



Yasuo Sumi

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Biography

Yasuo Sumi was born in 1925. After joining Gutai in 1955, Sumi becomes a member of Art Club, the group represented by Taro Okamoto. He participated in all the Gutai exhibitions from the first to the 21st one. Furthermore he has been invited to many exhibitions organized by public museums such as Tokyo City Modern Art Museum, Kyoto City Modern Art Museum, Hyogo Prefecture Museum, Osaka City Modern Art Museum, Ashiya City Museum, Chiba City Art Museum, Miyagi Prefecture Art Museum, Fukuoka City Art Museum, Kitakyushu City Art Museum, Itami City Art Museum, Shibuya Art Museum. He also held many exhibitions in the most famous galleries in Tokyo, Osaka and Itami. Sumi has been invited to the 45th Venice Biennale (Path to the East) with a project promoted by the Japan Foundation and the Italian Government.

He held many exhibitions abroad, such as Galerie National du Jeu de Paume in Paris; New York's Martha Jackson Gallery, New York Cultural Exchange Center (solo exhibition) in US; Auckland Museum in Australia; Rome Contemporary Art Museum, Torino Figurative Gallery, Torino International Aesthetic Studio, Milan Art Center, Fondazione Morra in Naples. Rauma Art Museum, Helsinki Art Academy in Finland; Rotterdam Design House in Netherlands; Off Center in Canada; and also in England and China. Plenty of his works have become property of public national museums all over the world. Sumi is today an active member of the AU Group and participates to the group exhibitions.

He uses abaci, vibrators and combs for his works. While painting and performing Sumi always wears a pair of geta (wooden japanese shoes) and a bangasa (japanese umbrella), and uses a soroban (japanese abacus). But the use of these instruments is peculiar: sorobans are, for example, used, together with japanese ink to create straight and curved lines on papers and canvas. Bangasa is used to blow violently canvases, thus making them damaged. Vibrators are used to spread rhythmically colours on papers and canvases.

Selected exhibition and protect

Individualism was a central concern for Gutai artists. During the Second World War, Japan's totalitarian regime had promoted the notion of a national body and stifled any hints of individual expression. Members of the group unashamedly rebelled against this attitude in their writings and artworks, encouraging the public, children, and other artists to "do what no one has done before!"

The word 'gutai' translates as 'concreteness', and it articulates one of the Gutai group's most distinctive traits - their desire to physically engage with an extraordinary range of materials. The name also anticipated their investigations into the reciprocal connection between matter (paint, chemicals, tar, mud, water) and physical action (breaking, exploding, tearing, dripping). They wanted to create a new kind of art that explored the relationship between the human spirit and material, works that luxuriated in "the scream of matter."

Gutai artists were exceptional international networkers who used the media to spread their ideas across the globe. They also collaborated with other artists' groups in Europe and America, including Allan Kaprow's Happenings, the Art Informel group, and the Dutch Nul collective. This drive was not only essential to the movement's long term success, but it also represented their rejection of Japanese isolation during World War II and their desire to be a part of a new, liberal-minded Japan.

Gutai firmly believed in concept over form, thoroughly rejecting representative art. They wanted to move away from the art object towards the invisible world of ideas, and to leave plenty of room for viewers to come up with potential meanings on their own. Two Gutai practices that articulated these ideas were the pared-down, interactive works of Atsuko Tanaka and Saburō Murakami's pieces that aimed to separate art from content with a strong dose of wit.

After joining Gutai in 1955, Sumi becomes a member of Art Club, the group represented by Taro OKAMOTO. Both the groups have broken up later. He participated in all the Gutai exhibitions from the first to the 21st one. At the present as an AU member, he continues to show his own works at every exhibition of AU (exhibitions at Kyoto Museum, International Modern Art AU Exhibitions). Furthermore he has been invited to many exhibitions organized by public museums such as Tokyo City Modern Art Museum, Kyoto City Modern Art Museum, Hyogo Prefecture Museum, Osaka City Modern Art Museum, Ashiya City Museum, Chiba City Art Museum, Miyagi Prefecture Art Museum, Fukuoka City Art Museum, Kitakyushu City Art Museum, Itami City Art Museum, Shibuya Art Museum. Sumi held many exhibitions even in several galleries of Tokyo, Osaka and Itami.

