group painting techniques around the theme of the Japanese folktale *Urashima Tarō* 浦島太郎.²⁵ This experimental technique combined ideas of traditional Japanese linked-verse poetry (*haikai* 俳諧) with the surrealist parlor game, exquisite corpse (*cadaver exquis*). This painting series and Kitawaki's synthesis of native Japanese styles with European surrealist techniques will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 2, along with a discussion of the group dynamic as a possible extension of Japanese wartime national polity (*kokutai*).

While Kitawaki's early works follow a tangential path from the immediate social and cultural issues of the day—Marxism, the proletarian art movement, socialist realism, political activism, and mass arrests—his early writings show a philosophical bent more interested in tackling “big picture” ideas rather than the concerns of daily life as an artist in 1930s Japan. In practical terms, this may have been due to his personal situation, having essentially inherited his uncle's estate following his passing in 1930. Kitawaki assumed the role of caretaker for a large property which brought financial independence, and with it the luxury of focusing solely on his painting, writing, and running the Kyoto

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of this folktale.

Institute of Independent Art. However, reading Kitawaki's early writings it becomes clear that he took his work quite seriously and approached art and its theoretical underpinnings in a highly intellectual manner. Whether it was the relationship of the motif to a larger theme, or the individual to the group, Kitawaki sought a logical methodology for making sense of the world. While still early on in his artistic and theoretical development, his earliest writings already show a penchant for examining dualistic contradictions—motif and theme, individual and group, particular and universal—with the aim of fundamentally understanding the world at large. This intellectual inquiry would be further expanded by his engagement with surrealism beginning in 1936, and would become a hallmark of his artistic career as he cultivated an all-encompassing worldview through his artistic practice and vision.

CHAPTER 2: Experiments in Surrealism (1937-39)

This chapter will begin with a brief introduction to surrealism in Japan, with particular emphasis on the visual arts, and then explore Kitawaki's personal understanding of surrealism focusing on his writings, paintings and works on paper created between 1936-1939. While surrealism in Japan began initially as a literary movement, on the visual arts front, artists Koga Harue, Abe Kongo, and Tōgō Seiji were the first to publically exhibit paintings in a surrealist vein at the 16th Nikakai exhibition of 1929. Based on recent research into the introduction of surrealism in Japan, there is strong evidence of an internal development of surrealist thought beginning as early as 1927.¹ The internal debates between proletarian artists/writers and those advocating surrealism in Japan gave rise to a newly defined surrealism, closely tied to the experience of reality rather than chance, dreams, Freudian psychoanalysis, and automatism as understood by André Breton. Instead, figures such as Takenaka Kyūshichi, founder of the surrealist journal *Rien* リアーン, advocated a so-called “scientific surrealism” deeply inflected by Marxism and distinct from Breton's ideas, in which reason, rationality, and a scientific approach to the world would allow artists to transcend reality. As early as 1930, Takenaka would proclaim that a “true surrealist uses reason as its only weapon” and went on to state that “if artists are intellectual, they can be a true surrealist even without reading Breton's declaration of surrealism.”² While this approach was adopted early on

¹ See Chinghsin Wu, “Another Surrealism: The Reception of Surrealism in Japan and Koga's Own Theory of Surrealism,” in *Japanese Encounters the Avant-Garde: The Art and Thought of Koga Harue* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2010).

² Takenaka Kyushichi, “Research on Surrealism—Mainly on its Relationship with Proletarian Art,” *Atorie* 7, no. 1 (January 1930): 25.

by the Japanese surrealist painter Koga Harue, an in-depth analysis of Kitawaki's paintings and writings after 1939 reveal that he explored the synthesis of art and science far beyond any other figure in Japanese modern art (as will be argued in Chapter 3).

While early adherents of scientific surrealism advocated “taking a step beyond Breton,” the importance of Bretonian/European surrealism, as introduced to Japan by figures such as the poet/critic Takiguchi Shūzō and painter Fukuzawa Ichirō, cannot be dismissed in the case of Kitawaki's development.³ Compared to the earliest surrealist painters in Japan, Kitawaki's work shows a greater familiarity and experimentation with European surrealist techniques and theories (i.e. decalcomania, frottage, Dalí's paranoiac-critical method). This may be partially due to Kitawaki's relatively late arrival to surrealism in 1936/37, nearly a decade after its first introduction in Japan. By the time Kitawaki engages with surrealism, exhibitions featuring original works and reproductions by European surrealists, including Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Giorgio de Chirico, and others had already traveled throughout Japan first in 1932 and then again in 1937. In addition, translations of Breton's key surrealist texts into Japanese in 1929 (*Le Manifeste du Surréalisme*), 1930 (*Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*), as well as in-depth texts on Ernst and Dalí published in 1939 all broadened Kitawaki's understanding of surrealism beyond the earliest internal Japanese debates. While others were clearly embroiled in the debates between proletarian art and surrealism, Kitawaki abruptly breaks with his “proletarian” style in 1937, exhibiting a fully-fledged understanding of surrealism in an explosion of more than 15 works painted in a surrealist vein and displayed in several exhibitions that year.

³ Ibid.

1937 was also a watershed year for surrealism in Japan, with the showing of the historic Overseas Surrealist Works Exhibition that brought more than 300 photographs, books, prints, objets, and original works on paper by over 42 European artists to Japan. Organized by Takiguchi Shūzō and Yamanaka Chirū along with foreign committee members Paul Éluard, Georges Hugnet, and Roland Penrose, the exhibition opened at the Tokyo Prefectural Art Museum, and then traveled to the Asahi Art Museum in Kyoto and the Maruzen Department Store in both Nagoya and Osaka. The exhibition was sponsored by the leading arts magazine *Mizue* with the tagline, “Direct Imports Selected by the Artists Themselves.”⁴ The artists included Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, André Breton, Man Ray, Alberto Giacometti, and Giorgio de Chirico among many others. The exhibition was truly international in scope with works from Czech, French, Belgian, and English lenders. While the bulk of the exhibition consisted of print reproductions due to financial constraints and shipping restrictions, the exhibition featured 60 original works including collages by Ernst, surrealist objets by Breton and Man Ray, and watercolors by Dalí. In particular, this exhibition is credited with introducing Dalí’s work to a wider Japanese audience. To coincide with the exhibition, *Mizue* published a special issue on surrealism, and *Atorie* (*Atelier*) also released a volume on “Research and Criticism of Avant-garde Painting.” That same year, Fukuzawa Ichirō penned *Surrealism*, the first all-inclusive text on the subject in Japan. More than simply an introduction to the historical development of surrealism in France, Fukuzawa looked squarely at the development of surrealism’s

⁴ Matsumoto Tōru, “Noboru Kitawaki—A Surrealist and an Intellectual,” in *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective*. (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997), 28.

revolutionary position, political attitude, as well as predicting its future development. Importantly, he also explored the rise of surrealism in Japan and its native antecedents, which will be discussed at length later on.

While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact trigger for Kitawaki's shift to surrealism, multiple sources confirm that the artist attended the Overseas Surrealist Works Exhibition in June 1937 when it toured to Kyoto. Prior to this, Kitawaki biographer and art historian Nakamura Giichi mentions an exhibition of children's artwork displayed alongside the 2nd New Japanese Oil Painting Association Exhibition held in September 1936 as a significant encounter. Kitawaki participated in this show, and no doubt saw the exhibition of children's work, as this becomes the subject of his essay "Children's Paintings and Surrealists" 子供の絵とシュールレアリスト published the following month in the local *Nippon Shimbun*.⁵ The article begins with a description of an elementary school student's drawing and its dream-like appearance, and Kitawaki questions if children and such images should be considered surrealist. He then questions the fundamental nature of dreams, asking:

So, first of all, what are "dreams"? One thing is for sure, they are not real. And, they are not what you can see when you want, neither what you can avoid even when you do not want to see them. They are thoroughly passive. Nevertheless, they are not unrelated with reality, either. In a dream, we cannot see someone or something that we totally do not know. Dreams are just a strange and unexpected combination of things in which an otherworld is realized. Another thing to be noted is that dreams must have reality to wake into. If not, it is not a dream anymore.⁶

⁵ The *Nippon Shimbun* ニッポン新聞 was a private newspaper that was published every ten days in Kitawaki's neighborhood.

⁶ Kitawaki Noboru, "Children's Paintings and Surrealists," *Nippon Shinbun*, October 1936.

Here, Kitawaki asserts that dreams are contingent on reality, and are by definition, grounded in our experience of reality. Returning to the issue of children's painting, and whether or not the work of children can be considered surrealist, he concludes that children lack this sense of reality, and that their works are, in fact, *pre-real*. According to the artist, because children do not sufficiently have a grasp on reality, they cannot surpass it, as is required of a true surrealist. Ultimately for Kitawaki,

A true surrealist is one that firstly lives in reality and is capable of dreaming after having overcome the norms of reality. "Dreams" are dreams only when there is reality to wake into. Intrinsically, art itself is a dream, in that sense. Only if you can picture freewheeling daydreams are you qualified to be called a genuine surrealist, as well as a real artist.⁷

In this formative article, Kitawaki appears to acknowledge the connection between Bretonian surrealism and its interest in Freud's analysis of dreams and early childhood, but turns this relationship on its head by insisting that in fact it is adults, and their relationship to reality where true surrealism can develop. While Breton claimed that "the mind which plunges into Surrealism re-lives with glowing excitement the best part of its childhood,"⁸ and viewed surrealism as a method for re-accessing the fear and wonder of childhood and dream-like states, from the outset, Kitawaki insists on the importance of reality to his personal understanding of surrealism. Kitawaki's belief that surrealism is rooted in reality and not in dreams is in line with Takenaka's notion of Scientific Surrealism, and places the artist at odds with Breton's definition of surrealism. This emphasis on science and reason with regards to surrealism will pave the way for

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 39.

Kitawaki's future inquiry into the fundamental contradiction between fantasy and reality. It is this intellectual probing of established surrealist terms and conditions that comes to define Kitawaki's artistic philosophy and artistic practice going forward.

Kitawaki's earliest surrealist paintings utilize the Japanese compositional technique of *mitate*⁹ 見立て to conjure eerily disorienting scenes through the juxtaposition of everyday objects. One of Kitawaki's most familiar surrealist works is the painting *Spikenards* 独活 (1937)[Fig. 2-1]. This work was first exhibited in March 1937 at the 7th Independent Art Association Exhibition in Tokyo (traveled to Kyoto) together with the work *Dislocation* (1937). The painting prominently features two stalks of *udo* 独活 (*aralia cordata*), commonly known as Japanese spikenard or "mountain asparagus," set against an eerie blue picture plane that extends endlessly off into the distance. Unlike Kitawaki's previous work to date, *Spikenards* utilizes a palette of blues, purples, and earth tones to create a stark, dream-like space that appears infinitely vast. The two *udo* stalks are positioned upright, and are immediately legible as personified figures. The figure in the distance appears to stand erect, with its tendril-like arms and legs swaying listlessly. However, the *udo* stalk in the foreground vacillates back and forth in the viewer's mind as both an inanimate root and an upside-down figure standing on its head. The resulting image achieves an effect similar to Freud's notion of the uncanny where something familiar is suddenly and inexplicably rendered terrifying.¹⁰ This frightening

⁹ *Mitate* refers to the Edo-period genre of "parody prints" in which two or more realities are juxtaposed within a single image.

¹⁰ For more on the uncanny, see Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919)* ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), 217-256.

feeling is heightened by the long, undulating shadows the two figures cast on the wall to the right. The anthropomorphic quality of the stalks is further emphasized by the artist's use of magenta pigment that occurs under the surface of the plant's skin similar to blood running through veins.

According to Kitawaki's fellow painter and Independent Art Association member Imai Ken'ichi, "in the *udo*'s form, there is the interesting discovery of a strange 'dancing person' but with the title written as it is, it has the double meaning of 'peculiar action/activity.'"¹¹ The wordplay Imai refers to can be found in the Chinese characters used in the Japanese spelling of the title, 独活 (*udo*), which are also the first characters used in the words 独自 (*dokuji*, meaning "peculiar") and 活動 (*katsudō*, meaning "action/activity"). The art historian Nakamura Giichi takes this exploration of wordplay a step further, pointing out that the large stump in the bottom right of the painting may be a humorous play on the saying "*udo no taiboku*" うどの大木 meaning "a good for nothing" since the *udo* plant can only be eaten when it is a young root, and not when fully grown.¹² While multiple Japanese sources point out the humorous nature of the parody at work in this painting, the strange, uncanny likeness of the *udo* to human figures coupled with the stark background reads more as an example of surrealist *dépaysement* (estrangement) for this author.

Kitawaki would utilize similar compositional techniques in a trilogy of paintings around the theme of airplanes that he exhibited at the 3rd New Japanese Oil Painting

¹¹ Imai in Nakamura Giichi, *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zasetsu—K no baai* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), 87.

¹² Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 87.

Association Exhibition in Kyoto that September. The works *Airport* 空港 (1937) [Fig. 2-2], *Perishing in the Sky* 空の訣別 (1937) [Fig. 2-3], and *Expedition* 探険旅行 (1937, no longer extant) all feature tilted blue picture planes that delineate a vast open space. And like *Spikenards*, these works all feature plants or natural materials arranged in a manner that suggest double or triple meanings that coexist in the same composition. In *Airport*, Kitawaki has created a fanciful scene in which maple seeds have been transformed into the body and wings of aircraft-like structures, and a dried, upside-down sunflower takes on the appearance of an airplane hangar or air traffic control tower. The two aircraft are pictured on a desolate blue-grey tarmac, with several clouds pictured off in the distance. Floating above this otherworldly scene is a block of wood with a hole—depicted through the surrealist technique of frottage—where the wood grain is accentuated to heighten the impact of the moon-like hole in the wood panel. While the arrangement of natural objects reads convincing as an airfield, there is an odd stillness to the scene that emphasizes each object’s discreet presence. In particular, the shadow cast on the ground by the floating piece of wood seems to break the cohesiveness of the illusionistic space Kitawaki has created.

Continuing with this theme, the work *Perishing in the Sky* employs similar maple seed planes but with a larger, more dynamic composition portraying a dramatic aerial combat scene. Unlike *Airport*, *Perishing in the Sky* refers to a specific current event of the day, recounting the moving story of First Lieutenant Umemura’s death during an air raid over the Chinese capital. The heroic battle scene is recorded in the *Kyoto Daily Newspaper* (*Kyoto Hibi Shimbun*), which states, “while First Lieutenant Umemura’s entire plane was engulfed in flames and falling, he fiercely waved a white handkerchief

with all his might toward his consort plane to announce his eternal parting with calm composure.”¹³ Kitawaki depicts Umemura’s final farewell in his painting by including a fluttering white handkerchief in the flames that emanate from the damaged maple seed aircraft. Upon closer inspection, the flames billowing up from the falling plane resemble an agglomeration of hands waving goodbye to the other planes in the sky. Given this sentimental war story, *Perishing in the Sky* can be read as a surreal tribute to the bravery of Lieutenant Umemura, and by extension, a reminder of the Japanese military forces actively fighting in China. *Perishing in the Sky* is the only overt reference to Japanese militarism in Kitawaki’s oeuvre, and to classify this work as *sensōga* 戦争画 (war propaganda painting) may be an exaggeration. However, given Kitawaki’s service in the Japanese army, his donation of works to aid military families, and subsequent paintings with heavily coded nationalistic themes, one cannot discount this work as simply a depiction of current events.¹⁴

Looking at *Spikenards*, *Airport*, and *Perishing in the Sky* as a group, these works all utilize a similar *mitate* technique in which multiple levels of meaning, sometimes contradictory in nature, share the same pictorial space. Kitawaki explored the paradoxical nature of surrealist painting in more theoretical depth in his first major essay

“Contradictory Painting from the Perspective of Technique.” 技術より見た矛盾の絵画

This essay is the first of many inquiries into the traditional performing arts and poetry of

¹³ *Kyoto Hibi Shimbun*, August 21, 1937.

¹⁴ Nakamura classifies this work as a “sarcastic portrayal of current events” akin to the work of Fukuzawa Ichirō, but as I will argue in Chapter 3, I believe Kitawaki’s personal politics and the pressures on art at this historical moment were more complex than this.

Japan as a means for Kitawaki to locate and assimilate surrealism through the lens of Japanese nativism—something that will be addressed in greater detail later in this chapter. He begins by identifying the fundamental importance of contradiction in traditional haiku stating, “Haiku is about discovering a great harmony in two things that seem exactly opposite at first glance. In that sense it is a literature of contradiction.”¹⁵ Then, through an involved discussion of Zeami’s *Kadensho* 花伝書—an aesthetic treatise by the 14th century Noh master—Kitawaki concludes that surrealism, like haiku, is a painting method that is based on the concept of contradiction. While he concedes that haiku and Zeami’s ideas “are not necessarily surrealist theories” they ultimately “share a similar awareness [with surrealist painting] that contradiction is the basis of art.”¹⁶ Kitawaki’s definition of contradiction here seems to be based on the coexistence of two opposing elements—namely reality and fantasy—and the ability to bring about a “totally unexpected sensation” from this paradox. He then goes on to explain how surrealist painting techniques embody this paradoxical nature, offering up his own work as an example. Here he describes in detail the process used to create the series of monotypes titled *For A Three Dimensional Rising of the Moon* 三次元への月の出 (1937)[Fig. 2-4]:

If you look at this painting as just trees, mountains, the moon, and clouds drawn on them the story ends there—but if we see the process, there is something entirely different. What seems like trees is actually a hakusai leaf with paint directly smudged onto it, the moon is a SMOCA¹⁷ metal lid placed on a piece of paper and water sprayed around it, the mountain is

¹⁵ Kitawaki, “Contradictory Painting from the Perspective of Technique,” *Nippon Shimbun*, November 10, 1937.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ SMOCA (スモカ) was a toothpaste brand that was sold in a tin can.

made using a crumpled newspaper with paint applied and pressed [on the surface], and the clouds were [made by] pressing a bowl with engraved patterns, all of which were done in the exact opposite manner of a sketch. Perhaps those with a concept that paintings are to be “drawn” using brushes may call this technique trivial, but in fact, isn’t art itself a trivial technique that deals with the contradiction of reality?¹⁸

While not quite the surrealist technique of frottage, Kitawaki’s pressing/stamping technique used to create these moonlight monotypes presents a straightforward paradox between the work’s process (leaf, newspaper, tin can, etc.) and what is depicted (tree, mountains, moon, etc.). Like *Spikenards* and *Airport*, it is the duality of reality and fantasy—the reality of what is depicted and the “surreality” of what the mind perceives—that unlocks hidden meaning for the artist.

Kitawaki would continue to refine these dreamscapes, culminating in a pair of large canvases that he would exhibit together at the 3rd Kyoto City Exhibition. *The Quietest Time* 最も静かな時 (1937) [Fig. 2-5] and *For Sleepless Nights* 眠られぬ夜のために (1937) [Fig. 2-6] both utilize a similar style in which animate and inanimate objects are juxtaposed with one another in a sea of fog or mist for dramatic effect.¹⁹ In *The Quietest Time*, a found piece of wood that resembles a canine figure howling at the moon is prominently featured in the center of the canvas emerging from a dense fog. To the right, a solitary yellow leaf falls from the sky breaking up the otherwise empty

¹⁸ Kitawaki, “Contradictory Painting from the Perspective of Technique.”

¹⁹ Photographic experiments in the Kitawaki archives indicate that some works in this style may have been based on dioramas or miniature arrangements that Kitawaki then photographed, enlarged, and then painted. For example, photo documentation that is likely the basis for the painting *Solitary End* (1938) still remains. This technique is similar to that of the Japanese surrealist Aimitsu, best known for his work *Landscape with an Eye* (1938) which incorporates similar techniques.

expanse of blue.²⁰ The lower portion of the canvas is engulfed in a thick blue fog, from which the silhouette of a lone female figure and a dense forest of plant matter are barely visible. These hazy and infinitely still dreamscapes were a hallmark of Kitawaki's surrealist style, and were celebrated by the poet and critic Takiguchi Shūzō. Shortly after Kitawaki's death, Takiguchi elegantly described this and other works by the artist as "dream images that rise up from the fog of the subconscious."²¹ The work, *For Sleepless Nights*, depicts a similarly fog-engulfed landscape, this time with a searchlight breaking through the deep blue haze to highlight an exotic pink flower. Art historian Nakamura Giichi identifies this unique flower as a Buddha's Seat (*hotoke no za* 仏の座), and citing the fact that Kitawaki's familial palatial estate also functioned as a Buddhist temple, reads the illumination of this plant in the darkness as a symbolic representation of "the immeasurable light of Buddhism."²² However, the painting's title comes from a collection of essays by Swiss philosopher Carl Hilty that was translated into Japanese in 1936. As the title alludes to, Kitawaki's scene is brooding and otherworldly in nature, at moments verging on the nightmarish. In the lower right is a carved bust of a screaming woman who seems to reiterate the howling canine figure from several of the artist's other works. To the lower left is another found wooden object that appears to have a face emerging from its bark. Like his European surrealist counterparts, Kitawaki had a collection of found objects, mostly pieces of driftwood, whose enigmatic forms were

²⁰ It is worth noting that the sprawling garden of Kitawaki's property, Kōseiin, is filled with Sassafras trees, and it is likely that their falling leaves were a regular occurrence the artist would have observed with great interest.

²¹ Takiguchi Shūzō. "Kitawaki Noboru Shorōn," *Bijutsu Techō* 70 (1953): 10.

²² Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 104.

fantastically reimagined and transformed in the dream space of his paintings. This work remains especially compelling and perplexing, and was awarded the Mayor's Prize when first exhibited in 1938.

Beyond frottage and found objects, Kitawaki would go on to experiment with a number of surrealist techniques including collage, decalcomania, fumage and Dalí's Paranoiac-Critical method with varying results. In 1938, Kitawaki would establish the Surrealistic Observation Room (*Chōgenjitsusei kanzoku shitsu*) to introduce a variety of surrealist techniques listed above to the public. Kitawaki organized the first exhibition of surrealist *objets d'art* in Kyoto, which came as a revelation to the local audience. There, Kitawaki showed various plants and minerals under a large magnifying glass to expose the previously unknown, strange and wonderful microcosms that exist in everyday items. In promotional material for the Observation Room, Kitawaki wrote:

There may be some people who may question the fact that we are holding an event on surrealism observation, or of its purpose. However no other answer than "A picture is worth a thousand words" can be given. This is because the word "surreal" is today placed under a serious misunderstanding, and unless we correct the public's understanding with our understanding, the possibility of abstract discussion is extremely low. What we wish for is the comprehension of the actual situation, and the departure point should be located at catching the actual situation of the surreal by polishing the lens and observing the universe of surrealism. Just how Mars or Saturn becomes a subject of universal discussion by the power of the lens, surrealism can become a subject of discussion for the first time by borrowing a lens and observing through it.²³

The colorful decalcomania works *Fantasy on Saturn* 土星への幻想 (1938) [Fig. 2-7],

The Fire 1 and *The Fire 2* 劫火 (both c. 1938) appear to be related to this vein of

²³ Kitawaki, "On the Surrealism Observation Room," *Shin Nihon Yoga Kyokai 4th Exhibition Catalog* (October 1938).

experimental inquiry.²⁴ *Fantasy on Saturn* is unique for its use of decalcomania to create colorful patterns that the artist then cut into the shapes of planets, rocks, and flames and collaged on a black background. The work depicts a cosmic scene in which the planet Saturn, complete with its rings, hovers above an active volcanic explosion. Here, the artist has cut patterned bits of paper made through the decalcomania technique, and given them clearly defined shape. In this way, an abstract method for accessing the creative properties of the unconscious mind (decalcomania) becomes a prescribed, figurative device. This is a straightforward example of Kitawaki's impulse to find order in chaos, which would become increasingly diagrammatic in later years. As Kitawaki explains in the text above, just as we can gain access to distant planets through the lens of a telescope, so too might a magnifying glass or microscope open our minds to a previously undiscovered surrealist world. For Kitawaki, the lens gave the artist tangible evidence of a hidden structure buried deep in the natural world, unlocking what he believed to be the world of surrealism. European surrealists such as Breton and Ernst utilized the microscope in a similar way, exploring microscopic worlds that were invisible to the naked eye.

One of Kitawaki's more novel surrealist experiments is the 14-part group painting (*shūdan seisaku* 集団制作) titled *The Tale of Urashima* (*Urashima Monogatari* 浦島物語, 1937), also exhibited at the 3rd New Japanese Oil Painting Association Exhibition. The group painting was orchestrated by Kitawaki together with thirteen other Association members each of whom were assigned a scene from the Japanese folk tale *Urashima*

²⁴ Decalcomania is the surrealist technique in which patterns are automatically created by smearing pigment between two pieces of paper. The recognition of shapes in the resulting patterns was seen as a way to access an unconscious, hallucinatory creative state.

Tarō to represent as part of an painterly experiment in free association. The legend tells of a fisherman named *Urashima Tarō* 浦島太郎 who saves a small turtle from a group of children that are torturing it. A giant turtle returns to explain that the small turtle he saved was in fact *Otohime* 乙姫, the daughter of the Emperor of the Sea, *Ryūjin* 竜神, and that the Emperor would like to thank him for saving his daughter's life. *Tarō* is then whisked off to the Palace of the Dragon God at the bottom of the sea where he spends three days with the beautiful princess. *Tarō* then asks to return to his village to see his mother, and is given a magical box, the *tamatebako* 玉手箱, which he is made to promise never to open. Upon returning to land, *Tarō* discovers that everything has changed and that neither his village nor mother is anywhere to be found. To his dismay, he learns that during the three days he spent underwater, 300 years have passed on land. The distraught fisherman decides to open the mysterious box for solace, and with a puff of white smoke, he suddenly ages 300 years and dies.

Kitawaki divided this well-known story into 14 parts ranging from “Saving the Turtle,” “Meeting Otohime,” and “Finally Opening the Tamatebako” which were assigned to each artist along with a mood for depicting the scene, and designated colors for the background and main motif. According to the chart [Fig. 2-8], Kitawaki's contribution to the project was titled *To the Sea* 海上へ(好奇) [Fig. 2-9], and was to incorporate a blue background, red motif, with an overall mood of curiosity. While the individual paintings themselves are not remarkable, Kitawaki's experimental process is significant as it is the first known example of surrealist group painting in Japan and as such deserves a more detailed analysis. The selection of such a popular folk tale as the

subject for a surrealist experiment into group automatism seems somewhat arbitrary or incongruous, but it is important to be mindful of the increased interest in Japanese nativism that was in the air as the country geared up for all-out war with China.

The theme of Urashima appears prominently in an earlier work by the 19th century *yōga* painter Yamamoto Hōsui, titled *Urashima's Return Home* 浦島図 (1893-95) [Fig. 2-10], which provides an interesting point of comparison to Kitawaki's taking up of the same theme some 40 years later. Unlike Kitawaki's sparse, symbolic composition, Yamamoto's large oil painting depicts Urashima Tarō's triumphant return home from the sea kingdom, followed by a grand procession of sea nymphs. In her study of Yamamoto's painting, art historian Takashina Erika explores the multifaceted meaning of the Urashima myth and sea imagery in the context of Meiji-period Japan (1868-1912). Takashina discusses the long-held view of "Japan as a nation of the sea" and the indigenous belief in the sea as the mythical "origin of the Japanese people."²⁵ Takashina also deftly connects these beliefs and Yamamoto's triumphant portrayal of Urashima Tarō with contemporaneous notions of coastal defense, and the Meiji-era annexations of both the Ryūkyū Kingdom (modern day Okinawa) and Hokkaidō. In the Meiji context, Takashina argues that the Urashima myth functioned as both a strong symbol of Japanese nativism and was emblematic of the country's early 19th century mentality of manifest destiny. Despite the 40-year gap between Yamamoto and Kitawaki's paintings, it is interesting to consider what may have driven Kitawaki to use the same mythical theme for his surrealist group experiment. In many ways, the theme of Urashima would have

²⁵ Takashina Erika and Christina M. Spiker. "From The Sea Beyond: Hōsui, Seiki, Tenshin, and the West Sea of Hybridization: In Dispute over Urashima." *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 26 (2014): 87.

resonated with the nativist thinking and ambitions for imperial expansion in the early Shōwa period as it did back in the Meiji period. While it is not immediately clear if Kitawaki's choice of Urashima as the subject matter for his group production was simply intended to veil a highly experimental surrealist mode of production in the guise of a familiar folktale, or if his choice of subject matter was in lock-step with early Shōwa nativist thinking, Takashina's article provides much needed context for unpacking alternative readings for what would otherwise appear to be an arbitrary decision on Kitawaki's part.

Kitawaki published an article titled "The Tale of Urashima—Group Production" 浦島物語—集団制作—in the December 1937 issue of the art journal *Mizue* みづゑ where he reported on his experimental process, its motivation, and its outcome:

This experiment was directly motivated by *myōshitai* 妙屍体 [exquisite corpse]. And, on the other hand, it is contrasted with the overall style of *haikai* 俳諧 linked verse poetry. Therefore, by making a comparative study of the two, we may clarify the contents of our plan.

First, let us consider the similarity between the two. They both compose a whole disjunctively by having individual people as units. This is the only similarity, and by that, they can both be regarded as a form of group production. However, once we consider the differences between the two, we discover there is quite an intrinsic contrast. That is, in *myōshitai* the disjunctive relationship between each participant and the whole is always accidental, and therefore it embraces internal contradictions that necessarily result in the development of criticism, while in the form of *haiku*, it is always intentional, and therefore it can only mimic external contradictions that result in the development of comprehension.

Comparison between the former, which is accidental and critical, and the latter, which is intentional and comprehensive, clearly reveals a difference in terms of the times—between the modern and the medieval. It seems that although in medieval times, one was resigned to comprehending things based on an objective understanding of nature, in modern times, it has become impossible to comprehend things merely through an objective understanding of nature. And paradox, paradox alone, became the solitary clue. Here lies the attraction of *myōshitai*, a game of

accident and criticism, and the direction of our experimental group painting.²⁶

According to Breton, the *exquisite corpse* is defined as a “game of folded paper which consists in having several people compose a phrase or drawing collectively, none of the participants having any idea of the nature of the preceding contribution or contributions.”²⁷ The *exquisite corpse* (*myōshitai* 妙屍体) was a playful method of group automatism that often resulted in bizarre sentences and highly surreal anthropomorphic designs. In coming to terms with this foreign surrealist technique, Kitawaki intuitively found what he considered to be its closest indigenous Japanese analog—*haikai* linked verse poetry—and analyzed the differences between the two. In *haikai* linked verse poetry, authors pass their writing between one another in a round robin format where the previous lines are visible and are then added to by the next participant with often humorous or playful results. Kitawaki reads this medieval group production method as “intentional” since each participant is aware of what was written before. By contrast, Kitawaki is struck by the “accidental” quality of the *exquisite corpse*, which is the result of a purely automatic process of group production. Ultimately, for Kitawaki, it is the paradox of automatism that the artist finds most compelling and indicative of modern times. According to art historian Věra Linhartová, Kitawaki saw the idea of objective chance as the abdication of the intellect to a seemingly impenetrable world. The artist viewed this failure as indicative of an era that had given up on finding the common ground between art and

²⁶ Kitawaki, “The Tale of Urashima—Group Production,” *Mizue* 394 (December 1937): 20-21.

²⁷ Breton, “The Exquisite Corpse, Its Exaltation,” in *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: MFA Publications, 2002), 289.

science—a conceptual space in which Kitawaki sought to illustrate an all-encompassing understanding of the universe.²⁸ He goes on to conclude the article by proposing “the destination of painting in the future may be indeed in the direction of an aggressive conquering of this paradox between individuality and the group.”²⁹ The irony of *The Tale of Urashima*, is that while Kitawaki approached this as an experiment in group automatism, he placed specific parameters on each artist’s individual approach by assigning them each a subject, mood, and color scheme to work with. By dictating these aspects of production, Kitawaki restricted the automatic nature of the experiment within narrow confines, ultimately working against surrealist automatism’s goal of freeing the creative impulse from the rational control of the conscious mind.

Kitawaki would go on to experiment with another model of collaborative painting the following year with the work *Garden* 庭園 (1938) [Fig. 2-11]. Working together with 15 members of the Kyoto Institute of Independent Art, each member designated how much space on a large 1 x 2 meter canvas they would allot to themselves. While no longer extant, photo documentation of the work reveals a horizontal canvas divided into six quadrants with lines emanating from the center of the canvas out to the edges. The composition is a hodgepodge of elements including a large leaf, a human figure, elongated shadows, a glass orb, and ornate metal work (Kitawaki’s contribution). Compared to the fragmented nature of *The Tale of Urashima*, *Garden* appears as a surreal unified whole, with elements randomly appearing across the canvas as if by stream of

²⁸ Věra Linhartová, *Dada Et Surréalisme Au Japon* (Paris: Publications Orientalistes de France, 1987), 252.

²⁹ Kitawaki, “A Tale of Urashima,” 20-21.

consciousness. While the previous project embodied the search for an unknown surrealist quality in the paradox of the individual and the group, *Garden* appears to pursue a unified group consciousness at the expense of the individual. Kitawaki's comments corroborate this reading in a telling way: "Let us think of the whole of the painting as a single nation. Under the supervision of that strong regulation, if you try to gather the results of each person working as they like, I think you can achieve a wonderful harmony."³⁰ This veiled type of nationalist sentiment corresponds with the consolidation of civilian organizations as part of the National Spiritual Mobilization Sentiment Movement (*Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō*), which took effect in October 1937 with the purpose of rallying the nation for a total war effort against China.

In the broader context of wartime Japan, Kitawaki's exploration of the individual's relationship to the group and the nation's role in creating a harmonious, unified front echo the Japanese wartime concept of *kokutai* 国体. The word *kokutai*, literally meaning "national body," encompasses the notion of a "national polity" or "national essence" that is unique to Japan and is embodied in the figure of the emperor. As such, the *kokutai* exists as an ideological construct unifying the Japanese people as a nation under the eternal sovereign of the emperor. According to author Alan Tansman, "the *kokutai*, by definition and by design, was an unmovable entity—a body, a community, a set of standards."³¹ This community was defined in religious terms and was endowed with mythic origins that traced an unbroken lineage of imperial rule over Japan

³⁰ Kitawaki in Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 98.

³¹ Alan Tansman. "The Rhetoric of Unspoken Fascism," in *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2009), 151.

dating from time immemorial. The emperor, believed to be a direct descent of the sun goddess Amaterasu, was the singular embodiment of political and religious power. The “body” of the nation was envisioned as eternal with the emperor as the “head” of the national family bound together by blood relation. Here the notion of *kokutai* resembles the Western concept of the “body politic” in which the sovereign was the embodiment and unifying symbol of the state. However, the *kokutai* was envisioned as a limitless, timeless, and boundless entity in which the individual citizen gave himself or herself over to a larger whole.

Particularly in the late 1930s, Japan sought to purge the concept of the individual informed by Western Enlightenment thinking in order to emphasize the close connections between individuals and the state while simultaneously implicating citizens in the fulfillment of state goals. The 1937 publication of *The Essence of the National Polity* (*Kokutai no hongi* 国体の本義), which was distributed nationally to teachers at all schools from the elementary to university level, was instrumental in the ideological indoctrination of the Japanese people into the community of the *kokutai*. Through literary strategies of constant repetition and obscure archaic references, *The Essence of National Polity* closely mimicked the workings of a religious text in both its style and function. By returning to a timeless essence, the Japanese government sought to bind the spirit and body into one, rejecting the individual in favor of a harmonious, unified national body. Thus, the nation was understood as a concrete entity that could mobilize millions for the war effort by equating self-sacrifice with the preservation of the imperial institution. Although Kitawaki does not reference the idea of *kokutai* directly in his texts on group

production, his arguments for eclipsing the individual in favor of group harmony are nonetheless informed by its logic.

