



PRACTICE BY WOOD PAINTING

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**MISA SHIN GALLERY**

Hikosaka Naoyoshi

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Saturday, October 14 - Saturday, November 25, 2023

Hikosaka is known for his performance art, Floor Event (1970), in which, completely nude, he coated the tatami mats in his room at home with latex, extending to the deck outside the room, and recorded the action in photographs. As an artist he has been in the forefront of Japanese conceptualism since the 1970s, questioning the very basis of the institution of art.

In 1969, as a key member of Bikyōtō (short for Artists Joint-Struggle Committee), which he formed with Hori Kosai and others, Hikosaka critiqued the institution of art. Bikyōtō languished in the aftermath of the collapse of the student movement. While staging Floor Event and its variations from 1970 to 1975, he embarked on a new pursuit under the concept of practice. Referencing Aristoteles, Hikosaka's theory of practice begins with poiesis and praxis, and leans to a chain of recognition and practice grounded in Mao Zedong's theory of practice. The final stage began in 1977, with practice and theorization embodied in his works in the Practice by Wood Painting (PWP) series.

As the title suggests, the supports for Hikosaka's PWP—or Wood Painting—works are wood instead of canvas. However, rather than flat wood panels, the supports comprise pieces of wood of different thicknesses, lengths, and widths, presenting uneven surfaces that are covered with filmy layers of acrylic paint. These works represent the pursuit of a non-painterly method that does not use the flat surface of a canvas, instead exploring the potential of the deconstructed painting, a medium that he had once rejected through his action of applying latex to the floor. Despite his earlier rejection of the medium of painting through Floor Event, in the PWP series Hikosaka embarked on experimentation in "post-painting painting", pursuing the painterly potential of the deconstructed medium.

Going back to the latter half of the 1960s when Hikosaka was a student at Tama Art University, he was struck by the dematerialization of modern art, which was undergoing rapid transformation worldwide. In June 1969, in a group exhibition on the barricaded Tama Art University campus before the founding of Bikyōtō, he used transparent vinyl sheeting stretched on wooden frames instead of canvas, exhibiting works in which the wall was visible through the wooden frame, or in which a wooden panel had been inserted at the back of the frame to conceal the wall, and a work in which vinyl sheeting was dropped onto the floor, leaving the wooden frame on the wall. These early works, which could be considered deconstructions of the medium of painting, raised questions about the self-evidence of painting as an autonomous object. The subsequent Floor Event series involved covering the floor of his home—the most self-evident plane—with a membrane of latex. In Wood Paintings, where the canvas is already absent—replaced by a wooden support—the wood is covered by a film of paint derived and developed from the latex membrane.

While Hikosaka deconstructs painting, he also furthers the concept of practice, taking up the challenge of reconstructing painting as post-painting painting. This development parallels the shift in the global art movements, which returned to painting after the departure from conventional artistic concepts in the 1960s. However, Hikosaka's Wood Paintings were by no means an easy return to painting; he earnestly took on the lesson of post-painting, maintained his unrelenting attention to self-evidence in art, and highlighted structures and premises rendered invisible in modernism

彦坂尚嘉

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MISA SHIN GALLERY

2023年10月14日(土) - 11月25日(土)

全裸で自室の畳の床と縁側にラテックスを撒き、一連の行為を写真に記録したパフォーマンス、「フロア・イベント」(1970年)で知られる彦坂尚嘉は、美術表現の制度そのものを根元から問い直し70年代以降の日本のコンセプチュアリズムを主導したアーティストです。

1969年、堀浩哉らとともに結成した「美術家共闘会議」(美共闘)の主要メンバーとして、美術の制度批判を追求した彦坂は、1970年から75年まで、「フロア・イベント」とそのバリエーションを展開した後、美共闘の活動の終焉とともに、「プラクティス」(直訳すると「実践」)のコンセプトの下に新たな探求に向かいます。彦坂のプラクティス論は、アリストテレスに参照したポイエーシス(制作)とプラクティスに始まり、毛沢東の実践論に根ざした実践と認識の連鎖へと偏していきます。その最終段階として、制作における実践と理論化を具現するのが、1977年から始まった、「プラクティス・バイ・ウッド・ペインティング」(Practice by Wood Painting; PWP と略)シリーズでした。

PWP、通称「ウッド・ペインティング」は、タイトルが明言するように、キャンバスの代わりに木を支持体とします。ただし、平坦な木のパネルではなく、厚みや長さや幅が異なる木で凹凸のある不均等な表面を構成し、アクリル絵具の皮膜で覆う作品です。それはかつて床にラテックスを撒くことで一旦は否定し、解体した絵画の可能性を、キャンバスという平面を用いることなく、絵画的ではない手法で追求するものでした。この作品シリーズによって彦坂は「フロアイベント」において拒絶し、一度は解体したメディアである絵画の可能性を、絵画的でないメディアを介して追求する「ポスト絵画の絵画」の実験へと踏み出していきました。

遡ること1960年代後半、当時多摩美術大学の学生だった彦坂は、国内外で急速に変化し、非物質化する現代美術の様相に衝撃を受け、1969年6月、バリケードで封鎖された多摩美術大学のキャンパスで開催されたグループ展で、キャンバスの代わりに木枠に貼られた透明なビニールシートを用い木枠から壁が見えたり、木製のパネルをフレームに挿入し壁を隠した作品や、ビニールシートを床に落とし木枠のフレームを壁に残した作品を発表します。これらの絵画の解体とも言える最初期の作品は、自立した物体としての絵画の自明性に疑問を呈しました。続く「フロア・イベント」シリーズでは最も自明な平面である住居の床をラテックスの皮膜で覆います。そして、「ウッドペインティング」ではキャンバスはすでに無く、それに代わって登場した木の支持体上の絵具の皮膜へと派生し展開していきます。

彦坂は絵画を解体しますが、プラクティスのコンセプトの下に制作へ回帰し、絵画をポスト絵画として再構築するという挑戦的な展開をとげました。これは、1960年代に従来の芸術概念から離反しつつ、その後に絵画へと回帰した世界的な芸術動向と重なります。ただし、彦坂の「ウッドペインティング」は単なる「絵画」への回帰に甘んじるのではなく、あくまで「ポスト絵画」を引き受けた上で、美術の自明性を見つめていく視線を保持し、モダニズムの見えない構造や前提を浮き彫りにします。





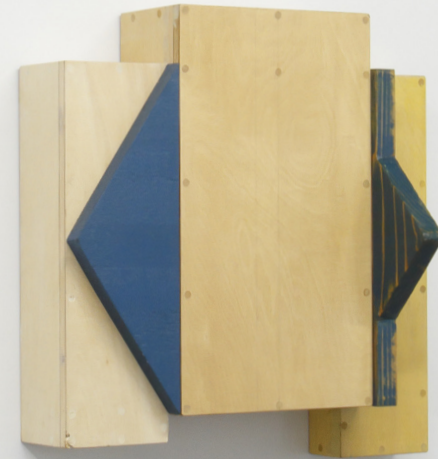
Installation view, *PWP: Practice by Wood Painting*, MISA SHIN GALLERY, Tokyo, 2023 Photo by Keizo Kioku





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3 Woodbox Art, 1992, Acrylic on wood, 72.5 x 73 x 23.8 cm





Wood Painting, 1981, Acrylic on wood, 52.3 x 23.5 x 18.8 cm



PWP 208, 1992, Acrylic on wood, 43 x 43.5 x 9.5 cm





*Minimal Art*, 1996, Acrylic on wood, 53.4 x 42.4 x 9.2 cm

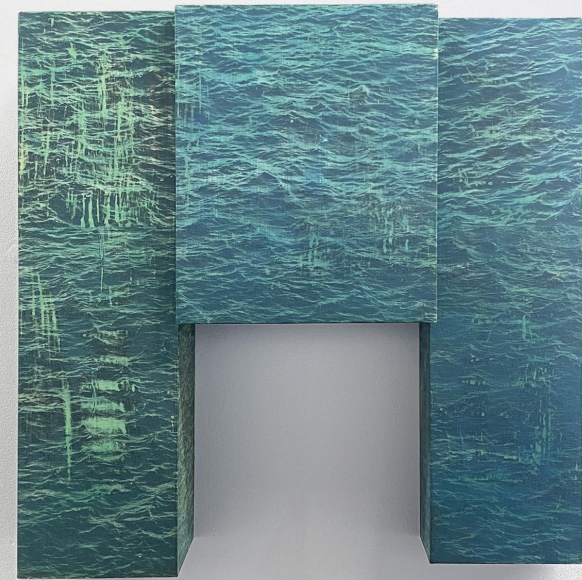


*PWP 205*, 1992, Acrylic on wood, 43.7 x 97.7 x 9.8 cm



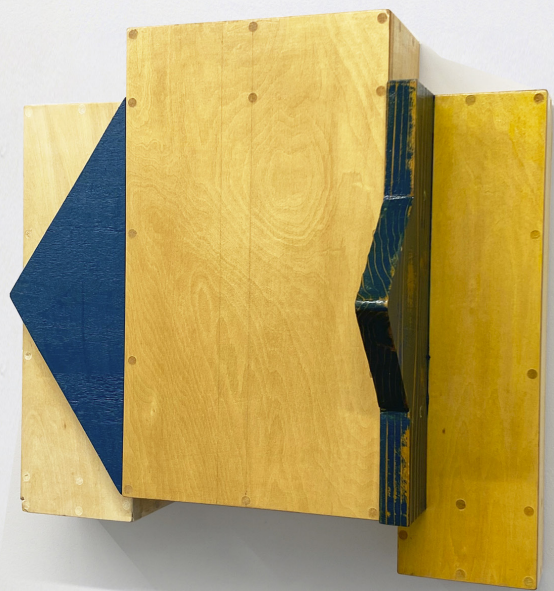


*Minimal Art*, 1992, Pencil and acrylic on wood, 29 x 53.1 x 9.2 cm



*Upright Sea*, 1998, Acrylic and pasted photograph on wood, 53.3 x 53.3 x 14.8 cm