Sumi has been invited to the 45th Venice Biennale (Path to the East) for two weeks. The Japan Foundation was the promoter of the project. Sumi held many exhibitions abroad, such as Galerie National du Jeu de Paume in Paris; New York's Martha Jackson Gallery, New York Cultural Exchange Center (personal exhibition) in US; Auckland Museum in Australia; Rome Contemporary Art Museum, Torino Figurative Gallery , Torino International Aesthetic Studio, Milan Art Center etc. in Italy; Fondazione Morra in Napoli, Rauma Art Museum, Helsinki Art Academy etc. in Finland; Rotterdam Design House etc. in Netherlands; Off Center in Canada; and finally in England, and in China... He has been invited even to many museums, studios and galleries. Plenty of his works have become property of public and national museums.

Most relevant museums

Art Museum of Hyogo Prefecture (Yamamura Collection), Art Museum of Miyagi Prefecture, North Kyushu Art Museum, Ashiya Museum, Osaka Contemporary Art Museum, Tanabe Art Museum (Wakayama Prefecture), Itami Museum, Urawa Museum, Miyazaki Museum, Nakamoto Seishi Art Museum (Sendai), Osaka University, Itami Town Hall, Culture Institute of Itami, Itami Hospital, Itami City Hotel, New York, Paris, London, San Francisco, Torino, Calgary, Vienna, Helsinki, Toulouse, etc

In 2016 ABC-ARTE organized the solo exhibition *Yasuo Sumi Nothing but the future* curated by Flaminio Gualdoni, ABC-ARTE, Genova, on the occasion of the exhibition it was published a book of ABC-ARTE series.

Exhibitions

2016

"NOTHING BUT THE FUTURE" , Solo Exhibition (Genoa - Italy , ABC-ARTE Gallery)
Solo Exhibition (Hong Kong, Whitestone Gallery)

2015

"Enchanting Mess: Yasuo Sumi in the 1950s" solo exhibition (Itami City Museum of Art)
"Yasuo Sumi - Full Immersion" solo exhibition (Ferrara, Mazzacurati Fine Art)

2014

"Art in the World" exhibition (Okayama, Tenmaya Store)
Solo Exhibition and performance (Karuizawa, Karuizawa New Art Museum)
"GUTAI- Scream of matter - Shozo Shimamoto, Yasuo Sumi" (Berlin, WeGallery)
"Yasuo Sumi - Special Works" exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)

2013

"Gutai: Splendid Playground" exhibition (New York, Guggenheim Museum)
"Gutai's Color" two man exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)
Solo Exhibition (Tokyo, Whitestone Gallery)

2012

"Un Art Autre?" exhibition (Paris, Christie's Paris)
"GUTAI: The Spirit of an Era" exhibition (Tokyo, The National Art Center)
"GUTAI at 32 East 69th Street" exhibition (New York, Hauser and Wirth)

2011

Solo Exhibition (Itami, Yoshida Gallery)
"Yasuo Sumi, Early Gutai Period" solo exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)
"Gutai, Between Past and Present" exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)

2010

Solo Exhibition (Osaka, Shimanouchi Gallery)
Solo Exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)
"Gutai: Painting with Time and Space" exhibition (Lugano, Museo Cantonale d'Arte)

2009

Solo Exhibition (Osaka, Lads Gallery)
Solo Exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)

2008

Solo Exhibition (Osaka, Shimanouchi Gallery)
Performance (Napoli, Punta Campanella)
Exhibition (Capri, Blue Lizard Gallery)
Exhibition and performance (Capri-Saint Giacomo's Charterhouse)
Exhibition and performance (Miyazaki, Gendaikko Museum)
Performance (Kyushu, Aoshima; Sakurajima and Miyazaki Kanko Hotel)
Performance and "Shimamoto-Sumi" exhibition (Bologna, Museo Magi900)
Padova Arte 2008 (Padua, Art Fair)

2007

La Biennale di Venezia "P3" Side event
Solo Exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)