...

While Kitawaki's work was far from war propaganda, it nonetheless was steeped in Japan's wartime rhetoric as tacitly acknowledged in some of the artist's own writings. Kitawaki was not alone in his thinking, and major surrealist figures such as Takiguchi Shūzō and Fukuzawa Ichirō argued for the presence of indigenous roots for surrealism in Zen Buddhism and traditional Japanese culture as part of a larger cultural program that emphasized Japanese nativism during wartime. Other surrealist figures such as Kitasono Katsue were much more outspoken about their support of the war effort, going so far as to write jingoist poetry for the *Sensō shishū* 戦争詩集 (War Poems) anthology and the journal *Shin gijutsu* 新技術 (New Techniques).³² As an imported artistic movement, surrealism joined a long list of Western cultural forms that Japanese artists had encountered abroad, and returned to Japan to internalize. However, surrealism had the unique distinction of undergoing this process during the revival of wartime ultra-nationalism. Surrealism was subject to these complex internal pressures from the moment it took hold in Japan, and its radical spirit and thought had to endure this self-scrutiny. Kitawaki's exploration of native Japanese terms and techniques as possible equivalents to European surrealist methods must be seen in this light to be properly assessed.

³² For more on Kitasono, please see John Solt, *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katsue (1902-1978)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1999).

At the same time Kitawaki was investigating the surrealist tendencies of haiku, Noh theater, and Japanese rock gardens, major figures in Japanese surrealism including Fukuzawa Ichirō and Takiguchi Shūzō were also putting forth similar arguments of their own. Fukuzawa Ichirō's book *Surrealism* (1937) published as part of Atorie's アトリエ monograph series *Modern Art*, contains two chapters on the topic including "Surrealism and Japanese Things" and "The Surrealism Movement in Japan." In his chapter on "Surrealism and Japanese Things," Fukuzawa points out the surrealist nature of indigenous cultural forms including haiku, *bonseki* 盆石, *suiseki* 水石, and Zen Buddhism. Regarding haiku, he comments that "Haiku is something that expresses a wide, infinite range of emotions in a simple five-seven-five rhythm, and this style has something extremely surreal about it. The unique sense that is born from the extreme contrast among very few words, and the conflict of contradictions, are related to the basic ideas of early surrealism like the 'chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella.'"³³ Here, Fukuzawa references the famous line by the French poet Lautréamont about surrealist dislocation and compares this feeling to that found in the work of Matsuo Bashō, the most famous haiku poet of the Edo period. Bashō was well known for his *haikai* linked verse poetry that often utilized vulgar humor to combine disparate literary elements. Similarly, critic Takiguchi Shūzō also writes about *haikai* as "the emergence of human desires by the unconscious through the artistic expression of

³³ Fukuzawa Ichirō, "Surrealism and Japanese Things." in *Surrealism* (Tokyo: Atorie, 1937), 185-198.

our ancestors” in his essay “What is Surrealism?”³⁴ That all three men would highlight the surrealist quality of *haikai* linked verse poetry is telling.

Fukuzawa goes on to discuss *bonseki*—the traditional Japanese art of creating miniature landscapes on lacquer trays using sand, pebbles, and small rocks—as corresponding with the surrealist object in its ability to transfigure and transmute reality. This is also true of *suiseki*—naturally occurring rock formations that allude to an entire landscape in and of themselves. Fukuzawa goes on to describe *bonseki* and *suiseki* as “literally about loving stones. It is about enjoying the shapes and colors of stones, just as they are. However, in some cases they are ‘symbolically effective objects.’ Objects are strange when they become like a cult, and there are also many sexual symbolisms.”³⁵ With its sexual symbolism, Fukuzawa here seems to allude to Dalí’s concept of the “object with a symbolic function” in which surrealist objects function as fetish objects of sexual desire.

...

In January 1938, the Innovative Art Association (*Sōki Bijutsu Kyokai* 創紀美術協会) was formed in Tokyo to create the first Japanese avant-garde artist’s group dedicated solely to surrealism. The group released a statement upon its formation, which referenced the need to rebuild culture in the current “state of emergency.”³⁶ The group set about experimenting with surrealist techniques with a new sense of urgency that corresponded

³⁴ Takiguchi in Ken’ichiro Makino, “Regarding The Tale of Urashima.” In *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective*. (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997), 38.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Sōki Bijutsu Kyokai* statement in Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 103.

with the mounting pressure on avant-garde art organizations in the midst of wartime. The initial membership consisted of 19 artists, most notably including poet/critic Takiguchi Shūzō, *Mizue* publisher Ōshita Masao, as well as Kitawaki, Komaki, and other surrealists from the Independent Art Association. Kitawaki and Komaki were invited to hold a Kyoto Outpost exhibition for the group in July 1938, and all members met in Tokyo for their first show in October 1938 at the Aoki Company Gallery in Ginza. While the Innovative Art Association would be short-lived, only lasting for about one year, it would set the stage for the hugely influential Art Culture Association (*Bijutsu Bunka Kyokai* 美術文化協会) the following year.

In both Kyoto and Tokyo exhibitions of the Innovative Art Association, Kitawaki would exhibit a series of new works informed by Dalí's Paranoiac-Critical method, collectively titled *Series of Physiognomy* 観相学シリーズ. According to Dalí, the Paranoiac-Critical method is a "*spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based upon the interpretive-critical association of delirious phenomena.*"³⁷ Through this method, the artist would self-induce a paranoid state, allowing them to tap into their subconscious. In Dalí's talented hands, these paranoid delusions would "pass tangibly onto the plane of reality" in the form of "common images having a double figuration" executed with the utmost precision.³⁸ Resulting works such as *Paranoiac Visage* (1935) [Fig. 2-12], represent two images within the same picture—a woman's face and a group of men seated around a hut—both of which are simultaneously legible to the viewer. This

³⁷ Salvador Dalí and David Gascoyne, *Conquest of the Irrational* (New York: Julien Levy, 1935), 15.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

particular work is a simple exercise of Dalí's method, and other works such as *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) and *Apparition of Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach* (1938) [Fig. 2-13] show the virtuosity Dalí was capable of with the Paranoiac-Critical method to depict multiple realities within a single composition. By comparison, Kitawaki's work *The Mandala of Birds and Beasts* 鳥獸曼荼羅 (1938) [Fig. 2-14], one of the first from his *Series of Physiognomy* is rudimentary at best. Set against a blank cream background, the artist has used the contours of various duck and cat faces to create a third face from the amalgamation of the others. While Kitawaki explicitly references Dalí in relationship to this series, *The Mandala of Birds and Beasts* is clearly inspired, in part, by the Edo period *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 artist Utagawa Yoshifuji's print *The Mysterious Cat from the 53 Stages* (*Gojūsantsugi no uchi neko no kai* 五十三次之内 猫之怪) (1848-49) [Fig. 2-15] that features a large feline face made up of an amalgamation of other feline forms. The portrait heads of Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo are also likely an important point of reference for this particular series as well.

Looking at Kitawaki's *Series of Physiognomy* as a whole, these works are unlike any previous paintings by the artist, and are characterized by isolated elements set against a blank backdrop arranged in such a manner so as to transform these elements into facial features. Unlike Dalí's wildly irrational compositions inspired by the Paranoiac-Critical method, Kitawaki's work is calm, collected, and almost clinical in its approach. According to Kitawaki, "Here in the Physiognomic Method, a limited search of overlapping images like the Paranoiac-Critical method, formally displays one characteristic in a symmetrical mandala-like composition. This is a critical method

according to artificial symmetrical aggregation of asymmetrical dynamic natural function.”³⁹ In his description, we can see that Kitawaki is unconcerned with the psychological aspects of Dalí’s method, and instead is focused predominantly on its formal characteristics. While this may reflect Kitawaki’s elementary understanding of Dalí’s method, it is more likely that Kitawaki was uninterested in the psychological aspects of Dalí’s experiments, and instead adopted Dalí’s method as a means to illustrate his own fascination with the interrelation of symmetry and asymmetry. Kitawaki would go on to write a lengthy article on the subject of symmetry and asymmetry the following year that began to map out a comprehensive theory that the artist believed held hidden meaning and insight into the fundamental nature of reality. As will become clear in the following chapter, Kitawaki’s subsequent paintings would evolve into illustrations of the artist’s theoretical concepts, assuming a greater level of abstraction and coded meaning.

Returning to the *Series of Physiognomy*, while not nearly as virtuosic as that of Dalí, it is clear some paintings are more compelling than others. The most visibly surreal example of the series is the work *Image of Rebirth* 変生像 (1938) [Fig. 2-16] that features a yellow moth perched atop a doll wearing a blue dress. The insect sits unnervingly on the doll’s head with its wings spread, the pattern and coloration of its wings doubling as a cute but monstrous face. The inspiration for this clever composition may have come from a scientific newspaper article found in Kitawaki’s numerous scrapbooks titled “Fearsome Faces?” 凄い顔 which details the face-like patterns found

³⁹ Noboru Kitawaki: *A Retrospective* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997), 86.

on various butterfly and moth wings.⁴⁰ There is another more fearsome face toward the bottom of the painting that emerges from the shadows created by the figurine's base and two yoyos that hang inexplicably from both of the doll's hands. Here the yoyos double as beady eyes for the more sinister visage that appears to grin menacingly from the ether. Other works such as *Village* 聚落 (1938) [Fig. 2-17] depict aerial views of topographical maps whose rivers, valleys, and architectural structures have been arranged to create primitive faces in the fictitious landscape.

One work in particular, titled *Shadow* 影 (1938) [Fig. 2-18], points to Kitawaki's ongoing interest in microscopic worlds and the blurring between surrealism and science in his work. At first glance, the painting depicts four multi-colored concentric shapes that make up the eyes, nose, and lips of a rudimentary face that appears to hover above a bluish-green background. Upon closer inspection, what appear to be lips are in fact the magnified cellular structure of an earthworm that has been dissected lengthwise. Above the "lips" is the inscription "Ph. Communissima G. et H." which refers to the particular genus (*Pheretima*) and species (*Communissima*) of the earthworm in question. The eye in the upper right, which has similar orange and green coloring, is a cross-section of the same earthworm in which concentric layers of cells are also visible. Likewise, the nose and other eye that are concentrically colored yellow and red are in fact dissections of the aquatic invertebrate, *Hydra*—known for its radial symmetry—viewed under a microscope. These biological specimens are both clearly labeled, and each of the cellular layers are designated "a" through "f" as would appear in a scientific text describing the anatomical structure of these microscopic creatures. In its use of magnified cellular structure, this

⁴⁰ Ibid., 140.

work shares much in common with that of Max Ernst who was fascinated by the hidden or overlooked worlds that could only be seen with the aid of a microscope. Utilizing an overpainting technique, Ernst would often invert scientific diagrams or charts and then paint over areas to create disorienting biomorphic fantasy worlds. It is interesting to note that while Ernst's approach utilized obfuscation and embellishment to bewilder viewers, Kitawaki's approach relied heavily on objective observation and clever compositional arrangements to illustrate his physiognomic method and conjure a surrealist image.

In his 1938 text "Delusional Paintings" 虚妄の絵画 published in the art journal *Atorie*, Kitawaki discusses how surrealist paintings have been derided as "fallacious" (*kyomō* 虚妄) or "delusional." Rather than arguing against this claim, the artist embraces it, explaining how this dismissive term is the result of a narrow worldview, pointing out that "those who view the universe only based on conscious reality have no other way than calling the universe based on unconscious reality, 'delusional.'"⁴¹ He then goes on to call for the establishment of a "theory of the delusional" proclaiming "delusional painting must be backed up only by delusional theories."⁴² The artist does not attempt to articulate such a theory himself, but hints at the need to rethink the contradictory nature of consciousness vs. unconsciousness, truth vs. fiction, and reality vs. delusion, with the understanding that these dichotomies are not necessarily in opposition to one another, but two sides of the same coin. This idea will come to consume Kitawaki's thinking over the next few years as he attempts to visualize the hidden systems of order and meaning found in the chaos of the natural world. At this point in time, however, Kitawaki's thinking is

⁴¹ Kitawaki, "Delusional Paintings," *Atorie* 15, no. 17 (December 1938): 91-92.

⁴² Ibid.

still in its nascent stages, and he can only provide examples of the natural phenomena that he finds so enthralling without explanation: “Driven by our aspiration toward the essential, we are amazed by the wonder of rather intentional forms, such as those of Coelenterates and Echinoderms, by the orderliness of meiotic division of living cells, and the almost wickedly intentional natural forms of Jupiter, Mars, and above all, Saturn.”⁴³

The following year, Kitawaki would build on the statement above by claiming emphatically, “Today, if you pursue avant-garde painting, you can achieve nothing by being unconcerned about the position of humanistic philosophies, the structure of quantum physics, and the topological idea of space. In other words, the subject matter of painting can no longer be limited to only visible worlds anymore.”⁴⁴ That same year, Kitawaki would create the painting *For Morphology* 形態学の為に (1939) [Fig. 2-19] as an ode to science and the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. While Goethe is best known for his literary work, he also wrote scientific treatises on morphology as well as color theory—both of which figure heavily into Kitawaki’s later work. Compared to his *Series of Physiognomy*, *For Morphology* is a complex composition rendered with great precision. At the bottom of the painting is an angular, L-shaped framed structure that houses six circles—each of which features a magnified image of the initial stages of seed germination. Each circle functions as a lens illuminating the germination process, which is presented in a very clear and objective manner, along the lines of scientific observation. Piercing this structure is a Wild turnip plant (*aburana* 油菜) whose roots begin beneath

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Kitawaki, “Methodological Reflections in Need,” *Bi no kuni* 15, no. 7 (July 1939): 6-7.

the surface, amongst the images of seed germination, and emerges fully-grown with leaves and yellow flowers. To the left and the right of the plant are two pinned specimens of pods—one living and one dead—that reference the plant’s lifecycle. To the right of the turnip plant is a strange leafy shadow in which a man’s silhouette is clearly visible.⁴⁵ The portrait is likely that of Goethe, the German poet and philosopher, and author of the 1790 morphological study, *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. Goethe conceived *morphology* as “a science of organic forms and formative forces aimed at discovering the underlying unity in the vast diversity of plants and animals.”⁴⁶ Goethe’s concept of morphology is a qualitative, descriptive science that searches for the underlying principles that determine how organic forms change through time—a process he called “metamorphosis.” Goethe’s text is clearly the inspiration for Kitawaki’s 1939 work, as the painting features an exact copy of an illustration featured in the German study rendered in bright pink.⁴⁷ [Fig. 2-20] *The Complete Works of Goethe* were published in Japanese in 1937 by Kaizosha, so it is likely that Kitawaki had access to this text and had studied it in detail.

Goethe’s philosophy of science, what today might be described as a “phenomenology of nature,” is based on direct experiential contact and in-depth viewing and description of natural phenomena. Unlike the standard scientific method that involves objective observation, hypothesis, and experimentation to test the validity of one’s assumptions, Goethe’s phenomenological method aims at an empathetic understanding of

⁴⁵ Curator Ōtani Shōgo has identified the same silhouette on the cover of *The Complete Works of Goethe* (Tokyo: Kaizosha, 1937).

⁴⁶ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, ed. Gordon L. Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), xvi.

⁴⁷ This illustration appears in *The Complete Works of Goethe* (Tokyo: Kaizosha, 1937), vol 26, 13.

natural phenomena in which patterns, structures, and meaning are internalized by the observer. As Goethe scholar Frederick Amrine explains, “In Goethe’s version of [the] scientific method, one does not abandon the phenomena, imagine a mechanism or cause, and then proceed to test one’s abstract hypotheses by constructing an artificial experience in which individual phenomena are torn out of context. Rather, one stays with the phenomena; thinks *within* them; accedes with one’s intentionality to their patterns, which gradually opens one’s thinking to an intuition of their structure.”⁴⁸ According to Goethe, “each phenomena in nature, rightly observed, wakens in us a new organ of inner understanding.”⁴⁹ This search for hidden meaning in the patterns of nature is addressed eloquently in Goethe’s 1798 companion poem “The Metamorphosis of Plants”:

All the shapes are akin and none is quite like the other;
So to a secret law surely that chorus must point,
To a sacred enigma. Dear friend, how I wish I were able
All at once to pass on, happy, the word that unlocks!
Growing consider the plant and see how by gradual phases,
Slowly evolved, it forms, rises to blossom and fruit.⁵⁰

Returning to Kitawaki’s painting, it appears that *For Morphology* is not only an homage to Goethe and his method, but an illustration of the latter as well. In subsequent works, Kitawaki will utilize Goethe’s method—observing natural phenomena and visualizing patterns—in an attempt to find hidden and/or secret meaning in the natural world. As phenomenologist David Seamon explains, “Goethe argued that, in time, out of

⁴⁸ Frederick Amrine, “The Metamorphosis of the Scientist,” in *Goethe’s Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*, ed. David Seamon, and Arthur Zajonc. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 37.

⁴⁹ Goethe in Seamon, *Goethe’s Way of Science*, 3.

⁵⁰ Goethe in Amrine, “The Metamorphosis of the Scientist,” 36.

commitment, practice and proper efforts, the student would discover the ‘ur-phenomenon’ (*Urphänomen*), the essential pattern or process of a thing.”⁵¹ Taking inspiration from Goethe, Kitawaki goes on to assume the role of a scientific dilettante or philosophical idealist, merging his artistic intuition with a pseudo-scientific method in order to make sense of the world around him and identify the fundamental laws that govern the nature of things. These factors would progressively infuse Kitawaki’s artistic vocabulary and vision giving rise to his “diagrammatic” paintings of the early 1940s.

Further complicating *For Morphology*, it appears that Kitawaki lifted multiple compositional elements from Max Ernst’s iconic painting *At the First Clear Word* (1923) [Fig. 2-21] to construct his own work. In particular, the silver leaf atop a long vertical rod in Kitawaki’s work seems to mimic the tree-like structures in Ernst’s earlier painting. The window in Ernst’s painting also reappears in Kitawaki’s composition as the framed botanical illustration from Goethe’s text, as does the thin white string found in Ernst’s original work. Unlike Ernst’s painting in which the string hangs limp connecting an insect to a red ball, the string in Kitawaki’s painting is taught, and serves to connect Goethe’s botanical illustration to the silver rod. Here, the top of the botanical illustration is literally tied to the top of the turnip plant, as are its roots, making a visual statement of equivalents. Here, the string symbolizes Goethe’s concept of morphology, which aims to articulate an underlying unity in botanical forms and function (leaf structures, root structures, etc.). In this way, *For Morphology* is the first of many works by Kitawaki to utilize painting as a means to illustrate the artist’s theories regarding hidden order and meaning in the natural world. As will be argued in the next chapter, as these

⁵¹ Seamon, *Goethe’s Way of Science*, 4.

diagrammatic illustrations become increasingly abstract they begin to divorce themselves from surrealism as we know it in an attempt to visualize the hidden order and structure of the world.

CHAPTER 3: In Search of the Universal

Diagrammatic Painting and the Pressures of War (1939-1945)

Just as Kitawaki's style had swung from social realism to surrealism in 1937, nearly two years later in 1939, his style would again abruptly shift, this time from surrealism to geometric abstraction. The pendulum's swing away from surrealism coincided with a number of conflicting factors at play in Kitawaki's creative life—most notably the formation of the Art Culture Association (*Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai* 美術文化協会) and the Japanese government's increasingly totalitarian control over artists and artistic production. Utilizing Kitawaki as a case study, this chapter will explore the push and pull between the ambitions of the avant-garde and the restrictions imposed by the Japanese wartime state to keep those very same ambitions in check. As will become clear, avant-garde artists such as Kitawaki had to negotiate pressures from within and without in order to strike a balance between one's artistic convictions and external wartime pressures. For some Japanese artists, the Second World War signaled a patriotic embrace of propaganda art sanctioned by the state, while for others it signaled an acquiescence to the new wartime status quo, or a silent retreat into obscurity. Looking at Kitawaki's stylistic shift toward geometric abstraction—what the artist would call “diagrammatic” or “schematic” paintings (*zushiki kaiga* 図式絵画)—together with his writings between 1939 and 1943, a complex picture emerges of an artist whose artistic and personal convictions were not black and white. As will be discussed in further detail, Kitawaki's writings implicitly rationalize Japan's wartime rhetoric by integrating elements of nativist and/or nationalist thought into the artist's unique worldview. Here,

politically charged elements such as Prime Minister Konoe's cultural "New Order" (*shintaisei* 新体制) and the Kyoto School's ultra-nationalist philosophy would rub elbows with esoteric concerns such as Goethe's color theory and ancient Chinese divination. Instead of ignoring or explaining away such problematic connections, this chapter attempts to make sense of how and why Kitawaki internalized such disparate information and transformed it into a unified visual language.

On the avant-garde side of this wartime equation, May 1939 signals an important development for the Japanese art world and Kitawaki as embodied by the formation of the Art Culture Association (*Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai*). Headed by arguably the two most influential figures of Japanese surrealism, the poet/critic Takiguchi Shūzō and painter Fukuzawa Ichirō, the Art Culture Association assumed the role of successor to the Nikakai and Independent Art Association (*Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyōkai* 独立美術協会), establishing itself as the preeminent avant-garde art group of the day. Unlike previous groups, the Art Culture Association aimed at fully encompassing the notion of the avant-garde by not merely staging exhibitions, but by critically examining artistic and cultural phenomena in all its forms—publishing its own journal (*Bijutsu Bunka* 美術文化), as well as holding regular discussions and activities. With a membership of 41 artists¹, the association sought to embrace artistic talents in a broad sense, focusing not only on painting and sculpture, but photography, decorative arts, design, and literature with the goal of synthesizing these into a unified avant-garde movement that would "work toward

¹ In addition to Takiguchi, Fukuzawa, Kitawaki and Komaki, the group included Aimitsu, Doi Toshio, Furusawa Iwami, Asō Saburō, Itozono Wasaburō, Yonekura Hisahito, Saitō Yoshishige, Yoshii Tadashi, Abe Yoshifumi, Terada Masaaki, and Tsuchiya Yukio, among others.

the fruition of tomorrow's art."² While it might be assumed that the group was driven by Japanese surrealism with Takiguchi and Fukuzawa at the helm, nowhere did the association explicitly claim to be surrealist in nature. Instead, the Art Culture Association defined itself as being an "avant-garde art movement" encompassing art and culture, and not limited to any single methodology, school, or technique. Above all else, the group was keen on breaking with the past and its associated ideas and techniques in the pursuit of a "new, powerful art."³

Looking at the table of contents for the August 1939 inaugural issue of *Bijutsu Bunka*, we see the ambitious range of ideas and topics the group and its members sought to explore. Article titles included: "Max Ernst," "Symmetry and Asymmetry," "Muromachi Art Notebook," "Gradiva," "The Magdalen Legend," and "Discussion of the Avant-Garde Nature in Avant-Garde Art." Takiguchi contributed the critical text titled, "The Avant-Garde and its Cultural Agenda," 前衛美術と文化的課題 in which he acknowledged a turning point for the Japanese avant-garde when political affairs were exerting external pressures on artistic practice. In an attempt to articulate the changing role of the avant-garde in the current "state of emergency," Takiguchi stated:

There are many elements that determine the cultural character of today, but I believe that it lies in harmonizing the desires of the individual and the group, or unifying them. This does not mean that individual expression should be suppressed and ignored for the group's demands. The state of emergency is trying to promote such a trend as a national policy for art, but for that to equip a clear cultural morphology requires the following

² "About the launch of Bijutsu Bunka Kyokai," *Bijutsu Bunka* (August 1939).

³ Ibid.

elemental resolution. National policy is a political theme, and art must respond to it in addition to having its own motivation.⁴

Here, Takiguchi argues for the autonomy of art amidst the Japanese government's sweeping wartime reforms while still acknowledging the need for compromise. By the time the Art Culture Association had formed, Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro had enacted the State Total Mobilization Law (*Kokka Sōdōin Hō* 国家総動員法) the previous spring that “provided a new legal basis for extensive state intrusion into many aspects of civilian life, including public expression, the media, and the arts.”⁵ While Takiguchi remained a staunch advocate for individual expression, by 1939 it is clear that the avant-garde had to walk a thin line between mounting state control over the arts and self-expression that would continue to intensify until the war's end.

Kitawaki's membership in the Art Culture Association represented a break with the past—both he and Komaki Gentarō withdrew from the Independent Art Association and New Japanese Oil Painting Association in May 1939. In particular, his departure from the Independent Art Association delivered a blow to the Kyoto Institute of Independent Art and Kitawaki's mentor, Suda Kunitaro. Kitawaki had been the backbone for the Kyoto Institute and had always looked up to the senior Suda, initially extending the invitation for Suda to lecture at the Kyoto Institute. But over the years, Kitawaki's interest in surrealism and pursuit of the avant-garde distanced him from the thick impasto and darkly atmospheric works of Suda. According to Kitawaki biographer Nakamura

⁴ Fukuzawa Ichirō, “The Avant-Garde and its Cultural Agenda,” *Bijutsu Bunka* 1 (August 1939).

⁵ Mark Sandler, “The Living Artist: Matsumoto Shunsuke's Reply to the State” *Art Journal* 55, No. 3 (1996): 75.

Giichi, Kitawaki's departure from the Independent Art Association could be read as a "declaration of independence from the orthodoxy of Suda and all that he represented."⁶

To emphasize this break from the past and commemorate their new alliance with the Art Culture Association, Kitawaki and Komaki held an exhibition at the Kyoto Asahi Kaikan Gallery. While Komaki presented works in a familiar surrealist vein, such as the Ernst inspired *Fetishistic Landscape* フェチッシュな風景 (1939) [Fig. 3-1] and the biomorphic triptych *These Three Things (3 works, 1 group)* この三つのもの (3点1組) (1939) [Fig. 3-2], Kitawaki presented several works that display a marked stylistic shift toward a new geometric abstraction. In *The Principles of Contradiction and Harmony (30°X60°.....45° in a Square)* 矛盾律と調和律(正方形内の 30°X60°.....45°) (1939) [later retitled *Correlative Order L.C.M.* 相関的秩序 (1939)] [Fig. 3-3] pure geometric abstraction is emphasized by red, blue, and orange colored lines that bounce at varying angles off the sides of a square delineated by a thick black frame. Looking at Kitawaki's notebooks from this period, there are several ink sketches that relate to this painting: one study with the earlier title scrawled beneath and letters designating the colors for each line, and another consisting of a simplified diagram that curiously has an eye drawn at the bottom edge of the square. [Fig. 3-4] Returning to the finished work, we can see that the eye was ultimately deleted from the final composition, but the sketch hints at some hidden meaning behind the various colored lines that originate from the same location as the eye at 30°, 45°, and 60° angles.

⁶ Nakamura Giichi, *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zasetsu—K no baai* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), 120.

Often there are explanatory texts or essays written by the artist that detail his complex theories and thinking behind a given work or series. Uniquely, in the case of the above enigmatic work, there is an anonymous article titled “The Principle of Control Focused on the Japanese Mentality—Complex Mysteries Can be Solved” 日本精神を中心とする一つの統制原理—複雑怪奇も解ける, (*Nippon Shimbun*, October 1939), that features an image of this painting and a detailed explanation of the painting in relationship to international politics of the day. The article warrants an in-depth reading for its unique interpretation of this work within the context of wartime Japan. The article begins,

This painting, titled *The Principles of Contradiction and Harmony*, was composed as a theoretical painting by Mr. Kitawaki Noboru of the Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai [Art Culture Association], and is a piece to be studied artistically for research. Since I believe that this theoretical piece does not simply remain at being an artistic principle, and should also entirely be applied to reform the world with the Japanese mentality in mind, I have decided to talk about it as a topic. This painting can be seen as a billiard table and it therefore shows a locus of a ball rolling at a set angle in a set direction. It shows the ball moving in a 60°, 45°, and 30° angle. In the case of the 60° and 30° angles, the path becomes very complicated and stops at a dead end in the corners, but the 45° angle draws an accurate square and continues infinitely without ever stopping.⁷

The author goes on to analogize the entangled 60° and 30° lines to poor and/or misguided leadership that ultimately will lead to a dead end similar to the fate of the wartime Chinese leader Chiang Kai-Shek. By contrast, the author likens the 45° line’s simplicity and uniformity with a uniquely “Japanese mentality”, making the following claim:

I think that we should emphasize the ‘Japanese mentality’ which orders all people to obey the 45° angle—and to complete this uniformity, rather

⁷ “The Principle of Control Focused on the Japanese Mentality—Complex Mysteries Can be Solved,” *Nippon Shimbun*, October 1939.

than fixing the other line, we should focus our attention on the 45° line, expand and strengthen it...I believe that real uniformity is raising the 45° line high so that it becomes thicker as it spins indefinitely, and in the public's standpoint that individualism outside the national policy line will eventually lose its force without having to interfere with it.⁸

The author compares the 45° line to the patriotic slogan “Universal Brotherhood Under the Emperor” (*tennō kiitsu hakkō ichiu* 天皇帰一八紘一字) likening the unity of the perfect square to Japan's colonial expansionism and the harmony of a unified Asia under Japanese imperial rule. The unwavering 45° line represents not only Japan's path toward colonial rule over its Asian neighbors, but the steadfast discipline of the Japanese military as well. This anonymously authored, nationalistic interpretation of this abstract painting in Kitawaki's local newspaper ultimately raises more questions than answers as to authorship. It is a fair question, if not written by Kitawaki, who would have had such intimate knowledge of the artist's thinking concerning this particular painting? While there are certain passages that are very similar to Kitawaki's previous writings (i.e. “...this teaches us that a paradox arises from contradiction...”) the article's specific mention of political figures, Japan's colonial policy, and the military are uncharacteristic of the artist. However, looking at Kitawaki's writings as a whole, it is clear that he often assumed a different tone depending on his audience, and the artist did resort to patriotic slogans toward the end of the war in his calls for a “functional” art.⁹ In the end, the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kitawaki Noboru, “Functional Things Are All Beautiful,” *Bijutsu Bunka 4th Exhibition Catalog* (May 1943): 45-47.

author's identity is less important compared to the informed reading it provides on Kitawaki's embrace of geometric abstraction.

Regarding Kitawaki's writings, the artist's first contribution to the *Bijutsu Bunka* (*Art Culture*) journal in August 1939 is the single most important text written by Kitawaki during his artistic career. Titled "Symmetry and Asymmetry," 相称と非相称 the text predates the first exhibition of the Art Culture Association by nearly eight months, and sets the stage for Kitawaki's debut as an active member of the newly established avant-garde group. Although drawn-out and speculative in nature, this text lays out Kitawaki's worldview in its most complete form to date, connecting such disparate topics as cellular meiosis, ancient Chinese divination, numerology and surrealism. The essay begins with a discussion of T.E. Hulme's theory of modern art presented in the Japanese journal *Kagaku Chishiki* 科学知識 (*Scientific Knowledge*) in which he mentions the recent reemergence of geometric art.¹⁰ Hulme distinguishes between two fundamentally different types of art—geometric/abstract and vital/realistic—that Kitawaki admits do not correspond to symmetry and asymmetry, but nonetheless triggers his thinking on the subject. Kitawaki declares the following,

I would like to clearly state that symmetry and asymmetry are not forms but orders [*chitsujo* 秩序], and that we should take them as two orders that come about as the form of expression of fundamental human volitions, rather than visual and formal concepts...I use the phrase 'fundamental human volitions,' but they are probably not just of humans, but also of the natural universe itself.¹¹

¹⁰ T.E. Hulme, "Modern Art – II. A Preface Note and Neo-Realism," in *The New Age*, 12 February 1914, pp.467–9, in Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, Jennifer Mundy, *The Camden Town Group in Context* (London: Tate Research Publication, May 2012).

¹¹ Kitawaki, "Symmetry and Asymmetry," *Bijutsu Bunka* 1 (August 1939): 7-9.

The artist establishes the concepts of symmetry and asymmetry as systems that provide the underlying structure or order to the natural universe as evidenced in scientific disciplines such as botany, zoology and morphology. Looking at cellular meiosis as one example, Kitawaki associates the reduction of sex chromosomes from diploid to haploid numbers as a fundamental example of the alternation between orders of symmetry and asymmetry in the natural world. He further clarifies this connection by explaining how numbers are related to symmetry and asymmetry with odd numbers associated with asymmetry and even numbers associated with symmetry. Circling back to the idea of even and odd numbers as they relate to sex chromosomes, he discovers that in a certain type of stink bug the male has an odd number of sex chromosomes while the female has an even number.¹² For Kitawaki, the connection between even/odd and female/male is rooted in the ancient Chinese philosophical concepts of yin and yang. According to the ancient Chinese divination text *I Ching (Book of Changes)*, yin is represented by a broken line (--) and is associated with the female principle in nature, while yang is represented by a solid line (—) and is conversely associated with the male principle. While the *I Ching* explicitly associates yin with even/female and yang with odd/male, it does not expressly link symmetry/asymmetry with either principle—a relationship that Kitawaki would arbitrarily infer himself.

¹² While Kitawaki does not discuss human sexual reproduction on the cellular level here (possibly because despite gender, normal human zygotes all have 46 chromosomes), it is interesting to note the chromosomal difference between female (XX) and male (XY) as a further extension of his thinking on symmetry/asymmetry.

Kitawaki then provides a diagram from the *I Ching* detailing the interconnected relationship of the Yellow River Map (河圖, *Ho T'u*) and the Lo Shu Square (洛書, *Lo Shu*), the two primary numerological arrangements for utilizing the *I Ching* for divination purposes. [Fig. 3-5] He also points out how The Yellow River Map gives rise to the Eight Trigrams (八卦, *Bagua*) whereas the Lo Shu Square can also be read as the Nine Halls Diagram (九疇, *Jiu gong*). [Fig. 3-6] Kitawaki deduces that these diagrams are “some sort of concrete representations of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases [*Wu Xing*—wood, fire, earth, metal, water], the two major ideas in Eastern thought.”¹³ Through a series of convoluted numerological explanations, the artist surmises that the *I Ching* is generally associated with even numbers and thus belongs to the symmetrical order while the Nine Halls are predominantly associated with odd numbers and part of the asymmetrical order. He concludes this section of the text by stating, “In this sense, Yin-Yang and Wu-Xing [Five Phases] are also different names for the two orders. It should be noted that these two are not only contrasting, but they are also interrelated, supporting one another.”¹⁴ Here, Kitawaki appears to liken the concepts of symmetry and asymmetry with the fundamental structure of the universe according to ancient Chinese philosophy. Just as Yin-Yang and Wu Xing structure the world and all natural phenomena, so too does symmetry and asymmetry. While Kitawaki’s argument here is rather arbitrary, it is through this process of connecting the dots that Kitawaki discovers his unique philosophy merging both Western science and Eastern philosophy.

¹³ Kitawaki, “Symmetry and Asymmetry,” 7-9.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Digging deeper into the numerology of even and odd numbers, the artist works out the following axioms based on the *I Ching* diagrams: even plus even equals even; odd plus odd equals even; and only even plus odd equals odd. According to Kitawaki, an exception to this rule is the 7-5-3 arrangement of stones in the Ryōanji rock garden in Kyoto, in which an odd sum is generated by adding odd numbers together ($7+5+3=15$).¹⁵ For the artist, this stands out as “the most representative example of asymmetric Japanese gardens.”¹⁶ Along these same lines, Kitawaki’s notebook titled “Aesthetic Notes” (*Bigaku no nōto* 美学のノート) likely from 1939, mentions that “numbers are the fundamental element for interpreting the universe” and features the following table of corresponding concepts:

Ryōanji rock garden, 7-5-3, (odd numbers)
Western flowerbed, left/right symmetry, (even numbers)¹⁷

While not explicitly mentioned in the essay on symmetry/asymmetry, it appears that the artist was thinking about numerology as not only a bridge between Western science and Eastern philosophy (as discussed above) but also as a means of rationalizing the differences between Eastern and Western beauty. By looking at something as basic as even and odd numbers, Kitawaki believed he could identify the underlying order and structure of all things. Increasingly, Kitawaki’s paintings would become a visual articulation of his numerological investigations.