鉛筆と現実界 | Pencil and The Real, 1992, Pencil and acrylic on wood, 53.6 x 53.6 x 23.5 cm



鉛筆とバーナー(現実世界) | Pencil and Burner (The Real), 1992, Pencil and acrylic on burned wood, 59.5 x 63.5 x 8 cm



## An Unlikely Prelude to Post-Painting Painting: Hikosaka Naoyoshi and Three Modes of Seeing, 1969–1973 Reiko Tomii

### Introduction: Hikosaka Naoyoshi's *Practice by Wood Painting*

Widely known for his radical performative work, *Floor Event* (1970–75), Hikosaka Naoyoshi (b. 1946) is an important practitioner in global conceptualism (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> He was a central member of Bikyōtō (short for Artists Joint-Struggle Committee), a collective that was established in 1969 amid the nationwide antiwar, antiestablishment, and student movements to pursue institutional critique through activist strategies. Hikosaka served as the group's lead theorist in its reincarnation after the failed 1970 struggle against the extension of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty almost completely brought down New Left activism in Japan. *Floor Event* was conceived and executed in this post-1970 phase of Bikyōtō, as was the theoretical investigation of photography he conducted under the auspice of the Group of Five *Revolution* Photobook Editorial Committee (a Bikyōtō subgroup).<sup>2</sup> These activities make Hikosaka a major figure of Non-Art (*Hi-geijutsu*) that characterized the dematerialized state of postwar Japanese art from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s.



(fig. 1) Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Floor Event*, 1970, Vintage photograph documenting performance art, 12.1 x 19.7 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Misa Shin Gallery

Less known outside Japan is what came after Hikosaka's Non-Art phase: *Practice by Wood Painting* is a vast body of work initiated in 1977 that continues to this day. Through this series, the artist has systemically and diligently explored the viability of painting, the medium he once rejected and dismantled—put to death—with *Floor Event*. His return to “painting” via “non-painting” (namely, that which is not painting)<sup>3</sup> makes Hikosaka an intriguing subject to study in the context of “painting, circa 1970.”

Above all, *Practice by Wood Painting* (hereafter abbreviated as *PWP*) is a strange object, contradicting a number of our assumptions of what a painting should look like (fig. 2). It is not made on canvas, but on wood, as its title unambiguously declares.<sup>4</sup> This fact is not concealed in practice, either, as the artist customarily applies a film-thin layer of transparent or opaque acrylic that reveals not only the material of the support but also its construction made up of vertical wood components. In the mature iterations of the series, the irregular shape of the picture support, each component is given a different height and bottom contour—either

rounded or horizontally straight. The surface of the individual components is flat, but the overall surface of the painting is not flat, because each component is given a varying depth, which generates a series of shallow, seemingly random steps. Laid over this disjunctive support is an often-transparent variegated skin of paint that creates an overall design of abstraction marked by angular and fractal forms exuding a hard-to-decipher yet assured aesthetic sensibility.



(fig. 2) Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Practice by Wood Painting*, PWP 50 (*zuni son*), 1981, Acrylic on wood, 149 x 109.4 x 10.7cm  
Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, photo: Hayashi Tatsuo

Hikosaka's *PWP* series, which began in 1977 and reached its mature form by 1981, roughly coincided with the return to painting in many areas of the world with the waning of the sober and often dispassionate tendencies characteristic of conceptualism. Still, its unusual appearance immediately alerts us to the necessity of carefully studying its genesis and local contexts. Most significantly, the Greenbergian concept of flatness, a prime driver that propelled gestural abstraction into minimal and frequently monochrome painting, did not take root in the art discourse of 1960s Japan,<sup>5</sup> even though the descriptive concept of *heimen* (literally "flat surface") entered the vocabulary of contemporary art to replace *kaiga* (painting) in the late 1960s, assuming the sense of "two-dimensional work." It should be noted that this terminological conversion, which did not so much represent a theoretical concern as a practical concern, followed the renaming of *chōkoku* (sculpture) as *rittai* (literally "standing entity") or "three-dimensional work." Japan's open-call exhibition system, which helped the mainstreaming of contemporary art,<sup>6</sup> needed more explicit categories than *kaiga* and *chōkoku* (sculpture) in the face of the diversifying and category-defying vanguard practices. Only in the late 1970s did the critical concept of flatness in the vein of the modernist flatness enter the discourse of contemporary painting in Japan.<sup>7</sup> Critics thereby retroactively acknowledged such pioneering "flatness" painters as Yamada Masaaki and Kusama Yayoi, as well as younger artists who increasingly accepted minimalist flatness as their starting point, as demonstrated by the

works of Hori Kosai, Tatsuno Toeko, and Nakamura Kazumi, among others. Following this was a burst of "new wave" painting that paralleled American Neo Expressionism and European Transavanguardia, which distanced itself from the earlier local lineage of flat painting.<sup>8</sup>

This local development represents a "similar yet dissimilar" manifestation that exemplifies the state of "international contemporaneity" within a world art history of postwar painting.<sup>9</sup> Even within this local context, however, Hikosaka's *PWP* stands out because he refused to obey the new orthodoxy of flatness. Indeed, his unyielding refusal of the accepted convention of flatness forced him into a lonesome position among his own and subsequent generations. Yet, combined with his committed exploration of what painting could still be, he managed to reconceptualize and reconstitute a version of painting—a distinct type of "post-painting painting"<sup>10</sup>—an approach to painting that became possible after the so-called death of the medium.

Hikosaka's path to post-painting painting was complex: it unexpectedly began in his non-painting phase, from 1969 to 1974. During this period, he laid the theoretical foundation for his subsequent post-painting painting in several ways: 1) trying to understand the basic nature of painting by deconstructing it; 2) learning to scrutinize *jimei-sei* or "self-evidence," that permeates both life and art through *Floor Event*; and 3) interpreting non-painting and other non-art acts in the context of art history through the concept of *purakutisu* (practice). Characteristically, this process was, as I will demonstrate in this article, informed by a practitioner's eye that "sees to think." A symbiotic relationship between theory and practice would continue into Hikosaka's post-painting painting phase, as he progressed toward formulating a new pictorial vocabulary, as demonstrated by a set of numerous drawings in the mid- to late 1970s now housed at the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art.

As the chief theorist of post-1970 *Bikyōtō*, Hikosaka wrote and published a considerable amount; however, there is scant textual trace of his thoughts on his own work.<sup>11</sup> Instead, we need to "read" his painting and non-painting practices to uncover logics and ideas hidden behind the works. Which is to say, we will have to see what he saw in his own practices, and sometimes those of others, and what he thought about them. It will thus be necessary to augment this study with biographical and contextual readings.

## 1. Seeing Painting on the Wall

Looking at Hikosaka's 1970s trajectory, one of the questions we may have is why Hikosaka returned to "painting" after making such an innovative and radical start with *Floor Event*. One biographical factor was his familiarity and engagement with oil painting since his childhood.<sup>12</sup> Born in 1946 in Tokyo, Hikosaka began studying oil painting as a first grader under Kiyohara Keiichi, a salon painter famed for his realistic rendering of roosters, and gained the foundation of painting through the teens.<sup>13</sup> A sickly child who suffered a few prolonged hospitalizations through his teens, he pored over books of literature and philosophy, while teaching himself Eastern and Western art history by closely examining *bijutsu zenshū*, literally "art compilation volumes," that became a respectable fixture of postwar middle-class households. Prior to going to art school, to some extent he also became aware of the development of postwar art through art magazines. For example, he distinctly remembers seeing articles on such American artists as Pollock and Rauschenberg by art critic Tōno Yoshiaki that he found in back issues of the magazine *Mizue's*, which his mother brought home from the library of a middle school where she taught Japanese.

In 1967, Hikosaka's poor health became a hindrance to his dream of going to medical school in order to help treat his younger brother's cerebral palsy. Instead, Hikosaka decided to become an artist. But as early as the spring of 1967, when two of his paintings were accepted to



the annual salon of the Kōfū Society, a reputable art organization with which his teacher Kiyohara had long been affiliated, he was already experiencing doubts about painting. He recalls feeling disgusted at his works hanging alongside others in a three-tier salon style. After the show, he burnt his two works.

In April 1967, Hikosaka entered Tama Art University (hereafter abbreviated as Tamabi) in Tokyo as an oil-painting major. He took advantage of Japan's college campus culture during his freshman and sophomore years, actively pursuing the possibility of expression outside painting and expanding his horizon of knowledge beyond the classroom. He joined three campus circles focusing on literature, film, and mural painting. Off campus, he frequented underground cultural scenes, including Sōgetsu Art Center's film series. Through his off-campus activities, he became acquainted with Hori Kosai, a fellow painting major at Tamabi and the future chairman of Bikyōtō, who encouraged Hikosaka to stand on stage during performances put on by his theatre troupe.