2006

"New Spring Small Works" exhibition (Tokyo, Mitaka City, Gallery Yume)
"Collection 4" exhibition (Osaka, The National Museum of Art)
Exhibition and performance (Napoli, Fondazione Morra)
"Itami Art Association" exhibition (Itami, Central Community Center)
Tokyo International Art Fair (Tokyo Big Sight)
Group exhibition (Beijing, Exhibition Center)
"AU" exhibition (Kobe, Haradanomori Gallery)
Solo Exhibition (Venice, Spazio Arte dei Mori Gallery)

2005
 "Traces: Body and Idea in Contemporary Art" exhibition (Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art)
 Exhibition and performance (Trevi Flash Art Museum)
 Performance (Reggio Emilia, Pari&Dispari Agency)
 Performance (Venice, Liceo Artistico)
 "AU" exhibition (Kobe, Haradanomori Gallery)
 "AU and Gutai" exhibition (Modena, Spazio Fisico Gallery)

2004
 "Traces: Body and Idea in Contemporary Art" exhibition (Kyoto, The National Museum of Modern Art)

2002
 "Collection Masterpieces II" exhibition (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)
 Solo Exhibition (Osaka, Lads Gallery)
 Exhibition (Sendai, Sendai Mediatheque)

2000
 Exhibition "Gutai and Informel" (Osaka, Art-U Gallery)
 Publishes the book "Yakekuso, fumajime, charanporan" Bungeisha Editions

2001 Solo Exhibition (Osaka, Lads Gallery)
 Solo Exhibition (Itami City Museum of Art)

1998
 "Works from the Fifties by Yasuo Sumi" solo exhibition, (Osaka, Shimanouchi Gallery)

1999 Gutai Exhibition (Paris, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume)
 "Works by Yasuo Sumi" (Osaka, Kuruse Gallery)

1997 Solo Exhibition "New Works by Yasuo Sumi" (Osaka, Lads Gallery)
 4-man Exhibition, (Finland, Rauma Art Museum)

1996 "Section of Post-War Art" exhibition (Chiba, Chiba City Museum of Art)

1995
 Solo Exhibition (Osaka, ABC Gallery)

1994
 "Gutai 1955-1956: A Restarting Point in Japanese Contemporary Art" exhibition (Osaka, Kirin Plaza Osaka)
 Solo Exhibition (Osaka, Lads Gallery)
 Solo Exhibition (Tokyo, Mitaka City, Gallery Yume)

1993
 "Gutai II: 1959-1965" exhibition (Ashiya, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History)
 The 45th La Biennale di Venezia, "Passaggio a Oriente" (Venice)
 "Gutai III: 1965-1972" exhibition (Ashiya, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History)
 "Gutai 1955-1956: A Restarting Point in Japanese Contemporary Art" exhibition (Tokyo, Penrose Institute)

1992
 "Artists of Gutai Art Association" exhibition (Miyagi, The Miyagi Museum of Art)
 Gutai Exhibition (Milan, Milan Art Center)
 "Gutai I: 1954-1958" exhibition (Ashiya, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History)
 "Itami Modern Art" exhibition (Itami, Central Community Center)
 "Outdoor Exhibition 1955, 1956" (Ashiya, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History)
 Solo Exhibition (Ashiya, Gallery Second House TWO)
 Performance (China, Foshan City Cultural Department)
 "The World of Modern Art" exhibition (Shimane Art Museum)
 Solo Exhibition (Itami Lustre Hall)

1991
 "Gutai Japanische Avantgarde 1954-1965" exhibition (Darmstadt, Institut Mathildehohe)
 "Gutai - Adventurers of Paintings" exhibition (Fukuoka, Fukuoka Art Museum)
 "Currents of the 20th Century Art" exhibition (Miyazaki, Kyuden Community Plaza)

1990
 "Gutai" exhibition (Shibuya, The Shoto Museum of Art)
 Solo Exhibition (Ikeda, Buranju Gallery)
 "Japanese Avant-garde - Gutai Group the '50s" exhibition (Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna)

1989
 "Yamamura Collection" exhibiton (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)
 Solo Exhibition (Itami, Itami Municipal Art Gallery)

1988
 Solo Exhibition (New York , Japanese-American Artist Cultural Center)
 Solo Exhibition (Ashiya, Grace Human Life)
 "Gutai Artists" exhibition (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)
 Solo Exhibition (Amagasaki, Seibu Department Tsukashin Store)