¹⁵ It is important to note that this “exception” is completely arbitrary since $7+5+3$ combines three odd numbers together, not two as stipulated in the *I Ching*.

¹⁶ Kitawaki, “Symmetry and Asymmetry,” 7-9.

¹⁷ Ōtani, Shōgo, “Kitawaki Noboru no ‘Zushiki’ Kaiga nitsuite,” *Bulletin of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo* 7 (2002): 9.

Returning to the essay “Symmetry and Asymmetry,” 相称と非相称 Kitawaki tries to apply this line of numerology and the concepts of symmetry/asymmetry to his understanding of surrealism. Looking at the irrational paintings of Salvador Dalí based on his Paranoiac-critical Method, Kitawaki claims a “symmetric volition” 相称的意欲 for surrealism in its merging of the conscious and subconscious worlds into a single image. In particular, Kitawaki argues that Dalí’s wildly asymmetrical layering of images form a symmetrical convergence based not on the classical notion of the horizon, but on lines converging at the center of a lens (which he likens to the even sum resulting from the addition of odd numbers).¹⁸ The artist then makes an additional leap, linking the “so-called irrationality of surrealism as something analogous to the uncertainty principle, which is a product of quantum mechanics, a world far beyond the classical one.”¹⁹ Kitawaki goes on to analogize quantum mechanics’ principle of complementarity²⁰ with the impossibility of seeing Dalí’s multiple images simultaneously, claiming the dualistic nature of surrealism is inherently symmetrical. Ultimately, Kitawaki concludes the essay with the following:

...[S]o the conclusion is very simple. It is that symmetry and asymmetry are not confrontational but complementary. This perspective enables us to understand well the complementarity of realism and

¹⁸ Kitawaki’s mention of the lens may relate to his previous surrealist experiments using a lens to enlarge, and in turn unlock, the hidden secrets of microscopic realities/worlds.

¹⁹ Ōtani, Shōgo, “Kitawaki Noboru no ‘Zushiki’ Kaiga nitsuite,” 9. For more on surrealism’s relationship with quantum mechanics, please see Gavin Parkinson, *Surrealism, Art and Modern Science: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Epistemology* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

²⁰ In physics, complementarity is the concept that two contrasted theories, such as the wave and particle theories of light, may be able to explain a set of phenomena, although each separately only accounts for some aspects. [Oxford Dictionary]

surrealism, abstraction and figuration, and also helps us acknowledge that it is nonsense to judge the tendency of each [artistic] style only by their appearances.²¹

Here, Kitawaki returns to dualism as a core concept of his worldview. The artist first introduced this idea in his 1938 essay titled “Delusional Paintings” 虚妄の絵画 where dualistic relationships of consciousness/unconscious, truth/fiction, and reality/delusion were found not to be contradictory but complementary in nature. A year later, now writing as a founding member of the Art Culture Association, Kitawaki elaborates on his theory of complementarity as an extension of symmetry/asymmetry—two complementary orders that provide order and structure to the universe. In his essay “Symmetry and Asymmetry” discussed above, Kitawaki articulates an all-encompassing theory that carves a through line from cellular meiosis, to the *I Ching*, to even and odd numbers, to quantum mechanics in order to prove the underlying dualism of symmetry/asymmetry. Ultimately for Kitawaki, these two orders operate in harmony with one another and exist as interrelated aspects of each other. In this way, symmetry and asymmetry fundamentally define the structure of the natural universe and simultaneously question the assumed dichotomies of realism/surrealism and abstraction/figuration.

Soon after the publication of this essay, Kitawaki would put his newfound theory into practice with a grouping of four diagrammatic paintings displayed at the inaugural Art Culture Association exhibition in Tokyo in April 1940. Of the four paintings exhibited, they can be grouped into two visually distinct sets: those that visualize mathematical equations and those that do not. The first two works titled *Synthesis and Analysis* 総合と分析 (1940) [Fig. 3-7] and *Structure of Order/Disorder* 秩序混乱構造

²¹ Kitawaki, “Symmetry and Asymmetry,” 7-9.

(1940) [Fig. 3-8] are part of the later group, and illustrate Kitawaki's understanding of the dualistic/opposing concepts listed in each title (i.e. synthesis/analysis and order/disorder). As will be discussed below, it is interesting to note that unlike the two works inspired by mathematical equations that are completely original compositions, these two paintings are each modeled after earlier works by European painters (Francis Picabia and Yves Tanguy). *Synthesis and Analysis* is modeled after Francis Picabia's drawing *Dada Movement* (1919) [Fig. 3-9] that appears in "Anthologie Dada" edited by Tristan Tzara. Picabia's original drawing is a wiring diagram for the inner workings of a Dada alarm clock that doubles as a symbolic family tree depicting modern art's lineage of artists that preceded Dada, and the group's current membership. On the left-hand side is the clock's battery with lines of energy that vacillate between the positive and negative poles. These lines are dotted with the names of Dada's forefathers such as Rodin, Renior, and Cezanne, leading up to a transistor labeled "Movement Dada," which is wired to the clock face that features the names of the international members of the Dada movement. This clock then leads down to a switch labeled "391" (the title of Picabia's own Dada magazine) that controls the alarm bell below.²²

While Picabia's drawing illustrates an electrical circuit that mapped out the structure of the Dada movement, Kitawaki's borrows the same overall composition to illustrate the concepts of synthesis and analysis. On the left-hand side of Kitawaki's painting the waves of energy in Picabia's battery are reimagined as purple, yellow, and red waves of light that stream upwards toward a prism. In the center of these colored

²² John Elderfield, *The Modern Drawing: 100 Works on Paper from The Museum of Modern Art*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983), 116.

waves is a vertical white line that likely represents the white light of the sun. When this beam of light hits the prism, the component parts are then scattered in various directions. To the right, Kitawaki has transformed Picabia's bell into a similarly shaped microscope that is examining an image printed on a card. Hovering above the microscope is a circle that displays an enlarged detail of the half-tone pattern one would see if peering into the microscope. Referring back to the painting's title, it becomes clear that the artist has presented two instruments—the prism and microscope—each used for visual analysis and synthesis. Each instrument allows for the detailed examination of either light (in the case of the prism) or printed color (in the case of the microscope). While this describes the analytical aspect of the painting, one must consider the painting in its totality to appreciate Kitawaki's approach to synthesis. Taken together, the painting depicts Newton's theory of color—that white light contains all visible color—and how this applies to image reproduction.

Like *Synthesis and Analysis*, the composition of *The Structure of Order/Disorder* also appears to be inspired by an earlier European painting, this time by surrealist Yves Tanguy's *Mama, Papa is Wounded!* (1927) [Fig. 3-10]. While not borrowed wholesale like Picabia's drawing, the six point star and hairy vertical shaft of Tanguy's surrealist landscape find their way into Kitawaki's composition, which mixes geometric abstraction with figurative botanical elements. Set against a hazy blue background, the painting features vignettes of two bonsai pine trees that seem to float above the emptiness. On the left-hand side is a sickly grey, sinuously shaped tree with withered brown leaves that represents disorder, and on the right-hand side is a cruciform-shaped tree that stands upright with healthy green leaves representing order. Kitawaki appears to make a

philosophical statement in favor of order, as it is associated with life and vitality while disorder is unfavorably associated with death or decay. Dovetailing on earlier writings by the artist extolling the benefits of group mentality and unity of the nation, here we see further evidence in the natural world that living things thrive under order, while they wither and die when subjected to disorder. Surrounding these figurative elements are intertwined yellow and red lines that crisscross a path around the painting as they bounce off of the edges of the canvas at 90° angles. On closer inspection, one can identify a prism in the lower right-hand corner from which the geometric lines originate. Following the path of the yellow line, it emerges from the prism, bounces off the edges of the canvas, and then enters a six-point star in which it cycles from yellow to green to blue to indigo to violet until it reemerges as red—effectively cycling through the visible spectrum of light. The red line then bounces off of the edges of the canvas, ultimately returning to the prism to repeat the process again. Here, the six-point star becomes an abstract representation of the interplay of order and disorder, depicting the interrelation of the two systems. This clearly reiterates the conclusion of the artist's all-encompassing theory of symmetry/asymmetry in which order and disorder are not opposites, but in fact complementary orders. Looking at the painting again, we can see Kitawaki's theory applied to the natural world with the shape of the healthy tree clearly associated with symmetry and the sickly tree linked with asymmetry.

The remaining two paintings presented at the first Art Culture Association Exhibition, *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ (意味構造 (1940) [Fig. 3-11] and *Structure of Phenomenon of Fashion* 流行現象構造 (1940) [Fig. 3-12] both utilize mathematical equations to geometrically represent abstract concepts. The painting

Structure of Meaning $(A+B)^2$ is a geometric representation of the factorization formula $(A+B)^2=A^2+2AB+B^2$ with the left side of the painting corresponding to the right side of the equation, and visa versa. This relationship is made explicitly clear by a red equals sign that is situated in the middle of the painting. Through a series of overlapping lines and gradation of colors, the painting dynamically illustrates that as the values of A and B change, so too does the corresponding shapes. However, despite the change in shapes, the two sides always remain equal. On a mathematical level, this painting provides further proof of Kitawaki's belief in the complementary nature of seemingly opposing elements. But Kitawaki is unsatisfied with simply charting a mathematical formula through geometric abstraction and pushes things a step further by integrating figurative elements into the composition that represent the stages of plant development from sprout to leaves to a flower. In this way, *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ seamlessly joins Kitawaki's mathematical and botanical research. Where this painting differs from previous work is in its visual synthesis of two wholly unrelated concepts—in this case being a numerical formula and the changing shapes of plants (morphology). Kitawaki makes his intentions clear in an essay titled “About *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ ” $(A+B)^2$ の意味構造に就いて in the third issue of *Bijutsu Bunka*, published in April 1940. In this short article, Kitawaki explains the mathematical correlation between the two halves of the equation/composition and his thinking behind this painting, stating:

In his *Metamorphosis of Plants*, Goethe has shown that a body is transformed by two standards, growth and reproduction, or expansion and contradiction. And now we see a match with ‘structure and meaning’ as revealed in the dynamic correlation of the mathematical formula.²³

²³ Kitawaki, “About *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ ” *Bijutsu Bunka* 3 (April 1940): 29-30.

While there is no scientific basis for the above claim, Kitawaki clearly saw his work following in Goethe's footsteps, and this painting as a breakthrough in visualizing the correlation between structure and meaning—a pursuit that the artist would continue to explore until the war's end and expound upon in subsequent paintings. Like Goethe whose work straddled the line between science and aesthetics, Kitawaki also arrived at an original pseudo-scientific method of visual analysis through his painting. In this way, *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ represents a conceptual leap on the part of the artist to find “structure and meaning” through the synthesis of mathematics and observation of the natural world. In the closing lines of the text, Kitawaki also makes mention of Immanuel Kant's theory of schema and admits that while his experimental painting is ultimately “reduced to a simple diagram” it may function as a means to explore a new universe in which the equivalence of “schema” and “form” can be discovered.²⁴ For Kant, schema was the philosophical principle that connected thought and sensibility, and in turn, the universal and the particular. In essence, the schema is a product of the imagination in which one's understanding of a concept is met with its temporal appearance to form an image. Kant explains, “This representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept, I entitle the schema of this concept.”²⁵ In this way, the schema “provides the image for a concept but is itself the means or procedure by which the image and the concept can come into contact.”²⁶

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith. (London: Macmillan, 1958), 182.

²⁶ Donald Phillip Verene, *The Origins of the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Kant, Hegel, and Cassirer* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 4.

Over time, Kitawaki would move from schema representing such abstract concepts as structure and meaning to those representing fashion, cultural development, divination, and social behavior. Like *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$, the composition of *Structure of the Phenomenon of Fashion* (1940) features figurative elements situated amongst geometric representations of mathematical equations. Here the artist has divided the canvas into the four quadrants of a graph with the X and Y-axis shifted to the left. Toward the center of the canvas is a red function curve that charts an exponential function, and at the point the curve crosses the X-axis there is another pair of intersecting lines that divide the composition further, creating a complex geometric diagram. Each area bounded by these intersecting lines features vignettes of caterpillars, butterflies, or ribbons that appear plotted on the graph in relationship to one another. For example, the area above the X-axis associated with positive numbers (+) features a scene with several butterflies flying freely in the sky, while the area below associated with negative numbers (-) features a black hairy caterpillar. Here the X-axis articulates the duality of heaven and earth embodied by the metamorphosis of caterpillar to butterfly. Kitawaki then takes this relationship a step further, associating the duality of positive/negative, and the metamorphosis of caterpillar/butterfly with the notion of fashion. Looking at the upper quadrants of the diagram, we see that Kitawaki has likened an image of a ribbon in a woman's hair (upper left) with that of a butterfly perched on a flowering bush (upper right). This relationship appears to point to the origins of fashion in the natural world, and the adaptation of natural phenomena for the purpose of ornamentation and beautification. Looking at the lower quadrants of the diagram, we see a black ribbon situated in the lower left, and a white ribbon situated in the lower right. As curator Ōtani Shogo points

out in his detailed essay on Kitawaki's diagrammatic paintings, in the etiquette section (*Kokumin girei shō* 国民儀礼章) of the 1938 National Spiritual Mobilization Movement 国民精神総動員運動, black ribbons were designated for mourning while red and white ribbons were designated for celebration.²⁷ According to Ōtani, Kitawaki's painting can be read as a metaphorical diagram charting the appropriateness of fashion in relationship to mourning and celebration, heaven and earth, and the transformation of caterpillars into butterflies. While buried in Kitawaki's diagram of the phenomena of fashion, these references point to the ongoing transformation of Japan into a totalitarian state in which all aspects of cultural production and daily life were now regulated by the state, including appropriate dress and personal conduct. As will be discussed below, the changing nature of daily life under wartime regulations and the increasing state pressure on and censorship of the arts were all being internalized and rationalized by Kitawaki and other members of the avant-garde Art Culture Association.

...

1940-41 represents a pivotal year in Japan's shift to an authoritarian control over artistic/cultural production. During his first term in office, Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro enacted the 1938 State Total Mobilization Law (*Kokka Sōdōin Hō* 国家総動員法) which "provided a new legal basis for extensive state intrusion into many aspects of civilian life, including public expression, the media, and the arts."²⁸ According to art

²⁷ Ōtani, "Kitawaki Noboru no 'Zushiki' Kaiga nitsuite," 13. Illustrations of the ribbons and an explanation of how to properly wear were indicated in several publications (*Kyoto Nichinichi Shinbun*, August 5, 1938).

²⁸ Sandler, "The Living Artist," 75.

historian Mark Sandler, “this legislation swept away the last vestiges of true parliamentary democracy by authorizing state controls over civil affairs by executive imperial decree.”²⁹ During his second term in office (June 1940-July 1941), Prime Minister Konoe extended the powers of the Japanese government into all facets of daily life—known collectively as the New Order (*shintaisei* 新体制) for East Asia. By 1940, Japan had occupied French Indochina and joined Germany and Italy in the Tripartite Alliance, and on the home front, was in the process of establishing itself as an “advanced defense nation” in order to cement the nation’s leadership in the creation of a “new world order.” According to Konoe, “the foundations of an advanced defense nation are in a powerful national system, which demands the establishment of a new order in politics, the economy, education, culture, etc.—every area of our citizen’s lives.”³⁰ This new totalitarian system would aim to vertically structure all areas of the Japanese economy and culture and unify them together horizontally as well. The New Order sought to “let citizens participate in the nation’s establishment of economic and cultural policy from within, and by doing so, would simultaneously spread the established policies out to the peripheries of people’s lives.”³¹ In Konoe’s words, “Under such a system, from bottom up, and top-down, the full strength of all Japanese citizens would be united in politics.”³²

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Konoe Fumimaro, “Statement, First Meeting of the New Order Preparation Committee,” August 28, 1940.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Under the New Order, economic mobilization was overseen by the Cabinet Planning Board (*Kikakuin* 企画院) and the Cabinet Intelligence Bureau (*Naikaku jōhō kyoku* 内閣情報局), the latter of which, assumed complete control over all aspects of information and mass media during wartime, including the visual arts. As art historian Mark Sandler points out, “by the end of 1940, the lens through which the Japanese government viewed art was no longer that of the conservative Ministry of Education but that of a new, hybrid civilian-military policy-making organ modeled on the Nazi propaganda ministry and espousing an ideology shaped by Marxist historical analysis.”³³ It is within the context of this sweeping overhaul of Japanese daily life and culture that art criticism such as the September 1940 article “Thoughts on Art Under the New Order” 新体制下の美術を考える in the magazine *Bi no Kuni* 美之国 by artist Nanbata Tatsuoki must be considered. The author begins by claiming,

The world is on the eve of a great transformation. We are about to see a magnificent light of the century that will brighten the dark night. In Japan too, the nation’s firm solidarity is forming under the New Order. Liberalism has already been destroyed. The political activities of the New Order are the rebuilding of a new Japanese culture. They say that politics is daily life. Today we also must think about how our survival as artists is not possible without considering politics.³⁴

He then goes on to discuss the role of artists during wartime, and the new responsibility artists now face for upholding the nation’s culture. Throughout the article, he variously refers to artists as “architects of culture” and “artistic warriors” who “burn with the

³³ Sandler, “The Living Artist,” 76.

³⁴ Nanbata Tatsuoki, “Thoughts on Art Under the New Order,” *Bi no Kuni* 16, no. 9 (September 1940): 20-23.

passion for the new cultural construction of East Asia.”³⁵ Nanbata willfully concedes that “art under the new order must be about freeing art from the individual” and that the current moment “does not allow individuals to indulge in artistic creation without thinking about the destiny of the home country.”³⁶ The author advocates for artists to be like salary-men, each serving their purpose—be it design, advertising, mural painting, or creating sculptural monuments—in aid of the nation. Ultimately, under the New Order, Nanbata envisions that artists “will probably be treated as technicians by society, be registered like technicians, obeying governmental orders and serving the public with the paintbrush. The mentality of the new regime can be said to be a mentality of ridding the self and serving public interest.”³⁷

While Nanbata’s portrayal of the increasingly utilitarian role for art and artists in Japanese society under the New Order seems extreme, it appears that Kitawaki shared much in common with his fellow artist’s views. In a November 1940 article titled “What the New Order of the Art World Should Do” 美術界の新体制は何をなすべきか published in the local newspaper *Nippon Shimbun*, Kitawaki reaches a similar conclusion to Nanbata. Reiterating the state’s aspirations for the “construction of the Greater East Asia New Order or the establishment of the Great East Asia Prosperity Sphere” Kitawaki quotes the slogan of Prime Minister Konoe’s Imperial Aid Association (*Taisei Yokusankai* 大政翼賛会) stating that “All citizens will achieve good results by

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

assisting their workplace in everyday life.”³⁸ He then goes on to rhetorically question if “artists creating their own personal, arbitrary work in their ateliers, exhibiting them chaotically and waiting for their works to be viewed by art lovers will also help achieve good results?” and answers his own question by stating “It is said that the New Order should ‘obey the emperor’s words when they are given’ and ‘prioritize public interest.’”³⁹ Here, Kitawaki appears to parrot back the state’s own rhetoric implying that he is in agreement with the transformations of art under the New Order, and that the art world as it previously operated is now at odds with the “public interest” during wartime. Kitawaki’s solution to this situation is a “return to the functional side of art,” admitting openly that “no longer can playing arbitrary games under the name of pure art be forgiven.”⁴⁰ Kitawaki clearly acknowledges that art during wartime cannot enjoy the freedom and purity it once did, and that in a time of emergency such as this, art must assume a more essential, and practical, role in the life of the nation. He then goes on to lay out his position with regard to the functional role of art in promoting the public welfare movement, which he defines as “a movement that tries to further improve the body and spirit of us citizens at its most balanced state.”⁴¹ Kitawaki argues,

The balance and improvement of the body and spirit—isn’t this actually a perfect functional mechanism for art? As they say that in a healthy body lives a healthy spirit, the public welfare movement should first start from

³⁸ Kitawaki, “What the New Order of the Art World Should Do,” *Nippon Shimbun*, November 1940. Slogan reads as follows in Japanese: 「全国民がその日常生活の職場職場において翼賛の実を挙げる」

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

concretely gaining all of balanced beauty. When one ardently grasps what balance really is, perhaps public welfare consists on its own. Art focuses its entire function on the pursuit of all balance. In this sense, an artist is a seeker who searches for balance.⁴²

Kitawaki gives a glimpse of how his diagrammatic paintings, interest in the *I Ching*, and understanding of art's role during wartime might all coexist under the banner of “functional art”—and by extension, fascism. The artist's thinking on this concept will be discussed in more detail later on, but it is important to remember the significance Kitawaki places on balance and its links to the function of art, proper governance, the role of ruler and subject, and harmony in the universe as dictated by the *I Ching*. Kitawaki concludes his article by offering up a practical role for artists in the same vein as Nanbata before him, suggesting that “we send our painters to a farm or a factory as a special worker and have them work for half a day and create for half a day,” which will provide artists a concrete setting in which to create.⁴³ While Kitawaki had advocated for group production methods, and the acquiescence of the individual to the group mentality, his vision for artists under the New Order takes things a step further. He elaborates on his position in the article's conclusion:

As for these artists [working on farms or in factories], their creation setting may reify their ideas into murals, and in that case for artists, what becomes different from the past is that the objective of their creation is clearly aimed at the public welfare movement, and that it is required to embody the harmonized, improved beauty as a pro forma constraint that is naturally executed. Motif-wise, the work should be something that is grasped from inside of the work place where they are positioned, and furthermore, if it is in a village, it should arise from the entire will of the village and be expressed as an adequately balanced thing. Some may say

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

that then the motivation or originality of the painter cannot be expressed, but that is an unnecessary concern.

Since this dives much deeper into reality than when artists created freely floating above reality, I trust that there will be a possibility for outstanding, unique work to be born.

I believe that this is the only way that we can actually assist the imperial rule.⁴⁴

In his conclusion, Kitawaki argues that put to functional ends, the work of artists in aid of the nation will create a harmonious beauty that is indicative of and defined by the constraints placed on creativity. While Kitawaki's definition of functional art is closely related to its usefulness in daily life and the realization of the New Order, it does not advocate for explicit propaganda, or war painting. Instead, it is a concept of painting that is tied to place (farm, factory, village, etc.) and serves its function within that specific context while extolling the nationalist cause. However, what is clear is that in the art he is advocating for the nation, the functional/didactic role takes precedence over any artistic motivation, creative freedom, or originality. This is especially ironic given the obscure and highly inaccessible nature of the diagrammatic paintings Kitawaki created at the time. Furthermore, this view of art is at odds with the underlying purpose of the avant-garde, and complicates not only Kitawaki's role as an avant-garde artist, but his membership in the Art Culture Association, a self-proclaimed avant-garde art movement. As state pressure and censorship on art, artist groups, and the rationing of art supplies would further intensify, the transgressive/anti-authoritarian role of the avant-garde would become untenable, and groups such as the Art Culture Association were rendered

⁴⁴ Ibid.

powerless. It is under these circumstances of growing suppression that Kitawaki continued to cultivate his concept of diagrammatic, functional art.

...

While still largely an autonomous group in November 1940, the Art Culture Association's Autumn Exhibition marks the first telltale sign that the group was experiencing the effects of the new status quo under Konoe's repressive New Order. While not officially billed as the group's second exhibition, the Autumn Exhibition was intended to coincide with the nation-wide celebration of the 2600th anniversary of the founding of Japanese imperial rule. This was one of many events held throughout the Japanese empire to commemorate the "unbroken imperial line" dating back to 660 BCE, when according to the imperial myth, Emperor Jimmu descended from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Described as "one of the most comprehensive and grandiose national commemorations ever," the celebrations included department store exhibitions aimed at raising public awareness of the foundational moment of the Japanese empire and the country's rich national history.⁴⁵ Nearly all department store branches across the nation hosted at least one such commemorative exhibition, including Mitsukoshi, Matsuya, Takashimaya, Shirokiya and others. Kitawaki and other members of the avant-garde Art Culture Association willingly hosted such an exhibition at Tokyo Ginza's Mitsukoshi department store from November 26-29, 1940 with all participants submitting works that celebrated the imperial anniversary. Kitawaki submitted two works, *Diagram of Cultural Morphology* 文化類型学図式 (1940) [Fig. 3-13] and *Thought, Deed, Knowledge* 想・

⁴⁵ Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 1.

行・識 (1940) [Fig. 3-14] both of which incorporate explicit nationalistic themes or iconography—the only two such works in Kitawaki's oeuvre.

Diagram of Cultural Morphology [alt. *Diagram of Cultural Typology*] features three sculptural heads in a triangular formation with a series of connected geometric abstract diagrams charting a path from a classical Greek sculpture, to a Gandharan Buddhist icon, to a Japanese Noh mask. The diagram appears to chart the evolution from one culture to the next with the process of growth and assimilation depicted by abstract patterns of overlapping spiral and geometric lines. The term “cultural typology” (*bunka ruikeigakui* 文化類型学) referenced in the painting's title is a concept coined by philosopher Kōyama Iwao in his 1939 text of the same title. A student of Kyoto School philosopher Nishida Kitarō, Kōyama defined cultural typology as “a study that tries to reach a complete self-awareness of our current national spirit from the typologically constitutive position that in each historical period various ethnic cultures possess a culturally important consciousness.”⁴⁶ Kōyama's studies into typology were an attempt to place the culture of Japan in a special category unto itself, but despite the wartime climate, he did not go so far as to consider Japanese culture unique and superior to all others.⁴⁷ According to Kōyama, “the Japanese spirit adopts from various outside cultures, assimilating in order to develop vigorously and harmoniously.”⁴⁸ Looking at the painting,

⁴⁶ Koyama in *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997), 108.

⁴⁷ Gino K. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought 1862-1994: A Survey* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 193-194.

⁴⁸ Koyama in *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997), 108.

we see the symbols of classical Greek and Gandharan civilization are placed at the bottom of the triangular formation with the Japanese Noh mask on top. Kitawaki diagrams Kōyama's concept of assimilation and, in not-too-subtle fashion, places Japan atop the historical development of world culture through the ages. Thus, in his celebration of the Japanese empire's illustrious lineage and antiquity, Kitawaki provides visual support for the nationalistic ideology of the Kyoto School and claims of Japanese cultural superiority.

The companion piece Kitawaki displayed in celebration of the 2600th anniversary of the founding of the Empire of Japan was titled *Thought, Deed, Knowledge* (1940). The painting's Japanese title *Sō, Gyō, Shiki* 想・行・識 is taken from the early sectarian (Nikāya 部派仏教) Buddhist concept of the Five Skandhas, or Five Aggregates (*go'un* 五蘊) which are the five aspects that make up a sentient being. In Japanese, these aspects are *Shiki-Jyū-Sō-Gyō-Shiki* 色愛想行識 meaning: matter, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness. Kitawaki explains the symbolic meaning of this painting and its connection to the Five Aggregates in his December 1940 article "The Structure of *Gyō*" 「行」の構造 published in the *Nippon Shimbun*. Kitawaki's article begins with a quote from Goethe stating, "Thoughts recur, convictions perpetuate themselves; circumstances pass by irretrievably." The artist then discusses how specific terms such as *gyō* 行 have been resurrected in place of equivalent general terms such as "activity" or "action." Kitawaki sees this shift from the specific to the universal as a trend indicative of the shift from liberalism to totalitarianism: "The trend from the unique towards the universal was a general characteristic of the liberal age [...] however, today's trend may be headed from

the universal to the unique. The era we are about to face today is an era we call totalitarianism.”⁴⁹ After an in-depth explanation of the Five Aggregates, he attempts to conflate this Buddhist concept with Goethe’s maxim, synthesizing the two into an original schema. The resulting diagram is featured in the center of the painting in question, and is explained thusly: “‘Thoughts recur’ is represented by a circular arc line. ‘Convictions perpetuate themselves’—this is a straight line that radially spreads outward from a central point. ‘Circumstances pass by irretrievably’ is represented by a spiral line expanding outward. If we construct these three schema at one central point, we can see the relationship of the three.”⁵⁰

Looking at the painting, we can decipher the blue concentric circles as *sō* 想 representing thought, the red radial lines as *gyō* 行 representing deed, and the spiral line as *shiki* 識 representing knowledge. To the left of this central diagram is a depiction of the Nara Period *Mekira* 迷企羅大将 (*Mihira* in Sanskrit) sculpture from the grouping of Twelve Heavenly Generals at Shin Yakushi-ji temple. For Kitawaki, this intimidating figure is the Buddhist embodiment of *gyō* or deed/conviction. Opposite this figure is a vignette featuring the contemplative Kōryū-ji *Miroku Bosatsu* 弥勒菩薩 (Maitreya Buddha) as the Buddhist embodiment of *sō* 想 or thought. Above the central diagram are a group of clouds floating in the sky, and below the diagram is a vignette of flowing river water, both of which symbolize movement or the state of being in flux. Here, the flux represents the chaos of the current moment, and the central diagram represents the

⁴⁹ Kitawaki, “The Structure of *Gyō*,” *Nippon Shimbun*, December 30, 1940.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

harmony between “thought” and “deed.” According to curator Ōtani Shogo, this work presents Kitawaki’s schema of an ideal society, one in which “thought” and “deed” are harmonized under the Japanese totalitarian regime. While Kitawaki’s rationale for combining Buddhism and Goethean philosophy is nonsensical, his statement regarding the harmony of thought and deed in Japanese society make complete sense within the context of wartime imperialism/fascism. Where Kitawaki’s surrealist work of just a few years prior attempted to transcend reality, by November 1940 it is clear that the artist’s work had yielded to the reality of totalitarianism and the pressure of wartime Japan.

Looking at the dramatic transformation in Kitawaki’s work in 1940—from pure geometric abstraction to diagrams of cultural and nationalistic morphology—we can see how quickly Japan’s New Order had begun to restrict artistic freedom and expression. While the evidence points increasingly to Kitawaki’s tacit support and internal rationalization of these state-sanctioned changes in his own artistic practice, it is clear that as an avant-garde group, the Art Culture Association was being pressured to conform to the demands of the New Order as well. Just prior to the 2600th imperial anniversary exhibition, Fukuzawa Ichirō sent a personally addressed letter to each member of the Association stating the following:

The situation is becoming more and more serious, over the communal life of artists, which remains cheerful as far as possible, various shadows are cast, rumors are incessantly flying about but rumors are, after all, rumors; if the art world becomes frightened by rumors of its own making it will come to a helpless existence. There is a rumor that the dissolution of the Art Culture Association has been commanded. It is not necessarily spared from dissolution, but is it the case that we have cause to be seen as disobedient? It is clear that this question is the [root of the] matter.

We have self-confidence based on our artistic convictions [...] Amongst those same practitioners attracted to rumor there appears a readiness to

adapt their reality to that of the right, they are not neglecting to make preparations to make the best of any situation and at the same time, since this conclusion is based on serious art works, that eventually the Art Culture Association Exhibition will confront confidence and authority and is therefore believed to be a caltrop, I am grateful for.

The mentality of the New Order demands this. I am considering to make a thorough effort to take this opportunity to enlighten my humble self regarding the standpoint of the right.⁵¹

While Fukuzawa denies the “rumors” that the Art Culture Association will be forced to dissolve, as well as any wrongdoing by the group, he begrudgingly warns his fellow artists that the “right” is gaining traction. Both Nakamura and Ōtani point to the letter above as a warning that was instrumental in Kitawaki’s incorporation of nationalistic philosophy and imagery into his work—having received it shortly before the autumn exhibition. In hindsight, Fukuzawa’s letter is eerily prophetic, as he and Takiguchi would both be arrested in March/April 1941 by the Special Higher Police for surrealism’s alleged ties to Communism and their implied support thereof.⁵²

Even prior to the arrests, the authorities expressed their disdain for artists not working in aid of the nation’s wartime goals in a roundtable discussion published in the monthly art journal *Mizue* in January 1941. Titled “The National Defense State and the Fine Arts: What Should Artists Do?” (*Kokubō kokka to bijutsu: Gaka wa nani o nasubeki ka* 国防国家と美術—画家は何を為すべきか), the article presented a transcript of a roundtable discussion (*zadankai* 座談会) between Major Suzuki Kurazō, Major Akiyama

⁵¹ Fukuzawa in Majella Munro, *Communicating Vessels: The Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923-70* (Great Britain: Enzo Arts and Publishing, 2012), 188-189. (translation Munro)

⁵² While official records date their arrest to April 1941, Takiguchi himself records it as March. Nakamura also dates their arrest to March 5th, 1941. In his essay “Surrealism in Japan,” art historian John Clark mistakenly dates their arrest to February 19, 1941.

Kunio, First Lieutenant Kuroda Senkichirō, editor Kamigori Takashi, and critic/art historian Araki Hideo. Tellingly, no artists were represented on the panel. Art historian Mark Sandler, summarizes the discussion as follows:

The basic message of the symposium conformed to the ideological view in force in the government, especially in the Cabinet Information Bureau with which the Army Information Section was allied. In this belief system, the world was poised on the brink of a new historical epoch that would replace the bankrupt Age of Freedom (*jiyūshugi* 自由主義), ushered in by the French Revolution. *Jiyūshugi* had seen the triumph of democracy over autocratic regimes, but it had degenerated into an oppressive system of egoism and exploitation. Thus, in the new age, that of totalitarianism (*zentaishugi* 全体主義), all the attributes of the now-spent Age of Freedom, including individualism, capitalism, European colonialism, class privilege, and cultural suprematism would be abolished. In their place, the National Defense state, of which Japan was the archetype, would create fulfillment for the individual through identification with the family-state collectivity, dignity for oppressed colonial peoples in Asia under imperial Japanese leadership, and healthy economic, social, and cultural forms, managed by an expert bureaucracy and protected by a powerful military. Art would not be produced for its own sake, but in service to the Japanese race.⁵³

Major Akiyama described art for art's sake as a "luxury" that was at odds with the needs of the nation, while elsewhere his military colleagues derided surrealism and abstract art as the work of lunatics. Ultimately, the panelists concluded that "in this time of war in which Japan would either live or die, art that did not serve the state could not be permitted to flourish."⁵⁴

While the *Mizue* article marked a watershed moment in the Japanese government's control over the arts, for Kitawaki and the Art Culture Association, the arrest of Fukuzawa and Takiguchi in March/April 1941 was a devastating blow to the

⁵³ Sandler, "The Living Artist," 76.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

avant-garde movement, one from which it never recovered. According to Takiguchi, “the concern of the investigation was Japan’s Surrealist movement and whether there was any relationship with the international Communist Party (of course, there was actually no relationship).”⁵⁵ The connection between surrealism and communism in the minds of the authorities stems from Breton’s “Second Manifesto of Surrealism” (1929) which was translated into Japanese the following year. While Breton’s text was “primarily a complaint about the unwillingness of the Communist Party to recognize the value of Surrealism” in which Breton expressed his “disillusionment with Soviet art policies,” it did take an explicit political stance in its call for surrealist commitment to collective action.⁵⁶ Despite the political ties between surrealism and communism having been debated in Japanese art circles almost a decade earlier by proletarian artists and critics like Okamoto Tōki and Takenaka Kyūshichi, it was not until Japan had fully exerted totalitarian control over art and culture that the Special Higher Police saw this connection as a threat and used it to substantiate the arrest of Fukuzawa and Takiguchi.⁵⁷

The ripple effect of the arrests was felt almost instantly within the Art Culture Association. In a note dated April 10, 1941 Kitawaki wrote to his close friend and fellow Art Culture Association member Komaki Gentarō confiding:

This may be sudden but this morning I received a letter from Mr. Yoshii [Yoshii Tadashi], saying that Mr. Fukuzawa and Mr. Takiguchi were called by authorities and were kept in detention, with their books and everything also confiscated. There has been no information on what

⁵⁵ Takiguchi in Munro, *Communicating Vessels*, 175.