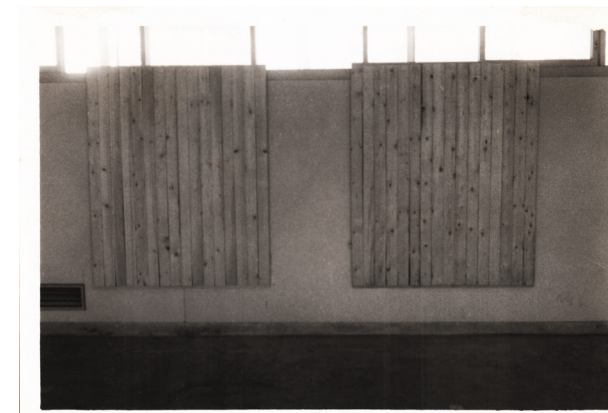
During Hikosaka's time at Tamabi, contemporary art practices were changing rapidly. For the budding artist, it was shocking to witness the dematerializing state of contemporary art both in Japan and abroad. In what he would later characterize as a "Minimal shock," he was particularly unnerved by the reduction of painting and sculpture to the bare fundamentals.<sup>14</sup> To understand its ramifications, he put minimalism to the test in a series of paintings that included *Ying and Yang: Two Dimensions* of 1968. It was a large 162 x 130 cm black-on-white rectangular canvas with dozens of acrylic coats patiently applied with a spray gun. The following year, he further reduced painting to its bare-bone form, that is, canvas laid over a wood stretcher. (These works were presented on campus at the time.) Hikosaka's experiment paralleled that of his associate Hori Kosai, who was then exploring the relationship of canvas and stretcher, one example of which was submitted to the 1969 Mainichi Contemporary's new open-call section, *Rittai B*, for three-dimensional non-sculpture works.<sup>15</sup>

Among this set of experiments, one in particular sustained Hikosaka's attention: a thin canvas stretched over a frame, in which he could see the wall behind the canvas. The next step was taken in June 1969, when Zōkeidō, an activist group prefiguring Bikyōtō, held a group exhibition within the barricaded campus of Tamabi. Hikosaka accentuated the see-through effect by replacing canvas with a sheet of transparent vinyl, which constituted the first step in his three-step deconstruction. In the second step, he inserted a wood panel within the frame to hide the exposed wall. In the third step, he dropped the vinyl sheet on the floor with the panel frame left on the wall. The last two elements constituted his final work (not extant but photographically documented) (figs. 3, 4). And these two elements became the prototypes of *Floor Event* and *Practice by Wood Painting*, respectively.

Hikosaka made no recorded comment about this experiment at the time. Still, with the benefit of hindsight we can recognize a singular theoretical position the young artist had unearthed. In a nutshell, he had set aside the modernist premise of painting as an autonomous, self-sufficient entity (on which Greenberg built his formalist criticism). Instead, he literally put painting on the wall and saw it in relation to the wall. Generally speaking, when we look at a painting, a painting alone is visible to our modern eye, which negates from sight the wall that holds the painting. Though superfluous to painting as an autonomous object, the wall does serve as an indispensable architectural support of painting. Looking back in history, East and West, painting was frequently imbedded in architecture. In this sense, Hikosaka's deconstruction of painting inherently encompassed a historical dimension, recalling the memory of an earlier mode of relationship between painting and architecture.

On reflection, Hikosaka soon identified a ramification of his 1969 work in reference to the history of perspective. Perspective was of special importance to him, due to his physical

imperfection, a squint on his right eye. Squinted, one cannot see an object in depth, a critical shortcoming for an artist. To correct his vision, Hikosaka had a surgery on his right eye in the spring of 1969 right before he joined the barricading students at Tamabi. The surgery was followed by a self-imposed training to see correctly with both eyes. In his avid study of perspective, an important source was an encyclopedia entry in the authoritative *Sekai dai hyakka jiten* (World encyclopedia), a 33-volume publication from 1972 by Heibon-sha.<sup>16</sup> In its fourth volume, Hikosaka found a three-page-long survey of perspective by Yoshikawa Itsuji and Yonezawa Yoshiho, two acclaimed art historians who had long taught at the University of Tokyo. The volume (indeed the whole set) remains in the artist's library today. The relevant pages are indicative of what the young artist learned from it, showing three different sets of underlines in black, blue, and red pencil, some of which overlap, indicating his repeated reading.



(fig. 3) Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Untitled (Wood Wall)*, 1969, Wood panels, lost; documentary photograph, Courtesy of the artist and Misa Shin Gallery



(fig. 4) Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Transparent Vinyl (Membrane)*, 1969, Vinyl sheet on the floor, lost; documentary photograph, Courtesy of the artist and Misa Shin Gallery

The entry is titled *enkin-hō* (遠近法), the Japanese translation for “perspective methods,” which literally means “method (法) for [portraying] far (遠) and near (近).” It consists of two sections, “West” and “East,” authored by Yoshikawa and Yonezawa, reflecting their respective specialties. Yoshikawa’s rather dry prose begins by acknowledging the invention of a scientific perspective system in Renaissance Italy, while prefacing its discussion with a substantial description of pre-Renaissance methods in the West, which must have attracted Hikosaka’s attention, as indicated by his underlines. In the discussion of scientific perspective, his marking also suggests that he took note of Alberti’s idea of “placing a thin membrane between the eye and the object, which was subsequently adopted as a glass pane used by Leonardo and Dürer.”<sup>17</sup> Fascinatingly, the line he drew below “thin membrane” is markedly thicker, accompanied in the margin by the word “frame” (*waku*) and a double circle added for a special emphasis. It is likely that he saw a parallel between Alberti’s method and his 1969 work.

The “East” section by Yonezawa, an eminent specialist of Chinese landscape painting, spans from ancient times to the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), when the “three distances” method was perfected. The high point of his narrative is given to Zong Bing, a 5th-century artist. Yonezawa explains enthusiastically, in contrast to Yoshikawa’s neutral tone:

The discovery of a “seeing through” [*tōshi*] method as explained in Zong Bing, a literati painter in the Liu Song dynasty [420–479], in his *Huashanshuixu* [*Preface on Landscape Painting*] is of particular note in the development of perspective in the East. According to Zong Bing, if one stretches a thin white silk cloth on a frame and sees remote mountains through it, any gigantic mountains can be placed in a small picture, thereby effortlessly transferring the far-near relationship [*enkin*] onto flat surface.<sup>18</sup> This is exactly the same method as the Western “seeing through” method [i.e., one-point perspective] discovered in the Renaissance, but only ten centuries earlier. As has been touted by Chinese art historians, this is indeed a great invention (pp. 62–63).

It should be noted that *tōshi* (透視), literally “seeing through,” is customarily reserved to signify the Western “one-point/linear perspective,” but the Chinese scholar intentionally used it for its literal meaning, the usage that strongly resonates with Hikosaka’s vinyl-stretched frame. Although few underlines are found in this part, Hikosaka echoed Yonezawa’s entry in his 1980 essay, “Perspective Methods in Joseon-Dynasty Folk Painting”:

When we compare Eastern perspective methods with Western ones, their respective aerial perspectives are almost the same. As are their revolutionary methods of “seeing through” [*tōshi*]. The fundamental differences lie in the [Eastern] “three distances” method and the [Western] linear perspective.

In the fifth century, Zong Ding, a literati painter of the Six Dynasties (Song), discovered a method to see distant mountains through white silk stretched on a frame, whereas in the fifteenth century, Alberti, a Florentine painter, considered the picture plane as a window that opened to the world and invented a method of seeing through a thin membrane between the eye and the object.<sup>19</sup>

Although Hikosaka’s study of perspective postdated his 1969 experiment, he likely became aware of the work’s significance by the time he returned to painting in 1977. Its historical legitimacy may

have encouraged him to reexamine his 1969 experiment as a starting point for his post-painting exploration.

Hikosaka’s interest in the history of perspective prompts us to bring a local element into this discussion: Tricky Art and its icon, Takamatsu Jirō’s *Perspective* series. What I have termed Tricky Art, or the so-called “tricky” (*torikki*) tendency, arose in the latter half of the 1960s, and was characterized by a shared interest in visual trickery in two- and three-dimensional forms.<sup>20</sup> It attracted attention from two critics, Nakahara Yūsuke and Ishiko Junzō, who co-organized the landmark exhibition, *Tricks and Vision: Stolen Eyes*, for Tokyo Gallery and Muramatsu Gallery in 1968.<sup>21</sup> Somewhat comparable to Op Art in the West, Tricky Art in Japan was less retinal and more cognitive, as codified by Nakahara and Ishiko, who followed the footsteps of Miyakawa Atsushi, an influential critic who articulated the issue of seeing in reference to French theory and philosophy.<sup>22</sup> In practice, the indisputable leader of Tricky Art was Takamatsu Jirō, a former Hi Red Center member who developed his Anti-Art engagement with “point” into a broader exploration of *ninshiki* (cognition).<sup>23</sup> He was also a Tamabi instructor and the star of the then-mainstreaming contemporary art, and thus a familiar figure for the young Hikosaka. Takamatsu’s *Perspective* series of the late 1960s, included in *Tricks and Vision*, exemplified Tricky Art’s investigation into the uneasy relationship between the two-dimensional painting and the three-dimensional world that painting was historically tasked to represent. By returning a disfigured representation of, say, a dining table set that exists as an illusion in two dimensions back to three dimensions, Takamatsu thereby exposed the visual trickery wrought by the codified seeing of linear perspective.

Simply put, Takamatsu critiqued the Renaissance perspective which had been transplanted to Japan and internalized as the system of seeing in painting by calling it no more than a visual trick. Yet, Takamatsu’s series in particular and Tricky Art in general can be faulted for trivializing the medium of painting by literalizing its pictorial technology. Hikosaka remembers not taking his instructor’s work seriously at the time, for he deemed works based on such visual tricks were not authentic expressions. In retrospect, his 1969 work offers a rebuke to Takamatsu’s literalism. It is not an overstatement to say that linear perspective was a ground zero for modernist painting, which defied the Albertian premise of painting’s pictorial support as window onto a world and instead embraced the idea of painting as an autonomous world unto itself. In a sense, Hikosaka recalled and even reclaimed the rich legacy of perspective methods worldwide by his inspired move—literally introducing a vinyl-made transparent “see through” picture plane—in order to put “painting” in a historical perspective, so to speak.

## 2. Seeing “Self-Evidence” (*Jimei-sei*) on the Floor

In June 1969, Hikosaka saw a painting on the wall and eventually saw it in a historical perspective. It would take him as long as eight years to return to the issues raised by this early experiment in his post-painting painting phase. In the meantime, he decided to give up painting and pursue photography as his primary means of expression. He put this decision into practice in *Floor Event* of October 1970.

