

Postscript

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“Experimental Workshop” is the theme of the present exhibition which marks the 11th in the series “Homage to Shuzo Takiguchi.” This exhibition features works executed between 1951 and 1957 by the former members of Experimental Workshop.

The exhibition works are categorized as follows:

1. Visual arts—paintings and photographs representing five artists: Kiyoji Otsuji, Tetsuro Komai, Shozo Kitadai, Hideko Fukushima and Katsuhiko Yamaguchi.
2. Music—sheet music representing five artists: Keiji Sato, Hiroyoshi Suzuki, Toru Takemitsu, Kazuo Fukushima, Joji Yuasa.
3. Poetry and Criticism—poems by Kuniharu Akiyama (manuscripts).
4. Photo commentary illustrating the activities of Experimental Workshop —photographs by Kiyoji Otsuji, Shozo Kitadai, Hiroyoshi Suzuki.

The present catalogue was published to complement the exhibition. After repeated discussions, Katsuhiko Yamaguchi (in charge of the visual arts), Kuniharu Akiyama (in charge of the music section) and I laid the first lines of this catalogue. Haruo Fukuzumi took the trouble of editing along these lines and Kazuyoshi Oishi accordingly was in charge of the design. Stage Illuminator Naoji Imai, and Takahiro Sonoda contributed comments and a brief record. In regards to the chronology, I would like to especially mention the cooperation of Shozo Kitadai who furnished most elementary data.

Although the name of “Experimental Workshop” appears throughout the history of postwar modern Japanese art, a large part of its activities has been neglected for forty years now. This is why I chose Experimental Workshop as the subject of the present “Homage to Shuzo Takiguchi” exhibition. While the former members are all in excellent health, I would like to take this opportunity to reconstruct Experimental Workshop as much as possible in its true nature. This is how it took the form of a retrospective exhibition.

It is well-known that Shuzo Takiguchi gave the group its name, however, it was very rare for him to direct his devotion and passion—whether openly or indirectly—to the activities of one single group. Takiguchi preferred a direct relation with the individual artist. This is an opinion that is shared by the artists as well. Each artist closely corresponded with Takiguchi on their own individual wavelength. Encouraged through these communications, isolated artists were able to fully concentrate on their work. In the case of Experimental Workshop, however, there existed a communication between Takiguchi and the group as

such. This is precisely what is so interesting.

Takiguchi was 48 when Experimental Workshop was officially formed in 1951; its members consisted of young people in their twenties. From the various texts by Takiguchi that are recorded in this catalogue, we can easily sense how high he evaluated their “experiment” and what his future expectations were. Always running ahead of its age, Experimental Workshop endeavored to give rise to new artforms by examining the fusion of visual arts and music. I believe that this experimental character of Experimental Workshop deserves to be put in a special daylight.

There existed no initial relations between Experimental Workshop and myself. At the time when the movement was founded in 1951, I was a second-year student at the faculty of economics of the Kyoto University and I did not have the good fortune to know about its existence then.

Yet, this does not mean that there existed no links, however brief and indirect they were. It was in April 1953, some time after I had joined the bank (The Norinchukin Bank) and moved to Tokyo when I saw a movie titled “Hokusai” at the auditorium of the bank. It must have been an event organized by the circle of movie enthusiasts. I still vividly remember how the close-up scenes of Hokusai’s prints were alternating on the screen as if in a cartoon. It was also after some time had elapsed that I learned that this movie was released without the full consent of Takiguchi (cf. “Collection Shuzo Takiguchi,” Volume 6, *An Essay on Image*, Misuzu Shobo.) Although my encounter with Experimental Workshop was indirect, this is how I at a young age, was able to get a taste of Takiguchi’s “experimental spirit.” This is what made me feel the inevitability of having this Experimental Workshop exhibition.

While this exhibition is modest in scale, it may form one step to fuel the tendency of re-evaluating postwar Japanese art. It is only that the means of one gallery are limited when organizing this kind of exhibition. I hope that a competent museum will someday organize and carry out an Experimental Workshop exhibition on a large scale. There is still plenty that ought to be done in order to activate the contemporary art scene in this country.

My heartfelt thanks go to all the members of Experimental Workshop who contributed to this catalogue. Shuzo Takiguchi, Tetsuro Komai and Hideo Yamazaki are no longer physically with us but all the other members are in good health and everyone of them is active in their own way. May they all enjoy continued success in their work.

My deep gratitude also goes to Mrs. Ayako Takiguchi and Mrs. Yoshiko Komai for their support.

June 10, 1991

In memory of Hideo Kaido

At half past ten this morning, I received the news that Mr. Hideo Kaido passed away. On June 22, the day before yesterday, he suddenly died at the age of 79. Perplexed by this sudden news, I rushed to the funeral home in Ogikubo to attend the funeral starting at 12:30. Today also happened to be the day for moving my house which is why I just could not find proper mourning clothes in time. I ended up attending the funeral service in bad-matching clothes, out of tune. When I think about it now, it was last evening after 9 o'clock when I was waiting for a taxi in Ogikubo on my way home from my father's hundredth day memorial service in Maizuru, that I had noticed a funeral signboard reading "Kaido". At that instant, Mr. Kaido had crossed my mind. It is true that the name Kaido is quite rare, however, it surely could not be Mr. Hideo Kaido. No, it could not have been him. Mr. Kaido is doing well, moreover his residence is in Shibuya... this is how I dismissed this thought from my mind and I hurriedly went home. How hard to believe it is.

It is well-known that Mr. Hideo Kaido played an undeniable backstage role in the support of postwar contemporary Japanese art. He was a main living witness. He often told me precious stories with interesting episodes. It was Mr. Kaido who launched Shuzo Takiguchi into art. It was also nobody else than Mr. Kaido who created the first opportunity for the foundation of Experimental Workshop. Knowing his deep involvement at the time, I had made an appointment for more background information on the movement. Looking through my notebook, I see that this meeting was supposed to take place on April 27. On the previous day, however, I had received a telephone call from him asking to postpone the meeting as he was not feeling well. He sounded very healthy. Since I had to leave on a trip to New York and Paris right afterwards, we agreed to meet after my trip. Ever since I arrived back on May 29, I often wondered about Mr. Kaido but then I had so many chores to do. Here I am now to attend his funeral. Had I only contacted him sooner. It is a great pity.

Mr. Kaido had great interest in the "Homage to Shuzo Takiguchi" exhibition series from the start and I always much appreciated his occasional advice. He contributed an essay to the catalogue of the 7th exhibition in this series, "Marcel Duchamp and Shuzo Takiguchi". This essay treats of Takiguchi's "Selected Words of Marcel Duchamp" which he helped producing. Mr. Kaido was very much looking forward to the present exhibition. I wanted him to come and see this one in particular.

In conformity with Mr. Kaido's will, the funeral service was nonreligious, held in a simple, graceful way with limited attendance. It is so admirable that Mr. Kaido kept his anonymity as a journalist until the end. I am deeply impressed by his unrelenting austerity. I pray and send my deepest sympathies. Thank you Mr. Kaido.

June 24, 1991