⁵⁶ Munro, *Communicating Vessels*, 164.

⁵⁷ For a comprehensive overview of this topic, please see Munro, *Communicating Vessels*, Chapter 5: The Surrealist Incident.

happened afterwards and we are all worried, but since so far there have been no measures taken, we are seeing what happens. Since the exhibition date is close I have asked about whether it is still going to be held or not, and they will be holding it, considering that in this situation it is definitely better to hold it - but if afterwards it becomes virtually impossible to hold the exhibition, there will be no other choice but not to. In my opinion, the detention of Mr. Fukuzawa and Mr. Takiguchi will turn out just like Mr. Nakai Masakazu.⁵⁸ If that is the case, I think that we cannot avoid the dissolution of the group unless we deal with such situation properly. We do not need to be surprised about finding ourselves in such a situation, but I believe it is not a wise idea to ask for more pain in such a case. What do you think? I have not mentioned anything to anyone else. Now is not the time. The above is just for your information.⁵⁹

From Kitawaki's note, we can see that the arrest of Fukuzawa and Takiguchi shook the Art Culture Association to its core, and that without its two leaders at the helm the group was deeply skeptical of its future and considered cancelling the second exhibition.

Kitawaki, Komaki, and the other remaining members of the group realized they had to tread lightly going forward, lest they fall victim to the same fate as their more vocal surrealist leaders. Writing in his memoirs some forty years later, Komaki recalls how the artists who participated in the 2nd Art Culture Association Exhibition were forced to self-censor themselves out of fear of reprisals from the authorities. According to Komaki,

Members submitting to the second exhibition attempted to avoid oppression by mutual examination, voting by a show of hands to determine what should or should not be exhibited. The standard of examination was entirely separate to artistic judgment; here the works were judged according to the viewpoint of the army and police. The censor was thereby quickly changing paintings. From this bud burst a crisis in the Art Culture Association. Rushing into the Pacific War in November [1941], increasingly a wartime order emerged and in May 1942

⁵⁸ Nakai Masakazu (1900-1952) was an aesthetician, film theorist, social activist, and lecturer at Kyoto University. He founded the popular culture tabloid *Doyōbi* 土曜日, and was arrested in 1937 for his involvement with left-wing social movements and lost his university position as a result.

⁵⁹ Kitawaki, transcribed from the original handwriting by Ōtani Shōgo.

defensive poster works on the theme of “Fine Arts in Cultural Establishment” had to be exhibited [...] From then on Art Culture Association was saturated, and increasingly inclined towards circumstantial works.⁶⁰

As Komaki attests, under pressure and intense scrutiny, the tone and quality of works shifted dramatically in the Second Art Culture Association Exhibition. Overtly surrealist works were removed from exhibition consideration, and other works had their titles changed to appease the authorities. Under the theme of “Creating the Nation’s Art” (*kokumin bijutsu no sōsei* 国民美術の創成) the exhibition materials included a statement by members recanting their previous perceived transgressions: “Following the path of the Japanese Empire, we have become more conscious of our sincere observance of loyalty. The proof of our sincerity is expressed in [our] exhibition which makes a clean sweep of past errors.”⁶¹ Works in the exhibition ranged from quaint portraits and still lifes, to landscapes that featured Mt. Fuji or referenced life on the home front. It is clear that in its self-censorship and its conciliatory tone, the Association members were intentionally conforming to the state’s demands for art that served national interests. While billed as a revolutionary avant-garde movement, the Art Culture Association showed no signs of resisting state pressure, and appears to have capitulated their independence almost immediately following the arrests of Fukuzawa and Takiguchi and the onset of the Pacific War.

⁶⁰ Komaki in Munro, *Communicating Vessels*, 190.

⁶¹ Bijutsu Bunka exhibition statement in Bert Winther-Tamaki, “From Resplendent Signs to Heavy Hands: Japanese Painting in War and Defeat, 1937-1952,” in *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, ed. J. Thomas Rimer. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011), 129.

It is within this constricted atmosphere that Kitawaki redoubled his interest in the *I Ching*, the ancient Chinese divination text, as a means to provide order and structure in the midst of uncertain times. Kitawaki was drawn to the *I Ching* not only for its oracular nature, but its diagrammatic aspects as well. In the sixth issue of the Art Culture journal, published in April 1941 (the same month as the group's second exhibition) Kitawaki contributed an essay titled "Graphic Art Restoration" (*Zuga Fukkō* 図画復興). In this essay, Kitawaki traces the etymology of *zusuru* 図する, meaning "to illustrate" or "express as a diagram" to its Chinese origins in art historian Zhang Yanyuan's ninth century text, *Records of Historical Famous Paintings* (*Rekidaimeigaki* 歷代名画記). According to Zhang's text, diagrams or "graphic art" (*zuga* 図画) originate with the Yellow River Map (河圖) which was revealed to Fu Xi, the author of the *I Ching*, on the back of the mythical dragon horse. Kitawaki quotes the following from Zhang's text: "There are three intentions in creating graphic art. First, it will illustrate reason. An example of this is the *bagua* 八卦 [the eight trigrams]. Second, it will illustrate knowledge. That is done in writing. Third, it will illustrate form. That is done in paintings."⁶² Kitawaki clearly substantiates the thinking behind his diagrammatic paintings, linking them directly with the articulation of reason, knowledge, and form. He then goes on to differentiate the concept of painting (*kaiga* 絵画) from drawing/illustrating (*zuga* 図画), again referencing ancient Chinese art historical texts: "To represent imaginary figures, spirits and ghosts, we use the word paint—*kaku* 書く,

⁶² Kitawaki, "Graphic Art Restoration," *Bijutsu Bunka* 6 (April 1941): 45-46.

while for replicating real beings, such as dogs or horses, we use the word draw/illustrate—*zusuru* 図する.”⁶³ According to Kitawaki, painting is intended to express the individual, the imaginary, and the modern, while drawing/illustrating expresses the universal, real, and the ancient. He goes on to explain how painting is in contradiction with science, while drawing/illustration embraces it. He then concludes by proclaiming the current historical moment as a “graphic era” (*zusuru jidai* 図する時代) in which the revival of “graphic art” is imminent: “To illustrate reason, illustrate knowledge, and illustrate form. In this sense, graphic art is an era which can hold hands with science and illustrate science.”⁶⁴

Just as other artists of the Art Culture Association self-censored themselves out of fear, Kitawaki chose to delve deeper into the philosophy and diagrammatic structure of the *I Ching* with a series of three paintings exhibited at the Second Art Culture Association Exhibition in April 1941. It is clear that Kitawaki was also wary of attracting unwanted attention, which may explain his turn to the *I Ching*—likely an inoffensive topic in the eyes of the authorities. These works go a step further in their stark diagrammatic representation of abstract schema, stripping away the colored backgrounds and figurative elements of his previous works. The remaining elements in this austere group of works are colored bars and lines on a blank white ground charting the abstract relationships contained within the *I Ching*. The work *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)(1941) [Fig. 3-15] is titled after the *bagua* 八卦, or the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

eight trigrams of the *I Ching*. The *I Ching* scholar and translator Richard Wilhelm explains its meaning as follows:

These eight trigrams were conceived as images of all that happens in heaven and on earth. At the same time, they were held to be in a state of continual transition, one changing into another, just as transition from one phenomena to another is continually taking place in the physical world. Here we have the fundamental concept of the Book of Changes [*I Ching*]. The eight trigrams are symbols standing for changing transitional states; they are images that are constantly undergoing change. Attention centers not on things in their state of being—as is chiefly the case in the Occident—but upon their movements in change. The eight trigrams therefore are not representations of things as such but of their tendencies in movement.

These eight images came to have manifold meanings. They represented certain processes in nature [heaven, earth, thunder, water, mountain, wind/wood, fire, lake] corresponding with their inherent character. Further, they represented a family consisting of father, mother, three sons, and three daughters, not in the mythological sense in which the Greek gods peopled Olympus, but in what might be called an abstract sense, that is they represented not objective entities but functions.⁶⁵

In *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)*, Kitawaki appears to map out the various arrangements of the eight trigrams according to the *I Ching*. The composition is divided into three sections, each of which contains a collaged page taken directly from a Edo-period Japanese adaptation of the *I Ching*. In the top right corner is a page titled “Ordering Sequence of King Wen Wang’s Hexagrams” 文王八卦次序 which maps out the familial relationship between the eight trigrams. [Fig. 3-16] Surrounding this black and white page of text is Kitawaki’s color-coded diagram mapping out the various familial relationships such as father/mother, first/second/third son and first/second/third daughter. Close examination reveals colored lines running in both directions that link

⁶⁵ Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, trans. Cary F. Baynes, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 1.

each trigram with one another, pointing to the 64 possible divination symbols (hexagrams) created from every permutation of combining the eight trigrams. While Kitawaki's diagrams are heavily encoded in his own abstract visual language, it is clear that he attributed specific colors to each line of the various trigrams, essentially adding his own visual dimension to the already complex divination system.

In the bottom left corner of the painting are two collaged pages separated by a sweeping grey line that divides the canvas into two. The collaged page on the lower left is titled "Directional Positions of King Wen Wang's Hexagrams" 文王八卦方位 [Fig. 3-17], while the page on the lower right reads "Directional Positions of Fuxi's Eight Hexagrams" 伏羲八卦方位 [Fig. 3-18]. As with the familial diagram in the top right, Kitawaki maps out the two other key arrangements of the *I Ching* utilized for consulting the oracle—the Sequence of Earlier Heaven (Fuxi) and the Sequence of Later Heaven (King Wen). In the painting, each collaged page is associated with a pair of two abstract diagrams consisting of a complex series of color-coded concentric circles containing a series of directional lines that seem to articulate the internal movement and/or the internal relationships of the two arrangements of trigrams. The Earlier Heaven arrangement is organized into a series of opposing pairs, with each of the eight trigrams associated with the cardinal points [Fig. 3-19]. In the *I Ching*, this is considered the archetypal order of things prior to creation and change, with heaven and earth forming the north-south axis (note that north is situated at the bottom in these diagrams—a point Kitawaki makes clear with the compass in the center of the painting). This diagram maps out the interrelation of heaven/earth, mountain/lake, thunder/wind, and fire/water that, while fundamentally opposing forces, nonetheless keep one another in balance and harmony. The Later

Heaven arrangement, on the other hand, is organized based on temporal progression, and articulates the order of change in the world exemplified by the cycle of birth and death, day and night, and the changes of the seasons [Fig. 3-20]. When consulted in concert with one another according to the rules of the *I Ching*, these three diagrams provide insight into the “ultimate meaning of the world—fate, the world as it is, [and] how it has come to be so.”⁶⁶

By including pages taken from the *I Ching* and collaging them next to diagrams illustrating the inner workings of those very same concepts, Kitawaki sought to give visual form and schematic logic to the mystical philosophy that drives from the *I Ching*. However, Kitawaki’s painting does not function as the *I Ching* does—the painting cannot be consulted as one would consult the text. Instead, Kitawaki’s work attempts to diagram the relationships contained within the text, with his series of color-coded lines alluding to change, motion, and the balance between elements in nature that are the engine for the text’s divinatory powers. In the context of 1941, this series of paintings appears to map out the interconnectedness of natural and moral laws that served to divine not only the future but also harmony in the present. It is this sense of needed direction, purpose, and order that Kitawaki no doubt felt was either missing, or at the very least, in jeopardy as Japan entered into the Pacific War.

Having mapped out the internal logic of the *I Ching* as he perceived it, Kitawaki then expanded his exploration on the philosophy of this ancient text to incorporate his concerns as an artist—namely the integration of Western science and Eastern philosophy into a coherent worldview. The work *Diagram of Chau Divination (Heaven and Earth)*

⁶⁶ Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 263.

周易解理图(乾坤)(1941) [Fig. 3-21] relates the harmony of heaven and earth as laid out in the *I Ching* with Goethe's approach to natural science. Visually, the painting features a similar composition to the previous work, with a solid grey line bisecting the white canvas into upper and lower halves. The upper half of the composition is associated with heaven as denoted by the hexagram *Qian* (☰, 乾) meaning "heaven" or "father" that is located on the left. This symbol is made up of six solid lines that each represent *yang* (—). Conversely, the lower half of the composition is associated with the hexagram *Kun* (☷, 坤) meaning "earth" or "mother/receptive" featured on the right. This symbol is made up of six broken lines that each represent *yin* (--). The upper half of the composition is linked with heaven, contains the plus symbol (+), and features the leaves of a sprouting plant. Kitawaki appears to associate these elements with warm colors, including red, orange, and yellow that are featured prominently as solid bars in the upper left corner. By contrast, the lower half of the composition linked with the earth contains the minus symbol (-) and features the roots of a plant. Kitawaki appears to associate these elements with cool colors, including green, blue, and purple that are featured prominently as solid bars in the opposite lower right corner. Closer inspection also reveals a slender diagonal line in the center of the composition running in both directions that links the image of the roots to that of the leaves. According to curator Ōtani Shogo, the articulation of this relationship may relate to a passage in Goethe's "Preliminary Notes for a Physiology of Plants" found in his botanical writings:

Origin of the root and of the leaf. They are united by origin; indeed, the one cannot be imagined without the other. They are also by origin opposed to each other. We answer the question, why the root embryo develops downward and the leaf embryo upward, by saying that they are opposed,

in keeping with the general dualism of Nature, which here becomes specific.⁶⁷

This passage eloquently lays out the conceptual basis for the multiplicity of complementary relationships that Kitawaki has depicted in his diagrammatic painting(s). Based on the *I Ching*, heaven and earth, while opposing elements/forces, are constantly working together to strike a balance. Heaven creates life while the earth receives it and supports it. Likewise, this extends to the notion of heaven being linked with the father/ruler/king who establishes law and order in the world, and his subjects who receive and obey his commands. In the philosophy of the *I Ching* and its underlying concept of oneness prior to duality—*taiji* 太極, symbolically represented by ☯—these elements are not opposites per se, but in fact two halves of a whole that coexist, constantly working in tandem to establish balance and harmony in the universe. Kitawaki takes this philosophy a step further, linking it to Goethe's observations of plant morphology in which leaf and root structures represent two opposing forces (and set of structures) in nature that nonetheless share a common origin and cannot exist without the other. Here, Kitawaki most succinctly depicts the conceptual framework or schema of his dualistic worldview that unifies science and philosophy. For the artist, it is this understanding of the world—its complementary orders and interconnected structures—that provided meaning and guidance in a time of great turmoil. While Kitawaki appears to have been searching for a sense of universal truth, the deeply coded messages of these diagrammatic paintings remain obscure. Their dense and cryptic iconography, filtered through ancient Chinese

⁶⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Preliminary Notes for a Physiology of Plants," in *Goethe's Botanical Writings*, trans. Bertha Mueller (University of Hawaii Press/Honolulu, Hawaii, 1952), 95.

divination and Goethe's pseudo-science make it difficult to unravel their meaning. This may have been intentional on the artist's part as a way to avoid censorship by the authorities. However, when read in concert with his writings of the time, Kitawaki appears to have hid little. Further adding to the mystery of Kitawaki's visual meaning is his acceptance of nationalist rhetoric and willingness to rationalize the "functional" quality of art with the demands of the Japanese wartime state.

The third painting in the *Diagram of Chau Divination* series titled, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Harmony and Stagnation)* 周易解理図(泰否)(1941) [Fig. 3-22] again emphasizes this worldview by connecting the *I Ching* to Goethe's color theory. Unlike the previous two works discussed above, this painting does not feature a bold grey line to delineate the opposing elements of the *I Ching*. Instead, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Harmony and Stagnation)* more than the previous works seems to expressly argue for the equivalence between science and philosophy. The upper half of the composition features a diagram illustrating an experiment from Isaac Newton's 1704 treatise *Opticks* detailing his theories on the refraction of light and its relationship to color. In the experiment, dated to 1666, Newton allowed rays of sunlight to pass through a screen, which then entered a prism and were refracted onto the wall of a darkened room. By isolating white light in this way, Newton was able to observe the visible color spectrum in descending bands of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Kitawaki depicts this experiment in its entirety, from a white circle on the left that represents the sun, followed by the pierced screen, prism, refracting bands of light, and a column featuring the visible color spectrum. The artist then draws a series of lines that connect the color spectrum to a series of six colored bars on the left side that are arranged into

two groupings of three: warm colors (red, orange, yellow) on top, and cool colors (green, blue, violet) on the bottom. From Kitawaki's previous work in this vein, we know that the warm colors are associated with *yang* (positive) while the cool colors are associated with *yin* (negative). Hovering above the color spectrum is the hexagram [䷮] (*Pi* 否) meaning "stagnation" that is composed of the trigram for heaven (☰) consisting of three solid bars associated with *yang* on top, and the trigram for earth (☷) that consists of three broken bars associated with *yin* on the bottom. While the hexagram (䷮) features heaven above, and earth below seemingly pointing to the natural order of things, according to the *I Ching* the opposite is true: "Heaven and earth are out of communion and all things are benumbed. What is above has no relation to what is below, and on earth confusion and disorder prevail."⁶⁸ In this formation heaven and earth draw apart from one another signifying stagnation.

Below this complex arrangement of symbols is another similar layout, but instead of illustrating the work of Isaac Newton, it depicts concepts from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's competing *Theory of Colours* published in 1810. Unlike Newton who conducted rigorous scientific experiments with isolated sunlight in a darkened room, as discussed earlier, Goethe's approach to science was more holistic, taking into account sensory perception of the human eye. While Newton's theory approached color as components of white light independent of the sensory perception of the human eye, Goethe's theory emphasized the experience of seeing with the understanding that color was a dynamic process linked to human vision. Kitawaki represents the primacy of sensory perception in Goethe's theory by replacing the diagram illustrating Newton's

⁶⁸ Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 52.

scientific experiment with an image of the human eye in the lower half of the composition. To the right of this eye is a depiction of Goethe's color wheel consisting of complementary pairs of colors that are situated opposite each other. A close reading reveals the same color wheel is reflected on the surface of the eye with a series of thin lines connecting the image on the eye to the corresponding colors in the wheel. The pairings of complementary colors are based on Goethe's observation of colored shadows—a phenomena in which the human eye creates complementary colors under certain lighting conditions where, in fact, they do not physically exist. Beside the illustration of Goethe's color wheel is the hexagram (䷊) (*Tai* 泰) meaning “peace/harmony” which consists of the inverse arrangement of trigrams from (䷋) (*Pi* 否), with earth (䷁) on top and heaven (䷀) on the bottom. According to the *I Ching*, this arrangement “denotes a time in nature when heaven seems to be on earth. Heaven has placed itself beneath the earth, and so their powers unite in deep harmony. Then peace and blessing descend on all living things.”⁶⁹ In his schematic painting, it is clear that Kitawaki associates Newton's theory of color with “stagnation,” while Goethe's theory is linked with “harmony.” Like the *I Ching*, Goethe's notion of light and color sought out balance and harmony by joining observation of external phenomena with inner perception. While Newton's theory argued that darkness was defined by the absence of light, Goethe's observations of color in visual reality lead to the conclusion that light and darkness are equals—much the same way that the *I Ching* relates *yin/yang*, dark/light, negative/positive, female/male, and the eight trigrams not as opposites, but as complementary parts of a whole. It is this perceived common thread of

⁶⁹ Ibid., 48.

interconnectedness in nature, science, and philosophy that Kitawaki believed held the key to unlocking hidden universal truths. In this series of final diagrammatic paintings, we can see the artist attempt to articulate his ideal worldview in the form of schema that could account for a unified theory that bridged the gap between not only science and philosophy, but also Eastern and Western systems of finding meaning in the natural world.

...

The next Art Culture Association exhibition would not be for over a year, eventually taking place in May 1942. In the intervening months, Kitawaki would go on to become the president of his neighborhood association (*tonarigumi* 隣組) and was placed in charge of rationing food and other goods, circulating notices, practicing air defense drills, allocating public funds, and assisting with radio calisthenics for the local community. In July 1941 all major arts publications such as *Mizue* and *Atorie* were merged to become *Shin Bijutsu* 新美術 (*New Art*), which was part of the New Order's wartime consolidation of the mass media. And after nearly eight months of incarceration, Fukuzawa and Takiguchi were both released without prosecution on November 11, 1941. Upon his release, Fukuzawa issued the following conversion (*tenkō* 転向) statement in the December 1941 brochure for the Art Culture Association's 2nd Small Works Exhibition, likely under pressure from the authorities:

Surrealism is as the authorities fear tinged with communism, and it goes without saying that this thought is incompatible with our country today. Thus surrealism must not be carried out. I think there is no one who will use this ideology for education in communism, but with the logic of Breton it is possible that exploration of the psychological domain of surrealism will serve the 'left wing'... The bomb has killed surrealism, but

it has not killed me. The authorities told me in understanding words, ‘Don’t get involved. Be as active as you want, just avoid what you must avoid.’⁷⁰

Following his release, the Special Higher Police began surveillance on Fukuzawa and the Art Culture Association more broadly, making regular visits to Association meetings as well as individual artist’s studios.

It is under this intense scrutiny by the authorities that Kitawaki’s final diagrammatic painting titled *Diagram of Chau Divination (Obedience and Pleasure)* 周易解理図(巽兌)(1941) [Fig. 3-23] takes shape. First exhibited at the Sixth Kyoto City Exhibition in May 1941 (just after Fukuzawa and Takiguchi’s arrests) and then again a year later in Tokyo at the Third Art Culture Association Exhibition (following their release), this work can be read in a two-fold manner. The lower half of the painting features an idyllic landscape with a duck calling out to a rainbow off in the distance from a reed-covered marsh. Above the duck is the hexagram (䷸) (*Sun* 巽) meaning “wind” or “penetration.” According to the *I Ching*, “in nature it is the wind that disperses the gathered clouds, leaving the sky clear and serene. In human life it is penetrating clarity of judgment that thwarts all dark hidden motives. In the life of the community it is the powerful influence of a great personality that uncovers and breaks up those intrigues which shun the light of day.”⁷¹ On the opposite side of the painting hovering above the rainbow is the hexagram (䷹) (*Tui* 兌) meaning “lake” or “joy.” According to the

⁷⁰ Fukuzawa in John Clark, *Surrealism in Japan*, Occasional Paper of the Japanese Studies Centre, (Clayton, VIC, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Japanese Studies Centre, 1997), 44. Clark mistakenly dates this statement to December 1943 when in fact it was December 1941, the month following Fukuzawa’s release.

⁷¹ Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 220.

commentaries of the *I Ching* regarding *Tui*, “When one leads the way for the people joyously, they forget their drudgery; when one confronts difficulty joyously, the people forget death. The greatest thing in making the people joyous is that they keep one another in order.”⁷² While the images of wind and a lake are featured prominently in the landscape Kitawaki painted, the meaning behind the *I Ching*’s commentary remains quite obscure on its face. However, Kitawaki provides a brief explanation of this painting’s intended message in a May 1941 article in the local *Nippon Shimbun* stating, “If you give an order in the direction of the wind, it will be thoroughly carried out. Give it in the opposite direction of the wind, and it means it will not be carried out. This is true for conveying the will of the ruler to the people, and visa versa.”⁷³

Here, we can glean from the meaning provided by the *I Ching* and Kitawaki’s own explanation that the artist did not limit his diagrammatic ordering of the world to simply understanding natural phenomena, but also applied this all-encompassing logic to social relations as well. The *I Ching* provides constant guidance on decisions regarding proper social behavior as it was initially intended as an oracle to guide the king in how to properly rule his people. As discussed earlier, the trigram for heaven is synonymous with that of the father, or ruler. Likewise, the trigram for earth is synonymous with that of the mother, or the retainer. According to the *I Ching*, when heaven and earth are in the proper order (i.e. the ruler and retainer are in harmony) the ideal society will be realized.

Returning to the painting, the *I Ching* associates the image of wind with the ruler issuing

⁷² Ibid., 686.

⁷³ Ōtani, “Kitawaki Noboru no ‘Zushiki’ Kaiga nitsuite,” 19.

commands and “penetrating the consciousness of [his] subordinates.”⁷⁴ In this sense, Kitawaki’s painting affirms the social order of the day in which the commands of the emperor—including the New Order, the arrests of Fukuzawa and Takiguchi, and abandoning surrealism—were to be heeded without question by his subjects to maintain balance and harmony. In a time when Japanese society was in chaos, Kitawaki’s paintings argue for an ideal social order dictated by the philosophy of the *I Ching* in which the emperor and his subjects must each adhere to their proper/ascribed social roles.

While Kitawaki would go on to create a handful more paintings prior to the war’s end, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Obedience and Pleasure)* represents the last schematic painting of its kind that visually incorporates the philosophy of the *I Ching*. Taken together, the four paintings of the *Diagram of Chau Divination* 周易解理図 series from 1941 encapsulate a particular moment in Kitawaki’s evolution as a painter that reflect not only an internal development, but more importantly, an internalization/coming to terms with the artist’s role in wartime Japan. Kitawaki’s turn to the *I Ching* was coupled with a rigid adherence to a schematic style incorporating geometric abstraction and a minimal use of color and/or figuration. Formally, the mathematical basis for Kitawaki’s geometric abstraction produced an austere diagrammatic style whose visual order mirrored the philosophical order the artist desperately sought to conceptualize and rationalize in his writings. Similarly, the *I Ching*, with its archaic social hierarchy and philosophy of interrelated natural elements provided a sense of legitimacy for Kitawaki’s own esoteric/eccentric worldview. While other Kitawaki scholars have argued that the *I Ching* provided the artist with a sense of order and direction at a particularly uncertain time in

⁷⁴ Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 681.

Japanese history, the *I Ching* also reinforced a social hierarchy that was compatible with the nationalistic rhetoric of the wartime Japanese state. In a complicated and inexplicable way, Kitawaki's diagrammatic paintings merge his aspirations as an artist with those of Japan's totalitarian New Order without being reduced to blatant war painting or propaganda.

Kitawaki theorized that diagrammatic works of art had a functional aspect to them that was uniquely suited to the needs of wartime Japan. In the May 1943 publication which accompanied the Art Culture Association's 4th Exhibition catalog, Kitawaki submitted an essay titled "Functional Things Are All Beautiful." 機能的なるものは全て美しい In it, the artist advocated discarding the notion of art for art's sake which was no longer tenable in the current moment, and to instead work toward bridging the gap between art and life through "functional" art. Kitawaki uses the words of the 13th century Zen Buddhist priest Dōgen, to argue that just as "life-and-death (*seishi* 生死) is itself nirvana" so too are art and life inextricably linked. This notion of nonduality is very much tied to Kitawaki's previous writing on symmetry/asymmetry and harmony as defined by the *I Ching*. Kitawaki applied this rationale to the concept of beauty, arguing that beauty in both art and life does not have material form, but instead is a state of being—a "function that is constantly changing according to the circumstances."⁷⁵ Writing in 1943, and having largely stopped painting himself, Kitawaki advocates a "functional life" in which one can discover beauty by living and working according to one's means, stating:

⁷⁵ Kitawaki, "Functional Things are All Beautiful" *Bijutsu Bunka 4th Exhibition Catalog* (May 1943): 45-47.

First we must take a break from thinking about beauty. We first must take interest in the matters of life, and dedicate ourselves to them. We must learn about our means from the space of our day-to-day life, and continue to function without delay. There is no beauty in defying life. The base of beauty lies in the functional life.⁷⁶

This extremely practical approach to art and life seems to be in direct opposition to the highly theoretical approach the artist had advocated and argued for throughout his career. While Kitawaki and the Art Culture Association had already distanced themselves from surrealism's exploration of the psyche and its access to hidden/inherent truths of the natural world, to advocate the functionality of art and the discovery of beauty in one's working, daily life points to the austerities of wartime Japan and the perceived uselessness of the avant-garde at the time. Kitawaki seems to have resigned himself to the realities of the New Order, and the fact that the role of the avant-garde artist in wartime Japan had fundamentally changed. Kitawaki appears to have accepted this new reality, adapting his artistic style and thinking to the needs of the day in the form of diagrammatic paintings. These "functional" works served a practical role in their ability to illustrate complex ideas in a visually succinct manner. At a moment in Japanese history when art had to serve the needs of the nation, Kitawaki developed a form of artistic expression that he felt was uniquely suited to communicating directly with the outside world. Just as he had previously advocated the concept of "working artists" that were a functional part of wartime society, so too did Kitawaki envision his diagrammatic paintings as a practical, functional way to put painting to use for Japanese society.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

He would solidify his thinking on this subject in the concluding lines of the essay “Functional Things Art All Beautiful”—the last words he would publish publically prior to the war’s end:

We must know our means fitting within the reality of our Empire and function voluntarily, and beauty must be found there. I believe that our aesthetics today must be entitled “Functional things are all beautiful.” Pure aesthetics is sinking far away over the Great East Asian Ocean. Functional aesthetics must be the new aesthetics to arise. Exterminate the formal and pure aesthetics. Our aesthetics must be the functional aesthetics that work as *Yamato-bataraki* 日本体操.⁷⁷

In these final sentences, Kitawaki elaborates on the “functional” role of art and likens its aesthetics to those of *Yamato-bataraki* 日本体操, a set of martial exercises that were accompanied by singing and chanting in praise of the Japanese gods and the emperor to express “the faith and ideals of the Japanese race” through the body.⁷⁸ Utilizing nationalist/fascist jargon of the day, Kitawaki equates his role as an artist in wartime Japan with that of visually preparing the nation for battle. While this explicit nationalist/fascist reference is rare for Kitawaki, it is in keeping with his rationalization and gradual acceptance of the New Order’s demands for art and artists during wartime. With the advent of his diagrammatic painting, Kitawaki appears to have found a way—at least personally—to substantiate his role as an avant-garde artist in Japanese society. Despite having to renounce surrealism and any individual claim to artistic expression, Kitawaki stubbornly held on to the idea that art could continue to serve a function during wartime.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ J.A. Mangan and Takeshi Komagome, “Militarism, Sacrifice and Emperor Worship: The Expendable Male Body in Fascist Japanese Martial Culture,” in *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon—Global Fascism* (London/New York: Frank Cass, 2000), 197-8.

In practical terms, however, Kitawaki appears to have given up on exploring the functional possibilities of his diagrammatic paintings toward the end of the war. From September 1942 until the end of the war, the artist submitted only a handful of paintings to exhibitions commemorating the Japanese army and navy, and other nationalist events with innocuous titles such as *Zinnias* (1942), *Persimmons* (1943), and *Lily and Stone* (1943). This may have been in part due to the wartime regulations that finally reached the Kyoto art world in January 1943. The local society of oil painters (*yōga gadan* 洋画画壇) was formally reorganized and reconstituted as the Kyoto Oil Painter's League (*Kyoto yōgaka dōmei* 京都洋画家同盟) which gathered works for exhibition and donation with proceeds going toward the regional army corps and the Maizuru naval base in Kyoto. While other artists such as Matsumoto Shunsuke, Aimitsu, Aso Saburo, Tsuruoka Masao, Itozono Wasaburō, Ōnō Goro, and Terada Masaaki would defiantly continue to exhibit works of a highly personalized nature as part of the *Shinjin Gakai* 新人画会⁷⁹ (*Society of New Painters*) in Tokyo, Kitawaki appears to have stopped painting by January 1943. In April 1944, Kitawaki begins working in the personnel section of the general affairs department of the Sumitomo Metalwork Factory in Osaka. This was the first paying job Kitawaki ever held, and he commuted from Kyoto to Osaka on a weekly basis. For an artist who had been financially independent for most of his adult life, this must have come as quite a shock to Kitawaki.

...

⁷⁹ For more on *Shinjin Gakai*, please see *Shinjin Gakai ten: Senjka no Gakatachi: E ga aru kara Ikiteiru* (Tokyo: Itabashi Kuritsu Bijutsukan, 2008).

The period from 1939 to 1941 encompasses some of the most creative and original works of Kitawaki's entire oeuvre. Ironically, this period coincides with the height of wartime authoritarianism and some of the harshest limitations on artistic creativity in modern Japanese history. While Kitawaki remained outside of the officially sanctioned war propaganda art circles, it is clear that his diagrammatic paintings and concept of "functional art" were a means for the artist to internalize and align himself with Japan's totalitarian New Order. The articulation of abstract concepts ranging from symmetry and asymmetry, synthesis and analysis, order and chaos, to fashion, cultural morphology, and Chinese divination, into formal geometric diagrams is a testament to the artist's mindset during these difficult times. As both an intellectual and avant-garde artist, Kitawaki formulated a highly original worldview that gave structure and meaning to his life during wartime. Far from being critical of wartime reality, his highly regimented, schematized aesthetic mirrored the strictures of Japan's New Order, and his writings of the 1940s theorized ways in which artists could still remain relevant in wartime Japanese society.

CHAPTER 4: Aftermath

Confronting Reality/Confronting the Self

Emperor Hirohito's Imperial Rescript of August 15, 1945 declaring the end of the war—the first time speaking directly to his subjects since his ascendance to the throne—signaled to the Japanese people an abrupt end to the nation's 15-year military campaign of imperial expansion and aggression. This was followed by the signing of the Instruments of Surrender on the U.S. battleship *Missouri*, which officially marked the end of hostilities and the beginning of the Allied Occupation. For the next seven years, the nation of Japan and its people would undergo an exhaustive process of democratization and demilitarization at the hands of the Occupation forces, led by U.S. Supreme Commander, General Douglas MacArthur. The Occupation administration quickly enacted widespread reforms ranging from: a new democratic constitution, the institution of civil liberties, the renunciation of war, the dissolution of the *zaibatsu* 財閥, and liberalization of the education and voting systems. At the same time, most Japanese experienced much hardship and suffering in the immediate postsurrender period due to food and material shortages, illness, and massive monetary inflation. For many, the trauma of defeat and the ensuing confusion and despair was internalized as a state of physical exhaustion and psychic collapse, known as *kyodatsu* 虚脱. However, for others, Japan's surrender was seen as liberation from years of militarism and authoritarianism, and the ushering in of a new era for freedom of thought and expression. For Kitawaki, the postsurrender period was all these things. Looking at his writings and art created from 1945 until prior to his premature death in December 1951, a picture of an optimistic yet deeply introspective individual emerges.

In August 1945, Kitawaki quit his job working at the Sumitomo Metal Works in Osaka, and without skipping a beat, returned to his art and exhibiting paintings publically at the 1st Kyoto City Sponsored Art Exhibition (*Kyoto shi shusai bijutsu tenrankai* 第1回京都市主催美術展覧会). Kitawaki unveiled two new works, *Vermilion and Purple* (*Shu to murasaki* 朱と紫) [Fig. 4-1] and *Fantasy of Autumn* (*Aki no gensō* 秋の幻想) [Fig. 4-2] both dated to 1945. While these works were exhibited together, their styles vary dramatically, with the former sharing much in common with his diagrammatic divination series of 1941, and the latter resurrecting his earlier surrealist style. *Vermilion and Purple* depicts a placid scene of the sun setting over a barren, mountainous landscape.¹ The sun is rendered perfectly round in a bright red hue and is surrounded by a white halo, a direct reference to the national flag of Japan. Hovering above the landscape in a separate register are three symbolic elements: a Chinese inscription, a horizontal band depicting the color spectrum, and a geometric diagram of a circumscribed equilateral triangle. The inscription reads top to bottom, right to left, “子曰/惡紫之/奪朱也” which are the first characters in a line from *The Analects of Confucius*, that translate as: “The Master said, I hate the purple encroaching on the [vermilion]. I hate the Song of Zheng disturbing the classical music. I hate the sharp mouths overthrowing states and families.”² This passage in the *Analects* expresses strong dislike of cultural vulgarization of the time, including new and expensive purple dye that was displacing the

¹ A study for this painting titled *Landscape at Kamihatecho in Kitashirakawa* 北白川 上終町風景 (1942) identifies the landscape as northeastern Kyoto.