Many things happened over the course of more than fifteen months between the June 1969 experiment and the first *Floor Event*. By the spring of 1970, the viability of the protest movement had almost evaporated under the state’s relentless deployment of forces, as had the formerly lively political life of Bikyōtō. Hikosaka dropped out of Tamabi with an intention to extend Bikyōtō’s struggle in the realm of art, thereafter serving as the group’s chief theorist and strategist. Although now out of school, he had gained a mentor during the first phase of Bikyōtō: he had met with Tone Yasunao, a Tokyo Fluxus musician-theorist, through the group’s recruitment efforts in the summer-fall of 1969. Even though Tone did not join the group until the following

year, he became Hikosaka's mentor and later his collaborator. Thanks to Tone, Hikosaka greatly expanded his engagement with philosophy and with history, while learning about the instruction-based events and performances of John Cage and Fluxus.

In his first concrete action plan for the post-1970 phase of Bikyōtō, Hikosaka organized a subgroup Bikyōtō Revolution Committee to produce a series of solo exhibitions of members' work outside standard institutional sites of the museum and gallery with admission charged during the year 1971. (Through 1974, he would organize a few more subgroups to investigate the institution of art, explore photography, and secure a site of discourse.)

Hikosaka planned to stage his 1971 solo exhibition at his bedroom in his parents' house. His initial idea was a photographic project that involved a performance element and an installation element. It would consist of two separate parts. The first part would take place as preparation in October 1970. The performance component would involve him pouring latex (a liquid form of rubber suspended in ammonium) in his room over the *tatami* floor of his bedroom and the wooden veranda that extended into his backyard. The act would "turn my room all white," generating the installation component. The process would be photographed for the second part that would take place in May 1971 as his solo exhibition under the auspice of Bikyōtō Revolution Committee. The exhibition would entail selected prints from the earlier shoot as a sort of time-lapse "information art" (as he later called it) presented in the very same room.

Hikosaka's starting point was a simple idea of "turning my room all white." Straightforward as it may sound, the artist improvised and adjusted the work in the process. The most crucial adjustment, prompted by Tone, was to switch the poured substance from plaster, the material he had originally planned to use, to latex. While plaster was a familiar art supply that any art student would know, latex was a relatively unfamiliar industrial material. Neither Hikosaka nor Tone were aware of Linda Benglis's 1969 post-minimalist work *Contraband*, for which the New York artist poured latex mixed with pigment on the floor. This is a case of "resonance" without connection. That is to say, a resonance between the form and materiality of two geographically dispersed works in which the artist, Hikosaka, had no knowledge of Benglis's use of latex one year earlier. (For that matter, until much later, he was unaware of a whole range of experimental floor works by Benglis's female peers in New York and elsewhere into the 1970s<sup>24</sup> contemporaneous with his floor work.) Although similar materially, their intentions were different: whereas Benglis used latex as a binder to create a painting on the floor, Hikosaka was less interested in painting: the act of pouring was primarily intended as a performative event.

Latex proved to be a superb material for Hikoaka's event. Not only was it far less damaging to the *tatami* mats of his room (as the dried coat of latex could be relatively easily ripped off from the floor); it also changed its appearance from opaque to translucent to transparent as it dried, thereby extending the time-based event beyond the conclusion of the artist's pouring act that lasted merely fifteen minutes or so. The changing appearance prompted Hikosaka to take up the camera himself at this second stage, after his pouring act was documented by Tone, who pressed the shutter of a 35-mm camera set up in the garden.

The two deployed completely different modes of photography. Tone pressed the shutter for the artist who could not do so himself, documenting the pouring event in an "objective" and "mechanical" way. It was reminiscent of serial photo-based conceptualism, representative examples of which were seen at *Tokyo Biennale 1970* (for example, Jan Dibbets, Nomura Hitoshi, and Kawaguchi Tatsuo). After the initial pouring event, as Hikosaka lived his everyday life in the latex-covered room over the next nine days, he began to intently study the changing state of the latex. In an attempt to capture the changing sceneries in his room, his photographic style significantly departed from Tone's objective documentary approach (fig. 5). As the days passed

by, Hikosaka increasingly focused his camera on the *tatami* or the wooden veranda floorboards emerging from beneath the latex coat, as well as the relationship between the latex and such everyday objects as a kerosene stove and a pair of slippers immobilized in the sea of latex. Eventually, on the morning of the tenth day, the artist saw a luminous glow of the latex skin in the morning sun that could not possibly be captured by the camera's mechanical eye. He wanted to share this discovery with Hori Kosai, a post-1970 Bikyōtō member, with whom he was in close contact in those days. It so happened that when Hikosaka telephoned, Hori was not at home. Unable to show this stunning sight to Hori, Hikosaka was utterly disappointed, and decided to change his plan and restage the event to share it with others physically, instead of photographically sharing it, for his *Revolution* exhibition in May 1971. Ultimately, Hikosaka's most significant divergence from his plan would be his decision to reenact *Floor Event* a second time. This in turn sparked his experiments with variations; all told, it was performed eight times, alone or in combination with other elements, through 1975.<sup>25</sup>



(fig. 5) Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Floor Event*, 1970, Vintage photographs documenting performance art, Courtesy the artist and Misa Shin Gallery

The process of making and documenting *Floor Event* prompted Hikosaka to reflect on the theoretical ramifications of using the floor as a technical support through photography. From the beginning, *Floor Event* was premised on dissimulation, as conveyed by the artist's remark, "I wanted to turn the room all white." The camera's viewfinder helped Hikosaka to focus and frame his gaze, transforming the floor into a site of slow reflection. By October 1972, when he published his "instructions" for "Floor, Sea, and Tool," in the contemporary art monthly *Bijutsu techō*, Hikosaka defined the object of his floor experiment: "self-evidence" (*jimei-sei*).<sup>26</sup> In poetic prose (see fig. 6 and Translation 1) he wrote:

The floor we stand on is the most self-evident plane for us because it supports our physical beings. In comparison, the walls and the ceiling of this room appear too lacking in terms of self-evidence.

We gaze too intently at what cannot be rendered self-evident. Therefore, we don't like to gaze again at what has become self-evident.



彦坂尚高		
床	海	道具
床は あなたによって ある透明な物質で おおわれる	海は あなたによって 見つめられる  われわれが見つめる海 は、われわれの環境の 外感をかたちづくるゆ えに、われわれの視点 の高さに、常に、そそ り立ちつく。それに くらべれば、天空と、 大地は、われわれの視 点の高さに、無頓着で ありすぎるようにすら 見える	道具は あなたによって 運搬され自体を目的として 運ばれる
われわれが立っている 床は、われわれの物理 的存在を支えている ゆえに、われわれにと って最も自明な平面と なっている。床にくら べれば、この室の壁や 天井は、自明性を欠陥 しすぎているようにす ら見える	あなたがたは そそり立つ海から 電機によって 天空と陸地を 排除する	あなたによって 運搬され自体を目的として 運ばれる
透明な物質でおおわれた床	われわれの環境であること をやめてしまおう。それ はわれわれの対象と化 してしまえばいい。そ れに類する環境をも って、われわれの前 にたちあらわれてきて しよう。それゆえ、それ 類する環境を排除して しよう。それゆえ、われ われは、われわれの環境 を記録しようとする。	に位置をしめる道具は、 われわれの身体とな りすぎているゆえに、精 神をも規定しすぎている。 道具にくらべれば、 恋人、妻、子、親、兄 弟は、あまりにも別の 存在としての意志をも ちすぎているようにす ら見える。
床をつつ透明な物質	天空も 大地もない 海	あなたによって 生活から切りはなされ 目的をもたないゆえに 再び元の生活へと 送り返される物体
床と 透明な物質は同時に あなたによって 覆われる	水平線も 海岸線もない 海	生活のなかで、われわ れは道具を支配しすぎ ている。支配されるこ とから、支配されるこ とへと、無目的に運ば れる物体。
自明性をおおひ、もう ひとつの自明性。自明 性におおわれた、もう ひとつの自明性	われわれは、対象固有 の環境を排除すること によって、それを、わ れわれの環境として記 述する。	運ばれる道具は あなたによって
床を おおひ もうひとつの床	海の記憶は あなたによって 海面に対して垂直な壁に 投影される	"REVOLUTION"という言葉で、つつまれる
床に つつまれた もうひとつの床	投影された海の記憶	"REVOLUTION"と名づけられ、運ばれる物体

(fig. 6) Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Floor, Sea, and Tool*, As reproduced in Bijutsu techō, no. 359 (October 1972)

The notion of "self-evidence" was closely entwined with the institution (*seido*) of art. As I have discussed elsewhere, Bikyōtō's institutional critique was based on the institution discourse (*seido-ron*) in 1960s Japan, where "the institution" was understood not only as social system or infrastructure, as in the museum and the gallery, but also in terms of received ideas, such as what "painting" or "sculpture" should look like.<sup>27</sup> Within this context, to question the status quo of the institution was to question its "self-evidence." It is the basic starting point for any kind of institutional critique, especially for the conceptual manifestation of institution, i.e., accepted cognitive patterns.

This broader understanding of the institution enabled Bikyōtō to shift its battlefield of institutional critique from the (more external) political realm to the (more internal) aesthetic realm in 1970. The goal of interrogating the "internal institution" (*uchinaru seido*), that Bikyōtō Revolution Committee set for themselves in the 1971 solo exhibition series, was precisely that: to confront the idea of the institution, in this case the museum or gallery, that would arise in the mind of artists whenever they started contemplating showing their works. Their decision to

stage their solo exhibitions outside the institutional venues was not motivated by a superficial "anti-museum" sentiment but by a more rigorous theoretical concern. Venues used by the artists who presented solo exhibitions ranged from an underground theater (Hori), Tamabi's campus (Tajima Renji), a riverbank of the Tama River (Yamanaka Nobuo), and at home (Hikosaka). (Tone, a member of Bikyōtō Revolution Committee, did not stage a solo show.) Of the four artists, only Hikosaka would subsequently address the theoretical issue of self-evidence per se.

