



Book / Talk series

Eve/Frontline **- *Critical Perspectives on World War II and Painting***

This summer, Yumiko Chiba Associates will begin work on a research book (scheduled for publication in spring 2014) looking at 20th-century painting from a unique perspective as well as launching a yearlong series of talks both entitled *Eve/Frontline - Critical Perspectives on World War II and Painting*. *Jiro Takamatsu Critical Archive*, which was published last year, enjoyed a favorable reception and the talk session featuring the four authors was well attended. With this initiative we hope to build on that success. Taking as its theme War and Painting, this research book, the second in the series, will see Takuma Ishikawa, Mari Komoto, Ryo Sawayama and Satoko Hironaka contribute as artist, art historian, critic and curator respectively to a reexamination of 20th-century painting in Japan and the West.

At the talk sessions, organizers Ryo Sawayama and Takuma Ishikawa will invite a different guest each time to discuss specific artists and their work. It is anticipated that the focus will be on the art practice of such painters as Yasuo Kazuki, Chimei Hamada and Ichiro Fukuzawa who in the 1930s to 1950s in particular confronted a variety of new problems arising from the Second World War.

We hope you will consider featuring this event in your publication.

■Background

Since the Second World War, a great many war paintings have been produced in a number of countries including Japan and the UK. A broad definition of "war paintings" would probably enable us to include within this genre several avant-garde tendencies, among them futurism and the extraordinary painterly experiences of artists like Franz Marc. The circumstances of war meant that painting was continuously in a tense relationship with the outside world. In particular, it is impossible to discuss 20th-century painting without considering the deconstruction/reconstruction of the subject arising from the experience of war. It is not our intention, however, to engage in a reflection theory-like discussion by reading into 20th-century painting in its entirety the shadow of war. This is because the practice of painting in the 20th century is not a reliable document demonstrating this tense relationship with the outside world. Rather, it is more important to consider the extent to which, in these circumstances, the painters themselves analyzed artists deconstructed/reconstructed by the outside world. It is likely that along with various time differences and degrees of abstractness, it is this that brought about formation of the many formal and meaning-based codes in the paintings and the changes in composition that cannot be reduced to a particular style theoretical framework. Accordingly, such myths as the autonomous history of modern painting and stylistic progress may also need to be demolished.

To what extent did the external circumstances deconstruct/reconstruct the mind-body problems of the artists, and to what extent did their painting bear witness to these circumstances? To what extent does war, an exceptional condition that places humans in a state of "life stripped bare," affect painting, a physical creative process of the individual? Can the various political, mechanical and practical problems of painting, whether abstract or figurative, be rendered readable at a methodological level, and to what extent can they be criticized? By looking at these and other issues, we hope to take the first steps towards constructing a new theory of painting. In concrete terms, we envisage the discussion focusing on the art practice of such painters as Yasuo Kazuki, Chimei Hamada and Ichiro Fukuzawa who confronted these issues pertaining to painting mainly in the period from the 1930s to the 1950s.

May 2013

Ryo Sawayama

**■Book**

Eve/Frontline – Critical Archive vol. 2, Critical Perspectives on World War II and Painting

Publication date: Spring 2014

Contributors:

Takuma Ishikawa (artist, art critic)

Mari Komoto (art historian; associate professor, Hiroshima University)

Ryo Sawayama (art critic)

Satoko Hironaka (curator, Itabashi Art Museum)

■Talk series

Session 1: Yasuo Kazuki

With Mika Kuraya (Chief curator, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo), Takuma Ishikawa and Ryo Sawayama

Saturday, July 20, at Yumiko Chiba Associates viewing room shinjuku

■About the participants**Takuma Ishikawa**

Artist and art critic. Born 1979. MA, Musashino Art University. Recent exhibitions include: "The World and Solitude vol.2" (gallery X, Tokyo). Recent critiques include: "Christopher Williams' Apple" (*Tokorozawa Biennial "Railroad Siding,"* 2011), "Orikaesareru basho: 'Barnett Newman: Dialogue between Man and Work'" (*Bijutsu Techo*, November 2010).

Ryo Sawayama

Art critic. Born 1982. MA, Musashino Art University.

Selected writings: "Jackson Pollock – *Rinsetsusei no genri* [The principal of contiguity]" (*Art Trace Press 01*, 2012, Art Trace), "*Momokuteki shahe kukan* [Blind shelter space] – Pre-Cubism and *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*" (*Art Critique n.02*, 2012, Constellation Books), "*Keiji naki hanpuku – Takamatsu Jiro no hi-meidai* [Reiteration without copula: Jiro Takamatsu's anti-thesis]" (*Jiro Takamatsu Critical Archive vol.1*, 2012, Yumiko Chiba Associates).

"Talk Session 1: Yasuo Kazuki" guest**Mika Kuraya**

Chief Curator of the Department of Fine Arts, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. MA, Chiba University. Recent curatorial projects include: "Waiting for Video: Works from the 1960s to Today" (2009, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; co-curated with Kenjin Miwa), "Lying, Standing and Leaning" (2009, MOMAT), "Meaningful Stain" (2010, MOMAT), "On the Road" (2011, MOMAT), "Undressing Paintings: Japanese Nudes 1880-1945" (2011-2012, MOMAT). Recent critical studies include: "Where is Reiko? Kishida Ryusei's 1914-1918 Portraits" (Bulletin of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, No. 14, 2010)

Curator of the Japanese Pavilion for the 55th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale (artist: Koki Tanaka, 2013)

Inquires

We hope you will spread the word about this exciting event.
For further information, please contact the gallery.

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Gallery hours 12:00-19:00; closed Sundays, Mondays and holidays