² E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 164.

old standard vegetable reds, and the popularization of folk music among the court.

According to commentary on the *Analects*, the beginning of this passage expresses hatred that the “good old ways are replaced by tasteless new ways, and that the political order is imperiled by it,” while the final line alludes to someone “preaching new doctrines that threaten the old order.”³

Returning to the painting, close observation reveals that the setting red sun is shown casting a purple hue across the mountains below. With its reference to the Japanese national flag, this imagery symbolizes not only Japan’s defeat but also the introduction of new, possibly vulgar, Western ways into Japan. The quote, however appears to provide an obscure classical reference hinting at Kitawaki’s state of mind—one of resentment toward those in power (“sharp mouths”) who led Japan astray and ultimately “overthrew” the state. Looking at the color spectrum to the right of the inscription, we see that red/vermillion and purple are at opposite ends of the spectrum, and referencing back to Kitawaki’s earlier divination work, we are reminded that red is associated with yang/positive, while purple is associated with yin/negative. While the writings of Confucius were more widely known than the esoteric *I-Ching*, it is telling that Kitawaki chose to continue coding his personal commentary in layers of classical Chinese text and scientific diagrams. While this may simply have been in keeping with his earlier style, it is also possible that this painting was executed prior to the war’s end, making the coding of the artist’s critical statement all the more necessary. Despite Kitawaki’s wartime writings, which acquiesced to the state’s authoritarian control over creative production, his post-surrender writings are unequivocally pro-democracy and

³ Ibid.

advocate a clear break with the past, leaving little ambiguity to the critical—albeit cryptic—message of this work.

Alongside *Vermilion and Purple*, Kitawaki exhibited the surreal *Fantasy of Autumn*, which is uncharacteristically bright and colorful. The painting features an expansive blue sky with Magritte-like clouds that continue into the distance with no sense of the horizon. In the foreground is a monumental silhouette of a man's head—most likely that of Kitawaki—gazing at a colorful pile of smoldering flowers, with a trail of smoke drifting into the air. These elements are rendered not with a brush, but with a daisy-like stamp that is imprinted in multiples layers of color to provide a sense of volume to the silhouette and amorphous pile. While rendered in dense black, the hair, eyebrows, and cheeks of the silhouette are clearly features of Kitawaki himself, making this work a self-portrait of sorts—the first of several the artist would create in the post-surrender period. While the title's reference to autumn may initially identify the smoldering pile as fallen leaves, the eerie darkness of the silhouette implies a more painful or traumatic subtext such as feelings of emptiness or self-doubt. In the context of 1945 Japan, the smoke is likely a reference to the smoldering ruins of a war-ravaged country. With the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki the victims of atomic bombs, and Tokyo devastated by repeated firebombing raids, many Japanese cities had been razed to the ground with hundreds of thousands dead. Looking again at Kitawaki's colorful pile, it appears as though the smoke is rising from a gravestone, which further complicates the reading of the billowing smoke. Here, the fantasy or illusion mentioned in the painting's title may refer to this double reading of the smoldering pile as either leaves, ruins, or even bodies.

Although Kitawaki's postsurrender paintings are contemplative and introspective in their intent, the artist's writings were enthusiastic about the future and did not dwell on the country's war defeat or issues of personal struggle. Kitawaki appears not to have been preoccupied with defeat in his day-to-day life either, choosing instead to immerse himself in his work organizing and coordinating the activities for various art groups including the Art Culture Association, Kyoto Bijutsu kai, and a handful of others he would eventually join. Kitawaki became increasingly busy juggling these responsibilities over the next few years, seemingly to the detriment of his health and artistic practice. In 1946 he would create only one new painting, and between the war's end and his death in 1951, he would exhibit a total of only eight new works, and would repeatedly re-submit older work to major exhibitions. Oddly, the optimism Kitawaki would express in his postwar writing and the enthusiasm with which he participated in various lectures and other art-related activities did not translate into his postwar paintings, which were by-and-large sober and introspective in nature and few in number. While Japan's surrender was no doubt liberating for Kitawaki artistically, his creative energies were often channeled into endeavors other than painting, which may point to a creative impasse due to private misgivings and his deteriorating health.

In May 1946, the Art Culture Association staged its first exhibition post-surrender, to which Kitawaki submitted *Vermilion and Purple* discussed above. While Takiguchi and Fukuzawa remained at the helm, several prominent Association members had died at the front including Aimitsu, Mori Takayuki, and Watanabe Takeshi, while others had either died of disease, bombing raids, or still remained unrepatriated. In addition, new members such as Oyamada Jirō, Tagaya Itoku, and Yamashita Kikuji

joined the group in the immediate postwar period, noticeably changing the dynamics of the Art Culture Association from its original prewar membership. By October 1946 the Art Culture journal had restarted in earnest, and published a survey asking all group members to provide a response to the question: “What type of dream do you have for tomorrow’s art?” While many artists’ answers were indicative of the confusion of postsurrender Japan and displayed an unease or uncertainty regarding the future⁴, Kitawaki’s response was decidedly optimistic and forward thinking:

The beautiful flight path of cosmic rays captured in a Wilson chamber⁵ is the posture of a cosmic flower that blossoms into full glory upon the acute interaction between the objective and the subjective. It is a domain of beauty that cannot be captured by the classical tool called a “brush.” In the new century, beauty converts from macroscopic beauty into microscopic beauty. With brushes replaced by airbrushes, oil paint by chemical dye, and canvases by films, art that goes through the fourth dimension will come into being.⁶

Here, Kitawaki appears eager about the role technology will play in advancing and ultimately transforming art for the better. The artist’s comments regarding macroscopic and microscopic beauty are clarified in an essay of the same title (“Macroscopic and Microscopic Beauty” 巨視美と微視美) that Kitawaki published in the same journal—the artist’s first piece of art criticism in the postwar period. The expanded essay begins

⁴ Artist Furusawa Iwami responded as follows: “Only now do critics say that artists should show interest in politics. As long as there are idiots like them, the essence of art is only going to be under confusion. I would like to say that it is now that artists should distance themselves from politics, learn about what art actually is, and pursue its essence.” [*Bijutsu Bunka Reissue no. 1* (October 1946)]

⁵ A Wilson chamber, also known as a cloud chamber, is a particle detector used for detecting ionizing radiation. It is named after its inventor, Charles Thomson Rees Wilson, a Scottish physicist.

⁶ Kitawaki in Nakamura Giichi, *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zasetsu—K no baai* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968), 207.

with the line: “With the flash of the atomic bomb becoming a new epoch, the entire world is feeling a contraction.”⁷ The artist then goes on to explain how the atomic bomb is an “accomplishment of nuclear physics” and how the general public is uninformed of how different this is from classical physics. Kitawaki connects classical physics with an outdated, macroscopic view of the world, while nuclear physics represents a new, microscopic view of the world that is in line with the 20th century. In true Kitawaki fashion, the artist then makes a conceptual leap linking these worldviews to fundamental differences between totalitarianism and democracy, stating:

Placing perspectives on the nation or its people is indeed a macroscopic direction. Totalitarianism was something of this kind too. When we think of world politics today, we must start thinking of individual beings as elementary particles. The direction of the world’s leaders must be to eliminate macroscopic ways of thinking that classify humans in certain groups and sacrifice certain groups for particular other groups, and must become a way to functionally let all human existence thrive. In that sense, democracy must not just be considered as civil rights bestowed by the authorities, but rather something that is more profoundly a part of basic human existence.⁸

Kitawaki emphatically declares democracy a basic human right, a concept that would have been unimaginable in Japan just a year earlier. Throughout 1946, revisions to Japan’s postwar constitution were being hotly debated between Prime Minister Shidehara’s Cabinet and GHQ (Occupation General Headquarters), with general elections taking place in April 1946. While the new constitution would not be promulgated until November 1947, issues surrounding democracy, civil liberties, and individual freedoms

⁷ Kitawaki Noboru, “Macroscopic and Microscopic Beauty,” *Bijutsu Bunka Reissue no. 1* (October 1946): 3.

⁸ Ibid.

were being openly discussed, and it is clear from his writings that these issues were at the forefront of Kitawaki's thinking as well.⁹

Kitawaki concludes his essay by translating the values of today's microscopic worldview into the realm of aesthetics. He argues that surrealism has always been associated with a microscopic worldview—one that is progressive in nature and not simply an exploration of the unconscious. Kitawaki proclaims that beauty is “alive” and that it “leaps, transitions, and changes appearance,” and in the present moment “microscopic beauty penetrates through macroscopic beauty, and expands into a particle-like beauty.”¹⁰ For Kitawaki, this new beauty—what the artist calls “nuclear aesthetics”—is theoretically and technically tied to the atomic bomb, democracy, the individual, and nuclear physics. Kitawaki ends the essay by claiming “the world of microscopic beauty promises us a second Renaissance,” and warns that without grasping such new concepts “a new culture of mankind will not be formed.”¹¹ Kitawaki makes a powerful argument in favor of nuclear physics for its ability to offer up a new dawn for man. That he would make such a positive statement regarding the technology that resulted in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shows Kitawaki's deep-seated belief in science and technology as a means for progress, not only for art and culture, but humanity as a whole. Kitawaki does not address the possible dangers of nuclear physics and the destructive power of the atomic bomb, which may have been the result of

⁹ “Birth of the Constitution of Japan: Chronological Table,” Nation Diet Library, accessed July 19, 2016, <http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/history03.html>.

¹⁰ Kitawaki, “Macroscopic and Microscopic Beauty,” 3.

¹¹ Ibid.

Occupational censors who restricted such criticism, but more than likely, the omission is indicative of Kitawaki's complete faith in science and technology.

Ironically, despite his noble call for a new dawn of humanity, Kitawaki only created one painting in 1946 titled *Morphology of Daffodils* 水仙の形態学 [Fig. 4-3], which by all accounts fell short of his lofty aspirations for “microscopic beauty.” The composition is divided into a rectangular grid with bold lines compartmentalizing various sections into horizontal or vertical scenes. To the lower right is the daffodil plant in full bloom set against a red vignette. Having shown his subject of inquiry in its totality, the artist proceeds to dissect, rearrange, and schematize the various elements of the daffodil plant. Utilizing the plant's corona, seed pod, and a cross section of the stem and ovary, the artist creates a strange frowning face—almost identical to his earlier work *Shadow* 影 (1938) which also utilized magnified cross-sections of plant and animal tissue to create a face. To the top is a series of three renderings of a daffodil flower that become increasingly schematized to the point that the flower becomes a diagrammatic abstraction of symmetrical plant forms.

The references to morphology, physiognomy, and schematic diagrams all touch on previous series of production in Kitawaki's oeuvre, but when thrown together in a single composition, there is little sense of visual cohesion or a unified artistic statement. This work and *Explanatory Diagram of Sesshu's Paranoia* 雪舟パラノイア図説 (1947) [Fig. 4-4], which also utilizes a similar grid-like composition and a rehashing of previous styles, point to a conceptual exhaustion in Kitawaki's approach to surrealism. While his writings aspired for a revolutionary aesthetic that was indicative of the newfound

potential of science and technology in the atomic age, he was unable to follow through on those ambitions in his artistic practice. The mediocrity of these two works highlights the artist's inability to reconcile the growing gap between his revolutionary rhetoric and thinking and the reality of his creative fatigue and deep introspection which is clearly visible in his final works.

The following year, in April 1947, the Art Culture Association experienced a division in its ranks with the group splitting into two camps—those who identified with group founder Takiguchi Shūzō and others who were allied with the Marxist critic Takenaka Kyushichi. The split may have been largely along party lines, as many of those who chose to leave the Art Culture Association identified as members of the Japanese Communist Party. Takenaka went on to form the Zenei Bijutsu Kai 前衛美術会 group, together with former Art Culture Association members including Akamatsu Toshiko, Doi Toshio, Hamaya Jirō, Ide Norio, Maruki Iri, Yoshio Tadashi, Asō Saburō, Inoue Chōzaburō, and Itozono Wasaburō. Despite the changing membership of the Art Culture Association in Tokyo, Kitawaki remained the supervisor of the Art Culture Research Society (*Bijutsu Bunka Kenkyūkai* 美術文化研究会) in Kyoto and continued to organize meetings at his home once a month. In addition, Kitawaki took it upon himself to begin staging exhibitions whenever possible, and in February 1947 he organized an Art Culture Research Society Exhibition at the Kyoto Daimaru department store that featured thirteen of his past works as well as the unfinished *Self-portrait* 自我像 (1947). It is worth noting that in this exhibition, the title of Kitawaki's nationalistic painting *Diagram of Cultural Morphology* 文化類型学図式 (1940) had its wartime title replaced with the less

controversial title *Three Masks* (*Mitsu no Masuku* 三つのマスク). Within the retrospective context of this grouping, it is possible that Kitawaki sought to downplay the nationalistic themes of his wartime paintings—this particular work was created to celebrate the 2600th anniversary of Japanese imperial rule.

In May 1947, Kitawaki participated in the 7th Art Culture Association exhibition in Tokyo with his completed self-portrait, now bearing the title *Image of Probability* (*Gaizen no Zō* 蓋然の像)(1947) [Fig. 4-5]. This haunting but powerful work is the first self-portrait of its kind in Kitawaki's oeuvre and marks a significant return to the human figure late in the artist's career. Set against a pale aquamarine ground, the painting features a striking middle-aged Kitawaki in the left-hand corner. Wearing a blue turtleneck sweater and black overcoat, the artist—pictured only from the shoulders up—stares out at the viewer in a calm, if somewhat reserved manner. The light raking across his face emphasizes signs of age, including lines across his brow and wrinkles around his eyes, but the artist has a healthy complexion showing no signs of illness. Despite his heavy eyelids, the artist does not appear tired, and exudes a dignified directness. Looming behind the artist is an amorphous black shadow that is more emotive than it is naturalistic. This patch of darkness ultimately reads less as a shadow and more as an aura of unease or turmoil that is projected from the sitter. To the right of Kitawaki is a small figure dressed in black perched atop a nautical piling, possibly fishing, amongst a patch of reeds. Four thin lines radiate from the base of the piling and culminate in the four corners of a bright red die, which likely is a reference to the “probability” mentioned in the work's title. To the right of the die is a young boy who looks down dejectedly at a bowl of gruel. Above

the boy are a ramshackle cabin and a hazy mountain range surrounded by clouds, each seemingly on their own plane.

The complex symbolism of Kitawaki's self-portrait reflects not only the artist's conflicted inner world, but the harsh realities of daily life in postsurrender Japan as well. In particular, the boy looking at the bowl of gruel may be a direct reference to the scarcity of food in the initial years of the Occupation. Following defeat, Japan was severed from its colonial food supply chain and together with an abysmal harvest in 1945, many died from malnutrition. Even after food shipments from the United States began to arrive, rice remained in short supply well through 1947 and was regularly mixed with flour to create a watered-down gruel that became the substitute mainstay of the Japanese diet.¹² In this context, the red die and the painting's reference to probability may reference the uncertainty of day-to-day life in postsurrender Japan in which access to food and shelter was unpredictable.

Beyond these material concerns, Kitawaki's writings of the period show the artist publically proclaiming a newfound sense of individual dignity and free will following defeat while privately questioning those same developments through a deeply existential lens. In a newspaper article titled "The New Constitution and Japanese Art" 新憲法と日本の美術 published in May 1947, Kitawaki discusses the changing conditions for Japanese artists pre and postwar as well as the importance of the new constitution from an artist's perspective:

¹² John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co./New Press, 1999), 94.

Japanese art could have been the expression of the will of the artists and critics and art dealers, but it was not able to become an expression of free will in the sense of ‘individual dignity.’ This was because artists who expressed free will as such had no choice but to be isolated as eternal heretics by their fellow artists [during the war]. Japanese art was art that was terrified of authority. Japanese art, which had authority and fell to hell did not even have the freedom of hope, and let the years accumulate. They also only had the freedom to believe in their ancestral legacy, and were accustomed to think that being blind to the discipline of heresy was heavenly. However we are now standing at a completely new reality. We do not just accept reality as fate, but rather have hope and faith that makes reality better and free from fear we can express our free will...The god of beauty has been given her wings. The new constitution teaches us that the thorough hunt for freedom is what paves the way for Japanese art to join the world’s art.¹³

Kitawaki was not alone in coming to terms with these issues, and his exploration of the self can be read as part of what art historian Ming Tiampo identifies as the postwar development of subjective autonomy (*shutaisei* 主体性) in Japanese art.¹⁴ While a strong sense of individuality was anathema to the authoritarian control of the Japanese people during wartime, in the postwar period, artists began to discover their newfound autonomy in the physical form of the human body. As art historian Bert Winther-Tamaki argues, for Japanese oil painters, the “postwar reconstruction of subjectivity” often took shape in the deformation of the human body. Artists such as Furusawa Iwami, Tsuruoka Masao, Abe Nobuya, and Fukuzawa Ichirō depicted twisted and mutilated bodies as an embodiment of a traumatic postsurrender subjectivity.¹⁵ However, the understated, sober quality of

¹³ Kitawaki, “The New Constitution and Japanese Art,” *Miyako Shimbun*, May 24, 1947.

¹⁴ Ming Tiampo, “Body, War, and the Discourses of History: Rethinking Postwar Japanese Art.” in *Art and War in Japan and Its Empire, 1931-1960*, ed. Asato Ikeda, Aya Louisa McDonald, and Ming Tiampo (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 339-350.

¹⁵ Bert Winther-Tamaki, “Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan: Reconstructing Subjectivity Through Deformation of the Body,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 58, no. 3 (2003): 347-396.

Kitawaki's self-portrait is in stark contrast to the often violently deformed representations of the human figure found in much of Japanese art during this time.

In and of itself, Kitawaki's self-portrait is rare within the corpus of painting being produced in the immediate postwar period. While many Japanese painters turned to the human figure as a newly contested site of individual subjectivity in the postwar period, very few chose to portray themselves—a marked change from the prewar period.

Looking at Kitawaki's paintings, the closest examples for comparison are the sobering wartime self-portraits of *Shinjin Gakai* 新人画会 artists Aimitsu and Matsumoto Shunsuke. In particular the three self-portraits by Aimitsu—a surrealist, and fellow Art Culture Association member—painted in 1943/44 just prior to being conscripted and sent off to China provide a striking comparison. In Aimitsu's *Self-Portrait (Jigazō 自画像)* (1944) [Fig. 4-6] the artist's chest and neck are depicted as a wall of flesh that occupies nearly two-thirds of the composition. The solid, weightiness of the Aimitsu's body is accompanied by an intense look of concern that is focused somewhere off in the distance—possibly looking toward his uncertain future at the front in China. Despite his visible turmoil, Aimitsu appears resigned to his future, whatever it may be. By comparison, Kitawaki stares directly at the viewer—and in turn at a mirror image of himself—deeply introspective, but undoubtedly pondering the present moment. For Aimitsu, however bleak, the artist appears to valiantly accept his fate. Kitawaki, on the other hand, appears to be in limbo, uncertain not only of his own status—as both an artist and individual—but of the conditions in which he now finds himself.

Looking at Kitawaki's notebooks of this period, this introspective turn appears closely tied to the artist's growing interest in existentialism. His notebooks contain

mention Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Sartre, and at times feature full sections of Japanese text transcribed from these authors' works. The following passage from Jean-Paul

Sartre's 1938 novel *Nausea* appears underlined by Kitawaki:

Perhaps it is impossible to understand one's own face. Or perhaps it is because I am a single man? People who live in society have learned how to see themselves in mirrors as they appear to their friends. I have no friends. Is that why my flesh is so naked? You might say—yes you might say, nature without humanity.¹⁶

And later, other sections are written in red by the artist for added emphasis:

Something is beginning in order to end: adventure does not let itself be drawn out; it only makes sense when dead. I am drawn, irrevocably, towards this death which is perhaps mine as well. Each instant appears only as part of a sequence. I cling to each instant with all my heart: I know that it is unique, irreplaceable—and yet I would not raise a finger to stop it from being annihilated.¹⁷

I exist because I think . . . and I can't stop myself from thinking.¹⁸

Despite not being Kitawaki's own words, the artist's concentration on these passages give a rare insight into the artist's private thought process, and by extension, the internal struggle that preoccupied him during the postwar period. While many Japanese were experiencing feelings of exhaustion and despair, collectively known as *kyodatsu* 虚脱, due to the war's abrupt end and generally poor living conditions, Kitawaki's existential crisis appears to be the artist's own form of dealing with the malaise of daily life post-surrender. For an artist who was both an intellectual and a surrealist, such thoughts of

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Robert Bentley, 1979), 18. [Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 229.]

¹⁷ Ibid., 37-38. [Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 229.]

¹⁸ Ibid., 99. [Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 229.]

self-doubt and questioning one's position in the world do not seem surprising. This line of questioning appears to reach its finale in the artist's only other self-portrait—a haunting pencil on paper drawing executed in April 1951, just prior to being admitted to the Kyoto National Sanatorium for tuberculosis. Unlike *Image of Probability* 蓋然の像 (1947) which shows a healthy, contemplative Kitawaki, *Self-Portrait* 自画像 (1951) [Fig. 4-7] shows the artist after three years of increasingly poor health. The gaunt, sickly Kitawaki is shown with a scraggly head of hair, facial stubble, and age spots. While visibly tired, this final self-portrait is less a depiction of defeat than it is the artist accepting his fate, and facing his own imminent death.

Prior to contracting pleurisy in June 1948, Kitawaki remained very active socially, being an active member of no less than five artist groups including the Japan Avant-Garde Artist Club (*Nihon Avantogyarudo Bijutsuka Kurabu* 日本アヴァンギャルド美術家クラブ) founded in 1947. This association, which was originally formed in 1936, and later resurrected in the postwar period, featured an impressive list of eighty-four members including painters, critics, and poets such as: Okamoto Tarō, Furusawa Iwami, Takiguchi Shūzō, Kitasono Katsue, Fukuzawa Ichirō, Matsumoto Shunsuke, Komaki Gentarō, and Yoshihara Jirō. The group staged major exhibitions in 1948 and 1949, known respectively as the 1st and 2nd *Modern Art Exhibition* (*Modan Āto ten* モダンアート展) which in hindsight were considered “veritable coming-out parties for the postwar leaders of the avant-garde arts” in Japan.¹⁹ The 1948 exhibition premiered at the Ueno

¹⁹ Thomas Havens, *Radicals and Realists in the Japanese Nonverbal Arts: The Avant-garde rejection of Modernism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 23.

Bijutsukan in Tokyo (supported by the Yomiuri corporation) and later traveled to Osaka and Nagoya. Many of the works on display addressed the issue of Japan's war defeat and the trying social conditions/issues of day, often through a visceral address of the human body. Notable works in this vein included Fukuzawa Ichirō's *War Defeat Group* (*Haisen gunzō* 敗戦群像) (1948) [Fig. 4-8] and Furusawa Iwami's *Demonic Music* (*Hyōkyoku* 憑曲) (1948) [Fig. 4-9], both of which were featured at the *1st Modern Art Exhibition*.

Fukuzawa's now iconic work features an entangled pile of naked—possibly dead—bodies that simultaneously represent defeat and the possibility of recovery. The seemingly lifeless bodies embody a deflated sense of loss, but the muscular physiques and fleshy tones of these “living cadavers” simultaneously radiate a macabre energy.²⁰ More sinisterly, Furusawa's *Demonic Music* features a demonic female figure hovering above a desolate atomic wasteland of dead bodies and burned out buildings. Between the demon's legs are the “organs of war”—a series of organ pipes and a massive gun turret—that no doubt provide the apocalyptic soundtrack for this hellish scene. In the background, a large stylized mushroom cloud looms over the red, nightmarish landscape. Where as both Fukuzawa and Furusawa both addressed the death and destruction of the war head-on, Kitawaki's submission to the *Modern Art Exhibition*, *Rose and Daughter* (*Bara to musume* バラとむすめ) (1948) [Fig. 4-10] appears tame by comparison. While no longer extant, black and white images of *Rose and Daughter* show a mother carrying an infant on her back, accompanied by her daughter looking out over a mountainous landscape. In the background is a detailed rendering of the mushroom cloud over

²⁰ Winther-Tamaki, *Maximum Embodiment: Yōga, The Western Painting of Japan, 1912-1955* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 149.

Hiroshima, possibly modeled after U.S. military aerial photography of the August 6, 1945 bombing [FIG]. Beside the mushroom cloud is another explosion, possibly that of Nagasaki, from which emerges a very large rose. Here, Kitawaki's painting appears to romanticize the nuclear blasts by likening their explosive cloud formations to that of a blossoming rose. This reading is not unfounded given the artist's essay on microscopic beauty and its relationship to nuclear physics. Unlike his Artist Club colleagues, Kitawaki's painting does not portray the harsh realities of war's gruesome aftermath, but instead seems to aestheticize the atomic blasts. This ambivalent statement is in line with Kitawaki's postwar rhetoric, and again, points to his belief in science and technology's beauty and transformative power. However, the fact that the family grouping depicted does not feature a father figure may point to the countless dead and un-repatriated male soldiers resulting from the war, somewhat tempering the painting's message.

Kitawaki would submit *Rose and Daughter* to the 8th Art Culture Association exhibition in Tokyo in June 1948, right around the same time the artist was first diagnosed with pleurisy. This exhibition also included a room dedicated especially to those Association members who had died in the war, including Hamamatsu Kogenta, Sugihara Masaki, Asahara Kiyotaka, Aimitsu, Takahashi Michiaki, and Watanabe Takeshi. Over the next two years, Kitawaki would continue to participate in numerous exhibitions, organizing lectures, and working as the Kyoto/Kansai-area representative for a number of arts associations. By 1948 Kitawaki was actively involved with the Arts Culture Association (Tokyo), the Arts Culture Research Center (Kyoto), the Japan Avant-Garde Artists Club, as well as the *Kyoto Shin Bijutsujin Kyōkai* 京都新美術人協会, *Nihon Bijutsu Kai* 日本美術会, and *Kōdō Bijutsu Kyōkai* 行動美術協会. It appears that

his commitments to all these groups began to take a toll on the artist, evidenced by his collapse in June of 1948 due to illness. Despite his declining health, in October 1948 he took on a leadership role in the organization of the Free Artists' Association/Art Culture Association Alliance Exhibition (*Jiyū Bijutsu Kyōkai/Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai Renritsu Modan Āto ten* 自由美術家協会・美術文化協会連立モダンアート展) at the Kyoto Fujii Daimaru department store. The exhibition brought together members from a variety of groups including the Free Artist's Association, the Art Culture Association, and the Japan Avant-Garde Artists Club, and showcased both surrealism and abstraction with the hope of demonstrating solidarity and exposing the masses to Modern Art.²¹ Artists were on-hand to explain their works to the viewing public, including Kitawaki who resubmitted *Rose and Daughter* for exhibition. Following the exhibition, Kitawaki donated his work to the show's sponsor, The Evening Kyoto Newspaper (*Yūkan Kyōto Shinbun* 夕刊京都新聞), in a sign of gratitude, but the painting was later destroyed in a fire at the newspaper's offices.²²

The following year, Kitawaki briefly recovered from his illness, giving him the strength to create his last flurry of paintings in 1949. The first of these works, titled *Parabola* (*Hōbutsusen* 拋物線) (1949) [Fig. 4-11], was exhibited at the Kyoto Bijutsu Kai Exhibition sponsored by the Mainichi Shimbun Kyoto branch office. Working with an uncharacteristically dark palette, the painting features a seated male figure supported by crutches and wearing a hat and trench coat. The man's hands clench his elbows tightly

²¹ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 233.

²² *Ibid.*, 234.

as if to suggest he is cold and trying to retain heat. To the right is a single split *geta* 下駄 sandal beside a cracked clay brazier that is unlit. In the distance is a spherical light source that projects a series of grey parabolas that form a cave-like space around the figure. While this work seems rife with symbolism, the exact meaning of these individual elements is uncertain. Both the *geta* and brazier are split, rendering them useless, and leaving the destitute man immobile and freezing. Despite the literal light at the end of the tunnel, the shivering figure embodies the suffering and despair of the postwar *kyodatsu* condition 虚脱状態. In this way, Kitawaki's painting shares much in common with artist Mukai Junkichi's *Tramp* (*Hyōjin* 漂人) from 1946 [Fig. 4-12], which shows a poor and pitiful war veteran cowering in a corner beside his bundle of possessions. While Junkichi's painting humanizes the unfortunate individual, giving a face to the rejection and isolation many war veterans experienced upon returning to Japan, Kitawaki's depiction remains cold and aloof, expressing these hardships through cryptic symbols within a desolate environment. Recent x-ray analysis of this painting reveals that the artist cannibalized an earlier work titled *Crematorium* (*Kasōba* 火葬場) (1934) [Fig. 4-13], reusing the previous canvas to create *Parabola*. At this late point in his career, it appears that Kitawaki had himself succumb to the financial hardships and material shortages that defined the hardships of the postsurrender period, being forced to reuse his old canvases to create new works.²³

²³ “Kitawaki Noboru: Shūrearisuto/Richi no Gaka,” Kōseiin, accessed July 19, 2016. <http://kouseiin.org/knoboru.html>.

In spite of the bleak outlook depicted in this painting and his uncertain health, Kitawaki's rhetoric remained optimistic. In a June 10, 1948 newspaper article, Kitawaki called on the younger generation of Japanese artists in terms that seem to resonate with *Parabola*, stating: "We would like to call on the younger generation. The dark, long, Middle Ages of Japan ended completely three years ago. Now is not the time to contemplate in the dark. The time has come to leave your jail room and step out to an art movement that analyzes and criticizes everything under the sun."²⁴ These powerful words imploring young Japanese artists to discard the shackles of the past, and look at the world through a critical lens are indicative of the promise Kitawaki believed the postwar period held. While mentally and artistically, Kitawaki survived the war years by turning to the esoteric worldview of the *I-Ching* for guidance and stability, his postwar rhetoric makes it clear that the artist believed not only in science and technology, but the newfound freedom and democratic ideals instilled by the Occupation. Other articles published toward the end of Kitawaki's life also show a renewed interest in a socially conscious art—one that used artistic privilege to criticize authority and shed light on the plight of everyday people. In an undated postwar article titled "Gutter Art—Use Talent in the Public," どぶ石美術—民衆の中に才能を生かせ Kitawaki champions the work of German artist Käthe Kollwitz who used her artistic talent to powerfully "record and report the lives of the lower class" in her etchings, woodcuts, and lithographs.²⁵ In the

²⁴ Kitawaki, "The Art of Analysis and Critique—Modern Art," *Kyoto Shinbun Evening Paper*, June 10, 1948, 1.

²⁵ *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective* dates this article to around January 1950.

article, Kitawaki berates those artists who use their privilege as teachers (*sensei* 先生) to “kiss up to governmental authorities” and “make fun of the public.”²⁶ He then responds by stating “Artists with a conscious should give up the term *sensei*. As Kollwitz has shown us, the true, professional talent of artists must be to become aware of a social obligation that comes from realistic life, and to live practically within that reality.”²⁷ In many ways, this statement mirrors the artist’s thinking on what is meant to be a “true surrealist” more than a decade earlier, when he concluded that a surrealist must be based squarely in reality in order to dream beyond its limits. Ever the realist, Kitawaki in 1949/50 now sees it the obligation of the socially conscious artist to live in reality and serve as “a friend of the public.” Artists have a duty to question what the future holds and utilize their artistic talent in aid of the public. This new line of thinking may be linked to Kitawaki’s membership in the Kyoto Shin Bijutsujin Kyōkai, an artist association that focused their efforts on democracy in the arts and socially conscious art. Members of this group included both artists and scholars such as Suda Kunitarō, Kikuchi Kazuo, Imai Kenichi, Izawa Motoichi, Takenaka Saburō, Nakai Sōtarō, and Sono Raizō.

This sentiment, along with the artist’s ongoing existential search for meaning, is translated onto canvas in Kitawaki’s final masterwork, *Quo Vadis* クォ・ヴァデイス (1949) [Fig. 4-14]. Exhibited in March 1949 at the 9th Art Culture Association exhibition in Tokyo, the painting prominently features a repatriated soldier viewed from behind. The male figure wears a hat and brown suit, and carries a bundle over his right shoulder, and a book under his left arm. To the left of the figure in the foreground is a large snail shell,

²⁶ Kitawaki, “Gutter Art—Use Talent in the Public.” [publication unknown; date unknown]

²⁷ Ibid.

and to the right, an unmarked crossroads with a stone and two roses growing out from its base. Far off in the distance to the left is a crowd of demonstrators carrying red flags, and to the right, storm clouds on the horizon. The painting's title, *Quo Vadis*, meaning "Where are you going?" in Latin, is a reference to both Scripture and Polish Noble Prize winning author Henryk Sienkiewicz's 1895 novel of the same title. In the Christian faith, this passage refers to the legend of St. Peter's martyrdom. As he is fleeing Rome, Peter is said to have encountered Jesus and asked him the words "quo vadis" to which Christ replies that he is returning to Rome to be crucified again. It is at this moment that Peter resolves to return to Rome and face his own death. Sienkiewicz's novel, which Kitawaki was familiar with, is a historically accurate love story between a young Christian woman and a Roman patrician which details the instability of the Roman Empire and persecution of Christians under the rule of Emperor Nero. For Kitawaki, this title resonated deeply with his personal search for direction in the postwar period, as well as his thoughts for what direction the Japanese people and the nation were headed more generally.

Returning to the painting, it is clear that the man—possibly a self-portrait of Kitawaki—finds himself at a crossroads with several paths to choose from.²⁸ The snail shell immediately to his left is the path of least resistance representing an inward turn—one that is self-contained, isolated, and closed-off from the world. This may reference a return to Japan's foreign relations policy of *sakoku* 鎖国 during the Edo period, in which the country closed its borders to the outside world. The shell also harkens back to Kitawaki's earlier collaborative work *The Tale of Urashima* 浦島物語 (1937), in which

²⁸ Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 240. According to Kitawaki's widow, the figure in this painting was modeled after Kitawaki's eldest son, Akira, who would have been around seventeen years old at the time of the painting's creation.

the shell was the transportation mechanism to a secret kingdom below the sea where all of one's troubles were forgotten. In this way, the snail shell represents both a return to the past and a refusal to face change and the challenges of the future. Another possible path is for the man is to join the long line of protestors off in the distance. The scattered red flags are likely a reference to the many labor demonstrations of the Occupation period, while the crowd more generally symbolizes the path to a democratic Japan. The third path—the storm clouds off on the horizon—seem to point to the unknown, uncertainty, and the turbulent times ahead for Japan as a nation.

If we accept that *Quo Vadis* is a self-portrait in a broader sense, what direction does Kitawaki choose for himself? Looking at the figure in greater detail, we see that his head is cocked slightly to the left, looking toward the crowd of demonstrators. In many ways, this appears the likely direction Kitawaki would have chosen philosophically given his postwar rhetoric—the path of freedom of expression, individual subjectivity, and democracy. But looking at the figure's feet, there is a sense of hesitation in his stance with neither foot necessarily leading the other. This sense of indecision, which is clearly tied to the physical body seems an apt metaphor for Kitawaki's predicament, and by extension that of the nation. While it might have been easy for one to imagine a democratic future for Japan and all that might afford, acting on those impulses and making those dreams a reality were an altogether different matter. Seen from behind, the figure faces out toward an uncertain future, with the decision of where to go becoming an eternal question without definite answer. As a result, this image is rife with uncertainty and powerfully embodies the zeitgeist of the immediate postwar period in Japan.