Latex was more advantageous than plaster in Hikosaka's theorization. The white surface of plaster would have certainly generated an immense effect of dissimulation, turning the most self-evident sight of his room into something utterly unfamiliar. Yet, by making the floor invisible, plaster would be unable to illuminate its self-evidence. In contrast, the poured latex first dissimilated the familiar room, just as plaster, and then gradually revealed the *tatami* mats and the wood veranda. These elements became visible, yet their self-evidence was put in "brackets" by the latex skin, as it were, immensely amplifying the sense of dissimulation. The act of gazing at the floor through the latex membrane was intensified by the artificially enhanced focus of the photographic gaze. As Hikosaka shifted his gaze in an attempt to see more closely, the camera moved freely, hovering above the *tatami* mats or looking up at the suddenly monumental stove, or crouching down to inspect the wood flooring of the veranda. A quiet excitement of seeing the familiar objects afresh thanks to the dissimulating effect of the drying latex is palpable.

Notably, Hikosaka was deeply influenced by Husserl's advocating for "philosophy as a rigorous science,"<sup>28</sup> aspiring to shape his own practice into its own kind of "rigorous science." Although Hikosaka himself did not link his investigation of self-evidence to Husserlian phenomenology in writing, it is a fitting reference given his ardent study of the philosopher's work through a reading group he had co-organized with Tone after their meeting in 1969. Fundamental to Husserl's thinking is the method of "bracketing" out (or *epoché*) of objects other than as they are received as phenomena in consciousness, a method he first developed around 1906. Through "bracketing", the phenomenologist can "focus on the essential structures that allow the objects naively taken for granted in the 'natural attitude' . . . to 'constitute themselves' in consciousness",<sup>29</sup> with the outcome of this process being termed a "phenomenological reduction." Herein the "natural attitude," as defined by Husserl, concerns "everyday life as a whole as well as the positive sciences operate," and seen with this attitude, "the world is for us the self-evidently existing universe of realities which are continuously before us in unquestioned givenness."<sup>30</sup>

If *Floor Event* of 1970 constituted a phenomenological reduction that revealed the self-evidence of the floor, Hikosaka soon moved to present his case to the audience in a more explicit manner by creating "variations" on the "thematic act" of pouring latex. In February 1972, for his solo exhibition at galerie 16 in Kyoto, he devised a significant variation for *Floor Event* by combining it with *Delivery Event*, for which he transported the whole room, consisting of the *tatami* mats and all the fixtures on them. This act of delivery, which undermined the self-evidence of the floor as a stable foundation of one's quotidian existence, set a stage for the act of pouring latex on the floor, to constitute a double bracketing. Four months later, Hikosaka made another important variation called *Carpet Music* for a group concert, *The White Anthology*, at Lunami Gallery in Tokyo. (In addition to Hikosaka, the presenters included Tone, along with the vanguard dancer Kuni Chiya and the Anti-Art practitioner Kazekura Shō.) In this work, a carpet that stood in for the *tatami* mats in his room was contributed by Tone. The work began with Hikosaka removing Tone's carpet from his apartment and delivering it to the gallery, thereby disturbing its self-evidence. The carpet was then laid out for the audience on the gallery floor. It was turned upside down five times during the course of the all-night program. As a dawn finale, the artist poured

latex onto the carpet with the audience still present, once again disturbing the self-evidence of the floor. The last act was exceptionally violent, because Hikosaka exposed the audience to the foul smell of ammonium, a latex binder, forcing them to flee onto the street.

The last time Hikosaka undertook *Floor Event* with his *tatami* mats was 1975, when he reprised his gallerie 16 exhibition for the Paris Biennale. At the conclusion of the project, the *tatami* mats and all the fixtures of his room were shipped back from Paris to Yokohama, where the customs office confiscated and burned the *tatami*, which they deemed a banned agricultural product. Losing his “floor,” Hikosaka had no choice but to conclude his *Floor Event* cycle that he had developed during the first half of the 1970s.

### 3. Seeing “Practice” (*Purakutisu*) in History

By 1975, the year that saw the end of *Floor Event*, Bikyōtō was effectively over; its final project undertaken by Bikyōtō Revolution Committee II involved making a pact of “not making or showing one’s work” throughout the whole year of 1974. Entering the second half of the 1970s, Hikosaka sorely needed a new start as an individual artist. The driving force for a new development was “practice” or *purakutisu* (プラクティス), rendered in *katakana* syllabary to indicate an imported word. From 1975 to 1977, he devised a rapid succession of “practices.” The first was *Practice by 51 Sounds* (1975–76), a series based on fifty-one Japanese phonetics; the ensuing *Practice by Historicization* (1977) was a reprisal of his 1969 deconstruction of painting. These works led to *Practice by Wood Painting* in 1977, through which he eschewed the self-evidence of painting—made with pigment on a rectangular canvas support.

In terms of Hikosaka’s title terminology after 1975, “practice” replaced “event” and “music”—the terms with which he had previously aligned himself within the transnational lineage of John Cage and Fluxus via Tone. The transition was more than semantic, for as we shall see “practice” was the concept that he himself articulated in response to the local history of performance art to which his *Floor Event* unmistakably belonged. (This transition enabled him to reconsider painting, the medium he had dismantled and rejected.) Hikosaka’s idea of “practice” differs by a few shades from the conventional English definition of the word. In fact, his starting point was Greek philosophy—in particular, the three modalities of human activity posited by Aristotle: *theoria* (theorizing), *poiesis* (making), and *praxis* (acting). (Hereafter, when Hikosaka’s specific use of the word is referenced, “practice” is enclosed in quotes to differentiate it from conventional uses of the word.) In the aftermath of sober Non-Art, he recognized the Aristotelian *praxis* could fill the place of *poiesis*, or “making,” negated by Non-Art’s embrace of “not making.”

The key text that precipitated this shift is “Beyond the Closed Circle: What to Learn from Gutai’s Trajectory,” published in the August 1973 issue of *Bijutsu techō*.<sup>31</sup> Credited as the first substantial art-historical assessment of Gutai,<sup>32</sup> Hikosaka’s text is not so much a dispassionate study of the pioneering group as an artist’s urgent deliberation about what remained possible after contemporary art ran its course from Gutai to Anti-Art to Non-Art. Evidence that Hikosaka was already engaged with the question of the historical identity of recent art is found in his collaboration with Tone on the compilation of a massive 500-plus-page “Chronology: Five Decades of Contemporary Art,” published in the April and May 1972 issues of *Bijutsu techō*.<sup>33</sup> The dedicated study over eight months of primary documents and sources that could fill six pickup trucks<sup>34</sup> was part of an effort to build a “rigorous” body of knowledge from a practitioner’s perspective. As the short text accompanying the “Chronology” explains, the compilers’ intention was to create a kind of “temporal tableau” in which “we can discover *bijutsu* either as segments outside the art establishment or as ‘expressions’ not yet institutionalized, and visualize the

process of their transformation into ‘expressions’ socially integrated and fully institutionalized.”<sup>35</sup>

On the strength of this project and associated publications he worked on, some suggested that Hikosaka should become an art critic. However, his mind was set on being an artist, and when writing “Beyond the Closed Circle,” he looked to history in search of the possibility of expression. One of Hikosaka’s aims was to distance himself from Anti-Art and its proposition, “This is Art, too,” which had been advocated by Akasegawa Genpei and others in his *Model 1,000-Yen Note Incident* (1963–1974), partly for legal expediency in a real-life courtroom. The problem with Anti-Art, according to Hikosaka, was its utter inability to dismantle Art, with a capital A, or *geijutsu*.<sup>36</sup> Reflecting on *Cleaning Event* (1964) by Hi Red Center, a collective cofounded by Akasegawa, in which members engaged in an absurdly meticulous cleaning of the streets of Tokyo, Hikosaka elaborated his theory of “practice”:

Figuratively speaking, as opposed to saying “It is also Art [*geijutsu*] to clean the streets” (Nakanishi Natsuyuki on Hi Red Center in *Bijutsu Journal*, no. 56, 1966), an artist [*bijutsuka*, literally a “person engaged in making *bijutsu*”] may clean the street as a “practice” from the perspective of art [*bijutsu*]. Although both engaged in the same act of cleaning the streets, the former can constitute *poiesis* [making] but the latter cannot. Therefore, the former may result in a work of art [*sakuhin*], the latter may not.

Likewise, take writing. As opposed to saying “It is also art to write a text” or “A text is also art,” an artist may write a text as a “practice” from the perspective of art. The former is a work of art, the latter is not.<sup>37</sup>

Hikosaka’s exacting, even fastidious, logic was his attempt to counter Non-Art’s injunction against “making.” The idea of “practice,” for him, offered an escape route not only from “making” but also from “not making.” Mindful of the dominance of Non-Art, he must have been aware that Non-Art’s embrace of “not making” still resulted in a *sakuhin* (work of art), as amply demonstrated by Mono-ha, the originators of “not making.” In Japanese art, *sakuhin* was as potent yet as self-evident a notion in art discourse as *geijutsu* (Art) and *bijutsu* (art).<sup>38</sup>

This sets a stage for the next paragraphs, in which Hikosaka argues that art must be taken out of the realm of making:

My exacting attitude about the depth of the act of non-making and the realm of non-work may appear foolish to those who limit [the discussion about] the goal of an artist to “work” and “making.”

However, the space of “exhibition”—no, the space of “culture” swallows everything, giving it a golden sheen that is Art and permitting anything. Therein, the work merely exists as an entity, just like “gold” is a peculiar entity.