1987
 Solo Exhibition (Itami, Itami Municipal Art Gallery)
 Solo Exhibition (Osaka, North Fort)

1985
 "The First Ten 1975-1985" exhibition (Canada, Off Center)
 "Modern Art in Hyogo Prefecure - Music" exhibition (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)
 "Jiro Yoshihara and Gutai:1954-1972" exhibition (Ashiya, Ashiya Civic Center)
 "Action and Emotion, Paintings of the '50s, Informel, Gutai Cobra" exhibition (Osaka, National Museum of Art)

1984
 "Modern Art in Hyogo Prefecure" exhibition (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)
 "Vancouver Modern Art" exhibition (Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery)

1983
 The first "Japan Week" (Dusseldorf, Atelier Hildebrand)
 "6 Artists of Gutai-AU" exhibition (Itami, Municipal Art Gallery)

1982
 Solo Exhibition at Tokyo Museum of Art

1981
 Solo Exhibition (Nishinomiya, Shozo Shimamoto Artspace)

1979
 "Jiro Yoshihara and Today's Aspects of Gutai" (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)
 "World Symposium Invitaton Show" (Alberta, Canada)

1976
 "Japan Now" exhibition (San Francisco, Kaplikon Gallery, Embassy Gallery)
 "Eighteen Years of Gutai Art" (Osaka, Prefectural Gallery)
 The 12th "Today's Notion of Space" exhibition (Yokohama, Municipal Gallery of Art)
 1977 International Peace Exhibition in Moscow
 "Green Activities" exhibition (Stuttgart, Germany)
 "Sign Symbol" exhibition (New Zealand, Wellington)

1975
 Joins Artist Union (then called AU group= Art Unidentified) and participates consecutively to all the exhibitions

1974
The fourth "Festival of Hyogo Prefecture Art" (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)

1972
"The Circle Surrounding Jiro Yoshihara" exhibition (Osaka, Fujimi Gallery)

1971
The first "Festival of Hyogo Prefecture Art" (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art)

1970
"Japan Expo '70-Garden on Garden" Gutai Group show (Osaka, Expo Museum)

1967
"Gutai in The Netherlands: small works" (Rotterdam, Design House)
"Gutai Art Exhibition in Austria" (Klagenfurt, Hildebrandt Gallery)
"The 18th Gutai Art Exhibition" (Osaka, Gutai Pinacotheca)
"The 19th Gutai Art Exhibition" (Tokyo, Central Museum; Osaka, Gutai Pinacotheca)

1966
"NUL66. Mul Negentienhonderd Zesenzestig" (Den Haag, Galerij Olez)

1965
"Groupe Gutai-Gutai Art Exhibition in Paris" (Paris, Galerie Stadler)
"'65 Japan; Today's Exhibition" (Tokyo, Muramatsu Gallery)

1962
"Don't Worry, the Moon Won't Fall Down: Gutai Art and Morita Modern Dance" (Osaka, Sankei Hall)

1961
"Continuite` et avant-garde au Japon" exhibition, organised by Tapie' (Turin, Center of Aesthetic Research)

1960
Fourth "Asahi New Talents" exhibition (Osaka, Takashimaya)

1959
Covered by the BBC
"The Seventh Gutai Art Exhibition" (Turin, Galleria Arti Figurative)
Moves house to Itami City and becomes judge of Itami exhibitions

1958
Performance "Painting in the air" at the second Gutai Art on Stage Exhibition (Osaka, Asahi Kaikan)
"International Art of a New Era: Informel and Gutai" (touring exhibition starting from Osaka, Takashimaya department store)
Becomes member of Ashiya Art Association
"The Gutai Group Exhibition" (New York, Martha Jackson Gallery)

1957
Performance "Work by Automatism" at the first Gutai Art on Stage exhibition (Osaka, Sankei Kaikan; Tokyo, Sankei Hall)

1956
Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition (Ashiya)

1954
Wins Sakura Prize at the 7th Ashiya Exhibition (Awarded the prize also for the following 5 years)
2nd Genbi Exhibition (Osaka, Matsuzakaya)

1955
7th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum)
Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun.
Enters Gutai Movement
1st Gutai Exhibition (Tokyo, Ohara Kaikan). Participates consecutively to all the following Gutai Exhibitions
5th Modern Art Association Exhibition (participates consecutively up to 1959)