Writing five years after Kitawaki's death in 1956, art historian and Kitawaki

biographer Nakamura Giichi included a lengthy examination of *Quo Vadis* in his article *Japanese Surrealism (2)* 日本のシュールレアリスム(2) for the journal *Art Criticism* 美術批評. In it, Nakamura views *Quo Vadis*' central figure as a self-portrait of Kitawaki torn between two paths—the path of the individual, and the path of participating in society. However, for Nakamura, Kitawaki's insertion of himself into the void that is *Quo Vadis* reveals a “secret confession” in which the artist admits to losing his grasp of reality:

The perspective of this space is quite empty. In a sense, the space spreads out from the place where the painter has lost his perspective. Even if he were to paint a self-portrait [head-on] one must wonder whether it could be quite this empty—but is this emptiness not because the painter has obviously lost his own stance, attitude, and position in reality? There is no “Quo Vadis” (Where are you going?) here in the sense of choices of this-and-that, nor uncertainty, nor hesitation. In fact, there is no place for the artist to even pause and stand still. Otherwise, why should there be this man's real image [his self-portrait], rather than the silhouette of another, in this picture? This is because it is a vain method of [Kitawaki] the painter securing his own realistic individual autonomy (主体性) by participating in the space of the picture. A self-portrait is something that is filled with the obsession of the self and requires a conflict of self-consciousness, but in Kitawaki's picture the pillar of the realistic ego that confronts one's self-consciousness has already been lost. In other words, this painter lost touch with reality at a certain point. This is because Kitawaki was only able to perceive reality as a concept, or more accurately, because the artist had already lost his own sense of internal reality, he could only perceive external reality as merely a concept.²⁹

As a self-portrait, Nakamura makes the point that seeing the figure from behind, versus head-on, is representative of Kitawaki distancing himself from his current predicament. In Nakamura's eyes, despite Kitawaki's sincere desire to participate in society, the artist finds himself frozen in an existential dilemma in which he has lost touch with reality (or

²⁹ Nakamura, “Japanese Surrealism (2)” *Bijutsu Hihyō* 57 (September 1956): 127-128.

has overly theorized reality into an abstract concept), and as a result, does “not dare take a step forward.”³⁰

Nakamura takes his critique a step further by reading the vast emptiness of space in *Quo Vadis* as a harbinger of the end of Japanese surrealism:

I have mentioned that in Kitawaki’s *Quo Vadis* I see a hint of the end of Japanese surrealism, and stated simply, that is evident in how the space is perceived. This perception of space is due to the extreme dualistic rupture between the outer world and the artist’s inner world. After the war, Kitawaki Noboru faced the dualistic contradiction between the path to participate in society and the path of the individual, and was compelled to come to a stop. As I have written in the previous issue, if you consider the fact that Japanese surrealism’s unique character developed from the lameness (跛行性) of proletarian art being turned on its head, Kitawaki’s stagnation is something that can be understood.³¹

Nakamura argued that while Kitawaki longed to participate in postwar Japanese society, due to the unique surrealist worldview he had formulated during the war, the artist experienced external reality as an abstract concept. Nakamura claimed that “politically oppressed” surrealists such as Kitawaki had been robbed of their individual consciousness and subjective autonomy during the war, and as a result, had lost touch with their internal reality as well. According to Nakamura, Kitawaki’s tenuous grasp on external reality led in turn to an internal crisis that left the artist at an artistic, political, and existential impasse. Later in the article Nakamura would clarify these statements by concluding:

What was missing similarly in Japanese surrealism and proletarian art was the individual’s way of perceiving political reality. Kitawaki Noboru is indeed an example of this...Unless the outer world is perceived not only

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 129.

as a concept, but in direct connection with one's inner world, reality is immediately lost.³²

Ultimately, for Nakamura, Kitawaki's *Quo Vadis* is an embodiment of Japanese surrealism's political ineptness—both prior to, and after the war. Having been robbed of their autonomy (主体性), surrealists like Kitawaki approached reality as an abstract concept in order to cope with the pressures of war. This false notion of reality then permeated his inner world, and left him at a loss as how to best reconnect with Japan's new postwar reality. Nakamura sees Kitawaki as symptomatic of proletarian art and Japanese surrealism's wartime failure to meaningfully bridge the gap between the outer world and the artist's inner world. In this way, *Quo Vadis* does not simply question what path the artist will choose—society or the individual—but poses the larger question of whether or not surrealists like Kitawaki will even have a place in postwar Japanese society.

Speaking to the unique character of Kitawaki's late paintings to capture the essence of this moment in Japanese history, Takiguchi Shūzō would later write:

I think that there have been no other artworks than these that present the situation of a single painter in that era and simultaneously the era itself as a "mystery" with an actual feeling that is somewhat chilling. I think there was certainly something with which one cannot help but make such a paradoxical remark. What was it that made this rare pursuer of painting choose to depict himself, whether facing backwards or frontwards, in the image in his premature later years? If I begin to ponder the reason all of a sudden, the human being as part of time and space rapidly turns into a mystique existence. At that moment, he who should be casting the spell becomes spellbound. Whether or not at the minute contact point between incomparable things that have no halfway, such as sustenance and discontinuity or resistance and collapse, the mystery remains unobtrusively just like a seashell or dice, yet still as solidly as before. Or,

³² Ibid., 137.

when the one who is bewitched bewitches—perhaps it should be restated this way.³³

Takiguchi seems to speak directly of Kitawaki's 1947 self-portrait *Image of Probability*, and *Quo Vadis* referencing the seashell and die as mysterious symbols of chance and an uncertain future. And while Kitawaki's work remains a timeless testimony to the postsurrender period, unfortunately, the artist himself did not live to see the end of the Occupation and the future path the Japanese people would choose for themselves.

In September 1949 the artist would participate in the *2nd Modern Art* exhibition staged by the Free Artists Association and Art Culture Association with the cooperation of the Japan Avant-Garde Artists Club, submitting the work *Structure of Order/Disorder* (1940) for the second time in the postwar period. His inability to create new work more than likely was an indicator of his declining health. In April 1950 Kitawaki was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and would write to his friend and fellow Japan Arts Association (*Nihon Bijutsu Kai*) member Hirano Jun'ichi of his worsening condition:

I was diagnosed with phthisis [pulmonary tuberculosis] and ordered to take complete bed rest. I cannot deal with things to do with the Japan Arts Association, either, so please discuss things as everyone thinks proper. ...I think I'll be most probably incapacitated for quite some time. I hand you all the related documents. Please discuss as needed amongst you all, including Izawa, Imai, Yamamoto and Ohno.³⁴

Kitawaki's health would continue to decline over the following year despite bed rest. In a letter dated February 20, 1951 sent to his friend Yoshigae Kyoshi, Kitawaki would speak

³³ Takiguchi in Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 244-245.

³⁴ Kitawaki in Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 246.

about his withdrawal from the art world and his feelings of helpless due to his increasingly poor health:

I have come not to think about painting—that is my current situation, honestly. Eating, coughing, sputum and sleeping, that is all. In writing a letter like this, in fact, I am also disinclined because I feel there is nothing to write about. I have no other way than preparing myself for the eventuality that this retreat would last forever from now on. Even so, I wish I could be a bit more energetic, but things are not going as I wish. Everyday life is also pitiful for someone like me who has no salary. There is no other way for me other than to count on helping hands from others, but the others themselves are also facing a critical moment, so it is so miserable. I have somehow managed until today, but I am acutely experiencing the severity of such a hand-to-mouth life as a poor painter. In this condition, I have no hustle, no source of money for canvasses and paints, and yet no benefactor who would purchase my existing paintings, so much so that painting is the last thing on my mind nowadays.³⁵

Here, Kitawaki finds himself in a sad state of affairs, unable to paint due to his illness and unable to support himself financially. For an artist who had been self-sufficient for his entire adult life, this turn of events must have been demoralizing.

Just two months later, based on his medical examination, Kitawaki was admitted to the Kyoto National Sanatorium in April 1951. Before leaving his home, the artist would create one last self-portrait. The pencil on paper drawing shows a sickly, unshaven Kitawaki with sunken cheeks, expressing the full toll his illness had taken on him. Compared to the uncertainty—and potential—embodied by a work like *Quo Vadis*, Kitawaki's final self-portrait is a somber coming to terms with one's own demise. Here, the artist appears to face his fate head-on, leaving no uncertainty about his future given his pitiful state. Soon after entering the sanatorium, Kitawaki's eldest son Akira is also admitted with pulmonary tuberculosis. While in the hospital, Kitawaki continued to

³⁵ Ibid., 248.

sketch and taught his nurses how to paint. The handful of sketches from this period all depict flowers that were likely brought to his hospital bed in a colorful, naturalistic style [Fig. 4-15]. The final extant drawing of this group, dated November 1951, features a grouping of white chrysanthemums—a symbol of death in Japanese culture—in front of a window or screen. Pictured outside is a tree in the process of losing its leaves all foretelling the artist’s imminent death. The following month, on December 18, 1951 Kitawaki died at the age of 50.

...

At his funeral on December 21, 1951, the artist’s previous mentor, Suda Kunitaro, gave a moving eulogy for his deceased student that recounted the avant-garde nature of Kitawaki’s work and the generous personality of the man himself:

Moving toward what is new by breaking ground, that's the image of you. That is something impossible without passion for creating new things, [but at the same time] you were one very conscientious member of society. You were definitely not a peculiar person as the existing, conventional idea of what a painter is like. In this sense, you were the painter of people in the true sense of the term. It must be also stated that you really pioneered a new attitude as a painter. Moreover, you were a person of contemplation and given surreality, your picture planes were a little bit difficult, too, but your humanity, where your own self is represented as-is, strongly attracted us.³⁶

Suda’s depiction of Kitawaki as a pioneering figure of Japanese painting who was both an intellectual and a surrealist is expected, but it is telling that Suda also chose to emphasize Kitawaki not as someone who was strange and aloof, but as a conscientious member of society. While Kitawaki’s concept of functional art and his evolving thoughts regarding art’s role in society—both prewar and post—often take a backseat to the artist’s

³⁶ Suda in Nakamura, *Nihon no zenei kaiga*, 249.

engagement with surrealism, it is clear that this aspect of his practice did not go unnoticed by his peers.

Two months after the artist's death, in February 1952, the Art Culture Association held their twelfth exhibition in Tokyo showcasing a selection of twelve works in commemoration of Kitawaki's memory, and the following year, a memorial exhibition was held at the Kyoto City Art Museum that featured artworks, photographs, and the artist's personal artifacts. That same year, Takiguchi Shūzō wrote a short article remembering his friend and fellow Art Culture Association member for the June 1953 issue of the arts journal *Bijutsu Techō* 美術手帖. In it, he spoke of Kitawaki's special ability "to easily see the endless combinations of this phenomenal world," and highlighted the artist's schematic paintings as a meaningful addition to surrealist thought.³⁷ In particular, Takiguchi was impressed by Kitawaki's ability to go beyond the world of design in unifying a unique schematic approach with his own painterly sensibility. While the two men were not close, Takiguchi was deeply taken by Kitawaki's cerebral approach to painting, remarking "the art of Kitawaki Noboru takes on the immense proposition of combining the concrete and the abstract. In other words, I think this is where the intellectual element of today's painting was born."³⁸ Here, Takiguchi briefly touches on the painter's distinct intellectualism and the potential importance of Kitawaki's postwar legacy. Unfortunately for Kitawaki, this potential was never quite realized. Following a four-person show at The National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo 東京国立近代美術館 in 1958, the majority of Kitawaki's paintings were donated to the

³⁷ Takiguchi Shūzō. "Kitawaki Noboru Shoron," *Bijutsu Techō* 70 (1953): 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

same institution by the artist's widow with the hopes of perpetuating the artist's legacy with the Japanese public. However, it was not until 1997, almost 40 years later, that the museum organized a large-scale retrospective of Kitawaki's work that traveled from Tokyo to Kyoto and Nagoya. This delay in recognition was likely due to the waning popularity of surrealist painting in the mid-1950s, and the trajectory of the postwar avant-garde in Japan toward abstract expressionism, performance, and socially engaged practices in the ensuing decades.

Kitawaki's postsurrender paintings powerfully capture the search for meaning and direction of the immediate postwar period, but due to his untimely death, remain firmly rooted in the uncertainty of the Occupation period. As a result, both Kitawaki's memory and his postsurrender paintings are inextricably tied to this interstitial moment in Japanese art history that follows Japan's defeat in World War II, but does not transcend into the post-Occupation period. Paintings such as *Image of Probability*, *Parabola*, and *Quo Vadis* capture the zeitgeist of this unique period that was rife with possibility and self-doubt. While Kitawaki himself did not live to see a postwar democratic Japan, his final masterworks live-on as indelible markers of the postsurrender period, perpetually in a state of questioning the future.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has traced the life and work of the artist Kitawaki Noboru, utilizing his story as a case study to explore issues related to surrealism in Japan, the pressures on avant-garde expression during wartime, and the general shift from authoritarianism toward a postwar artistic subjectivity and discovery of individual autonomy. While Kitawaki's work is often dense and idiosyncratic, bringing together obscure references from science, philosophy, and Chinese divination, his search for meaning in the underlying order and structure of the natural world was part of a more universal pursuit of knowledge and a fundamental understanding of the world in which he lived. Like some of his contemporaries, Kitawaki saw surrealism through the lens of Japanese nativism, often locating foreign surrealist concepts and terms within an indigenous Japanese-specific context. This impulse was not simply a means to make sense of surrealism in Japan, but more specifically, a means of making sense of surrealism within the unique context of wartime Japan and its immediate aftermath.

Surrealism, like other foreign artistic movements before it in Japan, underwent a process of introduction, adaptation, and innovation that reconfigured the terms and conditions of artistic discourse to the needs of the domestic avant-garde. Unique to surrealism, however, is the movement's introduction and adaptation to Japan coinciding with the rise of ultra-nationalism in the 1930s, and attempts at genuine innovation being tempered and even coerced by the wartime authoritarian state of the 1940s. Kitawaki's engagement with surrealism, and his evolution as both an artist and writer mirrors this process in a unique and thought-provoking way that questions the efficacy of the avant-garde in wartime Japan more broadly.

While surrealism has widely been viewed as an “anti-establishment practice” in Japanese art history, looking at Kitawaki’s oeuvre we can trace an arc that begins with a peripheral involvement with proletarian art which then abruptly shifts to an investigation of surrealism that is informed more by the natural sciences and Japanese nativism than it is by an exploration of dreams and the unconscious mind. The proletarian art movement was a blunt instrument of resistance that championed the struggle of the working class, and as a result, it was forcefully extinguished by government authorities. Surrealism, on the other hand, was allowed to grow initially, due to its interest in nativism and intellectualism rather than activism and did not come under attack until the early 1940s when Japan’s war prospects began to wane and all artistic production not in aid of the state was deemed unpatriotic and unnecessary. It is in the early 1940s that Kitawaki’s highly personal pursuit of surrealism is cut short by the mobilization of the nation for total war, and the state sanctioned restrictions on artistic expression. While it is tempting to characterize Kitawaki’s embrace of abstract, “diagrammatic” painting as an inner emigration in quiet opposition to the pressures of war, it is clear from the artist’s writings that he saw his works as a form of expression that was both compatible with and amenable to the needs of the wartime New Order in Japanese society.

Close examination of Kitawaki’s writings reveal a willingness to experiment with surrealist concepts in a way that not only satisfied his own intellectual pursuits, but also were in line with nativist/nationalist sentiments of the day. For example, his interest in collaboration and group production as a form of automatism in projects such as *The Tale of Urashima* (1937) equated the surrealist parlor game *cadavre exquis* (the exquisite corpse) with Japanese *haikai* linked-verse poetry. While providing native equivalents for

foreign surrealist concepts, Kitawaki's experiments also prescribed a rigid structure under which automatism could function. The following year, Kitawaki argued that such group production methods provided a structure in which the individual could harmoniously give way to the needs of the group, which he saw as a metaphor for a strong unified nation. In addition, he explored the *I-Ching* as a source and as a means to provide order and structure to a world that he viewed as out of balance with the natural order of things. Here again, the archaic hierarchy espoused by the *I-Ching* was readily compatible with the demands of the totalitarian New Order, which sought to reign-in all aspects of one's personal, political, and creative life in the name of the nation, and under the auspices of the emperor. While Kitawaki's work was far from state-sanctioned propaganda due to its cryptic visual coding and obscure references to science and divination, the experimental methods he championed—group production, diagrammatic painting, and “functional” art—were nonetheless reconcilable, and compliant with the Japanese wartime state's authoritarian rule.

The irony of Kitawaki's oeuvre is that the artist was at his most creative and most original when forced to operate within the confines of the war. His diagrammatic paintings of the 1940s are distinct, both formally and conceptually, within Japanese art history of the 20th century. While his exploration of surrealism was theorized in new and inventive ways, aesthetically, the works he produced in the first half of his career often fell short of their novel aspirations. This may in part be due to the artist's intellectual, and fundamentally rational, exploration of natural phenomena that could be read as antithetical to surrealism's stated goals of unlocking the world of dreams and the unconscious mind. Kitawaki was first and foremost a realist who believed that surrealism

could provide the means and methods for unlocking hidden meaning in the world as it exists—not its imagined alternative. He viewed the world through the lenses of natural science, color theory, morphology, and physics—all of which have concrete, measurable results based in reality—but when trying to synthesize this worldview into an all-encompassing theory that could explain the meaning, order, and interconnectedness of such phenomena, he turned to irrational practices such as numerology and Chinese divination to fill in the gaps. Kitawaki's surrealism, or transcendence of reality, then, is most compelling when the artist attempts to articulate the structure and order of a world that is so inherently complex and multi-faceted so as to render such attempts fundamentally impossible. It is this intellectual paradox, and its surrealistic pursuit that defines Kitawaki and his work.

Following Japan's defeat, however, Kitawaki struggled to find meaning in his creative life. The worldview he had previously constructed for himself was bolstered by wartime/nationalist notions of unity and harmony—a foundation that was thoroughly dismissed and rendered incompatible with the Occupation's democratic reforms. While the artist welcomed these changes and his newfound sense of individual autonomy, he was nonetheless forced to rethink his place within Japan's new postwar reality and what it now meant to be an artist. This was a daunting proposition that was deeply existential for Kitawaki, and its resolution eluded the artist until his untimely death. As an individual whose creative life had been shaped by the strictures of wartime Japan, Kitawaki floundered to find himself in the immediate postwar period. In his series of postwar self-portraits, the artist attempted to confront his uncertainties and misgivings about the artist's role in a newly defined Japanese democratic society. In the painting *Quo Vadis*

(1949), more specifically, the artist openly questioned whether or not a surrealist such as himself could meaningfully participate in the new postwar society. As Kitawaki's writings reveal, the artist saw the immediate need for artists to become socially engaged, but due to his failing health, he could not be part of that vital transformation. Sadly, Kitawaki's postwar transformation comes to an abrupt end with his death in 1951, and his innovative legacy as both a surrealist and an important intellectual thinker remains largely unknown to Japanese art history. This study attempts to articulate Kitawaki's unique position within the history of Japanese art, providing needed context to the life and work of an artist who was synonymous with another and uniquely Japanese form of surrealism.

FIGURES



Fig. 1-1 Okamoto Tōki, *Workers on Strike Raid Factory* 争議団の工場襲撃 (1929)



Fig. 1-2 Tsuda Seifu, *The Bourgeois Diet and the People's Life* ブルジョワ議会と民衆生活 (1931)



Fig. 1-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Mart* マート (1932)



Fig. 1-4 Kitawaki Noboru, *Sand Pile* 砂置場 (1933)



Fig. 1-5 Tsuda Seifu, *Victim* 犠牲者 (1933)

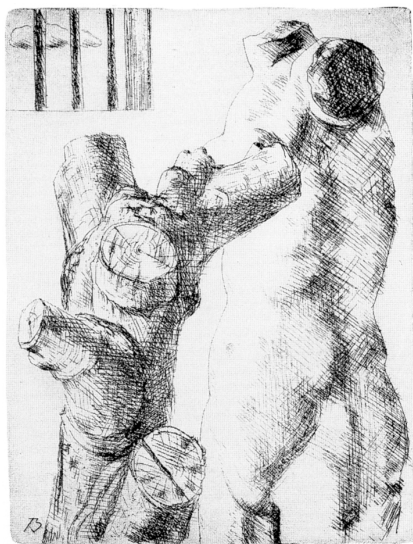


Fig. 1-6 Kitawaki Noboru, *Work* 作品 (1937)



Fig. 1-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Symbol* 章表 (1937)



Fig. 1-8 Migishi Kōtarō, *Flying Butterfly* 飛ぶ蝶 (1934)

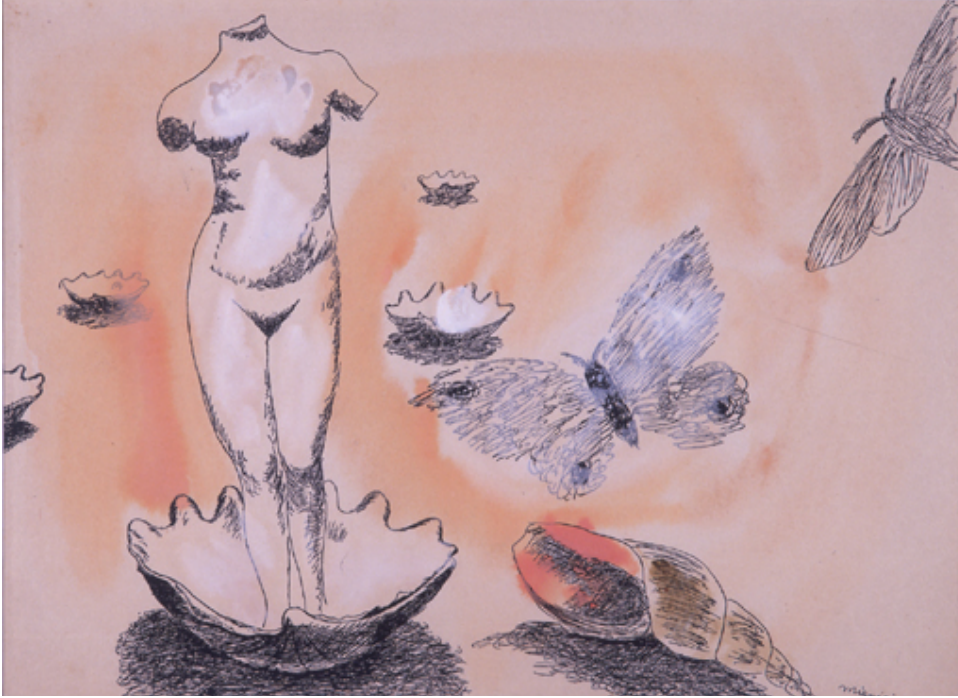


Fig. 1-9 Migishi Kōtarō *Venus and Moths* ヴィーナスと蝶 (1934)

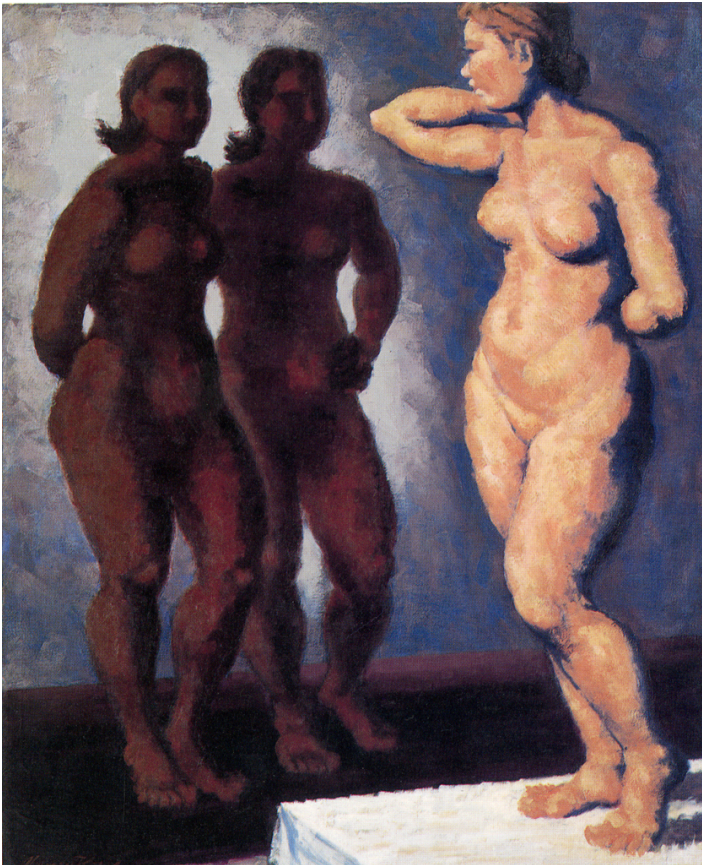


Fig. 1-10 Kitawaki Noboru *Three Nudes, Bright and Dark* 明暗三裸婦 (1936)

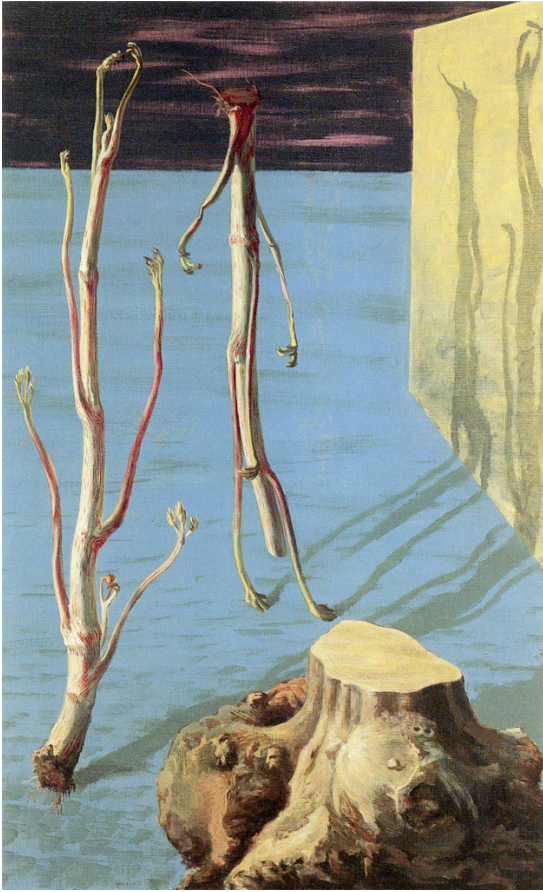


Fig. 2-1 Kitawaki Noboru, *Spikenards* 独活 (1937)



Fig. 2-2 Kitawaki Noboru, *Airport* 空港 (1937)

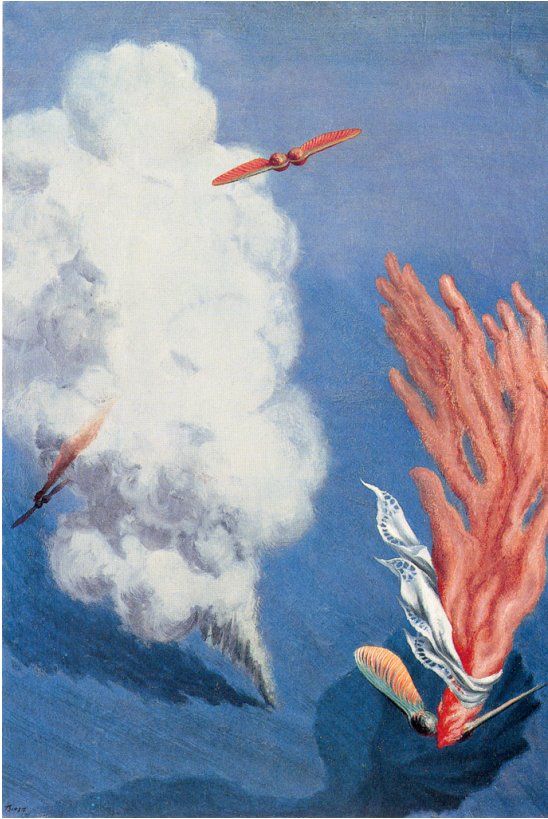


Fig. 2-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Perishing in the Sky* 空の訣別 (1937)



Fig. 2-4 Kitawaki Noboru, *For A Three Dimensional Rising of the Moon* 三次元への月の出 (1937)



Fig. 2-5 Kitawaki Noboru, *The Quietest Time* 最も静かな時 (1937)



Fig. 2-6 Kitawaki Noboru, *For Sleepless Nights* 眠られぬ夜のために (1937)



Fig. 2-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Fantasy on Saturn* 土星への幻想 (1938)

集團制作(浦島物語)設計書

擔 當 作 家	擔 當 命 題	參考的解義		
1 吉加江 清	浦 島 龜を救ふ	憧 憬	主 題 的 モ チ ー ヴ の 色 系 (次 第 に 量 を 増 す)	背 景 的 部 分 の 色 系 (次 第 に 量 を 減 す)
2 小石原 勉	龜 の 迎 へ	誘 惑		
3 北脇 昇	海 上 へ	好 奇		
4 原田 潤	海 底 を	愛 慕		
5 安田 謙	龍 宮 見 ゆ	歡 喜		
6 今井 憲一	龍 宮 に 着 く	讚 嘆		
7 松崎 政雄	乙 姫 に 會 ふ	戀 着		
8 井上 稔	龍 宮 の 生 活 A	親 和	紅 色	桃 色
9 田村 一二	〃 B	惑 溺		
10 三井 迂平	〃 C	虛 無		
11 小栗 美二	〃 D	厭 飽		
12 小牧源太郎	郷 愁 を 訴 ふ	倦 怠	青 色	白
13 杉山 昌文	玉 手 篋 に 誓 ふ	執 着		
14 島津 俊一	玉手篋は遂に開かれた 批判的現實			

Fig. 2-8 Kitawaki Noboru, Design Specifications for the Group Work “The Tale of Urashima” 集團制作「浦島物語」設計書 (1937)



Fig. 2-9 Kitawaki Noboru, *To the Sea (Curiosity)* from *Urashima Monogatari* 浦島物語—海上へ(好奇)(1937)



Fig. 2-10 Yamamoto Hōsui, *Urashima's Return Home* 浦島図 (1893-95)



Fig. 2-11 Kitawaki Noboru, *Garden* 庭園 (1938)



Fig. 2-12 Salvador Dalí, *Paranoiac Visage* (1935)



Fig 2-13 Salvador Dalí, *Apparition of Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach* (1938)



Fig. 2-14 Kitawaki Noboru, *The Mandala of Birds and Beasts* 鳥獣曼荼羅 (1938)



Fig. 2-15 Utagawa Yoshifuji, *The Mysterious Cat from the 53 Stages* (五十三次之内 猫之怪) (1848-49)



Fig. 2-16 Kitawaki Noboru, *Image of Rebirth* 変生像 (1938)



Fig. 2-17 Kitawaki Noboru, *Village* 聚落 (1938)

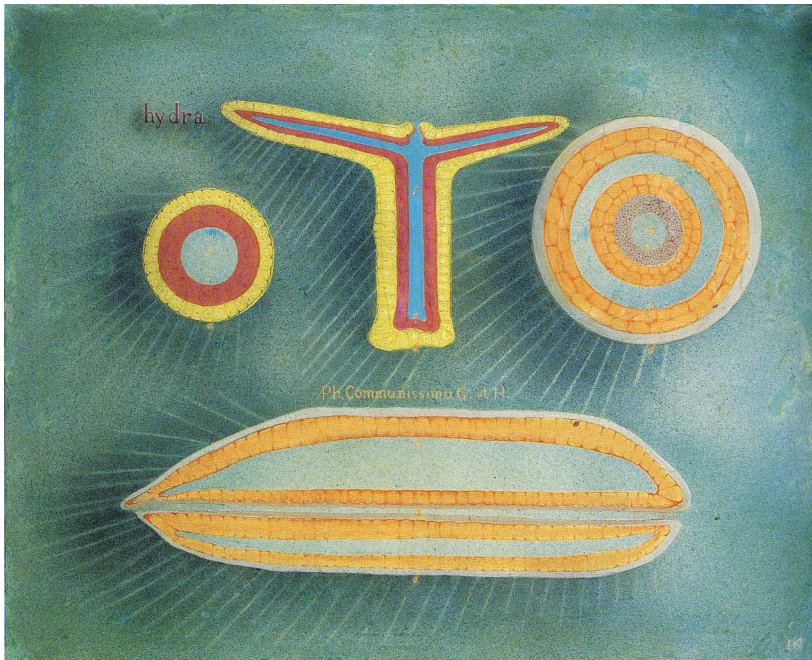


Fig. 2-18 Kitawaki Noboru, *Shadow* 影 (1938)



Fig. 2-19 Kitawaki Noboru, *For Morphology* 形態学の為に (1939)



Fig. 2-20 Illustration, *The Complete Works of Goethe*, Kaizosha, Tokyo (1937)



Fig. 2-21 Max Ernst, *At the First Clear Word*, 1923

[MISSING IMAGE]

Fig. 3-1 Komaki Gentarō, *Fetishistic Landscape* (1939)

[MISSING IMAGE]

Fig. 3-2 Komaki Gentarō, *These Three Things* (3 works, 1 group) この三つのもの (3 点 1 組) (1939)

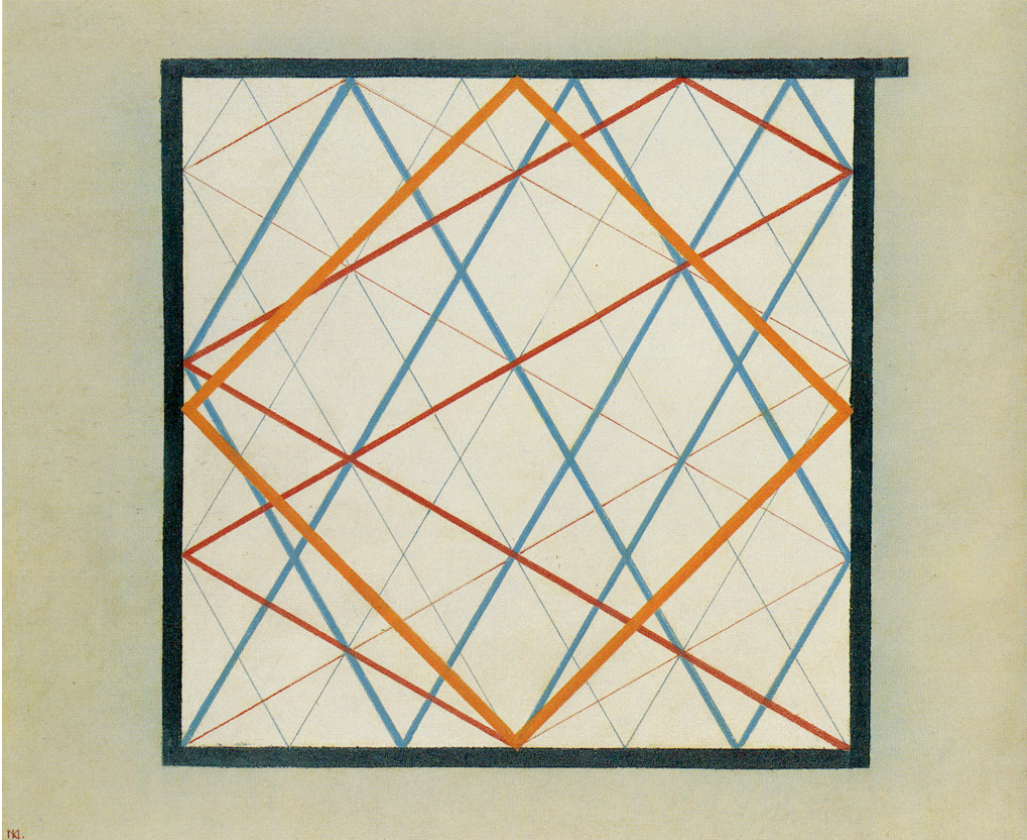


Fig. 3-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Correlative Order L.C.M.* 相關の秩序 (1939)