I suspect that we mistake this sucking power of *culture* for our act of making. If so, art is nothing but a black hall that swallows everything.<sup>39</sup>

With these words, Hikosaka extended his critique of Anti-Art to that of the avant-garde in general. Whether the avant-garde’s goal was to blur the boundary between art and life (the Western formulation) or descend to the everyday (the Japanese formulation posited by the critic Miyakawa Atsushi), Hikosaka argued, it merely expanded the territory of Art by the very act of negation. Indeed, the Anti-Art practitioners themselves knew of this dilemma; in 1961, Nakanishi



Natsuyuki, a Hi Red Center member, confessed his frustration about it: “we will eventually be sucked into a gaping maw: whatever we do will be absorbed into the category of Art [*geijutsu*]. It’s so frustrating.”<sup>40</sup> Echoing Nakanishi, Hikosaka had a clearer insight a decade later.

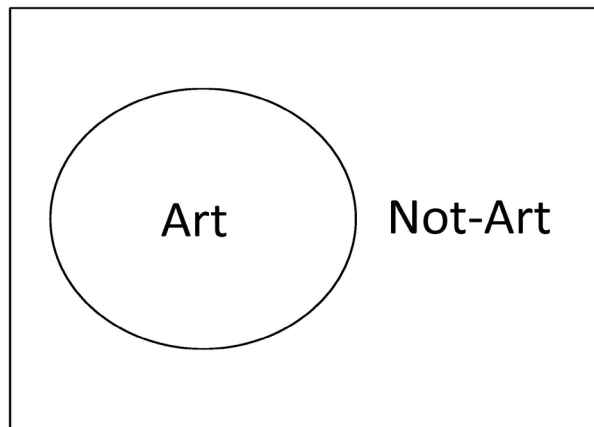
It was a dire indictment of the avant-garde. Aspiring to blur the boundary between life and art, the avant-garde ended up expanding the definition of Art (hence art) ad infinitum, thereby turning practically everything into Art. Without saying so explicitly, Hikosaka must have understood that if this situation eventuated, one of the three fundamental Aristotelian modes of human activity, *poiesis*, risked losing its relevance—if anything can be Art and art, what is the meaning of “making”? This was the prospect he could not possibly stand. In response, he offered a modest proposal that was intended to recover the potential of the badly undermined *poiesis*:

That is why the only way to make art art is for an artist to discover acts of non-making and spaces of non-making that underscored the infinite depth of art. Although it may sound contradictory, by continuously seeking them, we may, I wonder, be able to discover an occasion to positively affirm the human act of *poiesis*.<sup>41</sup>

If the avant-garde, on the one hand, saw art and life in antagonistic dichotomy and Non-Art, on the other, contrasted “making” and “not making” as hostile entities, Hikosaka differentiated himself from either by understanding such pairs as more complementary than incompatible. Hikosaka’s view was informed by mathematical set theory according to which “A” and “ $\bar{A}$ ” (not A) constitute the whole in an elemental Venn diagram (fig. 7). What was at stake for him was not so much seeing the boundary separating life and art as acknowledging it as self-evident but not absolute.

It is instructive here to repeat what Hikosaka and Tone wrote for “Chronology”:

We can discover *bijutsu* either as segments outside the art establishment or as “expressions” not yet institutionalized, and visualize the process of their transformation into ‘expressions’ socially integrated and fully institutionalized.



(fig. 7) *Art and Not Art*, Diagram drawn by Reiko Tomii

In this historicized and socialized view, the boundary of art and life (or, “not art”) is never absolute but mutable. On the surface, the expansion of Art/art in the avant-garde and Anti-Art may appear similar to Hikosaka and Tone’s view of expansion by social integration and institutionalization. But this is wrong: they envisioned the negotiation between the spheres of art and life (“not art”) in far greater terms; the accumulated efforts must be made by the both sides of art and life. After all, not everything cannot be art, because an actual murder in the name of art would still be a crime, as Akasegawa understood,<sup>42</sup> and most likely never be art, either. That is why the young Hikosaka contended that the realm of non-making should sustain and enrich that of making (art).

With this understanding, Hikosaka proposed that in order to break the impasse of Non-Art, the artist must look at both realms and cultivate “non-making” to recover “making.” This idea intimates his conception of the artist—an ultimate agent of *poiesis*. As such, he was committed to recovering “making,” while insisting on putting practice over theory. In search of an escape route from the binds of Non-Art and its dictate on “non-making” he took up *praxis*, while undertaking *theoria* based on seeing, as though harking back to the original meaning of *theoria*—to look at and speculate.

### In Lieu of Conclusion: Beyond Painting

To recap, these three modes of seeing—seeing painting on the wall, seeing “self-evidence” on the floor, and seeing “practice” in history—induced his theorizing and prepared him for *Practice by Wood Painting*. Theoretical exploration in the realm of non-painting may appear an unlikely prelude to the return to painting. However, if we borrow Hikosaka’s thinking, the realms of painting and non-painting complement each other and the depth of non-painting sustains and enriches that of painting. Hikosaka himself plumbed this depth by interrogating self-evidence in three ways using the artist’s basic instrument: seeing. In his 1969 project, Hikosaka dismantled the self-evidence of painting as an autonomous object. In his *Floor Event* series from 1970 to 1975, he endeavored to see through the self-evidence of the floor (and one’s environment) as an absolute given. And in his 1973 text, he constructed a method of “practice” to counter the self-evidence of making and non-making, art and non-art as being mutually exclusive.

Having discovered the complementary nature of non-making to making, it was logical for Hikosaka to return to making after five years of intensive investigation of non-making. The five years he had spent examining the notion of “self-evident” enabled him to return to the most self-evident in a twofold sense: painting as the most self-evident in art and abstraction that was privileged as the purist and thus most self-evident in modernism. The path he took back to painting was systemic, beginning with a reassessment of his 1969 project. In 1977, for his *Practice by Historicization*, he restaged the wood panel on the wall and the transparent vinyl on the floor. The fact that a “transparent matter” (in his 1973 instruction) on the floor was continuity between the 1969 vinyl and the 1970 latex would not have escaped his attention; but that was the path once taken. With the wood panel on the wall as his starting point, he moved on to reconstitute “painting” while seeking to avoid its self-evidence. Canvas was already gone, replaced by wood. The next thing to go was the rectangular support. He modified the rectangular support first with the 5-7-5-7-7 poetic meters of *waka* (fig. 8). The use of Japanese phonetics had begun with *Practice by 51 Sounds*, the series based on 51 Japanese phonetics, and the use of *waka* structure was adopted in reference to his mother who was a *waka* poet. Then he introduced the round bottom to some components (fig. 9). To lessen the weight of the wood support, he eventually devised a hollow box-like construction for components. (Prior to this, he used readymade lumbers, sometimes carving them out for weight reduction.) This made the production of large

scale works a practical possibility. Throughout this development, he preserved a token amount of flatness, winking at the modernist dictate, by making the surface of each component flat. (This feature sets his *PWP* apart from Frank Stella's relief paintings of the late 1980s onward that are informed by the deep space of Baroque painting.) As Hikosaka progressed with the exterior form (the support), he separately worked on the interior form by inventing a method of "regulated automatism," in which he first drew a complex web of triangular grids and randomly selected fragments of line before filling them in with colors (fig. 10).

Hikosaka thought of *PWP* as a "practice" that, in his theory, would not result in "work" as such. Implicit in his claim was that *PWP* was a "practice" but not necessarily a painting. His trepidation can be placed in the context of the newly introduced orthodoxy of modernist flatness of the late 1970s, which existed alongside the continued practice of Non-Art, especially its Mono-ha manifestation. What Hikosaka did not know then was that with his three seeings and theorizations, he stood at the threshold of postmodernism. It was not until the mid-1990s that he began to explore the non-painting potentials of his theorization. Central in this development was his willingness to take an external point of reference, an attitude consistent with his three modes of seeing. In seeing painting on the wall, he stood "outside" painting by bracketing its autonomy. In seeing "self-evidence" on the floor, he adopted the artificial eye of the camera that enabled him to at once lose and gain distance from the object. And in seeing "practice" in history, he stood outside the present to adopt a longer view. (Not coincidentally, a longer view helped him to coin the term "wood painting" in parallel to "rock painting.") His desire to adopt an external point of reference was a lesson he had drawn from Husserlian reduction to expose the self-evident, which allowed him to work with others in the non-painting world, as he repeatedly demonstrated in his works after 1995. One such example was *Tower of the Reconstruction* (2011), which he constructed for the temporary housing community of Minami Sōma and a related book project of *waka* anthology, in the devastating aftermaths of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami.<sup>43</sup>

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Together with *Floor Event*, Hikosaka's *Practice by Wood Painting* has a place in the world art history of postwar art. Not only because the Japanese artist contributed his theoretical and visual inventiveness, but also because his work points to the multiple endgames of modernism. If the historical framework of multiple modernisms has been often studied by focusing on their respective origins and developments, their consequences (endpoints), too, must be fully considered. Just as modernism manifested itself in many localized guises, its endgames, too, were explored differently accordingly to local exigencies. In the 1970s and onward, as the state of international contemporaneity grew significantly and the differences among locales have become less obvious. In this regard, Hikosaka's unwavering scrutiny of the self-evidence of art is a mirror that helps to bring into view the invisible structures and assumptions of modernism that are often unnoticed.

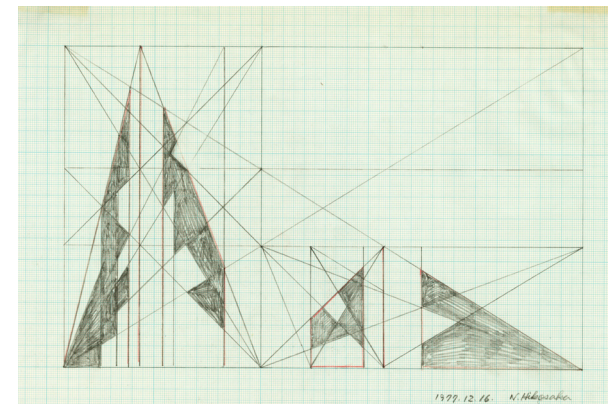
Furthermore, in the 1970s and onward, these explorations went on and brought about "contemporary art" to a global scale, with the significant expansion of the state of international contemporaneity. As the differences between locales have become seemingly less obvious, we may have come to assume a contemporary sameness as more self-evident. Hikosaka's unwavering scrutiny of the self-evidence of art, however, holds a mirror to that assumption, encouraging us to be vigilant in seeking the invisible structures and assumptions not only of the modern but also the contemporary that often go unnoticed.



(fig. 8)  
Hikosaka Naoyoshi  
*PWP 7*  
1977  
Acrylic on cedar wood  
136.5 x 135 cm  
Private collection  
Photo courtesy of the artist



(fig. 9)  
Hikosaka Naoyoshi  
*PWP 8 (Forest)*  
1978  
Acrylic on wood  
66.5 x 107.2 x 8.3cm  
Toyota Municipal Museum of Art  
Photo: Hayashi Tatsuo



(fig. 10)  
Hikosaka Naoyoshi  
*Untitled (Study for PWP)*  
1977  
Pencil, coloured pencil on section paper  
19 x 28.6 cm  
Toyota Municipal Museum of Art



## Floor

The floor is  
covered  
by you with  
a certain transparent matter

The floor we stand on is the most self-evident plane for us because it supports our physical beings. In comparison, the walls and the ceiling of this room appear too lacking in terms of self-evidence

The floor covered by the transparent matter

The transparent matter that covers the floor

We gaze too intently at what cannot be rendered self-evident. Therefore, we don't like to gaze again at what has become self-evident

The floor  
and the transparent matter are  
simultaneously  
gazed by you

Self-evidence that covers another self-evidence. Self-evidence covered by another self-evidence

The floor covers  
another floor

The floor covered by  
another floor

From Hikosaka Naoyoshi, "Yuka, umi, dōgu" [Floor, sea, tool] *Bijutsu techō*, no. 359 (October 1972). Translated by Reiko Tomii

## Notes

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Japanese and other East Asian names are given in the traditional order, surname first.

All translation from Japanese materials is by the author.

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- <sup>1</sup> *Floor Event* was included in the landmark exhibition *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* at Queens Museum of Art, New York, in 1999. The 1971 announcement card that incorporates a photo of *Floor Event No. 1* (1970) is featured on the cover of its exhibition catalogue. The early in-depth study is Reiko Tomii, "Gurōbaru-ka no naka de sengo Nihon bijutsu o kangaeru: Hikosaka Naoyoshi "'Furoa evento' o kēsu sutadī toshite"/"Thinking about Postwar Japanese Art in the Globalization: A Case Study with Hikosaka Naoyoshi's *Floor Event*," in *Wakayama Eiko sensei go-taikan kinen ronbunshū/Professor Eiko Wakayama Memorial Volume*, DVD/offprint (Osaka: Department of Western Art History, Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University, 2006). This has been updated in Tomii, "Hikosaka Naoyoshi's *Floor Event*: An Endgame of Modernism," and "Hikosaka Naoyoshi no 'Furoa evento': Kōi, shashin, kaiga" [Hikosaka Naoyoshi's *Floor Event*: Act, photography, painting], in *Hikosaka Naoyoshi: Floor Event No.1 1970*, booklet insert to portfolio (Tokyo: Misa Shin Gallery, 2017), 3–7 and 9–15.
  - <sup>2</sup> For Hikosaka's theory on photography, see Reiko Tomii, "Revolution in Bikyōtō's Photography: Naoyoshi Hikosaka and the Group of Five," in *For a New World to Come: Experiments in Japanese Art and Photography, 1968–1979*, ed. Yasufumi Nakamori (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2015), 148–53.
  - <sup>3</sup> This usage of "non-painting" here parallels Hikosaka's reference to Venn diagram, as will be discussed.
  - <sup>4</sup> Precedents for the use of wood as painting support abound in history, including Christian icons and Japanese cedar door decorations. What sets Hikosaka's work apart from them is his thorough rejection of the received notion of painting—pigment bound by oil (or other substances) laid on canvas (or other more or less flat surfaces).
  - <sup>5</sup> For the reception of Greenberg in Japan, see Kajiya Kenji "Gosadō suru buki: Kuremento Gurinbāgu, bunka reisen, gurōbarizeshon" [Malfunctioning weapon: Clement Greenberg, the cultural cold war, and globalization], *Amerika kenkyū /The American Review* 37 (2003): 83–105.
  - <sup>6</sup> For the mainstreaming of contemporary art, see Reiko Tomii, *Radicalism in the Wilderness: International Contemporaneity and 1960s Art in Japan* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016), 33–38.
  - <sup>7</sup> For the survey of modern painting in Japan, see Reiko Tomii, "Chapter 13: Infinity Nets—Aspects of Contemporary Japanese Painting," in Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Abrams, 1994).
  - <sup>8</sup> 1980s art in Japan has recently been gaining museological attention. For example, see *Kiten toshite no 80-nendai/Starting Points: Japanese Art of the '80s*, exh. cat. (Kanazawa: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018).
  - <sup>9</sup> For my proposed methodology of world art history, see Tomii, *Radicalism*, 12–25.
  - <sup>10</sup> The term was first proposed by Michael Craig-Martin in "Post-Painting Painting and Other Thoughts," a lecture at Slade Art School in 1997. See *On Being An Artist* (London: Art/Books, 2015), 231.
  - <sup>11</sup> Hikosaka's writing is anthologized into two books: *Hanpuku* [Repetition/reversal] (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1974; reprinted and expanded, Tokyo: Alpha Beta Books, 2016) and *Hikosaka Naoyoshi no ekurichūru* [Writing by Hikoaka Naoyoshi] (Tokyo: Sanwa Shoseki, 2008).

- 12 Hikosaka's biography is pieced together based on the chronology in *Hikosaka Naoyoshi no ekurichūru*, 560–89; Oral History Interview with Hikosaka Naoyoshi, conducted by Tomii Reiko and Adachi Gen, March 26, 2012, Oral History Archives of Japanese Art (URL: [www.oralarthistory.org](http://www.oralarthistory.org)); and running dialogues I have conducted with the artist since 1994.
- 13 For Kiyohara, see *Kiyohara Keiichi: Tokubetsu chinretsū* [Special display], exh. cat. (Tokyo: The Shōtō Museum of Art, 1992)
- 14 Hikosaka specifically recalls a special feature on Robert Morris in *Bijutsu techō*, no. 310 (March), which includes an essay by Yamaguchi Katsuhiro with ample reproductions (pp. 30–61) and the translation of Morris's 1966 essay, "Notes on Sculpture" (pp. 62–65).
- 15 For the *Rittai* section of Mainichi newspaper company's biannual *Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*, see Tomii, *Radicalism*, 35–36. Conventional sculptures were accepted into another section *Rittai A*. In a broader context, Hori's and Hikosaka's experiments resonate with those by Surpport/Surface in that they similarly deconstruct painting into canvas and frame. While the Japanese artists focused more on the relationship between frame and canvas, the French artists extracted canvas as the essence of painting.
- 16 Yoshikawa Itsuji and Yonezawa Yoshiho, "Enkin-hō" [Perspective methods], in *Sekai dai hyakka jiten* [World encyclopedia], vol. 4 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972), 61–63.
- 17 Yoshikawa's description (p. 62).
- 18 The original text by Zong Bing reads: "Now, if one spreads thin silk to capture the distant scene, the form of K'un-lun's Lang peak can be encompassed in a square inch. For an English translation of this text, see Tsung Ping (Zong Bing), "The Significance of Landscape," in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, comp. and ed., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 36–38.
- 19 Hikosaka Naoyoshi, "Richō minga no enkinhō" [Perspective methods in Joseon-dynasty folk painting], *Mizue* (February 1980): 56.
- 20 Despite its importance in understanding the state of contemporary art in 1960s Japan, this tendency has by now lacked a convenient movement label beyond being "tricky." My terminology is an effort to assign a rightful place to it in postwar art history as an underappreciated precursor to Mono-ha and conceptualism, two main strains of Non-Art in Japanese art in the expanded 1960s.
- 21 For this exhibition, see Mika Yoshitake, "The Language of Things: Relation, Perception, and Duration," in Doryun Chong et al., *Tokyo, 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 128–29.
- 22 For Miyakawa's art criticism and his use of French theory, see Reiko Tomii, "Historicizing 'Contemporary Art': Some Discursive Practices in *Gendai Bijutsu* in Japan," *Positions* 12, no. 3 (Winter 2004): 619–23.
- 23 For Takamatsu and cognition, see Mitsuda Yuri, "Jirō Takamatsu and the Photographic: Toward the Integration of Imagery," in *For a New World to Come*, 114–19.
- 24 For these examples, see *High times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967–1975*, exh. cat. (New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 2006).
- 25 For the chronology of Floor Event, see Tomii, "Gurōbaru-ka no naka de," 271–76; *Hikosaka Naoyoshi: Floor Event No.1 1970*, 42–43.
- 26 Hikosaka Naoyoshi, "Yuka, umi, dōgu" [Floor, sea, tool], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 359 (October 1972).
- 27 Reiko Tomii, "The Impossibility of Anti: A Theoretical Consideration of Bikyōtō," in *Anti-Museum*, ed. Mathieu Copeland and Balthazar Lovay (Fribourg: Fri Art and Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther, 2016).
- 28 The idea is expressed in his essay "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science" in the journal *Logos* (1910–11). For Husserl, see Panos Theodorou, *Husserl and Heidegger on Reduction, Primordality, and the Categorical* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2015), especially "Chapter 2: The Phenomenological Reductions in Husserl's Phenomenology," 17–66; Sebastian Luft, "Husserl's Theory of the Phenomenological Reduction: Between Life-World and Cartesianism," *Research in Phenomenology* 34 (2004): 198–234; "Edmund Husserl," [plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/); and "Phenomenology," [plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/) (both accessed January 16, 2018).
- 29 "Edmund Husserl," [plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/).
- 30 Husserl, quoted in Theodorou, 24.
- 31 Hikosaka Naoyoshi, "Tojirareta enkan no kanata wa: 'Gutai' no kiseki kara nani o" [Beyond the closed circle: What to learn from Gutai's trajectory], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 370 (August 1973): 72–92.
- 32 Shiryōshū, "Gutai sankō bunken" [Gutai literature], in *Shiryōshū*, 434. A nascent form of this idea outlined in the present and following paragraphs can be found in his 1973 text on "practice," in which he discussed the "realm of non-production."
- 33 Tone Yasunao, Hikosaka Naoyoshi, and Akatsuka Yukio, "Nenpyō: Gendai bijutsu no 50-nen, 1916–1968" ("Chronology: Five Decades of Contemporary Art, 1916–1968"), 2 pts., *Bijutsu techō*, no. 354 (April 1972): 1–251; no. 355 (May 1972): 25–186. For this work, see Tomii, "Historicizing," 626–29.
- 34 Tomii, "Historicizing," 627.
- 35 Tone, Hikosaka, and Akatsuka, "Nenpyō," pt. 1: 2.
- 36 See Reiko Tomii, "Geijutsu on Their Minds: Memorable Words on Anti-Art," in *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950-1970*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 35-62. *Geijutsu on Their Minds*
- 37 Hikosaka, "Enkan," 85.
- 38 It should be noted that in these paragraphs, Hikosaka made a subtle linguistic maneuver, changing the topic from *geijutsu* [Art with a capital "A"] to *bijutsu* [art with a small "a"], making his discussion from metaphysical (theoretical) to physical (practical), positioning himself out of Anti-Art that aimed at fervent assaults on Art and in Non-Art that focused on quiet reexamination of art.
- 39 Hikosaka, "Enkan," 85.
- 40 Nakanishi in Akasegawa Genpei, Shūsaku Arakawa, Itō Takayasu, Kudō Tetsumi, and Nakanishi Natsuyuki, with Ebara Jun and Nakahara, "Wakai bōken-ha wa kataru" [Young adventurers talk], *Bijutsu techō*, no. 192 (July 1961): 17.
- 41 Hikosaka, "Enkan," 85.
- 42 For Akasegawa Genpei's construction of "Anti-Art is Art, too," see Reiko Tomii, "State v. (Anti-)Art: Model 1,000-Yen Note Incident by Akasegawa Genpei and Company," *Positions* 10.1 (Spring 2002): 156.
- 43 For Hikosaka's *Tower of the Reconstruction*, see [wawa.or.jp/supports/000156\\_10plus1.jp/monthly/2011/12/post-36.php](http://wawa.or.jp/supports/000156_10plus1.jp/monthly/2011/12/post-36.php), [archiaid.org/archive/workshop/log-cabins-with-murals-and-cypress-tower-2](http://archiaid.org/archive/workshop/log-cabins-with-murals-and-cypress-tower-2) (accessed August 5, 2018). For his collaboration on *waka* poetry, see Hikosaka Naoyoshi, Haganuma Sei, and Igatashi Tarō, ed., *3/11 Man'yōshū Fukkatsu no tō/ March 11 Man'yōshū: Fukushima "Tower of the Reconstruction"* (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2012).