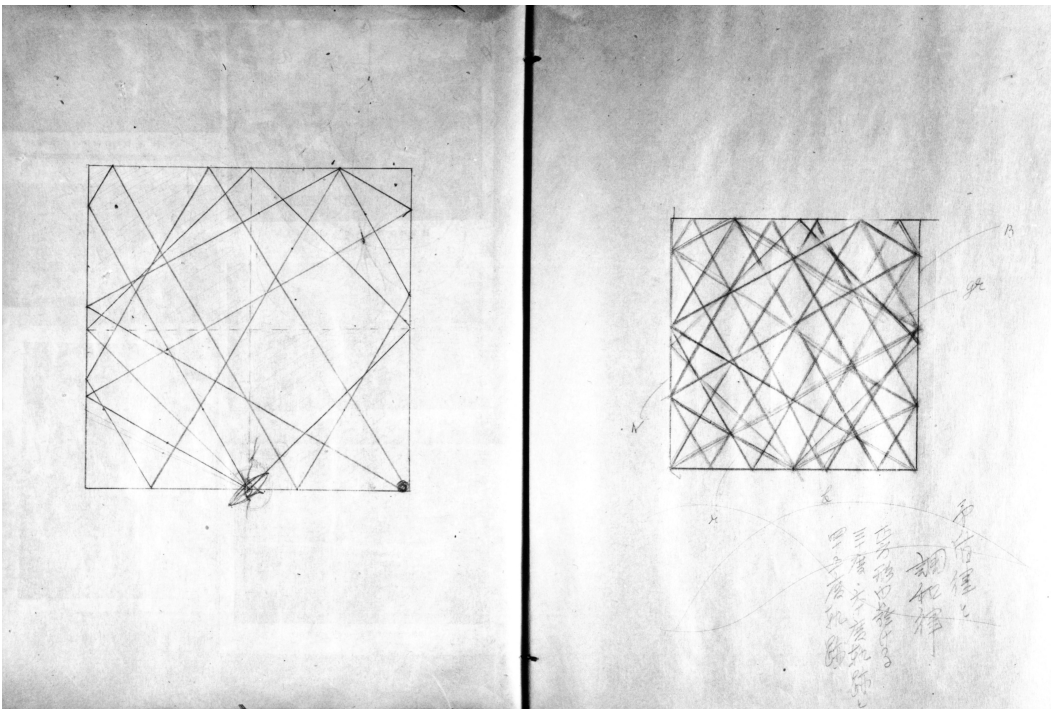


Fig. 3-4 Kitawaki Noboru, sketch for *Correlative Order L.C.M.* 相關の秩序 (1939)

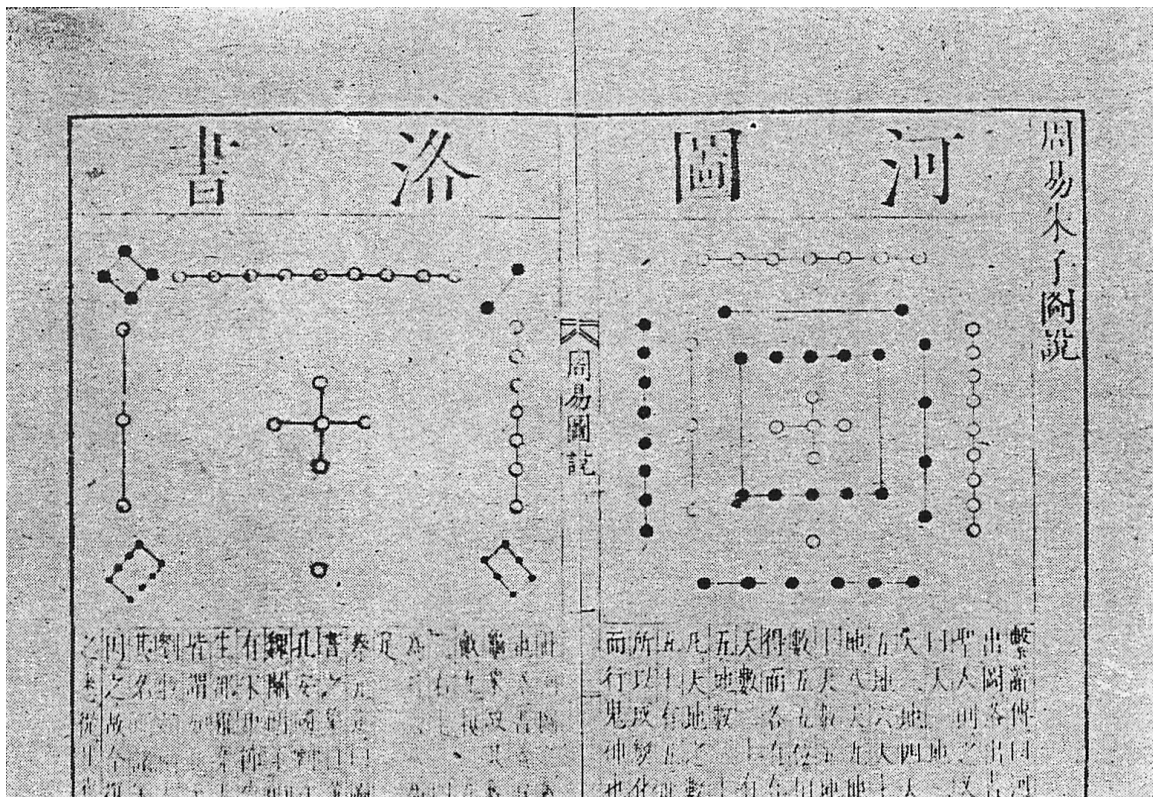


Fig. 3-5 Illustration for “Symmetry and Asymmetry,” 相称と非相称 *Bijutsu Bunka I* (Aug 1939), p. 8

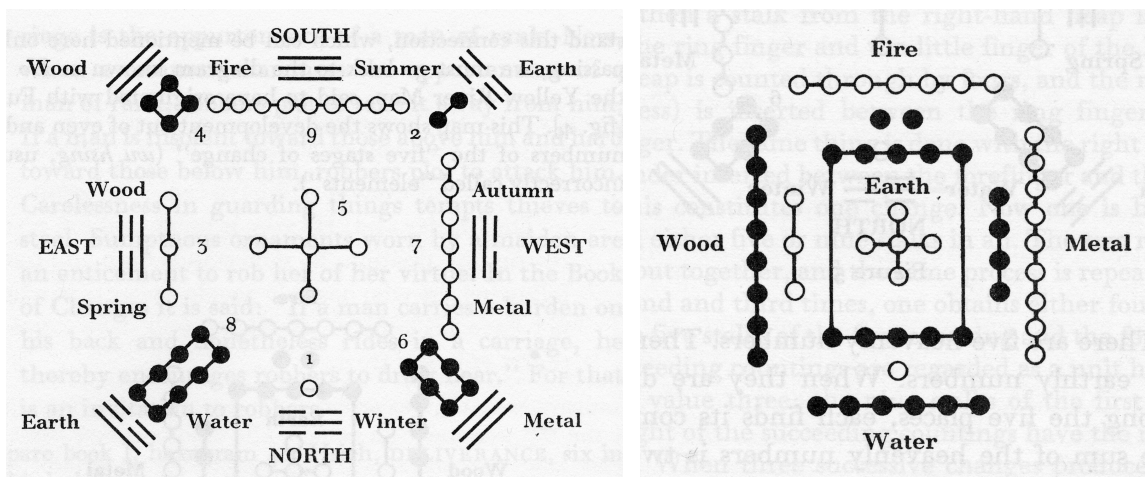


Fig. 3-6 *I Ching* diagram showing relationship between The Yellow River Map/Eight Trigrams (left) and Lo Shu Square/Nine Halls Diagram (right)

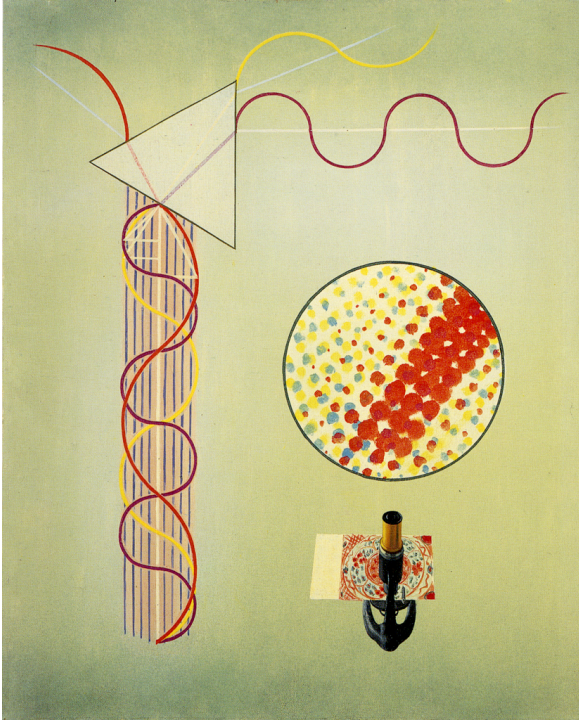


Fig. 3-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Synthesis and Analysis* 総合と分析 (1940)

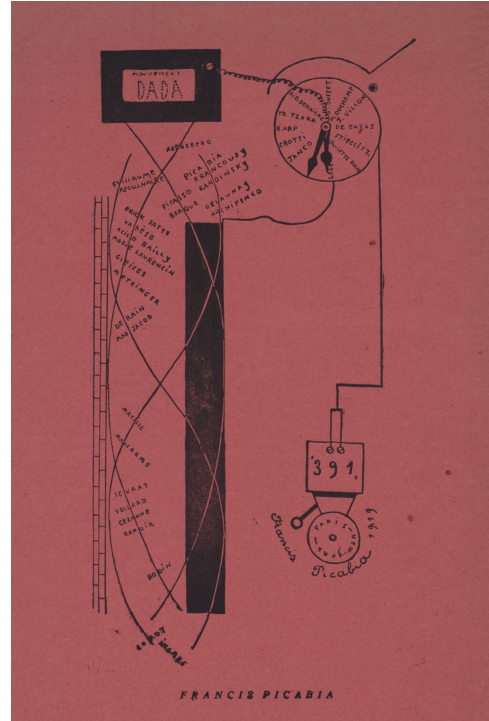


Fig. 3-9 Francis Picabia, *Dada Movement* (1919)

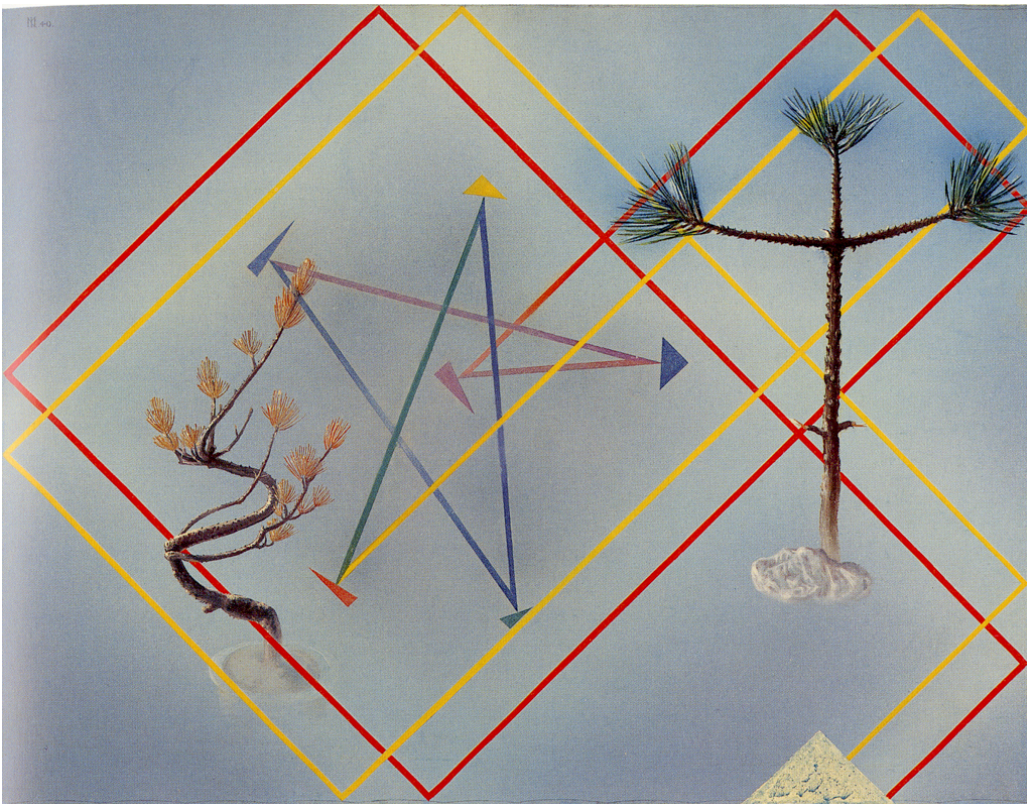


Fig. 3-8 Kitawaki Noboru, *Structure of Order/Disorder* 秩序混乱構造 (1940)



Fig. 3-10 Yves Tanguy, *Mama, Papa is Wounded!* (1927)

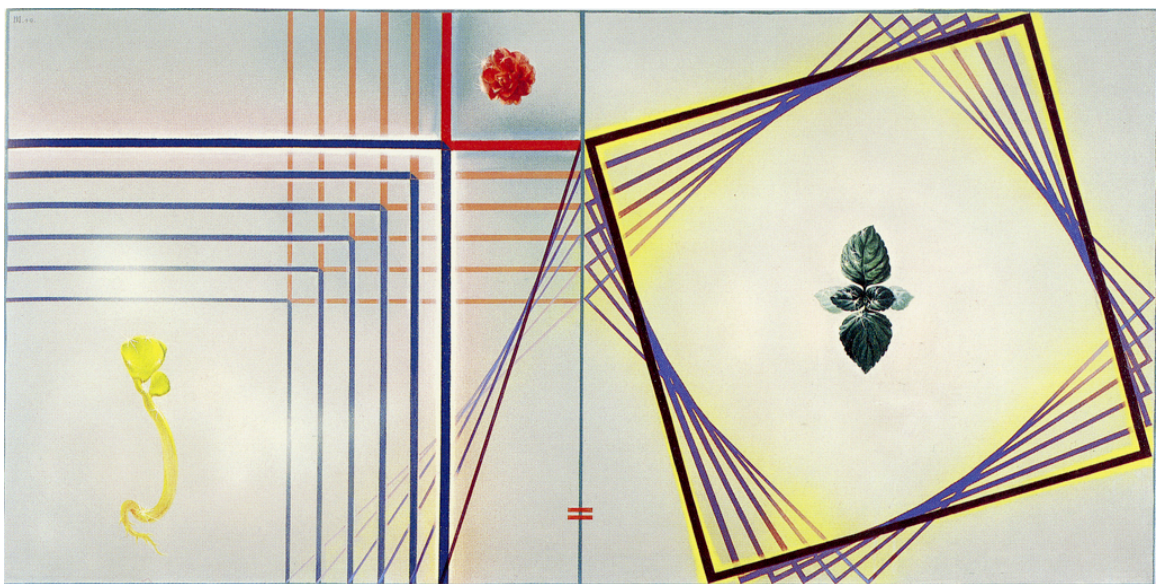


Fig. 3-11 Kitawaki Noboru, *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ $(A+B)^2$ 意味構造 (1940)

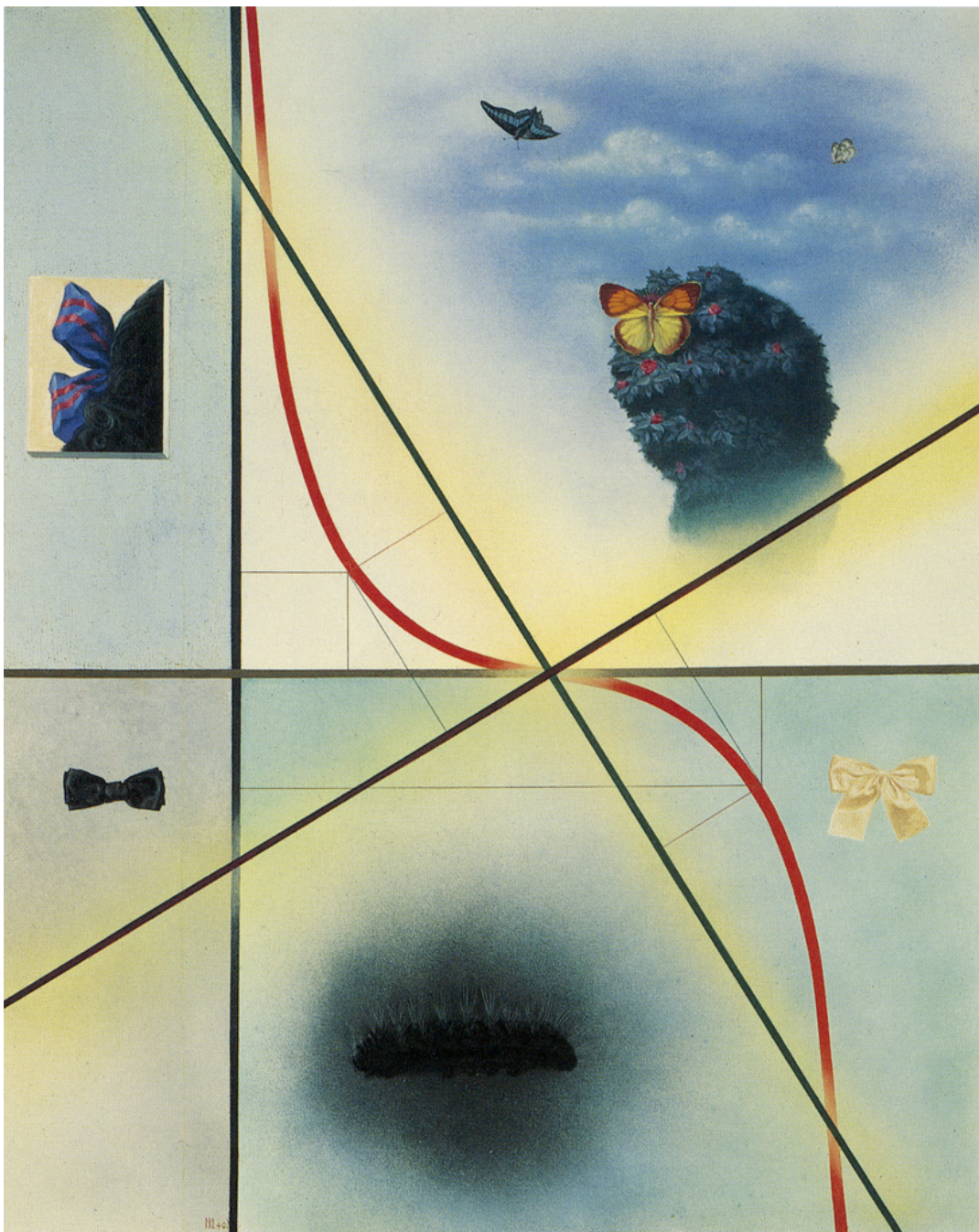


Fig. 3-12 Kitawaki Noboru, *Structure of Phenomenon of Fashion* 流行現象構造 (1940)



Fig. 3-13 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Cultural Morphology* 文化類型学図式 (1940)

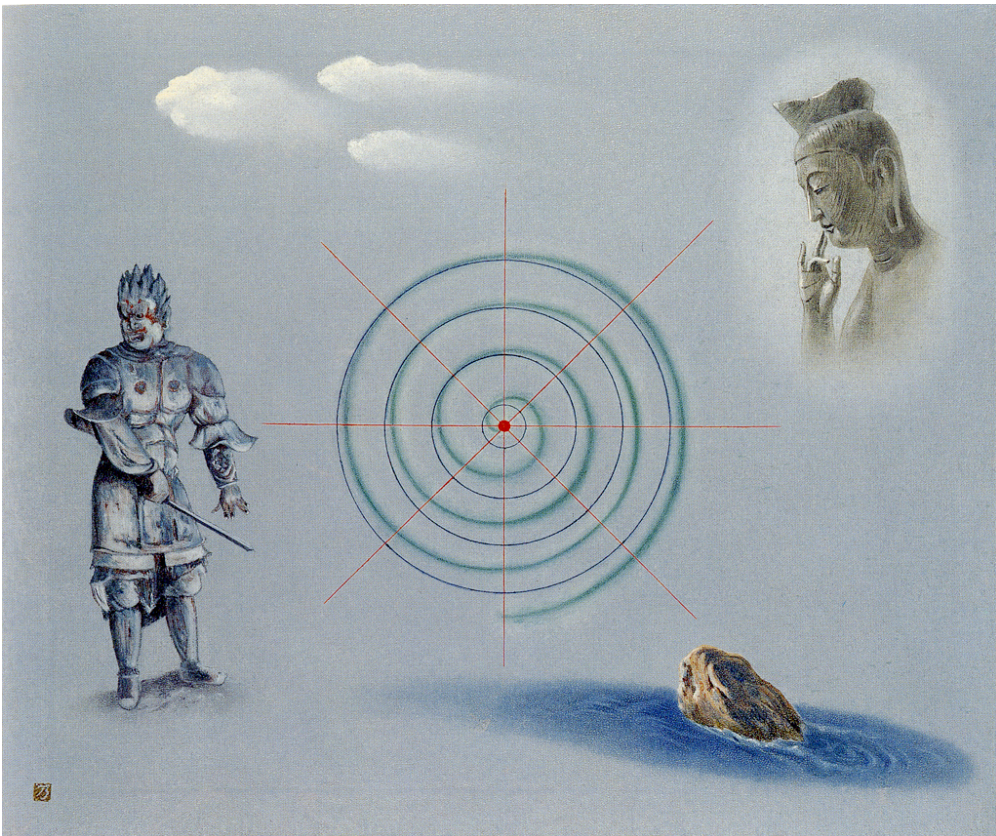


Fig. 3-14 Kitawaki Noboru, *Thought, Deed, Knowledge* 想・行・識 (1940)

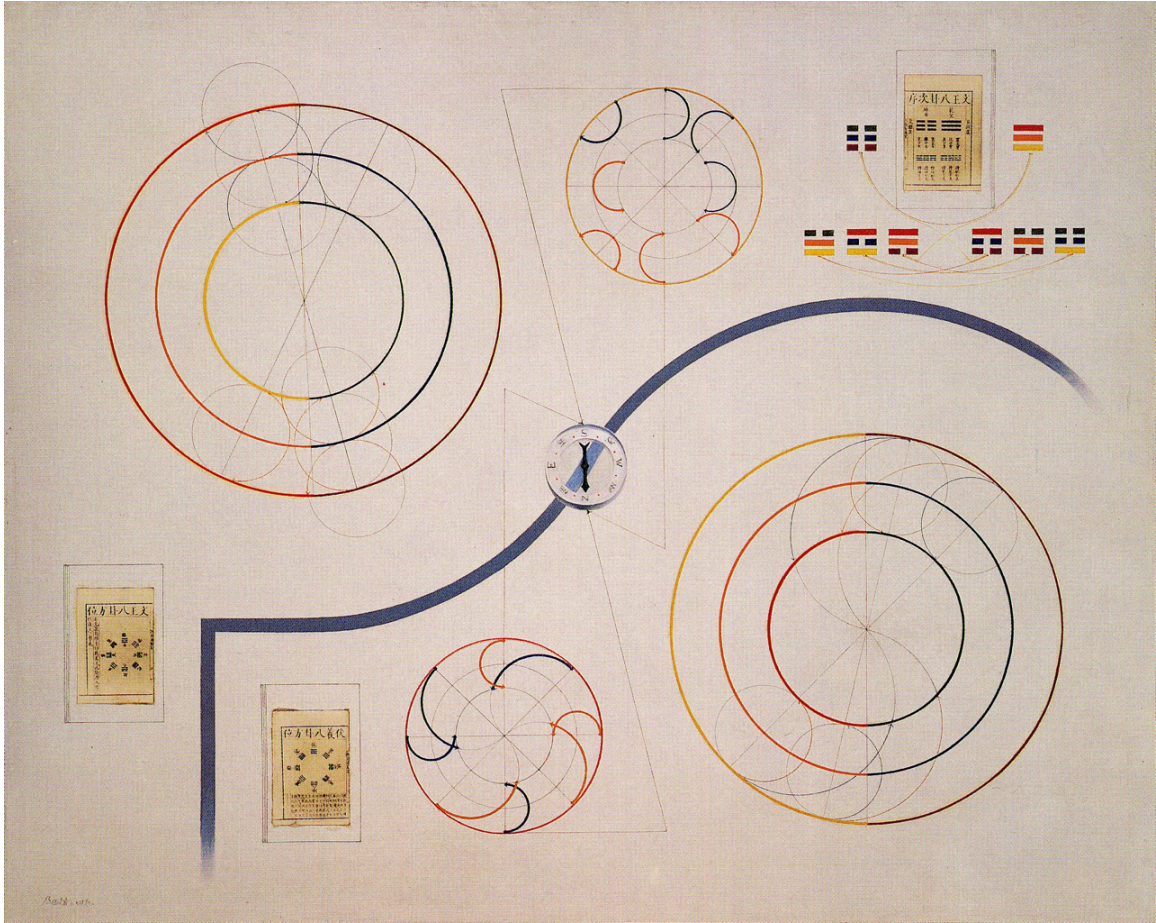


Fig. 3-15 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)(1941)

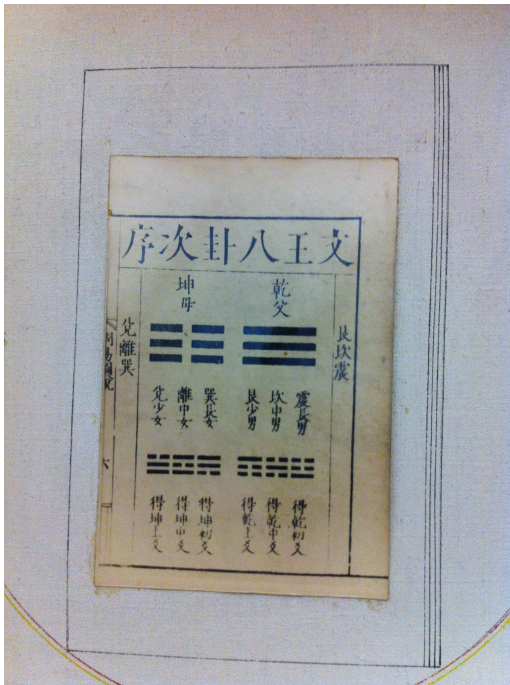


Fig. 3-16 “Ordering Sequence of King Wen Wang’s Hexagrams” 文王八卦次序,
Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)
(1941), detail

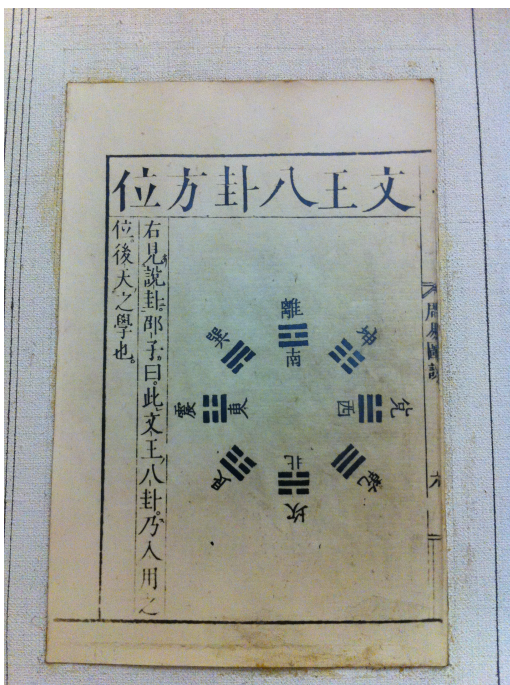


Fig. 3-17 “Directional Positions of King Wen Wang’s Hexagrams” 文王八卦方位,
Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理図(八卦)
(1941), detail

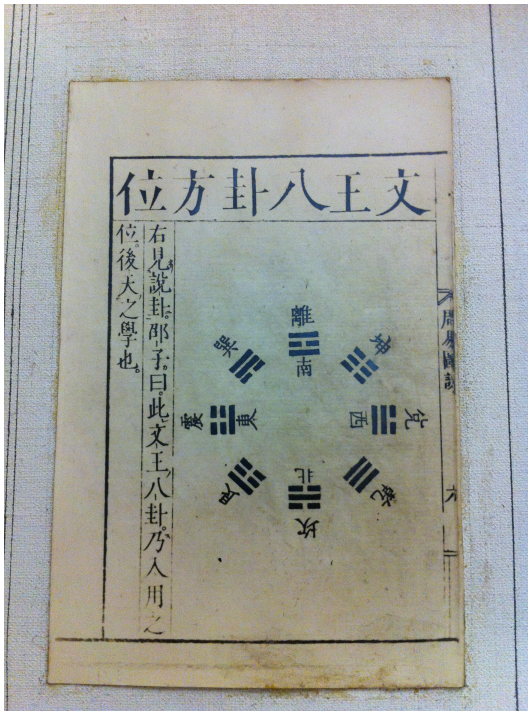


Fig. 3-18 "Directional Positions of Fuxi's Eight Hexagrams" 伏羲八卦方位, Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Eight Phenomena)* 周易解理圖(八卦)(1941), detail

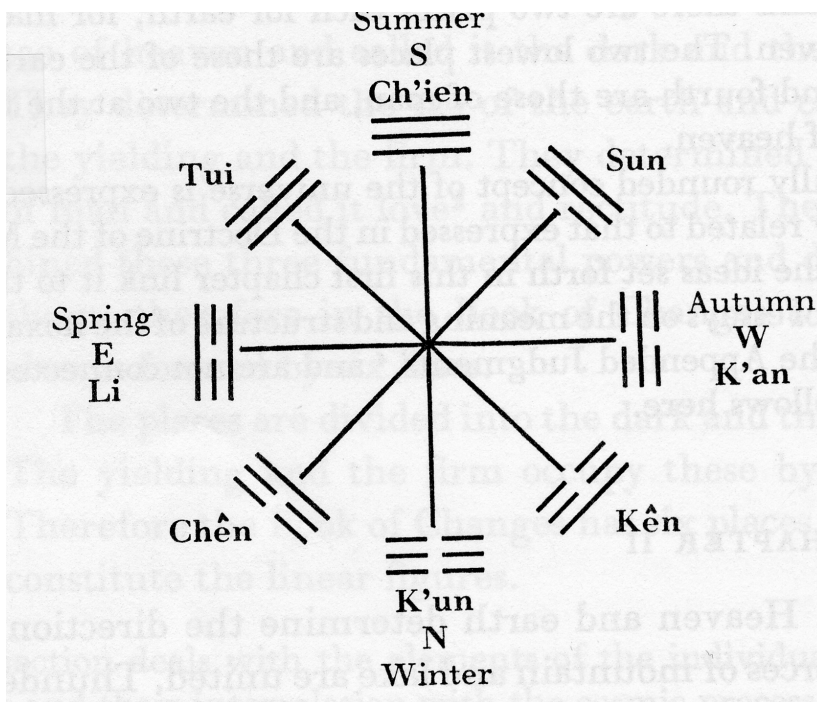


Fig. 3-19 Diagram of Sequence of Earlier Heaven (Fuxi)

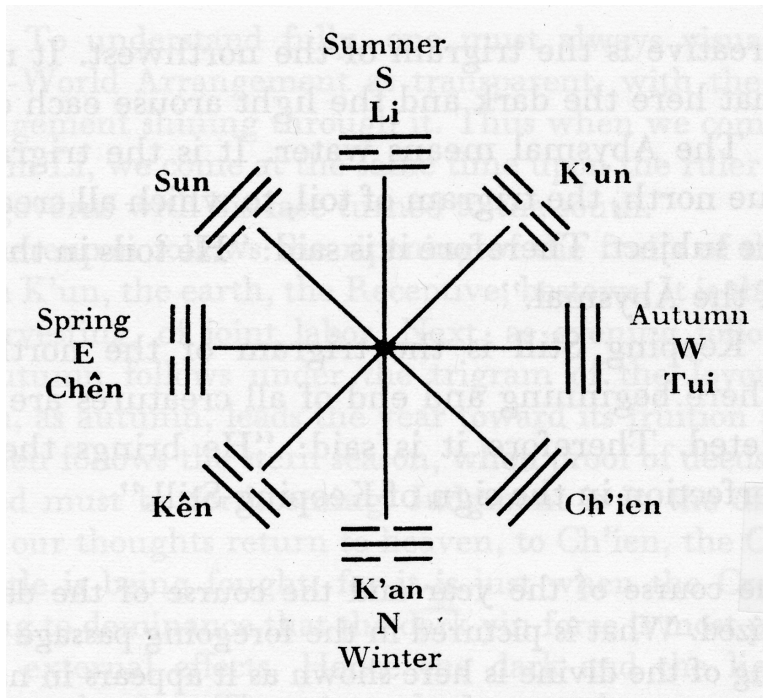


Fig. 3-20 Diagram of Sequence of Later Heaven (King Wen)

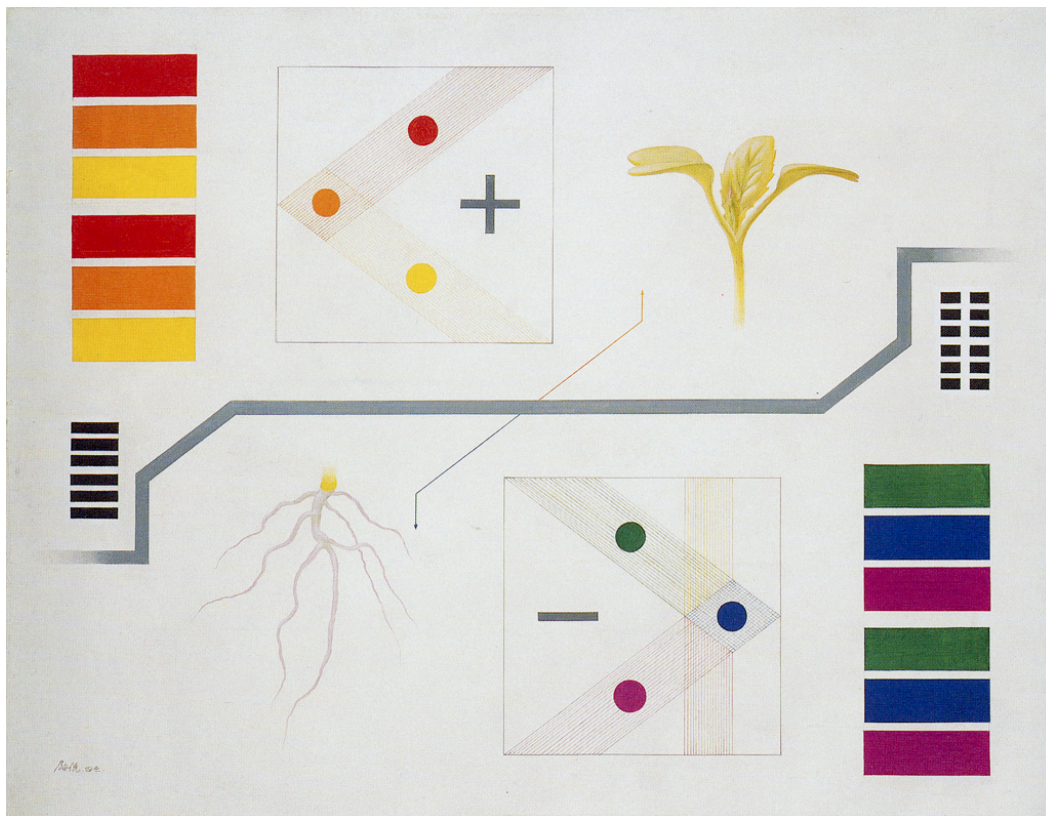


Fig. 3-21 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Heaven and Earth)* 周易解理図(乾坤)(1941)

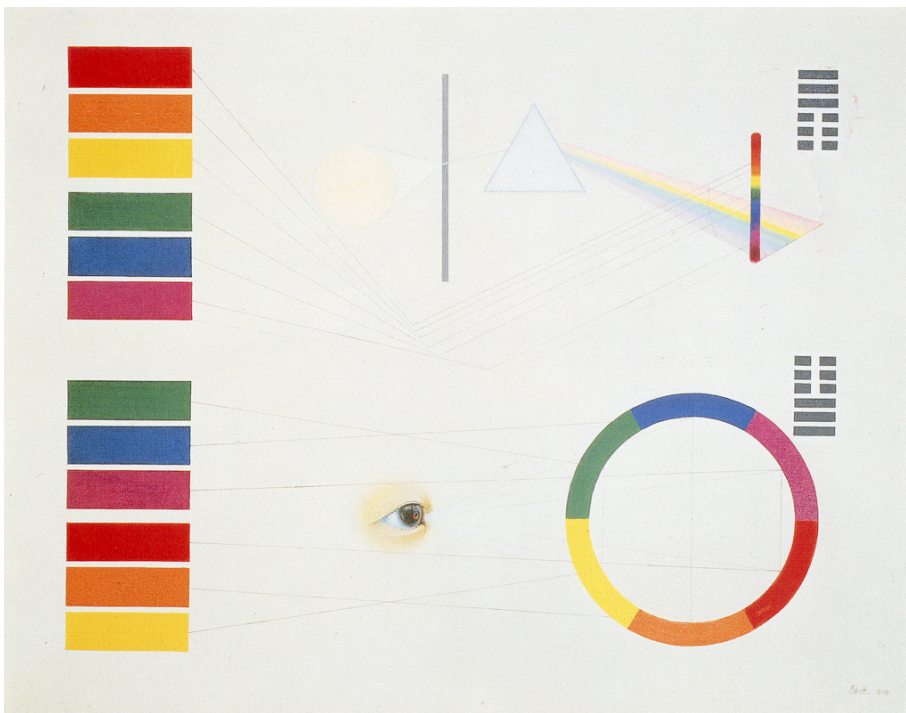


Fig. 3-22 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Harmony and Stagnation)* 周易解理図(泰否)(1941)

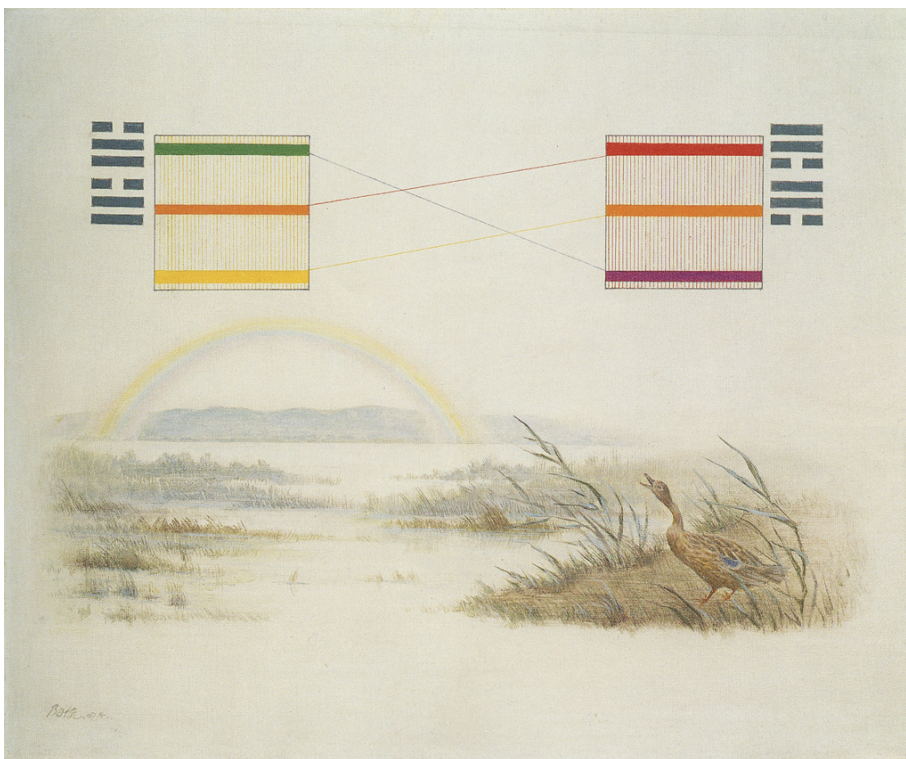


Fig. 3-23 Kitawaki Noboru, *Diagram of Chau Divination (Obedience and Pleasure)* 周易解理図(巽兌)(1941)



Fig. 4-1 Kitawaki Noboru, *Vermilion and Purple* 朱と紫 (1945)



Fig. 4-2 Kitawaki Noboru, *Fantasy of Autumn* 秋の幻想 (1945)

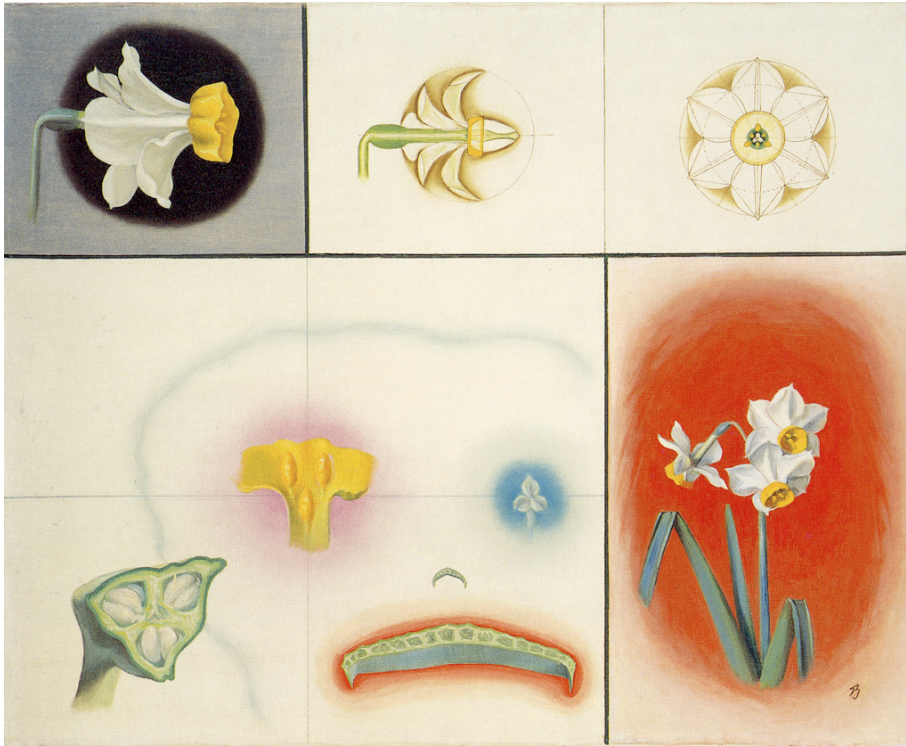


Fig. 4-3 Kitawaki Noboru, *Morphology of Daffodils* 水仙の形態学 (1946)

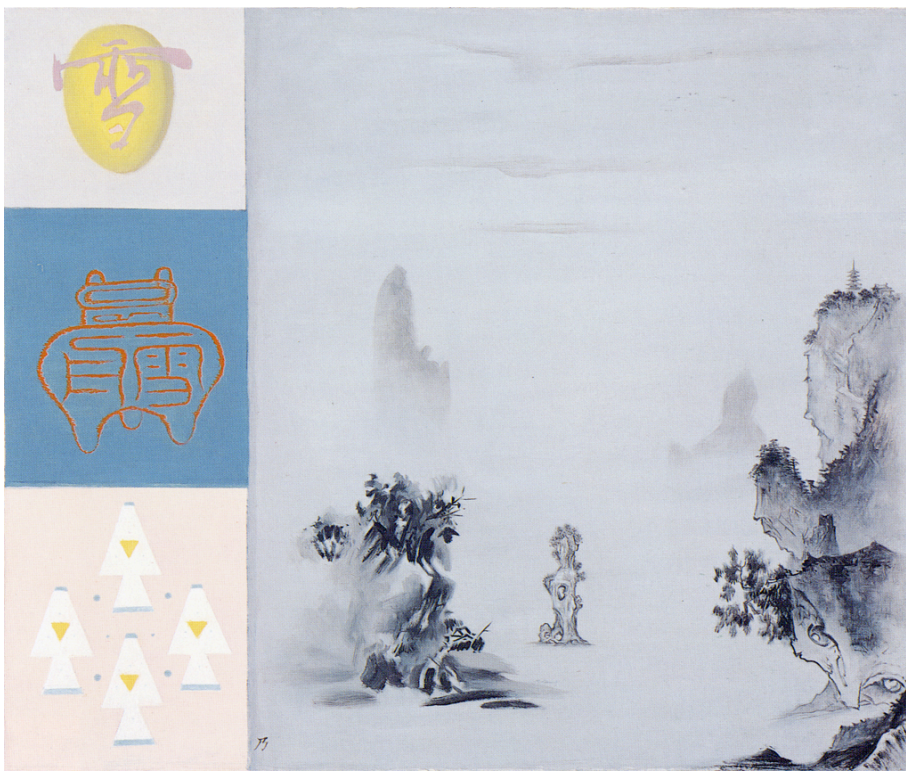


Fig. 4-4 Kitawaki Noboru, *Explanatory Diagram of Sesshu's Paranoia* 雪舟パラノイア図説 (1947)



Fig. 4-5 Kitawaki Noboru, *Image of Probability* 蓋然の像 (1947) [later retitled *Self-portrait* 自我像]

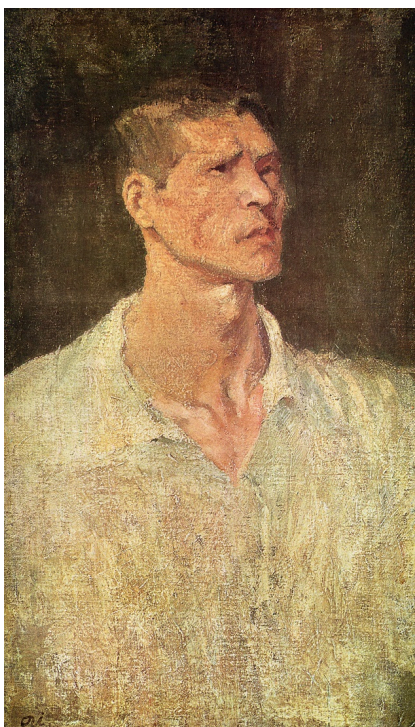


Fig. 4-6 Aimitsu, *Self-Portrait* 自画像 (1944)

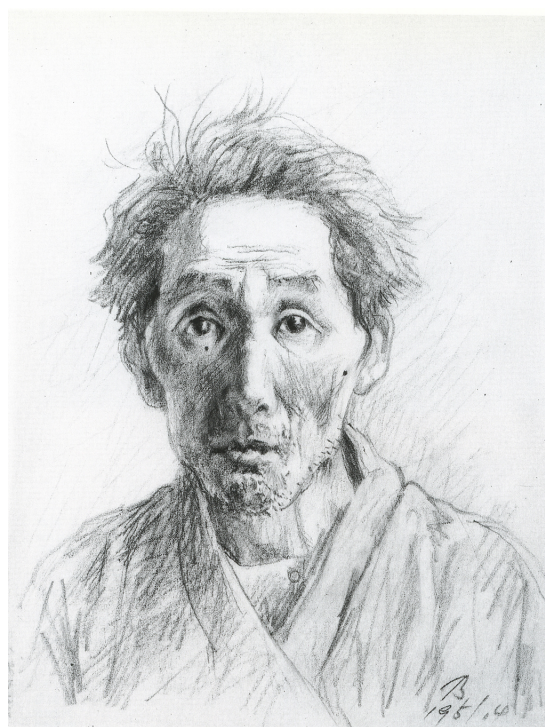


Fig. 4-7 Kitawaki Noboru, *Self-Portrait* 自画像 (1951)



Fig. 4-8 Fukuzawa Ichirō, *War Defeat Group* 敗戦群像 (1948)



Fig. 4-9 Furusawa Iwami, *Demonic Music* 憑曲 (1948)

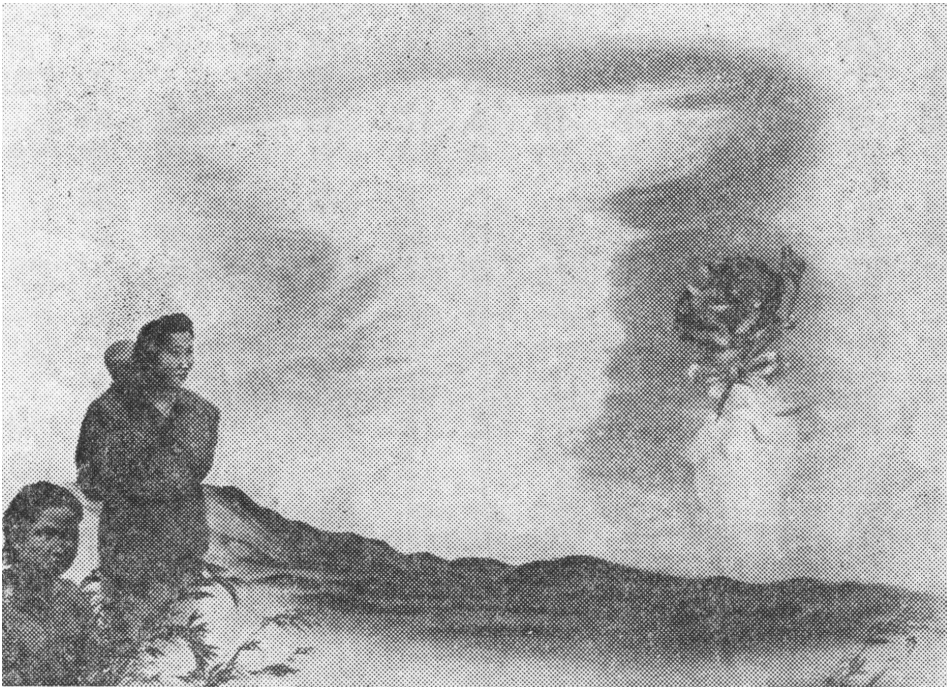


Fig. 4-10 Kitawaki Noboru, *Rose and Daughter* バラとむすめ (1948)



Fig. 4-11 Kitawaki Noboru, *Parabola* 拋物線 (1949)

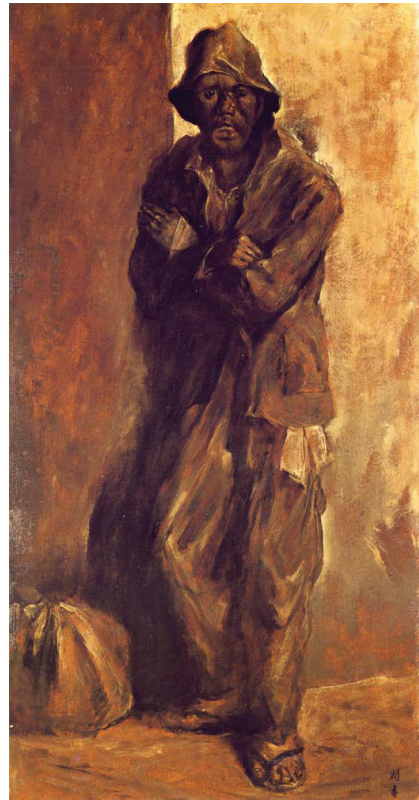


Fig. 4-12 Mukai Junkichi, *Tramp* 漂人 (1946)

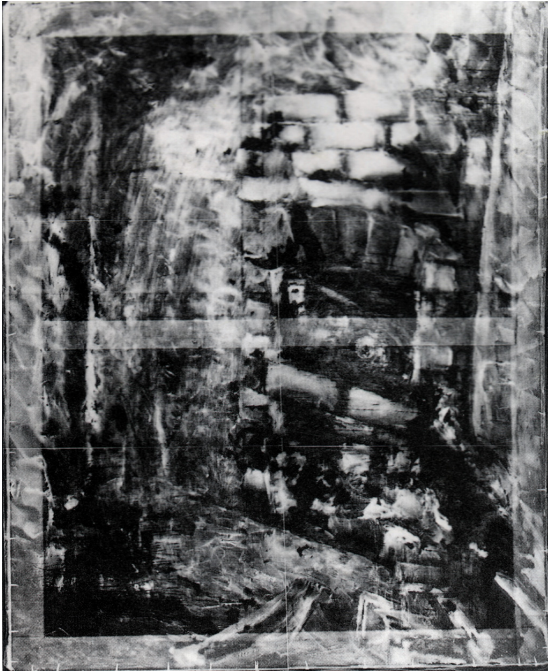


Fig. 4-13 Kitawaki Noboru, X-Ray image of *Crematorium* 火葬場 (1934)



Fig. 4-14 Kitawaki Noboru, *Quo Vadis* クオ・ヴァデイス (1949)



Fig. 4-15 Kitawaki Noboru, *Drawing* 素描 (1951)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“About the launch of Bijutsu Bunka Kyokai” *Bijutsu Bunka* 1 (August 1939).

Adachi, Gen. “Puroretaria bijutsu undō to sensō bijutsu.” *Nihon no Kokoro* 220 (2014): 143-145.

———. *Zenei no idenshi: anakizumu kara sengo bijutsu e*. Tokyo: Hatsumaimoto Kabushiki Kaisha Seiunsha, 2012.

Ajioka, Chiaki, Jackie Menzies, and Art Gallery of New South Wales. *Modern Boy, Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art, 1910-1935*. Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of NSW, 1998.

Baker, George. *The Artwork Caught by the Tail: Francis Picabia and Dada in Paris*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2007.

Breton, André. *Mad Love*. Translated by Mary Ann Caws. Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

———. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969.

———. *Nadja*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Grove Press, 1960.

———. *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. New York: MFA Publications, 2002.

———. *What Is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*. Edited by Franklin Rosemont. New York: Monad, 1978.

Brooks, E. Bruce, and A. Taeko Brooks, trans. *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Burger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Theory and History of Literature V. 4. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Cariou, André. *Yves Tanguy, L'univers Surréaliste*. Paris: Somogy, 2007.

Centre Georges Pompidou, Kokusai Kōryū Kikin, and Asahi Shinbunsha. *Japon Des Avant Gardes, 1910-1970*. Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1986.

Chong, Doryun, Michio Hayashi, Kenji Kajiya and Fumihiko Sumitomo, ed. *From Postwar to Postmodern, Art in Japan: 1945-1989* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012)

- Clark, John. "Artistic Subjectivity in the Taishō and Early Shōwa Avant-Garde." In *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*, edited by Alexandra Munroe, 41-53. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994.
- . "Surrealism in Japan." In *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*, edited by Michael Lloyd, Ted Gott, and Christopher Chapman, 204-213. Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1993.
- . *Surrealism in Japan*, Occasional Paper of the Japanese Studies Centre, Clayton, VIC, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Japanese Studies Centre, 1997.
- Dalí, Salvador. *Oui: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution: Writings, 1927-1933*. Edited by Robert Descharnes; translated by Yvonne Shafir. Boston: Exact Change, 1998.
- Dalí, Salvador, and David Gascoyne. *Conquest of the Irrational*. New York: Julien Levy, 1935.
- Descharnes, Robert, and Gilles Néret. *Salvador Dalí, 1904-1989: The Paintings*. Köln; New York: Taschen, 2005.
- Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co./New Press, 1999.
- Elderfield, John. *The Modern Drawing: 100 Works on Paper from The Museum of Modern Art*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983.
- Foster, Hal. *Compulsive Beauty*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Freud Reader*. Edited by Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.
- . *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919)*. Edited by James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1957.
- Fukuzawa, Ichirō. "The Avant-Garde and its Cultural Agenda." *Bijutsu Bunka* 1 (August 1939).
- . "Surrealism and Japanese Things." In *Surrealism*, 185-198. Tokyo: Atoriesha, 1937.
- Gentarō, Komaki. *Shururearisumu no jishō kao*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1987.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethe's Botanical Writings*. Translated by Bertha Mueller. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Hawai'i, 1952.
- . *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. Edited by Gordon L. Miller. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009.

- Hariu, Ichirō. *Sensō to bijutsu, 1937-1945: Art in Wartime Japan 1937-1945*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2007.
- Harootunian, Harry D. *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Havens, Thomas R. H. *Radicals and Realists in the Japanese Nonverbal Arts: The Avant-Garde Rejection of Modernism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.
- Hayami, Yutaka. *Shururearisumu kaiga to nihon: imēji no juyō to sōzō*. Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2009.
- Heisig, James W. *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*. Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.
- Heisig, James W., and John C. Maraldo. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism*, Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995.
- Hirata, Hosea. *The Poetry and Poetics of Nishiwaki Junzaburō: Modernism in Translation*, Studies of the East Asian Institute. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Hirayama, Mikiko. "Art without Borders to Art for the Nation: Japanist Painting by Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyōkai during the 1930s." *Monumenta Nipponica* 65, no. 2 (2010), 357-395.
- Hulme, T.E. "Modern Art – II. A Preface Note and Neo-Realism." In *The Camden Town Group in Context*. Edited by Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, Jennifer Mundy. London: Tate Research Publication, 2012.
- Kaido, Kazu, David Elliott, Museum of Modern Art (Oxford England). *Reconstructions: Avant-Garde Art in Japan 1945-1965, An Exhibition*. Oxford, England: Museum of Modern Art; Universe Books : Distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1985.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillian, 1958.
- Kitawaki, Noboru. "About *Structure of Meaning* $(A+B)^2$ $(A+B)^2$ の意味構造に就いて." *Bijutsu Bunka* 3 (April 1940): 29-30.
- . "Children's Paintings and Surrealists 子供の絵とシュールレアリスト." *Nippon Shinbun*, October 1936.
- . "Contradictory Painting from the Perspective of Technique 技術より見た矛盾

- の絵画.” *Nippon Shimbun*, November 10, 1937.
- . “Delusional Paintings 虚妄の絵画.” *Atorie* 15, no. 17 (December 1938): 91-92.
- . “Functional Things Are All Beautiful 機能的なるものは全て美しい.” *Bijutsu Bunka 4th Exhibition Catalog* (May 1943): 45-47.
- . “Graphic Art Restoration 図画復興.” *Bijutsu Bunka* 6 (April 1941): 45-46.
- . “Gutter Art—Use Talent in the Public どぶ石美術—民衆の中に才能を生かせ.” [publication unknown; date unknown].
- . “Macroscopic and Microscopic Beauty 巨視美と微視美.” *Bijutsu Bunka Reissue no. 1* (October 1946): 3.
- . “Methodological Reflections in Need 方法論的反省を.” *Bi no kuni* 15, no. 7 (July 1939): 6-7.
- . “On the Surrealism Observation Room 超現実性観測室に就いて.” *Shin Nihon Yoga Kyokai 4th Exhibition Catalog* (October 1938).
- . “Resonating 反響する.” *Fusain* 16 (March 1933): C-D.
- . “Symmetry and Asymmetry 相称と非相称.” *Bijutsu Bunka* 1 (August 1939): 7-9.
- . “The Art of Analysis and Critique—Modern Art.” 分析と批判の美術/モダンアート, *Kyoto Shinbun Evening Paper*, June 10, 1948, 1.
- . “The Group and Its Individual 団体とその個人, *TOILE* 6 (September 1935): 18-19.
- . “The New Constitution and Japanese Art 新憲法と日本の美術.” *Miyako Shimbun*, May 24, 1947.
- . “The Structure of Gyō” 「行」の構造.” *Nippon Shimbun*, December 30, 1940.
- . “The Tale of Urashima—Group Production 浦島物語—集団制作—.” *Mizue* 394 (December 1937): 20-21.
- . “What Bombs the Kyoto Oil Painting Circle 京都洋画壇を爆撃するもの.” *TOILE* 5 (July 1935): 8.

———. “What the New Order of the Art World Should Do 美術界の新体制は何をなすべきか.” *Nippon Shimbun*, November 1940.

Konoe, Fumimaro. “Statement, First Meeting of the New Order Preparation Committee.” August 28, 1940.

Kōseiin. “Kitawaki Noboru: Shūrurearisuto/Richi no Gaka.” Accessed July 19, 2016.
<http://kouseiin.org/knoboru.html>.

Kōyama, Iwao. *Bunka ruikeigaku, koō no genri*. Kyoto: Tōeisha, 2001.

Krauss, Rosalind E. *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.

———. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985.

Kyoto Hibi Shimbun, August 21, 1937.

Línhartová, Věra. *Dada Et Surréalisme Au Japon*, Arts Du Japon. Paris: Publications Orientalistes de France, 1987.

Matsumoto, Tōru, Yamano Hidetsugu, and Makino Kenichiro. *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective*. Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1997.

Mangan, J.A., and Takeshi Komagome. “Militarism, Sacrifice and Emperor Worship: The Expendable Male Body in Fascist Japanese Martial Culture.” In *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon—Global Fascism*, edited by J.A. Mangan, 181-204. London/New York: Frank Cass, 2000.

Marx, Karl. *Wage-Labour and Capital & Value, Price, and Profit*. New York: International Publishers, 1976.

Maur, Karin von, Yves Tanguy, Susan Davidson. *Yves Tanguy and Surrealism*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001.

Mayo, Marlene J., J. Thomas Rimer, and H. Eleanor Kerkham. *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

Munro, Majella. *Communicating Vessels: The Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923-70*. Great Britain: Enzo Arts and Publishing, 2012.

Munroe, Alexandra. *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994.

- Nakamura, Giichi. *Nihon kindai bijutsu ronsōshi*. Kyuryudo Library. Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 1981.
- . *Nihon no zenei kaiga; sono hankō to zassetsu—K no baai*, Bijutsu Sensho. Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1968.
- . “Japanese Surrealism (2) 日本のシュールレアリスム(2)” *Bijutsu Hihyō* 57 (September 1956): 126-137.
- . *Zoku nihon kindai bijutsu ronsōshi*. Kyuryudo Library. Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 1982.
- Nakano, Kaichi. *Zeneishi undōshi no kenkyū: modanizumu-shi no keifu*. Tokyo: Chūsekisha, 2003.
- Nagoyashi Bijutsukan. *Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945*. Nagoya: Nihon no Shūrearisumuten Jikkō Inkai, 1990.
- Nanbata Tatsuoki, “Thoughts on Art Under the New Order 新体制下の美術を考える.” *Bi no Kuni*, 16, no. 9 (September 1940): 20-23.
- Nation Diet Library “Birth of the Constitution of Japan: Chronological Table.” Accessed July 19, 2016, <http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/history03.html>.
- Okamoto, Tōki. *Nihon puroretaria bijutsushi*. Tokyo: Zōkeisha, 1967.
- . *Puroretaria bijutsu to wa nani ka*. Tokyo: Atoriesha, 1930.
- Omuka, Toshiharu, and Kita Takaomi. *Puroretaria bijutsu undō*. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2011.
- Ōtani, Shōgo. *Gekidōki no abangyarudo: shururearisumu to nihon no kaiga senkyūhyakunijūhachi senkyūhyakugojūsan*. Tokyo: Kokushokankōkai, 2016.
- . “Kitawaki Noboru no ‘Zushiki’ Kaiga nitsuite.” *Bulletin of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo*, no. 7 (2002): 5-36.
- Ozaki, Shinzin. “Japanese Surrealism in the Late 1930s: The ‘Space of Formless Matter’ and the ‘Space of Macroscopic Creatures’.” In *Japanese Modern Art : Painting from 1910 to 1970*, edited by Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter, 53-63. Zurich; New York: Edition Stemmler, 2000.
- Parkinson, Gavin. *Surrealism, Art, and Modern Science: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Epistemology*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Pincus, Leslie. *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National*

- Aesthetics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Piovesana, Gino K. *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought 1862-1994: A Survey*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Richardson, Michael. "Surrealism Faced with Cultural Difference." In *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, edited by Kobena Mercer, 68-101. London; Cambridge, Mass.: Institute of International Visual Arts; MIT Press, 2005.
- Rimer, J. Thomas. *Culture and Identity : Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Ruoff, Kenneth J. *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Sandler, Mark H. *The Confusion Era : Art and Culture of Japan During the Allied Occupation, 1945-1952*, Asian Art & Culture. Washington, D.C./Seattle, Wash.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, In association with the University of Washington Press, 1997.
- . "The Living Artist: Matsumoto Shunsuke's Reply to the State." *Art Journal* 55, no. 3 (1996): 74-82.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Nausea*. Translated by Lloyd Alexander. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Robert Bentley, 1979.
- Sas, Miryam. *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism*, Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Seamon, David, and Arthur Zajonc. *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Sharf, Robert H. "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism." In *Curators of the Buddha : The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, 107-160. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Shinjin gakai ten: senjka no gakatachi: e ga aru kara ikiteiru*. Tokyo: Itabashi Kuritsu Bijutsukan, 2008.
- Shururearisumu no tenkai*. Shururearisumu Tokuhon Vol. 2. Tokyo: Shichōsha, 1981.
- Silverberg, Miriam Rom. *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense : The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Slaymaker, Douglas. *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*. London ; New York:

- RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.
- Solt, John. *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue (1902-1978)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Spies, Werner. *Max Ernst, a Retrospective*. Munich: Prestel, 1991.
- . *Max Ernst, Loplop: The Artist's Other Self*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1983.
- Steinhoff, Patricia G. *Tenkō: Ideology and Societal Integration in Prewar Japan*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1991.
- Takashina, Erika and Christina M. Spiker. “From The Sea Beyond: Hōsui, Seiki, Tenshin, and the West Sea of Hybridization: In Dispute over Urashimap.” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 26 (2014): 80-103.
- Takenaka, Kyushichi. *Research on Surrealism—Mainly on its Relationship with Proletarian Art* シュールレアリスム研究：主としてプロレタリア芸術との関係について *Atorie* 7, no. 1 (January 1930): 21-34.
- Takiguchi, Shūzō. “Kitawaki Noboru shoron 北脇昇小論.” *Bijutsu Techō* 70 (1953): 8-13.
- Tansman, Alan. *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism, A Study of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- “The Principle of Control Focused on the Japanese Mentality—Complex Mysteries Can be Solved.” *Nippon Shimbun*, October 1939.
- Tiampo, Ming. “Body, War, and the Discourses of History: Rethinking Postwar Japanese Art.” In *Art and War in Japan and Its Empire, 1931-1960*, edited by Asato Ikeda, Aya Louisa McDonald, and Ming Tiampo, 339-350. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Tipton, Elise. *Japanese Police State: Tokkō in Interwar Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.
- Tsuda, Seifu. *Life of an Aged Painter 老画家の一生*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1963.
- Tsurumi, Shunsuke. *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945*. London and New York: KPI, 1986.

Tsuruya, Mayu. "Socialist Realisms in the War Art of Imperial Japan" In *Art and War in Japan and its Empire: 1931-1960*, edited by Asato Ikeda, Aya Louisa McDonald, Ming Tiampo, 59-77. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.

Ueda, Makoto. *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983.

Verene, Donald Phillip. *The Origins of the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Kant, Hegel, and Cassirer*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011.

Volk, Alicia. *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yoroze Tetsugorō and Japanese Modern Art*. Berkeley; Washington, D.C.: University of California Press; Phillips Collection, 2010.

Wada, Hirofumi. *Korekushon, nihon shūrurearisumu*. 15 vols. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, 2000.

———. *Shūrurearisumu no shi to hiyou*. Vol. 1. Edited by Wada Hirofumi.

———. *Shūrurearisumu no bijutsu to hiyou*. Vol. 2. Edited by Omuka Toshiharu.

———. *Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hiyou*. Vol. 3. Edited by Takeba Jō.

———. *Nishiwaki Junzaburō, paionia no shigoto*. Vol. 4. Edited by Wada Keiko.

———. *Takiguchi Shūzō, Buruton to no kōtsū*. Vol. 5. Edited by Sawa Masahiro.

———. *Yamanaka Chiruu, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā*. Vol. 6. Edited by Kurosawa Yoshiteru.

———. *Kitasano Katsue, resupuri nūbō no jikken*. Vol. 7. Edited by Uchibori Hiroshi.

———. *Takenaka Kyūshichi, Marukusu shugi e no ōdan*. Vol. 8. Edited by Takahashi Shintarō.

———. *Koga Harue, toshi modanizumu no gensō*. Vol. 9. Edited by Hayami Yutaka.

———. *Abe Kongō, iryūjon no hokōsha*. Vol 10. Edited by Ōtani Shōgo.

———. *Fukuzawa Ichirō, Pari kara no kichōsha*. Vol. 11. Edited by Takizawa Kyōji.

———. *Migishi Kōtarō, Yoshihara Jirō jojō no kosumorojī*. Vol. 12. Edited by Hirai Shōichi.

———. *Yonekura Hisahito, Iida Sōrō, sekai no hōkai kankaku*. Vol. 13. Edited by Hirase Reita.

- . *Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio renzu no avangyarudo*. Vol. 14. Edited by Yamada Satoshi.
- . *Shūrearisumu kihan shiryō shūsei*. Vol. 15. Edited by Wada Hirofumi.
- Warlick, M. E. *Max Ernst and Alchemy: A Magician in Search of Myth*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Weisenfeld, Gennifer S. "Imaging Calamity: Artists in the Capital After the Great Kantō Earthquake," in *Modern Boy Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art 1910-1935* (Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of NSW, 1998): 125-130.
- . *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931*, Twentieth-Century Japan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Wilhelm, Richard. *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, translated by Cary F. Baynes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Winther-Tamaki, Bert. "Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting During the Fifteen-Year War." *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 2 (1997): 145-80.
- . "From Resplendent Signs to Heavy Hands: Japanese Painting in War and Defeat, 1937-1952." In *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, edited by J. Thomas Rimer, 124-143. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011.
- . *Maximum Embodiment: Yōga, The Western Painting of Japan, 1912-1955*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012.
- . "Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan: Reconstructing Subjectivity through Deformation of the Body." *Monumenta Nipponica* 58, no. 3 (2003): 347-96.
- Wu, Chinghsin. "Japan Encounters the Avant-Garde: The Art and Thought of Koga Harue, 1895-1933." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2010.
- Yamada, Satoshi. "Science Fiction Kaiga." In *Nihon no kindai bijutsu 10: fuan to sensō no jidai*, edited by Tsutomu Mizusawa, Shigeru Aoki, and Tadayasu Sakai, 65-75. Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1992.
- . "Mujun no kaiga kara zushiki kinou e." In *Nihon no kindai bijutsu 10: fuan to sensō no jidai*, edited by Tsutomu Mizusawa, Shigeru Aoki, and Tadayasu Sakai, 76-80. Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1992.
- Yoshitake, Mika. "Kitawaki Noboru's Surrealist Project: A Historiography of the

Modern.” Unpublished essay, University of California, Los Angeles, 2003.