## HIKOSAKA Naoyoshi

Born 1946 in Setagaya, Tokyo, Japan

Lives and works in Hadano, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan

### Education

1967-70 Tama Art University, Tokyo

1982-83 University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts, under the auspices of the Japanese Government Agency of Cultural Affairs "art study abroad" program

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 *PWP: Practice by Wood Painting*, MISA SHIN GALLERY, Tokyo, Japan
- 2020 *Naoyoshi Hikosaka Exhibition*, Museum Haus Kasuya, Kanagawa, Japan  
*Floor Event: Repetitions and Variations*, MISA SHIN GALLERY, Tokyo, Japan
- 2016 *Floor Event 1970*, Misa Shin Gallery, Tokyo
- 2010 *History Lessons: The Imaginary Museum of the Imperial Palace*, Makii Masaru Fine Arts, Tokyo
- 2008 *Naoyoshi Hikosaka Printing Collection*, Softmachine Museum of Art, Marugame, Kagawa Prefecture
- 2007 *Intersection: Three Events of Naoyoshi Hikosaka Kyoto 1972*, galerie 16, Kyoto  
*Vertical Circle*, Softmachine Museum of Art, Marugame, Kagawa Prefecture
- 2002 Two-person exhibition with Lee Ufan, Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2000 *New Wood Painting + a*, Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo
- 1993 *New Floor Event*, Muramatsu Gallery, Tokyo
- 1981 *Practice by Wood Painting*, Tokyo Gallery + Muramatsu Gallery, Tokyo
- 1977 *Practice by Wood Painting*, Shin-Tamura Gallery, Tokyo  
*Practice by Shiritsu*, Muramatsu Gallery, Tokyo
- 1976 *Upright Sea*, Gallery U, Nagoya
- 1975 *Practice by 51 Sounds*, Muramatsu Gallery, Tokyo
- 1973 *Affect Green Meets Floor Event*, Tamura Gallery, Tokyo  
*Upright Sea*, Tokiwa Gallery, Tokyo
- 1972 *Floor Event No.4/Celling Music*, Hikosaka residence, Tokyo  
*Floor Event No.3/Delivery Event*, Gallery 16, Kyoto  
*Upright Sea*, Kyoto Shoin Hall, Kyoto
- 1971 *<Revolution> Floor Event No.2*, Hikosaka residence, Tokyo
- 1970 *Floor Event No.1*, Hikosaka residence, Tokyo

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2022 *MOT Collection: Rewinding the Collection 2nd*, The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
- 2019 *Who opens up the world?*, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan
- 2015 *Re:play 1972/2015 Restaging <Expression in Film '72>*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo  
*For a New World to Come: Experiments in Japanese Art and Photography, 1968 - 1979*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; traveled to Grey Art Gallery, New York University, and Japan Society Gallery, New York
- 2013 *Aichi Triennale 2013: Awakening*, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya
- 2009 *4th Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial*, Niigata Prefecture
- 2007 *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950-1970*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, USA  
*1st Lisbon Architecture Triennale*, Travessa do Carvalho, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2006 *Labyrinth + Museum: Looking at 20th-century art through the eyes of collector Tomio Isahai*, The Museum of Modern Art Gunma; Takasaki City Museum
- 2005 *Ljubljana International Biennial of Graphic Art*, Ljubljana moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2004 *Remaking Modernism in Japan 1900-2000*, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo; The University Art Museum Tokyo

- University of Arts, Tokyo
- 2002 *Sighting: Three Japanese Artists*, White Box, New York, USA  
*Vitality in Modernism: Collection from Iwaki City Museum*, Utsunomiya Museum of Art
- 2001 *Century City*, Tate Modern, London, UK  
*Through a Collector's Eye: Japanese Art after 1945*, The Museum of Modern Art Gunma
- 2000 *Japanese Art in the 20th Century*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
- 1999 *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s*, Queens Museum of Art, New York; traveled to Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Miami Art Museum; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA  
*3rd AIR*, Portside Art Gallery, Yokohama
- 1998 *2nd AIR*, Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo  
*1st AIR (Art In The Ruins)*, Gallery Yamaguchi, Tokyo
- 1997 *Nature and Prayer*, Nagano Prefectural Shinano Art Museum, Nagano
- 1995 *Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo: An Opening Exhibition with Permanent Collections*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo  
*Japanese Culture: The Fifty Postwar Years*, Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo; traveled to Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art; Fukuoka Museum of Art
- 1992-3 *Avanguardie Giapponesi Diglianni70*, Istituzione Bologna Musei, Bologna, Italy; traveled to Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo
- 1991 *Paintings of Showa*, Miyagi Museum of Art, Sendai  
*Contemporary Art: The Mind of Japan*, Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu
- 1989 *Europalia 1989 Japan in Belgium*, Museum voor schone kunsten gent, Gent, Belgium
- 1988 *11 Modern Artists*, Kahitsukan, Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art  
*Olympiad of Art*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, Seoul
- 1987 *Paintings 1977-1987*, National Museum of Art, Osaka  
*19th São Paulo Beinnale*, Brazil
- 1986 *Singapore International Festival of Arts*, National Museum of Singapore  
*The 86th Year Seoul Asia Contemporary Art Exhibition*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, Seoul
- 1985 *Wood: An Art Between Painting and Sculpture*, Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art
- 1984 *2nd Asian Art Exhibition*, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum  
*Japanese Contemporary Painting 1960-1980*, Museum of Modern Art, Gunma
- 1983 *Photography in Contemporary Art*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; traveled to National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto  
*Five Contemporary Artists From Japan*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany
- 1982 *40th Venice Biennale*, Venice, Italy
- 1981 *Japanese Contemporary Art : Trends in Japanese Art in 70's*, The Korean Culture and Arts Foundation Art Center, Seoul, Korea
- 1979 *Art Today '79: Wood Works by Three Artists*, Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo
- 1976 *Kyoto Biennale: Contemporary art selected by seven art critics*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art
- 1975 *7th Paris Biennale*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
- 1972 *Catastrophe Art*, Galleria San Fedele, Milan; traveled to Pinar Gallery, Tokyo  
*Expression in Film '72: Thing, Place, Time And Space—Equivalent Cinema*, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art  
*BOOK Group of Five's Silkscreen Revolution*, galerie 16, Kyoto  
*The Great Concert <White Anthology>*, Gallery Lunami, Tokyo
- 1969 *Zokeidō (Plastic Artists League) Exhibition*, inside the barricaded Tama University campus, Tokyo

### Selected Public Collections

- Chiba City Museum of Art
- Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art
- Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
- M+, Hong Kong
- Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia
- Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo
- Takamatsu Art Museum, Kagawa
- The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, USA
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA
- The Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama
- The Museum of Modern Art, Toyama
- The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Osaka
- The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi Prefecture

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